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Developing a Pedagogic Approach to Enhance Student Learning Before, During and After International Work Placement: Teaching Fellowship 11

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11. Developing a Pedagogic Approach to Enhance Student Learning Before, During and After International Work Placement

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Abstract

The report commences with a brief overview of the Fellowship research and provides insight into the benefits of mobility. Erasmus mobility is viewed as a means to promote the Department of Culinary Arts in the international culinary arena via the student's skills and performance. It is clear from this research that the international internships provide exceptional opportunities for students to integrate and learn in different cultural environments. It is argued that this research addresses many of the unanswered issues related to internship before, during and after the experience: issues of knowledge, identity, integration and the student's personal development. This research framed the development of an internship model termed 'Academic Connection Internship Development' (ACID) that supports better learning and student development during national and international mobility. The research provided insight, understanding and knowledge in relations to student development and concerns when living and working in another country, and internship in general.

**Keywords:** assessment, e-learning, internship, student engagement and retention, work placement

Outline of Fellowship Project

Introduction

The Department of Culinary Arts is a department in the School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology, located in Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Cathal Brugha, Dublin 1. The Department of Culinary Arts' involvement in international culinary internships has experienced exponential growth over the past five years with the assistance of European Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus funding for European internships. The aim of this research was to develop a pedagogic approach to enhance student learning. The research was an extension of current ongoing analysis of international internships to develop an in-depth understanding of the dynamics involved in international culinary internships. To achieve this aim the research question was identified as 'What is the "nature of being" for culinary arts students before, during and after international culinary internship?' To address the research question the methodology adopted was a mixed method pragmatic approach using phenomenological views from students of the B.A. in Culinary Arts, and quantitative data providing in-depth analysis of the 2006 to 2009 cohorts to establish their attitude towards and understanding of international internship, and develop a framework for internship. The research identified that the student's self-identity is interrupted during the internship and a categorisation of in-group membership is conducted that is based on the student's culinary practice. The research identified the need to develop better internship structures and presents a model for internship titled the Academic Connection Internship Development (ACID). Finally a framework for internship is presented that sets out a model for internships to promote connectivity between the academic and internship domains.

Framework for Internship

Figure 11.1 sets out a process to address internship preparation and other issues identified in this research.
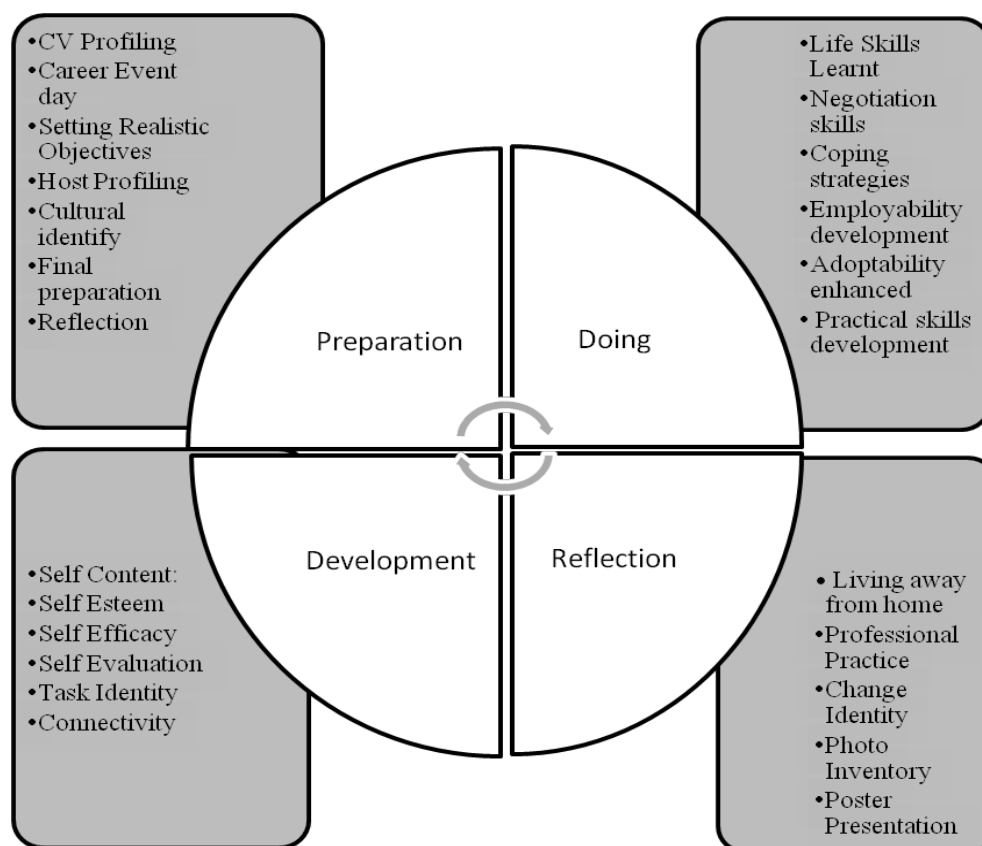
Figure 11.1 Academic Connection Internship Development (ACID) Model
Source: Proposed Internship Model to Address Academic Issues: developed for this research

