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An investigation of professional development education for tourism and hospitality employees through university and industry cooperative education

Helen Breen
Southern Cross University

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Title: An Investigation of Professional Development Education for Tourism and Hospitality Employees through University and Industry Cooperative Education Partnerships.

Biographic Details of the Author

Helen Breen is Academic Coordinator for the Centre for Professional Development in Club Management at Southern Cross University and has a Bachelor of Arts (Economics, Social Studies and Australian Public Policy) from Deakin University and a Bachelor of Business in Tourism (Honours) from the University of New-England-Northern Rivers. She is currently a Masters candidate at Southern Cross University and lectures in management and gaming.

Helen can be contacted at the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Southern Cross University, P.O. Box 157, Lismore, 2480, Australia.

Please address all correspondence to:
Helen Breen
School of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Southern Cross University
P.O. Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
AUSTRALIA
Telephone: + (02) 66 20 3152
Facsimile: + (02) 66 22. 2208
Email: hbreen@scu.edu.au

Abstract:

An Investigation of Professional Development Education for Tourism and Hospitality Employees through University and Industry Cooperative Education Partnerships

Keywords: university industry partnerships, professional development education in tourism and hospitality industries.

Cooperative educational partnerships in Australia are innovative education partnerships where universities join with a business or industry association in a working relationship. The partners share resources to develop and provide undergraduate award-bearing professional development education courses for employees and association members. The aim of this research is to investigate the nature of outcomes that encourages tourism and hospitality organisations to encourage professional development education for their employees and members.

This research used a qualitative approach to understand and analyse five cooperative education partnerships operating in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Southern Cross University, Lismore, Australia. The outcomes emerging for tourism and hospitality organisations include encouraging confidence and loyalty in employees and a strengthening industry commitment to further education. The university saw professional development education provided through cooperative education partnerships as becoming part of their core education activity. Communication difficulties between different organisation cultures appear to be a barrier to overcome.

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INTRODUCTION

As the pace of growth of knowledge and the rate of change in society move along in a rapid, volatile way, no professional or vocational qualification could be expected to survive without change and improvement. Becher (1999) observes that vocational qualifications need to be periodically refreshed. Further, Duke (1992) suggests that the diverse needs of society and the individual aspirations of people give rise to motivation for renewal. In fact Duke (1992:1055) writes, “The expansion of adult and continuing education is ... a complex phenomenon reflecting ... aspirations of individuals”. Educational refreshment or renewal is often called vocational education or continuing professional development education. As beneficiaries and often financiers of professional development activities, businesses and industry associations have a direct interest in professional development education, as do universities who supply some professional development education courses.

Professional development is sometimes referred to as a fourth stage of education. Using this idea Teichler (1992) describes basic school education as stage one, followed closely by secondary school as stage two. The third stage is seen as tertiary education while a fourth stage of education consists of a wide variety of education options, called: further, adult, in-career, recurrent, permanent, self-directed, continuing, lifelong, informal education, professional development, among many other terms. Professional development education

might well be called any of these names, but there is limited literature describing its nature, development and outcomes. Yet, it is an area of key importance to education providers and especially to industry, for the potential benefits it may bring.

Tourism and hospitality, as an emerging professional field, has a particular interest in professional development education. By seeking professional development education at university levels, tourism and hospitality industries recognise the need for achieving professionalism (Harris and Jago, 2001) through developing skilled, competent people able to provide high quality services. Professionalism implies high standards of service quality. This is particularly important in service industries like tourism and hospitality where skilled, knowledgeable performances create most of the benefits or products that customers purchase. Thus, levels of skill, knowledge and competence are expected to improve in aspiring tourism and hospitality professionals. However there appears to be little research as to the results or outcomes of professional development education in the workplace of tourism and hospitality organisations.

The purpose of this investigation is to examine outcomes of professional development education provided by cooperative education partnerships in the tourism and hospitality workplace. In particular this research aims to investigate the nature of outcomes from undergraduate award-bearing professional development education courses offered at a university in Australia in partnership with tourism and hospitality businesses and industry associations.

