

**A Tripartite of Student Learning
For “Real World” Experiences in
Hospitality Programs**

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Abstract

Applied learning experiences in higher education enhance students' learning by integrating "real world" work experience with classroom instruction in well-planned and rigorous curricula. These learning experiences are an integral part of hospitality programs at colleges and universities nationwide. Selected applied learning activities at one community college and three universities were reviewed as part of a research study funded by Buffalo State College and the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). The research report includes a curricular model that is intended to promote more dialogue about the efficacy of applied learning activities as course components. The dialogue, ideally, will lead to critical analysis of applied learning as pedagogy.

An educational model focused on a tripartite of student learning that includes *knowledge, skills and attitude* has been drafted. The model will be presented in a poster presentation as a topic for Education/Curriculum at International Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Educators 2004 Annual Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia, PA in July 2004. An applied learning exposition is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, 2004, 12:30 – 1:30 in the Campus House boardroom. Faculty will be invited to visit the expo, and exchange ideas, assessment tools and other information related to applied learning experiences.

The benefits I have gained with this fellowship include:

1. Scholarship – acceptance of paper for poster presentation at International CHRIE Conference
2. Understanding – a greater understanding of teaching as scholarship
3. Network – a network of colleagues at prestigious schools with premier programs in hospitality and new colleagues at Buffalo State College who share a commitment to teaching and learning as scholarship

Background

Applied learning experiences function as necessary curricular components for student learning in hospitality programs around the country in the new millennia. They are embedded in courses and taught by faculty, graduate assistants and staff in diverse and often exciting learning environments. Departments and colleges receive a wide range of support to make applied learning high quality educational experiences for students. Educational institutions allocate funds (public and private), equip facilities (on campus), and support faculty and staff so that applied learning components are developed, implemented and maintained as meaningful learning experiences. A network of colleagues in business and industry are crucial to the applied learning activities at colleges and universities. The challenge many institutions face is to effectively sustain applied learning experiences into the future.

This report will summarize the activities that I engaged in since September 2003 as part of the faculty fellowship for Carnegie Academy of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). The goals of the fellowship were to accumulate a fund of knowledge on the implementation of applied learning activities including the types of activities, the process for activity assessment and the criteria for sustaining applied learning activities in hospitality programs by researching four other programs.

Review of Literature

“Real world” learning experiences are an important part of the educational process for the undergraduate hospitality student. “It has long been recognized that knowledge without experiential content is not truly knowledge” (Keeton, 1977, pg.2). The objective of applied learning experiences has remained fairly consistent over time. That is to enhance students’ learning by integrating practical work experience with classroom instruction in a well-planned and rigorous curriculum. Keeton’s (1977) work poses a series of steps that will perpetuate the learning process. The student must receive, assimilate, infer and act on information before it can be useful in his or her everyday action.

Applied learning experiences at colleges and universities with hospitality programs vary considerably. Heller (1997) compared hospitality administration programs at American Colleges and Universities in an exploratory study. He found that selected applied learning activities are an integral part of the curriculum in a majority of colleges and universities with programs. Heller (1997) noted that internships/work experiences were offered in 81 percent of the 65 hospitality programs he reviewed. Kiser and Partlow (1999) summarized experiential learning in hospitality education in a survey of 40 schools. “All of the program respondents offered some type of experiential component within their curriculum” (pg. 77). The extent to which experiential learning is utilized in these curriculums is well documented by Kiser and Partlow.

So how are appropriate applied learning activities selected, assigned, measured and sustained by the faculty and administrators of an academic department? Is there a common thread that can be used as a foundation to inform educators about the efficacy of students’ applied learning experience? Relationships among areas and stages of human development are

outlined in a table constructed by Keeton (1977). Kohlberg, Perry, Loevinger, Piaget and Bloom have completed empirical research on human development. This research may be useful to educators when thinking about the efficacy of applied learning experiences. Further, it may facilitate decision-making related to the selection and assignment of applied learning activities for hospitality students in educational institutions. Content areas for curriculum which strengthen applied learning experiences are leadership, human resources management, service marketing, financial analysis, total quality management and communication skills (Umbreit, 1992).

Research Method

This qualitative research report summarizes the visits made to one community college and three universities over the past nine months. Notes were transcribed from observations and interviews and the college web sites were studied.

Information collected in this qualitative study helped to build a curricular model for understanding the efficacy of applied learning experiences. The model is constructed using Keeton's theory that *knowledge, skills and attitudes* come together when applied learning is part of the pedagogy in teaching hospitality. Content areas listed by Umbreit (1992) served as a foundation to build the *knowledge* dimension in the tripartite. The empirical work done by Kohlberg, Perry, Loevinger, Piaget and Bloom were used for developing the *skill and attitude* dimension of the model.

The Ohio State University (OSU), Niagara University (NU), Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and Erie Community College (ECC) were accessible and amenable to participating in the research study. I am grateful to the chairmen, faculty and staff whom I met. My contacts at each of the colleges, Dr. H.G. Parsa, Dr. Gary Praetzel, Dr. Francis Domoy and

Mr. Donald Spasiano were generous with their time, and went out of their way to assist me in gathering the information needed to conduct the study. I also appreciate the help and support of Dr. Kevin Mulcahy, Buffalo State College Hospitality and Tourism Department Chair and Ms. Rebecca Dowsey, Lecturer for their assistance in making contacts at the universities.

Findings

The taxonomy for applied learning activities integral to all of the programs studied is divided between on-campus, off-campus and international activities. On-campus applied learning activities include experiences in a variety of settings. Those settings include restaurants, food labs, cafeterias, and hotels (Table 1). Although health care sites were not discussed during the interviews, a review of the web sites of RIT and ECC, list them as learning environments for students in food management programs.

The findings listed are not a review of the programs in their entirety, rather a report based on the interviews with the contact persons. The goal of the research was to build a conceptual model that could be used to increase understanding of the efficacy of applied learning activities in hospitality programs.

Table 1

On-campus	Off-campus	International
• Restaurant	Restaurant	Restaurant
• Food lab	Hotel	Hotel
• Cafeteria	Corporate	
• Hotel	Health Care	

The Ohio State University (OSU) has a program in the Department of Consumer and Textile Sciences offering degrees at the Baccalaureate, Master and Doctoral levels. The degree is a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management. There are three components that I reviewed that relate to the tripartite of student learning. First, the department has one student-run restaurant located in the theatre arts building adjacent to Mirror Lake. Students spend one semester learning essential management practices of restaurant operations. A prerequisite to this course is previous restaurant industry experience. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner five days a week. It is open to the public and run by the students in the Hospitality Management Department. Professional staff includes a full time coordinator and one full time chef instructor. A full time tenured faculty member teaches the courses with the applied learning component attached to it.

The Blackwell Hotel is a four star hotel, and part of the Fisher College School of Business on the OSU campus. This is the second component for applied learning at the university. Here students learn hotel management when they attend class at the hotel property. Students interface with the general manager, marketing manager and other members of the hotel executive board as part of their coursework. The Blackwell Hotel draws meeting and event business from all over the country. Their clientele are often distinguished professors, high profile business executives and politicians. Students attend lectures; receive hands-on experience in all aspects of hotel management including finance, special events and housekeeping at the hotel property. This experience follows the on-campus restaurant experience.

The final piece of the applied learning component for OSU hospitality students is an internship, which usually happens, in the final semester of senior year. Students self-select a regional or national hospitality business and are linked with a manager, executive or owner for a high-level hospitality business experience with the help of the faculty mentor/advisor. I visited The Ohio State University on October 30, 2003. My contact at the university was H.G. Parsa, Associate Professor, Hospitality Management Program in the School of Consumer and Textile Science.

Niagara University (NU) established a new college on February 8, 2001. The Board of Trustees named it the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Niagara's program is now the fourth college of hospitality and tourism in the country giving it a position as a leading national and international program. Large grants from two regional foundations helped provide outstanding facilities for the program and the funds needed to expand the College's curricular offerings and to ensure that its students receive unparalleled practical industry applications. A strong national and international network of professionals has been forged by the dean of the college.

Theoretical and practical skills and experiences are part of the framework for the curriculum in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management at NU. Many courses offer a practical component. The applied learning model is at two levels, regional and international. The regional experiences depend on the facilities at the College and in the community of Niagara County. The college facilities are centrally located on the fourth floor of St. Vincent's Hall. They include a five-star quality conference and dining facility and a teaching kitchen. In addition, a video-conferencing room was funded as part of one grant and a computer lab was funded from previous grants.

The primary goal is to have students acquire both an applied and theoretical understanding of their chosen hospitality profession through the successful completion of a core curriculum, a specialization within the field, and career-oriented practical experiences. The senior practicum requires 800 hours of experience.

