

**Title - Industry-Education Links to Promote Hospitality & Tourism Management Applied Research & Consultancy Skills**

**Keywords** - Employability, Linking Teaching and Research

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**Activity** - 'Live' Group Enterprise Projects - A unit designed to enhance industry and educational links within hospitality and tourism education and to develop students' intrapersonal and interpersonal management skills and competencies.

**Group** - 16-20 M Level students

**Aim** - To engage students in live consultancy projects, i.e. with project clients from industry and under the mentorship and supervision of academic tutors.

**Context / Background** - Students are exposed to real market opportunities through which they experience, and have to try to resolve, some of the problems facing practising managers. The learning outcomes recognise the need for students to develop their transferable skills and competencies within academic programmes of study. The experiential approach to learning adopted in this example provides the opportunity for students to increase their capability within this area and to gain useful insights into current industry practice, vital for the vocational relevance of such programmes of study. The unit is worth 20 M-level credits

Example - Following industry consultation, an appropriate market research project is identified. The industrial client specifies a 'real' problem which:

- can be addressed by a small group of students (project group sizes of 3-4 students ideally);
- enables the achievement of the learning outcomes of the module in terms of academic and non-academic skills' development;
- has as its base the subject matter of the programme of study;
- forms an integral part of the course.

The unit is preceded by a series of workshops in project design, basic research methods, Word and Excel. The project topics are introduced to the students during the first week of the unit. Students form groups and, if necessary, make bids for their chosen projects. Activities comprise lectures, tutorials, demonstrations, SPSS workshops, guest speakers, external visits, desk research and presentations. During the semester students have access to, and support to collect and process, real business data.

The unit leader's role is that of consultant, advisor and arbitrator whilst the students are required to maximise the responsibilities that they are prepared to take for their own learning. In doing this, they can draw on the advice and support of academics, whilst experiencing relevant research and work with a client in the industry context. Each group makes a formal oral and written presentation of their findings (including a progress diary) to two academics and two clients. Student peer and self-assessments are employed. (Ineson 1994)

**Results / Feedback** - Through the applied research and consultancy project, the students are able to develop a range of transferable skills pertaining to information and data collection, analysis and evaluation, intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies, time management, business communication and business presentation.

A few examples of clients are: American Express; Beaufort Park Hotel; Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries; Carlisle City Council; Flintshire County Council; Holiday Inns, Inventive Leisure, Manchester Airport; Manchester City Council; Marketing Manchester; Manchester Visitor Centre; North West Tourist Board, Research/Community Exchange; Tatton Park; The Trafford Centre; Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

Fields of enquiry include investigation of tourism destinations as attractions, the contribution of tourism to a local economy, hospitality and tourism skills' development, visitor and customer profiling, development of tourism packages and access to leisure facilities for people with disabilities.

Other comments - Over 95% of the student participants over 20 years have found the live group project a worthwhile and 'very enjoyable and educationally positive exercise'.

Problems encountered by the students are: working to deadlines, preparing for presentations, difficulty in organising meetings outside timetabled hours, and limited participation by certain group members for which the specially designed peer assessment system compensates. Additional benefits include: (i) for academics, keeping updated on current practices and improving industrial links and (ii) for industrialists, obtaining research and testing of new systems at relatively low costs. Therefore, all three parties can achieve great benefits from the approach.

### **Further information**

Associated publications and conference papers:

Ineson, E.M. (1989) "Enterprise in Hotel and Catering Courses through Live Group Tourism Projects", International Association of Hospitality Schools Conference proceedings, Glasgow, November

Ineson, E.M. (1991) "Moving towards New Horizons in Experiential Learning through Live Tourism Enterprise Projects" World Tourism Education

Conference proceedings, University of Calgary, June

Ineson, E.M. (1992) "Making Exchange a Reality: A Tourism Database to enable Manchester's Voluntary Sector to Share its Experience with Overseas Visitors" (workshop presented with Rachel Crowe *et al.*) International Association of Hotel Management Schools' Conference proceedings, Manchester, May

Ineson, E.M., Hartley, P. and Sibbering, E. (1993) "The potential effect of the proposed Olympic bid on East Manchester", 2nd Council for Hospitality Management Education research conference proceedings, April

Ineson, E.M. (1994) "Evaluating Live Group Projects with Peer- and Self-assessment", *Hospitality and Tourism Educator* 6(3) 59-61

Ineson, E.M. (1994) "Access to Quality Urban Food Service - perspectives of people with disabilities" in P. Murphy (ed) *Quality Management in Urban Tourism: Balancing Business and the Environment*, Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, Province of British Columbia, Canada, pp 444-454, ISBN 1-55058-065-5

Ineson, E.M. and Stone, G.J. (1998) "Competing through education/industry links: communication issues for the millennium", *Competitiveness*, International Hospitality Industry, Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, 227-233

Ineson, E.M., Langlois, S.M. & Theodore J. (1999) "Poland - inbound tourism from the United Kingdom" *Tourism Management* (20), 461-469

Ineson, E.M. (2001) "Education/industry links to promote hospitality research and consultancy", CHME Learning, Teaching and Assessment conference proceedings, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK