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There's gold in them thar hills

First year students at Northumbria University, Newcastle have been prospecting for gold in a series of team-building exercises to encourage independent learning and develop employment skills.

The undergraduate team-building event was designed by management training company The Engagement People on behalf of Newcastle Business School, and is thought to be the first of its kind in the UK. Exercises included a puzzle-solving game based on the California gold rush where teams had to compete against each other to be the first to discover a hidden gold mine.

The event, held at the impressive Discovery Museum in Newcastle, was

offered to all new undergraduate business students as part of their Northumbria Welcome Week. In step with Northumbria's focus on graduate employability, the exercises focused on skills more typically associated with business delegates such as team working, goal setting, confidence building, critical thinking, research, problem solving, analysis, feedback, timekeeping and communication.

Gillian Forster, Principal Lecturer, Organisation and Human Resource Management at Newcastle Business School, said: "These events were a great opportunity for our first year students to get to know each other and establish new friendships in a fun way. Right from the start of their time at university we are also helping and encouraging them to develop the skills to bring them career success in a few years' time. Northumbria is among the top 10 universities in the UK for graduates entering professional employment and Newcastle Business School is building on this to enhance the prospects of our students even further.

"Skills relating to real life workplace situations were introduced quite subtly throughout the event sessions, with students being invited to reflect upon how their experience parallels their need for leadership, clear missions and visions."

Carley Denton, who is studying for a BA Human Resource Management degree, said: "I found having such an activity on neutral ground outside of the university was a perfect situation where we all had the opportunity to get to know each other better. I now feel like I belong to the place I worked so hard to join and my nerves at starting something new have turned to delight and complete motivation".

The Engagement People specialise in employee engagement and work with many corporate organisations including Bupa, Disney and Ritz Carlton Hotels.

Barry Howarth, director at Engagement People, said: "We have worked hard to ensure that we design and deliver a programme which students enjoy and learn from. Catering for around 800 students studying subjects like Human Resource Management, Marketing and International Finance, our starting point is always to ensure that the programme is inclusive, challenging, educational and fun."

Anyone wishing to find out more about Northumbria's business courses can

sign up for its open day on September 27 or October 25 by visiting
www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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