The ACID model presented in Figure 11.1 identifies the learning experience related to 'doing' such as, living away from home, coping with the new environment, developing negotiation skills for dealing with everyday life and the internship as a process to enhance employability skills, task identity to allow adoptability. The reflective process identified captures the key issues associated with 'self' and the reconstructing of the self, taking on a new identity both in the professional practice, and self as a confident individual capable of exploring and living in new cultural environments. The next section deals with the internship framework in a stage-by-stage process.

The internship activities should incorporate a four-stage grading process carrying equal weighting:
- *Stage One*: Internship preparation continuous with three briefing/workshop sessions, 25%
- *Stage Two*: Career workshop, 25%
- *Stage Three*: Students internship with mentors appraisal, 25%
- *Stage Four*: Internship final report, poster and/or PowerPoint presentations, and debriefing session, 25%

Each stage of the process should carry a weighting of 25% of the final grade. The placement officer working alone can deal with a maximum of 200–225 students. In cases where the

number of students engaged with internship moves beyond 225, assistance is needed for the placement officer either on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the increase in numbers. Some Erasmus management funding could be diverted to pay for a flexitime member of staff to assist the placement officer with Erasmus placement internships. Moving forward with Grange Gorman in mind, the DIT should be considering the development of a central hub for placement officers similar to DCU's setup where 900 students are engaged in national and international internship. The placement officer should be timetabled to meet with the students for at least one hour per week during the semester prior to the internship period. On programmes where the internship takes place in the first semester of the academic year, the placement officer should be timetabled in the second semester of the academic year prior to the internship.

Programmes that have internship timetabled in semester one should consider moving the internship into semester two to facilitate better continuum between academic and internship activities.

Internship Preparation

→***Stage One*** *of Internship Preparation Semester One*

Briefing/Workshop Session One
The briefing session should take place at the start of the academic year in September/October of semester one, and be inclusive of all students preparing for internship. In cases where some programmes commence internship in semester one of year three, these students should be included in the preparation starting in semester one of year two of their programme. This briefing is an introduction to internship and its main focus is to motivate students to engage with the process, identifying the academic requirements for internship and making the necessary connectivity between the internship and the academic programme. The first briefing session should include one or two short presentations from previous internship students.

The session should also include topics such as:
- Why go on international internship-opening discussion
- Dealing with expectations
- Making the most of your internship experience
- Opportunity to develop
- Becoming a reflective practitioner
- What to plan for part one
- Erasmus funding documentation requirements, open discussion and including a booklet for internship
- Academic programme assessment requirements with open discussions to facilitate a questions and answers session
- Setting up of the Erasmus Showcase Event, open discussion and identification of student representatives
- A short internship booklet/handout should be provided setting out the requirements for the programme, including each of the topical areas above and a tick-box checklist

Students should be encouraged to start looking for suitable organisations as internship hosts following this session.

