

Journal of

Applied Learning in Higher Education

Fall 2014, Vol. 6



Journal of
**Applied Learning
in Higher Education**

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Aims and Scope: The *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education* (JALHE) is an international and interdisciplinary journal serving the community of scholars engaged in applied learning at institutions of higher education. Its purpose is to advance scholarship on applied learning by providing an outlet for empirical, interpretive, and theoretical work related to this pedagogical practice.

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Educating for Democracy by Walking the Talk in Experiential Learning

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Engaging students as actors in rather than audience of their education. This is both the primary feature of experiential education as John Dewey envisioned it and its underlying link to education for democracy: the flourishing of democracy requires citizens who are empowered actors, and such citizens cannot be produced through educational processes that deny participation and power to students. In this article we share and examine ex-

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amples of experiential learning practices that try to walk the talk of democratic purposes and discuss associated challenges and design principles. Our goals are to encourage and empower the community of experiential educators to understand, enact, inquire into, and continue developing the full potential of our work as it contributes to educating for democracy.

Absence of participation tends to produce lack of interest and concern on the part of those shut out. The result is a corresponding lack of effective responsibility.... [Similarly] where there is little power, there is correspondingly little sense of positive responsibility. About larger matters, a spirit of passivity is engendered.... Habitual exclusion has the effect of reducing a sense of responsibility for what is done and its consequences.... [T]he best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. (Dewey, 1937/2010, p. 128)

John Dewey was a pioneer of experiential learning who thought and wrote extensively about education, democracy, and the relationship between them. In Dewey's understanding, the flourishing of democracy requires responsible citizens with democratic sensibilities and capacities who are empowered actors. Such citizens cannot be produced through educational processes that deny participation and power to students and thereby habituate passivity, disconnectedness, and lack of responsibility. This is the primary argument for and feature of experiential education as Dewey articulated it: engaging students as *actors* in rather than *audience* of their own education. Making an eloquent case for the importance of such alignment between democratic purposes and democratic processes in pedagogical design, Dewey (1937/2010) concluded:

Whether [the] educative process is carried on in a predominantly democratic or non-democratic way becomes therefore a question of transcendent importance not only for education itself but for its final effect upon all the interests and activities of a society that is committed to the democratic way of life. (p. 127)

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Simply put, education must walk the talk of democracy.

The co-authors of this article share a commitment to cultivating empowered-actor-learners through participatory, experiential education in which power is shared among students, faculty, staff, and community. Rather than simply telling our students they should be responsible for their learning, we design teaching and learning environments and practices that position them as—and build their capacity to be—agents of their own and others' learning. And we have come to recognize, value, and embrace the linkages between such empowered-actor-learners and empowered-actor-citizens. (To clarify, we use the word "citizen" to denote a person who is engaged with his or her community and the world at large, not legal status.)

Although specific conceptions of democratic purpose vary among us, we find compelling the notion that the academy can and should play a considerable role in nurturing democracy, strengthening communities, and supporting the flourishing of all life (e.g., Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003). We want our students to become builders of a better tomorrow (Hartman, 2013)—co-creators, with us and others, of a world that is increasingly peaceful, compassionate, just, inclusive, and verdant. And we believe that our day-to-day work should contribute actively and effectively to these ends. So we articulate civic as well as disciplinary and vocational goals and seek ways to integrate those goals within the full range of our professional activities.

Further, following Dewey, we seek educational practices that walk the talk of our goals by engaging everyone involved (students, faculty, staff, community members) as mindful, deliberate, responsible, collaborative, and critical builders of that better world. Dewey's framing of education for democracy calls us to invite students to join us in practices that, in our day-to-day worlds of classroom, campus, and community, engage us all as empowered actors and co-creators. It also provides a lens through which we can examine and refine our understanding of and approaches to experiential education.

Examining our own varied approaches to designing for democratic ends through democratic means makes explicit the ways in which experiential education that walks the talk of democracy can emerge from and be leveraged for a rich set of academic and civic learning goals and possibilities. For us, as for Dewey, democracy is both a way of life and a political system, and the two are intricately interdependent. We are, therefore, interested in both (a) the alignment of democratic purposes and processes in experiential education and (b) how such education can contribute to democracy as both a way of life and a political system.