INDUSTRY PRESSURES

Businesses provide the world with goods and services in exchange for something of value. Exchange encourages competition through searching for the best exchange rate or price for the purchaser, as well as the highest profit for the producer. Markets are the means through which competition and exchange occurs. While the goods and services businesses produce make life comfortable for many, de Geus (1997) claims that many businesses have short lives and fail. In fact de Geus (1997:52) argues that businesses fail when they place too much emphasis on economics including “land, labour and capital” and overlook the human beings in their community. They often do not fully recognise that “labour means real people” (de Geus, 1997:52). While businesses’ value and protect their physical assets of land and financial assets of capital, they may overlook the need to value and nurture their employees as human assets. When people are encouraged to train, learn, undertake further education to become more professional, then businesses are seen to value their people. As well, businesses who appear to adapt and evolve to meet changing conditions, do this partly through their efforts in galvanising human development, developing new knowledge and raising standards. In fact Drucker (1997: 22) claims “the only comparative advantage of the developed countries is in the supply of knowledge workers”. They create an environment where ideas and information can be transformed into goods and services that satisfy the market. This alone does not guarantee the competitive success of the business. However it builds workforce knowledge and quality standards which assist longevity and prolongs survival in an intensely ambitious business environment. One way to assist with developing human capacity for new learning is by encouraging professional development education. Through professional development

education, businesses and industry associations hope to extend and motivate employees and members to achieve knowledgeable, professional yet competitive advantages for their organisations. Some businesses and industry associations combine with universities to develop and provide co-operative education courses for the professional development of their employees and members, to extend their knowledge and lift professional standards. In tourism and hospitality industries, award-bearing professional development education has come to be seen as important for raising professional standards (Harris and Jago, 2001). However the results of professional development education courses provided by universities for tourism and hospitality employees are not widely available. This research will explain some of the outcomes of undergraduate award-bearing professional education courses offered by a university in cooperation with tourism and hospitality businesses and industry association.

UNIVERSITY PRESSURES

The focus of universities is centred on knowledge driven tasks. Clark (1983:14) suggests that this knowledge focus distinguishes universities from “industry organisations, governmental bureaus, and the many agencies that dot the nonprofit sector”. Universities as diverse and evolving organisations often face uncertainty and challenge. Taking a broad view, Maslen and Slattery (1994) have identified some troublesome issues for universities. One of these troublesome issues is the questionable ability of governments to continue funding universities. Another worrying issue is the undermining of the critical function, the publicly outspoken role of the university institution. Focussing on the first of these troublesome challenges, Wilson (1997:220) claims that “For better or for worse, universities are now regarded as contributors

to the national wealth”. Universities now cope with the rival demands of meeting national economic priorities and meeting their own essential knowledge task priorities. This creates complications for universities, trying to meet two quite different and sometimes opposing priorities. Reforms encouraging universities to become less economically dependent on governments through user-pays, echo the ideas put forward by Smart (1989:17 cited in Miller, 1995:11). One solution or alternative in a search for survival, is the establishment of university industry co-operative education partnerships. University industry co-operative education partnerships are a joint venture between a university and a business or industry association who together produce and provide undergraduate award-bearing education courses for the professional development of employees and members, for the payment of course fees.

FORMAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Formal professional development educational courses that are also award-bearing university courses have particular significance for emerging applied professions, such as those in tourism and hospitality management. According to Duke (1992:1056) university professional development education courses include, “... established or specially created degree and other award-bearing courses, ... designed to meet particular needs”. Formal professional development courses that articulate into, or are university degrees, focus on understanding the nature of experiences in the field. As well they connect the professional occupation to a developing, expert knowledge base, through building and sustaining relationships with higher education. The bond between a profession and an expert knowledge base reflects its history. The historical development of those very early medieval professional occupations such as the

