Doctorate in Professional Studies

Development of a Professional Learning Programme for Tourism in Higher Education

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If you wish to plan for a year, sow seeds,

If you wish to plan for ten years, plant trees,

If you wish to plan for a lifetime, develop people.

Kwa Chun Tan, 7th century BC

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Abbreviations

AAN	Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network
AR	Action Research
F&B	Food and Beverage Department
FO	Front Office Department
GAU	Girne American University
HE	Higher Education
HRM	Human Resource Management Department
KITOB	Cyprus Turkish Hoteliers Association
KITSAB	Cyprus Turkish Travel Agencies Association
RESBIR	Restaurateurs Association in North Cyprus
STHM	School of Tourism and Hospitality Management
TEDQUAL	United Nations World Tourism Organisation Accrediting Body
VETLAM	Vocational Education Training
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
YODAK	Higher Education Council in North Cyprus
YOK	Higher Education Council in Turkey

Abstract

Tourism education has matured over the past fifty years, and several authors have questioned and presented studies on what should be in the content of tourism programmes offered in higher education. This Doctorate in Professional Studies has also questioned what should be included in the content of the programme to be offered at higher education level; and further, developed a new teaching pedagogy for Girne American University, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, in North Cyprus.

The selected research method has been action research, with two main cycles. The first cycle applied in-depth face-to-face interviews with twenty-two representatives from accrediting bodies, the tourism sector and students. Thematic analysis was used to find common themes and conclusions. After the first cycle, the new tourism programme was developed. A three- way structured professional learning programme which included: class room pedagogies, online pedagogies, and on-the-job training (compared to apprenticeship-style learning) was developed. The second cycle took place with four expert representatives, one from each sector, accreditation bodies and two students; in the form of a focus group. I presented the professional learning programme at the focus group and opened the table for discussion on how the programme could be improved. All of the feedback given was incorporated into the programme.

Conclusions showed that there is a requirement for a professional learning programme to meet both sector and student requirements, whilst all stakeholders agreed that classroom pedagogies must also continue. Resources offered must sustain North Cyprus tourism-specific contents, yet include online pedagogies and practical training.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Aim of the work-based research project

The aim of my project is to research further the educational requirements of the North Cyprus tourism industry, and to design a new tourism education programme in the School of Tourism and Hospitality at Girne American University (GAU). I carried out research in 2009 detailing the requirements for developing practical knowledge and skills in tourism and hospitality (Guden, 2009), and the finding was that there is a gap in skill-based learning. In my professional experience, skill-based learning can be compared to an apprenticeship programme, as students are developing their skills through on-the-job training. For many institutions this can also be developing the skills of students in the available labs of the university or college. In more recent years the information and communication technology (ICT) discipline in higher education has developed *blended learning*. According to this research, one of the aims is to identify these skill requirements and to design a professional learning programme.

This project is relevant to my current position of Head of Department at the School of Tourism, as the position requires that curricula are monitored and reviewed to meet the requirements of the tourism industry, the students and the institution (GAU), and institutions accredited by GAU.

This research will develop a programme that keeps abreast of international developments in tourism education, to be in-line with – or, better – ahead of the competition, as well as meeting the requirements of industry, students and GAU/accrediting bodies. The research will aid development of the curriculum in accordance with international standards, raising the quality and understanding of what is required, and will therefore be a unique study for GAU School of Tourism and Hospitality.

My project will be to identify the requirements according to the stakeholders, including expert sector representatives; accrediting bodies (YOK, YODAK and TEDQUAL); GAU; and the students. These results will be collected and embedded in the new professional programme, which will be the first tourism and hospitality joint programme in North Cyprus. In Chapter 2, I will consider the terms “blended learning”, “apprenticeships”, and “simulations” and discuss their meaning and how they have developed. These ideas will then be embedded in the proposed new curriculum. This will provide an awareness of the sector requirements in tourism education, whilst taking into consideration accrediting bodies’ and students’ interests.

This project will also provide an opportunity for research in a new educational field in North Cyprus. Many developed destinations have adopted tourism apprenticeship programmes, but not here or in Turkey. There are informal apprenticeship structures, but these are not monitored, controlled, or of educational value. Therefore, I believe my research project can also be a model for Turkey.

As an insider researcher, my interest in this field stemmed from two fundamental experiences during my studies. The first is my early educational background, the BTEC National Diploma in Tourism and Hotel Management in Further Education. Although I was not very academic at that age, I discovered that I enjoyed learning through combining courses, also known as “blending learning”, in other words combining theoretical knowledge with on-the-job work experience. I am proud to state that I completed this programme of study and was awarded the title “Student of the Year”. This gave me the opportunity and encouragement to enter higher education (HE).

The second reason was that during my undergraduate and postgraduate study I worked in hotels, applying my theoretical knowledge to practice; not only did I earn but, more importantly, I gained valuable experience that could have not been achieved in the classrooms or labs of the university. For example, it is important to work under pressure in a busy hotel to appreciate fully

how to manage and motivate a team, and how to remain calm when opening a vintage bottle of wine in front of a protocol group, or even learning how to cut costs. I became manager of the Front Office upon completion of my studies, not because I had a Degree in Hotel Management, but because I had the experience to go with it. These experiences triggered important elements that I, as Head of Department, feel is important to provide in the learning for my students.

1.2 Definition of terms

My research will focus on how tourism education can be taught at higher education level, through looking at two main areas, firstly through critical analysis of literature to date on tourism education and vocational education models to include *apprenticeships* and *blended learning*. The second is to engage in in-depth interviews with experts from the tourism sector, accreditation bodies and students. The terms "blended learning" and "apprenticeship programmes" are defined in more detail below.

Advanced apprenticeship programme

The word "apprenticeship" comes from the Old French aprentiz, meaning "someone learning", and the Anglian suffix -*scip*, meaning "state, condition of being". An apprenticeship is when someone is in a state or condition of learning from a master in a field (English Dictionary, 2011). Schultz and Schultz (2010) define apprenticeship as a type of job training that involves following and studying a master of the trade on the job, instead of in school. Steedman, Gospel and Ryan (1998, 18) provide a more detailed definition:

> Apprenticeship is defined as a contract between an employer and a young person combining on-the-job training, formal learning and productive work. Once entered into, the agreement places upon both employer and the young person a set of reciprocal rights and duties. The employer agrees to ensure that the apprentice follows the stipulated programme of vocational education and training which will be based on national standards formally recognised by the sector concerned. A non-negotiable part of the agreement will be that on-the-job training will be complemented by off-the-job training in an educational institution. In return, the apprentice agrees to

> conscientiously pursue the stipulated programme of education and training, to undertake productive work related to his/her course of training within the company and to accept a training wage appropriate for his/her age and the stage of his/her apprenticeship training.

In summary, apprenticeship can be defined as training and learning through working with a set framework of guidelines and receiving a small payment from the workplace.

In this research I will apply apprenticeship-style learning to higher education institutions, therefore Steedman, Gospel and Ryan's (1998) statement of "young" people is not limited in this context and includes anyone who studies at university level. For the purposes of this research, we outline this as an ***Advanced*** Apprenticeship Programme.

Blended learning

Blended learning can be defined as combining instructional methods of learning, not limited to traditional classroom settings (Bonk and Graham, 2012). Staker and Horn (2012), define it as two possible ways of learning, depending on the learning environment. These are:

1. A formal education programme in which a student learns, at least in part, through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace.

2. The second, at least in part, is at a supervised bricks-and-mortar location away from home.

For the purposes of this study, the second definition is better suited, since the professional programme is to be delivered partly in a classroom and partly in the tourism sector. Given this, my understanding of blended learning is the optimal combination of work and place-based learning pedagogies, of actual or simulated practice-based learning contexts/environments underpinned by the more orthodox instructional methods of learning. I will deal with this topic further in Section 2.6. Section 1.3 below will discuss aspects of vocational training in Cyprus.

1.3 Background and importance of the project

Despite all the changes in the world such as climate change, the economic downturn, terrorism and the Middle East conflict, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation figures show sustained growth (UNWTO, 2015) in tourism in the first decade of the twenty-first century, both as an activity and an industry. The World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC, 2011) research and evidence show that tourism is a major force in the economy of the world. This, no doubt, makes a major contribution to the economy and to employment in most developing countries like North Cyprus. The travel and tourism industries' *direct* contribution to global employment 2005-2011 saw a growth rate of 3 per cent, which at present generates over 258 million jobs (WTTC, 2011). This is equivalent to around 9 per cent of the world's workforce.

Although tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, study by academics, researchers and commentators in this field commenced quite late. For example, WTTC was set up in the early 1980s. Page (2009) states that some of the early student text books on tourism date to the early 1970s, with very few examples of reviews from as early as the 1930s.

There is a range of commonly recognised problems in studying tourism, but the one most recognised by a variety of researchers (Baudrillard, 1998; Chadwick, 1994; Page, 2009) is that tourism is multi-disciplinary, which means that a wide range of other subjects such as psychology, geography and economics are included in the contents of the curriculum. In my thirteen-year experience of teaching in tourism at further education and higher education levels, both in England and North Cyprus, there does not appear to be an overarching academic agreement on how to approach the study of tourism, leading to a lack of clarity and definition in how to study tourism. This is also confirmed by Stergiou, Airey and Riley (2008) who outline that whilst there has been a considerable emphasis developing a systematic and rigorous body of knowledge about tourism, there has been little attention given to the conduct of teaching

these subjects themselves (p.632). Taking this information as a general perspective of where tourism education stands, I will question how such an important subject is to be taught, through in-depth interviews with experts from the sector, accreditation bodies and students.

Academics and researchers agree that tourism is a multi-disciplinary subject, yet industry representatives demand tourism and hospitality graduates with the practical ability to perform key competencies and skills (Zehrer and Mossenlechner, 2009). While universities are encouraged to embed key skills in their curricula, there is often a considerable gap between what they offer and what is required by the industry (Guden, 2009). Research conducted on hotels in North Cyprus (Guden, 2009; VETLAM 2010) indicates that the sector lacks skilled labour, with particular reference to the shortage of chefs, waiters and reception staff, yet tourism education institutions mainly provide academic curricula. Only five vocational schools (*Lise*) specialise in tourism and hospitality-related subjects (TRNC Education Ministry, 2015).

The North Cyprus economy relies on five main sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, education, construction and tourism with 72 per cent GNP from tourism and industry and 28 per cent GNP from agriculture and industry (TRNC Public Information Office, 2014, p2.). According to Johnson, Snepenger and Akis, (1994), the main income revenue for North Cyprus was from tourism, followed by education and agriculture, and tourism is the main provider of foreign exchange. This was confirmed by Katircioglu (2010) in a more recent study in which he provides emphasis on the relationship between the growth of higher education in North Cyprus and economic growth, for which he stated that “students are a type of tourist also as there is an estimated 40,000 international students” (p.126). Although tourism is developing as a valuable sector for North Cyprus, when we look at the profile of the students taking Tourism and Hospitality subjects in higher education we see that 82 per cent of the students are international, with only 18 per cent Turkish Cypriot (Guden, 2009). It is of interest to learn that the tourism and hospitality sector has deficiencies that in the long term could pose a problem to the labour

required in the tourism sector. This is an issue for the development of the tourism industry; as Lewis (2006) states, "education is crucial in responding to broader issues in tourism development that affect the wider society, and the core of successful and sustainable tourism development is education, considered as a critical element" (p.24).

North Cyprus has made a steady growth in tourism and hospitality and is still developing, as is education in tourism and hospitality management. There are nine universities in North Cyprus, of which seven offer tourism and hospitality programmes, both academic and vocational (TRNC State Planning Organization, 2015, p.30.) There are five technical schools offering two-year vocational studies (TRNC Education Ministry, 2015). This supports Lee, Kim and Ada's, (2005) research that states that in various countries higher education in tourism can be divided into academic and vocational, which is important for developing and sustaining economies.

1.4 Context of my work-based research project

Higher education is important to North Cyprus's economic development. Katircioglu (2010) suggests that higher education and international tourism contributes highly to real income growth, however the TRNC State Planning Organization to date has not carried out any research to confirm this. This may contradict previous research that states that the tourism sector is the main industry yet, as the majority of students in higher education are international, it is to be assumed that they come to North Cyprus for education and this can create a controversial debate if they are tourists. This is followed by the tourism sector demonstrating continued growth, with 2.8 per cent average growth in tourism numbers in 2012 and 30 per cent growth in bed capacity (NCSPO, 2013). Whether international students are considered as tourists or not, the growth in tourism demand suggests a growth in employment in the tourism sector; and therefore it is necessary for educational institutions to take action to meet the demand for skills and knowledge that will certainly arise.

The current education system is composed of primary and secondary schools, and a higher secondary level (*Lise*), also known as technical schools. Students who wish to pursue higher education can do so, dependent upon their exam results. Five *Lises* offer tourism and hospitality-related subjects, while seven of the nine universities offer tourism and hospitality-related degrees (TRNC Education Ministry, 2014). Although the education system provides tourism-related programmes, these have not been sufficient to meet the demands of the sector and there is a shortfall in the provision of workforce. Research has shown that this can be met through the provision of apprenticeship programmes.

For some countries, such as Australia, Austria and Switzerland tourism and hospitality apprenticeship programmes are common and often used in further education (Weiermair and Bieger, 2003) but there appears to be a lack of provision in North Cyprus. While tourism and hospitality comprise the dominant sector in North Cyprus, there is a major gap in the education offered. Previous research in this field points to this deficit (Guden, 2009), as has the European Commission, specifically the Vocational Education Training Institute's (VETLAM, 2010) report conducted in North Cyprus.

My project therefore pertains to research directed at designing the first tourism and hospitality blended learning programme model in North Cyprus that incorporates a blend of work-based learning and classroom pedagogies, like the apprenticeship programme. The main purpose is to identify the requirements of the stakeholders and to embed them into a professional learning programme at higher education level to be promoted and delivered at Girne American University. This is intended to be a model for other education institutes in North Cyprus.

1.5 Focus of my work-based research project

Based on the brief facts mentioned above, one can summarise that there is an acute need to develop tourism education curricula to meet the needs of industry, with particular reference to

international tourism education institutes such as those based in Switzerland and Austria (Weiermair and Bieger, 2003). These have taken the lead in developing education that meets the requirements of the tourism industry and its disparate sectors in particular. Taking into consideration the high competitiveness in the service sector in particular, the need for curricula specialising in developing skills and also accommodating the needs of higher education, it would appear to be essential to enhance curricula and delivery in North Cyprus tourism institutes to keep abreast of global trends and meet the stipulations of the tourism industry in North Cyprus. We would add the need for a practical approach to developing tourism students' skills and abilities (Guden, 2009).

Since 2010 the European Commission's Vocational Education Training Institute (VETLAM, 2010) in North Cyprus has been funded by the EU to carry out research on the local labour market. Its report shows a clear gap in the requirement for apprenticeship-style learning in specific fields in tourism and hospitality, as well as other subject areas. Since the publication of these results, the North Cyprus Employment Commerce jointly with the North Cypriot government has established schools specialising in apprenticeship programmes. However, none are at present offered in tourism and hospitality. This means that the introduction of a professional tourism programme that has a blend of work-based and classroom pedagogies could be an opportunity to develop it further at these schools and meet local demand.

1.6 Products and outcomes of my work-based research project

I intend to undertake a research project as part of my Doctorate in Professional Studies and develop a model that can be used nationally. However, I am also looking forward to the challenge of adopting a new concept of education that will be rewarding for GAU STHM students who are less academic, yet will learn skills that the sector demands. Hence, this research will make me an expert in the field of tourism education in North Cyprus.

Accrediting bodies such as YOK, YODAK and UNWTO TEDQUAL require that institutions, with particular reference to higher education, must carry out frequent evaluative research to develop and update their curricula. This project will therefore be an asset for use in accreditation audits.

The programme will also benefit the tourism and hospitality sector of North Cyprus as its views and suggestions will be researched and embedded in the curriculum, providing them in the long term with graduates who fulfill the demands of the industry.

The research will provide a pioneering programme model and consequently will be beneficial to GAU, which will be the first to implement this educational style, lending competitive programmes to North Cyprus, and consequently increasing graduate employability.

1.7 Limitations of my project

My position as a head of department has meant that I must be abreast to developments and therefore the focus of my research has been to develop a new programme as part of this project.

Although the outcome of this project is a model that can be used internationally, the actual "hard" (such as legislation and regulations) and "soft" factors (such as the quality of governance arrangements and social capital, the local and sectoral levels), are specific to North Cyprus and therefore can be considered to be a limitation of the project in an international context. It is important to outline that I am writing about the education system of a small country which is very `exceptional' because of the current political and cultural situation, which I discuss further in my chapter 3, however this project has tried to expand into the higher education sector by appealing to international student demand.

Chapter 2 Review of literature

For many developing countries, tourism plays a vital role, and in North Cyprus it is no different. A fundamental part of the economy is higher education (HE), with over 76,000 students (TRNC State Planning Organization, 2015, p.32-33) for a population of just 320,000 (TRNC General Population and Housing Unit Censes, 2011). Therefore, higher education and tourism are of great importance to the North Cyprus economy. In order for destinations such as North Cyprus to be economically sustainable in the long term, they must plan for tourism. This can be achieved through the development of education in tourism. Many studies have outlined new curricula in tourism, but the most evident question is how to teach a subject that has so many disciplines such as business, food and beverages, accounts, housekeeping and so forth. Researchers' overall agreement on the way forward is for blending learning that combines classroom, online and workplace learning styles. I discuss these factors below.

2.1 Research aims and objectives

The aim is to carry out a detailed study of current apprenticeship programmes offered internationally, researching the requirements of stakeholders in tourism education in North Cyprus and developing a blended learning model, blended in the sense that the curricula incorporates work placement for the first time in North Cyprus alongside more traditional learning and teaching methods. As outlined in objective 1, four countries have been selected for the research of apprenticeship-style learning. These countries are Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland. The reasons for this selection are that Germany and Austria have the dual system and therefore have a successful apprenticeship learning system in place at further education level, Britain was selected because in recent years advanced apprenticeship style teaching at higher education level has been adopted and Switzerland was selected because it has a strong reputation as a destination for teaching in tourism and hospitality disciplines. This study will use

practice-based pedagogies to create awareness and ensure the work may be used as a model nationally. In order to achieve this, the following objectives have been identified:

1. To carry out a detailed literature review on apprenticeships and their development, looking particularly at examples in Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland.
2. To study the requirements of the different stakeholders, including GAU, GAU students, accrediting bodies, tourism sector experts and professional organisations.
3. To study the North Cyprus education system's delivery of apprenticeship and placement-based blended learning – together with its "hard" (such as legislation and regulations) and "soft" factors (such as the quality of governance arrangements and social capital at the local and sectoral levels).
4. To develop and adopt a professional learning programme that fulfils the requirements of all stakeholders.
5. To create awareness of a "new" style of education in North Cyprus, as this will be the first education programme here that incorporates professional practice-based elements. This can be used as a model nationally.

Research statement

Development of a professional learning programme for tourism in higher education

This research is to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the current situation with apprenticeship programmes in Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland and how are they delivered?
2. What are the requirements of GAU, GAU students, accrediting bodies, tourism sector representatives and professional organisations for tourism education and employability?

3. What do North Cyprus' "hard" (such as legislation and regulations), and "soft" factors (such as the quality of governance arrangements and social capital that the local and sectoral levels fit in) mean for introducing blended learning?
4. How to develop and adopt a professional learning programme that fulfils the requirements of all stakeholders
5. How can awareness be created for the new programme in North Cyprus?

2.2 Terms of reference (literature review)

North Cyprus is an area yet to be internationally recognised, due to an international embargo post-1974 for political reasons. However, its political status has not hindered it from developing a valuable higher education sector hosting an average of 76,000 students (TRNC State Planning Organization, 2015, p.32-33), neither has it stopped the tourism sector from developing. Tourism is the second greatest income generator (NCSPO, 2013), thus the two main sectors for this small destination's economy are education and tourism.

The research conducted as part of the VETLAM report (VETLAM Report, 2010; Guden 2009) states that North Cyprus does not have an existing tourism apprenticeship programme; although findings provide evidence that there is a need for one with particular reference to the tourism and hospitality sector. My position as Head of the Tourism School at GAU has undoubtedly made me more aware of these basic facts and information, and my passion for combining the two topics has been a result of my interest in developing new ideas and models for GAU. This not only is my passion, but also my responsibility at the university; I must study the requirements of the sector and at the same time reflect them in the curricula. This is necessary to meet the demands all the stakeholders, to create further opportunities and a better climate for graduate employability; and also to provide the opportunity for my department to keep abreast of developments internationally, sustain student numbers and provide a competitive advantage in

our choice of programmes. Therefore, this research is important for me as well as my employers, and consequently should be accepted and supported by all stakeholders with whom I share my findings.

2.3 Tourism education

Tourism education began in universities in Europe as an extension of vocational schools in the 1960s. These schools emphasised training in core competencies such as hospitality, hotel management and related business skills (Morgan, 2004). A number of key changes in tourism were having a direct impact on the emergence of new programmes (Airey and Tribe, 2006). Demand from the public and private sectors showed growth in tourism studies and the establishment of departments of travel and tourism in institutions of higher education, in addition to technical schools (Butler, 1996). Therefore, there has been tourism education for over fifty years. Jafar Jafari (1990) identifies four phases: advocacy; cautionary; adaptancy; and knowledge, as summarised in Table 2.1 below. Airey and Tribe (2006) discuss this further and state that tourism education has come a long way since the 1960s, suggesting "tourism education life begins at 40" (online http://teoros.revues.org/1617).

Table 2.1 Jafar Jafari's (1990) four phases of tourism education

Phase	**Summary**
Advocacy	(1960–1970s) programmes firmly based on economics and business studies.
Cautionary	(1970–1980s) evolution of programmes to consider impacts of tourism with the negative impacts of tourism on environments. In particular, growth in subjects such as sustainable tourism and tourism impact etc. became apparent.

Adaptationy	(1980–1990s) programmes began to adopt courses providing alternative tourism to mass tourism, such as eco tourism and special ınterest tourism
Knowledge	(1990–2000s) saw tourism as a mature study programme offering a comprehensive understanding combining all the above areas.

Airey (2008) discusses similar points to Jafar Jafari and identifies four phases with a particular focus on the evolution of the state of knowledge: industrial; fragmented; benchmark; and mature. The focus of the industrial phase is very similar to that of advocacy, as both authors address how tourism programmes of the 1960s-1970s adopted a high focus on business and economic subjects. The main reason is that the strong growth of tourism data and statistics played an important role in employability (Airey, 2008), evidently highly vocational, with close links to industry and a focus on operational practice. The fragmented phase of the discussion addresses the fact that in the 1970s–1980s many of the lecturers in tourism practice were not in fact, from tourism backgrounds; hence many of the studies carried out at this time were based on criticism of tourism's curricula from researchers attracted from other disciplines related to tourism, not directly from tourism. This supports an earlier study by Cooper, Scales and Westlake (1992) in which it is suggested that tourism programmes simply took on the character of the particular expertise of the faculty members. This is the current condition of tourism education in HE in North Cyprus, as I will discuss later.

Criticism of tourism programmes in the UK was less evident, following publications by the Quality Assurance Agency for HE. Airey (2008) states that this was a benchmark stage, further enhanced by the inclusion of comprehensive consultation with the academic community over what it meant to study tourism at degree level. These programmes were broader in terms of discipline. The final stage is questionable, and Airey suggests that tourism may be moving into a mature stage in the realisation that researchers in this field accept that tourism programmes

must be multidisciplinary, while providing an opportunity for employment, not just debate over curricula and teaching. Therefore, I would like to observe that, if tourism education has come to this stage of maturity and we are done with researching and developing curricula, the question academics should be asking is "how to teach?". This is a question that has also been raised by Stergiou, Airey and Riley (2008), in which they attempt to "make sense of tourism teaching" (p.631) and confirm that it is important to question now "the extent to which those involved in the classroom engage the students not only in understanding the theoretical and explanatory frameworks that have been developed but also get them to challenge them, to consider them in practical settings and the fullest extent to revise or even overturn them" (p.645).

Many researchers have found that the tourism and hospitality sector is not overly concerned with the award or the grade achieved by graduates, but more the skills and actual content of the knowledge that graduates gain (Zehrer, 2009); this is evident in research conducted by the European Commission (VETLAM Report, 2009). While these programmes meet actual needs in training and education, there has been a growing discussion on where and what should be taught (Jafar Jafari, 1990; Airey, 2008). The Business Enterprises for Sustainable Travel (BEST) developed a set of curriculum modules to teach students the principles of sustainable tourism and specific management techniques, as per the needs of the tourism industry (Inui, Wheeler and Lankford, 2006), not necessarily for the tourism destination's or local community's requirements. It is important to accept that "education" is not necessarily just students' need for employability but a fundamental part of shaping a community's future vision and state planning. Education is often considered by leaders to raise awareness of the fundamental sectors and industries that are vital to their governments or kingdom's overall economic viability, and therefore sustainability. This is particularly apparent in most well-planned tourism destinations whereby community-based tourism planning has been practiced (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Inskeep, 1995; UNWTO, 2015).

Whilst education has had an important role in shaping communities and economies, HE has come under increasing pressure to improve the quality and efficiency of the educational services provided (Soutar and Turner, 2002). This is particularly evident in sectors such as tourism that prepare students with skills, knowledge and competency for employment (Guden, 2009).

Eurico, Oom do Valle and Silva (2013) in their research into satisfaction in tourism-related HE from the graduates' perspective, describe how there is an increase in unemployment among graduates across Europe, despite increasing numbers of tourism programmes in HE. The study outlines the factors related to graduates' satisfaction in tourism in Portugal, regarding the higher education institution attended. This research was conducted with graduates already employed in the industry and its findings are that institutional reputation is the most significant predictor regarding the tourism education experience. The research suggests a need for strategic planning in providing relevant education and industry-specific knowledge and skills. These issues are relevant across Europe and are important to the tourism industry's human resources, creating a challenging climate for tourism-related education (Airey, 2008; Baum, 2007; Cooper, 2006; Tribe, 2005).

In summary, tourism education research acknowledges that tourism education must be comprehensive and multi-disciplinary, yet must provide the skills and knowledge required to be employable and in accordance with the demands of the destination's tourism. The development of a perfect curriculum is not sufficient, in this case, and there is a need for different teaching pedagogies. I believe industry-specific knowledge and skills can be gained from a blended-style pedagogy in tourism education.

2.4 Tourism education in North Cyprus

There are nine universities in North Cyprus, of which seven offer tourism and hospitality programmes, both academic and vocational. There are five technical schools (*Lise*) that offer two-year vocational studies in tourism-related subjects (TRNC Education Ministry, 2015). This is the only form of tourism education available in North Cyprus and is insufficient for a country with a reliance on tourism. Secondary education does not offer the subject, so tourism is only studied by those who select it in *Lise* or higher education. This situation has forced tourism programme designers in higher education to incorporate introductory topics, as many students have no background knowledge (Guden, 2009). The curricula of all the HE institutions are similar to those across Europe, as mentioned by Airey (2008), with a comprehensive variety of subjects and a high concentration of business-related subjects such as economics, business and finance. The main reason for this omission is that tourism education started late in North Cyprus. For example, the first tourism degree course in North Cyprus was offered at the Eastern Mediterranean University in 1990 (TRNC Education Ministry, 2013), hence today's lecturers in tourism education are from business disciplines or have an education background. This situation can be compared to Cooper, Scales and Westlake's (1992) findings that courses took on the character of the particular expertise of the available faculty members.

Table 2.2 Comparison of universities' tourism and hospitality departments accreditations (and agreements) for North Cyprus

Accreditation: **HE Institution of Tourism Schools**	**YOK** Turkish Higher Education Commission	**YODAK** Turkish Cypriot Higher Education Commission	**UNWTO** United Nations World Tourism Education (TEDQUAL)	**EURHODIP** European Hoteliers Education Association	**EDEXCEL**	**AMFORHT** (Agreement) World Association of Hospitality & Tourism Education & Training	**ECBE**
Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU)	√	√	√		√		
Girne American University (GAU)	√	√	√	√		√	√
International Cyprus University (ICU)	√	√		√			
European University Lefke (EUL)	√	√		√			
Near East University (NEU)	√	√					
Karpaz Akdeniz University (KAU)	√	√					
British University of Nicosia (BUN)	√	√					

There are 1,900 students enrolled on HE tourism programmes in North Cyprus universities, just 2.5 per cent of the 76,000 total (TRNC Education Ministry, 2014). To compare HE tourism and hospitality schools of North Cyprus, we can gauge international recognition by their accreditations (see Table 2.2) as a good indication of the quality of the education provided, according to a number of studies, especially Arcelo's research (2008). We can see that GAU Tourism School and EMU Tourism School are in a strong position with regard to quality, whereas in terms of HE curricula the general content is similar and up to date with the island's tourism requirements.

The pedagogical delivery of programmes for schools in HE consists mainly of lecture-style teaching, where lecturers may demonstrate how to make a reservation, for example, using PowerPoint slides, but generally provide little opportunity for vocational pedagogy such as learning by doing, work-based learning, apprenticeships and placement/internship – *staj,* in Turkish. This has made me realise that higher education in North Cyprus lacks the opportunity for a blended style of learning, and hence my interest. EMU and GAU offer Fidelio/Opera (front office reservation systems), Amadeus/Galileo (travel agency systems) – which are examples of simulations for learning, and kitchen-related studies in their kitchen lab and restaurants provide opportunities for practical training. EUL has recently completed a new kitchen and offers student's practical training in the curriculum. Therefore, the infrastructure and curriculum for EMU and GAU are seen to be highly competitive regarding practical training or online and simulation learning, to be discussed later. However, one of the fundamental questions to be asked of the sector in the process of this research is whether this is sufficient.

Many authors suggest that vocational education and apprenticeships are the way forward to prepare employees with the skills required to provide good quality service in the hospitality industry (Barabasch, Scharnhorst and Kurz, 2009; Scharnhorst, 2007; Sweet, 2009).

Although a formal means of apprenticeship does not exist In North Cyprus, an informal model can be described as three levels of apprenticeship (see Figure 2.1). However, this is changing as more youngsters are opting for vocational schools known as *Meslek Okulu*, going into higher education, or the boys are giving up these choices to complete national army service (Guden, 2009).

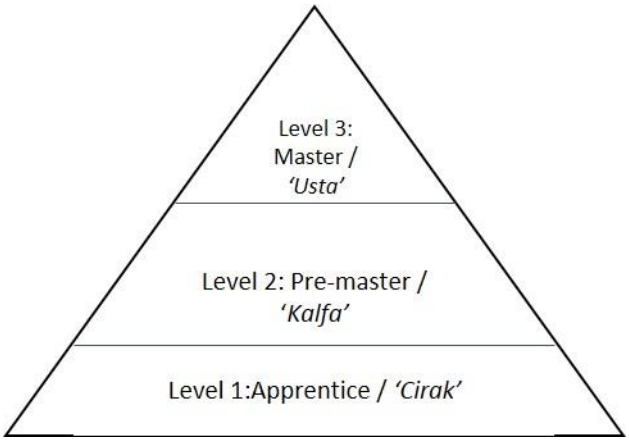


Figure 2.1. – A typical *Apprenticeship* model in North Cyprus

In many European countries, second-generation children from migrant backgrounds perform less at school than their parents did (Scharnhorst, 2007). This information is relevant to North Cyprus, which has a local Cypriot population of just 33 per cent (TRNC General Population and Housing Unit, 2011) and the majority of immigrants coming from Turkey – a sign that the social divide may actually worsen over time. For a destination such as North Cyprus, which has a high dependence on tourism for its economic viability, it is important to review and acknowledge that this educational background is a waste of young people's talents and a waste for society. Zelloth (2012) states that apprenticeship and work-based learning solutions have been somewhat neglected in previous vocational education and training reforms in low- and middle-income countries.

2.5 Apprenticeship programmes

Vocational education and training is a much debated topic that has no internationally accepted definition (West, 1999), but one may define vocational education as preparing individuals with the skills and knowledge to perform a particular job (English Dictionary, 2011). The most commonly accepted definition of "apprenticeship" is training and learning through working (Patiar, 2014).

Evident from many scholars, hospitality education institutes are making an effort to develop and improve their educational programmes to suit the labour market (Uludag and Yaratan, 2010). Lo's (2005) critique concerns higher education undergraduate and graduate programmes that train "scholars" rather than professional managers with an outlook on international issues. Therefore, emphasis should be on competence rather than theoretical knowledge, which also appears to be the request from the industry as a whole (OECD, 2010). This supports Airey's (2008) findings that tourism education has matured and requires new teaching pedagogies.

According to research carried out by Ouzoun (2009), National Expert of the European Commission and Director General for Education and Culture, too many young people face an uncertain future in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. She states in the study carried out in Europe, that 6 million young people (1 in every 7 in the 18–24 age range) leave school early with, at best, only compulsory education.

In recent years in a number of European Union member states a trend has been noted to re-energise apprenticeship as a valuable route (Skills Commission, 2009), with thirty formal work-based learning schemes in ten Mediterranean countries (European Training Foundation Report, 2009). Zelloth (2012) states that there are some key challenges that face apprenticeship programmes and other work-based learning programmes in the Mediterranean region, as follows:

- Balancing growth and quality improvement
- Reconciling social and economic needs
- Strengthening links to the labour market and targeting higher-skilled areas of the economy that lead to attractive work; and
- Improving governance systems

These ideas are well suited to Ryan's (2000) discussion, where he states that to ensure the success or failure of apprenticeships, education systems must understand two types of influence. These are "hard" factors such as legislation and regulations, training wages, financing systems, and qualification and certification arrangements, and "soft" factors such as the quality of governance arrangements, and social capital at local and sector levels.

The connection between an educational programme and its destination may be thought of as a "pathway" (Raffe *et al.,* 1998). Sweet (2005) suggests that the concept has been highly influential in the development of apprenticeship programmes and vocational education. It is usual to distinguish three principal post-compulsory pathways: general education; apprenticeship-type; and school-based vocational education (Raffe, 2008). In the education system of North Cyprus there is an absence of this pathway, so it is an opportunity that can be incorporated at HE level.

Although much research has been conducted in the field of apprenticeship programmes in the last couple of years, these mainly consist of government-related reports, focused on primary research conducted in Europe, such as Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Britain. Research undertaken more recently shows that there is a demand for and a growing trend to "blended learning" (Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman, 2006; Graham, 2005; Ginns and Ellis, 2007; Singh, 2003), generally defined as a mixing of different learning environments. Although the majority of studies suggest that blended learning consists of online elements, researchers such as

Weiermair and Bieger (2005) prefer to call this "new types of tourism schooling and training" (p.4), stating that the paradigm shift (i.e. structural change) of tourism factors and tourism product markets from "old" to "new" tourism has had implications for tourism schooling and training. This has given rise to a need for specialised vocational schools. Although the educational level outlined here is further education, and in this study higher education, the general argument appears compatible with research into blended learning in higher education. The general realisation is that no single mode of instructional delivery may provide the choices, engagement, social contact relevance and context essential to facilitate successful learning and performance (Singh, 2003). This is particularly relevant for tourism and hospitality, which as mentioned earlier is a multi-disciplinary area. For example a student is expected to learn culinary arts in a real-life setting such as a kitchen and, although the institution may have a kitchen lab to teach in, there may be a lack of guests to cook for, so students may not fully experience the intense "buzz" of working in a busy kitchen setting. Overall, the anecdotal evidence indicates that blended learning offers more choice and more effective learning (Singh, 2003). Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman (2006) state that "knowledge is power – no more", in their comparison of the higher education generation and affirm that to rebuild HE, blended learning is a must. Their findings are that since today's students are more diverse, the perfect blend is to include online and face-to-face pedagogical systems and also lectures, vital to provide them with strong motivation and to maintain progress. This is consequently well suited to the apprenticeship programmes proposed in this Doctorate.

