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Supervisor:	Chris Jennings

Comments	Section
	Title and Abstract (5%) Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.
	Introduction and literature review (25%) To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/ question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable).
	Methods and Research Design (15%) To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.
	Results and Analysis (15%) [2] To include: description and justification of data treatment/ data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings.
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	Presentation (10%) To include: academic writing style; depth, scope and accuracy of referencing in the text and final reference list; clarity in organisation, formatting and visual presentation

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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

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TITLE

A critical analysis of work experience and its ability to prepare undergraduate sports students for a career in the sports industry

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List of abbreviations:

- PBL – project based learning

- LSM – Leisure, sport and management

- WRU – welsh rugby union

- HE – Higher education

- CSSREC – Sport Research Ethics Committee

- SME's – Small to Medium sized Enterprises

- UK – United Kingdom

i Acknowledgements:

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ii Abstract:

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a unified theoretical understanding of the ability work placements have upon undergraduate students, assisting them for future employment in the sport industry. A qualitative approach was used throughout, using specific samples in the discovery of required data. Desired samples were drawn from the sports industry, consisting of three undergraduate students who have participated in works placements and three employers who assist students within the work placements. The study highlights its main themes through the literature review indicating its value regarding the employer's perspective, also potential barriers students face while participating in their chosen placement highlighting the unpaid status of work placements, a mixture of opinionated views are discussed throughout. The literature review highlights the inclusion of work placements into higher educational systems, indicating the benefits they have on students; enhancing key skills and widening their network outside of higher education through potential employers. Work placements would appear to be becoming ever more important in the university and college system, *Hergert (2009).*

Field research for the study was conducted in Cardiff, south wales. Interviews had been arranged to gather a mixture of views from both student and employer. Based on qualitative analysis, results indicate work placements have a unique ability in preparing students for future employment, used in such a way that no individual can attain elsewhere, however implications highlighted are narrowed down; the relationship between placement and university has a large emphasis on participation for students, with the correct promotional and marketing strategies, the demand for working placement around south wales will increase.

Future research is required to increase participation and awareness for working placements in sport, as there is a certainty that work placements prepare students for employability. The inclusion of financial incentives regarding travel costs and rewards will require further research; this will

indicate weather financial assets for students will be fiesable in the long term for work placements. The researcher has been able to identify an area of weakness within the study, indicating student candidates have been interviewed early in their career, unable to attain experience in the sport industry, highlighting future research to be targeted upon post students who have mature experience.

CHAPTER ONE

INTROCUCTION

The research study chosen investigates particular methods of learning, through research, highlighting the ability work placements have upon undergraduate students, assisting and preparing them for potential future employment within the industry of sport.

The main objectives of the chosen study were to explore:
•   The value work based learning brings to the student and employer
•   The role of work based learning
•   Barriers to learning – debating the unpaid status
•   Mentoring process
•   Employment opportunities arisen – student / employer

Highlighting the issues of Employability and Experiential Learning and how it continues to attract substantial attention within the Leisure, Sport and Management industry (LSM), *Keech, (2005).* The literature seeks information of how work experience can influence and create opportunities for undergraduate students in search for employment in the sports industry.

If higher education is to meet the needs of a wider section of the population, then new and more inclusive opportunities for learning are necessary: Foundation Degrees tailored for particular occupational areas, and work placements available to all students, are two such opportunities *Hall, (2006).*

There would appear to be barriers underpinning the mentoring process and its structural capacity, highlighting implications and how the structure can be alternated. Also how the unpaid status affects work placement participation, suggesting key findings and if anything can be changed to improve the participation levels of work experience.

Numerous investigations will take place throughout the research study, purposeful sampling i.e. sampling a population that fits criteria, one that consists of relevant undergraduate students and employers. A qualitative approach of data collection will be used by means of in depth interviews, used upon the subjects and by gathering the data, comparing results with relevant literature which can be found in the review of literature.

CHAPTER TWO

<u>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</u>

As a nation, we are living in a generation where it is difficult to attain the job you desire. Many graduates are finding it increasingly difficult to work in the subject they studied and some have retrained in other subjects to find work *(Shute, 2013).* This is not only costly to the student as it increases their student loan debt but still does bot guarentee them work. Shute (2013) also suggests that many students have to move away from their areas to find work due to the lack of job opportunities which aslo puts an extra stain on their finanaces. Employers portray a negative approach in employing someone with minimal experience, knowledge and job relevant skills. Employers seek individuals who have been able to gain experience while studying at university or college and have that cutting edge over competitors to benefit there organisational needs. *Brassie (2010),* a study indicates just over 70% of employers would prefer graduate students with relevant work experience and more than 85% of employers prefer to take on the students who have worked for the company previously, demonstrating the importance of participating in a working placement which gives students key skills and experience for their future in the sporting, or any industry. Sandwich courses are becoming a popular route for students as this gives them the opportunity to develop their network and essential skills needed once out in the working world. *Cotgrove (2012)* suggests that Sandwich courses are courses in which periods of practical experience alternate with academic study, these are also recent developments in British Universities. Evidence of its capabilities suggested by *ASET (2007)* "sandwich courses have been proven to give students an 11.1% advantage over their counterparts of obtaining and increased chance of full-time work once leaving higher education with 67.5% of students believed to go into full-time paid work, while 56.4% of non-sandwich students are also believed to go into full-time work, giving the sandwich students a 11.1% advantage over their counterparts". ASET provide up to date and relevant literature highlighting the importance and value of sandwich courses, and its ability to prepare undergraduates for employability, generating practical application within students; in depth work experience involving decision making that can not be replicated in classrooms, separating the practical

element to theoretical. Also if there is a vacancy in the organisation that they are attached to, they are, in effect, interviewing themselves for that position. As an employer, if someone has proven their capabilities and commitment to the organisation, employing that person may be seen as a safe option with less risk of personnel issues. It would be a safer option reducing the risk to the employer and any other position within the organisation. *Newton, (2005)* suggested Individuals may have high levels of skills and knowledge, but have no relevant qualification. In many cases individuals may have the opportunity to demonstrate or prove their skills, through evidence of work performed in the past, or through a previous employer's reference, the absence of a qualification can lead to difficulties for individuals in being considered as an appropriate job applicant, instagating a negative effect upon the placement and its ability to prepare students.

2.1 Definition and outline of Work placements:

An essential consideration for the researcher regarding work placements is that there are many definitions. Generally speaking, many theorists define work placements in their own terms and find it difficult to come to one conclusion, some definitions seem narrow, and some definitions from theorists consist of deep meaning and elaborate heavily on the theory of learning when looked at more closely, however the outline of the definitions are very similar and have similar meanings. By way of an illustration*, Hamilton, (1997)* suggests work placements offer a means of increasing students' engagement and focus in learning and of preparing them for employment. The citation could be considered as 'out of date', however the term work placements is known to be the same definition to date for all students, identifying the requirements within a working placement such as the engagement and focus of the student throughout and the benchmark requirements. *Beard, (2007)* states that there are many different types of learning; learning has a start and eventually an end, a degree for example; some might say that a degree can be classed as 'proper learning' compared to other types of learning that do not reach a certain requirement or benchmark of that quality, however having a balance of both theory based learning and practical based learning encouraging students to undertake

placements enhances a students performance. With comparison and debate over *Beards (2007)* definition Barr *(2003*), he states "the concept of work placements tries to capture and to quantify this learning". *Barr (2003)* defines work placements as learning that takes place at work or learning that takes place away from work with the objective of improving performance at work. There is a similar theme throughout both suggestions used by *Beard (2007) and Barr (2003),* while *Beard (2007)* underpins the concept of work placements through higher education; Barr (2003) uses the practical approach of the definition through experiences within the working environment. Work placements often consist of peer collaboration, a strong emphasis and focus on critical thinking, communication skills and interdisciplinary learning, *Markham (2003).* Emphasising key skills and what is required from participating students. By comparing different theorist's definition from 2003 to 2009, minimal changes occur. The prime definition that the researcher believes is appropriate for the research project and will be used further into the project is found within *Beard (2003*) definition, using work placements through higher education (HE).

A further debate considered to be relevant; *Lester & Carol (2009)* who suggests an approach to work placements consisting of four main components:

•   Individual (or part-individual and part-group) programmes where a learning contract/agreement is negotiated upon.

•   Recognition of previous learning, both for credit and as the starting-point for the programme

•   The use of live, methodologically-sound projects and practitioner research, backed by appropriate forms of learner support

•   Valid forms of assessment normally referenced to generic criteria representing the relevant academic level.

  Beard (2007) suggests that the scheme of work placements are carefully supervised programmes that enhance the student's ability to integrate academic knowledge with practical application, improve career opportunities

after graduation, develop social and people skills, also providing the opportunity for students to apply communication and problem-solving skills. *Beard (2007)* indicates the outcomes very fluently throughout this quotation and provides the reader with improved knowledge on what benefits students can attain from following a carefully structured and supervised programme, however, as stated previously, there are many different but similar theories of work placements and the outcomes of this learning method. Whilst considering the definition of work placements the researcher considers the different forms and debates on whether it should take place on the (HE) campus, in a relevant external organisation or a combination of both.

Work placements have become an essential working experience for undergraduates in recent years, over a decade there has been an increase in demand, giving individuals a stepping stone to better their chances of achieving their career aspiration, (*Popik 2009).* It is able to better their chances of employability through providing evidence to the employer that they are capable of working in a demanding environment, (*Fayeun, 2006).*

Many interesting articles and outcomes of work placements had been highlighted through *Armsby & Costley (2000),* However *Hergert (2009)* provides specifically up to date sources that engages students in real life work to prepare them for the future, alongside enhancing their CV's and 'spoon-feeding' them the confidence they require to succeed in an increasingly demanding working environment.