clergy, medicine, law and the like is based on a lengthy and extensive accumulation of knowledge, built on continuous linking of theory with practice. Over time a stage is reached, where these professional occupations have a recognisable well-developed, abstract, foundation of knowledge. In contrast, emerging professional occupations such as those in tourism and hospitality have just begun their journey to developing an abstract knowledge base. For instance the field of tourism studies was seen as evolving from other disciplines in the 1970's. Tourism then appeared as a part of sociology, anthropology, geography, economics, psychology and more. The editor of an international peer-reviewed journal, *Annals of Tourism Research* (Jafari, 1981) suggested that tourism in the 1970-80's began emerging as a distinct discipline in its own right. According to Leiper (1981) the earlier multi-disciplinary approach had no core body of knowledge on which to focus, to provide a sense of cohesion, order and unity. Over time, the tourism field has begun to develop its own substance, as Leiper (1982:10) says beginning as an "embryonic field of studies" growing through experience into a discipline, around which a recognisable well – developed, abstract, body of knowledge is being established.

A current requirement for a managerial position in many Australian tourism and hospitality sectors, is now a university degree according to the Beck and Richardson (1997) in their *Tourism Education Directory*. This complex managerial field includes finance, human resources, sales and marketing, environmental care, occupational health and safety, recreation, leisure and more. Through participation with higher education in undergraduate professional development courses, an emerging field can be assisted in its growth, through weaving an understanding of the nature of experiences in the field into theory construction. Yet the lack

of award-bearing education courses and qualifications in some areas of tourism and hospitality such as registered and licensed clubs, has led to the creation of professional development education courses to meet their needs. As partners, universities bring a perception of rigour that adds value to professional development education courses at university levels (Harris and Jago, 2001). In the emerging professional field of tourism and hospitality education, it remains unclear whether universities can meet many of the industries' professional development education needs.

MOTIVATIONS

Linking the market economy to employment prospects and higher education, Abbott (1988:211) maintains that corporate investment in professional development education is an, “attempt to direct education towards the immediate goals of commerce”. Additionally Marginson (1993:131) argues that credentialism is “the increasing supply of graduates, the continuing demand for graduates in the workplace, and the under-use of their knowledge and skills”. Employers may use credentials as a selection tool rather than value the cognitive attributes of the educated employee. From an education market view, Blackman and Segal (1992) observe that the expanded supply of higher education courses and increasing demand for recruiting innovative staff who are able to meet and critique changing competitive and technological conditions at work, are further market catalysts for continuing or professional development education. Nevertheless, sharp demand market forces according to Hemmington (1999:49) which consist of, “less secure employment, greater competition for jobs, companies focussing on short-term profitability”, provide the most basic motives for

participating in formal professional development education. Formal professional development education enables motivated employees and members to achieve personal and organisational success.

As a reward catalyst Teichler (1992:976) maintains that higher educational attainment is increasingly seen as a prerequisite employment pathway, “for access to the most powerful, most prestigious, and most highly remunerated occupations”. Close links between education attainment and career progression especially for emerging managerial occupations, are significant factors influencing market stimulation for continuing professional development education. In a similar vein, Bereday (1973) claims that in an industrial society there is no avoiding the social significance of educational aspirations and the dignity that accompanies a recognised professional position. General motivations for continuing professional development education relate to achieving the goals of commerce, assisting in staff selection, improving job security, enhancing career progression and acting as a reward mechanism. Nevertheless few publications explain motivations that underpin the provision of professional development education by employers and industry for their employees and members at an undergraduate level in tourism and hospitality.

UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Concerns about university industry partnerships changing the nature of university research, have been raised by Bowie (1994). He suggests that university industry partnerships might undermine three core academic values. The creation of business-funded research centres may

undermine the power of the departments and fragment university governance. As well, academics engaging in patentable research could obtain positions of power and undue influence. Finally, the traditional peer review system might be weakened through secrecy. Together these three effects may lead to a distortion in resource allocation and undermine the culture and mission of the university (Bowie, 1994). In contrast, Fairweather (1995) maintains that the lack of new products suggests that commercial research is not being achieved. In fact Fairweather (1995:609) maintains that industry is motivated to join university industry partnerships “to gain access to graduate students and faculty expertise”. Industry appears to want well-educated employees and academic research expertise more than commercial products from university industry research partnerships.

UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY EDUCATION PARTENRSHIPS

Unlike research university industry partnerships, cooperative education partnerships between industry and universities are less well recognised due to their broad definition and scope. Many higher education institutions that have any relationship or involvement with an industry might call this relationship a cooperative education partnership. The World Council and Assembly on Cooperative Education (1987) describes cooperative education as a strategy of applied learning, developed and supervised by an educational institution in partnership with an employer organisation in which relevant work experience is part of the academic program. For this research, a cooperative education partnership is one where a university along with a business or industry association join together in a working relationship, sharing resources to provide undergraduate award-bearing professional development education courses for their

employees or members in the workplace. Most of the education courses are delivered by distance education, students are enrolled part-time and have the option to attend residential schools at the university. Both parties in the partnership contribute to the development of these courses in which education and training is jointly developed and delivered for the principal benefit of employee and employer, for a negotiated fee (Hase, 1997). Cooperative educational partnerships in Australia are thus innovative and evolving education partnerships with industry connections at many levels, at employee, employer, industry association, state and national levels. For a summary of some important features of the five cooperative education partnerships involved in this research, see Appendix A.

However, limited research has been conducted into the outcomes of cooperative education partnerships generally, but particularly in the field of tourism and hospitality. The Business Council of Australia (1990) who have several cooperative education partnerships with a range of universities, mostly in the field of information technology, believe that these partnerships enhance the level, and improve the range of, education offerings as well as fostering closer links between business and education. Jamieson (1994) investigating one cooperative education partnership in car manufacture, concluded that it's success was founded on flexible and innovative design and delivery of courses to working adults; carrying out operations in a businesslike manner; and having a strongly bonded core of people with unwavering vision and commitment. From twelve Australian case studies, mostly government agencies, Hase (1997) found that innovative tertiary teaching, flexible academic staff, entrepreneurship, adequate reward systems, commitment, champions, open communications and government

support were factors contributing to fostering some Australian cooperative education partnerships.

These findings leave unexplored the nature of outcomes expected from cooperative educational partnerships in tourism and hospitality. The aim of this research is to examine the nature of outcomes that encourages tourism and hospitality businesses and industry associations to cooperate with universities in providing undergraduate award-bearing professional development education for their employees and members. The significance of this investigation rests in its usefulness as a reference point for other universities and industries that might want to explore the option of establishing a cooperative education partnership to provide professional development education for their employees and members.

METHODS

Using Naturalistic Inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), this research used an illuminative approach based in part on Grounded Theory (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) to understand and analyse some of the outcomes of participation in cooperative education partnerships. As Naturalistic Inquiry implies, this qualitative research was mostly carried out in a natural work setting and was open to whatever results emerged (Patton, 1990). Gathering detailed information through interviewing participants in their tourism and hospitality work settings, in businesses, in industry associations and in a university, was important to begin to understand the expectations that underpin each organisation's partnership.

This research design involved preliminary interviews with two senior academics and attendance at a cooperative education conference with current and potential industry partners. This was followed by individual interviews with six industry and three academic partners closely involved in five cooperative education partnerships. The interviews were in-depth standardised, but open-ended and ranged from 1 hour to 3 hours. A shorter follow up interview with the same people was completed to extend discussion on some issues and confirm the accuracy of the interview information. Finally, an investigation into the secondary literature was carried out to compare published information to the interview findings. See Appendix B for a list of the interview questions.

An Australian university with a concentration of cooperative education partnerships with tourism and hospitality businesses and industry associations was Southern Cross University in northern New South Wales, Australia. This site was convenient and within easy access for the researcher. It has in its School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, five industry partners each with varying partnership histories.

The first analytical task was to label and number the information contained in the transcripts of the interviews. This helped to identify potential variables through comparing and contrasting interview data (Patton, 1990). The second task in the analysis, constant comparison, was used to find evolving concepts and categories in the primary data. The development of inductive categories through comparison and coding allows for the linking or grounding of these categories to the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The third analytical task was to synthesise the main categories into core outcomes, around which most of the other

categories were integrated. This stage required moving back and forth between the data and the categories, adding depth to the developing theory (Patton, 1990).