Efforts to heed Dewey's call are neither new nor unique to us, although it is our intention to expand and deepen the inquiry to date. In the pages that follow we share examples of practice that several of us have designed intentionally (in collaboration with others) to try to walk the talk of democratic purposes. Informed by these examples,

we identify and discuss associated challenges and design principles, offering them for the reader's use, adaptation, and critique. Our goals are to encourage and empower the community of experiential educators to understand, enact, inquire into, and continue developing the full potential of our work as it contributes to educating for democracy.

WALKING THE TALK: EXAMPLES

Our first example is at the program level. Through a tight focus on a clearly articulated goal and on processes that walk the talk of that goal, Yale's Center for International and Professional Experience is systematically shifting its culture. Expectations and behaviors of staff and students are being transformed toward greater student responsibility for their own learning and development. The Center is intentionally examining the ways in which their own processes can be better aligned with their purpose of cultivating empowered-actor-learners; in doing so, they are nurturing in their students and in themselves the democratic ways of being on which the flourishing of democracy depends.

EXAMPLE 1. DESIGNING PROGRAM-LEVEL OPERATIONS TO CULTIVATE STUDENT OWNERSHIP

Kelly McLaughlin, Yale University

Yale University's Center for International and Professional Experience (hereafter referred to as the "Center") was established during the course of several years through the integration of previously separate offices for career services, fellowships, study abroad, and summer study. We took significant steps forward as a Center when, guided by educational consultant Patti Clayton, we worked together to determine our collective, guiding purpose, which we refer to as our "North Star" (following the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; see Bringle, Studer, Wilson, Clayton, & Steinberg, 2011).

Sharing across programs the opportunities we each saw to deepen our impact, staff members agreed that an ever-growing number of students were coming to us with a strong sense of entitlement, assuming access to our programs as a matter of course or expecting advisors to select opportunities and find funding for them. We saw in this dynamic an opportunity to cultivate empowered-actor-learners and empowered-actor-citizens. Enhancing student ownership of their education and personal development became our North Star. On many occasions since, Center staff have asked, "What would North Star say?" as a way to help us walk the talk of our focus on student ownership when considering programming choices, confronting an issue related to learning outcomes or assessment, or deciding how best to respond to particular student behaviors. Discussed briefly below are three examples of our efforts to align our processes with this purpose.

Model of student engagement. Seeking to align our purpose of enhanced student ownership and our processes for accomplishing that goal helped us see how heretofore independent offices could work in synergistic ways. We began to appreciate how experiences across the Center's spectrum of opportunities could help students—as agents of their own education and development—design a clearer roadmap for defining and achieving their goals in highly personalized ways. Specifically, examining the full range of our programs through the lens of our focus on student ownership generated an organizing framework, the Model of Student Engagement, that makes visible how student ownership can, does, and should interact with programmatic Center support (see http://www.yale.edu/yalecollege/international/pdf/CIPE_Model_of_Student_Engagement.pdf).

Mapping various programmatic opportunities in light of our North Star made clear what levels of agency and what associated competencies are most clearly present in particular activities. For example, the Richard U. Light Fellowship funds highly structured language programs in East Asia, whereas the Yale Fields Language Study Program and a variety of internships and research fellowships require a high degree of student agency. The highly structured programs are less flexible, led by others, and have predetermined foci. The high student agency opportunities are more open-ended, student-led, and customized by individual students in light of their own goals. The highly structured activities involve student competencies, such as following instructions and using existing resources well, while the high student agency programs are associated with problem-solving and finding one's own resources. These clearly defined characteristics and competencies of particular opportunities form the basis for goals-based advising that prompts critical reflection among students regarding their readiness for, goals for, and approaches to the Center's offerings.

Terms of engagement. Supporting the Model are our Terms of Engagement, which make explicit the roles that students and Center staff play as partners. As the excerpt below demonstrates, the Terms attempt to establish clearly that while the Center will support students, it is they who must take ownership of their own learning processes (for example, by thinking about their own goals and doing some research on related opportunities and requirements before they come to us):

The Center offers...