Many work placement environments include project based learning (PBL). According to the definitions found in (PBL) handbooks for teachers, projects are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations (*Jones, Rasmussen, & Moffitt, 1997; Thomas, Mergendoller, & Michaelson, 1999).*

The introduction of project based learning is a great asset for the work placement programme. Whilst work placement programmes will often include

course-based and peer-group activities, for most, the central component of the programme will be project-based. (PBL) will utilise the student's practical skills within the organisation offering them the opportunity to show potential employers their unique skills and what assets they can bring to their organisation, whether it be in sport or economics. Projects usually address real workplace issues with which learners are involved, and they are often an extension of activities that learners are in the process of undertaking or have already planned to work on *(Armsby & Costley 2000, Graham & Smith 2002)*. Students who participate in work placements across the UK are more likely to attain a greater understanding of that specific field than the students who have not, giving them a widened knowledge base when it comes down to their higher educational studies, and furthermore relevant experience. Work placements can be used as an asset for the employer delivering the placement. Gaining an extra worker within the work place for no initial cost can be very beneficial dependent upon the drive and work ethos of the student participant *(Popik, 2009)*.

By finding out how broad the definition of work placements is, there is no 'real' or singular meaning due to its sheer width and depth. However, the outline of work placements has a similarity throughout, consisting of project based activity and theory based therefore giving all different types of definitions similar outcomes. Higher education can also be perceived as theory based learning for the students participating in work placements. Work placements for sports students have been identified by *Barr (2004) suggesting* work placements provide opportunities to learn about graduate employment and enhance your employability within the sports industry.

 This brings the research project onto the importance and benefits of work placements. The outcome of this project will highlight the value of work placements and its ability to prepare students for a career in the sports industry.

2.2 The importance and relevance of work placements:

Hergert (2009) states "work placements are becoming ever more important in the university and college system, playing a crucial role in guiding students to

network between traditional coursework and the workplace". *Hergert (2009)* emphasises a great point in highlighting the importance of work placements, as universities are becoming known to change normal courses to sandwich courses, therefore giving the student an opportunity to gain experience while studying, also keeping a close link and structure with the higher educational system. *Hergert, (2009)* is the professor of management at the University of San Diego, teaching courses in Strategic Management and International Business. One of his aims consists of linking students with future jobs through work placements. The main areas of his research interest involve industry economics, international management, and competitive strategy, (*San Diego State University, 2013*). Before starting his career in academics, Dr. Hergert was a consultant with McKinsey and Company in Dusseldorf, Germany, and the Director of Strategic Planning Applications at Data Resources, Inc. This information sourced indicated the level of knowledge and experience Dr Hergert has to provide relevant and specific sources of the importance and value towards work based learning particularly specifying his research in employability for the younger generation.

According to *Vicary, (2005)* placements are "even more important than college work", along with having the right personality for the required job and demonstrating the ability to think creativitely outside the box. By undergoing work placements, this method of learning has the potential to expand an individuals knowledge whilst giving them confidence in their skills and personality traits. However, the article is over eight years old and since that time the demand for work placements has risen suggesting the importance for placements is continually increasing, potentially giving students the best preperation for when they have to leave university study. The demand for students to participate in work placements has increased along with the demand for organisations to supply the students with placement opportunities, however the availability of work placements are not moving as rapidly as the number of students seeking placements.

Popik (2009) suggests "students place a great value on the experience of work placements, gathering information and learning from mistakes, reinforcement and personal reflection". This is particularly true when the

placement has an impact on their career goals and aspirations, *(Beard, 2007)*. The perceived value of the placement is also related to the pedagogical approach and the demographic profile of the student, highlighting the class of the student and their ability to adapt to certain situations. Therefore the value and importance of the work placement will increase tremendously if educators can provide the appropriate structure and experience with the academic background of the student, giving this type of learning meaning and value*, (Hergert,2009).* Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) have put in place placements to help individuals who have a passion in business, rugby and relate somewhat to their degree, therefore assisting them and enhancing their knowledge academically, *Thomas, W (2013).*

The quotation suggested by *Hergert (2009)* has a balanced opinion; highlighting the importance of relevant qualifications, experience and the willingness of the educator. If the educator is unsure on what to do with the student and guides him in participating in job's which are non-specific to the needs of the placement, the structure suddenly collapses and its ability to prepare students for future employment becomes non-existant. However, the same can be explained by *Schneider & Stier, (2006*) indicating that H.E., students will learn most required traits and skills by actually performing real-world tasks while engaged in a formal and structured field experience, *Roberts (2006) and Hergert (2009)* suggest the benefits of work placements seem more appropriate than theoretical based learning. Still there seems to be no clear explanation to why work placements would be more appropriate to students than a normal degree.

Following on from *Hergerts (2009)* argument, there needs to be a strong link between the planning and design of a placement. By putting a clear structure; beginning, middle and end, indicating the requirements of the programme and what is required from both student and educator, the outcomes should improve and productivity and learning will be increased.

Peters and May (2004) state "Through the second half of the twentieth century, and on into the twenty-first century, successive British governments have stressed the need for the development of a 'knowledge economy' to

tackle Britain's ranking in a globalised world". Evidence has been found, identifying that the government provides the educational system with the resources such as new technology, capital and structured training to help students gain key skills and knowledge. Most recently the government have indicated the increase in demand towards work placements, However, the room for improvement is more than ever in the spotlight and should be an objective on the agenda for the government in Wales and the rest of the UK *(Popik, 2012).*

Brassie (2010), states that 75% of employers would prefer job candidates with relevant work experience and more than 90% of employers prefer to take on the students who have worked for their organisation previously. Highlighting the importance of gaining relevant experience, therefore students must be productive in the search for work experience.

2.3 Benefits of participation in work placements:

There are a number of benefits working placements have for students, through researching relevant literature, *ASET (2007)* suggests work placements builds a creation of network industry contacts and subsequent job opportunities. Through a study developed by ASET, 69% of placement students had been offered graduate jobs due to their networking skills and mature development through their working placements. Placement students are 4.6% more likely to be awarded a 1st class honours, followed by an increase in 6% more likely to achieve a 2:1, over students who have not participated in work placements. It would be very difficult for the employer not to employ the student who understands the meaning, culture and requirements of the organisation. However, there is an important debate as to whether this is regarded as unfair practice. *Fayeun (2013)* suggested "The value of work experience for young people and the benefits this brings to potential employers is universally accepted", but too few employers currently offer opportunities to those young people who genuinely seek work experience. With correct marketing and advertisement, this could potentially give students the motivation to continue their studies while gaining valuable experience. A balance between work placements and higher education will

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need to be established, however there needs to be an increased awareness and drive by employers who provide work placements for undergraduate students. Some organisations promote work placements to universities and colleges more than others, but there needs to be a larger drive in promoting work placements to within the university system. Examples that undergo promotion within universities are forseen by the WRU with its new initiative of an enterprise academy group, *Thomas, (2013)* states "The new Rugby Enterprise Academy, in conjunction with Wales' top students, is an exciting initiative, linking up with the universities and the clubs in the south and west Wales regions to make the best of this new opportunity over the coming season increasing the chances of employment for the chosen students". This enterprise is in its first year and has been running for a number of months alongside the students higher educational studies.

Thomas, (2013) "the enterprise academy will provide you with unique skills and add value to your Ciriclum Vitie (CV); we also provide industry leading in house commercial training with a rewarding work placement to complement your academic training. Tasks such as sponsorship account management and hospitality are just a few of many examples". Placements such as the WRU enterprise academy give employers the reassurance and confidence that the candidate they are employing has the capability to work under pressure and provide them with outstanding results.

Moorman (2004) argues that no single step in a sport management career path is as valuable as a work placement. Work placements potentially offer you a larger networking market with industry professionals, the opportunity to develop, refine and acquire specific skills; also an opportunity for learning that cannot be taught in the classroom, (*Beggs & Hurd, 2010).* When working in such an environment alongside higher education, you want the experience to be challenging, but not out of your own depth, which potentially can hinder the individual's university work and overall degree status.

Fanthome (2004) indicates employers wish to have students that can make an immediate contribution to the running of the organisation; highlighting the expectation of student participants once recruited, this process is dependent

upon the recruitment process applied by the mentors. However, suggested by *Arts Council England (2010)* emphasising the issue of students taking on unneeded pressure which in reality is not of great importance, resulting in a devastating effect to both business and educational studies.

Using relevant data, the students considered their placement "appropriate" and at best when the work placement responsibilities challenged them to advance professionally, which included the development of intellectual capabilities and practical skills, *Stratta, (2004).* Peretto was able to analyse the outcomes of challenging them in advancing professionally with the development of vital skills.

The researcher came across a study of service learning, where researchers put students into real-world settings, and finding evidence that problem solving, critical thinking, and rhetorical skills naturally improve in non-academic settings benefiting the student *(Matthews & Zimmerman, 1999)*, indicating the element of importance work placements has towards students and how it can further their knowledge in the demanding working environment. Taking all relevant experiences gathered from this type of learning and using them in their degree programme. If educators are able to provide the appropriate structure and integrate the experience with the academic background of the student, the value of work experience will be maximised *(Hergert, 2009)*.

Work placements can be perceived as something it is not if the wrong message is directed at the student, causing a negative outcome, therefore the end product is seen as a failure and chance of employability within the organisation becomes minimal. Work placements can often fail when the emphasis and commitment falls heavily on the 'project' element of the title rather than the 'learning' element. When employers concentrate and focus on what students can make and do, instead of what they can research and investigate, projects are guilty of what *Wiggins and McTighe, (2005)* term the "activity-oriented sin of design".

2.4 Barriers to learning:

There are set backs within work placements, certain topics suggested are discrimination, harassment and tort liability, as students are unpaid and perceived to have a role which is low down in the chain of command. A student who is not employed and in an unpaid placement will not be put on the protection against discrimination under title '*VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964*'; also not covered by the Employment Rights Act 1996. Based primarily on the unpaid status (*Kathryn A. Edwards & Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, 2010)*, they may be vulnerable to harassment or discrimination, yet they do not have any legal recourse, (Bowman & Lipp, 2000). Many suggest it is at the individual's discretion to carry on with the internship. Through the research provided above, the thought process between employees and employers over discrimination and harassment from 1964 - 2010 has remained very similar.