<u>Briefing/Workshop Session Two</u>
The briefing session's main focus should be to enhance the connectivity and provide further encouragement for student engagement with the internship process. Slides 11–17 identify the necessary requirements relative to the research findings. This briefing session should include topics such as:
- Professional practice concerns
- The reflective portfolio reinforcement of stage two
- Moving the internship forward
- Academic work and connectivity with internship
- Time-management actions
- Questions and answer session

<u>Briefing/Workshop Session Three</u>
This is the final briefing session to take place in the first week of May, reflecting on the requirements of the programme and encouraging students to develop individual plans.
- Reflective journal
- Interim report
- Final report
- Postal presentation
- Time management actions
- Questions and answer session

→*Stage Two:* *Career Workshop*

The career preparation focuses on preparing the students for their future career. This process is not unlike the requirements for internship. The internship preparation requires the student to assess the type of internship best suited to their interests and skills. Discussions with the DIT career officers informed the research on the aspects included in the career event:
- Self-assessment – examining values, interests, personality and skills (VIPS)
- Occupational research
- Networking and job search
- CV and cover letters
- Interview technique

→*Stage Three:* *Internship with Host Partner*

In order to ensure that the host partners and internship training agreements meet the learning objectives of the programmes the industry mentor needs clear guidelines to development of an understanding of the links between the academic domain and the connections between the student's programme of study and the internship. The following sections present recommended guidelines.

Industry Mentor's Role
The Mentor will ensure that the learner is fairly treated and that the work assigned is appropriate and challenging to the student, meeting the standard required for the level of award. The Mentor
- will encourage and facilitate the students learning
- encourage the development of new skill via a period of shadowing for a period of time each week

- assess the student's performance through encouragement and guidance during busy periods
- review the student's objectives and help set realistic objectives for internship and assist the student to achieve the objectives
- complete the internship assessment marking sheets.

→*Stage Four:* *Final report and Poster and/or PowerPoint Presentation*

This is the final stage of the internship process. The student's report needs to be based on a reflective journal providing a 'reflection of the reflections'. This style of report writing develops the student as a reflective practitioner and will further enhance the connectivity between the academic and internship domains. This should be a celebration of achievement, allowing the students to interact with each other and discuss their experiences. The internship, class tutors and placement officers discussions should draw upon:
- learning identified during the internship
- cultural integration
- benefits and any pitfalls experienced
- the poster presentation for the Erasmus Showcase event.

The internship tutor/s should also engage with the placement officer to assess and assist the student's development of:
- CV profiling
- career day participation
- setting realistic objectives
- host profiling
- cultural identify
- final preparation
- encouraging student reflection
- visiting the student during the internship.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Develop as policy to implement the four-stage internship process identified for Level 7 and 8 awards with internships offering 10 or more ECTS.
2. Adopt the Academic Connection Internship Development (ACID) Model for international internship as a minimum standard in DIT to ensure the internship is viewed as a continued academic process and meets the requirements of the National Framework of Qualification.
3. Adopt the National Framework Internship Models (NFI) developed for Higher Education awards with a view to reducing the number of current internship modules in the system. Page 20 presents the NFI module approach and a draft generic internship module for Level 8 award in Appendix 4.
4. Ensure the academic connectivity with internship by timetabling academic staff for each programme that incorporates work-based learning.
5. Develop a central hub for internship placement officers similar to UL and DCU operations, all programmes that incorporate internship would go through this hub to ensure quality standards in DIT's internship process.
6. Timetable the Placement Officer to meet with students weekly on all programmes that include internship.
7. Develop a flexible approach to awarding ECTS and grading the internship where necessary, that allows student progression (on a pending completion) into the next

stage of their studies having completed the first three stages of the internship process, the grade to be awarded on completion of stage four (final report and poster or PowerPoint presentation).

8. Review the current marking scheme in the DIT with a view to developing a more robust general grading system to minimise the possibility of grade inflation.
9. Adopt the proposed grading system in Appendix 1 for internship.
10. Award industry mentors for their contribution to internship following an agreed number of years service to DIT.
11. Develop a workshop for lecturers engaging in international internships.
12. Develop internship committees with a rotating chair every two years.

Proposed Future Research

- Feature projects could develop an e-portal that allows potential internship partners to upload offers of internship onto the DIT website.
- Research is needed to establish the cost benefit of developing a central office/hub for internship activities similar to the internship office in DUC.
- The development of an industry mentoring online training package is required and mentors should receive credits for completion.
- Future work: it is intended to develop a booklet on internship that sets out the process using an A to Z approach. This could be downloaded from the DIT site by all Colleges.
- Conduct research in the greater DIT to identify generic internship module and reduce the current number of module.

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