

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN PLANNING EDUCATION



ISSUE 02 | MARCH 2013

THE FOCUS

This newsletter focuses on the results of the baseline survey, introduces the case studies as second data collection phase and lets you know about upcoming events.

Since our last newsletter there have been a couple of changes to our project team:

Ms Cathy Towers moved out of the education role at PIA and we welcomed Mr Ari La Vache, Manager of Lifelong Learning as the PIA partner on the project.

Dr Michael Lockwood handed over to Dr Andrew Harwood the UTAS partner role for the rest of the project.

What did the baseline survey tell us?

This survey was the first phase of data collection and its purpose was to determine the extent of experiential learning currently being used in higher education planning programs. It was disseminated through head of program/course to course/unit coordinators in every accredited planning program in Australia and New Zealand in order to gain a broad sweep of responses. Potential respondents were asked to describe their experiential learning activities and the nature of the assessment used in the course/unit using a continuum of experiential learning experiences ranging from a variety of university-based through to workplace-based encounters. Example activities included field trips,

simulations, role plays, and informal and formal work placements.

Responses were received from 51 course coordinators covering 101 courses at 18 universities. The most commonly reported courses that used experiential learning activities were planning practice, addressing environmental planning issues and studios. Results revealed that guest speakers were the most frequently used activities but less than half were assessed in any way. Field trips were also popular with the majority being assessed. A recent entrant is the regional and international field trips used in eight courses, and assessed in five.



Students on the Lake Boga field trip in 2012 (photo courtesy La Trobe University).

Number of courses using and assessing tasks and types of assessment

Task Description	Courses Using Task (n=101)	Courses Assessing Task (n=101)	Assessment Types
Guest Speakers	76	34	Exams, group projects, assignments, mini essays, online discussion, reflection
Field Trips	39	31	Reflective journal, formal report, group presentation, assignment
Studio Project-based	19	18	Report, group assignment, reflective, display, strategy framework, presentation
Simulated Development at Real Site	34	32	Group project, reports, presentation to professionals, prepare strategies, essay
Track Development Application	16	11	Part final assignment, Ministerial briefing paper, development application report
Role Play	24	21	Peer/group assessment, presentation, participation, reflection
Work on Project for Client	15	12	Assignment, project report, presentation
Informal Work Experience	10	5	Reflective piece, presentation
Regional or International Field Studies	8	5	Project report, assignment, presentation
Formal Work Placement	13	11	Presentation poster, journal article, supervisor assessment, participation, exam, reflective journal

The most commonly used assessment types were exams, group projects and presentations, assignments, essays and reports. Reflection was used less frequently, but when used was mainly in the form of a reflective journal. Other uncommon assessment types include a Ministerial briefing paper, journal article and online discussion. The evaluation tools were formative, summative, grade and pass/fail. There was some evidence of hurdle tasks.





Experiential learning case studies

Starting in Semester 2, 2012 the collaborators on the project from Edith Cowan, La Trobe and Griffith Universities and the University of Tasmania, together with the University of the Sunshine Coast as project leader, began testing new ideas for experiential learning and assessment items in their classes. This also involved evaluation of the approach by students. This is continuing throughout Semester 1, 2013 and will contribute to the toolbox which we are starting to develop.

To find out more about the project and experiential learning

Visit our project website at www.usc.edu.au/explearning which has a copy of first newsletter and presentation given at ANZAPS in late September 2012.



Students enjoying the European Study Tour in 2011 (photo courtesy La Trobe University).

Upcoming presentation at PIA in March 2013

In late March at the PIA National Planning Congress in Canberra Assoc Prof Johanna Rosier and Dr Claudia Baldwin will be presenting a paper titled 'Growing Future Planners'. This paper explores principles underpinning experiential learning and links between university and industry-based learning activities. Whilst in Canberra Johanna and Claudia are happy to meet and discuss aspects of experiential learning and the project with others who are interested. Contact details are: Claudia at cbaldwin@usc.edu.au or Johanna at jrosier@usc.edu.au

For further information about the project please contact Christine Slade at cslade@usc.edu.au



Taking part in a planning exercise on the Casterton field trip held in 2010 (photo courtesy La Trobe University).



Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views in this project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