The “Leading Hotel Schools of the World” is the international bridge to Niagara’s applied learning experiences abroad. This applied learning strategy has resulted in an association of leading hospitality programs worldwide that work with the 400, five-star hotel and resort properties around the globe to bring students’ classrooms to the international hospitality community primarily in France, Italy and Switzerland. The founding schools are from the Americas, Europe, and Asia. I visited Niagara University on December 8th, 2003. My contact at the university was Gary Praetzel, Dean, College of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

The School of Hospitality and Service Management at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) offers five programs: hotel and resort management, travel tourism management, food management, nutrition management, and food marketing and distribution. State-of-the art equipment and laboratories are available to enhance the educational experience of all students. Henry’s, a lovely full-service, licensed restaurant, is located on the fourth floor of the George Eastman Building. It provides an appropriate training environment for students, who manage luncheons and dinners with the help of computerized beverage and point-of-sale systems. There is a heavy emphasis on quality of service and understanding the dynamic of guest loyalty. The food lab is equipped for testing and evaluating new food products and evaluating equipment.

The RIT Inn and Conference Center is college's "laboratory to the world." With its 304 rooms, conference and banquet centers and dining facilities, RIT students have unparalleled opportunities in their fields of study. The hotel is located adjacent to the campus directly off the interstate I 90. The hotel executive board of managers provides the necessary human resource network for students to have managerial experiences in problem solving, strategic planning and decision-making.

The American College of Management and Technology in Dubrovnik, Croatia trains professionals throughout Europe and creates exciting exchange opportunities for students in Rochester and Croatia. The School of Hospitality Management has worked closely with the Vice-President of Finance and Management at the university to bring about the necessary political and financial support to create the international branch school in Croatia. This is the largest of the four programs I reviewed. I visited Rochester Institute of Technology on Thursday, March 25th. My contact was Francis Domoy, the Chair of The School of Hospitality Management.

Erie Community College has state-of-the-art kitchen lab facilities and an on-campus fine dining restaurant staffed by senior hospitality students. The Erie Room is located on the first floor of the Student Center and is tastefully decorated including hand painted murals portraying the landscape of Italy. The redesign of the restaurant was funded through a private foundation.

The food lab is equipped with video, microphones and cameras for taping students and faculty during applied learning activities. There is an extensive video library that students access as part of their learning experience in the teaching kitchen. The institutional equipment is tantamount to any large-scale restaurant, resort or food service

operation where students seek future employment. The labs are designed with standards of quality for sanitation, safety and quality assurance in product development.

The student-run cafeteria is another facility, which is designed for the applied learning experiences of students in the program with fewer than 45 credit hours. Three associate programs including Hotel Restaurant Management, Culinary Arts, Baking and Pastry Arts and Country Club/Golf Management are offered at ECC. Each incorporates some level of applied learning, with significant applied learning activities found in the culinary arts and baking and pastry arts programs.

The faculty who has extensive professional experience in the areas of restaurant management and culinary arts facilitate the applied learning component. My contact at Erie Community College is Don Spasiano, Chair, and Hospitality Management Department.

The four colleges, all subjects in the research study, use applied learning methods in an integrative approach to advancing students' *knowledge, skills and attitudes* in a tripartite of student learning (Fig.1). For example, an introductory pastry arts class will give a student 80 hours to perfect measurement, mixing, and piping *skills*. It will add significantly to the student's *knowledge* about leavening, density and caramelization of baked products. It will enable the student to practice *mise en place* and the skills of accurate measurement and methods of mixing. But what part of the applied educational experience will influence *attitudes* of students?

The pastry arts class at Erie Community College allows for student to learn at the side of chefs (instructors) who have extensive experience in the day-to-day business of running a professional kitchen. The attributes of a culinary professional include a

commitment to service, a sense of responsibility and judgment (The Culinary Institute of America, 2002). These attributes are evident in the applied learning experiences in food labs at Niagara University, Ohio State University and Rochester Institute of Technology.

Professionals working at the on-campus hotel properties at Rochester Institute of Technology and Ohio State University add to students' *knowledge* about the hospitality product at hotels. Managers work closely with the faculty at the universities to coordinate applied learning experiences which result in a greater understanding of marketing theory. A particular focus is on the goods, environment, services and experiences that the hotel property offers in relation to what the guest wants and needs (Lewis and Chambers, 2000). These experiences are closely connected to course content. Again, the extensive experience of the hotel executives and department managers who work at the hotels play a significant role in the development of students' *skills* and *attitudes*.

Students observe the practices of hotel managers which result in customer loyalty, brand consistency, quality assurance and excellent customer satisfaction ratings. They encounter the guest in a variety of situations while they are at the property as part of their coursework. Hotel managers' best practices are grounded in theory and are effective due to skillful implementation of hotel policy and procedures. I propose that the attitude development piece of the learning experience is a subjective, conditional part of the students' activities, but emerges as a critical component necessary for a quality learning experience.