- *The opportunity to discuss the student's plan of action with an advisor who will guide critical reflection, goal-oriented activity, and thoughtful program selection.*
- *Support throughout the application process, after selection, during the experience, and upon return.*
- *One courtesy reminder to complete requirements.*
- *A culture of mutual respect for student and staff time.*

Students are expected to...

- *Be active participants in their own development by utilizing the Center's resources (on-line tools, advising, peers, funding, etc.) to maximal and intentional benefit.*
- *Be able to conceptualize and express how their plans connect to their own short- and long-term development.*
- *Respect peer and staff time by meeting deadlines, keeping appointments, and completing any requirements associated with the experience.*

Fellowship pre-advising questionnaire. Realizing that our advising practices were enabling students to come to us having given little or no thought to their goals, the nature of our programs, or the potential fit between them, we developed a Pre-Advising Questionnaire. While students can apply for fellowship funds without completing the questionnaire, and while meeting with an advisor is not an application requirement, the questionnaire must be submitted to secure an in-person advising appointment. As the following excerpt demonstrates, the Questionnaire attempts to make clear that the Center values and expects student ownership, agency, and responsibility:

To make the most of your individual appointment, we ask that you fill out this questionnaire to the best of your ability. In this way, not only will our advisers be better prepared to answer your questions, but you will also be better prepared to reflect upon and engage in a conversation about your proposed idea, your application strategy, and your long-term goals.

- *Please provide general information about what you will be proposing to do and where you are proposing to do it (in 2-3 sentences).*
- *With whom have you discussed your application and/or proposed idea? Please include any contacts you have made at your activity site.*
- *Briefly (2-3 sentences), what is one of your longer-term goals, and how might your proposed experience relate to this?*
- *Please list the fellowships to which you plan on applying.*
- *Click here to verify that you and your proposed activity (if applicable) are eligible for the fellowships you've listed above.*
- *If you have any particularly challenging circumstances or questions that you would like to discuss with an adviser, please describe these here.*

Advisors receive these questionnaires at least 24 hours prior to meeting with the student. Advising sessions, therefore, begin with the advisor and the student both having given thought to and gathered important ideas and resources. Our advising practices thereby better walk the talk of the kind of partnership we aim for in the Terms of Engagement—one of mutual respect and shared responsibility.

As our “North Star” ethos takes fuller shape, the Center is just one piece of a burgeoning, institutional reexamination of the tension that comes with providing students access to substantial resources without also designing opportunities (if not requirements) for them to reflect critically about their own roles in that educational partnership. Not all members of the institution, least of all some students and families who see themselves as paying customers, share this concern. But in this tension between students as consumers and students as responsible learners and citizens, our North Star is a framework for promoting the “positive responsibility” (*sensu* Dewey) that is at the heart of democracy.

The changes instituted by Yale’s Center for International and Professional Experience highlight the possibilities for and importance of designing practices that move our students and ourselves toward more democratic ways of being. Relatedly, if students are unaccustomed to participatory, power-shared, experiential approaches in the classroom—which is often the case after years of being positioned as recipients of others’ knowledge—they must learn how to be empowered actors. Our second example illustrates how an instructor begins to cultivate such capacities by designing the first days of the semester to jump-starting students’ shifts from passive spectators (audience) to collaborative actors.

EXAMPLE 2. DESIGNING THE FIRST DAYS OF CLASS TO BUILD STUDENTS’ CAPACITIES AS EMPOWERED ACTORS

George Hess, NC State University

If I walk into the classroom on day one and read the syllabus with all its attendant rules and power dynamics, it’s hard to convince students that my course is an opportunity for learning in experiential and democratic ways. I have designed the first two days of my Natural Resources Measurements course as microcosms of the semester—exposing the students to what is, for most of them, a very different way of learning while also introducing the content of the course. The days are a mixture of teamwork activities with embedded technical content, framed by critical reflection. My original goal was to begin establishing an environment in which students assume responsibility for their own and others’ learning and for course outcomes; I have come to see such responsibility as having democratic as well as academic purposes.

