

**Title :** Educating Undergraduates in the Construction Sector

**Sub-Title :** A study of the implementation of Practical Learning into Third Level Construction Studies Education

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**Purpose:** The construction industry has always been dynamic in nature. The success of the project is the ultimate goal for every project, for both the client and especially for all those involved in it. This paper is aimed at the education of the construction sector professionals. It will be of interest to all third level lecturers and institutes, professional bodies and to the construction industry in general. The experience and understanding of the sector and its materials all contribute to the success of a project. With the majority of third level studies being theory based where do the students, our future professionals get their practical experience in a correct and controlled manner? This paper will investigate the benefits of introducing a practical experiential learning module into today's theoretical studies at third level.

**Methodology:** An extensive Literature Review was carried out, and this highlighted the lack of any literature relating to a practical learning experience for Construction Studies students in third level in Ireland or the United Kingdom. A quantitative approach of collecting the required data was adopted after researching different methodologies. Three questionnaires (one hundred and eighty two in total) were distributed to the sixty two voluntary participants and a practical exercise with the data recorded. The learning styles of the Level 8 Architectural Technology students and Hetac level 6 Apprentice Carpentry and Joinery students was determined.

**Findings:** The research found that the level of practical knowledge among the Architectural students was low with practically no experience. After the practical exercise the knowledge base improved dramatically. The findings were analysed, discussed and concluded and found that additional learning did take place through the practical exercise, a list of recommendations for future research brings the Dissertation to a conclusion.

**Keywords:** knowledge, learning styles, practical experience, theoretical experience, understanding