In the recent economic downturn, there have been calls for creative graduates to be even more 'resourceful and willing to work unpaid' (*Ball, Pollard, and Stanley 2010-2011*). This can have a dramatic effect on participation in working placements due to the lack of finance students will be receiving. It can all be dependent upon the working class of the student's family and their ability to take on unpaid work to the sacrifice of paid work. A student who comes from a wealthy family can afford to participate in a work placement unpaid rather than a student who comes from a working class family who is unable to participate as they require paid work during their studies in order to support themselves financially. The issue needs to be addressed as the opportunity for work placements should be available for all individuals. For some students, the need to continue with part-time paid employment is the only option, also affecting the type of placement they can find in their own locality, *(Little 2006).*

Lester & Carol (2009) suggest working placements do not fit particularly well with the popular division of university programmes into either taught or research-based learning". Most work-based programmes contain elements of both teaching involving the educator feeding information to the student, and research that involves the student independently finding relevant research

that will enhance ones knowledge, although they are perhaps better characterised as involving the facilitation of active and enquiry-based learning from purposive (work) activity.

This statement used by Lester & Carol, (2009) is forseen as a barrier, however, the research can be debated upon due to the individual success that has been attained from work based learning while studying in higher education and therefore being offered a full-time or part-time job due to the work placement. The success of the individual is reliant upon the type of field the work placement is in, and how effective the educator is towards the student.

2.4a Mentoring process:

Potential barriers that can hinder a student's work placement can be the hierarchy of their mentor, the motivation to teach and pass on experience to the intern varies from mentor to mentor. The skills and experience they possess are passed down to the student. There will be no beneficial element from their experiences if they are provided with irrelevant tasks; however, it is all dependent upon the type of placement. Benefits to the student are dependent upon the enthusiasm and willingness of the mentor to actually teach. *Olk (2010)* suggests that "mentoring is a vital for a student's preparation and learning experience. If the information provided by their educators are not specific to the placement, the whole scheme of the will be worthless. However, a study provided by *Little & Harvey (2006)* suggests "students indicated that they had received no training at all during their placement". More research is needed to perfect the monitoring process".

To improve the overall experience, there is a need for monitoring of the work placement, for student and educator (*Moorman, 2004).* Being provided with a specific structure and design with outcomes for the student and deadlines to be met set out clearly will enhance the students' confidence and expertise in the specific field of work. Organisations should be able to monitor the students' progress through weekly/monthly reviews of their progress within the placement. The relationship from student to employer is vital for a student's preparation, if there is no connection between both student and

employer, the learning experience dramatically decreases. *Hergert (2009)* states "One of the most important aspects of a working placement is the relationship between colleagues" whether this is through employer to employer, or employer to student. It is essential that contact is maintained with employers throughout the year and not just during the placement perios. *Keech, (2005)* suggests there are key principles that help cement relationships with employers:

- Co-existence

- Co-operation

- Co-ordination

- Collaboration

- Co-ownership

The study also suggests 'It is essential that contact be maintained with employers throughout the year and not just during the period of the placement'.

2.5 Criticality of work placements:

According to *Hager et al (1984)* "Work experience is one of the most critical components of professional preparation that leads to employment in the sport industry". Whilst Hager's (1984) view is believable, it needs to be reinforced and backed up by more recent sources. *(Juznic & Pymm, 2011)* also state that "placements provide a highly relevant educational experience that is appreciated by students, and they believe it is essential to attain work experience before seeking jobs which demand a lot more professionalism and punctuality. The students also stated that the placement generally lives up to their expectations". Comparing *Hager's (1984)* and *Juznic & Pymm (2011)* quotations, it is clear that they both consider placements to be critical and as such you can surmise that there have been limited changes in the thought processes from 1984 to 2011.

Through the research provided, there is evidence that the value and demand for work placements is becoming something all students will require in the future to better their chances of securing the job they desire. However, when an advantage has been spotted and becomes common knowledge, difficulties and disadvantage appear. As students realise the benefits and strengths of work placements, the demand for these placements will grow and may eventually exceed supply. If this were the case, going back to the debate over whether these placements favour the wealthy, those who can afford to work unpaid and have the right connections, may well end up participating in most placements. Alternatively, as the placements are unpaid, employers will continue to create placements to keep up with demand. Employers will find it increasingly difficult to differentiate between job candidates and newer methods will need to be developed. This has already been seen with employers paying less attention to academic grades as a greater number of students attain the highest grades in both school and college. will become so large the majority of students and individuals seeking work will fall back to the same level having to seek for further experience, therefore in the future, work based learning will become a norm, not a privileged opportunity.

Comparing the UK's participation in work placements to other EU countries, the UK's percentage of students participating in a work placement comes in at 29%, this compares with the European average of 55%, France at 72%, Germany at 80%, *ASET (2007).* This statistic used by ASET is a great example of how far behind the United Kingdom is as a nation in promoting and pushing students to take their opportunities in working placements. Hopefully with correct initiatives by the government and higher educational systems, this low percentage can gradually increase and compete with the European countries, also being influenced by employers creating opportunities for students seeking the experience that employers look for. However, due to their percentages suggesting a higher average than the UK's, this still does not suggest placements are critical to students in forging countries to obtain full employment in the future.

2.6 Effectiveness of work placements for students in the long term:

Despite their popularity and unique historical background, little is known about the effectiveness and value of work placements. Literature on university work placements is minimal and lacks a dominant theory based perspective, and is largely descriptive in most empirical studies that are shown to date*, (Olk, 2010).* In the long term the effectiveness of the work placement can potentially fade away for the student as connections can be broken, relationships between colleagues can fall apart due to many reasons, and others will find completely different jobs. In addition, although the internship system has its complex relationship between the student, university and employer*, Olk (2010)* suggests that the majority of the research underpinned on work placements has typically focused on a 'small sector of the overall processes'.

ASET (2007) suggested that "students who undertake working placements are 9.3% more likely to be in full time employment and 1.2% less likely to be underemployed than those who did not". This is in comparison to students participating in sandwich courses where there is an 11.1% advantage over non-sandwich students. This suggestion used by ASET has been used to clarify and confirm the effectiveness and value of work placements in the UK, even though there is only a minimal increase in percentage, the potential for an increase in the future is possible with a greater focus from Government, employers and Higher Education establishments as discussed above.

Smith (2002) suggests as time passes, the thought of work placements becoming a requirement to attain a job is on the increase. Previously, leaving higher education with a degree gave you a high chance of employability. Today, the chances of securing a job without relevant experience is minimal, however once relevant experience has been identified it is then dependent upon the attributes and personality of the candidate. The balance between work placements and higher education should be at a similar level, combining both would be something worth investing for in the future, *Hergert (2009).*

To conclude the review of literature, there are many ways in which you can stand out from competitors. Using your CV to the best of your ability is vital. In certain scenarios it is not essential to have relevant experience as gaining

experience enhance's your key skills which employers look for. Remaining positive and searching for that job, opportunities will come; take on work that offer transferrable skills if you are unable to attain your desired career instantly.

Work placements have many different definitions, the citation that is precieved as relevant to this study has been included by *Beard,(2007)* stating there are many different types of learning; learning has a beginning and an end, some suggest a degree can be classed as '*proper learning*' compared to other types of learning such as work placements, however having a balance of both theory based learning and practical based learning encouraging students to undertake placements enhances a students performance.

It has been stated that the inclusion of work placements into higher educational systems is slowly on the increase, evidence indicating the benefits towards students; enhancing key skills and widening their network. Certain barriers highlighted suggest working unpaid can be a dramatic effect on certain candidates, whether it be wealth or provision, however many students thought process should be driven towards work placements being an investment for their employability in the future. The level of mentoring is yet to be assessed and must be increased with a more fluent structure, data collection will be gathered through the research study, potentially rectifying or suggesting the purpose of work experience and its ability to prepare undergraduate students for future careers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Definition of research:

This chapter will highlight and justify specific methods that were used in this study. The chapter is split into nine sub-sections including; outline of research question, population sampling, qualitative v quantitative, argument for selection, method of sample section, method of approach, method of collection, method of analysis and pilot. *Cambridge University (2003)* defines the word "research" as a number of similar and often overlapping activities involving a search for information, information that comes from specific sources to potentially find the outcomes of the research question.

3.2 Outline of research question:

The purpose of this research is to examine the value and effectiveness of work based learning for students undergoing sports based degrees and finding out its ability to prepare undergraduates for a career in the sport management and coaching industry. Over time there have been indications of its importance and value that this method of learning provides to students, certain skills that cannot be obtained within lectures.

The specific themes of this study will be looking in depth into the singular meaning of work based learning, what are the beneficial aspects for students while participating in a sporting work placements; finding out what the participants perception of work based learning is and specific benefits that they have gained from the placements, the potential barriers to work based learning; Finding out the participants opinion of the 'unpaid' status of working placements and if it adds or eliminates value, how critical are work placements for students who seek sport management jobs further down the line; indicating the essential preparation needed for the participants giving them the greatest opportunity in gaining employment, and finally, are they effective for students in the long term.

3.3 Population sampling:

Population sampling is the process through which a group of representative individuals is selected from a population for the purpose of statistical analysis. Performing population sampling correctly is extremely important, as errors can

lead to invalid or misleading data, (*Goddard 2004).* The researcher will identify individuals who have experience of working placements whilst studying in higher education within the specific sporting subjects. The researcher feels this is appropriate as the population who will be used as research have experience outside their higher educational studies, also highlighting how work placements benefit employers. The population study group that the research will be interviewing will consist of three undergraduate/masters students aged between 18 – 23 who have all been studying sport related degrees, all participants interviwed in this study have recently participated in unpaid work experience, and three employers of sporting organisations provide working placements for undergraduate students. By gathering information from the two sides of the work placement, the understanding of the knowledge widens, also indicating the true value and its ability in the students preparation.