Some context: Natural Resources Measurements is an upper-level undergraduate course that is completely wrapped around a community-engaged project. For example, in 2014, 37 students and I evaluated the human and wildlife use and environmental condition of the Raleigh, North Carolina, Capital Area Greenway System, in partnership with Raleigh’s Department of Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Resources; the NC Museum of Natural Sciences; and the WakeNature Preserves Partnership (see go.ncsu.edu/RaleighGreenways2014).

Day 1. Interdependence and teamwork. The 75-minute class period starts at 1:30 p.m. in a classroom with moveable furniture and large-screen computers. Students entering the room find a large note on the board directing them to instructions on the tables, which in turn refer them to instructions on the course home page (see go.ncsu.edu/nr300; Box 1). Essentially, I ask them to get started and inform them that I’ll arrive shortly. My absence at the beginning of class is intended to begin setting expectations that students will organize themselves, work interdependently, allocate and keep track of time, and complete tasks by a deadline. The activity itself is designed to begin building trust among the students, which is the foundation of good teamwork—a key learning objective of the course.

BOX 1. INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COURSE WEBSITE [*Asides in brackets explain my rationale for the instructions.*]

- There are 6 large monitors around the room. Please arrange the room so that there is a cluster of people around each of the monitors. Clusters should be of approximately equal size, and you should try to be with people you don’t know.
- Review Patrick Lencioni’s (2002, 2005) *5 Dysfunctions of a Team* [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). [*Although the title frames the issue negatively, the book is focused on effective teamwork. Links lead to summaries of key points.*]
- Trust-building teamwork activity: Within each cluster, each person should take a turn using google maps to show the others where s/he grew up. Talk briefly about what it was like growing up there. [*Ice-breaking and team-building activities are integrated with technical content. Students will use google maps for their work during the semester.*]
- Be finished by 14:05 and ready to debrief - you need to allocate your time so that you can make this deadline. [*Making clear that students are responsible for managing their time.*]

I enter the classroom 5-10 minutes before the deadline and walk around, listening in and introducing myself informally. This allows me to counter any brewing concern that I wasn’t there at the beginning because I am not committed to the course. If students don’t stop themselves at the deadline, I wait about 5 minutes longer before stopping them. Most semesters, they do not stop in time, allowing us to discuss, when we reflect on this later in the class period, responsibility for tracking time and meeting deadlines—in a nurturing rather than scolding manner.

At this point, I introduce myself to the class and begin a structured, critical reflection process called DEAL, which is the acronym for the model that guides students to Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning as they reflect on experiences (Ash & Clayton, 2009). I explain the process and ask them to describe, objectively and without

interpretation or value judgments, what happened from the time they entered the room to this moment. This typically gets off to a halting start. Students are not sure what to say, tend to leave out lots of details, or quickly begin to attach causes and values to the events. I coach them through this stage, prompting for details and noting when they go beyond observation. Natural resources inventory work requires keen, minimally biased observations, so this activity addresses core professional skills while teaching students how to reflect critically.

Together, we examine the events just described and discuss the “whys” and “hows”—why did certain things happen, why did I set up this activity, why didn’t I show up at the beginning of class, how did this differ from what they are used to in the classroom, and how did they feel about that? I relate all of this to the structure, content, process, and culture of the course. We discuss expectations—mine and theirs—and what we all need to learn to be successful.

Finally, we take some time to articulate explicitly what we’re learning from examining these activities. We do this orally as a class, and I also ask each student to take five minutes to complete a worksheet that documents the most important thing they learned, how they learned it, why that learning is important, and what they will do differently in future as a result of the learning; this is the usual structure for the Articulate Learning step in the DEAL model. I also emphasize that this is recording *their* learning, not repeating something I said. I ask them to put name and date on the back of the worksheet and request permission to scan and share the front side (i.e., anonymously) with the entire class through the course website. The scan-and-share establishes a pattern of learning from one another and the democratic sharing of information. Each of these steps is important to the course objectives, because effective teamwork relies on being explicit, documenting work, understanding that people learn differently, and transparency.