2.6 Blended learning

Graham (2013) has been the pioneer in defining and redefining blended learning, he states that an increasing number of people are discussing blended learning, but the ambiguity remains regarding how to define it. Often there appears to be a confusion of what is to be blended

(Graham, 2005) and for many researchers it is accepted as a mix of online and face-to-face teaching (Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman's, 2006; Graham, 2013; Picciano, 2009). It is worth mentioning that an area of common ground is that learning takes place away from the usual classroom setting. Consequently, as cited in Bonk and Graham's work (2012), this may be defined as combining instructional methods. It is also worth mentioning that blended learning (BL) began with e-learning ideas and most of the research to date is on this basis, however as more research is conducted we find that it is not limited to this pedagogy but is broader, as in my research. This can be identified with Graham, Woodfield and Harrison's (2013) work in which they attempt to investigate institutions who endeavour to develop bended learning. The focus is on institutional policy and adoption issues. Their research investigates six cases of institutional adoption of blended learning to examine the key issues that can guide university administrators interested in this endeavor. The results identified key markers related to institutional strategy, structure and support. These are outlined as follows:

- **Strategy:** this includes issues regarding the overall design of BL, such as its definition and policies (which again raises the question of *what* is being blended), forms of advocacy, degree of implementation, and purposes for implementation.

- **Structure:** this relates to the technological, pedagogical, and administrative framework facilitating the BL environment such as those soft factors and hard factors outlined in chapter one of this project

- **Support:** involves issues relating to the manner in which an institution facilitates faculty implementation and maintenance of its BL design, to include technical support, pedagogical support and faculty incentives.

It will be interesting to see if there are similarities in the development of the professional learning programme for GAU with those outlined by Graham, Woodfield and Harrison (2013).

The development of blended learning has been debated since 2003. The American Society for Training and Development (Graham, 2005) identified blended learning as one of the top trends to emerge in the knowledge delivery industry, whilst the Australian government (Australian Government Apprenticeship Incentives Program, 2011) created an incentive programme to develop a new skilled workforce that provides long-term benefits nationally and increases competitiveness in the international market. Moreover, Ginns and Ellis (2007) suggest that to increase quality in learning, blended learning is required and their research has identified a 93 per cent completion rate among students undertaking vocational programmes that incorporate blended learning.

Bailey and Morais (2005) explored the use of blended learning in tourism education through the combination of online and face-to-face pedagogies. Their purpose was to explore the influence of perceptions of online and face-to-face interaction on students' satisfaction and performance on a blended learning tourism marketing assignment. The findings suggest that instructors should consider the use of online tools to improve satisfaction, as increased student interaction leads to increased satisfaction. This is also apparent in Dziuban, Hartman and Moskar's research (2004), however these authors note that this relationship may be a result of learning style and familiarity with the internet. Although it was previously stated that blended learning is essential (Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman, 2006) to bring curricula forward, particularly in the twenty-first century when even young children are learning how to use the internet, we must not disregard the fact that some students lack familiarity with it. This is especially relevant for GAU students, as students in the tourism school are of 26 nationalities, and some are from backgrounds with little knowledge of the internet. A solution is to have online pedagogies in the second year of study, so that the first may be spent becoming familiar with the medium.

In Canada there is a need for a comprehensive, balanced and integrated tourism education and training infrastructure, according to Pollock and Richie's research (1990), and this is relevant to

the current work-based study. The key principle from the research is the need for balance between the requirements for trained personnel and for programmes offering "mix and match" modules.

In conclusion, whilst BL is widely accepted as face-to-face and online learning, the above researchers have not limited it to this. Evidently, there is a need for blended learning that combines "learner-centred" pedagogies with professional practice-based training and work-based learning.

2.7 Simulation software

Online pedagogies include software that creates a realistic learning environment for learners. There have been several studies conducted in the field of simulation in tourism and hospitality education programmes (Martin and McEvoy, 2003; Sigala, 2012; Yalcinalp *et al.,* 2012) that are also online computer operated sources of educational material. According to Feinstein, Mann and Corsan (2002); "simulations are representations of reality" (p. 734). They state that simulation is the behavior of the model being built in the management sciences. The model is described as a performance measure; in particular, simulations allow opportunities for role-play that is particularly relevant for improving communications and problem solving. A role-play may emanate from the self in the form of emotional, cognitive and physiological reactions to the context in which the activity is structured, or with other participants. Feinstein, Mann and Corsan (2002) argue that simulations are important in effective education and training, with particular emphasis on "the practical, on decision making, on communication skills, and, on doing the job" (Jones, 1995: 44). This is confirmed by Corsun (2000: 10), who states that simulations allow education to go beyond "knowledge acquisitions…. developing critical thinking skills, the ability to formulate good questions and the where to know how to find answers".

Martin and McEvoy (2003) go further in researching whether a simulation can provide a more satisfying learning experience. They state that as developments in technology have increased, more attention has been devoted to the use of computer simulation as an alternative teaching vehicle for examining and evaluating effectiveness on learning. This study involved students studying tourism and hospitality, and researched the students' ability to make decisions regarding elements such as room rates, restaurant food, menus, pricing and advertising, and so on. The results of the study suggest that the learning experience helps students to apply the principles and concepts of finance, accounting, service quality, marketing and human resource management to tourism and hospitality effectively. This supports the view that the inclusion of multi-disciplinary learning is what the tourism sector requires, as discussed. In particular, this alternative method to lectures and case studies proved to be effective in testing critical and analytical thinking abilities. Sigala (2012) confirms that e-learning processes enabled by technology can support and foster social and (collaborative) cognitive processes. She summarises this as a model for developing effective geo-collaborative e-learning (i.e. mapping, planning visitors' behavior, measurement of carrying-capacity in geographical locations, etc.) under these broad headings (p.55):

- The technical/technological elements that support social interaction and cognitive processes
- The social/organisational structures creating and supporting the collaborative learning environment and community; and
- The educational concept, referring to the design of the learning process and activities to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Her findings prove that e-learning is a highly effective way to design collaborative learning outcomes with benefits including equitable education that is achieved in a holistic way, providing an opportunity for assessment of quality and quantity, feedback on how students can

improve their learning processes and, moreover, giving the instructor valuable information about the appropriateness and design of the e-learning activities.

A similar study to those discussed above is research conducted by Yalcinalp *et al.* (2012). They discuss "second Life" (SL), designed by Linden Labs in 2003. It is a free downloadable online 3D virtual world in which users can navigate and interact with the environment. The study results showed advantages in the creation of realistic environments to practise learning alone and with other learners. The SL study not only provided realistic environments for practising knowledge, but provided opportunities for students to learn in a fun and positive alternative way to lectures. Because the software is an international virtual environment it goes further in providing potential for cultural exchange as well as role-play, decision making and working under conditions where on-the-spot decisions must be made, thus providing similar conditions to those in the tourism and hospitality industry. Consequently, it also supports the development of self and personal skills.

In conclusion, simulation technology offers vast potential for an alternative teaching pedagogy that can be compared to those of a blended learning programme. What is interesting is that studies conducted in this field have proved that students and instructors can benefit greatly from this style of learning and teaching, yet according to my observation, none appear to have questioned its benefits in developing the skills and knowledge required by employers.

2.8 Apprenticeships in Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland

Blended learning may be considered apprenticeship-style learning, as skills and knowledge are acquired through a combination of structured learning opportunities that is away from the classroom,pursued in the workplace, participation in the production process (such as in the labs) and also classroom learning. Steedman, Gospel and Ryan (1998) suggest in their definition of apprenticeship that it is designed to include all the elements that they consider necessary to

underpin future expansion in Europe, basing apprenticeship on a model that includes these elements. In particular, the elements comprise high quality on-the-job learning, special contractual status for apprentices and a trainee wage reflecting the value of the training provided. The definition is as follows:

> Apprenticeship is defined as a contract between an employer and a young person combining on-the-job training, formal learning and productive work. Once entered into, the agreement places upon both employer and the young person a set of reciprocal rights and duties. The employer agrees to ensure that the apprentice follows the stipulated programme of vocational education and training which will be based on national standards formally recognised by the sector concerned. A non-negotiable part of the agreement will be that on-the-job training will be complemented by off-the-job training in an educational institution. In return, the apprentice agrees to conscientiously pursue the stipulated programme of education and training, to undertake productive work related to his/her course of training within the company and to accept a training wage appropriate for his/her age and the stage of his/her apprenticeship training. (Steedman, Gospel and Ryan, 1998: 18)

In this DProf study my aim is to design a professional learning programme for an HE institution (GAU). It is worth noting that Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland are popular countries for apprenticeship-style learning and that the dual system offered in Germany and Austria is recognised for this. However, it is offered at further education (FE) level and as a pathway to HE. These countries are good examples to use as a guide to the development of this professional programme for North Cyprus, to see what factors must be considered.

There are a number of names for vocational training, as identified above, such as internship. This is a requirement as part of the curriculum for which students are expected to complete a part of their training in a work-based setting, also referred to as placements or work experience, and known as *staj* in Turkish. Apprenticeship, on the other hand, is not assessed separately but forms a major part of the programme whereby the student spends part of their education in the classroom and part in the workplace. What is different here is that instead of a set time (for

example 90 days in GAU), the student is expected to work and study throughout the three to four years that they are registered on the programme. Internships (or work experience, placements or *staj*) can be considered to be a blend of learning. Although I refer to blended learning throughout my research, whilst the curriculum will comprise blended learning the student will be referred to as the "apprentice". Whilst these terms are perhaps interlinked and sometimes interchangeable, the programme I am designing is a professional learning programme with blended learning in the curriculum content.

I have chosen to research apprenticeships in countries known to be the best in the world for this style of learning. The learning conditions and national frameworks in Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland are different and I will discuss these in more detail below, however the definition outlined above is well suited to these countries because the elements are present in all apprenticeships in further education and higher education. These elements will provide a good foundation for the development of the professional learning programme for GAU.

In 2013 a report was written on research conducted in 15 European countries on cooperation and communication between the labour market and vocational education and training. It was designed to renew and update the content and profile of international vocational educational training (IVET) provision. Emphasis was placed on how labour market and VET actors interact to renew qualifications: (1) curricula; (2) programmes; (3) standards. The 15 EU member states were Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. This report presents the outcomes of an explorative CEDEFOP study, and I refer to this report below. The four countries I have selected (Germany, Britain, Switzerland and Austria) are discussed with a review of the results.

2.8.1 Germany

Apprenticeship in Germany is still the main route into employment and further career development for nearly two-thirds of all young people, however there still appears to be a

shortage of medium qualifications, although there is increased immigration (BIBB Report, 2014). Students are well guided in schools by established careers advice centres with generous funding from the federal and regional bodies. Although there is a well-tested system and some demand from young people, employers are becoming scarce and some students have to wait several years for a placement. Completion rates are good and additional courses give access from apprenticeship to university (CEDEFOP, 2013).

The popular "dual system" consists of training, provided by firms to specifications agreed by sector employer and employee organisations, and education, provided in vocational schools, also found in Austria and Switzerland. According to a report commissioned by the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network (Steedman, 2010), the employer and employee organisations must be consulted at specified stages over the content of apprenticeship occupations, and this is what I intend to do in designing the professional learning programme for GAU. In Germany, however, these organisations also participate in the regional education authorities' decision-making on the occupationally-relevant elements of vocational school syllabi. This may be possible in North Cyprus in future after the programme in GAU has gained recognition, and will be beneficial in creating a pathway to university as well as employment in the sector. Moreover, in Germany, employer and employee representatives take part in the assessment process, together with a representative of the school authority. Apprentice matching, contracts, quality inspection and the organisation of assessment are carried out by the chambers of commerce and similar bodies (Steedman, 2010). Apprenticeships normally last for three years but can be shortened to two years if an apprentice is judged capable of completing more quickly. At least one day a week must be spent in the vocational school, where a federal agreed programme of general education and occupationally-relevant technical knowledge are taught. Because German apprenticeships follow the dual-system model, workplace training is also provided by the host firm following the outline of the training

regulations for the appropriate occupation. Firms must show that they have the equipment and facilities to provide this training and have a qualified person to supervise the apprentice. If a firm lacks equipment/facilities, these may be supplied from a Group Training Centre financed by private and public funding.

Although apprenticeships in Germany are in decline, there is increasing demand for hospitality service and thus hospitality apprenticeships, with a fifth of all employees in the sector being apprentices (Steedman, 2010). According to the CEDEFOP report (2013), since Germany has a strong and hierarchical VET system there is more than one feedback mechanism (FM). Various bodies for apprenticeship programmes help apprenticeships to keep abreast of developments and demands as they arise. The FMs are formally applied as they are a part of the legal framework, but this is not feasible in North Cyprus as there is currently limited vocational training so no apprenticeships; however, GAU can put these in place as part of this project and thereafter to assure continued quality assurance. FMs in Germany range from student feedback, employers, and chambers of commerce, as well as education authorities.

2.8.2 Britain

In 2010, the Ambassadors Apprenticeship Network (AAN) (Steedman, 2010) found that only 7 per cent of 18 year olds were participating in work-based learning in Britain. Apprenticeship-style learning was revised and re-launched in England in 1994 with a number of apprenticeships, reaching the level of just under 300,000 by 2009. Although employers are well-represented by national and sector skill organisations, the number offering apprenticeships was low by international standards (8 per cent). Apprentice students must complete competency-based qualifications, attaining underpinning knowledge and key skills, employment experience and off-the-job training. According to AAN (2010), the administration of government funding for apprenticeship training lacked transparency and, as a result, the financial incentives available in most other countries to employers taking apprentices are not normally available in England.

Responsibility for the education service lies with the Department for Education (DFE) in England, responsible for planning and monitoring the education service in schools. For this reason, the government commissioned Doug Richard in June 2012 to undertake a review of apprenticeships in England to ensure that they met the needs of the changing economy consistently delivered high quality training and skills that employers and apprentices need and maximised the impact of government investment. The report was published in November 2012 (Richard, 2012) and, interestingly, he made a point that turning Britain's apprenticeship programme into a German or Switzerland model would not be appropriate:

> Throughout this Review, many experts have told me that what we need is for our apprenticeships to look more like some of our European neighbours'; that my task was to prescribe a solution which involved us trying to become Germany or Switzerland.
>
> Where they were right is that we have much to learn from these excellent systems; many of the core recommendations in this report owe much to their experiences. But I have not set out to turn English apprenticeships into German ones; while it may have been simpler, I cannot recommend we adopt a system built, over generations, upon a very different economy, labour market and social partnership. (Richard Review of Apprenticeships, 2012, p.15)

It is important for me to bear this point in Richard's report in mind: that while Germany may be a worthy guide, the economy, labour market and social partnership for North Cyprus is unlike that in the countries I am researching. I will use some of these examples as a guideline to what may work for GAU, North Cyprus.

In summary the recommendations outlined by Richard (2012) were as follows:

- Redefine Apprenticeships to be targeted only at those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained and substantial training
- Focus on the outcome of an Apprenticeship – what the apprentice can do when they complete their training – and freeing up the process by which they get there

- Apply independent assessment
- Have recognised industry standards as the basis of every Apprenticeship and link them to professional registration in sectors where they exist
- Require all Apprentices to have reached Level 2 in English and Maths before they can complete their Apprenticeship
- Ensure government funding creates the right incentives for Apprenticeship training, with the purchasing power for investing in Apprenticeship training lying with the employer, and
- Greater diversity and innovation in training – with employers and the government safeguarding quality.

The government accepted these principles and undertook an implementation plan in March 2013 (The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education, 2013), resulting in reforms for apprenticeships in Britain. What appears to be very similar to Germany is that employers are expected to have an input in standards. This is vital to setting standards for North Cyprus, however in England there appears to be funding and therefore incentives for employers to be involved, and this will be difficult to achieve in North Cyprus. In England, eight sectors signed up to take part in the first phase in 2013, although not tourism and hospitality.

The new apprenticeships in England also have criteria encouraging them to be short, concise and accessible documents (The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education, 2013). They must describe the level of skill, knowledge and competency required to do a specific occupation well and operate confidently within the sector. Any new standard must:

- Describe what "full competence for a specific occupation" means so that, on completion, an apprentice will have the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform the role in any part of the sector
- Be publicly recognised by employers (including small businesses), recognised professional or trade bodies and, where appropriate, higher education institutions (HEIs), as fit for purpose
- Be suitable for small businesses to use to train their apprentices, if necessary with external training
- Contain sufficient content, and be pitched at such a level, that a new entrant to the occupation would find it stretching and need at least one year of training to meet the standard
- Include any skills, and any other requirements, for professional registration if such a system exists in the sector or occupation so that, on completion, a successful apprentice can achieve professional skills

The above standards are general, and are suitable to apply to my proposed professional learning programme.

2.8.3 Austria

According to a report published in May 2014 by the Austria Economic Chambers (*Wirtschaftskammer Ostereich* – WKO 2014), apprenticeship in Austria provides post-compulsory education and training for around 40 per cent of all young people. Almost all are under the age of 19. Apprenticeship is governed by legislation; employer organisations play a leading role in piloting the system, and promoting research and data collection. Most apprenticeships last for three years and comprise a programme of on-the-job and off-the-job

training. Most apprenticeships are in artisan or service occupations such as hospitality, completion rates are high but there is little progression to higher education. Extensive careers advice is available both in and outside school. The duration of a hospitality apprenticeship is between two and four years. The majority last three years, but this can be reduced depending on the apprentice's capacity. Apprentices enter into a contract with the apprentice firm, but are legally students, not employees. This is because apprentice status requires attendance at the part-time vocational school, normally for a minimum of one day a week. The school-based training is three-quarters job-oriented and a quarter on general subjects (CEDEFOP, 2006). Because the Austrian apprenticeship also follows the dual-system model of Switzerland and Germany, the firm also provides workplace training following the training regulations for the appropriate occupation. Apprenticeship firms must show that they have the equipment and facilities to provide this training and have a qualified person to supervise the apprentice. If firms lack equipment/facilities, again these can be supplied at a Group Training Centre financed by private and public funding.

Austrian apprentices normally begin their apprenticeship at the age of 16, and must directly contact companies themselves to secure a placement. There is a steady stream of apprentices, at around 40 per cent of young people and, as in Britain and Germany, decreasing demand from employers (Steedman, 2010). However, in 2003 the Prime Minister of Austria, with the help of a businessman (Egon Blum), gave firms incentives to take on apprentices such as: payments; apprenticeship advisors (experienced apprenticeship trainers/employers) whose job is to contact firms directly and persuade them to offer more apprenticeships; and training facilities outside employer provision. This last provision is for those who have not yet attained the level necessary to take up an apprenticeship, or for those in apprenticeships but in danger of failing or falling behind. The last incentive is the promotion of a route to HE through apprenticeship. This involves additional study for a dedicated qualification equivalent to the academic HE entry

qualification. In 2013 there were a total of 120,579 apprenticeships, with 10,351 in the Tourism and Leisure sector (WKO, 2014).

2.8.4 Switzerland

Switzerland is the only apprenticeship-offering country where there is reliable evidence showing that, on average, apprenticeship firms incur no net cost as a result of taking on apprentices. Employer involvement in planning and provision is very high. An in-school programme and out-of-school centres provide careers advice and guidance on apprenticeship. Two-thirds of school leavers' start an apprenticeship aged 15–19, but some must wait a year or longer for a place. Completion rates are high and progression to HE is possible (Steedman, 2010). Two-thirds of all apprenticeships are of three-year duration and the remainder of four-year duration. A new two-year work-based qualification is being introduced to provide a less demanding level of skill than full apprenticeship for those who cannot meet the demands of three- and four-year courses.

The dual system followed in Switzerland means that apprentices learn in two and sometimes three locations: vocational school; off-the-job occupational training centres; and the workplace. Apprentices attend vocational school for a minimum of one or one-and-a-half days a week for theoretical grounding and general education (Steedman, 2010). For Hospitality-related apprenticeships, apprentices attend courses designed and funded by employer organisations at off-the-job occupational training centres. In the workplace apprentices acquire the occupational competences laid down in the training regulations (Steedman, 2010). The employer firm signs an apprentice agreement and designates an employee responsible for the on-the-job training of the apprentice. During three- or four-year apprenticeships, the in-firm trainer ensures that the training programme is covered and the required skills achieved. This is recorded in detail by the apprentice in a log book that is taken into account in the final assessment, in which the firm is not required to participate. Employers are involved in decision-making on apprenticeship at every level. A Commission for Quality and Development with similar membership adapts training

regulations in line with changing labour market requirements (OECD, 2009: 12, Learning for Jobs: Switzerland).

The completion rate for Swiss apprentices is high, at 91 per cent (Steedman, 2010); what is also interesting is that, unlike Germany, Britain and Austria, in Switzerland some apprenticeships give access to a university entrance qualification: the Professional Baccalaureate. This qualification is open only to those following the apprenticeship route and requires additional study and a written examination. The additional study can be followed either concurrently or subsequent to apprenticeship. In 2008, 10,883 apprentices (20 per cent) were awarded a Professional Baccalaureate in one of six specialist areas. A pass confers the right to study for a degree at a technical university within the area of specialisation in the Professional Baccalaureate.

According to Steedman (2010), Swiss firms receive no direct subsidy for taking an apprentice, but the cost of the required off-the-job training for one or one-and-a-half days a week at the vocational college is met by of a mix of federal and cantonal funds. Trade and professional associations funded by the whole sector develop training plans, support training firms and bear the cost of assessment. Some federal funds are available to set up group training facilities for groups of small firms that cannot meet all the training requirements of an apprenticeship within their organisation. An important reason for the relatively high level of demand for apprentices in Switzerland is the way in which Swiss firms achieve a balance of training and productive work over the duration of the three- or four-year apprenticeships. This means that, on average, firms cover their training costs within the period of apprenticeship and, on average, manage to make a small profit. Apprentice wages are an important component of apprentice costs for firms and these are negotiated. Apprentices earn an average of £6,500 per year.

2.9 Comparison summary and what will be integrated into the programme

The overall comparison of curricula and the suggestion for the new programme to be an average of three years is summarised in APPENDIX 6, p.202.

As did Richard (2013), I declined to adopt the apprenticeship scheme delivered in Germany or Switzerland (or Austria and Britain). This is for two main reasons, first, as Richard (2013) notes, each country has "very different economies, labour markets and social partnership" (p.15) and, secondly, the countries outlined above have either no advanced apprenticeship programmes or very little data to date (i.e. Britain) to apply to the professional learning programme I am designing. However, there are several principles that I can apply here, as these countries have had sophisticated apprenticeship programmes and have been developing them for years.

Education and training post-compulsory education to age 18–19 is extremely popular in those countries. England has rather lower levels of participation in education and training age 16–19 than the other three countries and a much lower proportion achieving an upper secondary (Level 3) qualification by the vocational route. The students at GAU are 18 years plus and there are students aged over 30 who have been working in the sector so, unlike the countries outlined above, in North Cyprus we can say the programme will be for anyone above the age of 18. All countries' apprenticeships must offer part-time work and part-time study, with an average of a quarter in a classroom setting and three-quarters in a work-based learning environment. This has been summarised in APPENDIX 6, P.202 for justification, and supported by Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman's (2006) research that found that today's student is more diverse, so a perfect blend for them is to include pedagogical systems and also the lectures that are vital in providing the student with high motivation and maintaining progress. Therefore, the GAU professional programme will base its curriculum on a quarter of the students' time being spent in a classroom or lab at the school and three-quarters in a work environment. All the apprenticeships

mentioned also offer a wage of around 66 per cent of the minimum wage, in North Cyprus students attending an internship receive two-thirds of the minimum wage (TRNC Employment Ministry, 2014), which is the equivalent, and can be considered appropriate for this learning programme.

The general standards outlined in the England Implementation Plan (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education, 2013) are a valuable guideline to begin with, and I will use these in my methodology to find out, from employers in particular, what the apprentice should be able to do upon completion of the programme and other standards, all of which are relevant. A common challenge for Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland is a lack of demand for apprentices from employers; however the study above does not identify in which sectors. Thus, when we consider the Hospitality and Tourism Sector in North Cyprus we see that this sector is in demand because there is a lack of skilled and trained youngsters (Guden, 2009). In fact, as mentioned above, 70 per cent of employees are from abroad, mainly Turkey. This is already expensive for hoteliers in North Cyprus and so a monthly wage of 933 tl (£260) for an apprentice would undoubtedly be highly welcomed. Another common outcome of the four countries researched is that those with good communication and inclusion of employers in supervising and providing feedback for apprentices/apprenticeship, such as Switzerland, enjoy a higher success rate. Therefore, it is important to ensure that in my research I not only gather information from the potential employers, one of its purposes – but have their sustained input into the apprenticeship programme thereafter.

The findings from the research show evidence of support for apprenticeship from governments, chambers of commerce, federal funds and group training facilities. It is difficult to source funding at this early stage, also because GAU is a private university, but there is an opportunity to secure this in future. For the purpose of this study, the tourism sector and student fees are the main

providers of income and resources for the university. Therefore, in summary, the main factors that I must consider for my methodology of primary research are:

1. Pedagogy of study (what is to be *blended*) and structure, and
2. Employers/firms to provide work placements (apprenticeships) and agreements.

2.10 Curriculum development for tourism education in higher education

In the light of the vast availability of post-modern pedagogy systems, with reference to those outlined above it is important to step back into the basic concept of how curriculums are developing and developed, because whilst this project is about developing a new programme, its main aim in actual fact is about developing a new curriculum for tourism education at HE level.

What is evident from Cooper's (2008) research in curriculum planning for tourism education from theory to practice is that, "models of curriculum have evolved over decades of educational debate" (p.24). In his research he guides us through his experience of developing a tourism curriculum at university level in Jordan. Jordan is in the middle-east and like North Cyprus is a developing destination with an increase in tourism numbers (UNWTO, 2015); it is also a country that has its own share of political inconsistencies as does North Cyprus mentioned above (p.13). As a result, Cooper's experience and research is very applicable to the North Cyprus context. The aim of planning the tourism curriculum in Amman, Jordan was to meet the needs of the tourism sector and also the educational administration in Jordan, which is similar to this project's objectives 1 and 2. According to Cooper (2008), the planned curriculum in Jordan was designed with consideration to utilising Kerr's (1968, adapted from Cooper's research, 2008) framework. These were the following (Cooper, 2008. P.26):

1. Meet the future needs of the tourism sector in Jordan, taking into account the requirements of the varied stakeholders and the nature of the tourism product in Jordan;
2. Meet the needs of the tourism product in Jordan, in particular through the development of modules in guiding principles, ethics and responsible forms of tourism;
3. Meet the needs of the Higher Education Ministry in term of academic standards;
4. Ensure that student numbers are appropriate to the nature of the job market in Jordan;
5. Ensure that the curriculum is delivered and assessed appropriately for the subject area;
6. Ensure that a reasoned balance is achieved between generic business and management subjects and those in the specialisation of tourism management and that a reasoned balance is achieved between classroom-based instruction and on-the-job-training; and
7. Ensure that the curriculum conforms to international standards.

There is a close correlation between what Cooper had planned to achieve and what I have identified. His research continued to assess the elements of a tourism curriculum with the *Context* in which it was to be set . These elements are similar to those I have outlined as hard factors and soft factors discussed on p.12, with particular research into the macro-level context of political agendas, industry needs and funding constraints in planning of the tourism courses in Jordan looking at both tourism contexts and institutional contexts. This project has also discussed these above. In reviewing Cooper's (2008) work I have identified the curriculum to have developed through five stages, these are:

1. Research on the macro-level taking into account the development of the tourism curriculum within the national and institutional contexts
2. Set aims and objectives for the curriculum
3. Knowledge – selection of content
4. Learning experience – techniques for teaching

5. Evaluation – does the curriculum meet the set aims and objectives?

These stages are consistent with Adagale's (2015) five core curriculum elements which are:

1. Need Analysis
2. Objectives
3. Content
4. Pedagogy
5. Evaluation

In my current experience of developing this curriculum however, it is difficult to set aims and objectives for a curriculum before establishing the requirements of the different stakeholders. For example, the curriculum may take a complete different direction after researching what the sector requires, which is Stage 3 in both Cooper's and Adagale's work. Stage 3 is the selection of content for the curriculum, and Cooper (2008: p.12) states that the "selection of the content is a central issue for the curriculum, and hinges upon whether the content will be selected from the point of view of academic subject areas or from the needs of particular groups or individuals in a society". Inskeep (1990) in his early studies stated that sustaining cultures and social identity could only be achieved through education, therefore a curriculum must take into consideration a variety of academic and stakeholder needs, however it will be difficult to balance both these areas. This is the case for North Cyprus as it was the case for Jordan, where there is a strong influence of academic subjects within the higher education system. For North Cyprus this is because of the requirement to hold a PhD qualification in order to teach in HE, as discussed on p.18. However Cooper (2008) and Adagale (2015) state, in their research, the importance of different stakeholders when developing curricula, while Mayaka and Akama (2014) address this concept as "space" and confirm that tourism departments will need levels of engagement with other players. In their research they explain the challenges for the tourism, hospitality and

events (TH&E) HE curriculum development in sub-Saharan Africa, with particular emphasis on Kenya. Curriculum "space" is recognised as a flexible and adaptable initiative with many possible outcomes which may include, but is not limited to; employability, the individual's ambition, level of learning and broader societal aspiration.

Stage 4 is concerned with the technique for teaching or, as Adagale (2015) summarises it, as pedagogy, which is a critical area for consideration in tourism education, with particular reference to research such as Zehrer (2009), who has discussed the fact that the tourism and hospitality sector is not overly concerned with the award or the grade achieved by graduates, but more the skills and actual content of the knowledge that graduates gain. As my project argues that it is not possible to develop skills with common classroom pedagogies (Guden, 2009), technique gains importance for tourism curriculum development. This is confirmed by Adagale (2015), who states that pedagogy has three basic components: (1) curriculum, or the content of what is being taught; (2) methodolgy, or the way in which teaching is done; and (3) techniques for socialising students in the repertoire of cognitive and affective skills required for successful functioning in society that educationn is designed to promote (p.604).

According to Cooper (2008) the final stage is to evaluate whether the curriculum meets the aims and objectives set, whereas Adagale (2015) argues that evaluation is concerned with the impact of the curriculum on students, society, social changes, educational paradigms and the future of the curriculum. Both, however, agree that there are two approaches for evaluation of curricula, firstly through formative evaluation which is an internal process, performed by the institution; and, second, through approach summative evaluation that takes a broader view of the whole curriculum performed by an outside agency such as an accrediting body or industry organisation. Such evaluations can only be pursued after the programme has awarded it's first graduate for validating bodies such as TEDQUAL. Also when we consider that the objectives for the programme being developed in this project of meeting the stakeholders' requirements within

the sector, we can question how we can evaluate if the graduate is employable before they have graduated. In conclusion in developing this new programme, although the evaluation stage is important it cannot be carried out until students have graduated.

In conclusion, Cooper's (2008) research found that in order to supply appropriately trained manpower for the future tourism sector, changes in the university-level curriculum were necessary. These changes included the need for updated content, appropriate learning and teaching methods, engagement of educators with the tourism sector and investment in equipment and staff training. The prevalent challenge for Jordan appeared to be to change the culture of HE to deliver students into the tourism sector with relevant and contemporary skills and knowledge. This challenge will be compared to results obtained from this project set in North Cyprus.

Adagale (2015) concludes by addressing the contemporary curriculum's inclusion of ICT, which she states to be an "educational reform" (p.604) in the successful design and implementation of the teaching and learning process. She also suggests guest speakers who are experts from the sector and field trips that would compliment the curriculum.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

In this chapter I justify the research methodology applied to this work-based research project. I begin by evaluating my position, which determines the methodological choice and epistemology approaches used. I propose a qualitative research project through adopting the research techniques of action research that, in this study, has two cycles. The first cycle consists of twenty-two in-depth interviews with experts from the tourism industry, accreditation bodies and students. The selection of the choice of participants with reasons for this choice is discussed in more detail in section 3.5 below. The second cycle takes the form of a focus group to confirm that the professional learning programme design will be accepted by the tourism sector,

accrediting bodies and students, and to ensure fully that the research is robust. In this chapter I discuss different data gathering techniques, and provide justification for the choice of thematic analysis in the interpretation of data gathered.

As an insider–researcher I also address the ethical considerations and concerns, with emphasis on how I intend to overcome them.

3.1 Research design

My educational and professional experience has allowed me to generate an ontological position. This position has proved that the pedagogical model for tourism and hospitality requires practical and theoretical education, and therefore a blend of teaching. That is to say, for a student to understand and appreciate fully a role in the tourism and hospitality-related job sector, he/she must possess both practical and theoretical competencies and capabilities in the sector derived from work experience in the sector. Research carried out in recent years on the educational and training requirements of the tourism sector has confirmed demand for a more vocationally informed education (Guden, 2009), backed up by the VETLAM Project (VETLAM, 2010).

Epistemology: focuses on the knowledge-gathering process (Grix, 2002) and is concerned with developing new versions to compete with existing models and theories. This is closely linked to my ontological claim that, in my experience of students' appreciating and learning tourism and hospitality, they must have both practical and theoretical training. As indicated, my theoretical approach is based on my own informed experience coupled with the research results already indicated. I am using my professional experience and practice to ground my methodological choices. Given the two traditional approaches to social investigation, and a wide debate over decades on the meaning and philosophy behind methodologies, I consider the ideas highlighted to support that epistemology is the way in which humans want to interpret knowledge (Hay,

2008, p.5). For example, I predict a requirement for practical training, which is knowledge that I have gained and interpreted as a result of my own experience; however, this may be determined by how I want to interpret the knowledge I gain. It is important to confirm this as a fact through my research before applying it. This is accepted by Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008), whereby they state that epistemology has two positions: (at) one pole is based on conducting objective, unbiased observations to understand the world accurately; and the other is the view that all observations of the world are our own social constructions rather than images of an objective, external world (Kalof *et al.,* 2008, p.19). The two are accepted as "positivism" and "interpretivism" (Bryman, 2001; Grix, 2002). The former is an epistemological position that proves the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of real life situations. The latter is an epistemological position predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects difference between people and the objects of natural science, and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Grix, 2002, p.177).

We can assume that "interpretivism" seeks primarily to *understand* human behavior and the social world, whereas a "positivist" would seek mainly to *explain* the situation (Bryman, 2001). Given that my research is to develop a professional programme, where my primary objectives and interests are the perceptions and meanings that people attach to apprenticeship training and blended learning, the interpretive framework is the best fit.

3.2 Developing the project methodology

Although the design of a professional learning programme could be developed through a quantitative method, especially considering that the research will have multiple stakeholders (including students and representatives from the tourism sector and accrediting body, the feasibility of a quantitative approach appeared low. Quantitative research is not feasible for this study, because quantitative research is more concerned with measurement (Moballeghi and

Moghaddam, 2008), which would mean that I would have to carry out a survey of hoteliers, restaurateurs, travel agents and so forth that would require a large sample. The aim of this research, however, is not to identify the greatest preference for apprenticeship teaching and training design, but to devise a programme that suits all stakeholders. My primary concern is to identify the main conflicting and common views in the sector and from the students and to identify accreditations for a programme that is a blend of apprenticeship and online, as well as classroom teaching. This would have been difficult using a quantitative method because several instrument designs and data analysis methods would have been required. Once I have registered the different views among stakeholders, I can establish the common interests and apply this knowledge to the professional learning programme that will use blended learning techniques. This will be a valuable approach to ethical synthesis of data analysis, as I discuss below.

The selected research method is based on an action research framework. Experience in this field suggests that action research is well suited to educational research (Eden and Huxham, 1996; Parker and Waters-Adams, 2006), and also to the improvement and development of an action (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005) such as developing a professional learning programme in higher education. The fact that several stakeholders will be a part of the research, and that there will be two cycles of action, justifies the decision to deploy action research.