3.4 Qualitative v Quantitative:

There are two types of methods that can be used for the research methodology; these are Qualitative methods and Quantitative methods. *Newman (1998)* suggests that qualitative and quantitative research have philosophical roots in the naturalistic and positivistic philosophies, respectively. Virtually qualitative research, regardless of the theoretical differences, and reflects some sort of individual phenomenological perspective, where the research consists of more in depth findings, a larger personal approach to the research, in forms of interviews that require there in-depth opinions of each scenario given by the interviewer. Most quantitative research approaches, people can agree. Most quantitative research approaches, people can agree. Quantitative research offers a means for testing objective theories as it enable the study in the relationship among variables. These variables can then be measured,, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures.

3.5 Argument for selection:

A qualitative approach was used for the purpose of this study in order to capture thoughts, feelings, emotions, behaviours and experiences *(Gratton*

and Jones 2004). The reason the researcher will be using qualitative approaches over quantitative is due to the number of participants involved within the interview process. By gathering a large sum of information from a small population consisting of three graduates and three undergraduates, it suggests that the population group is knowledgeable and covers all of the requirements to be a part of the research. A great advantage of qualitative research is that it encourages insight into attitudes, behaviour and motivation which it affords investigators (*Boxill 1997).* In qualitative research the researcher and the participant undergoing the interview have a unique importance as the one to one relationship helps to generate meaningful and rich data, therefore the research becomes ever more important and relevant.

3.6 Method of sample selection and criteria:

Once all six participants have confirmed their availability to take part in the study, through semi structured interviews the researcher will ask specific questions on how they feel about their progress within the organisation and the level of satisfaction they are getting out of the placement experience. The interview will be adapted dependant on whether interviewing a student or employer. The interviewer will give the candidate time to answer each question, also using promps to keep them focused and help it maintain a free flowing interview.

3.7 Method of approach:

Prior to commencing this study, an ethical approval was requested and required. An ethical approval form had been completed and considered by the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee (CSSREC) who ultimately gave their consent for ethical approval for the study. Before the interview process commenced participants were required to complete an informed consent form via email which highlighted that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the entire study ensuring all information they presented would remain confidential and in no way reach out to the public.

3.8 Method of collection:

The researcher will collect data by communication with respondents. It can be through personal meeting or via telephone. Interview format depends upon information quality and quantity of data that researcher requires for research, *(Zikmund, 2009).*

Arrangements were made for the interviews to taken place at a venue which was familiar and comfortable for the participants. Providing this type of environment may allow the participants to speak more freely and elaborate on each individual question regarding work based learning and how it prepares them for the future. The researcher will be using a Dictaphone to which consent was given, to gather information from each candidate. The interview should last between 10-20 minutes dependent upon the level of detail the participant is willing to share with the researcher. To collect the data required during the interview the preferred environment would be a quiet area, class room preferably, if not possible the contingency will be any place where sounds are diminished.

3.9 Method of analysis:

Analysis of specifically gathered data and information should be accurate to give most reliable results of the dissertation. In order to analyse the data and information firstly, research should use thematic framework analysis. This approach allows the researchers to deal with the conceptual data in an easy way (*Easterby-Smith et al, 2006).* Once all data from the recordings have been gathered, the researcher will transcribe each interview and find any highlighted areas within the research topic to discuss further into the discussion and results.

Inductive analysis: *Johnston (2013)* suggests that Inductive analysis aims to systematically generate theory grounded in specific instances of empirical observation. As such it sharply contrasts with deductive methodology in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is constructed prior to, and is tested through observation and analysis. However, the researcher's thoughts on the

outcome of the interview process can be changed once the research and information has been gathered and analysed.

Deductive analysis: This approach of analysis starts with a hypothesis to its data analysis. The procedure of the deductive analysis, which will be used in a qualitative form starts with its preliminary theories, e.g. The researcher has an indication that each candidate will agree with the researchers proposal that work based learning helps them prepare for their future career paths. Once these theories are tested by using pilot runs, the researcher can then indicate the outcomes of each question and any different scenarios found from conducting the interviews.

3.10 Validity and reliability:

The terms validity and reliability are somewhat relevant to quantitative research, however do not fit the details of qualitative research *(Agar 1986).* For example within quantitative research external validity is vitally important in order to form conclusive generalisations, which can be applied to a wider population. However qualitative research generates hypotheses for further investigation, not just simply test them *(Sandelowski 1986), a*nd it comes to conclusion that qualitative research has been used throughout this research project due to its detailed depth in research instead of a broad quantitative method.

3.11 Pilot:

A pilot study can be defined as a smaller version of a larger study that is conducted to prepare for that study. A pilot study can involve pre-testing a research tool, like a new data collection method. It can also be used to test an idea or hypothesis, *Stachowiak, (2008)* suggests pilot studies are used as feasibility studies, to ensure that the ideas or methods behind a research idea are sound, as well as to "work out the kinks" in a study protocol before launching a larger study. The researcher will use a pilot study will be used as a 'trial run' to find the positive and negative aspects to the questions provided. 'A small scale pilot is often just the thing to help organise a larger, more rigorously defined study', *(Light 1990:2013).*

From the pilot the researcher can understand the types of answers the interviewee will give, therefore planning appropriate 'follow up' questions and prompts, preventing any misunderstanding and misjudgement of the questions provided by the interviewer during the interview process.

From using the pilot study on a sports coaching student, the participant provided evidence that all questions work well with each other, through clear and sufficient answers towards the interviewer, understanding what was asked and giving relevant feedback to assist the research. The feedback given to the researcher stated that their needed to be more prompts used to prolong the interview process, therefore teasing information out of the students and employers to give the researcher a larger field to gather its data collection. Appendix B indicates what the participant would have been following, and how it would have been improved through this method.

3.12 Limitations:

This methodology brings up very few limitations. One limitation that can be considered for future research would be the scale of sample used throughout the study, a particularly small sample had been used narrowing the research study and preventing further research further a field that is it has limited generalisability. The sample however is specified to help fulfill the aims and objectives of the study, but the size of the research and data is only used within south west Wales targeting a small sector. For future preference a larger sample would be beneficial generating a broader range of data to be assessed and monitored, also the sample experience, i.e. candidates with a minimum of three years employment within a sports organisation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter analyses and discusses the outcomes from the data collection. Each section has been categorised in accordance to the relevant themes highlighted throughout the literature review (Chapter 2). The themes have been developed to find out the value of work placements, indicating its ability to prepare students for employability once leaving higher education. The data collection consisting of two undergraduate students and one master's student who are or have been participating in a sport related degree. Three employers were chosen who have specific roles in providing and assisting students through the work placement process. The data was categorised into seven key predetermined themes and two sub themes emerged after the input from respondents had been gathered. These themes are synthesised into an examination of definition, importance and relevance, benefits of participation, barriers to learning, criticality and the standard of mentoring, the effectiveness of work placements in long term and desired changes to work placements. The key themes highlighted from the data were then critically analysed using the findings identified in the review of literature.

4.1 Definition:

All participants; both student and employer agree there is a bias towards a mixture of theoretical and practical based learning methods, employer 2 describing work experience as "Learning that provides opportunity for a student to compliment and apply their theoretical studies with real work experiences. Using both theoretical and practical based learning into this method also enables them to enhance their CV. This perspective was also articulated by *Armsby & Costley (2000)* who suggested projects usually address 'real workplace issues with which learners are involved', and they are often an extension of activities that learners are in the process of undertaking or have already planned to work on theoretically.

There is no single definition regarding work placements, the results gathered suggest anonoumously from both student and employer that work placements consists of: Theory based learning and practical based learning'. All student respondents agreed work placements enhancement of CV and create

chances for employment once leaving higher education, many similarities suggested by (Employer no.1, 2 & 3), all stating that work placements provide opportunities to 'compliment and apply their theoretical studies with real work experiences', potentially enhancing their chances of employment after the placement, and education.

In comparison *Beard, 2007, Barr, 2003 & Hamilton 1999,* all suggest there are many different types of learning; learning has a start and eventually an end, a degree for example; some might say that a degree can be classed as 'proper learning' compared to other types of learning that do not reach a certain requirement or benchmark of that quality, however work placements offer a means of 'increasing students' engagement and focus in learning'.

While it is difficult to form a common definition, the responses from students and employers indicate that formal work experience provide students with the opportunity to: understand the complexities of multi-faceted decision making in a practical context, closely link practical and theory based learning, develop the ability to learn through formal reflection (Employer 3).

4.1a value of work placements to the employer:

The data uncovered that all students believe employers benefit from the inclusion of work placements. Student 3 suggested that an intern is usually voluntary so they gain an extra worker for free and also enables a network and relationship to be set between the employer and student, potentially widening the student's network within the industry potentially enhancing their chance of employability.

Similarities between both students and employers highlight the inclusion of an extra worker within the organisation. However, a mixture of opinions had been generated through in depth questioning and answers.

Employer 2 suggests this allows employers to undertake projects they may not have the resource and manpower to deliver normally, and acts like an initial form of interview process when looking to employ. It can also strengthen the connection between employers, employee and universities.

A different approach indicated by all participating students (1, 2 and 3) suggested that gaining an initial worker within the workplace can potentially

benefit the organisation as there is no worry of financial cost due to the placement being unpaid. However the success from the extra worker is dependent upon the drive and skill set generated by the individual.

Both views combine with the review of literature suggests that gaining an initial worker within the workplace can be a beneficial aspect for the organisation, however it is entirely dependent upon the motivation and skill set of the placement student, *(Popik, 2009).*

Inductive analysis had not suggested work placements could be used in the form of an interview process, however through the data collection, deductive analysis had been used to include this opinion gathered by Employer 2.

An indication that work experience has the ability to prepare undergraduates for a career in the sports industry is evident throughout the employer's interviews, (Employer1, 2 and 3). By being able to use work experience as a form of interview, giving each student the opportunity to show employers their value to the organisation, enhancing their skill set, providing each student with the required experiences.

