

11 March 2013

Reference for Brett Wilkie for Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

I have worked closely with Brett since he joined York St John University. During this time we have co-taught modules and undertaken a number of projects together with the aim of enhancing learning and teaching. We regularly discuss learning and teaching and Brett's innovative approaches have often helped shaped some of my work.

A key theme in some of the project work we have undertaken together has been in relation to formative assessment on modules. Taking the institutional policy for using Supported Open Learning (SOL) we developed a consistent and coherent model for how this could be applied to the sport and exercise science programme in the form of formative assessment. Brett's meticulous attention to detail ensured this could work on highly complex modules with high numbers of students and has been a model of good practice in applying it to other modules within Sport. More recently a core aspect of my work has been as the Faculty Senior Teaching Fellowship project, which developed a set of principles in relation to assessment and feedback. Brett has strongly engaged with these principles in terms of his modules but also played a role in supporting the work more broadly and leading on aspects of the project. He has delivered workshops across the Faculty to support others in the application of the principles within module design. He has also empowered the Faculty technicians to develop and deliver staff development sessions, specifically in relation to the utilisation of video equipment to support student learning on modules.

Brett's current role is as Head of Sports Science related programmes. This is a key leadership role in relation to the quality of learning and teaching on the programmes. Brett developed a school liaison process, which provided a far more structured and targeted approach to offering visits by schools and colleges to the University. The success of this work was highlighted in the programme evaluative report as good practice and is now being adopted across the Faculty. This is a prime example of Brett's leadership approach, where he sets up effective and efficient practice in a specific area and then supports others to adopt it in their particular area or context.

Brett and I have also co-taught modules together, so I have first-hand experience of his planning and teaching. His approach is extremely student-centred in nature and actively involves the learner. A key aspect to Brett's teaching and modules is that he 'designs-in' student engagement. He has an excellent track record in terms of students completing non-compulsory activities within the module that they learn from to support them with subsequent tasks or assessments. Engagement in such activities is usually far higher than on other modules (80-90% vs 50-60%). Brett has supported me in adopting such a design on a third year Exercise Physiology module that I lead but we co-teach and it has had a key impact on the development of the students skills. Brett is an excellent teacher who also has a number of examples of supporting and leading others. I strongly recommend him for Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Dr Ian Sadler

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