3.2 Action research (AR)

Reason and Bradbury (2008: 8) describe AR as a participatory and democratic process, and state that “the process is concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes”. While this may give an appreciation of the broad scope of AR, Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.5) outline the ultimate aim as “the flourishing of individual persons and their communities”. I consider myself to be at the centre of this research, and the students, teachers and the sector to be the communities of this project. This accords with the work of McNiff

(2000), who define this as a type of research where "I" is at the centre of the process and therefore my professional practice.

Shani and Pasmore (2010) summarise AR under four headings, as shown in Figure 3.1.

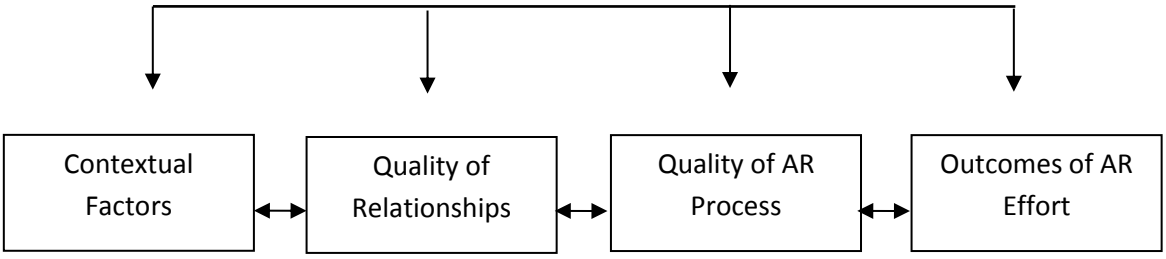


Figure 3.1 Complete theory of Action Research (Shani and Pasmore, 2010, p.253)

Context – is the factors that set out the situation of the AR project, taking into consideration the macro and micro environments. This may include the resources, history, and formal and informal organisation of the micro environment, and the global and local economies for the macro. This sets the *context* for readiness of participation in the AR. I have already applied this process in my review of literature. For the micro environment of my organisation, I reviewed the current resources, accreditations, programmes and student profile; for the macro environment, I compared competing programmes at a national level, carried out a small study on the sector's requirements and looked at examples of apprenticeship programmes in Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland; and also simulations and curriculum development.

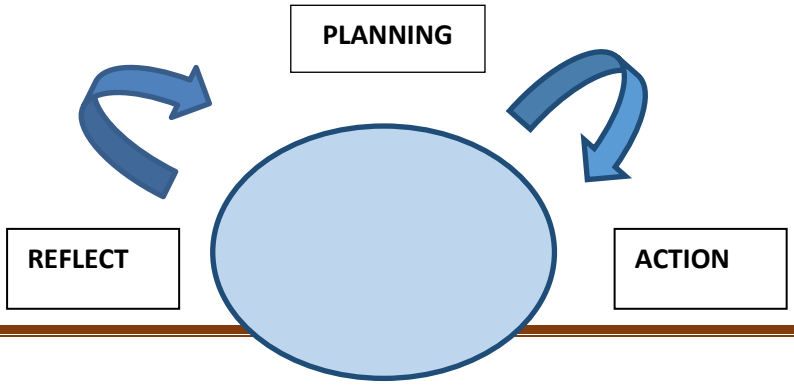
Quality of Relationships – is concerned with the links between the stakeholders participating in the research, which means there has to be a common language, willingness to participate, trust and equality and so forth. As mentioned above, there will be conflicting views among stakeholders, and my role is to identify common interests to incorporate into the programme. My choice of sample for the research has been partly due to this quality of relationship as I discuss further in section 3.5 below.

Quality of AR Process – the focus is on the inquiry process and its implementation. I have already identified who the stakeholders are, and my objective is to gain knowledge related to each group's background. This will be based on individual interviews with sector stakeholders (hoteliers, travel agents and restaurateurs), students (GAU students), accreditations, and North Cyprus Tourism Ministry and Chamber of Commerce. The sector representatives have been selected based on their expert experience whilst accreditations, the Tourism Ministry and the Chamber of Commerce are the stakeholders that represent the "hard factors" and the students, the object of this study.

Outcomes of AR Effort – helps provide an understanding of what is the new knowledge, and what has been sustained within a human, social, economic and ecological framework. This will be applied after the first cycle of interviews, and then the knowledge gained will be used to design the first professional learning programme in North Cyprus.

According to Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.6), several broad characteristics define action research: ***research in action*** rather than research about action; a ***collaborative*** democratic partnership and ***sequence*** of events; and an approach to problem solving. Traditionally research has concentrated on third-person research, whereas studies such as AR inquiries focus on first- and second-person input. Reason and Torbert (2001) point out a number of examples of first-, second- and third-person inquiries, and AR requires integration of all three.

Earlier models of AR have been widely accepted, as shown in Figure 3.2.



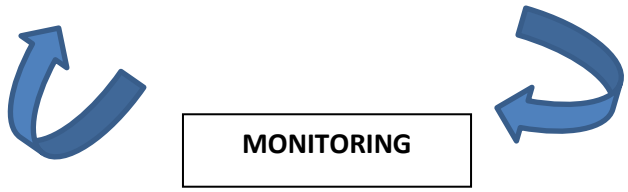


Figure 3.2 Earlier models of action research

3.3 Action research model

McNiff (2000) states that ARs are represented diagrammatically and in cycles of continuous improvement on spirals illustrating steps or a sequence of planning, acting, observing (or monitoring) and reflecting (and over again). It is, however, worth mentioning that in AR unexpected issues can arise and the steps may need to change – for example, reflection may occur at an earlier stage. In fact, this shift in the sequence has been the case in my adaptation of AR. Whilst I planned the project to develop a professional learning programme, I found that I had also reflected earlier than expected on what other countries had done, confirming that the sequence can vary. I also realise, as emphasised by other authors (Coghan and Brannick, 2014), that AR does not stop, but is a continuous process. This procession nature is an important feature of AR, and after my Doctorate is complete I am likely to pursue further evaluation and quality assurance, and keep abreast of changing developments between stakeholders and macro/micro environments.

McNiff (2000) also reveals a further set of characteristics within other research that resonate with my research. The AR characteristics are:

- Leads to knowledge – *I will find out what needs to be included in the proposed programme*
- Provides evidence to support this knowledge – *stakeholders interviewed will confirm the requirements based on their own experiences*

- Makes explicit the process of enquiry through which knowledge emerges – *the two cycles of data collection will achieve this*
- Links new knowledge with existing knowledge – *the review of literature (or Context, as Shani and Pasmore, 2010, outline) provides this opportunity.*

Coghan and Brannick (2014) provide an AR model that comprises a pre-step, context and purpose, then four basic steps. As outlined in Figure 3.3, this is most fitting and will be applied to my research on my organisation for two reasons: first, it has been tested in organisational research such as mine and, secondly, it is similar to earlier models yet allows for the inclusion of a *pre-step* to analyse the current situation before entering a cycle, to construct the design of the research successfully. This was mentioned or acknowledged in earlier models, and I find this deeply relevant to my research as there are a number of factors that I must consider before planning the AR in my own organisation. These are discussed in more detail below and are displayed in Figure 3.3.

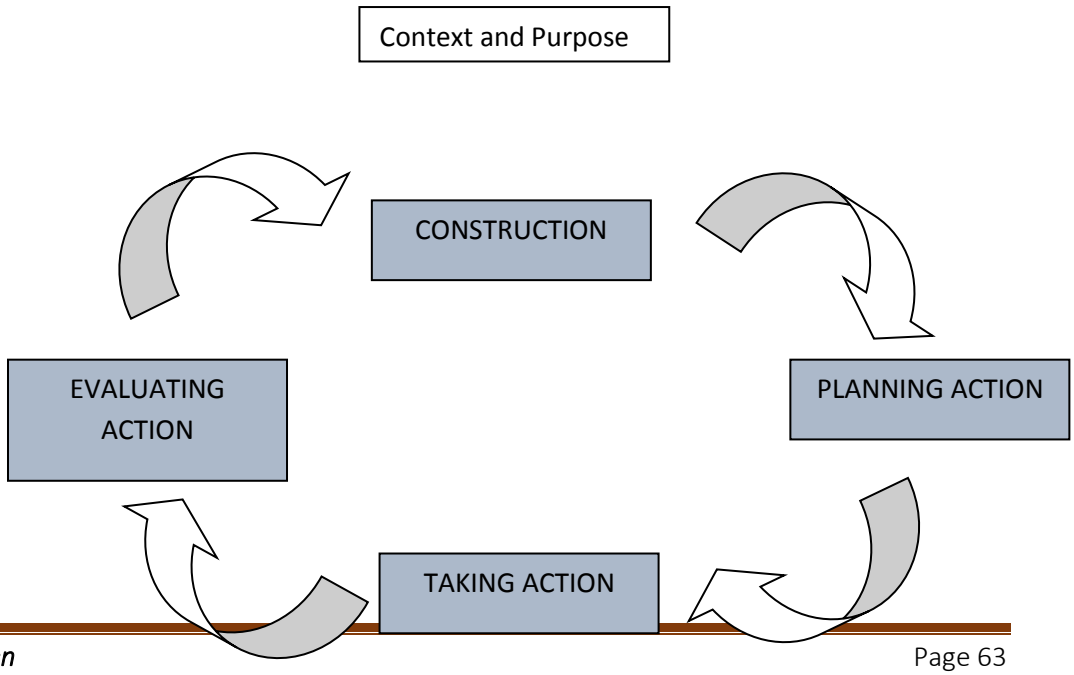


Figure 3.3 Coghan and Brannick Action Research Model (2014)

The ***pre-step*** in this model is to justify why the project is necessary or desirable. This can be identified through an assessment of the micro and macro conditions in the organisation, incorporating the economic, political and social conditions for the external stakeholders, and the cultural and structural conditions for internal stakeholders. It can be compared with Shani and Pasmore's (2010) *Context* factor, which establishes a readiness for the research. Furthermore, Coghan and Brannick's (2014) model, in particular its pre-step, is relevant to the Literature Review section of this project; for example its comparison of Britain, Austria, Switzerland and Germany to North Cyprus provides the opportunity to evidence the requirement for this study.

Construction is therefore the first step in the AR cycle, and is based on collaborative action that includes others in the research. For my research this has been a consideration of stakeholders, including students (internal) and the tourism sector and accreditations (external).

Planning Action is the exploration of the context and purpose of the project. Whilst this step involves planning the inquiry or the action to be taken, it is important to consider what is to come next in the AR cycle, in other words to take the action. The planning action that I will apply is closely linked to the work of Fisher *et al.* (2000) and Torbert and Taylor (2004), which is a four "parts of speech" (adopted from Coghan and Brannick, 2014). These must be clear for me as an insider-researcher. My action inquiry role is made up of ***(1) Framing, (2) Advocating, (3) Illustrating (and) (4) Inquiring.*** This planning step must consider the following:

1. *Framing* – The dilemma and shared assumptions about the situation

There is insufficient vocational training at higher education level, in North Cyprus and therefore a requirement for a blend of teaching model, the "professional learning programme at GAU"

2. *Advocating* – Stating the goal to be achieved

   Taking input from internal and external stakeholders of the programme to design and develop the first professional learning programme in North Cyprus

3. *Illustrating* – telling a part of the story that makes the advocacy concrete and clearly orients others

   Sharing the existing literature, in summary, and existing research with stakeholders to put them in the picture

4. *Inquiring* – questioning others to understand their perspectives and views

   Questioning students, sector representatives and accreditations

These four "parts of speech" are therefore a part of the plan I will use during the planning step of my AR.

Taking action is related to plans that are implemented, so takes place in my research during the process by which the actual programme will be written and developed, based on feedback from the planning step. In conclusion, from the interviews I will have access to a pool of information to apply to programme design.

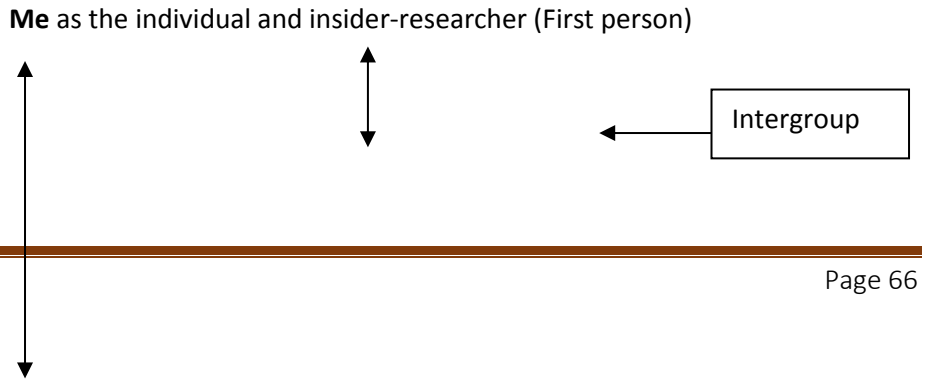
Evaluating the action comprises the outcomes of the action, and is therefore the actual written programme in my project. Here the programme will be evaluated, which should be a collaborative effort with those stakeholders mentioned, giving a conclusion based on further research conducted with stakeholders in a focus group. This will be the second cycle of the research, when I have confirmation of the finished programme or minor/major revisions.

3.3.1 Inter-level dynamics in insider action research

As an insider–researcher I have responsibilities as a Head of Department, yet as a researcher I must have inter-level dynamics whereby I cooperate and communicate with the teaching staff, management, students and external groups. Whilst I am the first-person researcher in my own organisation and this research will contribute to my development, I also have responsibility for everyday duties at the university. It is important for me to learn from experiences gained through my ARs through direct and indirect communication with the various stakeholders. The second-person research process includes how GAU, students, teachers and the tourism sector will be affected. The tourism sector may be referred to as inter-organisational networking (Burns and Novelli, 2007; Coughlan and Coghlan, 2011), a practice where, for example, my organisation deliberately forms voluntary networks with others to deal with issues and devise collaborative ways of planning and taking action. A direct example is that GAU will form collaborative networks with accreditation bodies and sector representatives for the purpose of internship. For some studies this may involve inter-departmental networking in the same organisation, but for the purposes of this project it means the Tourism Department only, although it may be a pilot for other departments in the future, collaboration may be a requirement. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) state that inter-level dynamics are systemic processes that provide frames for us to understand how participation develops in human systems through increasing complexity as individuals, and individuals in groups and teams, through to inter-organisational complexity that forms the basis for action.

3.3.2 Applying inter-level dynamics to my project

Figure 3.4 shows the planned inter-level dynamics for this research.



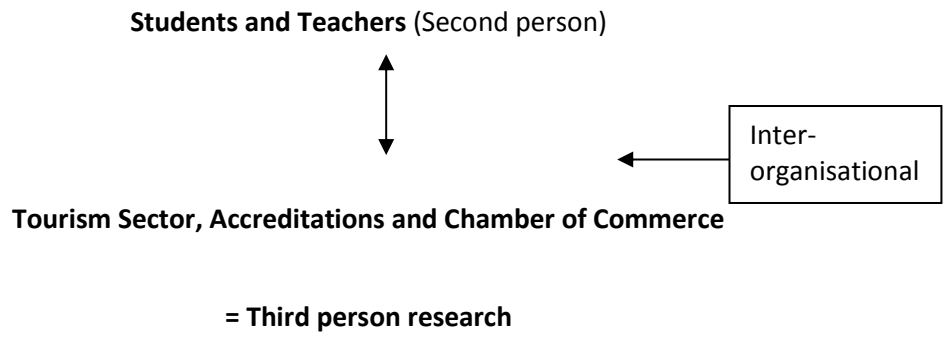


Figure 3.4 Planned inter-level dynamics

3.3.3 Researching my organisation

As discussed in the section on inter-level dynamics, this AR is a collaborative study that, according to Coghan and Brannick (2014), can fall into one of four quadrants, as briefly outlined below:

Quadrant 1: is defined by the absence of intended self-study in action by either researcher or system. There is study, but it is not in action.

Quadrant 2: applies where there is no intended self-study-in-action on the part of the researcher, but there is study of the system-in-action.

Quadrant 3: applies where the researcher is engaged in an intended self-study of themselves in action, but the system is not.

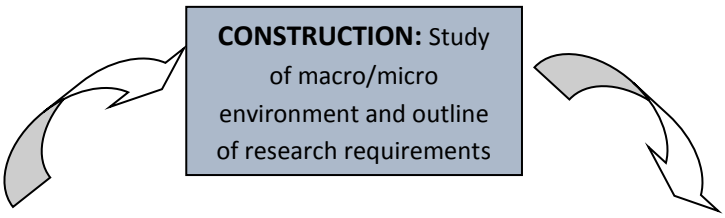
Quadrant 4: is where both researcher and system are engaged in intended study-in-action. The system has a commitment to change.

Some studies may shift from one quadrant to another, however my research at present appears closely linked to Quadrant 4, because both I and the system are being studied: the system is a new programme, and further a new model developed in North Cyprus.

3.4 My action research

As outlined above, the purpose of this research is to design and develop a professional learning programme for tourism at university level. This means there will be a requirement to investigate existing or secondary research in this area through the various stakeholders (i.e. GAU, accrediting bodies, students and the tourism sector). This research will first establish the **context and purpose,** and in conclusion support the **construction** of the AR; secondly, it will assess what is required by way of content, which could be understood as the **planning action** that paves the way for action on the knowledge gained for the professional learning programme, which I refer to as **taking action.** Once the design is complete the various stakeholders will be invited to give their views on the research, by which means the research will arrive at the **evaluating the action** stage, where I will reflect on these views and, if necessary, further construct, plan and take action, and again evaluate. This methodology will allow the research to be accurate in terms of its content, which is important for research of this nature. This action research includes the design, delivery and structure of a blended teaching programme determined by the requirements of a variety of stakeholders. Two cycles of action research will be employed: one will identify the main requirements through interviews during the planning action stage (and action taken to design the programme, which I evaluate in the first cycle); and in the second cycle I enter the process that will re-construct, and plan actions, followed by taking the actions, based on a focus group, and then evaluation and revision of the findings, thereby repeating the cycle again, as in Figure 3.5.

CYCLE ONE



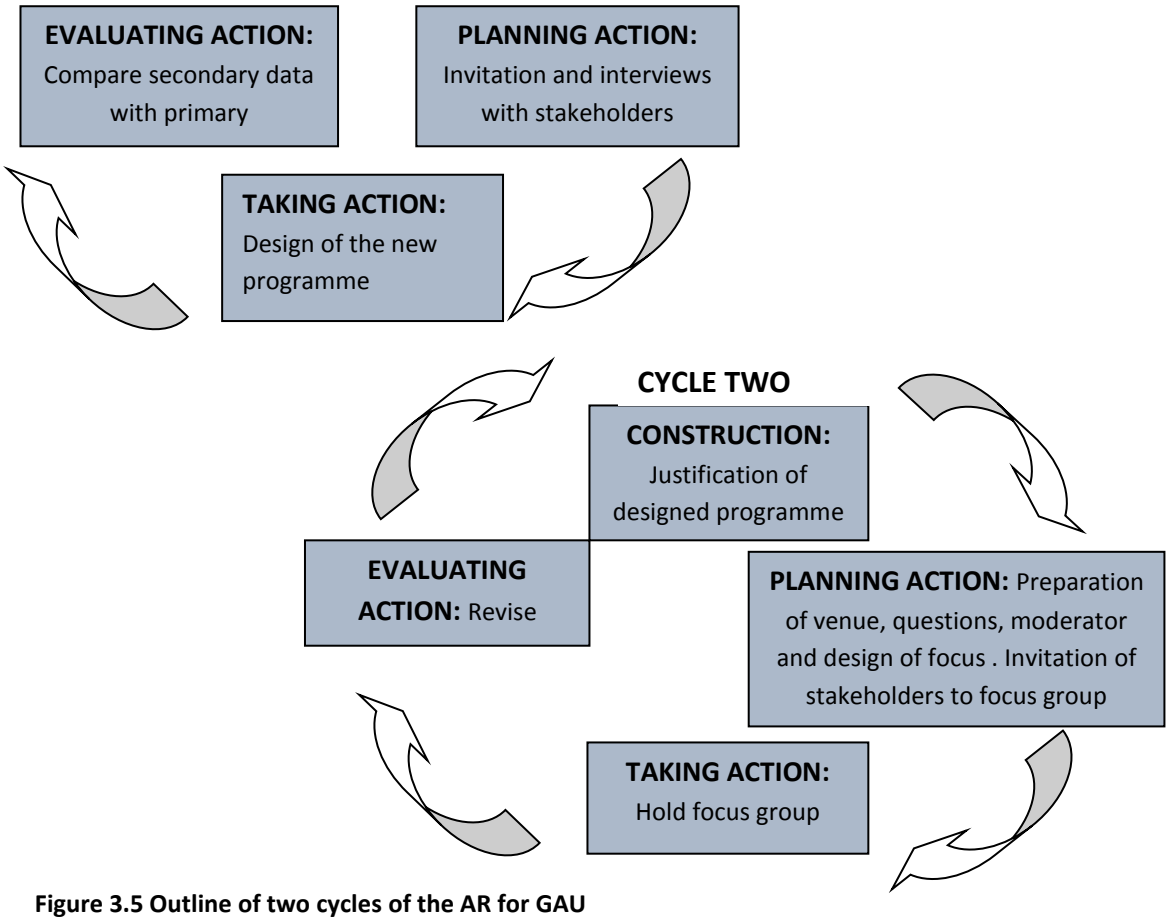


Figure 3.5 Outline of two cycles of the AR for GAU

Table 3.1 below is an outline of the different methods to be adopted during the research process in accordance with the set objectives:

Table 3.1 Research objectives and methods

RESEARCH AIM	OBJECTIVES	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	STAKEHOLDERS AND RELEVENT ASSOCIATIONS	DATA
To research the requirements of the stakeholders in tourism education and develop an apprenticeship programme at GAU	1. To carry out a detailed literature review of apprenticeships and their development, particularly examples in Europe.	Action research – Planning Secondary research	Higher Education in Britain, Austria, Germany and Switzerland	Secondary
	2. To study the demands and requirements of different stakeholders to include GAU, GAU students, accrediting bodies and sector representatives.	• Action research – Planning and action • Secondary research • Primary research • Semi-structured interviews	• Teaching in GAU STHM • Accrediting bodies, GAU • Sectoral representatives: • Hoteliers Association President • Travel Agencies Association President • Restaurateurs Association President • Students in the two-year programme	• Existing programmes • Existing rules, regulations and report feedback • Qualitative: • Summary of skills and theoretical requirements for future employees • Summary of theoretical, skill-based and social expectations from future employees

	3. To study how the North Cyprus education system – with its "hard" and "soft" factors – fits in.	• Action research – Action • Secondary research • Research from websites, informal interviews	• TRNC Education Ministry and representatives, chambers of commerce for businesses and shopkeepers, and representatives	• Qualitative summary of hard and soft factors related to the subject area
	4. To develop and adopt an apprenticeship-style programme that fulfils the requirements of all stakeholders.	• Action research – Action • Committee focus group • Semi-structured interviews with students	• Accrediting body representative, GAU and Middlesex University • Sectorial representatives: • Hoteliers Association President • Travel Agencies Association President • Restaurateurs Association President • Students in the two-year programme	• Qualitative: • Summary of skills and theoretical requirements for future employees • Summary of theoretical, skill-based and social expectations from future employees
	5. To create awareness of a "new" style of education in North Cyprus that can be used as a model nationally.	• Action research – Monitoring and reflection • Committee focus group	• Accrediting body representative and GAU • Sectorial representatives: • Hoteliers Association President • Travel Agencies Association President • Restaurateurs Association President • Students	• Literature and project

As outlined in Table 3.1, I intend to adopt AR within the overall qualitative research framework because I am concerned with various stakeholders' views and opinions. My project design is proposed to be conducted in the Action Research Cycle Model, as in Figure 3.6:

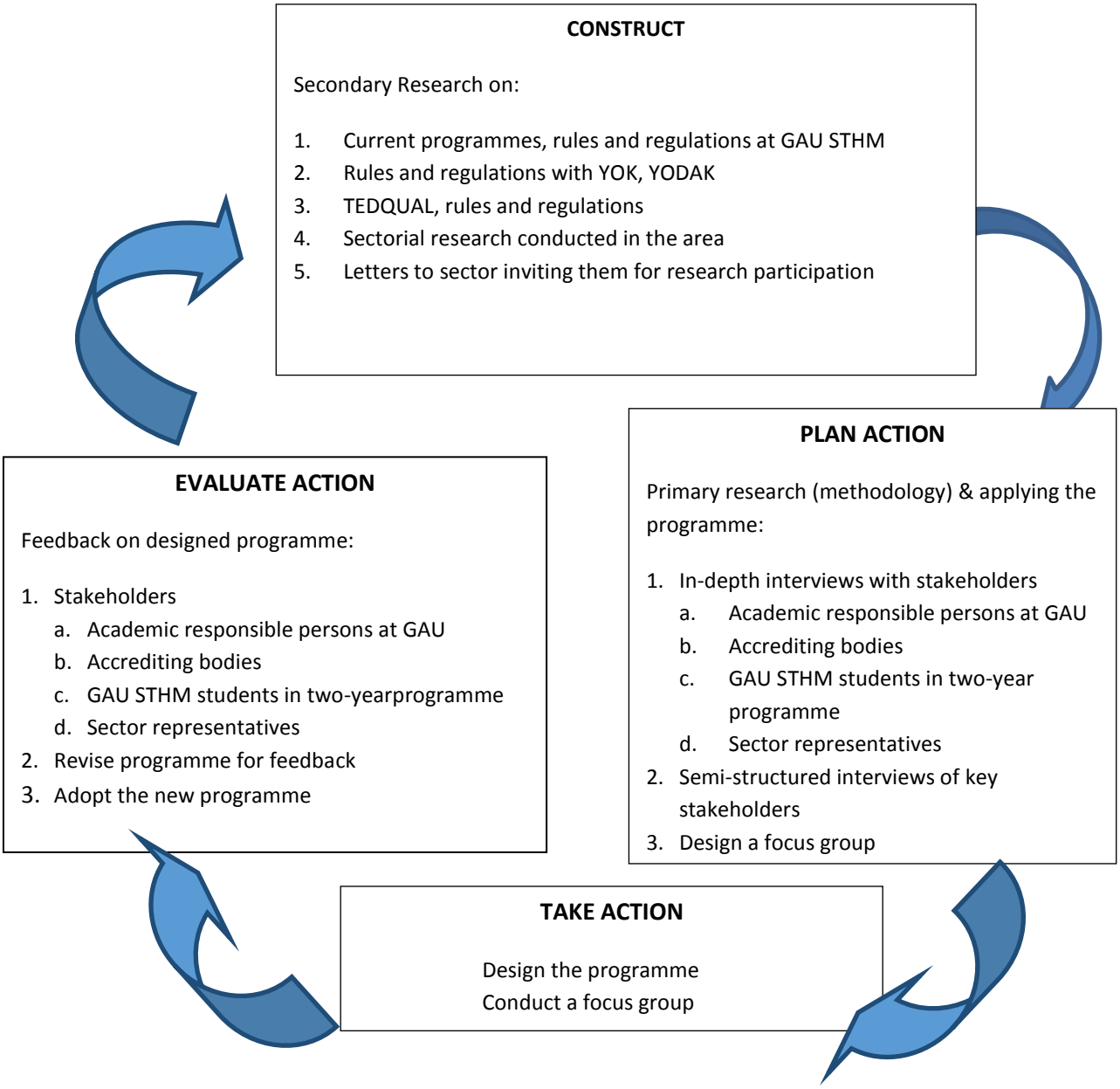


Figure 3.6 Action research cycle map of research project

As seen above, a variety of stakeholders will be interviewed in the AR cycle, requiring qualitative research and inter-dynamic networking.

3.5 Sampling procedure

Sampling will be *purposive* (judgmental), since I am developing a professional learning programme concerned with the tourism sector and students/graduates undertaking vocational training, so they are likely to have an interest in the research area. The sample of representatives in this case will be from the tourism sector, accreditation bodies and students studying tourism. In other words, the proposed sample will be those persons and stakeholders involved in the subject area (tourism education) by using human judgment and logic, and insider knowledge of the profession. Purposive research takes more time in preparation and planning, as several views are being researched, but it can gather data more applicable to the subject area. Moreover, carrying out this purposive research at the beginning will be beneficial later on as the knowledge gained is obtained from relevant stakeholders. My position as Head of Department at GAU has given me the advantage of extended networks and contacts in the industry, and my interviews with sector representatives, and students completing vocational education. It is proposed to interview three experts from the following stakeholders:

- Turkish Cyprus Hoteliers Association (KITOB)
- Turkish Cyprus Travel Agency's Association (KITSAB)
- Restaurateurs Association (RESBIR)
- TRNC Education Ministry and representatives
- Chamber of Commerce for Business, shopkeepers and representatives

These are the main representatives of employers in the tourism sector, in the best position to provide information and qualitative data on what is required in the professional programme, in their experienced opinion. I suggest three representatives from each to ensure unbiased data collection and robust research results from the interviewees to give the employer point of view.

For the employee point of view (i.e. students), I will arrange for semi-structured, in-depth interviews with current students who are studying vocational tourism and hospitality courses at

GAU, with a target number of ten students, a sample sufficiently large to compare results. Although my position as Head of Department makes it easy to communicate with the students, they may not feel comfortable sharing their honest views with me, so I will ask lecturing staff from another department to assist with interviewing and transcription (for ethical reasons). The research design will consist of purposive sampling of a total of twenty-two semi-structured interviews. Although, according to De Vaus (2001), the sample size needs to be fairly large to avoid biased results, Griffin and Hauser (1993) state that in qualitative research a sample size of between twenty and thirty is ideal, and this has determined the target for this study, due to the fact that this is not a quantitative study, supporting Marshall's (1996, p.523) claim that "an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question".

3.6 Gathering qualitative data

The qualitative research will consist of semi-structured, in-depth interviews and a focus group. The justification and rationale are outlined below.

3.6.1: Semi-structured interviews

In social research there are many types of interviews, and the most common are unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews (Dawson, 2002, p.28). Semi-structured interviews may be used in either quantitative or qualitative research (Brinkman and Kvale, 2009), but are mainly used in qualitative research. This method is most appropriate as the audience will have been specifically targeted, the information obtained will be relevant to tourism education and, because it is partly structured, it will allow the research findings to be compared. Semi-structured interviews will provide the freedom to explore the views or opinions of the tourism sector representatives in more detail and have been chosen because they can yield a better and more in-depth understanding of the requirements of the sector for tourism education. This is in terms of developing the professional programme, where it is necessary to conduct professional

interviews face-to-face with experts, as outlined in Figure 3.5. Since the sector representatives' time is limited, this will allow the researcher to prompt for responses within a framework of questions that will be more objective. Sector representatives with experience and an overall understanding of the workforce in industry will be interviewed in this respect, because they are in a good position to propose what the sector needs in terms of educational content. All interviewees will be informed well in advance, permission sought and arrangements for the interviews made (APPENDIX I). The research process will be audio recorded to allow the interviewer to remain focused during the interview process, the method will be tested beforehand and interview questions will be piloted with representatives from the sector to ensure they are understood and can gather the required subject data.

Interviews undertaken with the students will also be semi-structured and, considering that these respondents are less scholarly in their approach, questions should use language that is meaningful to them, with an emphasis on simple, direct and jargon-free statements. Ensuring that language is appropriate for respondents is critical to obtaining respondent cooperation and interest, as well as valid research data. Again, to avoid possible problems the questions will be piloted with a small number of students and finalised according to the feedback. The testing procedure will serve to correct the wording of the questions and, if necessary, redesign the layout of the interview. The questions will be prepared in both English and Turkish, because students and sector representatives may not be able to express their views clearly in English.

Semi-structured interviews have been selected rather than structured or unstructured interviews because structured interviews are rather fixed and inflexible in obtaining the general views and opinions of interviewees, while unstructured interviews are too free and prevent the researcher from controlling the research, which is prone to go off topic. The conversations consequently waste the time and resources of all concerned. The interview method as a whole is preferable, as it is able to communicate directly with people who are likely to have an interest

on the topic, and who can be contacted again during the progress of the research. This would be difficult to achieve with other forms of methodology such as observation or surveys, because the contact and discussion with representatives is limited, and a relationship could not develop, limiting the research. Moreover, surveys and observational methods are usually better suited to quantitative research, so restricted in their scope for this research.

The types of questions to be asked are open-ended to encourage the interviewee to be expressive and to share their views and opinions on what the proposed programme should include. Some existing research, as discussed in the literature chapter, has outlined the requirements of blending learning with online and work-based pedagogys compared to existing models with online elements, on-the-job training and the requirement for lectures in a classroom environment to keep students focused. These ideas will be discussed in the interview as they are a fundamental part of the content of the programme. It is important to discuss some of the models from Austria, Britain, Switzerland and Germany, for example, to gain an understanding of what the tourism sector and students of North Cyprus feel are important to the design of the proposed programme.

3.6.2 Focus group

A significant element of the AR cycle is developing the proposed professional programme, and in particular for AR two it is necessary to evaluate the newly-developed programme. The most feasible method is a focus group since networks with the experts would have been established and it provides an opportunity for different representatives to discuss views. This method will not be used until after the results have been analysed. The purpose is to share the finished product with stakeholders, rendering the research findings fully transparent, and to enhance the data by monitoring and reviewing the designed programme through stakeholders' views. As a result of this method, the professional programme content will be designed and shared with a committee formed of representatives of interviewees and two groups of students (currently

studying and graduates), which will make the results robust. As Kitzinger (1995) outlines, focus groups are an excellent way to gather people together to discuss a common task or activity, and considered to be ethical in terms of providing an opportunity to obtain views from various backgrounds. This understanding is confirmed by Dawson (2002, p.29), who suggests that focus groups are an opportunity to discuss or arrange a group interview. Additionally, Morgan, Fellows and Guevara (2008) state that a focus group is a good way to complement existing methods such as interviews, which comprise the first step, followed by further data collection. The others include focus groups, and these are compatible with the project design proposed here. Another benefit is that the combination of individual and group interviews provides a method of checking for data collected by other means, thus individual interviews could cross-check conclusions drawn from focus groups, or vice versa, and this is what is intended in this study. The focus group will allow stakeholders to debate, criticise and confirm the content of the designed programme. Representatives will be selected from the stakeholders interviewed previously, consisting of students and tourism sector representatives.

Holding a focus group in the second cycle of the action research study also presents an opportunity to evaluate the proposed professional learning programme. In addition, it provides an opportunity to revise the programme until it most closely fits the requirements of the stakeholders. It is difficult to state at this time how long it will take until the programme is designed; however, the advantage of an action research cycle is that there is flexibility in re-evaluation. Depending on the time and resources available, if the programme is accepted and utilised earlier on in the study, it can be further evaluated during delivery and upon achieving graduates. However, I do not believe this is likely, considering the time given. Focus group findings can also help me to triangulate the data with my own reflected experience as Head of Department, coupled with my secondary reading and the interviews.

In summary, the reason I have selected the focus group interview is to create an opportunity for the different stakeholders to come together to provide a collective view on how the new programme meets the experts' (stakeholders') requirements, which will enable me to justify the decisions made and to bounce ideas off each other (and enable justifications to each other on why the finished programme has been designed is this way). As a result of this reasoning and perhaps debate, I will obtain feedback on the overall view on areas that may need improvement. For these reasons, a focus group was preferable to other interview models: it provides a form of dialogue that, again, has not been undertaken before in North Cyprus.

