

**Title - Post Placement Analysis****Keywords** - Employability, Professional Development Planning**Name** - Angela Tomkins**School / Dept** - The Business School**Institution** - University of Gloucestershire**Activity** - Using active learning to enable students to reflect and critically appraise their industrial practice experiences.**Group** - Level 3 Leisure and Tourism Management students.**Aim**

- To disseminate information about workplace practices and procedures in the sector.
- To become aware of wider issues facing the service sector industries.

**Context / Background** - This module is designed to enable Level 3 Leisure and Tourism Management students, who have undertaken a 48-week period of work experience in the leisure and tourism sectors, to analyse and critically appraise individual experiences. It addresses key issues such as professional practice and career management and encourages students to reflect on the development of their skills and competences and to contextualise their learning within the characteristics and requirements of the leisure and tourism industry.

Learning starts with the placement and the process students go through. All students have the support of an industry-based mentor and a visiting tutor from the university during their placement activities. During the placement each student will have been required to write a reflective diary that supports the learning they have identified through the four learning contracts they have written. The activity begins the process of personal reflection that is a necessary precursor to the module and the assignments.

During the module students are engaged in active learning in two ways. First, it encourages students to reflect on their experiences in industry and, second, they 'learn by doing' in the creation of an exhibition (one of the two assessment methods on the module). About 90 students are normally involved, in 18 to 20 groups, and this provides a rich tapestry of both experience and timely knowledge of those issues affecting the workplace. Students are encouraged to keep minutes of the meetings they hold in relation to the project. As well as being part of the assessed work, the information produced is placed on the WebCT site in the Industrial Placement Unit for use by pre-placement students.

**Example** - The forum takes the form of a careers exhibition that is assessed in groups of 5 and carries 50% of the marks for the module. It addresses 3 aspects:

- A critical evaluation of the industry sector including the nature of the organisations and their products/services and how students perceive the sector's key characteristics and trends.
- A critical reflection of knowledge, skills and personal qualities/competences required for management in the identified sector, drawing on personal development.
- An evaluation of potential career opportunities within the sector, including the notion of 'transferable skills'.

### ***The exhibition***

Student groups are encouraged to use a range of media to demonstrate their learning on placement and its relationship to career opportunities. Many students use sophisticated web-based methods, for which there is specialist support, while others prefer the more traditional methods of posters, leaflets etc. The variety of methods used to disseminate information allows students to capitalise on their own strengths and experiences and to appreciate what they have learnt. As the exhibition takes place over a half day period, groups of students, from Levels 1,2 and 3 have the opportunity to look at, and to reflect upon, work and career opportunities in other sectors – the notion of transferability of skills from one sector to another is frequently reflected in the evaluation of the module.

**Other comments** - When students were asked to identify key learning points on the module, the following comments were made:

- "Developed my reflective analysis – to be more proactive"
- "Emphasised the value of contacts"
- "Opportunity to consider career development and 'professionalism'"
- "Skills identification – the difference between 'hard' and 'soft' skills"
- "Need to look back and evaluate what I have done and how this has improved"
- "Helped identification of key resources for future employment"
- "Learning how to manage time when working in groups"

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