In order to ensure credibility and reduce bias, triangulation of analysis methods, data sources and multiple analysts were used (Patton, 1990). Triangulation of methods involved completing interviews in the workplace using a tape recorder and comparing this information with that gathered from conference delegates and in related literature. Triangulation of data sources meant comparing each interview transcript with the other interview transcripts and with information published in relevant literature. It also meant asking the respondents to review their typed interviews for accuracy and clarity. Multiple analysts involved having other people independently analyse the interview transcript data. This member check involved asking an experienced qualitative researcher at Southern Cross University to review the analysis procedure. This ensured that labels, coding, categories and findings were seen as genuinely emerging from this research. As seen in Appendix A, case numbers are used to identify different respondents but also preserve their anonymity.

RESULTS

A range of outcomes can be identified in this investigation resulting from cooperative education partnership courses. From an industry perspective, important outcomes fall under the following headings: improving employee confidence and stronger industry support for professional development education. Both these results were equally important. Other less important results were that communication barriers and that little change could be seen.

Academic respondents see professional development education provided by cooperative education partnerships becoming a core university activity as a very important outcome. Less important outcomes reported by academics were additional revenues and potential ethical dilemmas.

Employee Confidence

A visible investment in developing people in their organisation indicates assurance and confidence in their employees reported four out of six respondents. Participation in cooperative education partnership courses, “ demonstrates ... commitment to the development of its staff” said one respondent (Case 5). Employee development provides business and industry with the human resources it needs to compete in an increasingly competitive market place. In reality, the opportunity for university level professional development education acts as a motivating tool to build confidence, to retain current employees and develop their loyalty to the business. As one respondent (Case 1) said “An educated capable workforce should help reduce staff turnover and eventually should have an impact on the bottom line”. There is an expectation that staff will show reciprocal loyalty to their employer and commitment to their work through access to, and engagement in, tertiary education opportunities. Another respondent (Case 5) commented “... they need new skills and qualifications for promotions”. The cooperative education partnership courses raise employee and member awareness of professional development education. Such courses remind people that they need to personally develop their skills, to take up industry education initiatives in order to enhance their careers. Industry respondents commented that following the implementation of new skills in the

workplace, they anticipated an improved competitive business position. More importantly they reported that better educated employees and members would be more confident to meet potential industry opportunities and threats. Employee development was predicted to reflect better business performance. As tourism and hospitality businesses and industry associations invest in broadening their employee and member capabilities through professional development education, one outcome is employees' willingness to enhance their careers, act with improved confidence to assist in meeting their employer's goals.

Industry Commitment

Equally as important an outcome as improved employee confidence, is strong industry commitment to developing relevant, accessible yet challenging professional development education courses for their employees and members. Four of six industry respondents reported this outcome. One respondent (Case 4) made this comment "The value and effect of education for the industry adds to our credibility and value in the ... industry". The subjects that people study are said to be relevant and applicable, so that educational achievement is aligned to both individual business and whole of industry achievements. However the provision of challenging industry education raises other critical issues. As one respondent (Case 2) remarked cooperative education courses were "... a challenge to current managers in their thinking". By reflecting on regular work habits and current industry thinking through professional development education activities, beneficial outcomes such as broader strategic thinking and better work practices should emerge.

Human resource managers and education managers see a benefit in dealing with a single education body for professional development industry education. University provided professional development education was seen as being dependable for tourism and hospitality businesses. “There is a degree of consistency with the university and that has been valuable ... has made a difference to the way we provide education” observed one respondent (Case 4). This stability is in contrast to a wide variety of training and education initiatives put forward by government agencies and private providers through the national vocational training framework. These initiatives are sometimes confusing. The supply of well established but demanding university education courses was anticipated to reduce complexity in educational choices for these tourism and hospitality organisations. The provision of university level cooperative education courses for employees and members is a signal of robust forces underlying strong industry commitment to professional development education in tourism and hospitality fields.