All students (1, 2 and 3) are agreeing the enhancement of key skill's and confidence through the placements, providing the employer with a positive reputation.

Knowledgeable and an asset to the organisation portrayed through confidence, comes punctuality and performance, (Student 2).

4.2 Essential learning – The future of work placements for sport students:

The role of work placements is to provide learning opportunities to enthusiastic students regarding graduate employment and enhance your employability once leaving higher education, *(Barr, 2004).*

Responses highlighted from students and employers both concur that there are vast the benefits of work placements, placing the student into the 'shop window' for future employers.

Employer 1 outlined that a placement gives students the opportunity to show off their key skills to future employers, and gain something no other student can gain through higher education.

Key skills can be enhanced through many different techniques. *Popik (2009)* suggests that students place a large emphasis on the experience of their work placement, gathering information and learning from mistakes, reinforcement and personal reflection.

This is particularly true when the placement has an impact on their career goals and aspirations, *(Beard, 2007).* Indications of agreement and acknowledgement shown by student 2 suggests the beneficial aspects of work placements being that they can give you chances to rectify mistakes, as your mentor can help you overcome situations you struggle with.

The employer's perspective suggests the beneficial aspects of work placements provide students with a greater understanding of what is out there in the 'real world', also determining the suitability and aptitude of the work placement itself, indicating its relevance for the student, and future students, (Employer 2 and 3).

All students agreed that 'work experience is vitally important', as it provides students with the opportunity to excel in their chosen sports career.

As stated in the review of literature by *Hager (1984)* "Working placements are foreseen as the most critical component of professional preparation that leads to employment in the sporting industry".

Similarities have been suggested by Employer no.1 "work experience is crucial for students as it provides them with real life experience that prepares them for future challenges".

4.3 Importance and relevance of work placements:

Hergert (2003) in his research involving work placements and the value it brings to both employer and student participants, suggests work placements are becoming ever more important and relevant in the higher educational system, stating how it plays a crucial role in guiding students in developing their reflective skills, potentially their networking skills with potential future employers, *(Hergert, 2009).*

A large percentage of student and employer participants agreed if work placements became compulsory it would be a positive step increasing participation and competition.

Work placements offer you a larger networking market with industry professionals along with providing the opportunity to develop, refine and acquire specific skills *(Brent Beggs & Amy R. Hurd, 2010)* agreements were established indicating work placements are becoming more influential and important for undergraduate students, assisting them with relevant experience for future employment.

The majority of results link well with all suggestions elaborated in the literature review, *Popik (2009)* suggesting students place a great value on the experience of their work placement, gathering information and learning from mistakes, reinforcement and personal reflection. However, an extremely valid suggestion from student 3 suggesting Work placements can add 'unneeded pressure' on students who are aiming at a high class degree; if this were the case, the decision would be positive dependent upon the knowledge and skill set of the placement employer.

 Employer 2 suggests "the market will dictate whether it is compulsory or not" however, still agreeing to the importance and relevance of work placements, including compulsory work placement programmes for all students within higher education.

Employer 3 suggests that the move to compulsory working placements is desirable as it gives students further opportunity; however it is not 'essential', suggesting work placements might not enhance a student's employment opportunity if they do become compulsory.

 The results indicate that a balance between both theory and practical working placements will need to be established, from the establishment the ability of work placements enhancing all students' employability will potentially increase. Both employers and students agreed to a mixed view of the relevance and the reliability of compulsory working placements.

4.4 Benefits of participating in work placements:

It was identified from all student participants that the experience provides opportunities and benefits to all parties. There was a correlation between the two undergraduate students and the employers perception regarding who in their opinion the experienced benefited more so.

The findings from the primary research undertaken with students and employers all identified work experience enhances the development of key skills; Student 3 suggesting communication skills, self-confidence and working within a team are all improved through participating in the work placement. Other secondary aspects indicated by student 2 include 'self-discovery' and being able to adapt to real life situations that cannot be attained through higher education. Results from the interview process have been developed through the review of literature. The value of work experience for students and the benefits this brings to potential employers is universally accepted, *(Fayeun, 2013)* but too few employers currently offer opportunities to those young people who genuinely seek work experience,

Similarities have been generated through the employers perspective and review of literature, it has been agreed that key skills are enhanced through working placements. However, throughout the interview process, a variety of views were suggested; (Employer 1, 2 and 3) suggested that a large benefit of work placements is that they offer to 'understand the students point of view, therefore helping assist future learning programmes':

 Employer 3 suggesting an element of work placements and the experience it provides can assist you globally; however placements need further development to ensure maximum benefit for student and employer providing them the opportunity to work within the UK and overseas. Linking the results with the literature review, it has been suggested by both *Vicary, (2005) & Hergert (2009)* that work placements are 'even more important' than college work.

Fanthome (2004) suggests employers wish to have students that can make an immediate contribution to the running of the organisation. However, views by the *Arts Council England (2010)* explain tasks should not put unneeded pressure on the student and should not be of great importance which could result in devastating consequences to the business if the student is unsuccessful, also identified by student 3 stating work placements can place unneeded pressure if not managed professionally.

 However, there are many beneficial aspects to work placements, its ability to prepare undergraduates for future careers in the sports industry is highlighted

through its ability to enhance all key skills and provide experiences to students that are not possible to attain in higher education, therefore agreed upon in the literature review suggesting work placements offer you a 'larger networking market with industry professionals', the opportunity to develop, refine and acquire specific skills, also opportunities for learning that cannot be taught in the classroom*, Beggs & Hurd, (2010)* also highlighting an important element of learning that is unique and can be used as a tool in gaining employment over less 'experienced' candidates.

4.5 Barriers to learning:

The section identifies the potential barriers that face students throughout their placements. The majority of students (Student 2 and 3) both agree working unpaid does affect them, student 2 emphasises "in this [sport] industry and current economy, you have to work unpaid to potentially reach the top and create opportunities for employment", indicating students regard placements as an investment. The responses correspond with *Ball, Pollard and Stanley (2011)* who identified that due to a reduction in the number of people employed in a sector, the recession places pressure on students to be creative in the way they invest in activities that will enhance their employability, i.e. working without any financial cost to the business.

The unpaid status of work placements has not affected student 1 due to family wealth and financial support, and in this scenario there is a niche that are able to cope without financial funding.

Student 2 suggests the need to attain another job 'irrelevant' to the desired career path, only to support him financially, combining fluently with the review of literature stating the need to continue with part-time paid employment was the only option, also affecting the type of placement they can find in their own locality, *(Little 2006).*

All students used in the data collection agreed that a rewarding scheme would motivate more students to participate in work placements: Student 3 suggests it would be beneficial, it will push people to increase their effort levels within the placement, potentially enabling people to 'further their knowledge' by purchasing equipment or attending courses, highlighting its ability in

enhancing employment opportunities through added experience and knowledge.

All opinions gathered from each employer have their own unique approach regarding the unpaid status of work experience, each employer agreeing that it is beneficial to have an extra worker within the organisation, particularly when there is no financial burden overlooking them, making placements very difficult to attain regarding a students financial situation. However employer 2 suggests If the placement is centered on a 'learning experience' then there should be no issue with the placement being unpaid, just like going to university is unpaid.

Other opinions gathered by employer 1 and 3 suggest that the nature of the economy seems to require people to undergo unpaid work to gain relevant experience.

The barriers highlighted indicate certain restrictions placed upon students who participate in unpaid placements as this prevents them from attaining a financial income. However, employer 2 suggests by gaining relevant experience, sacrifice have to be made whether this is participating in placements that require travel or are unpaid. However the benefits preparing each student for their future in their desired career path may outweigh the sacrifice.

4.5a Rewarding scheme:

The rewarding scheme is an initiative targeted at student participants, which can potentially creating a competitive environment within all placements. Employers believe this method can be used as a motivational tool increasing awareness of work placements, also providing incentives and adding extra value for participation.

Other opinions agreed by employer 1, 2 and 3 suggesting students gain rewards through the experience and making themselves employable.

The need for 'financial rewards' is not all essential as the learning experience gained through the placement is a reward in itself, referring back to the suggestion indicated by employer 2 that unpaid status is not a big issue that needs to be changed any time in the near future, therefore the issue can be

targeted at educating the students on the value of experience and how it is both regarded by employers, in contrast to just an academically driven program.

4.6 Critical components - Standard of mentoring:

Students who have been exposed to practical scenarios adapted and performed accordingly throughout their placements; however, this would be measured on the standard of their mentors. Evidence provided in the literature review indicated students had received 'no training' at all during their placement, whether this be one-to-one feedback sessions or group discussions, *Little & Harvey (2006).*

The information suggested by student participants indicates more attention needs to be directed towards the structure of the monitoring process. All student participants agreeing the standard of their mentoring had not been up to their expectations. *Olk (2010)* indicates mentoring is vital for a student's preparation and learning experience. If the information provided by their teachers have no appropriateness then the whole scheme of the placement will be worthless. More research has to be taken to perfect the monitoring process.

A range of opinions had been gathered from each employer participant, (Employer 1, 2 & 3) suggested "Without mentoring the whole programme wouldn't be viable". The data gathered links fluently within the review of literature, employer 3 suggesting it is essential for the student and mentor to have a positive working relationship and are able to openly discuss certain topics regarding the placement.

Hergert (2009) expressed a similar opinion on the matter concerning the importance of relationships, suggesting one of the most important aspects of a working placement is the relationship between colleagues.

The results highlight the need for improvement within the mentoring process, initially not the structural format but the reliance on the relationship between mentor and student. *Hergert (2009) & Keech (2005)* both suggesting it is essential that contact be maintained with employers throughout the year and

not just during the period of the placement, enhancing communication, trust and reliability.

