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Using live projects and experiential learning
to enhance employability and enterprise
skills in undergraduate

Background

- ◆ Computing, in a Business School
- ◆ Emphasis is on application of technology
- ◆ History of using projects to bring together several subjects, especially in final year projects
- ◆ Strong desire to improve graduate employability skills

What have we been doing?

- ◆ Using client led projects with final year Applied Computing undergraduates
- ◆ Work in groups, apply and pitch for projects to the clients over a 3 week selection / matching process
- ◆ Some client projects don't get chosen
- ◆ Clients are expected to participate in the project throughout the academic year
 - ◆ Some clients do this very well, others not so well!
- ◆ Projects run from October through to Easter
- ◆ Several presentation points (summatively and formatively assessed)
- ◆ Project artefacts are completed and delivered by Easter (50%)
- ◆ Students then individually reflect on the experience (50%)

Does it work?

- ◆ Yes – we have had several students get graduate level jobs as a direct result of these projects
- ◆ The students have been very successful at getting employment or at least getting shortlisted and interviewed – the projects feature strongly on their CV's
- ◆ Several of the clients have run more than one project with us and employed more than one graduate
- ◆ So, can we take this further.....

The next stage?

- ◆ We have recently validated a new suite of programmes for the Business School
- ◆ All of these contain a Consultancy Project module in the final year – based directly on this model
- ◆ The vision is to encourage cross subject teams to tackle a wider range of business problems, not just IT related
- ◆ The courses that include the module are:
 - ◆ International Business Management
 - ◆ Business Entrepreneurship and Computing Innovations
 - ◆ Business Management and E-Commerce
 - ◆ Business Management, Accounting & Finance
 - ◆ Retail Marketing Management
- ◆ This is therefore a much more complex situation than we have been operating up to now

Your thoughts?

- ◆ What I would like to get out of this session are your thoughts on the following areas:
 - ◆ In your experience, what type of projects might be suitable for the range of programmes we now have?
 - ◆ What potential problems can you foresee in using this model?
 - ◆ What safeguards would you consider being essential for students, clients and tutors?
 - ◆ How would you creatively assess such a model?
 - ◆ How do you see the lecturer's role in this model?
- ◆ In small groups, give this some thought and then feed back (if we have time, to the whole group)