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Integrating Experiential Learning into Formal Curriculum: The HKU Experience

Mary Ho & Albert Ko
Gallant Ho Experiential Learning Centre, The University of Hong Kong
Integrating Experiential Learning into Formal Curriculum

- Pre-Experiential Learning
  - Background research
  - Context study

- Experiential Learning
  - Interaction
  - Skill practice

- Post Experiential Learning
  - Reflection
  - Reporting
Integrating Experiential Learning into Formal Curriculum

• ‘New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education’

• Experiential learning becomes an important component for all undergraduate degrees

• At HKU... 
  – Experiential learning refers to the kind of learning that requires students to tackle real-life issues and problems by drawing on theoretical knowledge that they have learnt in the formal curriculum
  – Students put theoretical knowledge to test, gain a deeper understanding of theories and, most importantly, construct knowledge
Integrating Experiential Learning into Formal Curriculum

• At HKU . . .
  – A study on good practices in experiential learning at HKU was conducted in which focus group interviews were conducted with over 180 students from all Faculties and over 30 academic staff members were consulted
  – Faculty specific experiential learning surveys were also developed to facilitate systematic reporting and investigation of experiential learning
  – The findings showed positive learning outcomes, they also show that not all students found the experience beneficial and that involving students in real-life projects does not necessarily (or automatically) entail beneficial learning experiences.
Innovative Design and Course Structure

• Creating a different classroom culture
  – Teacher-controlled ➔ Teacher-student interaction ➔ Student-driven, authentic

• Teacher-centered vs. Learner-centered
  – Responsibilities?
  – Continuous learning?
  – Mutual care, concern and understanding??
Students’ Experience and Learning

• Reflection on the tie between academic readings and real-life experience facilitates students’ deeper understanding of the systematic causes of issues or problems

• Experiential learning becomes another text
  – It is part of the practical experience that students are expected to merge with the abstract knowledge from more traditional course texts

• Developing the affect

• Developing a sense of personal efficacy
Assessment and Evaluation

• What is the purpose of assessment? Why do we assess student learning?
  – The primary purpose of assessment should be to help students understand what they have learned, and that learning is limitless and should be a lifelong endeavor

• Rubrics assess learning-to-learn skills, individual development (e.g. performances, critical thinking, and problem solving)

• The key to assessment for experiential learning is to identify the skills to be learned and allow multiple opportunities for students to practice over time
Flooding Bangkok: Experiential Learning In the Planning Disciplines

Division of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong

1 Tang, D. (2013, February). Building Overseas Partnerships – Flooding Bangkok: Experiential Learning in the Planning Disciplines. GHELC Seminar Series. Seminar conducted from The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
STUDIO PROCESS

REGIONAL STUDY
indexing

DETAILED STUDY
typologies

FIELD VERIFICATION
annotations

PROPOSAL
prototypes &
deployment
TRAVELLING ALONG THE WATERSHED-DATA COLLECTION
TRAVELLING ALONG THE WATERSHED-COMPILING INFORMATION

Analytical Photography

Picturing a View

1. Place - specific
2. Place - general
3. Keyword 1
4. Keyword 2
5. Author - your name

Annotated Photographs

When you annotate a photograph or create diagrams with your images, consider the inevitable forces, actors, materials, relationships, and movement that are critical to your theme. Examine the existing photograph, and consider how you would draw a diagram that would help your viewer gain a deeper understanding of the site—operations that are beyond the surface. The annotations themselves should be more than simply labels, but the identification and emphasis of certain aspects of the photograph that might reveal something new. For example, highlighting certain types of plants, uses, movement over time, or interactions within a photograph would allow the viewer to reconsider several relationships within a photograph. Or, drawing a section over a photograph would help the viewer understand the relationship between how something is constructed and water levels. Below are some examples of how others have used similar techniques to annotate photographic images.
TRAVELLING ALONG THE WATERSHED-PROCESSING INFORMATION

hearing from people on the ground

daily debreifings

final workshop
WATER MOSAIC

EXISTING FLOOD WALL SURROUNDS THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

USING OLD FLOOD WALL ALLOWING THIS SPACE TO BE UTILIZED FOR STORAGE AND WATER TREATMENT

DURING FLOODS THE CONTAMINATED WATER WILL BE CONTAINED AND TREATED WITHIN

Using the space in between the existing flood walls, both the old and the new walls, and allowing water to be stored here during the flooding period so that the pumping of the site won’t effect the surrounding landscape as well as containing this contaminated water within the site and treating it effectively.
Business Consulting Practicum: Enhancing Experiential Learning for Business and Economic Students

Faculty of Business and Economics,
The University of Hong Kong

2 Leung, W., & Chau, P. (2013, April). Evaluation of Experiential Learning Course – Business Consulting Practicum. GHELC Seminar Series. Seminar conducted from The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Team Building

Training Workshop

Meetings with Business Clients and Professional Mentors
The Way Forward

• At HKU...

• Supporting infrastructure for experiential learning
• Preparation for learning
• Supervision of students and assessment of learning
• Evaluation of learning experience
• Resources