BE MORE, KNOW MORE: AN EVALUATION OF STUDENTS’ LEARNING IN A COMMUNITY EVENTS COURSE

ALEXANDRA COGHLAN* AND JUDITH MAIR†

*Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management, Griffith Business School,
Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia

†Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management, UQ Business School,
University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

This study takes an exploratory case study approach to assess the learning outcomes of a community events course using a Kirkpatrick model of evaluation. This third-year course uses a number of workshop and assessment-based activities to develop students’ knowledge of community event management, while also developing a set of values that allows students to *be* differently in the world. Underpinning the course design was an appreciative inquiry approach to community events. Results of the end of semester course evaluation surveys ($n = 36$ students) suggest that much of the students’ evaluation of the course was at Step 1, or reaction (enjoyment) level. However, some students also noted learning and behavioral outcomes (Steps 2 and 3) from undertaking the course. The findings indicate that an alternative approach to event management, focusing on small community events, and using an appreciative inquiry approach to develop a social legacy from events can have solid impacts on students’ sense of being and learning in Business degree, with positive sense of social responsibility outcomes.

Key words: Community event; Teaching; Evaluation; Appreciative inquiry

Introduction

Undergraduate students’ interest in studying event management has been growing in the last decade, in parallel with the increasing proliferation of events themselves (Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2008; Silvers, Bowdin, O’Toole, & Nelson, 2005). Mega-events in sports and music are particularly attractive to students, as

they are dramatic in character, highly consumptive experiences that appeal to a global audience (Hall & Wilson, 2016). The staging of such mega-events reflects their scale, complexity, and commercial nature, and as such requires the development of practical managerial and logistical skills among students, which is reflected in the event management curriculum design. The emphasis here is on

Address correspondence to Alexandra Coghlan, Associate Professor, Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management, Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Business 2, (G27), Room 3.26, Gold Coast Campus, Parklands Drive, Southport QLD 4222, Australia. Tel: +61 7 5552 8580; E-mail: a.coghlan@griffith.edu.au

the generic graduate “transferable” skills (e.g., communication, analysis, and ethics), with a set of content skills specific to the event context. Harris and Jago (1999) highlighted the importance of project and time management skills, budgeting and sponsorship management, liaising with media, managing staff and volunteers, and general networking, which were considered core skills in most event degrees. These same skills are recognized by event management students as the most valuable skills gained during their degree (Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009).

However, many event management students will spend a greater proportion of their working life involved with smaller-scale, localized events, rather than with the mega-events, which are by definition much less frequent than other types of events. Community events represent one type of smaller-scale event that are gaining renewed attention for their ability to increase community resilience, address social justice issues, provide regional community development opportunities, and build social well-being (Moscardo, 2007). Presumably, in order to achieve these goals graduates must complement their generic, transferable skills and event management skills (budgeting, project, and time management) with an appreciation of the concept of community (e.g., in the use of terms such as market and consumer vs. people and community), as well as strong interpersonal skills around listening, empathizing, social justice, and social responsibility.

Creativity, vision, ethics, and the integration of values form another set of skills that have been touched upon in the context of event management course design (Omazic, Vlahov, & Dvorski, 2014). Certainly, elements of dramaturgy, involving creativity, performance, and vision are recognized as important to the successful staging of events (Ziakas & Costas, 2012). Moreover, creativity itself is recognized as a core aspect of resilience building (Folke et al., 2002), and may therefore be considered particularly important within a community events context, where events are used for community development outcomes (Derrett, 2008). However, the extent to which creativity is encouraged in current event management education is variable.

A number of studies have evaluated event management education (e.g., Getz, 2000; Silvers et al., 2005) and almost all these studies have emphasized

the type of transferable skills, event management content-specific knowledge and skills, as well as soft skills that relate to interpersonal communication, presentation, attitude, and team work. Yet, to our knowledge no studies have focused on programs or courses that focus on community events. The latter arguably requires a strong sense of citizenship, a good understanding of identity (the foundation blocks of community), combined with the usual soft skills and, arguably, a willingness to engage in creative ideas that are specific to the community needs and the event’s community agenda.