3.7 Interpreting the data

In summarising the research process, we can see that the use of two research tools will involve considerable resources and time. In order to make the interpretation of data clear, understandable and applicable to developing the programme, it is necessary to keep it simple. To this end, *content analysis* appeared to be most feasible as it is suited to comparing stakeholder views on the inclusion of an online learning element: for example, clarifying what blend of learning should be included in the actual content overall, and how to integrate the suggested pedagogical elements, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Content analysis will allow me to interpret the data from sector representatives and students in an integrated pedagogy suitable for tourism education, providing the opportunity for me to practice what I am experienced in. However, there is a large pool of data and results – to include responses from experts in the sector (i.e. Hoteliers' Association, the Travel Agencies' Association, and the Restaurateurs' Association)**,** accreditation bodies, students on the programmes of study within the Tourism and Hospitality Department, and some representatives from the TRNC Education Ministry and Chambers of Commerce for businesses and shopkeepers. It appears that *content analysis* is a limited tool to use towards overall findings, and is not specific to thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis, on the other hand, allows the research findings to be grouped into common, or as Guest *et al.* (2012, p.4) state, "most common" forms. Although *content analysis* is a common data collection method in qualitative research, *thematic analysis* is most useful for analysing, and making sense of the transcripts from focus groups or interviews (Guest *et al*., 2012). Content analysis may be useful for explicit words or phrases, but *thematic analysis* helps us focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data that can generate themes. Codes are then developed to represent the identified themes, and these are applied or linked to raw data or, in this case, to the design of a professional learning programme. In conclusion thematic analysis is the most appropriate and applicable data analysis method for this research because it allows for a systematic approach where reliability is the chief concern.

I will use some of the apprenticeship models outlined in chapter 2, such as Austria's and Switzerland's tourism and hospitality schooling, as policy templates to compare views. Thematic analysis will also give me the opportunity to put forward my views and research on the future of education in tourism and hospitality. This data will contribute to pedagogical issues about the benefits/ disadvantages of "blending learning" and "practice-based" learning with a view from the actual employers and students. As a result, a new idea is likely to be interpreted from this data such as: what the role of higher education really is in defining educational goals, and more importantly *who* is responsible for providing curriculum input.

3.8 Ethical considerations

3.8.1 Ethical codes and ethical competence

As an insider researcher the main ethical consideration that arises is from my position as the researcher in the workplace. It is important for me to identify and reflect on my personal role as a Departmental Head, with a particular focus on the political sensitivities that surrounds this both in terms of macro- and micro ethical levels. The students in my department may not be

comfortable sharing their views and information with me, considering my position. Consequently, it may be more appropriate for the interviews to be conducted by staff from other departments of GAU, who will sign an agreement that no names of participants will be shared with me. I will also ask for the results to be transcribed in such a way as to ensure that I will not be able to see who made what comment. Students and staff will, however, be asked in advance if they would volunteer for the focus group on the evaluation of the new programme, and those who are willing will be invited. In order to maintain the ethical codes of the university, I must first of all gain approval from the GAU management. Another issue is that the external stakeholders within the sector may use potential apprentices as cheap labour. To prevent this and/or to avoid any problems, I must make it clear to the sector from the start that this is not the objective of this research.

3.8.2 Formulating an ethical project

First, I must consider who is being researched, by whom and for whom (Costley, Elliott and Gibbs, 2010), and for what purpose:

All respondents:

1) who are approached should participate on their own initiative, willingly
2) will be invited in advance to participate in the research through written documents. This will allow time for the participants to decide, and it is ethical in being transparent about the overall purpose of the research
3) who give feedback will be treated with confidentiality
4) will be selected to represent different groups in the sector or, if students, chosen randomly. All accrediting bodies' research will be used.

The final decision on what to include in the programme will be made by myself, as the various stakeholders may have contradictory values and intentions for the professional programme. Consequently, although the developed professional programme should be a reflection of the views and experiences of all stakeholders, I must reflect so that the common themes are fair to all, and therefore ethical.

3.8.3 Assessing the purpose of my project

Social Implications: in order for the professional learning programme to be beneficial for the future of each representative stakeholder, I must communicate all outcomes, and consider any persons (or organisations/institutions) that have a potentially detrimental effect, such as GAU's competitors.

Economic implications: the project will not have any cost, risk or general negative economic impact on stakeholders or society. The benefits outlined for the sector will be of equal value, which means that the results from the respondents should be equitably embedded in the programme so as to ensure that graduates will be of equal value to all sector representatives. Consequently, the project outlines that part of the structure for the programme will be a blend of placement, online and classroom teaching meaning that the student will be working, and

some form of financial reward will be made that is in accordance with North Cyprus' laws, and communicated to the sector in advance of the research.

Environmental implications: No implications for the physical environment are regarded here.

Personal implications: This research has five main objectives, and although the above research will be conducted ethically, it is important to remember that is has a personal value for myself.

3.8.4 Issues within the project:

Obtaining approval: Approval must be obtained from all the stakeholders (APPENDIX I).

Potential conflict of interest: As mentioned above, the views of all participants must be embedded in the curriculum as equitably as possible, and I will take into consideration common themes.

Issues relating to dual or multiple roles within the project: The purpose of this research is to show an equal representation through the stakeholders; I believe the wide variety of stakeholders will make this a fair study that concludes with an overall view. My responsibility is to ensure a representative share of results. As an example, the fact that the sector would welcome cheaper labour could result in representatives proposing a programme with an unreasonable proportion of practical training for apprentices; I must use my position to negotiate a balance. My main role is to transmit the various views, recommendations and perceptions, whilst maintaining my own research proposal to students in an ethical fashion.

Other issues relating to power relations: The conditions must be consistent for all participants, with comfortable informal settings for the interviews, clearly set-out interviews and a focus group invitation that outlines the purpose of my research in advance. I will also be transparent about the outcomes of the professional learning programme.

3.8.5 Ethics of managing different stakeholders

Taking the above from a general perspective, it is important for me to identify and reflect on my role as a Department Head, with particular regard to the political sensitivities surrounding these at both the macro- and micro-level. The students in my department may not be comfortable sharing their views and information with me, considering my position. As discussed, it may be more suitable for interviews to be conducted by someone from outside – such as staff from other departments of GAU –who sign an agreement not to divulge names to me. The results are to be transcribed to ensure that I cannot see who has made what comments. However, graduates will be invited to participate in the focus group to evaluate the new programme in advance, to avoid dilemmas in due course. In order to be ethical in line with the requirements of the university, I must first gain approval from GAU management. As mentioned, outside stakeholders (hoteliers for example) may want to use potential apprentices as cheap labour, so to avoid problems later I must make this clear to the sector from the start that this is not the objective of the programme.

Chapter 4 Project activity

This chapter describes my experience during the research journey. I explain briefly the data gathering of secondary research and then in more detail the implementation of my AR, as outlined by Coghlan and Brannick (2014). The AR took place in two cycles: the first was in semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. In the second cycle I received confirmation of acceptance from the stakeholders, which took the form of a focus group with discussion and debate. This caused a stir among the stakeholders, as predicted. I often referred to my ethical framework to make sure I was not upsetting either the people or the system. I endeavored to share the experience as transparently as was feasible.

The aim and context of this research has been outlined and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

As outlined in Chapter 2, my project concerns research directed at designing the first Tourism and Hospitality professional learning programme in North Cyprus. Its main purpose is to identify the requirements of the stakeholders and embed them in a professional learning programme to be promoted and delivered at GAU. This is intended as a model for other education institutes in North Cyprus, and also for other countries. This learning paradigm is a feature of further education and some advanced apprenticeship programmes in the UK, but none in tourism, therefore the study represents a contribution to research in tourism education. It is necessary to use this new learning model to provide learning opportunities for all, with particular respect to non-academic learners.

4.1 AR Cycle 1: Gathering secondary data - construction stage

Although in Chapter 3 I did not discuss secondary data at great length, I believe it is important, as can be seen from Figure 4.1. The first step of the AR was to outline the *context and purpose* of the research; therefore I conducted a literature review as part of this cycle for Step 1.

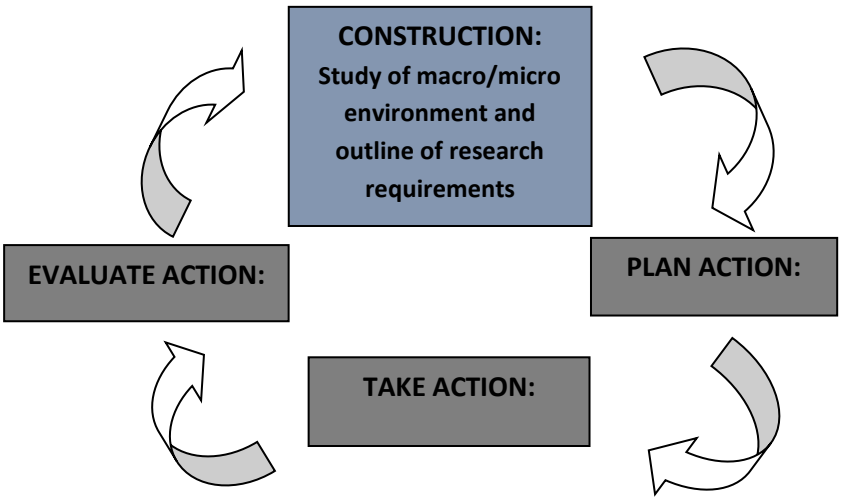


Figure 4.1 AR Cycle 1, Step 1 – Construction

I began my review of the macro and micro environment of GAU by studying existing literature on tourism education. These data were easily accessible for two reasons: first, my position as Head of Department allowed me access a pool of secondary resources. Secondly, it gave me the opportunity to link to and access state reports from the North Cyprus tourism organisation. As well as research at national level, I felt the need to look at international tourism education models and scholars. I reviewed existing good examples of apprenticeship programme curricula in tourism education that could offer a guide for the development of my proposed programme. After reviewing the existing literature, my selected destinations were mainly those with a dual system and highly respected tourist destinations with a good reputation for tourism education. I decided to base my recommended models on Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Britain, on the basis of their success in public media. There were many reports and a lot of accessible data, however in a meeting with school directors from Germany and Austria (as an insider–researcher of GAU), I shared my initial findings in a collaborative, informal setting. It appeared that what I was suggesting was outdated, and there were new reports available from government websites. The directors shared these links and I updated these data. The difficulty with using other countries' reports, as I found in my secondary research, was that by the time the research had been written up and translated into English, the findings were often outdated. This was apparent

in this case, as I had suggested that Germany's apprenticeship programmes were growing in popularity; in reality, the school director of a tourism school in Heidelberg told me, this was not the case. So although my secondary results were revised, I was able to obtain recent reports that I had not considered in the methodology chapter through my insider–researcher position.

4.2 AR Cycle 1: Invitation to stakeholders to attend interviews, planning action

As outlined in Figure 4.2, letters of invitation were sent to all selected sector representatives in January 2015 (APPENDIX 1). I selected a member of staff from the Communications Department of GAU to interview some of the Tourism and Hospitality students to ensure good levels of communication and a degree of separation from the Tourism and Hospitality Department. The instructor (interviewer) selected ten students on the programme and approached them directly through email, then conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews. This was to make sure that the project remained within the ethical framework. In total, 15 letters were sent to sector representatives. I followed up each with an email and telephone call to establish suitable times and venues. Although I had initially arranged for the interviews to take place in February, unfortunately some went on into March. I tried to avoid this because of the proximity of the tourism season, which I knew would cause difficulty for the sector representatives, but failed to take into consideration the two-week February school holidays which meant that many of them had tight schedules.

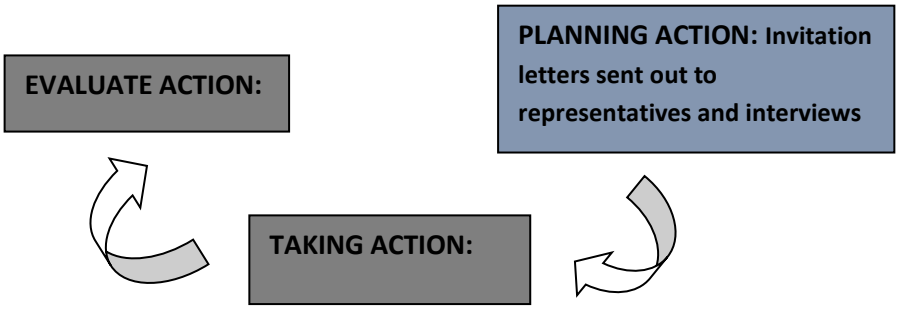


Figure 4.2 AR Cycle 1, Step 2 – Planning Action

Of the 15 letters sent out, I interviewed the following:

- **TRNC Educaton Ministry –** Undersecretary (Dr. Sahap Asikoglu)
- **Chamber of Commerce for Shop Keepers and Artisans –** Office Manager (Tolga Hurrem)
- **Sector**:
  - **Hotels**: Turkish North Cyprus Hoteliers Association President (Also 3-star Hotel CEO) (Huseyin Aktig), Coordinator (Esra Celiker) and Merit Hotel Group Human Resource Manager (Mehmet Sonmez)
  - **Travel Agents**: Turkish North Cyprus Travel Agents Association President (also medium-sized incoming and outgoing travel agent owner, Orhan Tolun), large travel agent – Ornek Tourism owner (Ozbek Dedekorkut) and Tour Operator- Polatkan Tourism Human Resource Manager (Ali Polatkan)
  - **Restaurants**: Turkish North Cyprus Restaurateurs Association President (also restaurant owner) (Suleyman Gurcafer), established restaurant (Zihni Turksel) owner and restaurant chain owner (Ahmet Niyazi).

- **Accreditations**:
  - North Cyprus Higher Education Commission (YODAK) President (Professor Dr. Huseyin Gokcekus), Coordınator and Turkey Higher Education Commission (YOK) Representative (based in North Cyprus) (Professor Dr. Olgun Cicek)
- **Students** *(Letters were sent by the interviewer and not myself)*
  - Ten Tourism and Hospitality students selected by GAU Communications Department instructor.

The interviews with the sector had a particular common structure, in that the first 10 minutes of each interview had an introduction to the research and what I was doing, its purpose and how the new curriculum would progress. I explained how tourism education has evolved to date, and what is required in the future according to research. My position as a Head of Department of Tourism in a North Cyprus university supported the extensive networks in the HE as well as the tourism sector.

4.2.1 AR Cycle 1: TRNC Education Ministry representative ınterview experiences

The interview with the TRNC Education Ministry appeared to be somewhat unconstructive, because its general response was that YODAK is responsible for HE in North Cyprus and at present the Ministry is not responsible for universities, nor does there seem to be any plan to be associated in future. I reminded the Undersecretary that our country's main income generator is HE and that the Ministry should consider taking a direct role in the future and growth of this sector. However, the overwhelming response was that this is the political structure of North Cyprus, and at present this is how it will remain. The hard and soft factors I mentioned in the methodology became apparent in this feedback, with particular reference to the legal framework whereby universities are the exclusive responsibility of YODAK.

4.2.2 AR Cycle 1: Chamber of Commerce shopkeepers and artisans interview

The chamber of commerce was selected because in Chapter 2, section 2.9 of my research I found that countries like Germany are working closely with their Chamber of Commerce, and further in research carried out in 2009 (Guden, 2009) the Chamber of Commerce in North Cyprus had started to design apprenticeship programmes. As a result, I considered these participants to be important in contributing to this research.

This semi-structured interview took place at the interviewee's office. The first thing I realised was that the North Cyprus Chamber of Commerce had already designed an apprenticeship programme for *Lise* graduates. Although the level is different, because its aim is to develop middle-line positions, it still meant that my programme was not to be the first in the country, as I had initially thought. The manager reflected his view that this was the way forward in developing education for all and, at the same time, meeting the needs of the tourism sector. This confirmed what I had found in my secondary research. It was in this interview in particular that I asked further questions, not initially structured, and the adoption of a semi-structured interview model proved most useful here. I was now interested in identifying their mistakes to avoid them in my curriculum design and so I asked questions to this end. What was evident was that they lacked the valuable contacts and networks with the tourism industry, and therefore could not offer sufficient placements for their students.

4.2.3 AR Cycle 1: Sector interview

As was evident from the accreditation evaluation I carried out for my school departments in 2009 with TEDQUAL, one of the prime requirements for achieving accreditation is to develop the curriculum together with the sector. I therefore, worked together with the sector in researching the requirements for the curriculum, also as an insider-researcher I was in a good position with regards to my network of contacts in the industry. In particular, my choice of

selection for the participants in the sector interviews was based on their expertise in the sector and the average ten years' experience each of them have in the sector. All representatives, from hoteliers, travel agents and restaurants have a minimum of ten years' experience. For each sector I also interviewed the presidents of the related sector's association as they are not only experts in their fields and have experience working within the sector, but are also in a position to receive common complaints and therefore very much aware of the gaps the sector may have with regards to knowledge and skill deficiencies.

I found the responses from the in-depth interviews very useful and as a result was satisfied with the selection of experts from the sector. What was very evident was that they all had empathy for the sector as well as the proposed professional learning programme. I tried to get them to reflect on the employee skills they have because this outlined what was lacking in learning and also it helped in building a positive rapport.

Feedback and responses from the hotel sector were very supportive and representatives were able to provide me with the required data. They made further recommendations that I decided to incorporate, such as discussing possible incentives for developing the programme with the North Cyprus Employment Office. The Hoteliers Association President was not only helpful in answering my questions, but stated at an early stage that he and his team were ready to support this programme. Further, he provided me with the Association's venue and facilities for hosting my focus group, as I will explain in Chapter 5. This was good motivation for me personally. The inter-level dynamics discussed by Coghan and Brannick (2014) became evident here and were important for the progression of this research.

The interviews with the travel agency representative were repeatedly delayed and I found myself translating into Turkish two of the interviewees' letters, emails and question sets to ensure I could retrieve useful data. One of these interviewees repeatedly turned the discussion towards his personal education and work experience. It was difficult to bring the interview back

to the place that I wanted. I took the lead and rephrased key questions, being careful not to upset the interviewee by asking the same questions. Both useful and interesting, his responses provided different data that could not be compared with the rest of the sector. His educational background in comparison to the other interviewees was less academic and I believe his responses were therefore based primarily on his own experience; however I chose to use his responses in my thematic analysis to find patterns and similarities.

4.2.4 AR Cycle 1: Accreditations interview

There were some changes in my interviews for accreditation representatives because I initially stated I would interview the international accrediting body of TEDQUAL (UNWTO). However, I realised after the interview with YODAK (Higher Education Commission of North Cyprus), while transcribing, that many of the TEDQUAL responses would be readily available in a handbook to which I have access, since GAU is an accredited school. Therefore, while I interviewed a YOK (Higher Education Council of Turkey) representative and a YODAK representative, for TEDQUAL I simply used the publicly available handbook.

With both YOK and YODAK I had excellent feedback and was assured of their support. This was a critical development, as I mentioned in the methodology chapter that in holding face-to-face interviews I was also building a relationship (or rapport) with key stakeholders to secure acceptance of a new teaching paradigm that may have been rejected without a slowly developing professional relationship. The rigid legal framework of YOK is often known in North Cyprus for limiting opportunities for change and often, for this reason, universities in North Cyprus are forced to follow a legal framework when proposing new programmes. I learnt that keeping accreditation bodies involved with such projects is a productive way to secure acceptance of required changes. The only query that arose from our interview with YODAK was how to ensure that an apprenticeship-style programme remained academically relevant. At this point I was pleased to have selected a face-to-face interview because, as mentioned in the

methodology section, this style of interview allowed me to convince the stakeholder and develop acceptance of change. I achieved their support for the new curriculum style by informing them that international models exist and that the sector demonstrates strong demand for this type of graduate. Sharing some of the general responses I received from the sector supported my argument to build on this accreditation acceptance. In particular, what was very evident from the responses was that our graduates claim to know, but there appears to be a problem with "*doing*". This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.3. During this experience, I felt myself taking up a strong position to promote the requirement for this new programme. During the AR, I was also "learning in action" with regard to my personal development. Although I did not plan to interview the sector first, this accidental structure provided a professional opportunity to raise awareness of this new programme's requirements, it was an opportune moment in my professional research development. In conclusion, a qualitative approach was most beneficial in developing people's thoughts, experiences and, more importantly for me, in developing a rapport with stakeholders to gain their acceptance of this new programme style.

4.2.5 AR Cycle 1: Students' interview

In order to observe the ethical conditions of my research, the students were interviewed by a colleague outside my department with no connection with me or students on a professional level. Ten students were randomly selected from the tourism department by my colleague, who also transcribed the responses, omitting students' names.

I presented my in-depth interview recordings to my colleague to prepare them for the kind of moderating that was required, further, I had prepared the questions and asked him what he understood from the questions, to make sure we were consistent with each other's understanding of what was required. This was a mild training exercise through instruction between myself and my colleague. I selected this colleague from the Communications Faculty

as he is a professional communicator and have experience in interviewing on live TV, therefore has good experience in using language.

Common themes for student expectations became evident and are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

4.3 AR Cycle 1: Taking the action – Designing the professional learning programme

During this step there appeared to be a pool of information that took a considerable amount of time to analyse thematically. After each interview I immediately transcribed the data, but even so the thematic analysis of the data took seven days, with an average of eight hours a day. This timeframe was something I had not anticipated and I found myself indecisive about which key phrase comments fell under. For example, students expressed a desire to use their telephones and computers to access information about the programme, and sector representatives mentioned a number of times that they wanted employees to be Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literate and able to design websites. With this kind of feedback, it was evident that while there was a common requirement in the form of ICT, the required outcomes of stakeholders were different. I learnt to deal with these kinds of response with a *light hearted approach.* In this case I accepted that both groups of stakeholders had a common interest, in that, part of the blended learning for the programme should include ICT. There were two elements: first, for the student to access data; and second, for the programme to incorporate learning criteria and courses that met the required outcome for the sector. As a result of this first phase of AR, I found that responses do not necessarily fall under a single, key code or phrase and that I was the one to decide how to incorporate these findings as a whole.

Despite the fact my position as Department Head allowed me to incorporate key changes into the curriculum, I found it challenging to display this in a transparent way as a doctoral candidate. The cultural and political climate in North Cyprus suggests that a lecturer or Department Head is a highly respected figure in society. A Head of Department is promoted to the position, based

on their know-how and the common perception is that s/he knows best. In other words, "*I am the academic, I am doing the research and therefore I know best"*, but as a doctoral candidate I am still learning. As a result, I experienced a challenge in dealing with my self-confidence. However, this step of the cycle taught me to have confidence in my decisions, hence I understood more clearly what is been meant by "Doctorate in *Professional* Studies". Here, I took a positivist approach and with confidence wrote the key terms that were the outcomes of interviews, and noticed my skills develop as a result. These key codes (themes) are as follows:

1. Business and Economics courses and specialists crowd the current programmes (consistant with Jafar Jafari's (1990) four-platform theory and Airey's (2008) fragmented stage)
2. Tourism is multidisciplinary
3. Students must specialise in a specific field (hospitality or travel tourism)
4. There is a lack of "doing"
5. Requirement for ICT – all stakeholders need competent professionals in the industry
6. Requirement for classroom pedagogies
7. Everybody wants to be a university graduate

The thematic analysis observed a pattern from the different stakeholders in these seven common themes. I highlighted and numbered the data in the transcriptions and in accordance with the theme code number or, as Guest *et al.* (2012) state, the "most common forms" (p.4). The next stage in the action research cycle was to summarise and incorporate these findings into the new programme. I summarised these as follows:

- ✓ Instructors with tourism background
- ✓ Include subjects that the sector requires in the curriculum

- ✓ Teach students the *"doing"* part ("hands on" approach to learning)
- ✓ Have a diverse curriculum that includes ICT-based pedegogies, yet have classroom environment learning and at higher education level

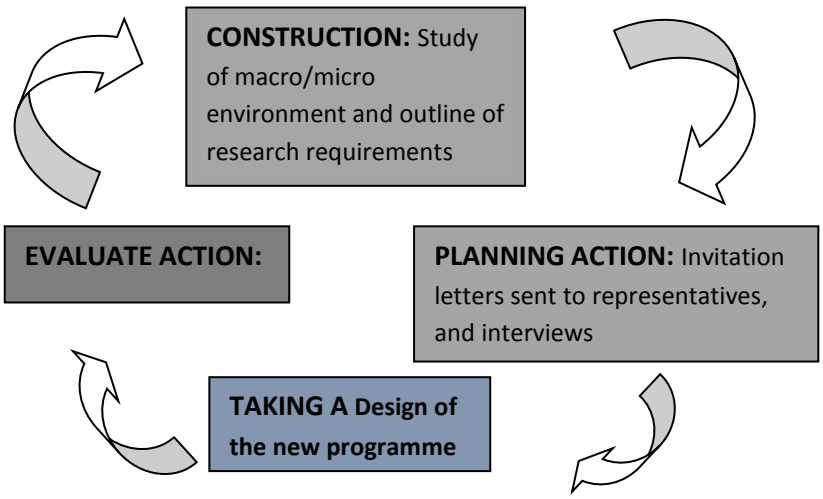


Figure 4.3 AR Cycle 1, Step 3 – Taking action

The professional learning programme started to take shape at this stage of the AR cycle, taking in to consideration how far I could make changes within the scope of GAU's current accrediting bodies (TEDQUAL, YOK and YODAK), yet apply sector and student feedback in as much depth as possible. I had to use intuition here regarding the implications of the changes and what type of questions and arguments might arise from the focus group. For example, in HE there is a requirement by YODAK for a minimum of 20 courses (60 credits) for a two-year associate degree programme. The apprenticeships I investigated from Austria. Germany, Switzerland and the UK normally include two days in a classroom and three days on placement. I included blended learning here, although its deployment meant different ideas for various researchers, as discussed in the literature review. One common finding was that learning should be away from

the usual classroom setting, yet a balance between theoretical, classroom and workplace is required to keep students on track. Therefore, whether adopted from Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman's (2006), point of view, as an online and classroom setting learning, or the American Society for Training and Development, which considers this to be a "top trend", for the purposes of this research, blended learning has been deployed as a mix of classroom and sector-based learning.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, blended learning began with e-learning ideas. However, as more research was conducted, I discovered that it is not limited to this pedagogy but can be defined more broadly. Bailey and Morais (2005) in their research explored the use of blended learning in tourism education through the combination of online and face-to-face pedagogies. The findings suggest that instructors should consider the use of online tools to improve satisfaction, as results show that increased student interaction leads to increased satisfaction. This finding is also apparent in Dziuban, Hartman and Moskar's research (2004). Although it was previously stated that blended learning is necessary (Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman, 2006) to bring curricula forward, we must not disregard the fact that some students lack familiarity with the internet. This can be especially relevant in GAU tourism school, as the students are of over 26 different nationalities, and some are from backgrounds with little knowledge of or exposure to the internet. Therefore this project activity designed the new programme with the model shown in Figure 4.4.

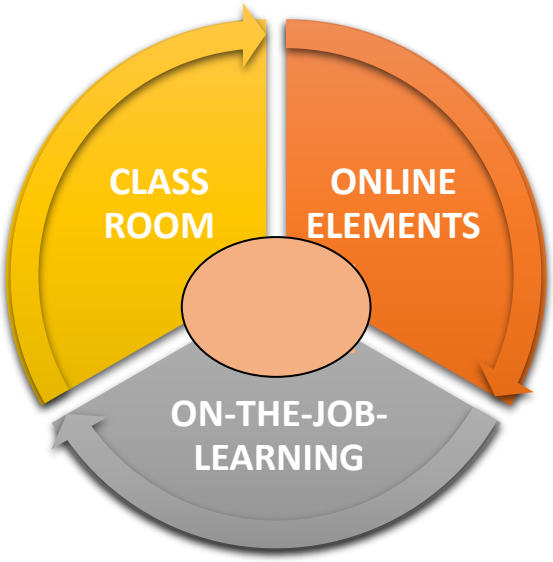


Figure 4.4 Blending Learning model for tourism education

If this programme is to have this structure, students can only learn and be productive by engaging in two courses per day and three days of placement, so an Associates' degree would take three years rather than two, as at present. Local accrediting bodies YOK and YODAK, typically, have not strayed from the either two- or four-year programmes for an Associate or Bachelor degree. Moreover, during the interview with YOK representatives, I was informed that generally they do not accredit three-year programmes because these are viewed as a way for young men to delay their army service. I was prepared to defend the requirement for a three-year programme, using YOK and YODAK's requirement of a minimum of 20 courses as my argument or defence, however continued discussion resulted with a clear understanding of its requirement. This is also consistant with varying countries outlined in APPENDIX 6, p.202. Acceptance of this "new" programme design would not have been possible had I not designed this research as an AR where accreditations were involved. In due course, this was a fruitful research method that allowed interaction with experts and the "rule makers" (Hard factors mentioned in Chapter 2). Although the next step on the AR was likely to be when such comparisons were to be made, I found it necessary at this time to compare my secondary and primary data. As previously mentioned in my methodology with reference to McNiff (2000), who

states that an AR does not necessarily follow the same cycle (as discussed in Chapter 3), in this case I did progress to the next step (Evaluate Action) and back (Take Action). It was important that I evaluated each action (or which course I included or otherwise on the professional learning programme, for example) to provide a transparent and ethical argument to the viewers.

4.4 AR Cycle 1: Step 4 – Evaluate action

Once the interviews were complete and I had transcribed the common themes, I was able to see the common outcomes, and I outlined these as code themes under seven main headings that I will discuss in Chapter 5. I embedded these in the new curriculum and checked my interview transcripts again to make sure I had not forgotten anything. I also checked those hard factors again that were mainly outlined by accreditation bodies and GAU to make sure I was within the university regulations and national legal requirements. As mentioned above, this step was taken together with Step 3 of the AR. This was noted in my methodology, but I was uncertain at what phase of my fieldwork this was to take place, and this became apparent when I realised that elements of the new curriculum may cause stakeholders certain problems. I checked on the hard and soft factors that I found during my secondary research at a macro- and micro-level. These can also be outlined as a pre-step, to avoid sensitivities at accrediting, sectoral and student level. More importantly, I compared the secondary data with the newly- designed programme to avoid ethical issues essential for me to identify with and reflect on in my role as an Acting Department Head, with particular reference to political sensitivities at the macro- and micro-levels.

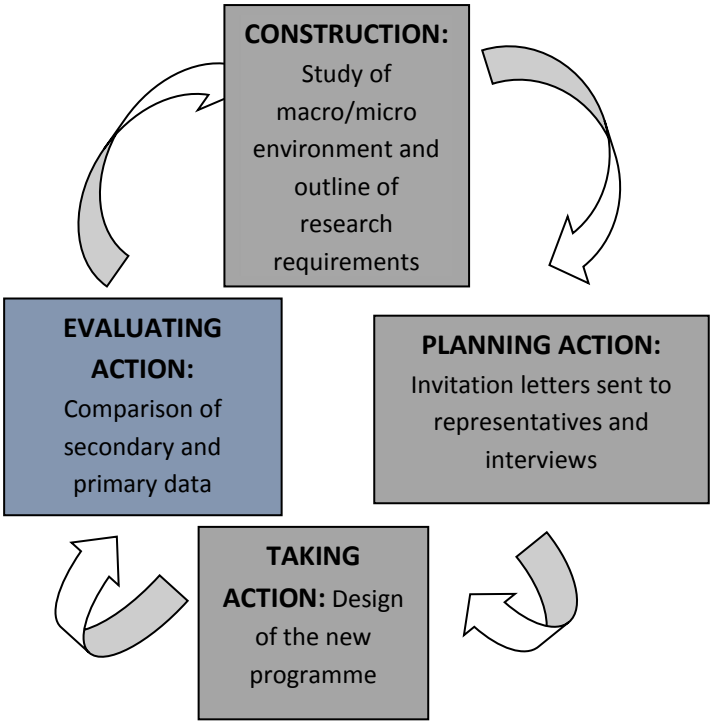


Figure 4.5 AR Cycle 1, Step 4 – Evaluate the action

Step 4 of the AR was important to ensure the new programme contents (curriculum) will meet the requirements of the various stakeholders, also that the research was robust and ethical. I did this by comparing the secondary data with what was included in the new curriculum.

4.5 AR Cycle 2: Step 1 – Construction

My positivist approach continued in the second cycle of my AR, particularly because the interview results had now confirmed that there was a requirement for practical training and accreditation. I felt strong at this stage, as I could justify all that I had incorporated in the new curriculum, and further I had strong international secondary data that supported my results. For this cycle I checked the subjects and structure of the new curriculum one-by-one and prepared a justification for each. It was evident that some of the stakeholder representatives I was to invite for the focus group would defend the requirement for the subject or structure, nevertheless I was prepared. Consequently, although I was confident about the new

programme, I was aware that the point of the focus group was to revise any areas deemed wrong or requiring change, and I was at this stage excited to see what the response might be.

I decided to do this in the form of a presentation, in order to maintain my focus on transparency and ethics. The common outcomes were not grouped individually in the presentation but came under each stakeholder group's results (see APPENDIX 2 P.186).

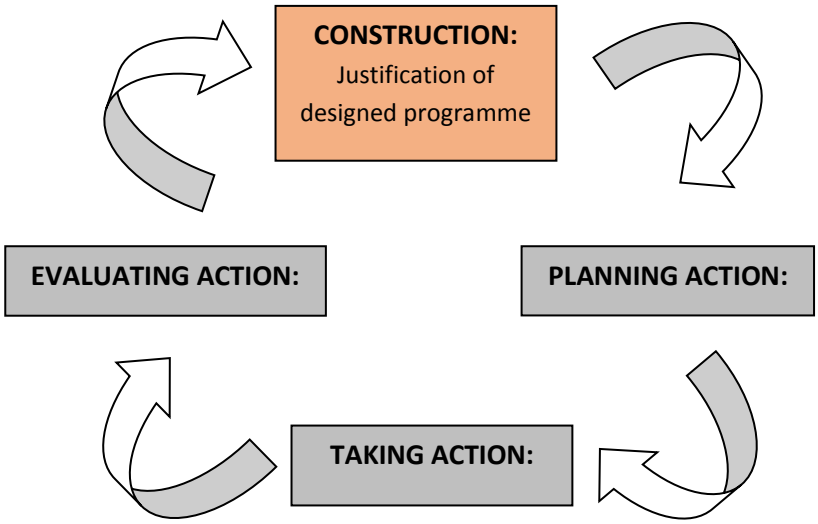


Figure 4.6 Cycle 2, Step 1 – Construction

4.6 AR Cycle 2: Step 2 – Planning action

In preparation for the focus group, I selected one expert from each stakeholder group, apart from the student group from which I invited two graduate students who had completed their education and were working in the sector. I chose graduate students because of my personal role as Head of Department and the ethical considerations that go with this. I was to be the moderator, as it was an opportunity to seek acceptance from university graduates working in the sector. I invited stakeholders who had provided the most feedback and appeared to have an interest in the programme, therefore I considered who provided considerable content, based

on the transcripts, and sent letters of invitation to each, followed with a call or text message to the mobile telephones with which I was provided with during Cycle 1.

