

Tutor Diary

Matt Edwards, Community Sports Development Officer at the University of Bristol, reveals what his Community Sports Leaders got up to during their final week of spring term.

Thursday pm – *Confidence is building*

It's the last tutoring session for the Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership course, and we've got an hour and a half of theory, the same of practical. Candidates have often been working or in lectures all day, so we keep the theory concise and energetic, and then focus on practical skills.

By this stage candidates' confidence is really starting to build, and ideas are flowing. The focus is on learning-by-doing, so we split the group into teams so they can plan, then adapt, a game of their choice. Candidates keep focussed on good leadership and communication skills.

Tuesday pm – *Real mutual support*

Having completed the theory parts of the course, tonight's session will cover the details of the session plans for Thursday's primary school sports day, and deal with logistics for the day itself.

This will be some candidates' first experience of leading children, and it can be an anxious time. My role is to give them as much responsibility and control as possible, while being supportive and reinforcing what they've learnt. I'm pleased to see plenty of mutual support amongst the group, and great enthusiasm to put the hard work into practice.

Thursday – *The big event*

Today is a long day for the Sports Leaders, including more than five hours of leadership with children they've never met. We start with a briefing to build confidence, deal with any questions and remind everyone to take care of themselves (for example, keeping hydrated) and each other during the day.

Initially candidates are nervous, but as soon as the children are here, that disappears. There's a quick briefing with all 60 children, who are from a primary school with limited physical exercise facilities.

After that, candidates lead a short warm-up then split the children into smaller groups, and rotate round the multi-skills activities. We have regular breaks, including an hour for lunch where tutors run a sports quiz, giving the Sports Leaders a rest and chance to assess whether to change anything for the afternoon.

By 2 pm some of the children are starting to tire, so we lead a few gentle competitive relays to keep them going. We end by asking the Sports Leaders to nominate children from their group who have behaved particularly well, and award them medals. We also have various freebies to give out to the children so no-one goes away empty-handed.

Once the children have left and everything has been cleared away, I hold a short de-brief with candidates to talk through what went well and what could be improved next time. It's then off for more team building - and a well deserved meal - at the local pizzeria!

Sports Leadership at the University of Bristol

The University of Bristol has run the Level 2 Award in Sports Leadership since 2002 to help students show what they can do beyond their academic qualifications. A course runs every autumn and spring term, and the majority of candidates volunteer in the Bristol Festival of Youth Sport, an event aimed at secondary school children who don't normally take part in competitive sport. For the 2010-11 academic year, the university will also run the Sports Leaders UK Day Certificate in Sports Leadership for students and staff looking for something different in professional and team development. The university will also be running its first Level 3 Certificate in Higher Sports Leadership.

Katie Corkill, *Student*

"The Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership has been a fantastic experience and has already put me in good stead for future employment opportunities.

"The main reason for joining the course was to enhance my leadership skills in a sport related context to aid my chosen career path into sports development and coaching at a local community level.

"Not only was the course content interesting and informative, but also the delivery was engaging and fun, enabling candidates to put theory into practise with almost every module. Gaining these practical skills in lesson planning and delivery has been paramount to the development of my leadership and coaching abilities.

"Since completing the Sports Leaders UK qualification I have gained employment as a Kids Camp Holiday Coordinator. I am now also looking to enrol onto the Level 3 Certificate in Higher Sports Leadership."

Sue Davis, *Staff member*

"I am so glad I chose to take this course because it has given me the motivation, relevant experience and tools to continue with the development of my sports leadership skills.

"The team of tutors provided great support and encouragement. Their enthusiasm was infectious, a quality which I hope I am able to impart to those studying under my direction.

"I made new friends, while recognising the value and importance of volunteering within the community.

"I am now looking forward to progressing with renewed confidence within my Netball Club and helping to expand our Junior Coaching Programme giving the younger children the motivation and opportunities to develop their all round team and individual skills."

Lesley Kyle, *Part-time Postgraduate Student*

I am studying towards my MSc in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Public Health at the University of Bristol and whilst I have always been passionate about sport, I realise the benefits that exercise can have on both mental and physical well-being, particularly in children.

"I can't emphasise enough what a rewarding experience the course has been. The opportunity to demonstrate my skills at the Bristol School Festival of Sports was a highlight, recognising the value that Sports Leaders have in impacting children's participation and enjoyment of sport.

"I have already registered as a volunteer for the London 2012 Olympic Games and on completion of my MSc I plan to volunteer for local opportunities within the community."