Therefore, this study explores how we might complement generic and content skill development with a “sense of being” within a group of students studying a community events and festivals elective subject in their final year of their degrees. We borrow this term from Barnett (2009) who described a relationship between knowing and being whereby “the process of coming to know has person-forming properties” (p. 435). Furthermore, well-designed education programs have the ability to encourage the development of epistemic virtues that become personal and professional values to form an ethical compass. He argued that developing a student’s sense of being prepares them to deal with complexity and diversity as well as embrace a social responsibility approach as graduates.

The study took an exploratory case study approach to seek insight into an alternative way to teach event management. The community events course used in this evaluative study was delivered as a workshop and incorporated a number of activities that aimed to develop this sense of self, in relation to the course material—that is, community events. In this article we evaluate the students’ response to this approach using the Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1994), a well-known teaching evaluation model, and the students’ overall evaluation of the course in relation to its format, content, and desired learning outcomes.

Literature Review

Event Management as a Course of Study

As the number of events increases there is a growing realization about the need to develop professionals who are able to create, organize, and

manage events (Arcodia & Reid, 2002). According to Silvers et al. (2005), education is playing an increasingly important role in the area of special events management. The key features of events (short term, temporary, unique activities) demand specific programs in event management in order to produce graduates with the in-depth knowledge of their field of study, as well as the more generic skills of problem solving and critical thinking. Most programs emphasize management and business; however, event management programs also draw upon a wide range of disciplines and fields of study, including tourism, hospitality, marketing, psychology, law, and geography. As a result, event management programs need to have a multidisciplinary focus.

To some degree, research has examined the key topic areas that should be covered in an event management degree program and it has been suggested that event management students should leave university equipped with both generic skills such as problem solving, communication, and critical thinking skills as well as knowledge of specific events-related topic areas including operations, management, and marketing (Getz, 2000; Nelson, 2004; Silvers et al., 2005). Getz and Wicks (1994) also proposed that event studies should include the history and meanings of festivals, celebrations, and rituals; trends in demand for, and supply of, events; motivation and benefits sought from events; the triple bottom line of event impacts on the economy, society, and the environment; program concepts and styles; and event settings. Getz (2000) proposed a framework for event management education that is composed of two levels—foundational skills and specialized knowledge. His argument is that event management graduates need to have a good underpinning knowledge of foundational skills such as planning and research; organization and coordination; human, financial, and physical resources; budgeting, control, and risk management; marketing, communications, and performance evaluation. In addition, Getz (2000) argued that event management graduates need advanced knowledge and skills that build on the foundations acquired in Level 1. Such advanced knowledge includes concepts such as the type of event and program; special venue requirements; event organizations; target markets and unique communications; special

services and supplies; and unique impacts and performance criteria.

In an attempt to synthesize the existing literature on event management education, as well as to provide a useful point of reference for event management educators, Silvers et al. (2005) developed the EMBOK model (event management body of knowledge). The EMBOK model's aim is: "to create a framework of the knowledge and processes used in event management that may be customized to meet the needs of various cultures, governments, education programs, and organizations" (Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Nelson, 2005, p. 186). EMBOK emphasizes creativity, strategic thinking, ethics, continuous improvement, and integration, most of which are generic management skills, but the inclusion of creativity highlights one of the distinctive aspects of events (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2012). In addition to these core skills, EMBOK also provides five knowledge areas for event management programs—administration, design, marketing, operations, and risk (Silvers et al., 2005). Each of these areas of knowledge includes fundamental aspects of event management, such as finance and human resources, merchandizing and public relations, logistics, health and safety, and other compliance issues.

There appears to be some common ground among researchers and among event management programs in terms of both generic and specific skills and knowledge that event management graduates should possess. In addition to discussion of skills, there has been some limited research into the attributes of event management graduates that are required by employers. Arcodia and Barker (2003) analyzed job advertisements in Australia for event management graduates and noted that the key attributes requested were self-motivation, positivism, dynamism and energy, commitment, and creativity. However, events are multifaceted and while some event management graduates may indeed leave university and take up positions organizing major events, it is likely that many event management graduates will end up working in the community events sector.