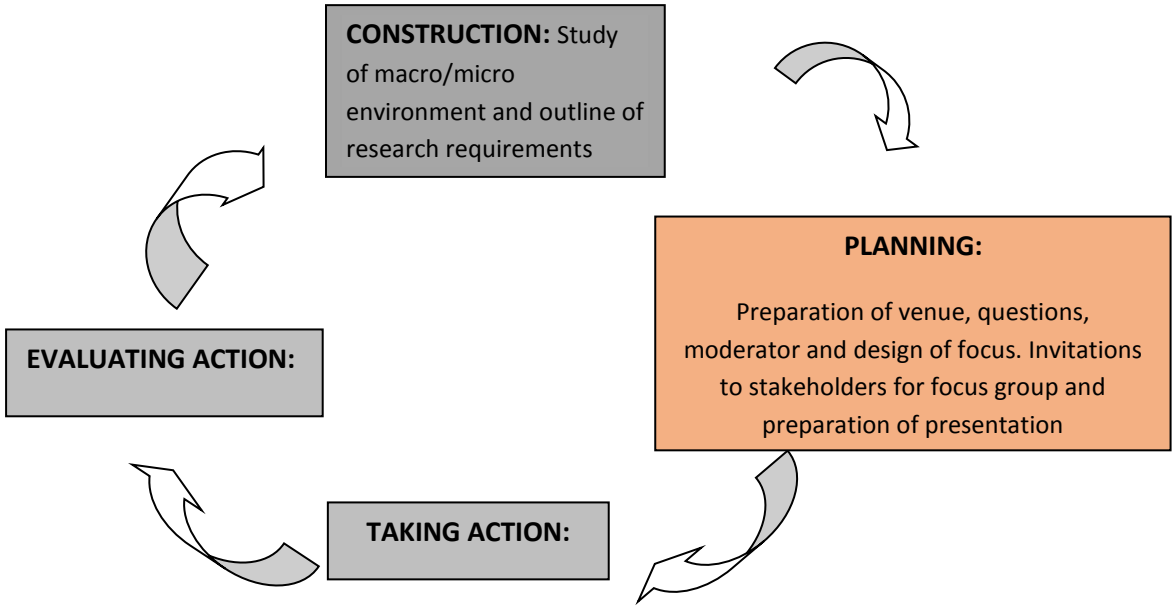


Figure 4.7 Cycle 2, Step 2

As mentioned above in Cycle 1, the North Cyprus Hoteliers Association President mentioned his interest and support for the new programme and stated he would be happy to host the focus group at the Hoteliers Association (KITOB) office. I accepted this invitation because the office is in a central location suitable for all stakeholders and is conducive to open, transparent communication. I also felt this would avoid any interruptions or constraints that might arise in a university environment. Additionally, I arranged for a video recording of the focus group.

The presentation for the focus group involved a brief overview of the project's aim. The graduate students were informed in writing about the project. The presentation followed the same structure as the overall project, so I also briefly discussed the methodology in the context of AR. The following representatives were invited, and I was informed that I might refer to their full names in the write-up of this project:

- Tourism sector:

  - Turkish Cyprus Hoteliers Association (KITOB) President – Mr Huseyin Aktig
  - Turkish Cyprus Travel Agencies Association (KITSAB) representative – Mr Ozbek Dedekorkut
  - Restaurateurs Association (RESBIR) representative – Mr Ahmet Niyazi Aydeniz
- Accreditations:
  - North Cyprus Higher Education Council (YODAK) representative – Professor Olgun Cicek
- Student (graduates):
  - GAU graduate 2012: Mr Ugur Kiroglu
  - GAU graduate 2013: Ms Songul Celik

The Chamber of Commerce was not invited as I received no valuable research results from the first cycle. I also chose not to invite anyone from the Education Ministry, as staff informed me that HE of North Cyprus is not connected to the Education Ministry but to YODAK. The above interviewees all attended apart from GAU graduate Songul Celik, thus I was one graduate short. Rather than preparing questions, I stopped after each slide for discussion in order to moderate the focus group.

4.7 AR Cycle 2: Step 3 – Taking action

The third step of Cycle 2 was to hold the focus group, which was personally fulfilling as it showed our hard work and what we had achieved together. I began my presentation on a positive note with these words. The progression began with a discussion by the accreditations representative on the first two slides. I ensured no single person monopolised the conversation, and that all parties had an equal say and, therefore, input. What was interesting is that initially I wanted two students so that they would not be overpowered by the other members who were in high positions in employment, and was concerned that because I had only one graduate he would

not be comfortable enough to provide his opinion. I was pleasantly surprised when he had a considerable amount to say, and particularly appreciated how he gave an example to justify his discussion. It was most beneficial to start with members representing the various groups.

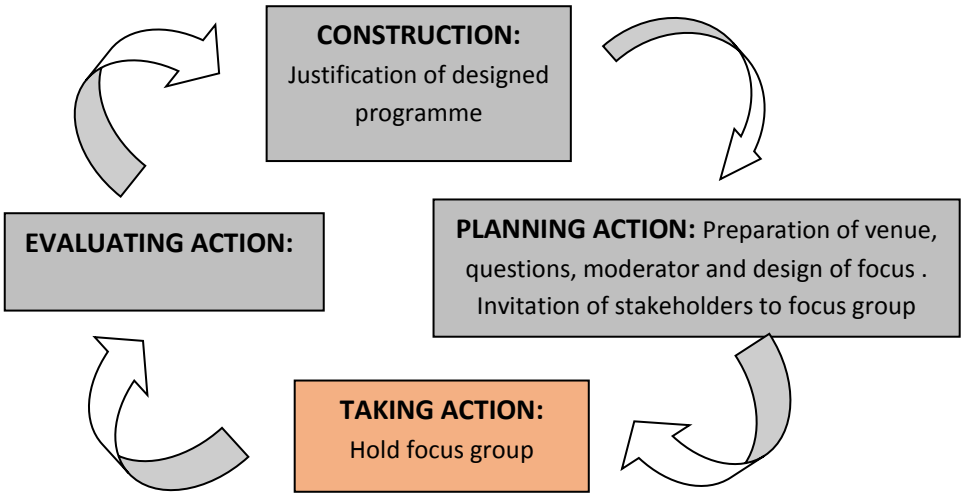


Figure 4.8 Cycle 2, Step 3

The focus group was in English and all interviewees were confident for discussion to take place in this way. However, groups with interests or perceptions from various perspectives were represented, as mentioned in the methodology chapter. This was evident in the progression of the focus group session, as there was a general concern for improved tourism education that would meet the requirements of sector, students and accreditation. The focus group allowed for a culture of work ethics, as a result. Whilst in the interviews the accreditation representatives were focused on the hard factors of the micro environment, the focus group allowed for a discussion of the sector's soft factors at macro-environment level. This allowed for a common understanding and appreciation of what was required by all stakeholders. It is worth mentioning that I received comments to the effect that, if the state did something similar to my research then it would be a more sustainable environment in the labour market because they could appreciate why and what, now. There were many instances when the professionals in the focus

group tried to bring the discussion to the lack of government input regarding some issues in tourism education, but I wanted the group to concentrate on our research objectives and, more importantly, to be ethical. Providing space for discussion about what the government could do better was unethical, because there was no government representative to justify or discuss; neither was it acceptable, as this was not the aim of my research. Without upsetting anyone, I explained that because we did not have anyone from the government present it was not fair to have this discussion, and I believe this was within the ethical framework of my research although I did not consider its possibility in the ethical framework in Chapter 3. My leadership in this respect was important for the ethical progression of this research, and my main concern at the start of discussing ethics was my position in GAU and my students. This is why I invited graduates for the focus group that I moderated. My second concern was that the sector, accreditation representatives and students have different interests and therefore potentially contradictory values and intentions regarding the apprenticeship part of the programme. Consequently, although the programme should be a reflection of the views and experiences from all stakeholders, I decided to reflect the common themes to be fair to all, and therefore ethical. This outcome was achieved in this way, although I had not been prepared for the professionals to discuss the lack of professionalism at state level, and had used my leadership to stop this at an early stage of Cycle 2, Step 3 – the focus group interview.

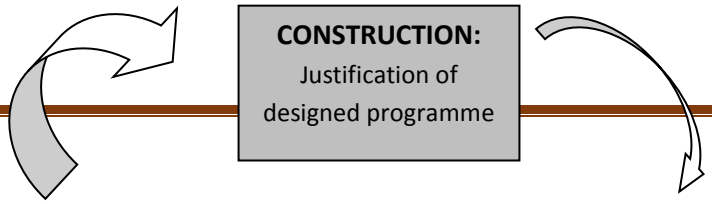
The focus group took 2 hours 30 minutes, but the main discussion was during the presentation of the content of the professional learning curriculum (APPENDIX 3 p.187, slide 17). This is when the discussion of the focus group took the shape of what I wanted to achieve, specifically different opinions of what should and should not be included. For example, names of courses to which had been added the word “management” were agreed by all stakeholder to be dropped, as this is to be a programme that teaches the student the “doing” part, not “managing”. The revisions that were discussed were highly relevant to the research results from Cycle 1, and I

learnt that I did actually foresee some of the highly important points outlined, thus the benefits of Cycle 2 were appreciated instantly. The discussion of the curriculum content was the main topic and 70 minutes of the focus group was spent this way. These revisions and findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

As a result of the focus group, I can confirm as I had outlined in my methodology I wanted to pursue a focus group to be transparent with my project in the presentation of my results with the stakeholder's representatives and also confirm a robust study that accurately meets the requirements of all. My objectives were achieved.

4.8 AR Cycle 2: Step 4 – Evaluate action

Based on the feedback and data I recieved from the focus group the changes I made to the curriculum were the main components of Step 4, Cycle 2 and these changes are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. As well as making these revisions, I once again compared the secondary data and the hard factors of accrediting bodies and GAU to make sure I was within the political, legal and regulating framework of what was to be the final outcome of my reseach – the actual *Professional learning Programme in Tourism*



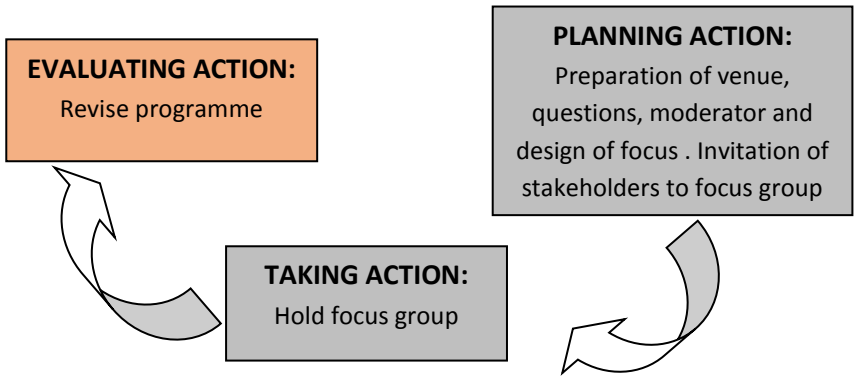


Figure 4.9 Cycle 2, Step 4

Some outcomes from Cycle 2 were irrelevant to revising the curriculum, which was the objective of the focus group, but were important contributions that would support the programme's acceptance by the various stakeholders and make my programme sustainable in the long term. These are outlined below and discussed in more detail in Chapter 5:

1. ***The programme should be supported by the Employment Office***. The professionals present in the focus group stated that the Employment Office is likely to support this programme because of its flexibility for people seeking employment. This would support objective 5, to create awareness of the programme. Although the programme meets the criteria for these people, the possibility of the Employment Office paying the social security contributions for these people would make my programme both more attractive and accessible to wider groups. This suggestion would involve communication with the Employment Office.
2. ***The Tourism Ministry and Education Ministry should have a role in creating awareness of the importance of the tourism sector for the younger generation.*** This is again, closely connected to objective 5, to create awareness of a new type of education in tourism. KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR stated that this is important in creating a campaign for recognition of the requirement for different models of tourism education. My secondary data had outlined that tourism sector statistics indicate continued growth, with 2.8 per cent average growth

in tourism numbers in 2012 and a 30 per cent growth in bed capacity (NCSPO, 2013). Therefore, tourism is an important player in North Cyprus's economy. I consider social responsibility to be a part of my project, and therefore in due course, and, with GAU's permission, upon completion of my DProf I will present my programme to the Tourism Ministry and the Education Ministry.

3. **KITOB's support for the new programme:** I was invited by KITOB to a separate meeting regarding creating a campaign for recognition for tourism. Representatives explained that they have the funding for both a campaign and courses, and were interested in working with GAU to deliver the new programme, which they believed would help the labour shortage. They stated that they would promote this programme at a national level to make it accessible to local and current personnel in the sector. This, again, is to be discussed with GAU, and I believe it would represent added value for my programme. This is consistent again with objective 6.
4. **Agreements with KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR:** At the end of the focus group the sector representatives recommended that agreements were drawn up with associations instead of individual companies, as associations are in a good position to recommend which to work with. For example, as I will discuss further in Chapter 5, each student will have a workplace mentor who has at least a degree qualification and three years' experience. The focus group representatives all agreed that the most ethical and fair way of achieving this is to consider companies from a wider point of view, and associations have available data on labour turnover, reputation and financial success. This agreement has been drawn up (APPENDIX 5, P.200) and is within my ethical framework.

4.9 Project objectives and project activity outcomes

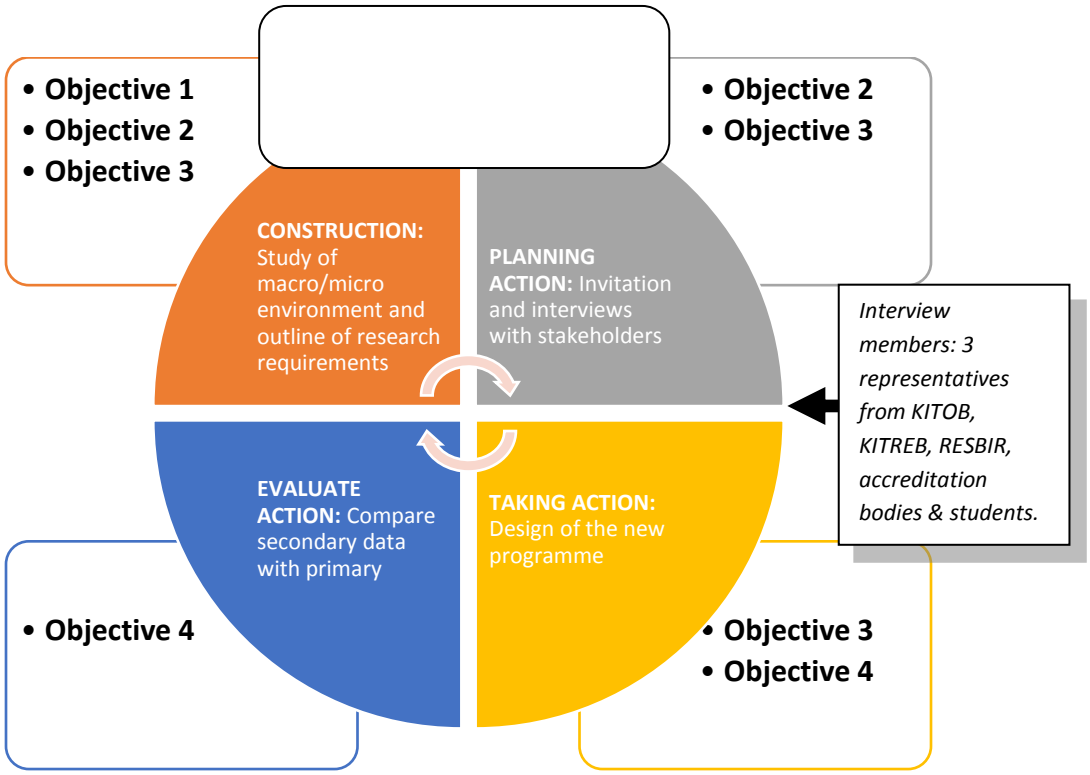
The methods outlined for the research in the methodology section were slightly altered, as shown in Table 4.1 in bold. In summary, the interviews to be held with accrediting body

TEDQUAL were changed to observation and reviewing the handbook to gather the required data. Reviewing the hard factors was initially to be done through the TRNC Education Ministry and the Chamber of Commerce, but project activity revealed that these were insufficient, as HE was not related to these but to YODAK, and the data were obtained from YODAK. The last change is that during Cycle 2 the focus group was initially to invite students, but I considered this unethical due to my position as Head of Department and decided to invite GAU graduates, also because workers in the sector are best placed to provide feedback on what they have previously learnt, the proposed changes and how these would or would not enhance employability.

OBJECTIVES	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	STAKEHOLDERS AND RELEVANT ASSOCIATIONS	DATA
1. To carry out a detailed literature review on apprenticeships and their development particularly looking at examples in Europe.	Action research – Planning Secondary research	Higher education in Britain, Austria, Germany and Switzerland	Secondary
2. To study the demands and requirements of the different stakeholders to include GAU, GAU students, accrediting bodies and sector representatives.	• Action research – Planning and action • Secondary research • Primary research • Semi-structured interviews	• GAU STHM • Accrediting bodies **(for TEDQUAL, this was achieved through a review of the handbook)**, GAU • Sector representatives: ○ Hoteliers Association President ○ Travel Agencies Association President ○ Restaurataurs Association President ○ Students in the two-year programme	• Existing programmes • Existing rules, regulations and report feedback • Qualitative: ○ Summary of skills and theoretical requirements for future employees ○ Summary of theoretical, skill-based and social expectations of future employees
3. To study how the North Cyprus education system – together with its "hard" factors and "soft" factors fit in.	• Action research – Action • Secondary research • Research from websites, informal interviews	• **Objectives were met with the results obtained from accreditations in particular YODAK**	• Qualitative Summary of "hard" and "soft" factors related to the subject area
4. To develop and adopt an apprenticeship-style programme which fulfils the requirements of all stakeholders and associations.	• Action research – Action • Committee focus group • Semi-structured interviews with students	• Accrediting body representative, GAU and Middlesex University • Sectorial representatives: ○ Hoteliers Association President ○ Travel Agencies Association President ○ Restaurateurs Association President ○ Students on two-year programme	• Qualitative: ○ Summary of skills and theoretical requirements for future employees ○ Summary of theoretical, skill-based and social expectations from the future employees
5. To create awareness of a "new" style of education in North Cyprus which can be used as a model nationally. 6. To provide an opportunity for learning for less academic students.	• Action research – Monitoring and reflection • Committee focus group	• Accrediting body representative and GAU • Sectorial representatives: ○ Hoteliers Association President ○ Travel Agencies Association President ○ Restaurateurs Association President ○ Graduates from GAU	• Literature and project • **Agreements with associations** • **KITOB tourism campaign**

Table 4.1 Research objectives and the AR

The project activity and how each objective was researched is shown in Figure 4.10 through two AR cycles, with clear indication of how I met each objective at each step.



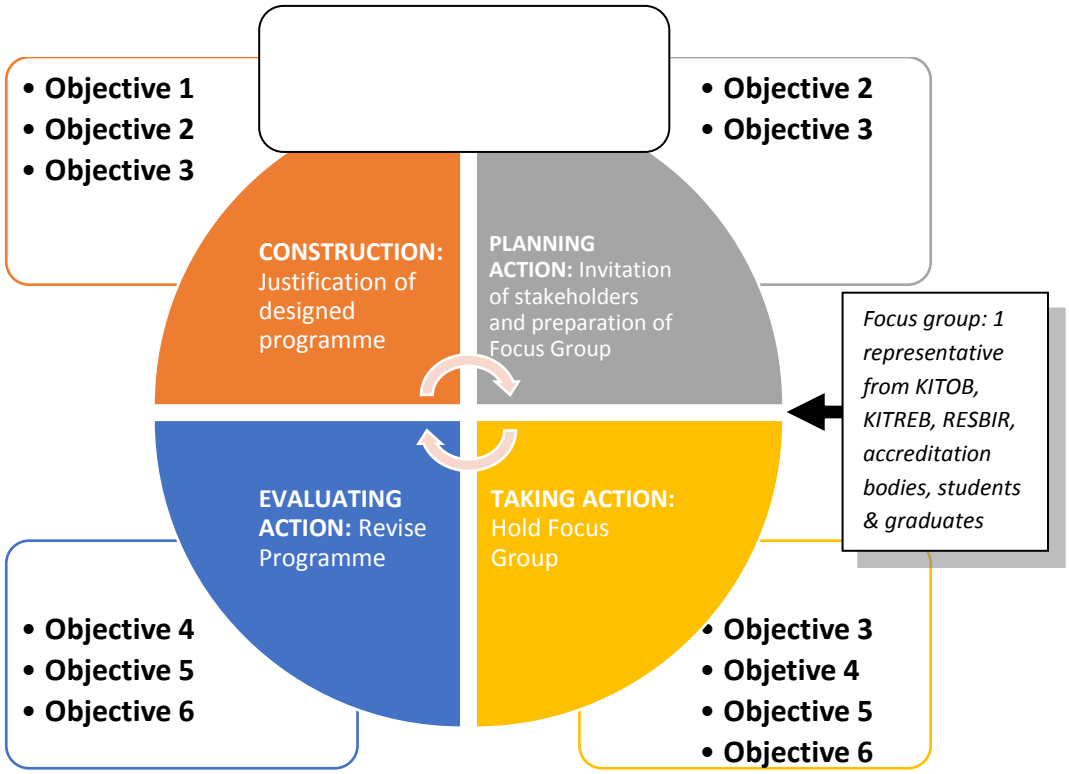


Figure 4.10 Project activity action research cycles and how the objectives were met

Chapter 5 Project findings

The results of my research are analysed in this chapter. I present them through the thematic analysis described in Chapter 3, and indicate the project activity process (Chapter 4). Here I will present the framework and new curriculum that has taken shape, based on the results obtained from the two cycles of my action research (AR). The first cycle of the AR displays findings from the 22 semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews with accreditation bodies, sector representatives and students. These results were evaluated, compared and analysed to develop the Professional Learning Programme. The second cycle of the AR was allocated to revise the curriculum, based on the results from the focus group for which the curriculum was professionally presented to the representatives of the selected stakeholders and critically evaluated with them. The final part is an analysis of the results. Table 5.1 below is a summary of the common theme codes first formulated in Chapter 4. These codes are based on common themes or comments raised in the in-depth interviews and I refer to them as "TC" hereafter.

Table 5.1 Common themes and codes of research results

Thematıc code	Common themes
TC1	Business and Economics courses and specialists "crowd" current programmes
TC2	Tourism is multidisciplinary
TC3	Students must specialise in a specific field (Hospitality or Travel tourism)
TC4	There is a lack of "doing" in graduate competency
TC5	Requirement for better ICT competence – all stakeholders need ICT-competent professionals in the sector
TC6	Requirement for classroom pedagogies
TC7	There is a high demand from young people, wanting to become university graduates

5.1 Cycle 1 AR Results – Secondary results

5.1.1 Evolution of tourism education

In the first step of Cycle 1 of my AR I reviewed the literature to date on tourism education to understand the current macro- and micro-environment for GAU, and what "soft" and "hard" factors are present both in GAU and nationally. As outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, the "soft factors" are the way in which tourism education is structured at national levels and how sector levels fit in. The "hard factors" concern the quality of governance arrangements and how social capital in the local and sector levels fits in. It was important to review all of these factors to be able to plan for the development of a new curriculum, and to forecast the requirements in planning for a professional learning programme at GAU. This was carried out by reviewing the four platform phases discussed by Jafar Jafari (1990) and a more recent analysis by Airey (2008) that provide accounts of the evolution of the state of knowledge in the field of tourism education (discussed in Chapter 2). This helped our understanding of the dynamics of the pedagogical development of tourism education in an international context and, ultimately, the factors that are critical to the new curriculum.

As shown in Table 5.2, Airey (2008) outlines the development in four phrases and concludes by stating "Tourism Education Life Begins at 40". What is evident from his research is that in the past fifty years tourism education has been shaped by macro/micro impacts and has not been able to forecast the requirements for the future. Consequently, tourism education has often been left behind in meeting the requirements of a diverse sector. Airey states that tourism education has now matured and that we are ready to plan ahead. This was relevant to what is required for the proposed curriculum. What was particularly important to consider were the fundamental developments in tourism education and what must be included or removed for today's and tomorrow's tourism education. The framework of the curriculum I designed is based on the outcomes that I analysed and reviewed as part of this research process. Also, as an

insider–researcher, I was in a position to reflect on my professional practice as Head of Department. Added to this was the data that were gathered from the semi-structured interviews from the first cycle of my AR. These are the inputs that structured the research project and I have summarised these and their relevance to GAU in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Summary of Airey's 2008 Evolution of the state of knowledge platforms and relevance to GAU

Platform	Summary	Relevance
Sectorial development	**(1960–1970s) Programmes were overly based on economics and business studies.**	The majority of lecturers in Tourism in North Cyprus come from Business Management backgrounds as tourism education has been in HE only in the last 15 years. Another important contributing factor is that YOK requires that each programme has PhD holding instructors and there has been a lack of academic staff with PhDs in tourism-related disciplines.
Fragmented Stage	**(1970–1980s) Tourism programmes were simply taking the character of the particular expertise of the faculty**	As a result of what is stated above, at present I can say that this is also the current state of Tourism Education in North Cyprus a, particularly because of YOK's policies (hard factors)
Benchmark Stage	**(1980-1990s) UK publication of the Quality Assurance Agency for HE. Need for strategic planning in providing relevant education and industry-specific knowledge and skills**	GAU and some other universities are only able to achieve this through cooperation of international accreditations, because this is not a requirement from national accrediting bodies – but there will be deficits in quality in education and employability if this is not pursued. Hence, my work with TEDQUAL and the development of this curriculum is important.
Mature Stage	**(1990–2000) We know that tourism and hospitality is multi-disiplinary and we must research what the sector requirements are so as to develop new curricula.**	HE institutions in North Cyprus are not researching the sector requirements, but rather are following their competitors, however my research has done so.

The outcomes from the thematic analysis of the three accreditations participants (refer to Chapter 4) can be summarised as follows:

- The current academic teaching staff consist mainly of people with business and economics backgrounds
- YOK and YODAK require academic instructors who hold doctorates
- Sector requirements must be considered thoroughly when designing curriculum content.

5.1.2 Current ınternational tourism education trends

According to the secondary data I analysed while undertaking my literature survey (Chapter 2), there is a growing international demand for practice-based knowledge in the tourism sector, as mentıoned by Zehrer (2009). This is evident from research conducted by the European Commission (VETLAM, 2009) and confirmed by my findings for North Cyprus, which will be discussed below. On the other hand, whilst the dual system in Austria and Germany, as described in Chapter 2 (p.33) provides opportunities for practiced-based learning and meets the requirements of the tourism sector, it fails to meet the requirements of students. Reports in Germany and Austria confirm (p.34 of Chapter 2) that apprenticeship programmes are losing popularity. This is due to the new generation of students wishing to be university graduates and, therefore, taking the academic route into HE. This was also evident in the research findings, as outlined below (TC7), and therefore compatible with the secondary research I conducted. In summary, while the apprenticeship systems in Europe are meeting sector requirements, they are not meeting the HE qualifications to which students aspire.

5.2 Cycle 1 AR Results – Semi-structured interview results with accreditations

The major objective of my work-based project was to identify the various stakeholders' requirements of the blending learning for the professional learning programme. During the

interviews with the accreditation bodies, the main findings obtained from YOK and YODAK were concerned with the "hard" and "soft" factors described in Chapter 2. One of these, evident in the results from YOK and YODAK, is that they are not flexible in accrediting programmes that do not have doctorates qualified lecturers.

Here are some responses concerning this issue:

> PhD holding instructors on the programme is a prime requirement, without them present the programme cannot achieve accreditation… at least the programme leader or Head of Department should hold a PhD, because these are academic programmes…. Normally we look for three PhD holders per programme.
>
> YOK is strict with providing allocation of students from Turkey. For programmes with less lecturers with higher titles – such as Associate Professors for example – there is less student availability.

The above comments during the interview with YOK and YODAK on accreditation processes are common examples and prove that there is a lack of flexibility regarding the main requirements, such as lecturer qualifications. For TEDQUAL, by contrast, there is no requirement for doctoral lecturers; meeting the requirements of the sector is more fundamental. The following quotes illustrate this situation:

> Agreements and regular research into sector requirements are required... if this means that there is a shortage of skills in the kitchen then chefs with experience should be hired… it is not important for the instructors to be postgraduates provided they have the skills and experience to teach the students what is required.

As outlined by Airey (2008) and Jafar Jafari (1990) in Chapter 2, the fact that tourism education was accepted as an academic discipline much later than other subjects means that tourism instructors with doctoral qualifications are scarce. For this reason, as is evident from the results from the sector and from the students, discussed below, current tourism programmes are crowded with instructors from other disciplines such as business and economics (TC1). The explanation is YOK and YODAK's strict teaching requirements.

Other “hard” factors evident from the interviews are the requirements for the programmes; this can be found in more detail on the websites of YOK, YODAK and TEDQUAL. I have summarised them in Table 5.3 below. It is important to understand the foundation requirements for any curriculum to be licensed by YOK and YODAK, quite unlike the requirements of TEDQUAL. They represent the main requirements for accreditation of a new programme in HE in North Cyprus, as put forward by the key authorities in Turkey and North Cyprus HE regulation and accreditation authorities, namely YOK (Turkey), YODAK (North Cyprus) and TEDQUAL. YOK and YODAK appear to be less flexible with regard to lecturers’ qualifications. The reason is that the HE authorities of Turkey and North Cyprus evaluate HE as a whole, not separately for tourism-related subjects, although these are multi-disciplinary (as mentioned in Chapter 2) and require specialised teaching staff to deliver courses such as catering, it is difficult to find a chef who is a professional in the kitchen and also has a doctorate. As TEDQUAL specialises in tourism it is more aware, therefore is more flexible in this respect.

Table 5.3 Accreditation results comparison summary

Interview question	YOK	YODAK	TEDQUAL
Fundamental requirements	Programme Information, Academic Structure and Physical Infrastructure	Programme Information, Academic Structure and Physical Infrastructure	Detailed outline of the Employer, Student, Faculty, Infrastructure and Management
Assessment of new programme for approval	Document check	Document check, presentation in front of a jury and visit check after two years of delivery of the programme	Documented audit check, visitor audit and a scored report
Special requirements	Labs, software, a minimum of 60 credits	Labs, software, a minimum of 60 credits	None outside the principle requirements
Planning for sector requirements	Not at present	None	Through the accredited members
Quality Assurance	Visit checks	Visit checks	Audits
Support for Blended Learning Programme	Conditional Yes	Yes	Yes

Part of the reason I chose to conduct face-to-face interviews with accreditation body officials was to build rapport with interviewees, so as to create awareness of the requirement for a new style of teaching and therefore programme, as mentioned in Chapter 3. The main findings obtained from these interviews were in actual fact accessible from the accrediting association's website. However, conducting these interviews generated interesting discussions and exchanges that proved useful in introducing the pedagogy and structure of the learning programmes to the official accreditation bodies, thus preparing the ground for a longer-term culture change in HE tourism teaching and learning methodologies. The following quotes exemplify this situation:

> This really is the right way of carrying out this research and I would like to support you to do this and make people at the top realise what is required. You have my full support… the problem is nobody wants to take responsibility for researching sector requirements and as a result tourism graduates are not meeting the employer expectations and choosing to work in other fields.
>
> It would be great to offer this (the professional learning programme) in North Cyprus and be an example maybe to other fields…. Provided the principle requirements are in place then, yes, we support the blended learning programme.

5.2.1 Accreditations results comparison

The results from YOK, YODAK and TEDQUAL for the accreditation of our tourism programmes, were directly linked to objectives 2, 3 and 4 of this project report. The main focus of objective 3 was to research what the "hard" and "soft" factors of adopting the programme should entail. These outcomes were evident from the themes which emerged through the conversations I had with the various accreditors. Objectives 2 and 4 were to research what the stakeholder requirements are, to develop the new programme. Here, YOK and YODAK appear to have very similar requirements, whilst TEDQUAL requires a more detailed audit to receive approval of the programme, as is evident from Table 5.3 above.

In analysing the themes which emerged from the interviews, I can outline that the common threads presented here are TC1 and TC6. TC1 being that the lecturers currently teaching on the programme come from business and economic backgrounds, because the main PhD holders come from these disciplines. YOK and YODAK state the minimum requirement is for at least one PhD holder being on the academic team. Also the themes have proven that all three accreditors require classroom pedagogies used in teaching tourism (TC6) in order for the programme to be accredited. This is consistent with Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman's (2006) research discussed in Chapter 2 in which they stated that classroom-based lectures are important for providing the student with high motivation and maintaining progress. YOK and YODAK did not specify a requirement for researching sector requirements when updating or designing tourism

programmes, however, they agreed that it is important to consider. In particular YOK and YODAK representatives disputed the fact that, not enough research is being conducted on sector-specific requirements. They also stated that this responsibility is being left to the universities. However, in my direct experience as an insider in the profession, I can claim that because YOK and YODAK do not have this requirement, there has been no incentive for universities to conduct research on the curriculum and pedagogy requirements of the sector. However, because I want to receive accreditation for the proposed programme from TEDQUAL, and wanted my programme to be favourable in the future, I have chosen to research sector requirements which will be outlined below. Some of the comments that confirm this argument are below:

> There is not enough being done. For example we noticed there are too many teachers, we also claim that we are international HE institutions therefore we decided to leave it to universities, unfortunately the Employment Office is not doing enough research either and neither is the Tourism Ministry and they should.
>
> It is very important to understand and know what professions and skills there is a demand for.

YOK and YODAK confirm therefore, that students at present are being taught with traditional classroom lectures, and that there is a lack of research into what the sector requires. Although the thread of themes suggests that YOK and YODAK are aware of the importance of research on sector skills and developing programmes to include a practical element, the current regulations appear to be rather adaptable and do not force HE institutions to research sector requirements.

In summary, accrediting bodies have a certain understanding of what HE teaching formats (pedagogy) should be and these are part of their statutes. I can summarise these findings as follows:

1. Although there is no “practical” element currently required by accreditors, I have introduced these in this proposed programme

2. Some accrediting bodies look favourably on skill-based and work-based HE teaching formats and are thus open to "blended teaching"
3. All three accreditation bodies accept the need for some kind of skill and workplace or work-based components in HE tourism programmes, but YOK and YODAK have not so far shown support for this to happen.

5.3 Cycle 1 AR Results – Semi-structured interview results with the sector

As outlined in Chapter 4, the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews took place under three tourism sector categories. In order to represent both travel and hospitality under the tourism umbrella, hoteliers, travel agents and restaurateurs were the participants in the interviews. The common themes, for each category are analysed below.

5.3.1 North Cyprus hoteliers results

Perception of current national HE tourism programmes

Three hoteliers participated in the in-depth, face-to-face interviews. The general views and therefore themes that became apparent with these participants were that DAU and LAU have developed a good reputation for Gastronomy graduates; GAU has a good reputation for ICT and English-speaking graduates. The overall image and contents of curriculums and level for graduates otherwise is the same. These themes are evident from the comments below:

> I have heard positive reputation from DAU and EUL for Gastronomy department. And for ICT I hear GAU is very good.
>
> The most successful programme has been in my experience the two-year Gastronomy programme from DAU because the students work with the sector and they know they will be a chef and so they are all in employment.
>
> GAU students speak very good and fluent English…

The main gap in the contents of curriculums and therefore graduate skills, knowledge and understanding appeared to be the same theme not only for hoteliers but also for the other specific sectors as will be outlined below. According to the responses from the hoteliers,

Students have not set themselves realistic expectations upon graduation. All three in-depth interviews with the hoteliers have included comments to confirm this, as shown below. The general perception of the hoteliers was that students believe they will become a manager as soon as they graduate from universities. The hoteliers' sector appeared to voice this as a concern, because when graduates learn that they cannot be a manager without sufficient experience and skills, they either resign from the sector altogether or work in it with low esteem. The hoteliers stated that this is the current problem with all the HE tourism programmes in the country and they could not differentiate with the attitudes of graduates from any of the other universities to GAU.

> Students think that as soon as they graduate they will be a manager or GM, but this is not the reality.
>
> A more realistic education must be given, for example students should know in reality they must work from bottom up so something like creating awareness is necessary.
>
> The problem we are presented with here is that students expect to be a manager as soon as they graduate from university but this is not reality.

All three hotel representatives also outlined that the new generation of youngsters, want to be a university graduate (TC7), as outlined above. The main complaint about the current curriculums and therefore student graduates was that they are not informed enough about the practical skills required for the tourism sector. KITOB outlined that they are in preparation for a tourism campaign so that, not just students but the whole of North Cyprus can better understand how the tourism industry is structured and why it is an important sector for the country. The main reasons given by the hoteliers for the dilemmas in understanding the tourism sector was that many of the academics and instructors in HE may be professors but have had, either none or very little experience as professionals in the sector and as a result of their not being from tourisem backgrounds, very often lack understanding of the requirements of the sector (TC1). The following responses confirm this:

> If we combine experience (and by this I mean training provided by people from the hotel sector) and academia we can find a very high-quality education and skill combination.
>
> When I was a student in high school, teachers had background experience from hotels and this was very enjoyable and beneficial for the students… I have noticed that all the directors of tourism schools do not have tourism backgrounds… how can we expect them to train our future employees?
>
> The person teaching the students may be a professor but unfortunately he doesn't know how to fry an egg, let alone to teach the student to open a bottle of wine or clean a room.