Fig. 1 Tripartite of Student Learning

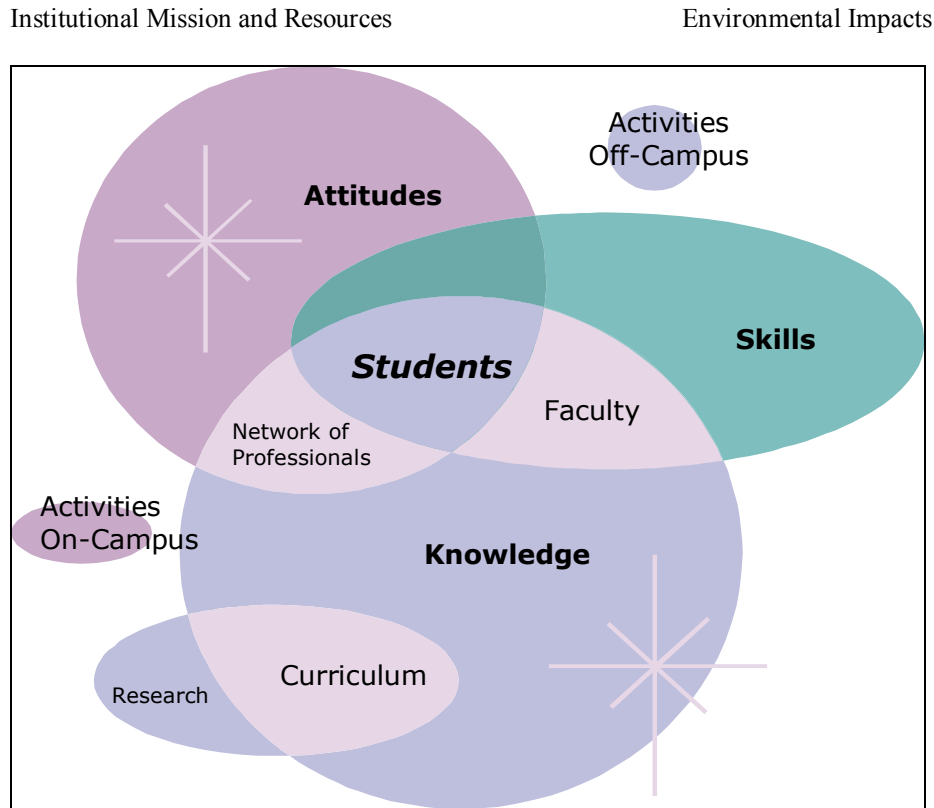


Fig. 1 The efficacy of applied learning activities through examination of knowledge, skills and attitudes of hospitality students.

The tripartite of student learning serves as a tool to understand the efficacy of applied learning activities in relation to institutional goals, student educational achievement, and career opportunities. Students are at the center of the model and need to be understood in terms of their educational development, experiences, professional goals and maturity.

The faculty and the network of professionals surround the student so the influence of attitude towards discipline and professional goals is achieved. *Knowledge, skills and attitudes*

will enter into the tripartite through organized integration of concepts, theory, practice and communication in settings that are selected, built or designed. The faculty must continue to nurture the relationships and build a network of professionals in order to sustain quality experiences for students. Activities both on campus and off-campus, regional and international parallel the institution's mission and require a substantial investment of funds and resources to sustain the activities. Assessment of activities requires more study.

The tripartite is surrounded by the institutional mission and resources. The events influencing the environment including the economy, terrorism must also be a consideration. Serious engagement in the college's mission is a necessary activity toward sustaining the applied learning pedagogy.

Conclusion

Applied learning experiences in higher education will enhance students' learning when the "real world" work experience adds significantly to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the student. What knowledge is gained by the student in the applied learning experience? What skills are developed throughout the experience? How are the students attitudes influenced?

The tripartite model may be used for various applied experiences. The applied learning experiences connected with a pastry arts course can be analyzed for efficacy in relation to the course goals. The hotel management course can be reviewed and understood in relation to its activities at the international property in Switzerland. The tripartite then, if used as a measure of efficacy, will serve as an instrument to select, improve and sustain applied learning activities for students in institutions with programs in hospitality or related fields.

This research, if pursued further, may call for a deeper understanding of the value that applied learning activities return to students through "real world" experiences. Educators and administrators may use this framework as the basis for designing and refining cognitive learning and applied activities in hospitality programs at two and four-year schools. The goal is to promote inquiry in other disciplines (education, social work, criminal justice, theatre arts, and museum studies to name a few) that tend to use similar pedagogy.

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