THE CHAMBER OF FEAR
A Role Playing Approach to the Recruitment and Selection of Learning Technologists

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Our institutional context

• C of E Foundation | Post 1992 University | Million+ Group
• 4 x Campuses across the County of Kent | 4 x Faculties | School-based
• Predominantly offers courses for Public Sector careers
• @ 18,000 FTE Students | @ 3000 FT & PT Staff (1600 Academics)
• 5 x Learning Technologists | Learning & Teaching Enhancement (a central service)

Learning Technology Team values:
• Grounded in Pedagogy | Mediated meaningfully through Technology
• Importance of Working in Partnership with Students & Staff
• Supporting learning technology as an enabler to student learning
• Being a ‘critical friend’ to Staff in relation to TEL aspirations / ambitions
• Critical + Research Informed Practice --> Research, Evaluation & Dissemination
How we used to assess candidates

1) Presentation to Learning Technology Team
   • 20 minute presentation
   • 10 minute Q&A

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

However:
   • Tests candidate’s presentation skills
   • Tests candidate’s research & literature review skills
How we now assess candidates

1) Role Play Scenario with Learning Technology Team
   • 5 minute presentation on Blended Learning to fictitious BA Heritage Studies programme team (inc. PD, 2 x ML, PA, Student)
   • 25 minute discussion with a fictitious BA Heritage Studies programme team
   • Considerable development in creating role-play scenario, role definitions, character backstories, types of questions – to ensure candidate equity

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

Which:
   • Tests candidate’s presentation skills + research & literature review skills
   • Demonstrates how they would work with a Programme Team
   • Demonstrate how well they lead / broker / negotiate
   • Conveys a complex array of skills & characteristics to be a Learning Technologist
What our candidates thought of the new process

How the candidates felt?

“apprehensive”
“nervous”
“...interviewers taken candidate
nerves into consideration”
“...difficult to prepare for”
“...[what] the interviewers might
be looking for”
“I kept remembering things that
I hadn’t done very well”
“...the brief gave me an insight
into facets of the role”

How suitable is the process?

“...a good way of assessing candidates”
“...it did not feel too ‘artificial’”
“...situates...important aspects of LTs
role in an authentic way as possible”
“...appreciate the diversity of roles
involved in delivery of a programme”

Can improvements be made?

“however...team members need to feel
confident in role-playing”
“...having an academic member of staff
present...might be a useful”
“...translating the model to an electronic
context for overseas candidates”
The Human Resources perspective

- Getting more information / evidence as to the candidate’s suitability.
- The candidate may enjoy and excel in this exercise, esp. if they don’t like interviews.
- Sending role-play brief out in advance will give candidates a chance to understand what is expected and prepare accordingly.
- Similarly, the brief may put some candidates off (arguably, a potential ‘weeding out’ process).
- Risk of losing potentially good candidates who are overwhelmed by this exercise.
Other approaches to recruitment & selection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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No LEGO minfigures were harmed during the making of this presentation...honest!
Questions?
References & Resources