There were mixed opinions on how this situation could be overcome and no common theme could be established. However, a summary of the three hotel representative interviews is that students should have experience in the hotel sector before they choose to study Tourism and Hospitality at university level. They suggested that students undertake role-play of real situations in a classroom environment to build experience of "practice" and, that students should be interviewed before they are accepted onto the programme. However, while in many European universities students are interviewed before being accepted onto a programme, this is not a requirement in North Cyprus universities. This is especially true of privately owned HE institutions such as GAU, as they try to maximise student intake to meet targets. As a result, although interviewing the students before accepting them onto the programme would be beneficial in meeting the hotel sector's requirement (and consequently the students' expectations in the long-term), this is difficult to achieve in the current political and economic context in North Cyprus. However, by adopting work placements and online teaching into the programme, the student will have an opportunity for a real experience in the sector, and as a result be better informed of the tourism and hospitality sector at an early stage.

Tourism and hospitality departments that have staff shortages

The overall feedback from the three interviews revealed a requirement for jobs using specific skills such as front office (FO), where staff deal with complaints and take reservations and

therefore must have good communications skills; and food and beverage, in which service skills and communication are important (TC2 and TC4). Some of the comments from hoteliers to raise awareness of these facts are outlined below:

> Security, Reception, Accounts is highly available, lots of people want to work in these departments, they also want to work in Marketing but there is a lack of skills in food and beverage service and ICT knowledge.
>
> Departments lack staff with special skills. Like a waiter with a flair… Whereby he can open a bottle of wine in an artistic way, or upsell products with a smile
>
> Staff in hotels come into contact with guests all the time, the main problem in all departments is problem-solving skills… the future employee must be able to deal with complaints by themselves… this is the same for every department of a hotel

The use of online simulation has been researched in a number of studies as discussed in Chapter 2 (Feinstein *et al.,* 2002; Sigala, 2012; Yalcinalp *et al.,* 2012) and is beneficial in creating a realistic environment, where students are put in a real-life situation, under pressure and given role-play opportunities for learning. This has also been adopted for the proposed programme to overcome those deficits mentioned by the sector.

Perceived level of theoretical knowledge of graduates in the hotel sector

All three responses confirmed that there is sufficient knowledge of theory within the sector from HE tourism graduates and that the current availability of different courses on a single programme is important (TC2 and TC3). The only gap here appeared to be that students should be informed of the realities of working from the bottom of the hotel's management hierarchy to the top, as the responses stated that, although the current programmes are essentially management programmes, it is not possible for a graduate to become a manager without working in lower hierarchy positions first. This is consistent with my experiences, as mentioned in Chapter 1, and studies carried out by Zehrer and Mossenlechner (2009) and Guden (2009) outlined in Chapter 2, therefore I can confirm that there is a requirement for work-based learning for graduates to be employed in higher positions in the hotel sector.

The themes also outlined a requirement for a better theoretical base for advanced ICT knowledge which they regarded as a key requirement (TC5). Again, this is consistent with Feinstein *et al. (2002)* research (discussed in Chapter 2) regarding the requirement for and efficiency of simulation systems in tourism. These points were raised by the other sector representatives (travel agents and restaurateurs), which I discuss below.

Perceived level of practical knowledge of graduates in the hotel sector

The respondents' thread of themes confirms that there is a requirement for more practical knowledge, in particular specific skills such as being able to solve problems, communication, selling and confidence, as outlined in the quotes below (TC4). These can be developed through experience, and respondents made some suggestions on how they believed this might be achieved. One suggestion was to have extended work experience, consistent with the way in which the professional learning programme is intended to run. The quotes below display evidence that the hoteliers believe that these skills can be obtained through practical training, as the quotes were in response to the question on hoteliers' perception of the level of practical knowledge of graduates.

One question during the interview was intended to analyse the experts' perceptions of the practical knowledge of graduates, however the respondents often evaluated all staff, even those that had not attended *Lise*. Consequently, it is important that this new programme accommodates the current shortage of practical skills in the hotel sector as a whole. For graduates to be prepared to work under these conditions, it is vital for them to understand the dilemmas the sector faces in North Cyprus, for example working for a hotel where people do not know how to respond to an email, as in the first quote:

> We have some small hotel owners that don't know how to send an email even, this is not acceptable… the main shortage appears to be people with good communication skills, with confidence and able to solve problems.

> Dealing with complaints, communication with guests, making deals and confidence when selling are areas that students need to practice in…. for example, a longer work experience in a hotel would help students to do this.
>
> (A graduate must be) able to problem-solve, able to manage crisis. Students should have practical experience of languages, cultural appreciation, empathy, working under pressure and dealing with complaints.

The skills shortage was mentioned in Chapter 2, and is evident from previous studies (Guden, 2009; VETLAM, 2009). The responses from the in-depth interviews gave an indication of expected skills for the hotel sector in North Cyprus and are outlined in the quotes above. Common themes are communication skills, problem solving and selling. Further, the respondents also made suggestions on how these skills can be developed and achieved. These themes are incorporated into current programmes of GAU, however they do not provide the opportunity for students to undertake more practical training to develop these skills. Suggestions made by the three hotelier respondents were as follows:

1. To include role-play in classroom learning
2. For sector representatives to assess students during work placements
3. To create a real-life situation for students, to practice what they are learning in theory.

Blended learning featuring online simulation pedagogies was discussed in Chapter 2 and above (p.117), the models outlined are suitable for creating a combination of these learning environments. In particular Graham, Woodfield and Harrison's (2013) framework for institutional adoption and implementation of blending learning in higher education can be considered.

The comments that confirm these arguments are as follows:

> (Example of hoteliers' own experience) - Interactive learning, like role-play for example at reception, or to set a table and the instructor was a customer and student was taking a reservation and everyone saw each other's mistakes. We did this in our short courses KITOB organised a couple of months ago and it was enjoyable and very successful, because the students

> were put on the spot and were under pressure. Although I attended and learnt the theoretical knowledge the teacher was teaching the role-play part taught me something new each time and it was really beneficial. Particularly as the teachers had background experience from hotels and they shared their experience with examples, this was very enjoyable and beneficial for the students too.
>
> The sector should assess the student through the year and at the end to have a total grade with the other areas…. They MUST BE able to provide empathy and show that they care, this can be supported with experience in real-life work and role-play.
>
> It is important to create a real-life situation in education so that students can attempt to solve the problem and actually improve their skills in customer relations.

How should students be assessed?

According to the responses from the three in-depth interviews from the hotel sector, themes emerging were that the theoretical parts of the programme should consist of a written assessment, and there should be an element of practical assessment within the institution's own lab or during placements in the internship. An average of 60 per cent weighting of written examination (TC6) and 40 per cent practical assessment was suggested from the three hoteliers' interview results. Within practical assessment, two of the respondents mentioned a requirement for sector input and assessment from the sector directly, as many lecturers at university level would not be able to do this (TC1) due to their lack of practical know-how. This was checked with the "hard" factors mentioned in section 5.2 and appears to be feasible, provided that the assessor from the sector is at least a university graduate with a tourism equivalent degree. Current assessment does not confirm that students can perform tasks commonly required in the hotel sector such as cleaning a hotel room, opening a bottle of wine or making a hotel reservation (TC4 and TC2). Therefore, these results proved the need for practical assessments in order to meet sector demands.

Opinion and support for the professional learning programme

When probed about their opinions and support for a professional learning programme, the three respondents were positive and supportive, with one offering to host the focus group at the office (Cycle 2 of the AR) and being ready to draw up agreements for the programme. These actions showed support for the programme.

The results obtained from the three in-depth interviews with the hotel sector are summarised in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Hoteliers' results summary

Interview themes	Answer summary
Perception of current national HE tourism programmes	Students not well informed of career prospects in tourism and the realities of the industry
Tourism and hospitality departments that have staff shortage	All departments that require skills
Current theoretical knowledge and competency	Sufficient, lack in understanding the realities of working in this sector
Current practical knowledge competency	Skills, working under pressure, dealing with complaints, ICT, closing sales, effective communication, English language skills
Main Desired requirements in programme contents	Same as current programmes but more opportunity for practical training
How should students be assessed	60% written assessment, 40% practical assessment
Support for Blended Learning Programme	Positive Yes

5.3.2 North Cyprus Travel Agents results

Three travel agent representatives were interviewed in depth. Two were travel agency owners and one is the owner of a travel agent and the President of the Cyprus Turkish Travel Agents Association (KITSAB).

Perception of current national HE tourism programmes

As with the hoteliers' responses, it appears that travel agents also felt the theory content in current programmes is sufficient but the student's practical knowledge is insufficient. Also evident, from the three responses, was that from the travel agents' experience, they felt that students believed they will be managers upon graduation, therefore again the sector has suggested that students are not given the full picture of the tourism sector and therefore upon graduation students are not familiar with the realities of the working conditions in the tourism sector. The quote below is an example of this.

> As theoretical knowledge they (tourism graduates) have the capacity, I think our universities are doing a very good job in that department, but unfortunately for all the universities I think the English is not sufficient. It is not enough; especially if they are graduating from an international university they should know a better level of English. But the theory is there. However, they have in their brain that as soon as they graduate they are managers and, of course, this is not the case.

From all three responses, it was evident that at present students do not have the appropriate skills for developing learning during their internship. Two of the quotes below suggested that the reason for the students not taking internship seriously is because lecturers are not monitoring them during their placements. This is important to consider for the professional learning programme, and confirms that students should first be monitored during their work placement and, secondly, be assessed on it, to ensure they take this fundamental part of the learning seriously. The comments below support this argument:

> The fact that students are not monitored sufficiently during their internship placement cause a dilemma as students are not taking the work placement seriously.
>
> I have had students for work experience but I found them to not be there willingly but rather just to get a signature for their internship book.
>
> The fact that lecturers do not check on the student (during internship) also does not help.

As Head of Department at GAU, lecturing staff visit students on placement at least once – but this, as outlined in the quotes above, is insufficient. GAU STHM has an independent placement committee, separate from the university structure that takes the form of a general handbook signed by students and placement supervisors and then approved by one member of school/faculty staff and the student office. Our school has developed an evaluation sheet, a minimum of one placement, as mentioned, and a handbook. Internship has shown signs of problems in the past, in my experience, as our students were attending internships merely to pass the time and not to learn. Since this has become apparent, the GAU tourism programme is the only one in North Cyprus to assess student competence during placements; in other HE programmes there is no credited internship course: the students either pass or fail.

Since these interviews compare HE tourism programmes at a national level and I only made the change to our programmes two years ago, the sector is not yet aware that at GAU we have already taken precautions to monitor placements. The response from the travel agents confirms the requirement for blending learning and its being monitored and assessed by university faculty. Further, a valid point that supports this conclusion is that the way the contents of curricula are prepared is questionable. The following quote specifically discusses the materials that universities use. This was confirmed in the interviews with graduate students, which I discuss below.

> I think the way that you are teaching them is wrong. We use the American or English system books and literature and it works for them but here it is not the same. We also don't have enough criteria for internship such as from what side to pour the wine or how to make a reservation. For our sector we don't have enough staff, we ask graduates if they know ticketing or Amadeus they say no, we ask them if they know how to make a ticket reservation they say no, that is because in other countries these may be straightforward, but for Cyprus it is not so, I believe the universities need to take this into consideration.

Other countries also have this skills shortage, as discussed in Chapter 2, however they try to overcome it through education systems. As also discussed in Chapter 2, the current education structure of North Cyprus is primary school, secondary school and *Lise* (upper secondary school). Whilst in *Lise* some students may choose to study tourism, and can learn the basic skills outlined by the sector representatives, the majority do not know how. International examples (discussed in Chapter 2) provide these skills either in the dual system (Germany and Austria) or through lab training in higher education (Switzerland and Britain). For North Cyprus, however, the majority of the pressure is on Tourism delivery at the HE institutions. Although university teaching has traditionally been based on academic and theoretical teaching pedagogies such as lectures, practical training has gained importance. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Britain has introduced professional learning programmes in HE for this reason and, as discussed by Richard (2012, discussed in Chapter 2), the European Union is also aware of their importance, hence the funding available. Therefore, although universities are places of academia, there is awareness of a requirement for change to make sure the skills outlined by the tourism sector of North Cyprus can be met. My interviews with the three travel agent participants found common themes that addressed how they had never had a graduate who knew how to make a sale or book a reservation (TC4), and during the in-depth interview they stated that the minimum expectation of any travel agent employer is that a tourism graduate should be capable of doing so. This was evident in the quote above, and also from the participant below:

> I expect a graduate to be able to book an airline ticket, but they don't know how to.

In all the responses there was evidence of employers stating that graduates did not know how to "do" tasks important for travel agents, such as taking a reservation for booking an airline ticket. The travel agents were also key respondents for Thematic Codes 2 and 3, where they confirmed that tourism is a multidisciplinary field that requires several subjects. The fact that

tourism is multidisciplinary is widely accepted by tourism education researchers, as discussed in Chapter 2, and this supports the requirement for blended learning.

The travel agent representatives also stated that students must specialise in either hospitality or travel, because current programmes combine them and students need an insight into both tourism and hospitality. However, during these in-depth interviews, two of the respondents suggested a requirement to separate these into two different departments and consequently curriculum content would concentrate on students learning and becoming specialists in one or other field. My experience is that at HE level students should have an insight into the tourism industry as a whole before deciding in which area they want to specialise, yet I agree that contents of curricula should aim to meet the requirements of the sector, as is evident from this DProf research. As a result, elective courses that provide opportunities for students to specialise in a specific field will be incorporated in the curriculum towards the end of the programme.

Tourism and hospitality functions/jobs that have staff shortages

From the three interviews with the travel agent participants, the most frequent themes that were apparent were tour guiding, travel consultants and reservations.

Perceived level of theoretical knowledge of graduates in the travel agency sector

The general responses were that although the curriculums have sufficient theoretical content in the courses, the lecturers' backgrounds are often not tourism (TC1); further, the material and books used in delivery are examples from the US and the UK. The responses here specifically provide a strong argument and evidence for why the current lecturers' backgrounds were not meeting the sector's requirements. All three respondents gave responses for the perceived level of theoretical knowledge on travel agencies of graduates from tourism programmes, as outlined in the quotes below:

> If the lecturers have the tourism background themselves and they can share their own experiences – this will make a student want to learn

> The lecturer must also have background experience from the sector. When we look at the examples of the universities here we find that actually many lecturers do not have sufficient experience in the sector to show the students how.
>
> Perhaps if more lecturers had backgrounds and experience from tourism it would be a very different story today.

The interview discussions with the travel agent respondents raised several instances of current problems with the tourism industry in North Cyprus that HE is not addressing in its curricula. One example in the in-depth interviews was that the interviewee studied tourism education in *Lise* (equivalent to college level, as discussed in Chapter 2), and his teacher was Cypriot with considerable experience of work in the tourism industry in North Cyprus. For this reason, rather than using resources from western countries, he wrote handbooks relevant to the current context, which equipped graduates well for the travel sector. This comment was interesting in developing ideas for the future development of the professional learning programme. Although accreditations do not require specialised teaching material from within the country, this finding suggested that the sector requires it and therefore it would be beneficial in the long term, both for the sector and graduates' employability. Also, TEDQUAL states that sector requirements should be researched and applied in order to achieve accreditation (mentioned above) and therefore the inclusion of local resources gains further importance. Whilst this is relevant to TC2, the fact that tourism is a multidisciplinary subject means that I must also consider providing relevant material specific not only to hospitality or tourism (TC3) but to North Cyprus. This must be considered in future for the sustainability and quality of this programme.

Perceived level of practical knowledge of graduates in the travel agency sector

As mentioned in several quotes above and evident in the hotel industry participant's thread of themes, there is a major gap in "*doing*" (TC4):

> Multi skills, ticketing, English, effective communications and to be able to make a sale are skills that lack greatly in the travel industry and for which a graduate must be able to do.
>
> Tour guiding is a must and one of the most important components in tourism agency, to do a reservation, customer relations, marketing is very important – how will they promote, how will the destination be promoted in world exhibitions, advertising. What are the international places for an event – it is very important in the 21st century. A graduate must be able to go online and change prices understand incoming and outgoing tourism – in other words, to date students must graduate know how to do all of this and even web design."
>
> A graduate from tourism must be able to do everything in travel, from greeting the guest, making a reservation, using social media to design an itinerary, making a deal with the tour operator and combining it with cost purchasing.

In summary the expectation of today's graduates from the travel sector according to these three in-depth interviews, is that not only can they *do* these activities, but they should have advanced knowledge such as how to design and maintain a website. This was also mentioned in an interview with a representative of a medium-sized hotel (TC5) and is consistent with Adagale's research discussed in Chapter 2, p.45 in which she outlines the effectiveness of e-learning and ICT pedagogies. Respondents also outlined the requirement for foreign languages, with English being essential. Although these subjects gain importance in curriculum content here, it is necessary to compare these comments with the requirement for blended learning. To be able to "do" what is outlined above it is important to practice during learning and, as outlined in Chapter 2 by the Alliance Sector Skills Council of UK (2013), technical knowledge, competence and professional development can be achieved through blending learning, which they suggest takes the form of a professional learning format.

Required content in the proposed curriculum

As is evident from those quotes above, the results show subject areas such as web design, marketing specific to North Cyprus, cultural and geographical knowledge, not just at international level but specific to Cyprus. Another interesting point raised by respondents is that

in HE tourism programmes in North Cyprus, accrediting bodies (such as YODAK, YOK and TEDQUAL) expect infrastructure suitable for the subject area. For example, if the programme has kitchen-related courses then it should have a lab. Likewise, if the institution is delivering front office related courses, then they should possess suitable software for simulation (as outlined in Chapter 2, by Corsan (2000), in which he states that simulations allow students to go beyond "knowledge acquisition". Therefore, the expectation is that students have travel agency related software or labs. The professional programme will also have information and communication technology pedagogies, as outlined below. This was described in Chapter 2 as "simulation techniques".

Simulation techniques must be incorporated for two reasons: the first is because the sector has clearly noted a requirement for them, as can be seen from the common themes above; and secondly the blended learning programmes to date have been designed in this way (as discussed in Chapter 2, Graham, 2013; Graham *et al.* 2013; and Singh, 2002). What is different from the blended learning model outlined by Singh (2003) and the blending for this professional learning programme for tourism is that this programme will also have work-based pedagogies. This is discussed in more detail below.

The general feedback was that students can learn travel agency skills only by on-the-job training, which confirms the requirement for blending learning. A reason why GAU is well suited to meet the sector's requirements is because our programmes offer simulation software such as Amadeus and Galileo; moreover, it has a travel agency of its own that could be used for instruction. The sector responses suggest a need for simulation software and to use these facilities to improve skills and therefore employability for tourism graduates (TC4).

How should students be assessed?

In summary, the response to this question was that assessment is carried out by lecturers in a real-life situation, for example internship should be monitored and graded; students should not

use it as a pastime but to be able to gain valuable skills, which is the perception the travel agent sector has at present, as evident from above. Examples of these quotes with these common themes can be seen below from the three respondents:

> On-the-job training is important because as they practice, they become better.
>
> Partly theory such as written tests with the current methods the university uses but also practical. For example students shouldn't come to work experience just expecting to receive a signature in their books, but wanting to learn.
>
> By instructors in a real-life situation, for example internship should be monitored and graded; students should not use it as a pastime but be able to gain valuable skills.

Work experience is fundamental, according to the travel agency representatives, who agreed that students should be assessed in this context; in particular, their discussion suggested a concentration on the specific field within hospitality or travel (TC3).

Opinion and support for the professional learning programme

The travel agents' representatives support the programmes with specific conditions, as can be seen from the two quotes below:

> It must run parallel with equal theoretical and practical training to work
>
> The supervisor selected at the workplace must be qualified and a mentor with background experience for this programme to work

Table 5.5 summarises the results obtained from the travel agent industry.

Table 5.5 Travel agency results summary

Interview themes	Answer summary
Perception of current national HE tourism programmes	Students' attitude to the industry is negative, instructors lack practical know-how due to

	lack of tourism background and internships should be assessed
Tourism and hospitality departments that have staff shortages	Tour guiding, travel consultants and reservations
Current theoretical knowledge competency	Sufficient, lack in instructor background and materials specific to North Cyprus
Current practical knowledge competency	Gap in "doing", tour guide, reservations and communicating. Advanced ICT competencies
Main desired requirements in programme contents	Web design, marketing, cultural and geographical context specific to North Cyprus. Resources and facilities specific to travel and North Cyprus.
How should students be assessed	Instructors, in a real-life situation and internships should also be assessed
Support for Blended Learning Programme	Conditional Yes

5.3.3 North Cyprus Restaurateurs In-depth interview Results

Perception of current national HE tourism programmes

According to the three in-depth interviews with the restaurant representatives, the current content of HE Gastronomy programmes is insufficient to meet sector requirements.

> As far as I am aware no restaurants in North Cyprus receive applications from university graduates. Or even students… not even for internship… (reason for this is) students see restaurants in our country as places that don't require university students, or perhaps the working conditions are not suitable for them, for example, evening working hours or not being able to be promoted to higher positions.
>
> Majority of staff are Turkish and not Cypriot. This is all required to be planned ahead….
>
> All students from different universities have the same attitude and learning, actually the international students have a better flair and appreciation wanting to learn.

Graduates do not choose to work in the restaurant and prefer to work in hotel food and beverage departments (F&B). As a result, restaurants employ staff from Turkey, as stated in

Chapter 2; this was evident from the feedback I received from these respondents. The reason for the staff shortage in the tourism sector is normally covered by Turkey, because salaries are often less there and there is a greater availability of skilled staff. The main reasons respondents gave for this response is that graduates cannot be promoted to high positions in restaurants, and they can in hotels. In recent years there has been a great demand for chefs in hotels; restaurants cannot compete with the salaries offered. The general argument apparent here was the background of lecturers' views, as HE institutions did not meet the requirements of the sector (TC1).

> The lecturers are normally the students' idols and they almost never have had any experience in the restaurant, but have a degree in hospitality, at best.
>
> I know the universities have the labs and are still developing and that is the right way – the student should learn in the lab as well as the classroom equally, but their lecturer should have background experience in the kitchen also.

The three respondents stated that a chef can teach in the kitchen lab, but universities are offering high salaries instead to PhD holders. The average income of a chef at a restaurant is 3,000tl (equivalent to average £750), and for a professional chef to teach at university the expectation would be 5,000tl (equivalent to £1,250); but no university is willing to pay this salary to an instructor without a Masters degree. These responses are relevant to the "hard" factors mentioned in section 5.1 because, as mentioned, in order for HE institutions to receive a good allocation of students from YOK, there must be PhD holders on the programme and as a result HE institutions prefer to offer them the higher salary - not professional chefs. This situation does not provide any opportunity for programmes to meet the expectations of the sector, nor achieve the high quality required at this level.

Tourism and hospitality departments that have staff shortages

Common themes that were raised by the three respondents were that there is a staff shortage, mainly in the kitchen and service departments. In particular, in the respondents' experience, international students have a better attitude to service, but all departments lack skills such as English speaking, bar skills and table service (TC4):

> Normally they (staff) come saying they know everything, but then I know actually they don't know nothing.
>
> Even peeling a potato or fry an egg – I have been known to show them. What is important, is to employ people with the right mind who wants to work and learn.
>
> Kitchen, service and bartending… they must learn personal hygiene, health and safety… like loyalty to the establishment and like personal communication.

These quotes confirm the requirement to teach students the "doing" part of T4.

Perceived level of theoretical knowledge of graduates in the restaurant sector

There appears to be a major gap in theoretical knowledge of Cypriot cuisines and traditions, in particular general developments in cuisine. All three respondents raised concern over finding sufficient chefs and service staff who know local traditions and cuisines. It is evident that this is due to local staff not wanting to work in the sector, as mentioned above.

Perceived level of practical knowledge of graduates in the specific sector

There is a lack of skills in bar, service, kitchen and, in particular, Cypriot traditions (TC4). Practical skills and knowledge of kitchen disciplines also appeared to be lacking according to the responses from the restaurateurs which were confirmed from the quotes above.

Required content in the proposed curriculum

Practical training should be employed by HE institutions and chefs to teach students how to do the work required in the kitchen (TC4). The content should have Cypriot content and industry-

specific courses; most importantly for this sector, students should undertake 75 per cent practical training (TC2, TC3, and TC4).

> Written examination is not enough if theory and practical learning does not go together than it will not be successful.
>
> Partly practical, by the sector and instructor.
>
> In gastronomy students should be assessed at least 70 per cent practical such as how to use a knife, how to cut, the hygiene standards etc. Plenty of experience is necessary and so to assess them in this way.

Although the restaurateurs have suggested the requirement for a higher assessment at practical level, this is not feasible due to the "hard" factors described by YOK and YODAK. The highest possible assessment at practical level is 40 per cent.

How students should be assessed?

According to the responses from the three in-depth interviews with the restaurateurs, the major part of the assessment for F&B should be practical. Although the respondents appeared to have a common outlook in this respect, it is not feasible, due to the principle requirements of YOK and YODAK. As a result, based on responses obtained from all stakeholders and concluding with the restaurateurs, I can confirm that a maximum of 40 per cent practical assessment will be used in the professional learning programme.

Opinion and support for the professional learning programme

This question received a definite "yes", as the respondents were interested in signing an agreement together to attract more graduates to the restaurant industry.

Table 5.6 summarises the results of the interviews that took place with the restaurateurs.

Table 5.6 Restaurateurs' results summary

Interview themes	Answer summary

Perception of current national HE tourism programmes	Insufficient in meeting sector demands, students not are not trained by industry-specific instructors
Departments that have labour shortage	Kitchen and Service
Current theoretical knowledge competency	Insufficient
Current practical knowledge competency	Very insufficient in all fields of doing practical tasks
Principal requirements in programme content	A narrow concentration on practical training is required, chef instructors and on-the-job training. Cypriot specific content
How should students be assessed	60% practical and 40% theory, by sector-specific background instructors
Support for Blended Learning Programme	A definite Yes

5.3.4 Sector in-depth interiew results comparison

In total, nine in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants from the tourism sector. The participants were from the hotel sector, travel agency sector and restaurateurs sector.

Sector results were linked to objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5, with the particular notion of objective 5 where the sector was made aware of a new style of learning which has now become more apparent as blending teaching . Whilst the interviews were pursued there was opportunity to build a rapport with the sector as I had predicted in Chapter 3. As a result, the sector appears to support the new programme and further wanted to form agreements in the first AR cycle. This was a good indication that there is a demand for blended learning from the sectorial point of view. Thematic codes in the sector results are primarily TC4, which is the practical knowledge of how to pursue practical tasks in the specific sectors that I refer to as the "doing" part. I chose to refer to this theme as "doing" because the sector representatives often referred to the various tasks in this way, for example comments included "*graduates claim to know everything but when it comes to doing, we see problems",* or "*the student was in their final year at university, but she did not know how to 'do' napkin folding"* or "*he is a graduate from tourism but when he was*

asked to take a reservation, he didn't know what he was doing…" Another common theme that was apparent was TC1, evident in Airey's (2008) and Jafar Jafari's earlier research (1990) as tourism programmes taking on the characteristics of the current academics some forty years ago. Today, it is still relevant to HE tourism programmes in North Cyprus, due to the "hard" factors outlined in my results on accreditation bodies. For example, the requirement for PhD holders on programmes in order for HE institutions to recruit more students is a "hard" factor. This has been a cause of students learning fewer skills, because these lecturers' backgrounds are mainly in business and economic disciplines, as mentioned in earlier chapters. These results have been consistent with Cooper's (2008) research in developing tourism curriculums in Jordan, discussed on p.44-45. In particular, responses from the travel agencies reflect a requirement for sector-specific specialisation programmes (TC3), whereby the students concentrate on in travel or hospitality, is present in HE in Austria, Switzerland, Britain and Germany (in Chapter 2).

What was also evident is that the sector confirms that there is a requirement for programmes to be multidisciplinary in terms of their content (TC2); however, what became clear was that the sector suggests a requirement for specific educational resources, lecturers and courses relevant to North Cyprus. During the thematic analysis of my results, this point was obvious in its reoccurrence, and I therefore consider it as Thematic Code 8 (TC8). Further, in the analysis of the results I found that the sector voiced concerns over student attitudes toward it, possibly explaining why there is a fall in student numbers.

The nine in-depth interviews with sector experts' responses suggest that graduates lack awareness of the skills requirement at HE level. The responses from all three sectors confirmed that graduates must have skills and experience to work in higher position jobs, and consequently when they are employed in lower-paid jobs or jobs requiring fewer skills, they are dismayed to be confronted with the realities of the industry. According to various respondents, because of this some graduates choose to leave tourism altogether. This is a matter of concern not only for

the tourism sector in North Cyprus, but internationally as there are similar problems in other countries as mentioned in Chapter 2 by Eurico, Oom do Valle and Silva (2013). Therefore, this is vital when considering accepting students for the programme, and choosing to refer to negative student attitudes to the sector as in Thematic Code 9. In conclusion, there are extended Thematic Codes 8 and 9, as can be seen from Table 5.7 where I compare the sector interview results. In conclusion of AR Cycle 1, sector interviews, the results have identified nine themes that have been incorporated into the professional learning programme.

Table 5.7 Sector results comparıson summary

Interview themes	Hoteliers' responses	Travel agents' responses	Restaurateurs' responses
Perception of current national HE tourism programmes TC1 TC9	Students not well informed of career prospect	Students' attitude to the industry is negative, instructors lack practical know-how due to lack of tourism background and internships should be assessed	Insufficient in meeting sector demands, students are not trained by industry-specific instructors
Departments that have labour shortages	All departments that require skills	Tour guiding, travel consultants and reservations	Kitchen and Service TC3, TC4
Current theoretical knowledge competency	Sufficient, lack in ICT	Sufficient, lack in instructor background and materials specific to North Cyprus	Insufficient TC1, TC5, TC8
Current practical knowledge competency	Skills, working under pressure, dealing with complaints, ICT, closing sales, effective communication, English language skills, cultural appreciation	Gap in 'doing', reservations and communicating. Advanced ICT competencies	Very insufficient in all fields of doing practical tasks TC1, TC5
Principle requirements in programme contents TC2, TC8, TC9	Same as current programmes but more opportunity for practical training	Web design, marketing, cultural and geographical context specific to North Cyprus. Resources and facilities specific to travel	A high concentration on practical training is required, chef instructors and on-the-job training. Cypriot specific contents
How should students be assessed TC4, TC8	60% written assessment, 40% practical assessment	Instructors, in a real-life situation and internships should also be assessed	60% practical and 40% theory, by sector-specific background instructors
Support for Blended Learning Programme	Positive Yes	Conditional Yes	A definite Yes

5.4 Cycle 1 AR Results – Semi-structured interview results with the students

Ten students were interviewed through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, conducted by a colleague from the communications department, who had no formal ties with the students. As explained in the ethical framework of my research in Chapter 3, this was for the purpose of ethical research in my current role as Head of Department. This not only assured that the research was ethical, but also provided an opportunity for my students to be comfortable with the answers they would provide for the interviewer. Although I had selected and structured the questions, the students interviewed are not known. They were selected by my colleague from the Communications Department and their results were also transcribed by my colleague. I however, pursued the thematic analysis. In order for me not to know which students were selected, my colleague randomly selected the students. Not all the questions are listed below, as some questions had been presented in different styles to ensure that the answers retrieved would be robust and meet the objective. The objective of having students as stakeholders of this research was to ensure that the blended learning programme will meet the requirements of the consumers, whom in the case, are the students.

Preferred subjects and reasons

Of the ten students interviewed, the three most-preferred subjects were Food and Beverage (F&B), Front Office (FO), Events Management and Housekeeping. The students' reason for this preference was that they enjoyed the practical part of the content. The following quotes reflect this:

> One subject that I really enjoyed and I can say has had great influence on what I do now was Events Management…. This course was given by an inspiring teacher who has helped us understand both the theoretical approach, and practical approach to events planning.
>
> Food and Beverage, Events and Housekeeping, because we had opportunity to practice what we were learning.
>
> Events Management, F&B and FO - I find lectures boring on their own. I chose to study tourism because I think it is an active sector – so my subjects that I enjoyed so far are the active ones!... I mean that we had practical training as well as the theory part.

The results suggested that students enjoyed practical experience in the kitchen and ICT labs, and Events Management because these courses had a high practical content. These were directly linked to TC4 and TC2.

Individual learning preferences

Although the respondents did not directly use the words "theory" and "practical" in their answers to this question, it is evident that they preferred this combination learning style:

> When I make mistakes and it becomes part of my learning experience and I will know how to handle the issues or other upcoming or unexpected things next time. For example, those courses that have practical experience opportunities – such as Food and Beverage and Front Office and I really enjoyed Events course.
>
> I had to learn to adapt to all thanks to the teaching staff at university that have encouraged us to take part in group projects and presentations.
>
> I think the most lesson I learnt in is Events Management, because the teacher gave the class one hour theory and second hour we held a meeting, and outside of the class we were organising. For example the teacher would give us an example risk assessment and explain what it is and its importance, etc.

> and we would have to do one. Later we would be assessed on the theory stuff.

It was interesting to see that eight of the ten students had common themes and experiences, so their examples were highly compatible. This suggests that students are happy to learn the skills the sector has outlined as scarce, provided the content provides the opportunity. This positively reflects that there is a demand for blending learning pedagogies.

Least preferred subjects with reason

The least preferred subjects were described as Tourism Law by four of the respondents and Management Information Systems by six, representing the least popular subject. The reasons can be seen from the quotes below:

> My least favourite subject was MIS. As I am a tech-challenged person, it was one subject that I could not fall in love with no matter how much I have tried. Unlike other subjects, MIS only had a right or wrong, you either got it or you don't, and no matter how much I've tried and just couldn't quite get it.

> Subjects which keep repeating same points and are very detailed. Like MIS... you have to memorise a lot of data and no chance is given to apply what we have learnt.

> I hated Tourism Law! Our lecturer was a lawyer and he just didn’t give any examples from the tourism industry, I couldn’t connect.

This final quote is also compatible with Thematic Code 1 (TC1) as those comments also suggest that the lecturers on tourism degree programmes seldom have tourism backgrounds.

What subjects did you find were most helpful during your work placement?

Eight students stated that the same subjects (Food and Beverage, Front Office and Housekeeping) were helpful subjects during their placements. The responses stated that these subjects provided them with skills and prepared them for real-life scenarios. The content of these subjects is a combination of blending teaching styles by which students are given the opportunity to undertake training in the labs and sector, as well as classroom pedagogies. Front Office is delivered through simulation software and is therefore an example of a blended

learning pedagogy and it is interesting to see that, whilst they meet the expectations of the sector regarding developing skills, they are also appreciated by students. These results suggest that the "doing" (TC4) part that, according to the sector is lacking in graduate skills (as mentioned above) may be met through the development of subjects which have blended learning pedagogies. Seven respondents stated that these subjects were taught by people with some experience of the tourism sector. The quotes below suggest that lecturers with backgrounds in tourism can provide a useful learning experience:

> What I can say benefited me the most in my line of work was the personal experience our teachers used to share with us, and their personal attributes that have rubbed off on us.
>
> These subjects taught me how to deal with tourists with different cultures and attitudes or personality in different situations.... I found those teachers that have practical experience as managers in industry to always give examples that made the subject fun and easier to understand.

