

## CONCEPT OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

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### Abstract

It is not intended as a paradigm but merely to show one establishment's first steps towards solving such problems which are still undergoing further refinement and development. The skills which need to be developed have been identified not only by BTEC but by many other writers. A list of the identified skills was considered and modified by myself resulting in the following. This rather daunting panel was most impressed with the final piece of work. As a result of the project carried out by the final year students for shoppers video the PIMCS requested that the first year group carry out a feasibility study on two stores in the area to determine their suitability or otherwise for a convenience type operation. Once again questionnaires were designed approved and implemented on both sites and the findings were presented in written form and at an oral presentation. This oral presentation was assessed by a panel comprising two lecturers and three managers from the society. The development of appropriate skills for business students has been increasingly emphasized by BTEC and this report describes an attempt to develop appropriate skills through the design of a balanced Cross Modular Assignment programme and individual Cross Modular Assignments (CMA). The difficulties associated with the development and assessments of such skills are explored.

*Keywords:* Development, Education, Student, Modular, Individual, Assessment.

### Introduction

Most lectures involved in Business Education are aware that their students need to develop a range of skills in order to cope with and indeed thrive in the business environment. The impetus for the formal development of such skills has come mainly from the Business and Technician Education Council where the systematic development of student skills was seen as a responsibility for the whole course team. This raised three major issues which were extensively discussed by BTEC course team at Portsmouth polytechnic which skills should we be developing in our students?

### The Cross Modular Assignment Programme

In each year small groups of students were asked to gather, interpret and present information on a company or industry of their choice. Tutorial advice was available from lectures on all modules as well as from the subject librarian. There was a high degree of commitment and motivation on the part of the students who made comments like now we know much more about how business work and now we understand what our lecturers meant and a great deal of initiative and originality was shown especially in the final oral presentations. The commercial Manager of Sea link visited the Business School and gave a talk to the HND group on the history and plans for the future of the Portsmouth Harbour to Ryde foot passenger service. As a result of this and the subsequent discussion with the students he requested that the students survey the daily commuter traffic with a view to making recommendations for amended timetable when new faster vessels come into service. The group agreed terms of reference with the company and designed and submitted a draft questionnaire for approval. Approximately five hundred interviews were then conducted on the boats during the morning and afternoon commuter periods. The findings, conclusions and recommendations were then presented in the form of a written report and an oral presentation. The students were given advice on research methodology and report presentation and

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