Communication Barriers

A negative outcome for the cooperative education partnerships was the strain implicit in cooperation between different institutions. Distinct organisational cultures belonging to a university, a business or an industry association in a cooperative partnership lends itself to having some differences in communication styles. Two out of six industry respondents reported this negative outcome. “The culture, the language and the signals can be different in importance in one forum and not the other between the industry and academia. There needs to be an understanding of the importance of this between the partners” noted one respondent

(Case 3). An example illustrating communication and cultural tension was the need for further investigation into integrating national tourism and hospitality industry competency standards into the cooperative education partnership courses. This task was seen as an important one for some industry partners, but not for the university partner. Communication and cultural barriers between different organisations can lead to poor interactions and deteriorating relationships. One respondent (Case 2) recommended, “A balance needs to be maintained to serve the ... (organisation) ... needs and the university needs”. Cultural anxieties and communications barriers take a short time to appear, but much more time to heal.

No change

On a minor negative note, one industry respondent felt that little progress had been made in a cooperative education partnership with one of Australia’s largest but fragmented hospitality service industries. This respondent (Case 3) “... still identified ... a major need in the industry, which is underrepresented in terms of qualified management education”. Many managers and employees had little or no tertiary education in this industry. This respondent felt that cooperative education partnerships had made few inroads into their industry, as enrolments had been very poor. “There have not been many enrolments from hospitality businesses” was a comment from this person (Case 3). Adopting ideas to bring about professional change at an industry level needs to be matched at small business levels as well. Professional development education was not really expected to grow in an industry dominated by small businesses with a low threshold for adopting new ideas on education, particularly where the current education standard is not seen to need any upgrading.

Core University Activity

For the university, participation in cooperative education partnership programs and the accompanying innovations they bring, is becoming a core activity of the university. As one senior academic said “When ever possible all university programs should connect with the appropriate industry ... where cooperative means development of elements of the course in collaboration and cooperation with the industry and/or an employer”. Cooperative education partnerships are seen as an essential part of the university’s mission and programs. They have enhanced overall education quality provided by the university. All three academics noted that cooperative education partnerships had provided the impetus to enhance student administration methods, improve delivery systems and broaden the curriculum following a review by current industry practitioners. As well, teaching and learning processes had been refined to meet education delivery in the workplace. For example the university had developed distance education teaching systems, improved timely responses to student inquiries and won awards for quality teaching material in a quality audit of the university. One academic observed, “They came to us because we are an innovative university, most thoughtful”. The cooperative education courses also brought a diversity of mature students which pushed the university into developing new systems for recognition of prior learning, continuous entry and advanced standing based on combinations of education, experience, skills, knowledge and challenges. “Our industry students have forced this change for the better”, said the same academic. With the cooperation and involvement of business and industry association partners in creating and developing professional development education

programs, the resulting courses are reported to be more relevant and viable. “Anytime we connect with industry in the vision, creation and development of courses (we) have more relevant courses” noted a senior academic. As well cooperative education courses provide extra students when combined with others, making a practical number for operating education programs. “ Industry courses can help make up the numbers needed to make a course viable” remarked the same senior academic. As a result cooperative educational partnerships that provide undergraduate professional development education to industry students have become a core university activity providing innovative, quality education courses.

Revenue

The generation of revenue from non-government funds is a valuable outcome for the university. As a senior academic said “ We are likely to rely more and more on the added value revenue that comes from our cooperative education courses”. There is a trend in Australia for less reliance on government funds for many types of public institutions including universities, with a corresponding growing reliance on externally generated funds. In some instances revenues have been initially less than expected, but the partnerships provide links with industry that gives the university potential to develop future opportunities if and when they arise. Nonetheless the financial revenue from cooperative education partnerships is a tangible and welcome benefit for the university.

Ethics

There are potential conflicts, one academic noted, in supplying professional development educational programs to a commercial market that might hold contrasting ethical views to that of the university. This could compromise the university's integrity as a social institution supplying a public good or service. In this case, the academic commented "We might have a conflict with an operator". As a solution, this academic suggests that the university needs to think ahead, to look for potential problems. The university needs to have checks and balances in place through composite systems, such as careful screening of partners, teaching common courses, using similar recruitment criteria and awarding standard credentials to ensure that any ethical conflicts were reduced.