Dredge and Whitford (2010) highlighted the enduring focus on the economic features of events in event management programs, which they suggest may be due to the positioning of event studies

within Business schools rather than Arts or Social Sciences. In relation to this, Dredge and Whitford (2010) argued that teaching about the role of community is vital, given that the public and private interests are played out in global and local relations. Arguably, graduates of Business schools may have had fewer opportunities to complement their business skills and knowledge with an understanding of working with a variety of stakeholders and people. Therefore, this raises questions as to how well a business and management focused degree prepares graduates to work in the community sphere.

The Community Event Context

Many communities stage traditional festivals and events that have always played an important role in building and maintaining community relationships and community social capital. According to Gibson and Stewart (2009), traditional community events and festivals are pivotal dates on the annual calendars of towns, providing rural communities with coping mechanisms at times of economic hardship, and serve to mobilize community in the name of fun. Further, events are one of a small range of development tools available to local authorities working on limited budgets (Getz, 2013). Community events may not share the glamour and excitement of the Olympic Games or large sporting events, yet they are by far the most common type of event staged.

Despite this, event management curricula often appear to overlook the importance of community events. Getz (2000) noted that the knowledge required to plan and manage events is an important component of event education. However, this knowledge is often situated in the major and mega-events context, which can lead to a diminution in the importance placed on community events in the curriculum. Further, as previously noted, many event management courses are located in business faculties or schools, meaning that emphasis is often placed on the business components of event management (marketing, finance, and management). A study of community events allows students to explore issues such as social cohesion, meaning, identity, and social capital (among others), which may be lost in the neoliberal event management agenda.

Meanwhile, it is widely acknowledged that “community” is itself a contested term, particularly

within a globalizing, multicultural world (Clarke & Jepson, 2015). How community is defined—based in geographical proximity, shared values, and interests, neotribalism or through other means—is continually shifting, as is the identity of in groups and by extension, out groups (Taylor, 2011). Furthermore, the issue of meaningful participation by “the community” is also considered problematic, linked to issues of power, power sharing, and agency (Stout, 2010). Striking a balance between true engagement and shared decision making with action can be a fine art, as well as time consuming, and is not typically part of the market-oriented approach to event planning (Bostock, Cooper, & Roberts, 2015). Instead, we generally teach our students to conduct postevent evaluations of success, as measured through economic indicators and satisfaction measures. Clearly, therefore, teaching students to work with communities, understand shared values, power sharing, and distributed decision making is quite different from many of the project-based event management skills currently considered in existing curricula. We argue a different pedagogic approach is needed to develop those community event-specific skills.

Alternative Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Conventional curriculum aims to impart knowledge, both content based and skills (preferably transferable), both of which are vital to tertiary education. As discussed above, in the context of event management, this approach predominantly focuses on interpersonal skills and communication skills, as well as content knowledge that focuses on project and time management, budgeting, sponsorship, stakeholder management, and so forth (Getz, 2000). However, given the nature of community events we propose that the course should develop another set of skills with focus on citizenship, values, and social responsibility, applicable to a context that values diversity and is able to manage uncertainty. To guide this approach to community events curriculum design, the course studied in this article is positioned within the developing body of literature on student identity development through teaching and learning (Kasworm, 2010). This approach is closely related to Markus and Nurius’s

(1986) “possible selves” concept, which encourages students to explore what they hope to become through learning.

This identity development approach also relies on embracing creativity in learning; Csikszentmihalyi (2006)—most recognized for his work on flow, absorption, and well-being—proposed that “to inject creativity in the education system, the first step might be to help students find out what they truly love and help them to immerse themselves in the domain” (p. xix). Barnett (2009) is a key champion of this approach; he advocated that we focus on curricula that also develop students’ sense of being. In this, he draws attention to the fundamental questions that must be answered by any teacher: (a) what do we teach? and (b) how do we teach it? In this sense, he embraces the liberal education agenda that empowers individuals to be creative and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change, and teaches them about social responsibility. Barnett highlights that how we, as educators, impart knowledge to students will affect how they relate to the world. In addition, Barnett suggests that the process of knowing itself will develop a set of values that allow students to *be* differently in the world—he refers to this as “active knowing for being.” This pedagogical approach based on creativity combined with uncertainty focuses less on teaching students the answers, and more on providing a “propositional, provisional knowledge, and equipping them to critically and objectively test and expand that knowledge” (Bennett, 2012, p. 37).

