

Interdisciplinary Learning & Teaching Presentation

Evaluating Consultancy Projects as an Interdisciplinary Learning Opportunity for Postgraduate Students

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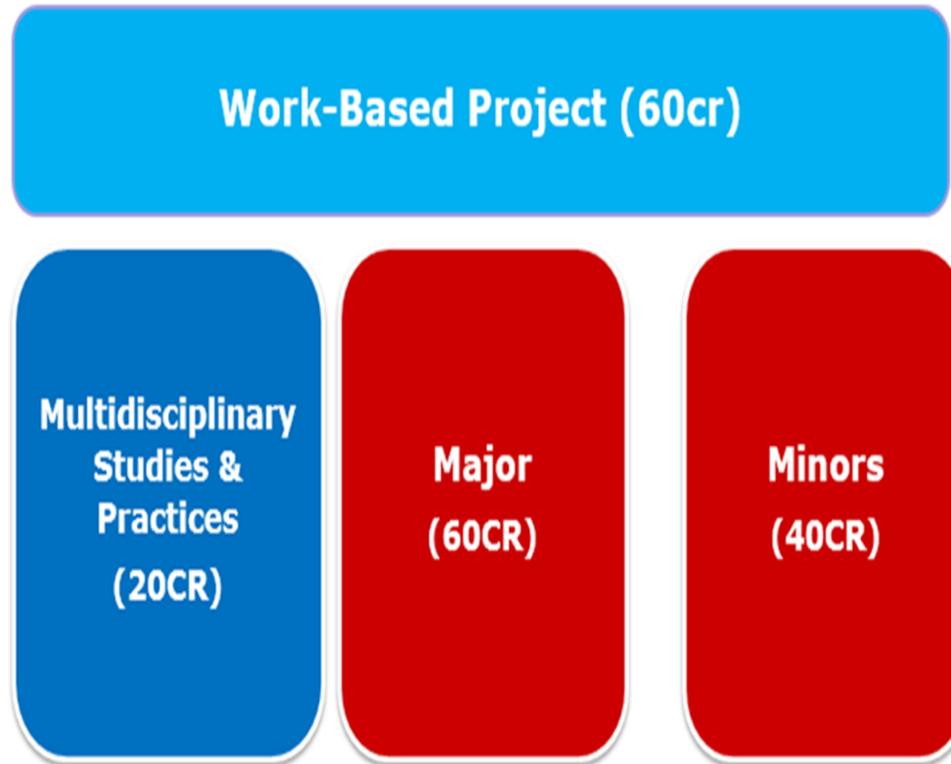
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Agenda

- Our Multidisciplinary Master's (MDM) course
- The interdisciplinary process (experiences & impact)
- Project case example (Canal & River Trust)
- Healey's (2005) Student-led Learning Framework
- Project experiences, outcomes & lessons learned

MDM Rationale: HEFCE & NTU-funded Project

Multidisciplinary Studies & Practices



- Providing an early real-world experience
- Supporting multidisciplinary within the course
- Encouraging interdisciplinary learning through:-
- Problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, team-working, project management, consultancy, creativity, employability

The Interdisciplinary Process

- 4 cohorts over 18 projects (approximately 90 students)
- Taught input: project and team-working models
- Multidisciplinary consultancy teams supported to work with client
- Client presentation and report
- Performance evaluation and critical reflection
- Changed and adapted over time



Case Example: Canal & River Trust Project

Project Aim?

To produce an overarching brief and 'sales pitch' for an Interpretation Plan for the Waterways of Nottingham

What did they do?

- Identified existing data on the canal usage
- Site visits and evaluation of existing interpretation
- Compared to good practice
- Developed heritage/history story
- Offered a plan to bid for funds



Healey's (2005) Student-led Learning

STUDENT-FOCUSED
STUDENTS AS PARTICIPANTS

Research-tutored

Curriculum emphasises learning focused on students writing and discussing papers or essays

Research-based

Curriculum emphasises students undertaking inquiry-based learning

EMPHASIS ON RESEARCH CONTENT

EMPHASIS ON RESEARCH PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS

Research-led

Curriculum is structured around teaching subject content

Research-oriented

Curriculum emphasises teaching processes of knowledge construction in the subject

TEACHER-FOCUSED
STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

Project Experiences & Outcomes

What have our student said?

"This has definitely enriched the learning process and challenged me by taking me out of my comfort zone and learning to communicate in different ways."

"I have learned so many new skills because my course has been so varied."

"My fellow cohorts have been brilliant. Getting to know them and studying with them has been the most enjoyable part of the course."

"The course has been too challenging at times."

What have our clients said?

"The students presented a broad range of points to consider. With respect to the brief that was set."

"It is impressive that you have all grasped the detail so well over such a short period."

Lessons Learned

-- Clients –

- Interdisciplinary working valued by clients (reflective of real world & outcomes are valued)
- Carried out within schools but interdisciplinary nature goes beyond this to deliver more – enriches outcomes for clients and students alike

-- Students –

- Valuable learning experience but not without difficulties

-- Pedagogical Insights –

- How best to support student learning (e.g. provide tools for communication, team-working, consultancy & project management)
- It can be a balancing act (some students switch off if fail badly but need to experience difficulties to learn)
- Works best as intensive learning experience within a wider programme that supports reflection and active learning (WBP & Graduate School)