4.7 Work placements in the long term – employment opportunities:

Through all data collection gathered, all students and employer participants agree; due to the lack of research and development through work placements, there have been no employment opportunities while participating in their work placements. Student 1 stated he had received employment opportunities; however the opportunity presented itself outside of higher education and the working placement, suggesting urgently that there is a need for improvement, whether this is advertisement or financial incentives drawing more students towards the placement opportunities.

Olk (2010) suggests the majority of the research underpinned on work placements has typically focused on 'only a small sector of the overall process '. Also despite its popularity and unique historical background, little is known about its effectiveness and value in its preparation for future development. Employer 1 agrees with the statement suggested by Olk, indicating more research is needed and for smaller placements, a larger emphasis on 'advertisement and promotional tools'.

The study has been targeted specifically on sport undergraduates, elaborating that the information required does not justify all aspects of work placements and all its opportunities.

4.8 Suggested areas for improvement:

The findings of the current study suggested all student participants agreed that there is a lack of publicity within all university campuses around the Cardiff area.

Student 2 suggests he found his work placement out of '*chance*' and searching for experience; "publicity within the university campus was non-existent".

All student participants suggested that the need for government funding is essential, not initially for their benefit, but for the increase in placement

standards, also generating connections with local/national universities providing opportunity for all higher educational students. This can be related in the literature review indicating minimal knowledge regarding the effectiveness and value of work placements, requiring a higher percentage of research into its ability to prepare talented students, *(Olk, 2010).*

The inclusion of government funding is essential for the growth of work placements, not particularly to assist student participants in their placement, but for further research into its ability to prepare higher educational students for their future within the sports industry.

The data collection gathered by each employer participant indicates a more in-depth and opinionated view, in comparison to the students perception.

All participants agree that the inclusion of financial incentives, (i.e. travel expenses, food costs) towards all programmes of work placements would be in preparing not just students for future career, but the preparation and a positive step forward for work placements in sport.

Employer 2 suggests "Universities need to improve and provide a robust assessment process for the work placement component so that it formally forms part of the student's degree and provides greater structure to this component". Thus suggesting work placements can be added to the assessment process, making it a larger part of higher education, resynthesising the link between employers within university programmes.

The opinions suggested by *(Beard, Barr & Olk)* indicate there are still improvements required within the experience of work placements, however, its ability to prepare undergraduate still becomes dependent upon the quality of the actual placement.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter provides a structured conclusion to the dissertation, specifically evaluating the original objectives and analyzing if they have been address within the research project.

The main objectives of this study were to explore:

- The value work placements bring to the student and employer
- The role of work placements
- Barriers to learning – unpaid status
- Mentoring process
- Employment opportunities– student / employer

The research question stated throughout the literature review can be accepted through both definitions between *Beard & Barr (2009).*

5.2 The value work placements bring to the student and employer

Conclusions can be drawn that work placements provide value to both student and employer enhancing key skills and confidence for future employment, therefore minimalising the differentiation in transition between higher education and employability.

5.3 The role of work placements

Research within the literature review suggests students have a greater chance of employability if they participate in a work placement, potential employers seek students with relevant experience, evidence provided by *Brassie (2010),* However, one respondent identified that not all students have the financial backing to work unpaid, which for future research, needs to have a contingency in providing opportunities.

5.9 Mentoring process

The analysis of the data identified that there is a need for improvement in the monitoring process for the future development of students, providing all individuals with sufficient and reliable information.

The main findings indicate that work experience requires more attention and investment from higher educational systems; whether this be promoting, advertising and publishing all programmes on offer to students, preparing them adequately for future employment within the sports industry.

5.10   Barriers to learning – unpaid status

Some of the respondents identified that they would like to see the inclusion of financial incentives, increasing awareness and popularity of work placements. However, the task of gaining sponsorship or initial funding targeted towards work placements will need to be taken into consideration. Further research will be required to look at potential to increase participation and keep the sustainability of work placements.

5.6 Employment opportunities– student / employer

The relationships created with employers and the networking opportunities created through work placements are essential for a students preparation, however this brings uncertainty and un-predictableness, whether it is a work placement within (SME's) or larger firms, the success of the scheme is dependent upon the level of professionalism produced by the mentor; findings by employer 1, 2 and 3 suggest without mentors participating in work placement's, paid or at voluntary level, the program will not be feasible, however the mentors all have relevant experience and qualifications.

5.7 Additional emerging themes:

There were many reoccurring themes identified throughout this study. These themes consisted of defining work placement, the importance of work placements, student benefits, barriers to learning consisting of the unpaid status and the mentoring process, how critical work placements are for future

employment and any indications to whether work placements are effective in the long term for employability.

Reflection from work placements was also revealed to be an important component of the experience in order for students to identify personal key strengths and weaknesses enabling them to improve performance in future scenarios *(Matthews & Zimmerman, 1999).*

5.8 Future research:

To enable future researchers to elaborate on this study, further recommendations have been emphasized to provide an enhanced critique of results and a greater accuracy of future information *(Swetnam & Swetnam, 2009).*

A major finding through analysis has been highlighted, indicating all undergraduate students' opinionated view on work placements have come prematurely. Due to the scale of study, a greater opportunity to find relevant information would be interviewing the candidates once they have gained a minimum of three years' experience within a sports industry and increasing the number of interviews provided, providing a broader analysis of the chosen study.

Due to small sample selection, for future preference the researcher would interview post student candidates who have attained over three years' experience, who potentially could provide greater and more relevant information regarding work placements and its ability to prepare students for a future career in within the sports industry.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Figure 1. Typology of Students' Responses Regarding the Internship Experience
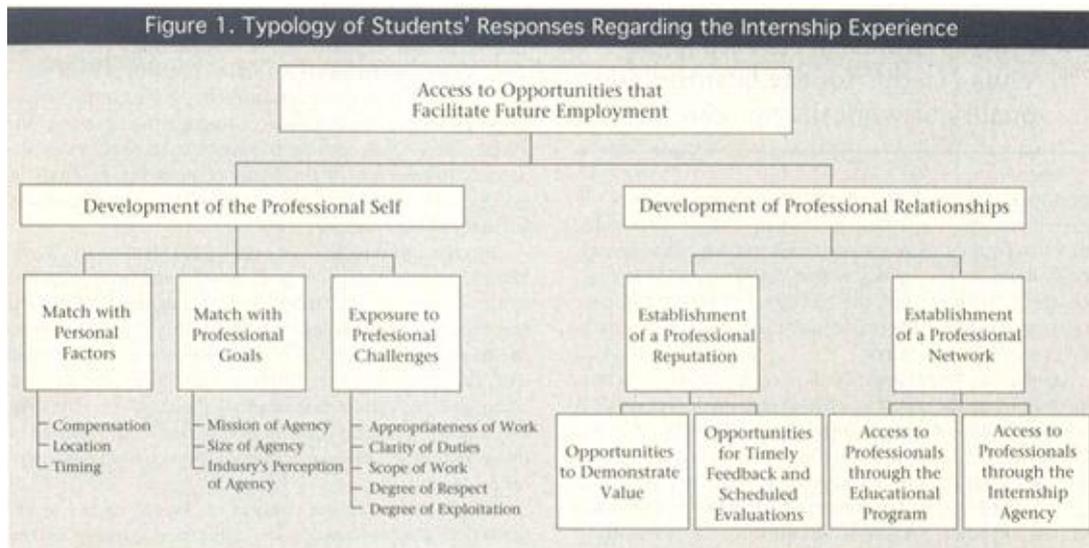
This table provides the reader with a further insight to a model of work based learning, and the student's perception and response to the experience, along with the outcomes if successful.

APPENDIX B

Definition & outline of WBL	1. **There are many different definitions explaining work based learning, however, what would your definition of work based learning be?** 1a. **What value does work based learning bring to the employer?**	• Theory or practical based learning? • Mention of skills: communication, decision making, working with others, problem solving etc.
Essential learning	2. **In your experience what roles do work placements play in the future of individuals seeking sport management related jobs?**	• Experience & confidence… • Puts them in shop window?

Importance and relevance of WBL	3. What are your thoughts on work based learning being a compulsory learning process for students who seek their desired jobs?	Suggested by *Brassie (2010)* *70% of employers would prefer graduate students with relevant work experience and more than 85% of employers prefer to take on the students who have worked for the company previously, highlighting the importance of participating in a working placement".* • What are your thoughts on this statement? • So you have suggested that…
Benefits of participating in WBL	4. How have you benefited from participating in your work placement?	• Specific examples if possible: *Self confidence, people skills, real life situations, anything that you would not be able to achieve by studying courses in higher education.* • Be specific… key skills – problem solving, info and communication, technology, working with others… • Any skills you have not

		improved on/lost?
Potential barriers	**5. While you participated in your work placement, did/does the unpaid status of the work placement affect you in any way?** **5a. What are your thoughts on a rewarding scheme within working placements?**	There are barriers to participation in all aspects of work; however, a barrier to a minority of the population is due to the 'unpaid' status of work based learning, therefore students are unable to gain the work experience, and work in a paid environment which is non-specific towards their degree programme*. There have been calls for creative graduates to be even more 'resourceful and willing to work unpaid' (Ball, Pollard, and Stanley 2010,11).* • Financially, unable to afford bills, food etc… • Emotionally, drained due to stress • Rewards from a small cash sum to job opportunities…

Critical components	**6. What are your beliefs in relation with this statement?**	*Hager et al (1984) "Work experience is one of the most critical components of professional preparation that leads to employment in the sport industry, potentially any industry which requires a high level of skill and commitment".* • How did this prepare you for your job? • Did the placement develop your skills? • How committed were you?

Critical components	7. What are/were your thoughts on the criticality of your mentor/boss monitoring your progress? Giving you advice, guidance to prepare you for future opportunities within sporting organisations?	• Yes- how did your mentor assist and help you? • So you are suggesting… • Was there any structure with your mentor? • Daily/weekly/monthly? • Semi structure…
Conclusion & opportunities	8. Have there been any sport related employment opportunities since participating in the work placement? 8a. what changes (if any) to the work based learning programmes would like to see, to potentially give	• So you are suggesting… • Review session's weekly/monthly? • More government funding?

	undergraduates a greater opportunity of employment once leaving higher education?	