In summary, important outcomes resulting from participating in cooperative educational partnership courses for tourism and hospitality businesses and industry associations include improved employee and member confidence and a stronger commitment to further professional development education. Less important were overcoming some communication barriers and making a significant impact in one area of hospitality. For universities, professional development education and cooperative education partnerships are contributing to, and becoming a significant part of, their core activities. To a lesser extent, cooperative education partnerships provide extra funds for universities and potentially expose them to some ethical problems. A summary of these results can be seen in Figure 1 below.

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DISCUSSION

Cooperative education partnerships are a combined response by higher education, business and industry associations to meet opportunities and challenges posed by rapidly changing conditions in their environment. Both de Gues (1997) and Drucker (1997) emphasise the importance of a knowledgeable workforce in any organisation. The provision of professional development education for employees in the workplace has been shown to be an important strategy for industry to meet competitive forces with a knowledgeable and dedicated workforce.

As an emerging professional field, tourism and hospitality managers and employees learn to confidently reflect on their workplace experiences. They learn to compare the nature of these experiences to theories on the same topic and express their views in a logical, academic way. Incremental activity such as this accumulates and helps to build a recognisable body of knowledge for the tourism and hospitality discipline and a professional field for graduates. Results such as these support the early assertions of Leiper (1981; 1982) and Jafari (1981) that tourism and hospitality is developing a distinct body of knowledge, based in part, on documenting the nature of experiences in the field.

Professional development education, Abbott (1988) suggests, is a response to market demands. Yet, the reality is that professional development education at university levels also provides the motivation to achieve, culminating in award-bearing university credentials for

individuals. Indeed, according to Duke (1992), Teichler (1992) and Bereday (1973) aspiring for success at university, enhances the prospects of professional positions. Heightened career prospects and personal development are key incentives for employees and members to undertake professional development education in the workplace.

In spite of Bowie's (1994) predictions of undermining academic values, cooperative education courses provide a pool of confident, loyal employees for a business or industry association. As Fairweather (1995) asserts, industry is really interested in access to, and development of, well-educated, capable graduates. There appears to be no support for credentialism (Marginson, 1993). Instead, professional development education through cooperative education partnerships provides evidence of a growing industry commitment to education, underlying a belief and confidence in their human resources.

While Jamieson (1994) found that cooperative education partnerships need to be founded on a strongly bonded core of people, strains accompanying cooperative education partnerships based on distinctly different organisational cultures, lends itself to uncovering some communication difficulties. Different cultures, language and attitudes identify each partner and these can have different degrees of importance and value from one organisation to the other. Difficulties with internal cultures and communication processes have been seen to lead to a reduction in the partnership synergy. Hase (1997) also found that there needs to be an understanding of the importance of recognising alternative cultures, maintaining balanced views and flexible attitudes between the partners to best serve their educational needs. Clearly effective two-way communications are essential to maintain effective partnerships.

The position of having positive industry relationships helps to publicly establish the university as an enthusiastic industry partner. Building a reputation for reliability in developing innovative education partnerships does establish close links between business and university. This finding is supported by the Business Council of Australia (1990). Professional development education in Australia sits near the cusp of university innovations, due to a reliance on meeting demand and supply mechanisms. Education innovations are implemented and added to existing courses that attract and retain strong market demand. Additionally, as Wilson (1997) maintains the revenues cooperative education partnerships attract are valuable for a university.

While continuing innovation in professional development education encourages closer university – industry links through responses to market mechanisms, the potential for controversy through holding opposite values to a partner could damage partnership relations. The university role of having a public social conscience (Maslen and Slattery, 1994) means that careful initial screening of partners is essential, to ensure similar attitudes and values are held. However as partner circumstances evolve, initial attitudes could change. The implication is that partners need to be aware of their partners’ evolving social and community values as well as their educational values.

