

Guided Student Reflection: A Critical Imperative for Experiential Learning

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Abstract:

This paper presents the results of a pilot exploratory study examining the role of reflection exercises in capturing student learning outcomes from a controlled experiential learning activity in a capstone student consulting course. Qualitative reflection data were collected during a student consultant project conducted by ten hospitality students for bed and breakfast owners in Taiwan. Data were examined using manual content analysis techniques. Results show that the act of guided reflection supports higher order cognitive student learning in the discipline. Additional evidence was found of increased self-efficacy development and positive affective (emotional) impressions of students towards the industry and towards community engagement. The paper further demonstrates the utility of reflective practice for the purpose of capstone conclusion of an entire program of study in hospitality management.

Keywords: Guided reflection | Experiential learning | Consulting | Bed and breakfast | Hotel management

Article:

Introduction

Various agencies have influenced the direction of hospitality business education, e.g., AACSB [1] and the Small Business Institute [2], prompting educators to use hands-on or experiential learning methods within the standard curriculum. One rich experiential learning strategy used by hospitality and tourism educators is that of the consulting project, which provides a context within which students, together with their clients, solve complex, real-world problems [3]. According to Ferrari and Sternberg [4], consulting work asks students to do the following: apply theories and lessons to actual real life challenges, focus on the practical rather than the hypothetical, make effective tradeoffs between decision risk and return, and manage personal values and needs while engaging in time-consuming project tasks. Sternberg and Williams [5] suggest that consulting work permits students to gain increased insights into their own personal

strengths and weaknesses in the discipline's core knowledge and skills; such insights directly influence students' perceived self-efficacy. Moreover, the authors expect to find that students use such insights from consulting projects to explore and verbalize their own affective emotional responses to prospective industry careers and to their future roles in society as hospitality professionals. The terms affect and affective in this paper refer to the psychological concept of emotional measures that are part of the triad of cognitive, behavioral, and affective learning responses to educational interventions.

Experiential learning interventions such as student consulting have been used to move students' cognitive processing to higher levels than normally permitted by classroom lectures and tests. Such higher order cognitive processing is often aided by the introduction of reflection exercises in the learning design; reflection typically requires students to examine what they have done in the context of their prior academic coursework and to state what they have learned. It is our belief that adding guided student reflection as an embedded activity in student consulting projects additionally permits instructors to observe students' perceived self-efficacy and view students' affective emotional responses to the industry and the profession. In concert with these beliefs, the authors coordinated the collection of qualitative reflection data during the implementation of a controlled student consulting project course in Taiwan.

The current study centered on student projects with bed and breakfast operations in Taitung, Taiwan. The projects were primarily oriented at helping B&B innkeepers incorporate hospitality best practices into their B&Bs to increase marketability and sustainability of the properties. This paper presents content analysis of collected reflection data to demonstrate how incorporating guided reflections into an experiential learning-based consulting project facilitates evaluation of student learning outcomes, self-efficacy, and positive affect.

Background Literature and Relevant Learning Theory

Ideas regarding the importance of experiential learning can be traced back to the work of John Dewey [6,7]. Dewey integrated the idea of experiential learning into traditional higher education. He believed that experiential learning could serve as a bridge between the academic domain and the practical world of work and daily life. Colleges and universities have embraced this idea in myriad forms: internships, field trips, problem-solving based projects, communitybased projects, and other highly engaging activities included in academic coursework [8].

Designing Controlled Experiential Learning Interventions

While Greenaway [9] points out the fact that learning experiences are often spontaneous and naturally occurring, relying on chance experiences alone does not guarantee the achievement of desired hospitality learning goals. Atherton [10] stipulates that educators must manage the students' exposure to experience through assigned tasks that require students to process their observations in ways that are meaningful to the academic discipline under consideration. Furthermore, Rainsford [11] emphasizes the need for continuous interactions between faculty

and students during all phases of a Small Business Institute (SBI)-type consulting project in order to improve quality of service to the client and to reinforce the business professionalism of the student consultants.

The education literature offers further insight into the design of experiential learning interventions. Drawing upon the research on experiential learning cycles by Kolb [12] and Neill [13], we see that learners must be actively engaged in the educational process by consciously performing a range of tasks such as observation, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Expanding upon Dewey's [7] work and Lewin's [14] field theory, Kolb [15] proposed a four-stage cyclical model of learning. The first stage, concrete experience, occurs when the learner is exposed to an identifiable event or series of occurrences. The second stage, reflective observation, is when the learner consciously reflects back on that salient experience.

