

# Externality Projects for English students: Heritage, Literature, Culture, Writing

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# Aims

- This presentation will explain the highly flexible Externality Partnership Project (EPP) model which allows students to develop employability skills through interests and activities directly relevant to their degree studies. The EPP model also enables students to gain experience of work opportunities in harder to access sectors such as heritage, charities and fund-raising.
- In 2012-13, Professor Gweno Williams has been awarded an HEA Individual Teaching Development Grant to develop and disseminate this model nationally.
- Thank you warmly for inviting me to Nottingham to discuss this topic with you.

# Challenges in running employability modules

- Academics cannot have experience in all relevant fields of employment
- Fields of employment are in any case rapidly evolving
- Economic pressures have significantly reduced work placement opportunities available to undergraduates, as graduates search for internships
- Some relevant fields have less confidence or capacity to offer work placements e.g. heritage, charities (but/and often have significant volunteer involvement)
- Some academics and students find employability apparently unacceptably remote from their discipline interests

# Opportunities in running employability modules

- Creative engagement with regional or seasonal activities and partners (often appreciative graduates)
- Development of entrepreneurial skills for academics and students
- CV enhancement
- Students create their own reading lists
- Chance for discovery research
- Unexpected outcomes

# 'What Work Is' Philip Levine (b.1928)

You know what work is-if you're  
old enough to read this you know what  
work is, although you may not do it.

(in *What Work Is*, 1992)

# 2EN293 Working with Words

- This module offers 2 equal skills development routes: Employability or Externality
- Students may undertake EITHER an Employability Work Placement (individual) OR an Externality Partnership Project (individual or group), each equivalent to 15 working days, usually arranged in smaller blocks of time. Some students put together a package to make up the 15 days equivalent.
- The choice will depend on each individual student's current career priorities and interests
- Required module reading and research for the reflective portfolio (80% of assessment) will vary according to individual career direction choices made

# EPPs as an alternative to work placements

## Key terms on module 2EN293

- Employability Work Placement = placement with an employer following their scheme of activity
- Externality Partnership Project = entrepreneurial activity for a partner, which is partly or wholly student organised
- Tutor-led EPP = YSJU has generated the opportunity e.g. Haworth
- Student self-generated EPP = wholly student devised and organised activity, reporting regularly to a tutor

# Externality Partnership Projects

An alternative to Work Placements, typically requiring more initiative, development, and more complex time management. Can potentially be a higher risk choice than a placement. Can potentially offer a high level of satisfaction.

EITHER a) tutor-led OR b) student-devised proposals. ONLY available by competitive formal application process (hard copy CV + letter). This year's Externality Projects will usually start in Week 4. Details will be available on Moodle.

Externality Projects require a high level of personal motivation, commitment, organisation and creativity in order to fill the required 15 days with effective and relevant activity. Should be seen as a 'no place to hide' opportunity.

ADVICE: plan creatively and in detail, be prepared to problem solve and learn from set-backs, approach potential partners in a professional manner, NEVER waste their time.



# 2013 student data

- 145 Level 2 students studying Literature, Creative Writing, Film, Media
- Module optional for some programmes, compulsory for others
- 5 tutors (some persuaded)
- 60% work placements, 40% EPPs
- Themed seminar groups, responsively organised

# 2EN293 Assessment overview

Summative assessment consists of two pieces of work:

1. A targeted CV and letter of application, equivalent to 1,000 words (20%). (Learning outcome 3) Due Monday 24 February 2013
2. Portfolio of 4,000 words (80%), including a variety of critical, creative and reflective materials related to the student's experience in a workplace/externality project setting and on the module (Learning outcomes 1, 2, 4). Due Friday 17 May 2013. **IMPORTANT:** it is the quality of reflective writing that determines the grade, not the quality of the placement alone. Must include a photograph of yourself on placement. Must include the Employer/Partner Feedback form and your reflections on it. Must include the completed Placement/Project Timetable Log.

# 2013 EPP Examples

- Heritage: Haworth, the Mary Ward Project
- Literature: 2 book launches (poetry & oral history), World Book Night, York Literature Festival
- Culture: Soundsphere band publicity
- Writing: student led film noir EPP, Students and Literature student led EPP
- Charity: Books for Kenya

# Teaching issues

- Less preparation, more repetition and coaching
- Framing real world experiences rather than imparting knowledge
- Collapses the walls of the academy
- Reciprocal relationships with partners
- Peer-learning and support opportunities
- Problem-solving and contingency planning
- Exciting, surprising outcomes

# Success stories

- Fund-raising capacity of students
- Connections across the generations
- Knowledge development e.g. Haworth students hearing a version of the Bronte story which foregrounds Patrick
- Students continue engagement with partners
- Folk singer Bella Hardy gained her agent through the module

# Reputation

- Module in its original form (WP only) loved by Externals and parents though not by students
- EPPs generate considerable visual and media materials, the module is consequently known and appreciated by the Marketing Department, the Dean and the V-C
- Module publicity is intrinsic, not in addition

# What EPPs could you generate?

- In your region?
- Around your academic interests?
- Related to local festivals or communities?
- By giving responsibility to your students?
- In partnership with your colleagues/graduates?