

**Title - Student Think Tanks****Keywords** - Assessment, Groupwork**Name** - John Buswell**School / Dept** - School of Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality Management**Institution** - University of Gloucestershire**Activity** - A one-off, assessed session, in the form of a debate between students (in groups).**Group** - Level 3 students. Studying module Contemporary Issues in Leisure. Approximately 50 students, 12 groups of 4. The module runs every year, semester 2, level 3.**Aim** - The aim of the session is to link individual work with the processes of group work: analysis, synthesis, and reflective group thinking, as well as organisational skills and time management.**Context / Background** - This event takes place towards the end of the semester in the module Contemporary Issues in Leisure. Students attend taught lectures throughout the semester discussing various leisure-related issues and topics. They are then asked to form into groups of 4-5 and meet regularly to discuss and debate the issues from the lecture and the given reading. These groups are called 'think tanks' and the purpose of them meeting is to prepare for a class debate at the end of semester. The exercise combines cognitive skills with subject-based knowledge and understanding, and the key skills of groupwork, communication and problem-solving. Students are required to refine their ability to discuss and debate at two stages with the need to agree a common position within the small group in the first stage. All individual group meetings are logged and minutes are taken as evidence of meetings taking place outside lecture time.**Example** - The students are asked to synthesise their analysis of social change with an evaluation of developments in leisure and to consider the implications of their analysis for the role and skills of leisure management.

The main debate, takes place in one of the final sessions of the module. This is the time the students come together and debate the various issues identified during their meetings. Students should be well prepared and able to enter a lively and topical debate. Issues raised and discussed include the commodification of leisure, leisure consumption and provision, leisure and post-modernity home-based leisure and the relationship between work and leisure.

**Assessment Criteria:** The assessment comprises an individual commentary containing two elements:

- a) an analysis of the key issues and their determinants discussed by the group
- b) a critical review of the influences on their analysis including the group processes and the collective debate

**Results / Feedback** - Students have given positive feedback on the exercise. They feel it brings all the issues together, with two types of interaction to reinforce their learning. The students are well prepared for the debate through their meetings and discussions, which boost confidence when entering in to such a situation.