In the third stage, abstract conceptualization, the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model to explain antecedents or consequences of the experience. The fourth stage, active experimentation, is when the learner plans to or actively tests the model in a new experiential situation. A person passes through these modes repeatedly in a way that helps him or her learn from the past and take new information into future learning situations. We move from this general description of the learning cycle to a more introspective look at the role of reflection in experiential learning and what it conceivably can offer to the student learner in the hospitality environment.

Reflection As A Critical Component of Experiential Learning

The educational community has regularly incorporated reflection into its learning designs [16-19]. Reflection techniques have been applied as part of experiential learning in a variety of disciplinary contexts, including business (e.g., [20-22]); education (e.g., [23-25]); healthcare (e.g., [26-28]); service-learning (e.g., [29]) and social work (e.g., [30]). In addition to general uses of reflection, the authors believe that there is considerable value in defining what reflection as a teaching technique adds to the mix of tasks comprising an experiential learning design.

There is substantial evidence in the literature that student reflections help educators to investigate what students are learning in a course or educational experience [31,32]. Firstly, Quinton and Smallbone [33] suggest that reflection operates cognitively in ways that help students to question the applicability of knowledge and skills to situations—thereby improving goodness of fit between theory in the classroom and practice in the field. Secondly, these authors rationalize that reflection helps students identify their own ability gaps that might be closed by taking advantage of available learning opportunities and resources. Such a direct comparison of personal skill sets to immediate project needs helps students perform more effective self-assessment and planning for personal and career development.

Lastly, reflection improves hospitality instructors' abilities to view students' perceived increases

in self-efficacy [34-37]. Given these findings in the literature, we expect that reflection data collected from experiential learning projects will show students' developing self-efficacy through verbalized meta-consciousness of their own capacity to transfer learning to new situations and challenges. We also expect that students perceiving heightened self-efficacy will also display increasingly positive affective responses to the profession and their potential careers.

Guided Versus Free Response Reflection Prompts

While a diverse array of reflection techniques and prompt styles has been amassed in higher education [38-40], work by Eyler [41] as well as by Eyler and Giles [42] suggests the need for further investigation into the varying benefits of guided versus free reflection prompts. Given the broad range of learning outcomes that reflection can help with (skill transfer, self-efficacy, affect), instructors must design experiential learning activities carefully to make sure reflection does what they want it to do. Billett and Ovens [43] urge faculty to manage the student reflection process so that students are encouraged to think strategically about the experiences that they are involved in during experiential learning activity.

Adding to the body of work on the use of reflection, Ash and Clayton [44] advocate a structured reflection process that includes three primary stages: "(a) description (objectively) of an experience, (b) analysis in accordance with relevant categories of learning; and (c) articulation of learning outcomes, which we find fits nicely with the tenets of experiential learning cycle frameworks as well as feasible in the context of student consulting". For the purpose of the present study, guided reflection prompts are preferred over open-ended prompts, since the present authors seek to verify specific learning outcomes related to transfer of learning, student perceptions of self-efficacy, and affective emotional responses. At this point, the discussion moves to an overview of the consulting project from which data were collected in this pilot study.

Consulting Project Background Information

The pilot study centered on hospitality student projects with bed and breakfast operations in Taiwan. A large number of B&B properties exist in Taiwan, with more than 1,200 registered B&Bs in and around Hualien and Taitung [45]. There is a strong rationale for focusing student consulting on the bed and breakfast industry, as this sector is a vital part of the tourism and hospitality industry in many countries. In addition, since the typical bed and breakfast operation involves many different aspects of hospitality management, students will be able to use a majority of the skills they have gained throughout the hospitality curriculum.

The bed and breakfast industry is also a setting in which student consulting can have significant impact due to the limitations on resources faced by many B&B operators. Compared with chain hotels that have access to vast corporate resources, these B&Bs are small businesses run by individuals. Many of the owners who entered the B&B business in Taitung did so without any

hotel management experience and were on the verge of bankruptcy [46].

The consulting projects were further supported by leaders of the Alliance Cultural Foundation (ACF) [47] who sponsored the students who were selected to conduct property enhancement studies for the bed and breakfast community. Because of budget constraints, this project-based course was capped at ten students and was scheduled as a university course in the winter-break semester.