Draft interview questions both directed at student and employer participants.

APPENDIX C

Dear Student/Employer,

I am writing to you regarding a dissertation study that will be finding out the value of work placements and its ability to prepare undergraduates for future jobs within the sporting sector, along with the employer's view of work placements and how it benefits their organisation.

The researcher is currently seeking three undergraduate/masters students that have experience within sport related work placements, and three employers/mentors of organisations that give these opportunities to students seeking experience.

The study will consist of a short interview process, approximately 10 to 20 minutes in length, asking in depth (semi structured) questions regarding the value and importance of this method of learning.

Only one interview will be needed for this study, all information received from student and employer will remain private and confidential.

If you are able to contact me via email, that would be much appreciated:

Jamesrussell@hotmail.co.uk

Sign of consent:………………

Participants signature: ……………. Date: ………….

Researchers signature: ……………. Date: …………

APPENDIX D

Date: 17th March 2014

To : James Thomas Russell

Project reference number:

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of 29th May 2013.

Yours sincerely

Chris Jennings

D2

APPENDIX E

Student and Employer

This table indicates the course each student participant studies and what industry the employers

Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Sports Coaching	Strength and conditioning	Management

Employer 1	Employer 2	Employer 3
Llandovery college	Welsh Rugby Union	Bedwas RFC

APPENDIX F

Results and Discussion from Interviews

Themes highlighted

- Definition and outline of Work placements (Q1 – 1a.)
- Essential learning (Q2)
- Importance and relevance of work placements (Q3)
- Benefits of participating in work placements (Q4)
- Potential barriers (Q5 – 5a.)
- Critical components (Q6 – 7)
- Conclusion and opportunities (Q8 – 8a.)

STUDENTS INTERVIEW COLLECTION

Theme	Student no.1 (Sports Coaching)	Student no.2 (S & C)	Student no.3 (Management)
1. Definition and outline of Work placements	• **Definition of work placements:** Work based learning is where you are able to gather information, weather it be in sport coaching or management, through practical workshops, and perform the information given to you through real life	• **Definition of work placements:** Work based learning would probably be a place where I'm learning about the job in hand, but in regards working towards a goal as well. Also linking practical and theory based learning together.	• **Definition of work placements:** Gaining a work placement in a field similar to the one you are studying or have an interest in to gain a better understanding of what it requires, as well as something to put on the CV to enhance chances of

	scenarios or assessed situations. However theory based learning is essential in all aspects of work experience. • **Values work placements bring to the employer:** problem solving under pressure and in situations that would not arise within a lecture theatre, communication skills and confidence improved while participating at my work placement, gives a huge amount of value to the employer as they are able to trust you in front of customers and potential sponsors etc… working with others.	• **Values work placements bring to the employer:** Communication skills keeps improving, showing the knowledge and understanding to be able to teach specific tasks and have the trust of the employer. Knowledgeable and an asset to the organisation. Through confidence, comes punctuality and performance. Employer is gaining an extra worker for free which can help the employer in more ways than one.	gaining employment. • **Values work placements bring to the employer:** An intern is usually voluntary so they gain an extra worker for free, also enables a network to be set between the employer and employee, the employee may also bring new ideas that may help in the future

2. Essential Learning	• **Roles of work placements for the future of sport students**: Work based learning has given student no.1 many contacts and a wider network. The essential learning puts you in the shop window for organisations related to your work placement, preparing you for potential interviews.	• **Roles of work placements for the future of sports students:** The role of a work placement is to guide you forward's, for any individual in any placement, and experience real life situations, and by dealing with them correctly, the confidence will build, therefore becoming more productive. They also give you chances to rectify mistakes, as your mentor can help you in situations you struggle with. The role of WBL is to put you in the shop window for future opportunities within sport management/conditio ning/coaching roles.	• **Roles of work placements for the future of sports students:** gain a good job to place on a CV which proves experience in the field as well as a good reference that will back up the persons involved. Also provides confidence that they are competent in the areas needed.

| 3. Importance and relevance of Work placements | • **Work placements becoming compulsory:**
The relevance of work based learning is now at its highest, if you have relevant work experience within the organisation or any type of relevant work experience, you should be taken on by the employer.

If work based learning became compulsory, the whole benchmark and standard of knowledge and experience between all students in the UK would rise, causing work placements not to have the same effect on employers as their expectations on students would change, and look for other aspects into a students skill set and experience. So in my opinion, yes it would | • **Work placements becoming compulsory:**
Students need work experience these days more than ever due to the sheer competition, you can have a degree these days but a degree does not challenge your practical and life skills as frequently as work based learning.

That would be great, to have a WBL compulsory, 100% spot on, some people, if not the majority of people do not know their desired jobs.
Where as I gained experience in my university to move onto another work placement to gain further experience in the same sector (Strength and conditioning).
Their does become a | • **Work placements becoming compulsory:**
Add's unneeded pressure on students trying to gain a good level degree by taking a lot of time out of their schedule, also can divert attention from studies. However a lot can be learnt that can aid studies but is dependent on how good the employer is at passing their knowledge. |

	be great to see work based learning become compulsory, however It would bring more competition between students and the satisfaction of participating in a work placement, gaining employment from that will soon die if the overload in work placements rises.	small pressure built up on students if they have to undergo their university studies, and take part in a work placement, for some it could be a controversial effect.	
4. **Benefits of participating in work placements**	• **Benefits of work placements:** Self confidence improved, working with individuals I have never spoken to before gave me great confidence in myself, also keeping to a system and programme helped my time management. Real life situations have benefited me tremendously, something you aren't able to get within the university campus and	• **Benefits of work placements:** My key skills have improved, coaching skills, decision making, communication and authority within the environment. All of the key skills have prepared me for the future in the strength and conditioning industry. When you are put in such an environment, you automatically learn, it forces you to learn, but as I wanted to learn it became	• **Benefits of work placements:** Have gained a great level of confidence throughout the placement. I have also gained hands on experience and self-discovery learning by being chucked in the 'deep end'. I have been able to reflect upon and learn how to react if a similar situation were to arise.

	lectures. All the students' key skills have improved.	second nature. Technological advantages such as learning how to use analytical devices such as 'sports code'. Preparing me for jobs which need participants to master.	
5. Barriers to learning	• **Unpaid status** : Did not effect student no.1, parents supplied him with source of income. Candidate states it would affect some other individuals without any other source of income. • **Reward Scheme:** A great scheme to have, I am sure they have something like that within the organisation I did my work placement, giving individuals full time roles if the employer thought they had something to offer. Rewarding schemes	• **Unpaid status:** Yes It does affect me quite a lot. You have to agree with the terms that, within strength and conditioning in Wales, if you want to be strength and conditioning coach, you have to sacrifice time and effort: work unpaid. To be able to afford to live along side the placement, you need to find another job outside of the placement that pays, but finding it hard to give 100% to the paid work as I want to give	• **Unpaid status:** Yes, some parts of the work placement had an affect. Early mornings and tedious jobs have to be done are hard to keep motivated for when it's only for personal gain in knowledge. Possible finance incentives would give me more motivation to attend early morning sessions to benefit my knowledge and understanding; therefore this would make the sacrifice of my own time easier. • **Rewards**

	motivate individuals to work harder.	all my effort to the voluntary work. Motivation has been low recently due to lack of funding and source of income. • **Reward Scheme:** This would give students motivation to participate in work placements.	**Scheme:** A rewarding scheme would be great as it would push people to increase their effort levels within the placement, especially mine. With financial rewards possibly enabling people to further their knowledge by purchasing equipment and attending courses. Or even by making travel costs less, helping out with finances causing less of a burden on individuals trying to gain experience and knowledge.
6. Critical components *Hager et al (1984) Work experience is one of the most critical components of professional preparation that leads to employment in the sport industry, potentially any industry*	• **Beliefs with the statement:** Work experience is vital, not just for students, but for anyone who seeks a job within the sport coaching/management sector. They suggest work experience is the	• **Beliefs with the statement:** I blieve You need to volunteer, even if it is for work experience. No one can just rock up to a highly paid job, you need experience in todays climate. Preperation is critical	• **Beliefs with the statement:** To an extent it is very true, however in personal experience I have needed to use knowledge gained from reading and attending lectures to provide me with the

which requires a high level of skill and commitment	most critical components of professional preparation and commitment is vital for students and employers.	for all students studying and participating in WBL.	reasoning and answers in specific situations, therefore a strong balance is needed between the theory and practical side of things. There is a lot that can be gained from just a work placement that cannot be gained in lectures or through reading such as commitment and dealing with pressured situations.
7. **Critical Components**	• **Standard of mentoring:** It could have been better. Emails regularly and once a week the mentor would call updating on the weekly events and ask the student how he/she felt the placement was going. This can be reassuring. Monthly meetings face to face would take place to assess improvements and areas to work on.	• **Standard of mentoring:** I would like my boss to be more critical of my actions within the placement. They are very open to their opinion to me and I feel comfortable to ask them any questions regarding strength and conditioning. We have only reviewed my progress once this year and am not sure	• **Standard of mentoring:** To start with they were very critical and I learnt a lot, through styles of teaching, speech, and body language. However, further into the placement it was more of a self-discovery through shadowing that I learnt any more, so indirectly I was learning however the mentor was not really directly helping my progress, by having

		when the next reviewing session will be, so communication needs to improve.	any one on one explanation and reviewing of my progress. Down to my own will power to learn techniques.
8. **Conclusion & opportunities**	• **Any employment opportunities while participating in placement:** Not as yet, concentrating on the placement at the moment, small job opportunities but no large firm opportunities**.** The main positive had been networking and picking up sources of contacts in sports coaching. • **Any changes to working placements you would bring in:** Mentors pay more attention to the student. Compulsory weekly meetings with student	• **Any employment opportunities while participating in placement:** Yes, due to my work ethic, they have referred me to a Wales 7s conditioning coach job if I am to stay next year. • **Any changes to working placements you would bring in:** More links between the universities. Have not witnessed or heard any work placement opportunities within the university campus whilst studying in higher education. I found my work placement out of	• **Any employment opportunities while participating in placement:** No particular employment opportunities as of yet. However previous interns to the work placement I am now undergoing have gained employment. • **Any changes to work placements you would bring in:** Financial incentives would be a main issue such as by government funding to take away the pressure of travel and lack of

and mentor. Phone calls and emails to a minimum. A more positive link between universities and placements. Believes that more government funding will increase the standard of grades throughout UK and increase standard of work placements and productivity amongst students.	chance and searching for experience, publicity within the university campus was non existent. Also if the government or companies aren't going to pay students for working placements, travel expenses should be arranged (Some placements do).	commitment. Also an emphasis to the employer to give the employee the best opportunities they can get to further their learning and experience. Larger link with university.