The above comments are compatible with the thread of Theme TC1, in particular with the comments raised by the sector representatives. They suggest that lecturers with experience of the tourism sector would provide an improved learning experience for students that in the long term, also improves attitudes towards working in the tourism industry, as raised by some of the sector representatives (TC9). Further, Adagale's (2015) suggestion of inviting expert guest speakers may be beneficial in this respect (discussed in Chapter 2, p.45)

Attitude to the North Cyprus Tourism & Hospitality Industry

Seven of the ten responses were positive towards the industry and the students stated they would like to continue working in the industry. There was a positive response from GAU Tourism students and this is directly linked to TC9. However, a further study will be required in future on students' attitudes to the industry, in particular to compare the different programme styles and establish whether blending learning in this professional learning programme supports students' attitudes as described by the research of Ginns and Ellis (2007) in Chapter 2.

Lecturer skills, characteristics and qualifications that support student learning

Nine responses from the in-depth semi-structured interviews were directly linked to TC1, as students stated that instructors with a background in tourism provided examples from their own experience and supported their understanding of the subject. These comments were directly linked to TC2:

> Lecturers that have worked in hotels or tourism made the subject more enjoyable.
>
> Lecturers that have empathy. In particular one teacher always gives examples of their experience in hotels, and every time s/he gives an example the puzzle fits. It helps me to understand.

Does the contents of the tourism programme provide sufficient theoretical knowledge?

Five of the ten students stated that although there was sufficient inclusion of theory in the current programmes, much of the reading resources were not relevant to Cyprus and there was a requirement for more up-to-date material (TC8). The following statements support this argument:

> It was difficult for me to put the real-life experience mentioned in the American books into the Cyprus context.
>
> The programme taught me how things should be done in international terms, but working in the industry has proved different, I think this is because we are an unrecognised country these rules and regulations are not taught to us or not relevant here.
>
> Some of the material used is out-of-date…. GAU should use material that is relevant for our country.

Does the contents of the tourism programme provide sufficient practical knowledge?

All ten responses were positive, but seven stated there was room for more practical training as they enjoyed this part of the programme and found that it supported them during their work placements (TC4). The following statements are related to this theme:

> An ideal tourism program would be exactly what I have received. It was efficiently executed, we had a fair share of practical and theoretical studies, and the teachers cared about their students' wellbeing, and helped us all to

> strive for excellence. I would not change one thing about the education I have received as it is what made me.
>
> I was given sufficient theoretical information as the teachers always had their handouts ready along with the slides. Each lesson was clearly structured, learning intentions were discussed and assignments/ submissions were assigned. There was always time for discussions and questions, the teachers made sure that all lessons were interactive and all students were engaged.
>
> Theory teaches you the basics, but when thrown in the deep end you will learn how to float and that's where the practical came in play.

Valuable parts of the students' work placement

Combining the theoretical knowledge gained with practice was important, in particular the examples given by lecturers with a background in the industry. The quotes support this finding (TC1). One quote (below) also stated that students learnt how to deal with different cultures in their work placement, suggesting that this could only be achieved during placements. Whilst this may have been the case three years ago, to date GAU STHM has 25 different overseas students on programmes and therefore this opportunity can be provided in the classroom if the content of the curriculum is designed to support cultural exchange. This theme was raised by two of the nine representatives and can be considered to be incorporated into the professional learning programme.

> The most valuable part of my work experience had to deal with all the different people and tourists, helping them with their excursions and learning first hand from my manager. When working with people from different cultures you will need to learn how to be diplomatic with certain things as all cultures perceive things differently. Learning with different people is a skill that I only mastered during my work experience, and it has helped a lot.

Least valuable part of the work placement

Although only two of the ten students reported negative experiences during placements, the themes suggest room for improvement. These comments confirmed a requirement for mentors in the workplace, agreements to be drawn up between GAU STHM and placement organisations,

and a better lecturer support system. These points may also be linked to why student attitudes were negative, as outlined by the sector (TC9).

> Long working hours… being a waitress, because I already knew these skills from my F&B course.
>
> Carrying out tasks that were not relevant to my work experience and lack of instructor support.

Is the current programme meeting student expectations

As is evident from the quotes above, there appeared to be a requirement for more sector-specific material (TC8), instructors with a background in the industry (TC1) and more opportunity for practical learning (TC4). All ten students stated that they wanted to be a university graduate because of current international competitiveness for employment (TC7).

A need for more practical training was mentioned by eight of the ten interviewees; all stated that they require classroom pedagogies to keep them focused and motivated. This was also outlined by Dziuban, Maskal and Hartman (2006), as discussed in Chapter 2, who state that today's students are more diverse yet still require structured class room teaching to keep them on track (TC6).

5.5 AR Cycle 1: Results analysis comparison

The main themes that were addressed from the student interviews were TC1, TC2, TC4, TC6, TC7, TC8 and TC9. What was interesting was that these were compatible with the sector results at large and therefore what the students felt was missing from their learning was the same as that outlined by the sector. In recent years GAU STHM has made course material, supporting documents and enrolment, research material and social media more accessible to students online and therefore students did not mention a requirement for ICT. However, the secondary research stated a requirement for ICT, and blended learning programmes are generally supported with online pedagogies and this is effective in modern curriculums (Adagale, 2015,

p.604), as outlined in p.45 of Chapter 2. These findings will be incorporated in this professional learning programme; furthermore, the sector has also stated a requirement for it in the content of courses shown in APPENDIX 4, P.196.

5.6 Formulation and integration of results into the professional learning programme

The results of AR Cycle 1 were analysed to form the contents of the programme (APPENDIX 3 p.187) and were presented to the selected experts during AR Cycle 2 in the form of a focus group held at the KITOB office. The structure of the programme considered in particular the "hard" factors described by the accreditation bodies, as summarised in Table 5.2. These were that the programme must have a minimum of 60 credits (a minimum of 20 courses), applied for through YODAK's principal structure and framework, with a minimum of one PhD instructor on the programme. The responses indicated by the sector and students were that there is requirement for an equal combination of theoretical and practical training. For this reason, I considered the regulating framework of accreditation bodies, and how much allowance there is for practical training and assessment, and opted for 40 per cent practical and 60 per cent theoretical assessment. In conclusion, the structure of the programme is as outlined below:

5.6.1 Structure of the professional learning programme

- Three-year programme
- 78 credits (26 courses)
- Term 1 - will concentrate on theoretical knowledge
- Term 2 - will include two days in a classroom environment and three days in an apprenticeship programme
- 40% of the assessment will be practical and 60% will be theoretical
- Of the 40% practical assessment - 25% will be assessed by a supervisor mentor in the workplace who holds a minimum of a tourism degree equivalent qualification and a minimum of 3 years' experience and the remaining 75% by the instructor (mentor).

The assessment criteria again considered not only the regulation framework of accreditation bodies but the feedback received by the sector and students. In particular, the students felt it would be valuable to be assessed by professionals from industry with a background in their specialist area (TC1 and TC4), which was also raised as an important matter by sector representatives.

The first proposed professional programme content is summarised in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8 Proposed Tourism Curriculum

YEAR 1	*YEAR 2*	*YEAR 3*
TERM 1 • Sanitation, Health & Safety • English for Tourism I • ICT I • Intro to Tourism & Hospitality • TQM • Sales & Marketing I	**TERM 3** • Language Elective I • F&B Service • Kitchen Management I • Front Office • Three-day placement	**TERM 5** • Language Elective III • Consumer Behaviour • HRM • Costs, Accounts and Purchasing • Three-day placement
TERM 2 • English for Tourism II • ICT II • Housekeeping • Sales & Marketing II • Three-day placement	**TERM 4** • Language Elective II • F&B Management. • Kitchen Management II • Ticketing • Three-day placement	**TERM 6** • Ethics • Placement Seminar • Specialised Elective • Specialised Elective • Three-day placement

The main principles taken into consideration when designing the content were heavily dependent on the results obtained from the sector. My rationale was that TC4 was the point raised most frequently by the sector and students. My programme's aim is to meet the requirement of specific skills and knowledge shortage (the "doing" part) and, therefore, is very much dependent on students obtaining the skills that the sector found to be absent, and those that students reported as valuable to their employability. Further, particular points raised such

as the requirement for ICT (TC5) have been integrated, and the content of this course in particular will be to design a website, maintain it and be able to make and monitor reservations from it, as outlined in Chapter 2 (Simulation Systems). Subjects such as Front Office and Ticketing have also been included for this reason. This integration has primarily been a result of the feedback from the sector, which stated the importance of today's graduates knowing to apply the basics of the tourism sector. Further, this particular course will also have blended learning elements. As Ginns and Ellis (2007) suggest, to enhance the quality of learning, blended learning is required and their research has identified a 93 per cent completion rate among students undertaking vocational programmes that employ blended learning. As a result, students will have ICT learning from outside the classroom and meet the TC5 findings requirement. The most fundamental part of the blended learning, representing a first in tourism education, is that students will have three days a week on placement in the sector from Term 2. This structure of the programme is directly aimed at meeting TC4.

Blending learning can also be considered to be apprenticeship-style learning, as skills and knowledge are acquired through a combination of structured learning opportunities in the workplace, participation in the production process and formal "classroom" learning. Steedman, Gospel and Ryan (1998) suggest in their definition of apprenticeship that it is designed to include all the elements that they consider necessary to underpin future expansion in Europe, basing apprenticeship on a model which meets the requirements of the sector as well as the students. The contents of these courses are outlined in APPENDIX 4, p.196, as they are to appear in the final programme.

Knowledge of international languages is an important subject that has been mentioned by the sector a number of times, particularly by the travel agents who stated that English is essential and that a second language is required in tourism today. In conclusion, the programme will be delivered in English and elective languages will be offered to students. Restaurateur and hotel

representatives also stated a requirement for health and safety, and sanitation; the programme will therefore provide this in Term 1 to prepare for the minimum requirement before students commence their placements. The remainders of the subjects are from the feedback results obtained from students, who stated that these were valuable to them during their work experience. The placement seminar was based on my own views, as the practical element of the programme should have a feel of celebration at the end, perhaps something that could be presented back to the sector. On my own degree course in tourism, I regarded the graduate project as a celebration and feel it is necessary for the student to present what they have learnt along the three-year journey that this programme will involve. In the final term, students can choose to concentrate on a particular area of tourism, as this became clear as a requirement from the sector (TC3). The professional learning programme can be summarised as a blend of learning as outlined in Figure 5.1.

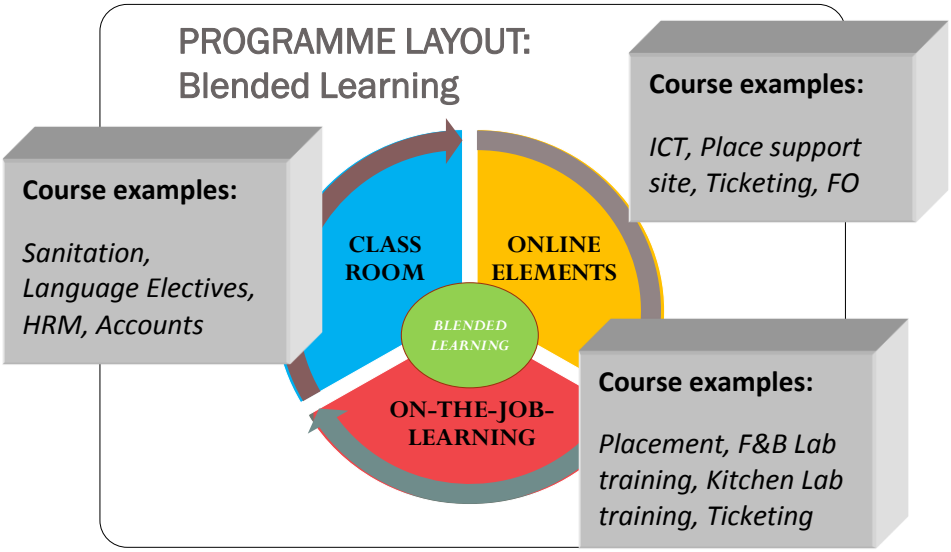


Figure 5.1 The Professional learning programme as a "*Blend*" in HE for tourism

5.7 AR Cycle 2: Focus group results

The interviewees in the focus group were selected as a result of my experience. One representative from the accrediting organisations, hoteliers, restaurateurs and travel agents, and two student graduates were invited to the focus group that took place at the KITOB offices,

where the final programme was presented (APPENDIX 3 p.187). Representatives from YODAK and the sector were selected based on their valuable in-depth feedback; support and passion for this new programme and their command of the English language; and the graduates were selected for ethical purposes (as discussed), working in industry and having a good command of English, since the focus group was presented in English. The focus group was recorded and transcribed, and each point raised, discussed and agreed was applied to revise the programme. The main points that were apparent are listed below:

a. TC3 was raised here as all representatives mentioned that by the final term the sector specialisation addressed in Term 6 is insufficient so there should be one further elective specialisation. The focus group concluded with this point by approving the removal of the subject of ethics and including this in the content of Term 1. This is further discussed in point b. Representative quotes can be seen below:

> How will the student be specialising in travel if he only takes five core courses for the subject? I think you must include more in the final term.
>
> The programme should separate hospitality from travel.....this can be done in the final term.

b. One of the main issues with current tourism programmes is that the students' level of empathy towards the industry is not known, and often they complete their education and then realise this industry is not for them. The sector representatives raised awareness that although in Term 2 students begin their apprenticeship and have the opportunity to try a real-life experience before completion of the programme, this is not enough to understand and support the student in terms of empathy for the industry. More importantly, it does not support the appropriate attitude suggested in the findings from Cycle 1 (TC9). The sector experts suggested interviewing students before accepting them on the programme, which I believe would be beneficial. However, the accrediting

bodies and I were both cautious as the HE institutions would not accept this in the current political climate, as mentioned. However, after some debate it was agreed by all representatives, particularly the graduate, in the focus group that an *Industry Awareness Tutorial* should take place in the first term of the programme to cover the various factors such as ethics, empathy, attitude to the industry, cultural awareness in the sector, etc. This can be confirmed from the following representative quotes:

> In the years when I was studying in England, we were interviewed first to see if we were serious about wanting to work in the Tourism industry, why don't you try to do this?
>
> Although this would be very beneficial in the long term, as YODAK we can not push for this as the universities are privately owned and their aim is to register as many students as possible. Putting this rule would create a burden and actually according to them, perhaps a constraint.

c. All representatives agreed that the word "*management*" should be removed from the programme, as the aim of the programme was not to develop managers but to develop skills. It would be misleading to the student to have course names such as Kitchen Management, Human Resource Management, etc. The following two quotes represent this agreement:

> I think the word "management" should be removed, because by having this word listed in the content of the curriculum you are making a promise to the student .... that they will be a manager upon graduation.
>
> We already have this problem of students thinking they can manage a hotel upon graduation but ofcause we know that is not the reality!

d. Accreditation bodies' representatives questioned why the programme is to be three years, as discussed in Chapter 4. I defended this requirement as the programme must have a minimum of 60 credits, to be accredited by YODAK and YOK. The inclusion of three days of placement and two days of classroom teaching means that the programme will be spread across three years and represent 78 credits. This answer to the

accreditation bodies' representative's question was accepted and the response was that this programme would gain approval. The average apprenticeship in the countries I analysed, with particular reference to Switzerland, Germany and Austria is aso three years, this is summarised in APPENDIX 6. The following was representative of the discussion:

> Why is this programme a three-year programme?
>
> As discussed, YODAK and YOK do not count work placements as accredited courses, whereas TEDQUAL – which is an accreditation we would like to apply for later, does. In order to accommodate both YOK/YODAKS' and TEDQUALS' requirements we needed to increase credits and therefore its timescale for delivery.

e. Accreditation bodies, graduates and some sector representatives raised concerns that the tourism sector may take advantage of the students' working hours and work content and asked how I would ensure that there would be fair working conditions. I replied that a contract of agreement between the sector and the university would be drawn up, and that working hours would be eight hours a day, and pay would be two-thirds of the minimum wage, which is within the regulations. Depending on the specific department in which the student would work, there would be a list of expected learning outcomes that I had detailed in Cycle 1 of my research, and they were not to be used as manual labour, but as apprentices (APPENDIX 4, p.196). There will be a qualified and experienced mentor (as mentioned, with a minimum of three years' experience in the department and qualified at least to tourism degree equivalent) in the workplace and, in particular, students were to be visited at least twice each term by their instructor. The sector suggested having a mentor from the university present.

f. In conclusion to the above debate, another point was mentioned by KITOB's president, and agreed by the RESBIR and KITSAB presidents. This was a suggestion that agreements

were drawn up between them and the university for support with the sector, as they know which placements would be most beneficial for the students. This can be seen in APPENDIX 5, P.200. The graduates confirmed that these agreements would protect the rights of students as the associations are in the best position to know which companies or businesses would provide positive experiences. The following quotes and discussions confirm this:

> To avoid such dilemmas and issues Nafiya, I think we can advise you where to send the students, what do you think about this?
>
> Why don't we go one step further and develop an agreement?
>
> I think that (drawing up an agreement) is a very good idea.

g. On completion of the focus group a week later, I was invited by KITOB to a separate meeting regarding creating a "Campaign of Recognition for Tourism". The representative explained that the organisation had funding to create a campaign and run courses, and was interested in working with GAU to deliver my new programme, which they believed would relieve the labour shortage. The representative stated that the organisation would promote this programme at national level to make it accessible to locals and personnel in the sector. This again is to be discussed with GAU. I believe this would provide added value for my programme.

In conclusion of this Cycle 2 focus group, the final programme was revised, as shown in Figure 5.3; the subjects in bold are the revised areas.

Table 5.9 Final Tourism Curriculum

YEAR 1	*YEAR 2*	***YEAR 3***

TERM 1	TERM 3	TERM 5
• **Sanitation, Health & Safety** • **English for Tourism I** • **ICT I** • **Introduction to Tourism & Hospitality** • ***Industry Awareness Tutorial*** • ***Introduction to Sales***	• Language Elective I • F&B Service • ***Kitchen Practices I*** • Front Office • Three-day placement II	• Language Elective III • Consumer Behaviour • ***Human Resources*** • Cost, Accounts and Purchasing • Three-day placement IV
TERM 2	**TERM 4**	**TERM 6**
• **English for Tourism II** • **ICT II** • **Housekeeping** • ***Marketing techniques*** • **Three-day placement I**	• Language Elective II • ***F&B Practices*** • ***Kitchen Practices II*** • Ticketing • Three-day placement III	• Placement Seminar • Specialised Elective • Specialised Elective • ***Specialised Elective*** • Three-day placement V

The learning outcomes (LO) of the professional learning programme were derived from the opinions expressed by the stakeholder and these were presented at the focus group. These LO were approved by the expert representatives during the focus group and no revisions were made here. These are shown below in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Learning outcomes for tourism blended learning programme

PROFESSIONAL TOURISM LEARNING PROGRAMME, LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. **Graduate will have a strong interest and be a confident professional in a specific field of the Tourism Sector (Hospitality, F&B or Travel)**
2. **Graduate will be a presentable individual that adhere to health, hygiene, safety and ethical national and international criteria**
3. **Will be fluent in two languages, with English at an advanced level**
4. **Have the practical know-how of designing a website, maintaining it, being able to make a reservation and ticketing**
5. **Provide practical and theoretical knowledge of a specific field of tourism, that can be applied to Cyprus as well as internationally**
6. **Understand consumer behaviour, have high-level customer relations and problem-solving skills experience**
7. **Have the theoretical and practical experience and competence of sales and marketing specific to North Cyprus**
8. **Understand basic accounts, and have cost and purchasing knowledge**

The professional learning programme has been formulated to meet sector requirements and so can be promoted in this way. As a result, the objectives have been fulfilled with particular regard to researching the needs of the various stakeholders and designing a programme that meets all the requirements. A future study will take the form of Cycle 3 to confirm that this programme does meet requirements, and further enhance its quality through revisions.

HE programmes in North Cyprus do not normally have learning outcomes requirements, but if the programme is to be accredited by international bodies such as TEDQUAL, this is expected. Therefore, I have developed them as a requirement to obtain accreditation from TEDQUAL in the future.

5.7.1 Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO) and the mapping process to Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Each course that was included in the programme was directly based on the feedback received from the views expressed by stakeholders, and the common themes established were directly noted to be included as subject courses. The PLOs and the relevant courses were mapped out by the Tourism Department lecturers at GAU and myself, these are detailed below:

1. Graduates will have a strong interest and be a confident professional in a specific field of the Tourism Sector (Hospitality, F&B or Travel)

   There are specialist courses based on hospitality, food and beverage and travel that have learning outcomes specific to these disciplines however in Term 6, students are given the choice to concentrate on a specific field based on the elective courses (outlined in Appendix 4, p.196).

2. Graduate will be a presentable individual that adhere to health, hygiene, safety and ethical national and international criteria

   In particular the selected courses that will meet the criteria for this PLO will be the courses *Sanitation, Health & Safety, Industry Awareness Tutorial* and in Terms 4, 5 and 6 the *three-day placement.*

3. Will be fluent in two languages, with English at an advanced level

   The programme will be delivered in English, therefore this will already guarantee a good command of the English language, which was raised by the stakeholders as a high priority. The programme also has language elective courses, the student is expected to continue to take Language Elective II and III in addition to language Elective I. This is likely to increase fluency of a second language. In other programmes this is limited to two-level courses, on this programme this has been

increased to three levels. In total there are five courses that have CLOs that fit with this PLO.

4. Have the practical know-how of designing a website, maintaining it, being able to make a reservation and ticketing

The programme has three compulsory courses that will meet the requirements of this PLO, these are *ICT I, ICT II* and *Ticketing.* As outlined on p.202 of APPENDIX 4, P.196, the content of ICT I will be in the classroom however, as part of blending learning and to provide opportunity for practical know-how students will be designing websites in the course ICT II as an online course. Ticketing will also be an online course.

5. Provide practical and theoretical knowledge of a specific field of tourism, that can be applied to Cyprus as well as internationally

All courses will have a combination of material that is international and the lecturers will be encouraged to develop handbooks that are suited to the Cyprus context. Whilst all subjects have elements of theoretical knowledge, the work-placements from Terms 2-6 will focus on either hospitality, travel or food and beverage. These courses will be delivered apprenticeship-style and students will have individual learning outcomes at the appropriate level as discussed in Appendix 4, p.202. These will also be the main contribution to "practical" knowledge (meeting the "doing" part as expressed in particular by the sector experts).

6. Understand consumer behaviour, have high-level customer relations and problem-solving skills experience

In Term 5 students are given the compulsory course of *Consumer Behaviour,* but students are challenged further in Terms 5 and 6 as the content (as outlined on p.202) to outline cases where they solved problems during their placement courses.

7. Have the theoretical and practical experience and competence of sales and marketing specific to North Cyprus

   In Term 1 the course *Introduction to Sales,* will introduce the student to sales and in Term 3 the programme incudes the *Marketing Techniques* course that applies the content both at theoretical and practical assessments. Terms 3-6 also require the students to prove elements of selling and marketing based on their placement experience as can be seen in APPENDIX 4, p.196 and discussed further below.

8. Understand basic accounts, and have cost and purchasing knowledge

   In Term 5 the programme has the *Cost Purchasing* course which meets the criteria for this PLO, and further the *Placement* course in Terms 5 and 6 also indicates CLOs that students will be assessed on.

Every course will have an assessment weighting of 40 per cent theory and 60 per cent practice, as presented in the focus group (Appendix 3, p.187) . In particular, this is what differentates this tourism programme from other examples nationally and furthermore, will be an example that can be a contribution to knowledge of tourism education in the future. The developed professional learning programme in tourism, is a model that has not been applied as far as this research is aware to date. With particular reference to the contribution of blending learning that has online and class/lab pedagogies, this programme introduces the third blend as a work placement, which has been compared to an advanced apprenticeship programme. Apprenticeship programmes from Austria, England, Germany and Switzerland were compared in the Literature Review, in Chapter 2, p.21-24 (and summarised in APPENDIX 6, p.202) and have been beneficial in developing the contents of the placement courses that have been included in this programme from Terms 2-6. This is the most important contribution of the project and is explained in more detail below.

5.7.2 Contents of Work Placements and Course Learning Outcomes

The main contribution of this professional learning programme in tourism education is that it will be a blend of online and class lab, but more fundamentally, will include the third blend as a work placement. However, in order for the programme to meet the requirements of all the stakeholders, the CLOs must be clearly set out in order to be assessed. The learning outcomes have been summarised in APPENDIX 4, p.196, however it is important to outline them in detail here, to clearly identify how they compliment and support the programme as a whole.

The programme curriculum has been so designed to provide a suitable level as outlined by Adagaale (2015) and Cooper (2008) to make sure the student is equipped with the foundation knowledge before they practice further and also to make sure the student is guided with health and safety ethics. As a result, the work placement commences in Term 2.

Term 2: Work Placement I

Course Contents: Students apply to the tourism department for which there is a position available and are interviewed by the supervisor who will be their work mentor. The student commences their basic training in the department. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student, several learning outcomes specific to the department are addressed.

CLO 1: Student develop skills specific to the department, for example recognition of terms and department - if in hospitality understanding of short-hand expressions such as FO, F&B, HRM etc.; if student is placed in travel begins to understand short hand for airline codes, basic defintions of AMADEUS and GALILEO; if in the food and beverage department the student is expected to apply all health, safety and hygiene rules and basic use of knives.

CLO 2: Introduced to basic sales, student will understand and appreciate the four Ps of marketing to include price, place, product and promotion specific to their department. (Relevent to PLO7)

CLO 3: Introduced to workplace website or web-design, student develops skills in ICT, possibly developing an existing website of the workplace or designing a new one either for the workplace or of own preference.

Term 3: Work Placement II

The student continues their training in the selected workplace, with further depth in understanding of marketing and evidence of selling products relevant to the department chosen to work inSkills are practiced in housekeeping duties relevant to the work place. The workplace may be set in either a hospitality or travel context where student will practice either food and beverage, culinary and service skills OR develop skills of taking reservations, making a sale of a room/airline/tour and developing skills on simulation software.

CLO 1: Making sales and develop skills in marketing Depending on the department the student is placed in, relevant marketing practices must be proved. For example if the student is in the kitchen, evidence of contribution to menu design may be applied, in F&B students must evidence skills in upselling, in travel student must again provide evidence of completing a sale. These can be pursued in both manual, face-to-face or ICT settings.

CLO 2: Communication skills Students will develop skills in communication through face-to-face or ICT. Where relevent, use of tone, body-language, empathy, eye-contact and gestures evidently should show a more confident student ready to be employed in the tourism sector

CLO 3: Application of Housekeeping Depending on the department the student is placed in, s/he should use relevant rotas, chemicals, timescales and structures to practice housekeeping responsibilities

CLO 4: Student develop skills specific to the department The workplace may be set in either hospitality context or travel where student will practice either food and beverage, culinary and service skills OR developing skills of taking reservations, making a sale of a room/airline/tour and developing skills on simulation software.

Term 4: Work Placement III

The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Student can work independently in his/her department without supervision and with increased autonomy and responsibilty. Also able to work as part of a team being familar with the company structure.

CLO 1: Organisation and independent responsibility Student attends to responsibilities without difficulty and has developed skills in making decisions on own initiative

CLO 2: Dealing with basic complaints Student deals with a basic dilemma, using own initiative and decision-making.

CLO 3 Hospitality OR Travel Systems are confidently applied Student can independently apply a full day's responsibilities and has learnt the systems in place for the specific department. Descriptions of tasks and activities are formally compiled.

Term 5: Work Placement IV

The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student several learning outcomes specific to the department at level 4 are addressed. Application of consumer behaviour, human resources, cost, accounts and

purchasing projects are assigned. Learning outcomes must address these principles at this level of the programme, and in particular, provide examples of problem solving.

CLO 1: Knowledge and experience of working with different market groups Depending on the department the student is working in, they will have come into contact with different market groups. Student must be able to show an understanding of what they have been doing during this experience over the last year and a half, and explain the individual needs and wants of these consumer groups.

CLO 2: Understanding of recruitment, orientation, training and motivation Student would have gained sufficient experience to develop a project that outlines the structures in place in the workplace and is ready to suggest recommendations on what can be improved in respect of HRM.

CLO 3: Practice in Cost, Account and Purchasing Depending on the department the student is placed in s/he would have gained practical experience of costing products, working in debit/credit projects and purchasing either tangibles or services. Evidence of this practice must be provided.

CLO 4: Dealing with complaints in a professional manner Student must prove that they have dealt with a customer complaint in a professional manner.

Term 6: Work Placement V

The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Depending on which departments they are woring in, with a professional level of problem-solving at department level, marketing techniques and cost, accounts purchasing. Employment prospects at this level are discussed with the placement supervisor

CLO 1: Dealing with a dilemma and solving the problem relevant to the specific department This can either be a dilemma between the customer and workplace or within the workplace. Student must prove to have taken decisions autonomously.

CLO 2: Student has gained professional skills either in travel OR hospitality Either department skills or job description responsibilities have been evidently pursued and the student qualifies in this specific position to be employed with a professional understanding of what the responsibilities of a candidate in this position would require.

CLO 3: Confident in the specific field of work Student will be able to present the skills, tasks and responsibilities gained in the three years during the professional tourism seminar presentation to his/her tutor, mentor and fellow students.

5.7.3 Justıfıcatıon of the requirement for a three-year programme

The curriculum developed in the project favours a three-year programme as opposed to the two-year programme for which the project was initially intended. However, due to the requirement from accrediting bodies YOK and YODAK for a 60 credit programme, the placement courses could not be included. On the other hand, the most important contribution of this professional programme has been the introduction of the three-day work placement , which TEDQUAL, the accrediting body requires to be assessed, and therefore courses must be credited. In conclusion, to accommodate the requirements of the accrediting bodies and more

importantly developing a curriculum that addresses the needs of the tourism industry, and thus enhances the employability of graduates, the curriculum has been spread over a three-year timescale. Although this will incur additional costs for the student, at the same time as part of the legal requirement from the state, these students will be considered as apprentices and will be receiving a small salary. Further, the fact that this programme has been developed with sector representatives, suggests opportunity for direct employment of the graduate upon completion. APPENDIX 6 (p.202) presents a summary comparison of curricula in varying countries to benchmark the three-year professional learning programme in tourism for HE.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and recommendations

My research involved the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, which I lead at GAU, and I sought to produce a new programme to be used in our teaching. It was carried out through an AR that took place in two cycles. Cycle 1 involved 22 semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews with various stakeholders. These included higher education accrediting bodies, tourism sector representatives and students. It explored the various requirements and expectations of these stakeholders to form the framework, structure and content of a new curriculum. Secondary research was an important part of the AR cycle and I investigated how tourism education has evolved in the European Union and internationally, taking in to consideration developing countries such as Kenya and Jordan and what it should encompass today and in future.

The second cycle took place through a focus group with invited key stakeholder representatives. The proposed programme was presented and discussed during the second cycle. As a result of the second cycle, the programme was revised to become the first *professional learning programme for Tourism in Higher Education* in North Cyprus. My research journey has been about representing the inception, design and preparation process of this programme. The programme makes GAU the first to provide a blend of teaching and learning, and thus lends a competitive advantage; it is a programme that meets the requirements of accreditation bodies, the tourism sector and the students.

These conclusions can be compared to those outlined by Cooper (2008), discussed in Chapter 2, p.45, in which there appears to be a consistency with findings, in particular areas such as a requirement to supply appropriately-trained manpower for the future tourism sector with updating content, suitable learning and teaching methods, engagement of educators with the

tourism sector. However, whilst in Jordan there appears to be a conflict between the public sector, HE and tourism sector in developing such a curriculum, in this project the professional learning programme in tourism has the full support of all.

6.1 Limitations of my research

The two main limitations in this research project can be summarised as (1) the limited resources available for action research in the context of tourism; and (2) the small sample size for the interviews in the methodology.

Whilst action research (AR) has been a popular method of research for qualitative research studies in other professional areas such as education, nursing, and organizational research etc., there appears to be a lack of this method in the context of tourism research, which would have been beneficial for this research. It would have been interesting to compare a model AR process with this example and further, would have been an example guide for this project.

This was a qualitative study that took place with twenty-two representatives. These were in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews conducted with a variety of stakeholders. However, there were often three experts for each representative group and therefore, this could be considered to be a small sample size to provide widely generalizable results. I have instead chosen to present my findings as possible `best practice' on the basis of the data I have received and processed in the light of my reading and reflecting on my experiences.

6.2 Revisiting the research question

My position as Head of Department for the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, allowed me to review the requirements in tourism education, based on my own experiences and

previous research (Guden, 2009). Earlier studies had already stated that there was a need for skills-based learning development in tourism education. This was later confirmed by the VETLAM project, which summarised a requirement for specific skills in tourism and hospitality.

I began to formulate my research by researching secondary data, paying particular attention to investigating the international evolution of tourism education, the evolution of tourism education in North Cyprus and recent trends in education. These were the guidelines and the foundation of my research objectives, and are summarised below.

My primary aim was: **To carry out a detailed Literature Review on apprenticeships and their development, looking particularly at examples in Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland.**

In order to research international apprenticeship programmes I began by considering how tourism education had evolved in the past fifty years, and adopted Airey's (2008) main findings. Airey states that tourism education has developed in four phases. What was evident is that in the past fifty years tourism education has been shaped by the changing factors on the macro- and micro- environment. This has resulted in tourism education programmes failing to keep abreast of the sector's requirements, since changes have been made to somewhat "save the day". Tourism education has often lagged behind the needs of an increasingly diverse sector. I considered the relevance of this for GAU and North Cyprus, and how I should structure my curriculum.

Based on my previous research, an important deficiency was the lack of practical work-based skills. I therefore investigated the concept of blended learning and apprenticeship programmes, as in Chapter 2. I found a close connection between the two areas and defined them both as combining work-based learning as well as classroom pedagogies. In particular, blended learning is a new concept in North Cyprus and apprenticeship pedagogies have only recently been

developed at further education level. Internationally, on the other hand, blended learning began with online learning elements. Nevertheless, I learnt that its deployment can be comprised of work placements, classroom pedagogies and online elements. I compared this to apprenticeship programmes in countries such as Britain and Switzerland that offer advanced apprenticeship programmes, and Germany and Austria that offer apprenticeship programmes as part of a dual system. Whilst the dual system appeared to meet the shortfall of skills for sector requirements, I found that it failed to meet HE's requirements of graduates. As a result, my first objective was fulfilled and my decision concerning its deployment was that it would be a style of learning at HE level.

To study the requirements of the different stakeholders to include GAU, GAU students, accrediting bodies and tourism sector representatives and professional organisations

The most fundamental part of this research has been to comprehend the requirements of the various stakeholders involved. I already knew that GAU wanted to keep abreast of developments in tourism education; the difficulty was to understand what the other stakeholders required. By the end of the action research cycles, it was evident from all 22 representatives that there is a need for change to the structure of tourism programmes and curricula in North Cyprus. The findings have indicated that there are eight main requirements that must be integrated into future organisation and delivery of tourism education:

1. Backgrounds, qualifications and experience of instructors should be related to tourism
2. Tourism studies are multidisciplinary and curricula should reflect this
3. Students should be given the choice to focus on a specific field of hospitality or tourism
4. Graduates should have more practical skill competencies

5. Graduates should be competent professionals in ICT for the tourism sector – and have online access to learning support
6. Classroom pedagogies must continue
7. Material and resources should be provided that are up-to date and relevant to North Cyprus
8. Students should be prepared for the sector, so that they understand they will not be employed as managers straight away

As a result, we can assume that integrating these findings into a new programme will provide opportunity for the employment of students and close the skills gap in the tourism sector. These findings can be converted into a model that is relevant not only to GAU but other HE institutions in North Cyprus and internationally; my secondary research had confirmed that there are similar deficiencies in other countries.

To study how the North Cyprus education system's delivery of apprenticeship and placement-based blended learning fit in – together with "hard" (such as legislation and regulations) and "soft" factors (such as the quality of governance arrangements and social capital at local and sectoral levels).