Description of student subjects

The ten students who participated in the B&B consulting project were selected from a competitive pool of applicants and serve as the sample for this pilot study. Seven of the students were female and three were male. All were single and their ages ranged from 20 to 23 years old. Eight of the students had hospitality work experience ranging from one to three years. Four had previously been involved in consulting project work in earlier academic courses. All but one student were majoring in hotel management.

Structuring a Consulting Course for Experiential Learning

The underlying practical objective of the project was B&B property enhancement. According to stated learning objectives in the consulting course syllabus, students would also be able to: (1) apply the values and principles they learned in the classroom to a real world situation; (2) transfer their knowledge and skills in hotel management to help B&B innkeepers better manage their properties; (3) evaluate and improve the quality of the B&B product sector; (4) cultivate career contacts within the lodging industry; and (5) obtain hospitality business consulting skills. The course was implemented in two phases of observation and experimentation.

The two phases of the consulting course

During the first phase of the project, students visited B&Bs with a team of experts in hotel management, interior design, and culinary arts. The purpose of this initial foray into the field was for students to have exposure to consulting work similar to those they would be asked to carry out as part of their projects in the very near future. Students observed the experts walking through a sample B & B property making suggestions. For example, students saw how the designers rearranged the furniture to make a room more spacious and inviting and they listened to all recommendations the experts made for enhancing the properties' aesthetic appeal and quality of the product in general.

During the next phase of the course students were divided into teams to visit additional B&Bs and were required to provide suggestions for enhancing the physical appearance of the properties. Students took pictures to document all the B&B establishments they visited and to verify any of their recommendations that were subsequently implemented by B&B operators. In addition to reviewing student reports, the instructors also visited each individual B&B to evaluate

the impact of student recommendations and to ensure the quality of the project.

Weaving reflection into the fabric of the consulting course

Student reflection was a critical and continuous activity throughout the consulting course. At the end of each day, instructors met with students and discussed the problems and issues they encountered during their physical visits to the B&Bs. Instructors facilitated the reflection process and asked guided discussion questions in group sessions. Examples of the discussion questions were as follows:

- “What did you learn from the experts?”
- “What did you observe about the B&B sites you visited?”
- “How did you identify the problems in the B&B property?”
- “What was your greatest accomplishment today?”
- “What was your biggest challenge today?”

Following Kolb’s notion of abstract conceptualization, students were challenged to think critically about their daily consulting activities in the context of previous academic coursework and prior learning, exploring such issues as, “How does your work on the physical enhancement project relate to your hospitality skills?” At the end of the course, students were asked to write a final reflection report by following specific prompts to express and explore their individual learning about hospitality management. Guided reflections were also conducted to deepen students’ learning about consulting by reflecting on questions such as, “What are the skills and knowledge needed for a successful B&B project consultant?” “What’s the most difficult aspect of working in a team?” “What did you learn from the consulting project?”

Content Analysis of Reflection Data

All student reflective writings and discussion data were gathered and processed jointly by the instructors and members of the research team. Recordings of group discussions were transcribed verbatim, combined with written reflection responses, and subsequently analyzed using manual content analysis techniques. Due to the small number of subjects in the pilot study, manual analysis was seen to be entirely suitable to this project. Raw qualitative responses were inductively sorted into meaningful categories relevant to documenting student learning regarding student perceptions of (a) the relevance of hospitality knowledge and skills learned from their program curriculum through prior coursework, (b) their personal self-efficacy in transferring skills to the project settings, and (c) individual affective emotional responses to the hospitality industry and profession. A multi-rater technique was employed to resolve inconsistencies in categorization among the authors.

Findings

Content analysis of the reflection data revealed support for the three primary expressions of student learning anticipated by the authors: (1) transfer of hospitality theory to the concrete bed and breakfast setting, (2) increased self-efficacy through successful transfer of skills to the B&Bs, and (3) positive affective emotional responses to the industry or to future careers. A fourth primary finding is presented on student motivations for joining the consulting course itself. Tables 1 through 4 provide principal themes that arise in each of the four aforementioned student learning or motivation areas. In each table, categories derived from content analysis are in the left-hand column and descriptive sample statements are in the right-hand column.

Table 1: Matching Concrete Experiences to Hospitality Theoretical Principles.

