

The Visitor Economy: Strategies and Innovations

Track: Tourism and Hospitality Education

ABSTRACT

Action-Based and Experience-Based Learning in the areas of Tourism & Hospitality: practical approaches to co-creation of the curriculum

The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework and the increasing competition within the HE sector have placed the focus on student experience and ways to achieve excellence in teaching and learning. This paper focuses on various aspects of Action-Based and Experience-Based Learning, employed at a programme and departmental level as part of High Impact Teaching strategy and shares best practices and lessons learnt.

Action Based Learning (Reynolds M. and Vince R, 2004) is a long standing tradition in management education, which was interpreted in a new way and adapted to the needs of the specific programmes at CULC. A set of activities was designed, each addressing different business skills and enhancing student experience through individual and collective learning and reflection. This was interpreted as an inclusive approach, where activities have different levels of difficulty and could be adapted to the needs of students with extensive practical experience and also student who join their postgraduate programme with limited or no previous experience. Over two consecutive semesters, a different combination of activities was tested in core modules and contributed to student satisfaction rate of 85%-97%. After evaluating the results, a set of activities was implemented in a systematic way in a wider range of modules and was supported by 100% student satisfaction rates. The activities allowed to link core concepts covered in different modules and improve ability to apply them at advanced level. These included flipping the classroom via video material and carefully selected preparation activities, Live Projects, Leadership lectures, team competitions, ad hoc presentations and debates, experiential activities and networking with the industry and academia, to mention only a few. These activities addressed the programme learning outcomes and were incorporated in appropriate modules through delivery structure, content and assessment.

The holistic way in which the Action Based Learning approach was adapted and implemented increased student satisfaction and resulted in excellent attendance, participation rates and progression rate across module delivered. These activities have helped address the challenge of large seminar groups (33-37 students) and ensure that students receive personal attention and feedback from their tutor. The experience and lessons learnt were disseminated at staff workshops. The success of the initiative was evidenced by increased and sustained student satisfaction from their module and the programme. More importantly, this initiative was embraced widely in the subject team and led to innovative practices and rewarding experiences.

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