To further emphasize this aspirational approach that develops the students’ sense of identity, encourages creativity, promotes a responsiveness to the local environment, as well as develop the event management skills of networking, stakeholder engagement, and project management, the course teaching in the community events course being studied here was underpinned by an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Commonly practiced in areas that require positive change, the AI approach can be understood as a questioning approach that seeks out the best in people and reveals the positive potential in the systems surrounding them. AI differs from a linear problem-based approach (issue → cause → solution) and encourages an iterative process, sometimes referred

to as spiraling diagnosis, of “discovery, dream, and design.” In doing so, the AI approach encourages people to talk about past and present capacities: achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, strategic competencies, stories, expressions of wisdom, and visions of valued and possible futures.

AI is most commonly used as a set of management practices to drive positive organizational change through a social constructivism approach. For example, Forbes Magazine covers how the correct set of questions—based on AI principles—can lead to greatness (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/brettsteenbarger/2015/06/21/appreciative-inquiry-leading-by-asking-the-right-questions/#6abc35fc1609>). Although commonly used to drive organizational change in business, AI has also been used in education, health care, and religious teaching (Busche & Kassim, 2005). It is most useful in arenas that require “cooperative capacity” (Barrett, Fry, & Wittrockx, 2005), and it is this characteristic that make it suited to community engagement in events that foster community development. However, it is not clear to what extent an AI approach has been used in event management, and in particular the design of community events. Therefore, this article offers an exploratory investigation into the use of AI in a community events course (see Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, for further detail on the AI approach).

Methodology

As noted, this research took a case study approach. Yin (2009) defined a case study approach as an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a case) set within its real-world context. Further, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) described case study research as involving research questions geared towards understanding the case and providing detailed and holistic knowledge about it. This research used a single case study. Single cases are most appropriate with exploratory research, that is, when there is insufficient data about a particular topic or area (Yin, 2012). The aim of this case study is to unpack a specific and unique case using

contextualized and “thick description” of a case (Geertz, 1973).

Study Context: The Course

The community events course is a third-year elective in the events management major of a Bachelor of Business offered at a major Australian University. The course is run as a weekly 3-hour workshop, with a number of hands-on activities designed to activate a sense (i.e., feeling/lived experience) of the concepts covered in class. The course is built around four “threshold concepts,” designed to move students away from a typical managerial (project, time, budget, and stakeholder management) to an appreciation of community, and its contradictions (Taylor, 2011). A threshold concept is defined as an integrative concept that provides the learner with a discipline-specific portal toward a new way of understanding, interpreting, or viewing the students’ study area (Meyer & Land, 2003). Often these concepts allow a student to see how various bodies of knowledge relate and interconnect, and often a threshold concept may be transformation in a students’ learning. Furthermore, a threshold concept may help the student link thinking with practice.

In the case of this community events course, the four threshold concepts include identity, community, social capital, and inclusion. These concepts dominate the content of the first six weeks of the course. During the remainder of the semester, students work in teams to design a community event to bring about positive change within the University’s community, however they choose to define community (e.g., students, students and staff, particular cohorts of students, the campus and its local businesses, alumni, or school leavers preparing to enter university life). Their event design must apply the four threshold concepts, thereby linking conceptual knowledge with practice. In order to assist the students in this task, a scaffolded approach to their course assessments, that is, where one task builds upon and integrates knowledge and skills gained in previous tasks to build and extend understanding, test their ability to apply these concepts to their proposed event as they develop their final event proposal.

By way of example, the scaffolding of assessments tasks first requires them to identify and reflect

on their values and their response to deliberately enacting those values, with regards to their relationship with the self, and their relationship to others. They then carry out a number of nonassessed tasks to develop a concept design for a community event of their choice. Next, they are assessed on a practical “sampler” event to test out their event ideas on other students in the class. The sampler event consists of a practical assessment where the workshop session is handed over to students, and each group has 20 minutes to lead the cohort through a mini-version of their event and demonstrate the application of the theory covered in the earlier part of the course. Other students provide feedback on how well the “sampler” applied the learned theoretical concepts, as well as what they did and didn’t enjoy in the “sampler” activity. To further develop their design concept in a way that engages the community, students also complete a world café activity to get feedback on their community event-related change. World Cafes are a collaborative tool that engages people in conversations about issues that matter—here, the formation of community within the University, and the use of their event to do so. Finally, they do a crowdfunding pitch with their classmates (representing their community/crowd) as part of their funding strategy. They also submit a final funding proposal for their university-based community event.