Theoretical Principles	Sample Statement(s)
Importance of quality management and hospitality product quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There seemed to be a lack of operational procedures for housekeeping and front desk.” • “The experts really made a difference when they changed the B&Bs accessories and furniture.” • “I now realize that paying attention to details is so important.” • “Seeing how experts rearranged the B&Bs, I learned to use aesthetics and creativity to develop the niche appearance of the property.” • “By working with experts, I realized that even professionals from various fields, such as arts, architecture, interior design, and gardening can contribute to this industry. • “By visiting B&Bs, I realized the importance of first impression and its relationship to marketing. • This consulting project is a great example of redesigning and repositioning one of the marketing “Ps” (product) to attract more tourists.”
Customer service and hospitableness are critical to successful tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The hospitality of the local people was very good. They knew we were here to help the B&B operators; they invited us to their houses to be their guests. They showed us around and wanted to introduce their hometown to us. We were treated like a VIP. I was so impressed by their hospitality. I told myself, if I had my own business, this was the type of hospitality that I want to provide to my customers. ”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Through the interaction with B&B operators and seeing how our instructor communicated with the clients, I felt that what I learned from the textbook about customer service came to life.” • “From these tiny little things he (Mr. X) did, I realized why he was so well respected. From the way he interacted with people, I had a new understanding about the real meaning of service.”
<p>Consulting work requires professionalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I learned from the textbook that clients were pleased if you called them by their names. We immediately held a group meeting to develop our strategy. Since these were B&B innkeepers and the majority had their own websites, we searched all the websites as a team and printed out the online photos of the innkeepers. We spent the rest of the day trying to memorize their names. And we made it! We called each of the operators by name before they identified themselves. These B&B innkeepers were amazed and impressed and even asked us how we knew who they were.” • “I got to make suggestions to the B&B innkeepers for enhancing the physical appearance of their properties.” • “There are a lot of time constraints; I don’t get a lot of sleep.” • “This project is a heavy workload with a lot of pressure.” • “There are so many last-minute incidents and changes.” • “Sometimes we have conflict among team members.” • “Some B&B operators feel defensive when we point out the things to be improved in the B&B. ” • “We learned that we need to be very careful when communicating our suggestions to the B&B operators.” • “Working on a consulting project, you need to be well-prepared and develop your credibility so that your clients can trust you and accept your suggestions.”
<p>Cultural preservation in tourism destinations is a worthy value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I got to experience the beauty of Taitung and how it is related to tourism development.” • “I learned about the importance of local culture/natural resources.” • “By participating in this community-based project, I began to understand the issues regarding tourism in

	Taitung and realized it took effort to develop tourism.”
Community engagement should be a personal goal for hospitality students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “While working on the B&B project, I had the opportunity to meet with college volunteers from the United States. They came all the way to Taitung to teach children English during their break. I feel so shameful about myself. Being a college student, I did so little in returning something to society. I was so touched and inspired by their passion and enthusiasm in helping our people here. If it is possible, I would volunteer more.”
Social networking is an opportunity to take advantage of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was so thrilled that even though we were just students, Mr. X treated us like VIPs. He invited us to sit down and eat with him. He called us by our names and afterwards we all received a copy of his book with his autograph.” • “One of the B&B operators we met was also a local tour guide. He even spent time to show us several amazing scenic spots where tourists usually won’t go.” • “By participating in this consulting project, I had the opportunity to meet and know people from different areas, including business, academia, arts, and government.”
Entrepreneurship or small business ownership requires personal goals and business acumen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Many of the B&B innkeepers opened their B&Bs because they had a dream to make their homeland better. I was so touched by their love of this land and their country’s people.” • “I was moved by their (B&B innkeepers) passion for making their dream come true. I learned that with this passion, something can be achieved.” • “From my conversations with the B&B owners, I realized that it takes knowledge and skills to run a successful business. If I am going to open a B&B, I will make sure that I have basic management skills and have a good control of cost.”

Matching concrete experiences to theoretical principles

Through targeted prompts, students were asked directly to reflect on values or principles from prior courses that stood out to them as transferable to the project settings (a) during their visits to the B&Bs and (b) during their encounters with people in the projects. Reflection responses to

these prompts are categorized in Table 1.

The subheadings serve to indicate theoretical principles the researchers posit best represent each of the student reflection item groupings and are summarized as follows:

- a. Hospitality business skills: gained knowledge of B&B operations, tourism development principles and aesthetic appreciation of property layout and design.
- b. Consulting skills: developing training materials, problemsolving and critical thinking skills; communication skills; leadership skills; coordination skills; people and community service skills; conflict-management skills; and teamwork skills.
- c. Entrepreneurial skills: being creative; increased confidence in pursuing a dream.
- d. Personal and career development: increased maturity, being more appreciative of what they have, having a greater sense of achievement and life enrichment.