Theme	Employer no.1	Employer no.2	Employer no.3
1. **Definition and outline of work placements**	• **Definition of work placements:** Gaining a work placement in a field somewhat similar to the one you are studying or have an interest in to gain higher knowledge and understanding in the specific field. Also this type of learning is great to enhance your CV for future employment. • **Values of work**	• **Definition of work placements:** Provides using both theory a practical based learning into this method. also enables them to enhance their CV for future employers. • **Values of work placements to employer:** Allows the employer to undertake projects they may not have the resource and	• **Definition of work placements:** The opportunity to understand the complexities of multi faceted decision making in a practical context. • **Values of work placements to employer:**

	placements to employer: It shows other students seeking work placements that the employer give students the opportunity to excel within their desired career path, enhancing their key skill base; Problem solving, people skills, decision making. But not just the key sills, it widens their network within the field of work, gaining vital contacts that can help the students in their career in the future. As for many students, it is all about who you know.	manpower to deliver normally. And finally, it acts as an extended and more effective interview process when looking to employ into new positions. Giving the employer a positive name and image as he is able to give students opportunities to show off their skillset and generate a network to future employers	The opportunity to assess possible future employees within the orgaisation, strengthening the connection with universities and students.

2. **Essential Learning**	• **Roles of work placements for the future of sport students**: Work placements give students the opportunity to show off their skills and attributes to future employers in the specific field of work. It can also put students in situations that benefit them that they will not get in higher education, real life scenarios along with help from there mentor like myself.	• **Roles of work placements for the future of sport students**: The whole purpose of the work placement is to give these students a better understanding of what is out there in the 'real world'. Work experiecnce has always been more critical than in any other industry as the sports and lesiure industry has traditionally had an over supply of labour. I would say this has now progresses to the point where it is now absolutely critical to have some work experience for job seekers in the industry.	• **Roles of work placements for the future of sport students**: Work placements can be useful in helping determine suitability and aptitude of not just the work placement, but the quality of students applying for the placements provided.

3. **Importance and relevance of work placements** Suggested by *Brassie (2010) 70% of employers would prefer graduate students with relevant work experience and more than 85% of employers prefer to take on the students who have worked for the company previously, highlighting the importance of participating in a working placement".*	• **Work placements becoming compulsory:** I agree with the statement provided. Employers look for students who have sacrificed themselfes and taken time out to undergo work experience, not many graduates these days go straight into full time employment who have not taken part in work experience or something that influences and better's their degree. Work based learning becoming compulsory will be great for the educational system, however, students must balance both higher education and work exeprience. If work experience	• **Work placements becoming compulsory:** The market will dictate whether it is compulsory or not. With the historic and current over supply of labour in this industry it is by effect compulsory. so yes i do agree with the statement.	• **Work placements becoming compulsory:** It would be desirable as this gives students a greater chance of employment in the future but is not essential.

	outweighs their degree, the student will end up with a poor degree, visa versa.		
4. **Benefits of participating in work placements**	• **Benefits of work placements:** By understanding the stuedents point of view really helps the employer/mentor plan their programme, also gives you a thought process of both sides of the story, coming from the students perspective and employers perspective. Personally my people skills have been enhanced, being able to lead and teach students through their expeirnece within the placement have improved	• **Benefits of work placements:** We would not have been able to undertake projects at a Premiership Club/Regional level if we didn't have additional manpower that we have recruited through work placements.	• **Benefits of work placements:** Ours has been an initial and experimental project and needs further development to ensure maximum benefit for students and the organization involved. However I do agree that work placements are universally accepted and known, giving students the opportunity to travel the work and work within their desired field of work.

	throughout the programme, and the satisfaction of helping students gain further employment is something that means a great deal to me.		
5. Barriers to learning *There are barriers to participation in all aspects of work; however, a barrier to a minority of the population is due to the 'unpaid' status of work based learning, therefore students are unable to gain the work experience, and work in a paid environment which is non-specific towards their degree programme. There have been calls for creative graduates to be even more 'resourceful and willing to work unpaid' (Ball, Pollard, and Stanley 2010,11).*	• **Unpaid status:** For an employer like myself, this is a benefit as we have an extra worker within the organisation that costs nothing. I understand that this can be a negative aspect for students as they have minimal finances, however sacrifice has to be made if they want their desired career, and a way to show the employer that they are worth	• **Unpaid status:** It depends on the nature of the work placement. If it is centred around it being a learning experience for the student then I don't have any issue with it being unpaid, just like going to University is unpaid. However, if a placement is just dressed up as such and really the student is undertaking normal work while getting very	• **Unpaid status:** The nature of modern economy seems to require people to undergo unpaid work in order to gain relevant experience. • **Rewarding scheme:** I think it would create potential difficulties if an element of discretion were introduced to allow

	employing is by undergoing work experience unpaid and putting 100% into their work.	little learning in return then it shouldn't be labelled as a work placement and should then fall under normal employment law.	"paid or non paid" placements.
		This whole thing needs to be governed and controlled by the University to protect their students.	
	• **Rewarding scheme:** For students this is a great motivational tool, any type of rewards are bonuses and this can give students an incentive to undergo work placements, and gives it a more competitive feel, competition is vital and pushes students forward. However from an employers perspective, a rewarding scheme can be an irritant, dependant upon the scale of the reward. Within my organisation, we	• **Rewarding scheme:** The reward works both ways, in that the student is rewrded through a great learning experience and should make themselves more employable at the end of it. I think a financially rewarding scheme could be introduced in conjunction with the Universities also contributing	

	reward good work with free meals at the end of each month, for interns/ students, we do not reward them with financial rewards.	financially.	
6. Critical components *Hager et al (1984) Work experience is one of the most critical components of professional preparation that leads to employment in the sport industry, potentially any industry which requires a high level of skill and commitment*	• **Beliefs with this statement:** I do believe work experiene is a critical component for students who seek their desired career path, giving them experience in real life sitiations and preparing them, individually for the future, in whatever career it may be, enhancing their people skills, confidence and decision making: not just for the student, but also for the employer and mentor involved within the	• **Beliefs with this statement:** I Agree with the statement provided, University won't prepare you for the unique intracicies of working in industries such as sports and lesiure. Examples of this are: • Relationship management • Empathy • Emotional intelligence	• **Beliefs with this statement:** Its hardly rocket science. Work experience can come from a variety of different sources however.

	programme.		
7. Critical Components	• **Standard of monitoring:** Dependant upon the programme scheme, how it runs within my orgaisation is that the mentor monitors the student daily and gives the student feedback weekly. Once a month I sit down with the student and go through what improvements are needed (if any) and highlight the positives. And when needed, the mentor gives the student assistance and help if need be, ofcourse if they are struggling or are unsure of what to do in certain situations, there will be assisstance	• **Standard of monitoring:** I think this is vital, without mentoring the whole programme wouldnt be viable. The more mentoring the student can receive the better, as the student will be working with full time professionals who understand the trade and what actions to take in certain situations.	• **Standard of monitoring:** We are barely one quarter way through the placement. Too early to assess. However, for the students benefit it is essential that student and mentor have a good working relationship and are able to discuss certain topics that are relevant to the work placement.

	provided. I feel my mentoring is helpful, pushing them in the right direction weather it be ways to approach clients, take criticism. There preperation is key for their future career, and by giving past students references to future employers I feel is great.		
8. **Conclusion and opportunities**	• **Any employment opportunities while participating in placement:** Our advertisement for working placements has been minimal due to finance, however, through social media such as twitter, facebook, our programme has been put out their, and through our college	• **Any employment opportunities while participating in placement:** Yes, since the introduction of a well structured programme ther has been an increase in demand for this work placement. it attract's many students who are based within welsh and english universities. One of our	• **Any employment opportunities while participating in placement:** No, no opportunities have risen since the work placement has taken place.

	and higher educational system is where most of our demand has been generated. Our demand has not been as high as expected but hopefully in the near future the publicity will increase and through feedback from students and higher educational systems, this will increase in time. • **Any changes to work placements you would bring in:** Students would like to see financial incentives, and this can be developed by government funding, this can take away some for the pressure on travel and commitment. Possibly a larger	students this year is based in loughborough which indicates to you the scale and popularity of the scheme thus far. • **Any changes to work placements you would bring in:** Universities providing greater opportunity to advertise the work placements and chance to get in front of the students to present to them. Some Universities do this much better than others. Universities to provide a robust assessment process for the work placement component so that it formally forms part of the student's degree and provides greater	• **Any changes to work placements you would bring in:** As stated, we are barely a quarter of the way through the placement so to have an opinion in what to change would be very difficult. A possible initial funding from government sources and the opportunity to advertise the placement through college and school systems would be a huge benefit for it.

	emphasis on publicity for work placements (personally) I do agree that other work placements have the financial capabilities to brand their placements, however for the work placement here, more backing from the government would be something the work based learning programme needs.	structure to this compenent. Help from government would also be a great bonus.	

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