In line with the above, the course advances an AI approach, previously highlighted in the literature review. This approach encourages students to focus on the strengths and resources available in the university’s community, which students use to prepare their final event proposal. It also requires that students focus on the individuals and networks that will provide access those strengths and resources and encourages a deliberate engagement with community to develop an aspirational “dream” for the future. It is considered an appropriate alternative to the more commonly used issues or problem-based approach found in business studies, to develop students’ learning of social cohesion, meaning, and identity—it focuses on the *being*.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data used in this article are taken from the course evaluation administered by the university.

Three cohorts of students have been included in the study, across 2 years (2013–2014) and two campuses. The sample was 36 students, representing a 24% response rate. To understand how students respond to both the content of the community events subject and the teaching philosophy built around AI, we use the Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1994) and responses from the student evaluation surveys collected at the end of this course.

In the Kirkpatrick model, four levels of learning are described as “steps” of learning. Step 1 is described as reactions to the teaching—“liking of” or “feeling for” the program. Step 2 describes actual learning; that is, the principles and facts understood by the participants. Next, Step 3 is a behavioral measure, the application of knowledge gained. Finally, Step 4 is named “results” and is understood as achieving the desired outcomes of the teaching of training. Step 4 was not considered in this study as students had limited opportunities to talk about changes in how they manage events. Although the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation does make a number of assumptions that are disputed (e.g., learning may not actually be enjoyable, or each higher step indicate a more desirable outcome), the model is useful as guide to thinking about learning outcomes.

A qualitative and exploratory approach was applied to the data, using an analysis of responses to the open-ended question, “what did you find particularly good about this course?” All data were coded according to themes derived both from the literature (mainly using the Kirkpatrick model) and from the emergent data. Coding “frames” the inquiry at the beginning of data collection, providing “leads to pursue” (Charmaz, 1995, p. 39). Manual techniques were used to analyze the data. This involved the examination of hard copies of the responses, highlighting relevant information or statements, writing notes and summaries, and thus identifying themes. During this manual process, the researchers sought terms that indicated a reaction to the course: without any learning; learning in terms of new knowledge or skills, new ways of thinking about the subject; and finally, behaviors, such as different ways of engaging with the course, and with others at the university and beyond. Responses to this question were coded according

to the Steps 1–3 of the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation. These codes formed the basis of what Miles and Huberman (1994) considered to be a theoretically informed analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Our analysis of the data in relation to the three steps of learning indicates that Step 1, a reaction to the course material and delivery style, was the most common type of student response. Students reported enjoying, liking, or loving the course, finding it interesting and engaging. One student reported finding that “most assignments were exciting,” while others enjoyed the focus on interactions between students and with the convener, for example: “I particularly enjoy interacting with classmates in the practical and World Café assessments.” Such comments provide some evidence for the contention by Csikszentmihalyi (2006) that in order to embrace creativity in learning, the first step might be to help students find out what they truly love.

For another student, the emphasis was not just on completing the assignment in a group, but actually developing their friendship networks: “I also enjoyed working with my team. I found that the group that I was in, we developed/further developed our friendships.” This comment suggests that this approach is useful in helping students to develop the soft skills that are required in the wider workplace, such as interpersonal skills and communication skills.

Sometimes reactions such as enjoyment and engagement were accompanied by learning outcomes (Step 2) as well. These commonly referred to the course material, but also included elements of problem solving and skill development. One student noted: “I like the workshop style, makes me work with the stuff straight away, at the same time it is easier to remember the content.” Some student comments focused on the importance of the teaching staff in encouraging students to reflect on their learning and consider how problems and issues may be examined in alternative way: “She was fun and encouraged learning. She made you think and really consider what was being discussed” and “It was engaging and showed me how to approach problems in a different way.”