As noted in Table 1, major areas core to the learning goals of the broader hospitality program are signaled in these categories, such as quality management, customer service, and professionalism. Many of these principles are found repeated in a number of earlier courses students have taken and evidently are perceived by students to be core principles of the field.

Student reflections on perceived self-efficacy

A separate type of reflection prompt was used during discussions and as part of the final reflection paper, asking students to identify skills and knowledge from prior courses that they transferred or tried to transfer to the consulting setting and how successfully they were able to do so during their projects with the B&Bs. Students seemed to grasp easily the concept of transferring skills and knowledge from prior hospitality courses which included hotel operations, service management, tourist development, marketing, and human resources, to this new experiential learning setting of the consulting project.

Content analysis additionally resulted in the categorization of learning presented in Table 2, displaying self-reported increases in self-efficacy related to trans-disciplinary perspective, broader worldview, knowledge and skills useful to helping others, and capacity for continuous or life-long learning.

Table 2: Perceptions of Increased Self-Efficacy.

Perceived Self-efficacy Outcome	Sample Statement(s)
Trans-disciplinary perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I learned to evaluate things around me from c perspectives”• “I learned concepts about aesthetics and becar

	interested in it. I would like to learn more about this”
Broader world view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This experience has broadened my view of the world. I was so stimulated and did not want to become a frog living in a well”
Knowledge and skills useful to helping others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel so good that I was able to help others by applying what I had learned at school. I will definitely do more community-related work in the future and will encourage my friends to participate in similar community projects” • “I realized that I have to learn more so I will have the knowledge to help more people”
Capacity for continuous or life-long learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This is the first time I have participated in consulting work. I enjoyed it very much and will continue to participate in similar projects.” • “I feel I was like a sponge and wanted to learn as much as I could”

According to Table 2, students exhibited meta-level awareness of about learning as a process and about the consulting course’s usefulness as a learning intervention. Of particular note is the fact that the learning outcomes portrayed in Table 2 related to expanded worldviews and commitment to community seem to correlate well with higher education’s goals for improving critical thinking and global citizenship of students.

Expressions of positive affective emotional responses to the industry or to future careers

According to Table 3, evidence shows that students perceive that the real life experience provided in the consulting course had an impact on their career aspirations and attitudes toward the field.

Table 3: Expressions of Positive Affective Emotional Responses.

Target of Positive Affective Response	Sample Statement(s)
Careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “After participating in this consulting project, I discovered my interest in training. Even though I always wanted to become a chef, I think I may be able to teach culinary skills.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I found out that I should not limit my career choice to one. There are so many different career choices for me to pursue.” • “This experience inspired me to consider a career with a non-profit organization.”
General industry or profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have a new perspective regarding the service industry.”

Such findings support the idea that increased self-efficacy acknowledged through reflection can be associated with increased positive affect towards careers in the profession and towards the hospitality industry in general.

Personal motivations for engaging in a consulting course

Information about student perceptions about the consulting course itself was an additional and unexpected finding that emerged from content analysis of the reflection data. Table 4 displays the various student motivators for joining the project and are categorized as: influence from legitimate authority, opportunity for social networking and learning from teachers and professionals, and wanting to help others or the community.

Table 4: Motivations for Engaging In Student Consulting Projects.

Motivators	Sample Statement(s)
Influence from legitimate authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My department head encouraged me to participate in this community service project.”
Opportunity for social networking and learning from teachers and professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I thought it was a great opportunity that I could work with my instructor (who used to be the general manager of a prestigious hotel in Taiwan and has published books regarding his hotel management experiences) and learn from him.” • “I wanted to learn more about the bed-and-breakfast operations and network with industry professionals.” • “Mr. X’s dedication to his work and the way he treated people have had an influence on me.” (Note: name omitted)
Wanting to help others or the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I heard about all the great things that Mr. X and the foundation have done to improve the quality of tourism in the Taitung area and wanted to be part of it.” • “I wanted to do something for others and make my winter break meaningful.”

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I was so inspired by Mr. X’s determination to make Taiwan a better place and his contribution to Taiwan’s tourism development. |
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As seen in Table 4, motivating factors range from the personal influence of instructors and others to self-actualization reasons. Even though expressions of student motivation are not indicators of actual student learning outcomes, they can contribute to students’ general willingness to learn from these types of active learning instructional designs. As such, motivating factors are a relevant finding from the content analysis of the reflection data.

