**BUILDING WORK READINESS AND PROFESSIONALISM BY NETWORKING,
PROBLEM SOLVING AND BUILDING BELONGING
a Case Study by HUGO SMITH**

❶ **In which subject was your case study used?**	
Creative Technologies, Leeds School of Arts	
❷ **How many** students has your work/example involved?	
100	
❸ **How long** have you been doing this work for?	
Seven years (approximately)	
❹ Was it **designed into** the course originally **or** added in and **subsequently embedded**? Explain in relation to your work	
The module was added as an elective to improve employability for students at the start of their final year when they otherwise might be putting off thinking about industrial work in favour of finishing their University assessments. So, an embedded module that was developed at the first re-validation/re-structure of the course after it began, approximately 12 years ago.	
❺ **What was the aim** of your work?	
To improve detailed knowledge in a specific area of industrial practice through study. But more than that the module has a two-fold approach: to develop and reward professionalism in 'looking out' towards the workplace, thereby developing potential for quick development of networks of contacts in broadcasting. And to give students a specific reason to approach the people they would like to work with/areas they might want to work in, as engaged and work-ready individuals. This direct contact, through work shadowing and informal 'interviews' about industrial practice is designed to grow and embed genuine relationships for students with broadcasting workers that might – and often have – lead to work and speedy career development.	
❻ What was the **main purpose** of this work and **how does it link to the** course and module learning **outcomes**?	

The purpose is:
1. To show students that practice in technology areas develops fast and there may be skills that are relevant but not evident in library resources.
2. To make meaningful personal contacts with those working in industry and whom they'd like to work with
3. To get to develop -and highlight – their readiness for work to those who might be peers or who might hire them after graduation before they graduate.

The approach links directly to Module Learning Outcomes:

LO1 Acquire self-development skills necessary to plan and launch a career as an independent broadcast worker

LO2 Develop networks and examine industrial and commercial practice through research and industrial contact.

LO3 Grow awareness of the fast-changing professional environment in the media industries and be able adapt to industrial change with resilience and innovation.

And course learning outcomes:

- To develop a systematic understanding of key aspects of pre-production, production and post-production in the area of broadcast media and associated technologies.
- To develop and research original ideas, then communicate and manage production workflow and responsibilities to format these creative concepts into broadcast content.
- To critically review established techniques of analysis and design that encompass internationally recognised standards to add value to broadcast content.
- To encourage professional development and personal growth through regular engagement with critical reflection on professional practice, including the contributions and performance of self and others when team-working.
- To independently undertake research and critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete) and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution, or identify a range of solutions, to problems.
- To construct a portfolio of practical work demonstrating practical broadcast-related skills and employability that facilitates appropriate transition between academic study and the industrial workplace.

7 What academic **level** are the students? Why is it most suitable/suited for them?

L6 – Because they need to be thinking about transition from study to workplace and preparation of professional mindset. And because the relationships developed here give the confidence to approach professionals after they have graduated, as well as building relationships that can lead to work from the study on this module.

8 Does your case study relate to any of the **literature** outlined in the introductory literature review? (Maybe pick no more than 2-3 strong links)?

9 Is your work **embedded** into a module/throughout a course?

It is the main thrust of Broadcast Industry Practice at L6 but also develops skills that can be put to use in the second semester module Business and Enterprise in Media, where students need to plan a graduate business/freelance practice and engage clients to complete work for them.

10 Was your work **assessed**? **How**?Does this assessment **build on** any of the key themes?

Portfolio presentation for first assessment point to a panel of academics and careers team members.

Report/Podcast presentation for the second component of assessment

The use of careers staff and portfolio presentation allows students control of what and how they present, while engaging them face-to-face with key staff in the University who can benefit them and allows for their public persona to be professionalised before reaching into industry.

The second component promotes critical thinking as well as confidence in growing networks and contacting employers/future peers.

11 **Main theme:**
What did your work do to maximise your students' sense of belonging?
Can you outline how it impacted on academic and social belonging and how?

Students are supported in both components to think about their own desires in work, not to follow another's' path.

They have contact with academics and careers staff on the panel before presentation of portfolio. This puts them at ease and introduces the idea that personal relationships can be powerful and positive.

Students are supported to make contacts for assessment 2 and congratulated and supported when they can do this. No student is 'left behind'. The course team have many contacts and can smooth introductions etc for those who lack decisive action/are unsure and this also develops sense of confidence and belonging.

Students discuss personal and module proposals in-class and support one another with ideas for progress early in the module and this creates belonging.

A programme of guest lectures offers both informal introductions to professionals but more and more features successful graduates of the course, whose stories of how they 'got in and got on' are personally empowering for students and emphasise that the course 'family' is worth belonging to as a short and long-term network.

⑫ **Sub-themes:**
- Did your work also address any/all of the following subthemes? (All the case studies do to a greater and lesser extent…)
- Inclusivity in its broadest sense (embedded, flexible learning environment, flexible assessment, relatable …. etc.
- Students as developing professionals
- Employability skills such as confidence building, impression management, collaboration and teamwork?

Yes – see above.

⑬ **Main benefits and successes of your work**
(for example, student feedback, sustainable, improved data/ results, noticeable change in behaviours, good feedback from stakeholders and employers, measurable change in metrics)

Feedback has been really positive in recent years but sample sizes so tiny with e-feedback over covid that this probably isn't useful.

Lots of positive feedback from students and employers anecdotally and overall employment figures are at or above sector and school norms.

⑭ **Main challenges for your work** (for example, is it scalable, manageable again, too difficult to evaluate, resource heavy, too risky, not enough ownership…?)

Requires personal investment from students and staff. Report can seem stuffy and obscure the real network-development purpose of the module.

⑮ **Main outcomes**
How do you know it was successful? (was your work measurable? Any Data? Student views? Feedback from colleagues? Other evaluation such as change at wider course and institutional level?)

Positive reviews from careers and graduates. Graduate guest lecturers refer to it as empowering and influential for them and this perpetuates potential for positive/virtuous cycle of growing contacts/ influence.