This type of collaborative learning facilitated by the convener and led by the students themselves is known to enhance both higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills (Blumenfeld, Marx, Soloway, & Krajcik, 1996). Furthermore, research indicates that students work best within this type of active participation in team-based activities where knowledge is constructed as they are faced with challenges that connect to the real world (Jennings, Scantlebury, & Wolfe, 2009).

Step 3—the behavioral step—was reflected in three important ways: (1) the simple act of attending classes, as well as participating in class discussions and learning tasks represented a behavioral change for many; (2) an increased reflection (a form of behavior) on the role of events from a social justice/community perspective also described an increased propensity by students to explore social issues on their own; and (3) the development of friendships through the course was also noted by some students (e.g., “great for making friends and meeting people with similar interests”). Much of the comments that fell into this category were concerned with the students’ perceived freedom to contribute to the discussion (e.g., “opportunity to speak and discuss topics more,” “we were able to express our opinions and due to it being interactive, I felt myself retaining more information”).

Another student pointed out that “it was obvious through class numbers that everyone enjoyed it, because you normally get to week 3 or 4, and people drop off . . . but our numbers seemed to stay pretty strong.”

Several students reported that the classroom experience had a relatively profound impact on them:

The content itself really opened my eyes to the concepts of diversity and inclusiveness. Terms that pre-[course code] would have gone in one ear and out the other with little to no effect on my mind, now cause me to think about how to include people even in my daily life instead of just passing by opportunities to connect with someone new and different.

Such comments demonstrate that not only did the student like the subject and felt that they were learning but were actually using this experience as an impetus to change their learning behavior.

Given that the AI approach can be understood as a way to seek out the best in people and reveal the positive potential in systems surrounding them, it is significant to note that the AI approach had encouraged students to reflect further on the position of community events in society: “it really opened my eyes to look more into WHY we are having events and to note the various social issue we have in our society and how events have helped to change or combat them.” Again, this demonstrates a behavioral change outcome in the perceptions and attitudes of the students following the AI approach.

The student feedback highlighted above clearly identifies that students are moving beyond the skills developed in traditional business management-focused events courses towards a new set of skills more appropriate in a community events context—citizenship, values, and social responsibility. Moreover, these findings were reinforced by an item on the Student Course Evaluation Questionnaire, namely that the course had developed the students’ sense of social responsibility (e.g., social and civic responsibilities, human rights, or sustainability). The response on a Likert scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was 4.4, half a standard deviation point above the mean for this item across the university.

However, this is not to say that all student comments were positive. In response to how the course could be improved, students most frequently suggested that they found it difficult to concentrate for the 3-hour long workshop, and that assessments tasks (the values task, practical, pitch, and proposal) were poorly explained to them. However, no comments specifically related to the learning outcomes, or lack of, noted in the Kirkpatrick model.

Further analysis of the student evaluations uncovered several themes of interest to us in relation to which aspects of the teaching approach were most successful, and conversely, which aspects of the AI approach were not well received by the students. These themes were “interactivity”; “engagement”; and “reflection.” Students reported a high level of interactivity through the workshop format, which in turn led to higher levels of engagement with the course material, course convener, and other students. In addition, many of the comments referred to information provided during the workshops that made the students think/reflect on societal

issues. A typical example of a student comment that reflects these three themes is:

Very different to other courses of similar class size—opportunity to speak and discuss topics more. . . . Totally different perspective on events compared to other event management core courses. Inspirational—makes you realize there is more to events than just putting on a large production with the use of copious amounts of money—has made me rethink my involvement in large events and think more about the community around me and how I can make a difference.

The approach developed here around active participation in team-based activities where knowledge is collaboratively constructed in the face of real-world challenges enabled the students to interact with the course material and each other, apply the material by engaging in active learning, and reflect on the outcomes. These are the tools that we need to use to encourage students to move from the initial steps of the Kirkpatrick model (liking the subject matter and learning about it) towards Step 3 (application of knowledge) and Step 4 (achieving the desired outcomes of learning or training). Furthermore, the approach also permitted us to balance vocational skills and liberal thinking, promote deep learning and a critical reflexive approach, in the manner advocated by Tribe (2002, 2003), Dredge et al. (2013), Jamal, Taillon, and Dredge (2011) and Ruhannen and McLennan (2012). Indeed, the students' responses were indicative of the type of sustainable pedagogy that integrates knowledge and skills, reflection and action, vocational and liberal learning that specifically addresses impacts on the marginalized and powerless. Doing so moves event education beyond a simple business-based approach into a more socially responsible, sustainability driven paradigm, an area that urgently needs addressing according to Boley (2011).