Implications of the Pilot Study for the Use of Reflections in Experiential Learning

From our results, we see that students respond actively to reflection prompts and do not resist sharing thoughts, either positive or negative about the consulting experience or about their learning from the experience. When they are given clear directed prompts, students are also able to provide reflective statements that are coherent and representative of course-related theoretical principles and intended learning outcomes. Reflection statements in our study largely demonstrated transfer of hospitality principles and values relevant to improved property quality and customer service for the advancement of tourism in the study region. Core hospitality skills learned in prior hospitality courses were acknowledged as useful to the projects and students additionally expressed increased self-efficacy in the use of these skill sets and in expanding their world views.

There was also evidence from the students of positive regard towards community engagement values as well as towards potential future careers. The fact that students repeatedly expressed commitment to future community service projects, and that one student might seek a non-profit career avenue, demonstrates that reflection data can be appropriately used to determine positive affect about the career prospects after an experiential learning activity has taken place.

Conclusion

This paper describes a student consulting course designed to assist small hospitality business operators in Taiwan. Bed and breakfast owners in Taitung, Taiwan, benefited from the committed efforts of students and faculty members from a local university, in that hospitality students offered advice to help B&Bs enhance their property quality and customer service. Content analysis of reflection data showed that the students experienced personal growth and developed a greater sense of confidence in applying hospitality and tourism skill sets. On the whole, this study reinforces the advantages of experiential education in preparing students to be competent professionals and encourages educators to consider guided reflection as a valid technique for hospitality education.

Notably, there is still debate in the experiential learning community about how much of learning

from experiential opportunities results from mere trial and error versus carefully controlled interventions, i.e., having educators place a learner in the right place at the right time [48,49]. Ames [1] views assurance of learning as difficult to achieve in consulting projects if careful steps are not taken to collect relevant and reliable data about student learning along the way. We believe that instructors must collect reflection data in order to explore student outcomes fully, particularly in order to verify any increases in self-efficacy or demonstrations of positive affect.

Several factors may have contributed to the findings in this pilot study. First, a careful placement procedure was adopted. Instructors screened interested students and selected the ten who were believed to best fit the project. Such a strict screening process may have triggered exceptionally positive statements of prior motivations for joining the consulting course. Secondly, the focus of the consulting project on improving bed and breakfast operations allowed students to apply skills they had previously acquired in the hospitality program. Third, the support of the community and tourism leaders made the students feel welcome and validated the importance of their consulting work which could lead to increased self-efficacy and positive affect toward the community, the tourism and hospitality sector, and related careers. Fourth, instructors were on site to supervise students and provide guidance. Instructors continually assigned tasks to challenge the students. Fifth, the students were continuously asked to reflect on their activities and learning, following the experiential learning cycle model that suggests reflection between experience and future experimentation is a necessary step in the learning process.

On a slightly tangential note, while the experiential learning design examined in this paper placed students in a real-world setting using consulting projects serving small business clients, little specific learning about small business and entrepreneurship was documented in student reflections collected over the course of the project. The authors are forced to conclude that reflection assignments must be carefully tailored to instructors' desired learning outcomes; merely placing students in an environment does not seem to be sufficient to guarantee students will respond to all available environmental cues. It is more likely students will be selective of cues based on their assumptions of the core disciplinary goals or based on the learning outcomes expressed in the course syllabus.

The authors clearly found that student reflections on the consulting project addressed hospitality competency and consulting skill sets. But no sense of learning about small business and hospitality entrepreneurship was displayed even though the focus was on B&B clients who represented small business owners in Taiwan. Undoubtedly, there was a lack of evidence of students' learning outcomes related to small business and entrepreneurship because this potential goal was not incorporated into the guided reflection activities. Since the instructors posed the project challenge as one of improving physical assets and hospitality operations for tourism development in Taiwan, the students concentrated their reflective activity and learning on those aspects of the course. Any observations on the small business nature of the B&Bs tended to focus on the gaps in hospitality expertise and lack of capital resources evidenced by the B&B owners.

Students commented more on the unprofessionalism or lack of sophistication of the operations from a hospitality quality vantage point, than on the entrepreneurial qualities of selfemployment, risk, and creativity, often discussed in courses in entrepreneurship, which did not happen to be part of the student's hospitality program.

The absence of any significant reflection on small business concepts when the entire project was designed to assist small business operators is revealing, implying that as instructors, what we ask the students to see, is what students will see. Therefore, the design of the student reflection activity or assignment, as well as the statement of learning goals for the course, must both be carefully examined.

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