Accrediting bodies relevant for GAU STHM have been identified as YOK, YODAK and TEDQUAL. Each accreditation body has key principles that are monitored and checked by the accrediting bodies themselves. These key principles include; Programme Information, Academic structure and Physical Infrastructure; and detailed outlines of the Employer, Student, Faculty, Infrastructure and Management. These are checked via documented evidence and visitor audits. The "hard" factors can be summarised as a minimum requirement of a 60 credit programme and a requirement for PhD holding instructors. These have been embedded in the programme without difficulty.

To develop and adopt a professional learning programme that fulfils the requirements of all stakeholders.

Recognising the requirement for work-based learning for the tourism sector from previous studies, I suggested at an early stage the possible inclusion of apprenticeship-style learning. However, although the programme has integrated this approach into its structure, I have chosen to call the programme "professional learning programme" rather than "apprenticeship". In the current education structure of education in North Cyprus, it is worth observing that no formal structure of apprenticeship exists (as mentioned in Chapter 2). Therefore, when I noticed people's confusion during my AR at having an advanced apprenticeship programme at an HE level, although I integrated apprenticeship components in to the content of the programme, I chose not to call it an apprenticeship programme. I also considered calling the programme a blended learning programme in order to secure the acceptance of all stakeholders. I believe this may be a new trend in tourism education and an area which I would like to focus on in future research, however, there are limited research studies in blended learning in tourism that incorporate work placements, and therefore that is an area I endeavor to research in the future. In conclusion, this new programme, although it is a style of apprenticeship programme, also has blended learning through courses that are simulations and online pedagogies, so it was deemed most feasible to have a name that would accommodate both ideas yet be appealing in the future when promoting the course. I confirm that this has been achieved, with the name of "professional learning programme for tourism."

To create awareness of a "new" style of education in North Cyprus, as it will be the first time there will be an education programme that incorporates professional practice-based elements that can be used as a national model

During the AR, data gathering tools were chosen to give a chance to build rapport with the various stakeholders. This not only let me obtain and retrieve information on the different requirements and what must be integrated into the programme, but created an opportunity to discuss different styles and opportunities in the learning process. The most difficult stakeholder I assumed to be the accreditation bodies, with YOK being the main hurdle. However, through discussion and preparation I have received verbal acceptance of my programme. During my face-to-face interviews and presentation for the focus group, I was given the opportunity to create awareness of this style of learning. I can confirm that a possible agreement with KITOB is underway to promoting the programme under the "creating awareness of tourism" campaign discussed in chapter 5.

6.3 Recommendations

The professional learning programme is comprised of three parts: work-based learning; online elements; and classroom pedagogies. The findings suggest a requirement for combining the three areas to meet the requirements of the accreditation bodies, the tourism sector and students.

- The development of the programme has been successful due to the support of information and experiences provided by the expert stakeholders mentioned. Therefore it is advisable that the utilisation of the programme also involves oversight by these stakeholders. In particular, the agreements drawn up with the sector for student apprentices in work placements should be followed up and sustained for the successful deployment of the programme.

- Once the programme is deployed, a third AR cycle is advisable for assurance of the quality of the programme, as at present we can assume that the content and structure of the programme meets the requirements of stakeholders as well as GAU. However, it must be tested to make sure that the programme meets the expectations of the stakeholders in the long term and to maintain its quality. An empirically-based evaluation of the programme will be useful.
- The programme will commence and students will complete in three years. It is assumed that the skills gaps in the sector will be met by this programme, however this is an assumption and cannot be tested until the programme produces its first graduates. Therefore, I will need to evaluate the programme again three years' after the students graduate.
- Creating awareness of this new style of learning in North Cyprus can be achieved through agreement with KITOB, which has funding available for a marketing campaign and is willing to support the initative.
- Learning agreements made between the mentor in the workplace and GAU STHM must be monitored to ensure the apprentice (student) is working in fair and ethical conditions. The minimum requirement for the workplace mentor is that s/he holds a tourism equivalant degree and has three years of experience in the specific department.
- The materials used in the programme must be up-to-date and relevant to North Cyprus. It is advisable that instructors in STHM in GAU devise research and publications specific to North Cyprus, as there are sufficient international resources yet rather limited research here. This can only be encouraged with funding support from the university. In conclusion, it is recommended that management allocates funds for this purpose.
- It is recommended that online pedagogies require a specialised software website for the blend of learning that has been applied to the new programme. The resources available

at GAU, place the programme in a strong position to design this website. In particular the department of Management Information Systems could work together with STHM to develop and adopt this programme.

6.4 Future research

As described above, several conclusions have been made as a result of the research findings. These can be summarised as a necessity for a blended learning programme to meet the accreditation bodies', tourism sector's and students' requirements. Secondly, it is considered that the skills gap in the tourism sector of North Cyprus can be minimised through this learning programme. It is suggested that future research is carried out in the form of a third cycle of action research methodology, as students graduate from the programme, to test these possibilities. Finally a quality assurance committee should be formed in the school to monitor the quality and ethics of this programme; therefore, continuous research in ensuring the sustainability of the programme will benefit all stakeholders, with particular reference to GAU.

Chapter 7 Self-reflection

During the programme I have reviewed and engaged with the learning that I have gained throughout my working life. The doctoral experience has enhanced my scholarly approach, practice and overall professional knowledge. Until now I have considered myself a teacher rather than a scholar, and have been committed particularly to teaching tourism, and this has been my motivation for pursuing this doctorate in professional studies. My motivation has been conditioned by the realisation that there is a lack of scholarship in higher education tourism relating to apprenticeships and blended learning programmes, both the designing and the delivery. My interest and passion is developing research on tourism education, with an emphasis on revealing the contribution of tourism education, through using it as a model at the university where I work, which can subsequently be adopted in HE throughout North Cyprus.

This journey has taught me to consider different options for this study's title. During the proposal it began as *"Design and Evaluation of an Advanced Apprenticeship Programmes at University Level",* but the project has proven that what is in the proposal may not be the outcome. Through the development of the project my title changed, as I did, because of my interactions with participants in the action research cycles. I saw this development as a puzzle; as each chapter developed, the picture became more evident. The name of this picture became "*Development of a Professional Learning Programme for Tourism in Higher Education".* This topic began at GAU but, through its development, based on communication with key tourism sector representatives; it became a topic that can be applied at national level.

I believe I have created awareness for its requirement not only at my institution, but at national level. The support of KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR undoubtedly has been an achievement due to their continued involvement during the AR cycles. The action research was a fitting method for

this research because it allowed me to form important contacts with industry and further raise discussion of how tourism education should be taught at university level.

My position in GAU as an insider–researcher and as Head of Department allowed me to assume leadership in paving the way for, and constructing the new curriculum model. The most important learning I have gained from this DProf has been not only to take leadership as a professional in my workplace but also, I have learnt to take a *light-hearted* approach, as I called it, to presenting my findings through thematic analysis on what *I* believed these results proved, as a doctoral candidate and not a Head of Department. Therefore, I can summarise this as developing my skills in analysing my data with confidence and therefore being a leader in the subject.

Handling difficult or awkward situations, diplomatically making spontaneous decisions under pressure, was something that I also practiced during the project journey. Although I have experience of making decisions under pressure in my role at the university and through working in the tourism sector before that, this organisational behaviour role became evident and was recorded during this research with professionals. This has been another skill that I have developed during the DProf journey.

7.1 How has my knowledge and understanding of tourism education developed?

My experience as a staff member and manager in hospitality, and university lecturer and Head of Department, gave me some understanding of tourism education. However, the contribution of depth research during the DProf journey to how this has evolved with particular reference to Airey's (2008) theory was a major factor in the progression of the research. Whilst Airey drew the roadmap showing the direction of tourism education as a model, I further questioned the direction it takes next. During this journey, I have found that tourism education has been behind what is required for the future, merely adding the curricula or courses required to correct

previous mistakes made in other tourism destinations. For example, when the Mediterranean and the Caribbean were being developed for tourism, there were negative impacts on the environment – so programmes were introduced with courses such as sustainable tourism. However, what is required today is to look to the future of what the sector requires and, more importantly, based on knowledge obtained during this project using new pedagogies to support tourism education.

In order to research this ethically and build this proposed new model, I found it necessary to include all the stakeholders affected by tourism education in North Cyprus. I used AR to achieve an insight into what is required and how it should be applied. This meant that I worked with different power groups, including professionals from accreditation bodies, experts from the tourism sector and students. What became evident was that these groups may have conflicting values; for example, whilst the student wants to learn skills by working in a hotel, the hotelier may just want cheap labour. I formulated solutions to this by informing all stakeholders equally about the purpose of the new programme, and what is and is not to be expected. This experience taught me to manage different power groups ethically and efficiently.

7.1.1 Cognitive (thinking skills)

I believe that combining my experience with what has been written to date about tourism education, and more importantly analysing and synthesising this information as a whole, has possibly redefined knowledge on tourism education. The learning outcome has been that there was a requirement for a new curriculum in tourism internationally; it must be a new style of teaching (a blended paradigm), according to the tourism sector of North Cyprus and students in tourism; and it must be acceptable to the accreditation bodies at national and international levels. The selected methodology of face-to-face in-depth interviews with the various stakeholders has provided evidence of communication with “critical communities” – not only

has my project with them supported the development of a new paradigm; it has established a rapport for its future sustainability.

Understanding the secondary data of tourism education before interviewing the stakeholders was beneficial, and previous studies supported arguments and discussion at great length. This is what gained the support of the various stakeholders and, to a degree, made them more aware of the current status. KITOBS's offered support to promote the new programme is an indication of this.

7.1.2 Practical skills

The action research model described by Coghan and Brannick (2014) was directly applied to my methodology and I used each step as my own, with the application of relevant contexts. For example, the first step is identified as the ***pre-step*** in this model. It is outlined as a justification of why this project is necessary or desirable. This can be identified through an assessment of the micro- and macro-conditions of the organisation that incorporates the internal and external conditions – to be economical, political and social for external; and cultural and structural for internal. I used Chapter 2, a Literature Review on tourism education, to research the current state of higher education in North Cyprus and GAU. I applied each step of the model in the same way and much of my interdisciplinary approaches and understandings arose from this AR model. This taught me particularly, that it is important to master the literature written on the subject area before questioning it further. This process developed my confidence as a doctoral candidate in tourism education. Only after this experience did I feel that I was ready to be questioned about my subject. Basically, I understood what other researchers had to say about tourism education, and only then was I ready to add my views.

I have used resources that are up-to-date but also those that have been milestones for tourism education, and the main point that I have raised, is that to date in tourism education we have

considered what is required in curricula for sustaining environments, earning profit and possibly establishing what is required for employability, but in this research I have questioned the way we teach students and if this is sufficient. What has become evident is that there is a requirement for a blended approach in tourism education. I therefore consider that this will impact on future studies in tourism education.

As mentioned, communicating the proposed new programme during Cycle 1 and 2 to "critical communities" including accreditation bodies' representatives, sector representatives and students professionally was important to gain their support and to retrieve sufficient and accurate responses. Further, I have presented the new programme at the KITOB main office to the main representatives of my research. This experience has taught me to manage different interest power groups.

7.2 My contribution to knowledge

Tourism education may have matured over a forty-year time scale (Airey, 2008), but it has still lagged behind what the sector is looking for with particular reference to skills. Whilst the content has proven to be mature, as described by Jafar Jafari (1990) and Airey (2008), it is evident from my research that the skills are not sufficient, because of the way we teach the programmes. My research suggests a requirement for new teaching pedagogies and, based on the results obtained, this appears to be a blend of learning with ICT, classroom and on-the job training. Therefore, in summary, my contribution to knowledge of tourism education is the new professional learning programme shown in Figure 7.1.

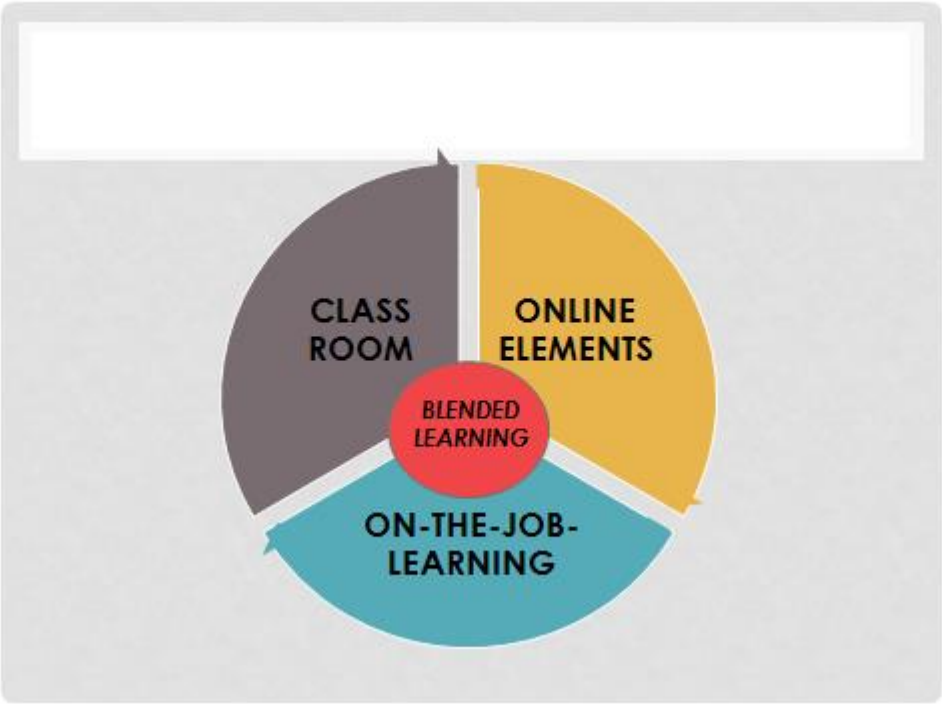


Figure 7.1 An educational model for HE in tourism

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APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INVITATION TO STAKEHOLDERS FOR INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP

Date: …./02/2015

Dear ……,

RE: Research on 'Design and Evaluation of Advanced Apprenticeship Programme at University Level', for student in Doctorate in Professional Studies Programme (DProf.)

I am writing to invite you to take part in an interview for the development of a blended learning programme, in higher education. The information you give will purely be used in the design and development of the first blended learning programme in North Cyprus and in the DProf studies.

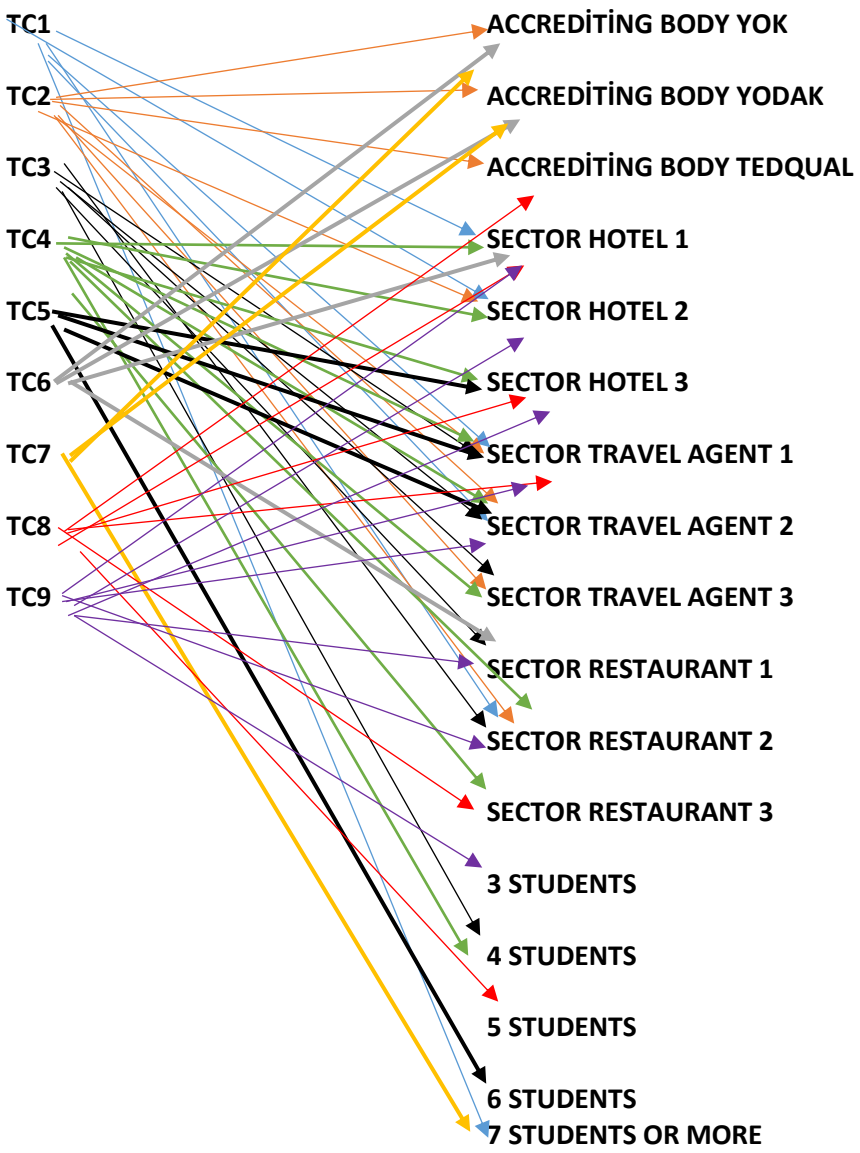
The research will be conducted in two phases, first you are invited to participate in a one hour interview with myself face-to-face on ……*date*……., at ……*venue*……., ……*time*…….. and secondly you will be invited to participate in a focus group interview with a group at a later date, once the programme is designed.

Your views and opinion will be a valuable part of this research and I will therefore call in next week to receive confirmation of your approval and availability at this date and time.

Nafiya Guden

APPENDIX 2: COMMON THEMES FROM ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE 1

Thematıc code	Common themes
TC1	Business and Economics courses and specialists 'crowd' current programmes
TC2	Tourism is multidisciplinary
TC3	Students must specialise in a specific field (Hospitality or Travel tourism)
TC4	There is a lack of 'doing' for graduate competency
TC5	Requirement for better ICT competence – all stakeholders need ICT-competent professionals in the sector
TC6	Requirement for classroom pedagogies
TC7	There is a high demand from young people, wanting to become a university graduate
TC8	Material and resources should be provided that are up-to date and relevant to North Cyprus
TC9	Students should be prepared for the sector, so that they understand they will not be employed as managers



APPENDIX 3: FOCUS GROUP PRESENTATION

Nafiya Guden

Doctorate Studies:

Development of a Blended Learning Programme in Higher Education for Tourism

PLATFORM	SUMMARY
Advocacy Platform	(1960s-1970s) Highly based on economics and business studies.
Cautionary Platform	(1970s-1980s) Evolution of programmes to consider impacts of tourism (growth on subjects such as sustainable tourism, tourism impacts etc.)
Adaptancy Platform	(1980-1990s) Programmes here began to adopt courses that provided alternative tourism to mass tourism (E.g. Eco tourism, Special Interest Tourism)
Knowledge Platform	(1990s-2000) Sees tourism as a mature study programme which offers a comprehensive understanding of all the above areas combined.

How has tourism education evolved?

Tourism Education has matured

Jafar Jafaris' (1990

PLATFORM	SUMMARY
Industrial Stage	(1960s-1970s) Programmes were highly based on economics and business studies.
Fragmented Stage	(1970s-1980s) Tourism programmes were simply taking the character of the particular expertise of the faculty
Benchmark Stage	(1980-1990s) UK publication of the Quality Assurance Agency for HE. Nead for strategic planning in providing relevant education and industry-specific knowledge and skills
Mature Stage	(1990s-2000) We know that Tourism and hospitality is a multi-disiplinary and we must research what sector requirements are to develop new curriculums

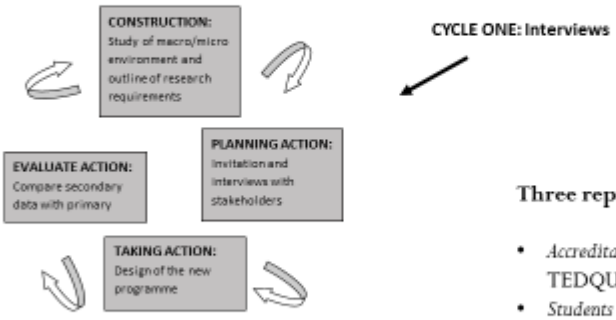
How has tourism education evolved?

Tourism Education life begins at 40!

Airey (2012)

Methodology: How was the research conducted?

- **Primary: ACTION RESEARCH**

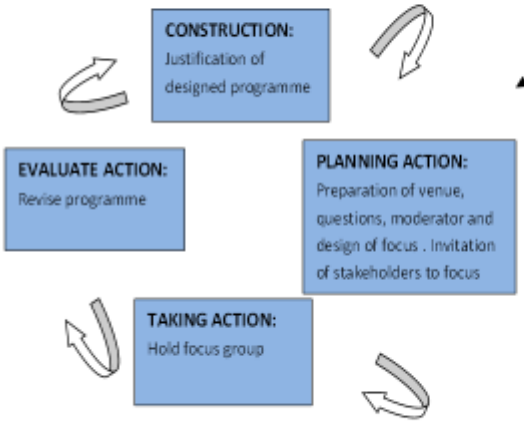


CYCLE ONE: Interviews

Three representatives for each:

- *Accreditations* (YOK, YODAK, TEDQUAL)
- *Students*
- *Chamber of commerce*
- *Sector*
  - *Hotel, Travel, F&B*

Continued...



CYCLE TWO: Focus Group

One representative from each:

- *Accreditations*
- *Student*
- *Chamber of commerce*
- *Sector*
  - *Hotel, travel, F&B*

Results of cycle 1: Today's student

- is more diverse
- is more ICT literate
- Requires class-room environment to keep them on track
- Wants to be a university graduate
- Wants to have more practical training
- Wants to earn and study
- Prefers instructors with sector experience

Results of cycle 1: Chamber of Commerce Results

- Lack of research in to sector requirements
- Based on VETLAM British Council results from 2010 they are aware that there was a requirement for Chefs
- Apprenticeship programmes have been developed but are not sustainable
- They are willing to further develop educational programmes but at present there are no plans
- Funding has been available from various resources
- They are willing to provide logistic support for this research

Continued...

- YODAK does not at present research in to sector requirements and scholarships are not provided with the supply/demand concept
- A quality assurance committee has been formed by YODAK with set out criteria and this will be utilised in the coming new education year.
- UNWTO TEDQUAL has five areas of analysis (Employer needs assessments, Student needs assessment, Curriculum and Pedagogical assessment, Faculty assessment and Management)
- YODAK, YOK and TEDQUAL support this programme

Results of cycle 1: Sector

- Sector states tourism graduates *claim* to know all the subjects, but problem with *doing*
- All departments in hotels, restaurants, travel have a lack of skilled labour (chef shortages have been addressed by HE)
- Associations are developing short courses to address the labour skill shortage problems (E.G. KITOB has HK, Service and FO courses) with funding from organisations such as '*Cukurova Kalkinma Ajansi*'
- Lack of planning from states are having negative impacts on HRM of the sector (i.e. Sustainable TQM)
- Instructors should have sector experience
- Assessments should be at-least 30% practical based

Continued....

- The main skill shortages are *practical* with particular notion to:
  1. General hygiene and attire
  2. Language (English in particular)
  3. ICT – particularly web-design and up-keeping
  4. Customer relations and problem solving
  5. Selling and making the sale to a high quality standard (i.e. Taking a reservation and ticketing)
  6. Service and kitchen
  7. Personal willingness to learn

NEW PROGRAMME

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME IN TOURISM

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **Graduate will have a high interest and be a confident professional in a specific field of the Tourism Sector (Hospitality, F&B or Travel)**
2. **Graduate will be a presentable individual that applies to health, hygiene, safety and ethical national and international criteria's**
3. **Will be fluent in two languages, with English at advanced level**
4. **Have the practical know-how of designing a website, upkeep it, be able to make a reservation and ticketing**
5. **Provide TQM in service (Depending on the specific field)**
6. **Understand consumer behaviour and have high level customer relations and have problem solving skills (experience)**
7. **Have theoretical and practical experience of sales and marketing**
8. **Have basic accounts, cost and purchasing knowledge**

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- **40% Practical**
- **60% Theoretical**

Of the 40% - 25 will be directly from a sector representative (will have a degree in Tourism and have minimum three years experience). 15 will be assessed by the instructor with project assignments and spot checks

Of the 60% - Quizzes, written exams and assignments will be provided depending on the subject

PROGRAMME LAYOUT: Blended Learning

Faculty

- 1xProfessor, 4x Assist. Prof. Dr. (with sector experience), 1x Dr., 3x sector specialised Lecturers (Hotel, Chef, Travel)
- Agreements with professional tourism sector companies, with qualified individuals as supervisors
- Each student will be interviewed before acceptance

Infrastructure

- FO Reservation Lab (Opera)
- 2x Kitchens
- 1x Ticketing (Amadeus & Galileo)
- 1x 100 people capacity Restaurant
- 4x Allocated class-rooms
- Agreements with Travel Agents, Hotels and Restaurants

Results of cycle 1: Accreditations

- YODAK and YOK have almost identical requirements for accreditations
- There are three main principles that HE institutions must meet in order to achieve a two year conditional acceptance. After this time frame YODAK goes and checks these principles and then the institution can achieve full accreditation. The principles are:
  - Programme information, Academic Team and Infrastructure
- There are three year vocational programmes such as Engineering and Nursing in North Cyprus. For Tourism there are only two year associate programmes

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME

COURSE NAME & TERM:	**CONTENTS:**
TERM 1: Sanitation, Health & Safety (PLO2)	Covers the moral and legal responsbilities of coordination for sanitary and safe environment for housekeeping, food preperation and service. Also outlines the safety and security requirements for risks associated to travel and tourism**.**
English for Tourism I (PLO3)	Students are introduced to all the terminologies applied in the various tourism departments. To include the role of tourist information offices, explaination of guided tour with use of past, present and future tenses and respond to possible guest requets. Therefore this course is covered through applied learning and role-plays, set in various tourism departments.
Information and Communication Technology I (PLO4)	Students are shown all the Microsoft Office Systems to include Word, Power Point and Excel. Learning takes place in a class room Lab. Students are briefly introduced to web-design
Introduction to Tourism & Hospitality (PLO1)	The tourism system and overal components of tourism are explained in depth. Students will understand what has contributed to the development of Tourism & Hospitality and what are likely to be the future developments. Use UNWTO Reports and TRNC Tourism data are fundamental learning resources
Industry Awareness Tutorial (PLO1)	A high concentration of this course is educational visits to the various legs of the tourism sector. The course introduces the student to all the possible job prospects in the sector to include travel and hospitality, and the working conditions in the tourism sector.
Introduction to Sales (PLO7)	The course aims to develop the students communication and selling techniques through customer relations theories and cases. The contents of the course includes role-play and simulation resources**.**
TERM 2: English for Tourism II (PLO3)	Students develop the communication skills through organising tours inwhich they are the guide. They apply the learning they have achieved at level 1 and prepare their own itinarary, literature for promoting the event, conduct the tour and evaluate the event at the end. This can be directed in to the specific field the student is interested in (tourism or hospitality)
Information and Communication Technology II (PLO4)	Covers the basic requirements of developing and maintaining a website in which the student chooses which field to specialise in (tourism or hospitality). Students will be shown how to design a web and maintain it as part of an online software course programme.
Housekeeping (PLO1)	Students are explained and demonstrated the skills required in managing the housekeeping department from the recruitment process for this department to

	how to clean, maintain and manage the housekeeping of public and private areas within the tourism sector. Various visits to public attractions and hotels are pursued.
Marketing techniques (PLO7)	The theoretical idea's of marketing are explained and students are taught the fundamentals of promotion, advertising, product development, pricing, distribution channels and the influence of social media and website review networks.
Three-day Placement I (PLO7)	Students apply to the tourism department for which there is a position available and are interviewed by the supervisor for which will be their work mentor. The student commences their basic training in the department. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student several learning outcomes specific to the department are addressed.
TERM 3: Language Elective I (PLO3)	Student has a choice of choosing French, German or Russian as a second language. Level 1 is taught which include speaking, reading, listening and writting.
Food & Beverage Service (PLO1)	The various service styles around the world are first explained theoretically and after the first three weeks students practice and apply their learning in the university reataurant lab. Students prepare and practice various food and beverage services.
Kitchen Practices I (PLO1)	Covers the explaination of basic kn ife and utencil use, basic sauces, kitchen brigade and structure and after the fisrt three weeks students are practicing their learning in the university kithen. Student will demonstration principle sanitation, hygiene and safety in the kitchen.
Front Office (PLO1)	Students are demonstrated the simulation of front office system for a hotel. The course takes place in the university Opera Lab where students practice to take reservations, manage reservations, checkin/out guests, prepare guest bills, make changes to reservations, carry out night audtis and deal with complaints.
Three-day Placement II (PLO7)	The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student several learning outcomes specific to the department at level 2 are addressed.
TERM 4 Language Elective II (PLO3)	Student continues with the chosen language from term 3 at level 2 which includes speaking, reading, listening, writting, taking a reservation and making a sale.
F&B Practices (PLO1)	Covers the planning, organisation and preperation of food and beverage practices to include banquet, fast-food, fine dining, events, cafe and bar. Both commercial and non-commercial practices are explained. Each student plans, organises and hosts a food and beverage practice
Kitchen Practices II (PLO1)	Is a continuation of Kithen Practices I. Includes menu planning, procurement, food handling, effective food

	and beverage storage, food preperations and principle culinary dishes.
Ticketing (PLO4)	Students will be demonstrated the use of Amedeus and Galileo travel simulation methods in the university lab. The principle reservations techniques alongside travel requirements are explained. Students will deal with special requests, itinarary planning, package development and apply skills learnt in marketing practices, through online learning soft-ware.
Three-day Placement III (PLO7)	The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student several learning outcomes specific to the department at level 3 are addressed, to include mrketing techniques.
TERM 5: Language Elective III (PLO3)	Student continues with the chosen language from term 4 at level 3 which includes speaking, reading, listening, writting, taking a reservation and making a sale, problem solving and dealing with a complaint
Consumer Behaviour (PLO6)	Covers the principle theories on consumer behaviour, looking at international examples and applying them to the north Cyprus context. Students will have on-line pedagogies and role-plays to develop their understanding of different consumer behaviour and dealing with the situation at hand.
Human Resources (PLO1)	Provides understanding of human resources and its function. The recruitment process from international examples and the overal responsibility of the HR department are explained.
Cost, Accounts and Purchasing (PLO8)	Covers the concepts of costs in tourism products, basic accounts and purchasing rules. Various systems are demonstrated to include balance sheet, procurement, cost cutting methods and iniatives.
Three-day Placement IV (PLO7,8)	The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student several learning outcomes specific to the department at level 4 are addressed. Application of consumer behaviour, human resources, cost, accounts and purchasing projects are assigned. Learning outcomes must address these principles at this level of the programme, and in particuler prove accounts of problem solving, marketing techniques cost control accounts and purchasing.
TERM 6: Placement Seminar (PLO1-8)	Student is expected to prepare a detailed self reflection of what s/he has learnt during the two-and-a-half year placement. The reflection will be presented in a professional setting and therefore will develop the students presentation skills.
Specialised Elective (PLO1)	Departmental or university electives can be selected depending on tutor guidance. Students are advised to select courses of specialism either from tourism or

	hospitality. However, students may choose business, accounts, languages also.
Specialised Elective (PLO1)	Departmental or university electives can be selected depending on tutor guidance. Students are adviced to select courses of specialism either from tourism or hospitality. However, students may choose business, accounts, languages also.
Specialised Elective (PLO1)	Departmental or university electives can be selected depending on tutor guidance. Students are adviced to select courses of specialism either from tourism or hospitality. However, students may choose business, accounts, languages also.
Three-day Placement V (PLO1,6,7,8)	The student continues their training in the selected workplace. Depending on which department has been chosen by the student several learning outcomes specific to the department at level 5 are addressed, with professional level of problem solving at department level,. Employment prospects at this level is discussed with the placement supervisor

APPENDIX 5: AGREEMENT BETWEEN GAU AND SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES

Agreement between Higher Education and KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR

As part of the Doctorate in professional studies project completed by GAU, and the new programme contents discussed in detail during the interviews and presentation that took place at the KITOB office for the programme between head of department GAU, and KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR representatives, the follow proposal of agreement has been considered to be feasible:

KITSAB, KITOB and RESBIR to work jointly together with GAU, over the next three years, but to commence work together as of September 2016 in the following projects:

I. Internship / Apprenticeship
II. Graduate Employment
III. Monitor the quality of the programme
IV. Tourism Awareness in North Cyprus Campaign

I. Internship /Apprenticeship Programme:

GAU STHM and KITSAB, KITOB and RESBIR will agree to send all the Blended Learning Programme students to train as part of an Apprenticeship Programme in the various departments of the suggested Hotel, Travel Agent and Restaurant sector. Only licensed, fully equipped and highly education and trained companies and establishments will be recommended. This will commence as of September 2016. Students will work in the various departments on average of 30 hours a week and will be in class at GAU STHM three days of the week. These students will be trained for three years in junior positions such as bar tender, Head Waiter/waitress, reception, housekeeper, sales, reservations, or chef and be paid the required legal pay of two-thirds of the minimum wage – in accordance with TRNC Employment Legislation. The students will be monitored by their lecturer and an allocated supervisor at the hotel/ travel agent or restaurant who will have a minimum of three years' experience in the position and have at least a tourism related university degree. The supervisor will also be responsible to partly assess the student's performance.

The Apprenticeship Programme is to be marketed in the national / international media by KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR, but to be agreed by STHM beforehand

All students are to be provided with a meal and changing room facilities. The time allocated for working will not exceed 30 hours a week, unless there is a special agreement between the student and work place, which must be approved by STHM.

II. Graduate Employment:

Each year one senior position will be offered by KITOB, KITSAB or RESBIR to a graduate student who achieves a CGPA of 3.00 and above, any other required positions will be promoted by STHM. KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR is to inform STHM in advance of the vacant position so that arrangements can be made

III. Monitor the quality of the programme

The programme quality will be monitored by STHM, KITOB, KITSAB and RESBIR through two questionnaire surveys in one educational year. These survey's will be analysed by STHM and remain the property of GAU. The results will be shared between all the stakeholders in this agreement. The survey will be prepared, designed and distributed by all stakeholders in this agreement annually.

All stakeholders in this agreement will work to improve, maintain and develop the quality and content of the blended learning programme. At least three meetings a year will take place for quality assurance.

IV. Tourism Awareness in North Cyprus

As part of KITOB's North Cyprus Campaign which commenced in 2015, GAU STHM and KITOB will work together to promote and create awareness of Tourism in North Cyprus; and also use the new blended learning programme as a potential source to raise awareness in society, through various campaigns deemed feasible by GAU STHM and KITOB.

This agreement will commence in September 2016 – September 2019, in which case a new agreement will be formed thereafter.

Girne American University ……

KITOB ……

KITSAB ……

RESBIR ……

APPENDIX 6: COMPARISON OF CURRICULA OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES IN VARYING COUNTRIES TO BENCHMARK THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME FOR TOURISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Apprenticeship – England 2011	**Apprenticeship – Austria, Germany, Switzerland 2011**
Employed status	Trainee status
Wage (high relative to other countries)	Trainee allowance
Short duration (average one year)	Long duration (average three years)
Most at lower skill level (Level 2)	Most at higher skill level (Level 3)
Outside providers train	Employers train on-the-job
Only 60% of apprentices are under 25	Apprentices are normally under 25
Minimum100 hours off-the-job training	Minimum 900 hours off-the-job training
4-8% of employers train apprentices	25-30% of employers train apprentices