In this case, these outcomes were facilitated by adopting an AI approach that specifically requires students to consider the community in which they are embedded (the University), as well as construct a positive model for learning (Yballe & O'Connor, 2000). As a pedagogic technique, AI has been used to develop active student involvement in learning (Shreeve, 2008), question dominant paradigms (Neville, 2008), develop an awareness of, and skills in, inclusive practices (Doveston & Kennaghan,

2006), as well as encourage an "entrepreneurial identity" (Donnellon, Ollila, & Middleton, 2014). The approach specifically values and encourages social (face to face) inquiry where students "give vent to their curiosity and discover the successes of their classmates," thereby mimicking the types of interaction best suited to community events with positive social outcomes (Yballe & O'Connor, 2000, p. 477).

Our findings suggest that this community events course does indeed complement the content knowledge and skill development necessary for successful event management teaching with the fostering of a "sense of being" (Barnett, 2009). As noted, developing a student's sense of being prepares them to deal with complexity and diversity as well as embrace a social responsibility approach once they complete their degree (Barnett, 2009). Students recognize and appreciate the opportunities provided in this course for self-reflection and awareness of the differing event contexts that they may be faced with on leaving university and seeking employment. The next stage in investigating the efficacy of this teaching approach would be to examine the postuniversity outcomes of those students exposed to this course and this teaching approach, in particular seeking information on whether these students meet event industry needs as well as contributing positively to community inclusion, cohesion, and justice. This will be a worthy topic of future research.

Conclusions

This article reported on a case study of AI as an alternative way to teach event management. The Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation has also proved to be a useful way to examine how students are moving through attitude change towards behavior change in relation to both their in-class learning and also their future career choices. Feeling inspired represents a reaction to the course (Step 1), while the realization that "there is more to events" represents learning (Step 2) and finally a behavioral change is reflected in the comment that s/he is thinking more about the community around her or him, and how he or she can make a difference. All three steps were apparent in the student evaluations used for this study. Our analysis of the data has also identified three key themes emerging from

the student course evaluations. These are interactivity, engagement, and reflection.

Although it is very common for universities to gather data via surveys on student perceptions of programs, courses, and teaching, often only the quantitative measures are reported at program, school, and faculty level with the qualitative data being useful for the course or subject coordinators to improve their teaching and their courses. However, these data are not always well evaluated in relation to student learning. The approach used in this article provides a framework to understand how students respond both to the subject (community events) and the teaching philosophy (AI) in terms of not just their attitudes towards a course or teacher, but also in terms of their actual content learning and the application of this learning.

Because the aim of the AI approach to learning is intended to foster positive change, it can be argued that this approach has been very successful in this particular case, with students reporting increased awareness of a range of societal issues and increased desire to make a difference in their chosen career. This appears to be a good reflection of the idea conceptualized by Barnett (2009) of developing a student's sense of being.

Naturally, there are limitations of this study that must be acknowledged. First and foremost, the single case study approach used means that caution should be used when interpreting the results of this case and when considering whether the findings of this case study are applicable to other cases. In particular, this article reports on evaluations of one community events course with three cohorts of students. Other courses, or other cohorts, may result in different findings or interpretations, and an extension of the study to other institutions or contexts would be advisable. Nonetheless, teaching and learning is highly contextual and individual and so the results of this article are valuable not only in the context in which this research was undertaken, but also to inform future teaching and learning research.

Future research will involve further qualitative analysis of student evaluations, and in addition will involve analysis of interviews and focus groups held with students in order to investigate some of the key aspects of their learning, and also to assess their response to the course and teaching

philosophy. Finally, the true test of this teaching approach will be in Kirkpatrick's final Step—outcomes—and will require longitudinal evaluation of the students' use and application of the courses concepts and their learning as they move into management events within the community.

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