University culture is distinguished from other organisations through a focus on knowledge activities (Clark, 1983). Industry partners actively seek knowledge activities in professional development education with a university. This implies that a partnership should not be set up

with profit making as its main focus (Harris and Jago, 2001). Any university developing cooperative education partnerships lacking a dedicated education and knowledge focus will suffer from having a shallow, less serious partnership, one with a very low level of support from tourism and hospitality industries.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigation has sought to investigate the nature of outcomes of professional development education for tourism and hospitality employees and association members through university and industry cooperative education partnerships. One of the most significant industry outcomes is the capacity for professional development education to be a catalyst for self-renewal and growth of confidence at an individual and organisation level. An equally important industry outcome is the improving industry support driving professional development education in some tourism and hospitality sectors. For the university partner, professional development courses provided through cooperative education partnerships have grown to become a significant part of the university's activity. Clearly, one practical implication is that thriving cooperative education partnerships depend heavily on effective communications, on acceptance of one another's culture and a commitment towards working together in producing sound education courses. On a theoretical level, professional development courses with workplace employees have sufficient links and connections with academia, to add to the distinct and growing body of tourism and hospitality knowledge. The benefit of university based professional development education programs for industry include

significant opportunities to develop new knowledge and a new learning culture for the business or industry association.

In terms of future research, quantitative surveys of graduates and current students would be useful to extend and broaden these findings. An opportunity for longitudinal survey research would take into account the evolving nature of tourism and hospitality professional development education. As well, other research might investigate the links between emerging disciplines and professional development education for industry employees in developing and building an expert knowledge base.

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FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

	Major Outcomes	Minor Outcomes
Tourism & hospitality businesses & industry associations	Improved employees confidence; stronger industry commitment to professional development education.	Communication barriers; little change.
University	Professional development education becoming a core activity.	Improved revenues; potential ethical dilemmas.

APPENDIX A

A brief summary of the five tourism and hospitality cooperative education partnerships investigated for this research project.

	Academic Award	Partners	Board of Management	Student body	Funding Source	Established
Case 1	Certificate	Multinational org. & Southern Cross	Senior State Human Resources manager, Training managers, & Southern Cross	Middle managers & supervisors	Industry sponsorship	1998
Case 2	Diploma, Associate Degree, Degree	Training school of a multinational org. & Southern Cross	Senior State managers, Training School manager, Human Resources manager & Southern Cross	Those who have completed their Certificate at the Training School	A mix of industry sponsorship and fee for service	1995
Case 3	Diploma	Industry Association	National chair of the education committee, State Training and Education manager, & Southern Cross	Members & their employees	A mix of industry sponsorship and fee for service	1994
Case 4	Certificate, Diploma, Associate Degree, Degree	Two Industry Associations	National chair of the education committee, State Training and Education managers from both associations, & Southern Cross	Members, managers and trainee managers	Industry sponsorship	1993
Case 5	Diploma	Training division of a multinational org. & Southern Cross	Senior State managers, Training School manager, Human Resources manager & Southern Cross	Middle managers & supervisors	A mix of industry sponsorship and fee for service	1997

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Description

1. What cooperative education partnership programs does your industry or university offer?
2. Who runs the program?
3. How is it administered?

Values - Effects

4. How does participation in these cooperative educational partnership programs affect the industry or the university? In generally, then specifically.
5. What benefits / advantages are there for your industry or the university? Now and in the future.
6. Why are these benefits important? Values question.
7. What kinds of disadvantages are there for your industry or the university?

Roles – Relationships

8. What is your role in cooperative education partnerships?
9. What are the channels of communication like? Relationships question.
10. What kind of model of information flow exists?
11. Whose roles most affect relationships in the educational partnerships?

Effectiveness – Cooperation strategy

12. How effective do you think the cooperative educational programs are in what they try to achieve?
13. What difference have they made to the industry or the university or the whole community?
14. In your opinion, what do you think keeps these cooperative education partnerships alive?
15. What are the essential features for a successful cooperative educational partnership?
16. Why do you think industry organisations cooperate with universities in providing education for their employees?