Day 2. Teamwork, process, and technical skills. The centerpiece of the second day is a statistical sampling activity that blends technical content with further development of teamwork, organizational, and time management skills. I direct the students to develop an estimate of the number of blades of grass in a large field (approximately 12,000 square meters) next to the building, working in small teams (Box 2; Hess & Keto 2009). This is a 75-minute version of the entire course: students are given a task that seems impossible. They have to muster the resources to complete it with the team and time at hand—and they do! The activity blends academic content (i.e., sampling and statistics) with the possibilities of positive, democratic process (i.e., accomplishing what appears impossible through organizing with others).

BOX 2. GRASS COUNTING ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Specific objective Bring back your best estimate of the number of blades of grass in the area mapped on the reverse *and* a list of reasons

why your estimate may not be a good one. [*I define the task and focus attention on what could go wrong. This highlights the importance of retrospection, self-evaluation, and self-critique. It allows me to introduce the notion of the scientist as a healthy skeptic—always asking questions about “how we know.”*] Allocate your time among planning, data collection, calculations, etc. as you wish. You need to be back in the classroom and ready to present results and debrief by ***time to be announced*** at the latest. [*Again highlighting their responsibility to organize and be ready on time.*]

Method. Your choice. If you have a question about how to proceed, write down the question, make a decision, write down the decision, and carry on! [*This highlights the importance of taking responsibility for and documenting issues and decisions so they can be examined by others. This is firmly in line with professional and democratic practice.*]

Invariably, small groups of students go their separate ways with little planning within or across teams, moving as quickly as possible from the classroom to the grassy field. In the 10 years I have been facilitating this activity, I have never seen the students combine as a single, cohesive unit to complete the job well and efficiently. This is both an organizational and a statistical failure, and it reflects a deeply socialized student mindset. They either do not consider the potential value of integrating small teams into a large team to better accomplish the task, or they dismiss that thought and adhere strictly and literally to my instruction to “form small teams” rather than claiming the power to organize themselves otherwise to be more successful. We discuss this during our debriefing, with my main goal being to have students realize that fidelity to the question and the best way to address it, rather than a preconceived notion of “how school is done” (with its attendant defaults to hierarchical power dynamics), is key to success. Fruitful discussion of this and other process issues allows me to inspire students to “think outside of school”—to unlearn the autocratic approaches they have become accustomed to and take a more democratic approach to constructing their learning environment and solving problems.

The key elements of the activities during these two days are highlighting shared responsibility among students and instructor; clarifying expectations for initiative and interaction; nurturing *esprit de corps* and pride of ownership; and being very explicit and transparent about why I’ve organized not only these introductory activities but also, in collaboration with my community partners, the entire course in this democratic way. Because it is so different from what most students have experienced before, this must be done carefully, in a manner that communicates caring and support and that makes it clear that this is all about building up, not tearing down.

The design of the first days of a semester can shape students’ orientation to a course as either audience or actor; it can also begin to build their capacities for unfamiliar ways to collaborate with others, within the classroom and in broader communities, as both learners and citizens. Community-engaged pedagogies and engaged scholarship are particularly well suited for students to engage collaboratively

and, sometimes, directly with the structures and policies at the heart of democracy as a political system. Our third example takes the form of community-based research and advocacy, one of several strategies for integrating theory and practice of democracy and human rights by building students' agency—along with their knowledge and capacities—within political, educational, and legal systems.

EXAMPLE 3. DESIGNING A COURSE TO ENGAGE STUDENTS LOCALLY IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

Julie Shackford-Bradley, University of California at Berkeley

Part of the American Cultures / Engaged Scholarship (ACES) program at the University of California, Berkeley, my course, Human Rights in American Cultures, introduces students to human rights structures and strategies. The main academic learning goal of the course is the development of students' working knowledge of international human rights frameworks and their application in the United States. During the course, we examine the ways in which a human rights lens can reframe how we address social justice issues (through both discourse and action) and can clarify complex issues by peeling back layers of ideology, political positioning, and "othering." The course expands upon the framework of civil and political rights in the U.S. to include economic, social, and cultural rights (in line with a more international approach) and presents students with arguments about the interconnectivity of these categories of human rights.

To integrate theory and practice, I first present the human rights framework and then demonstrate its application through local case studies of violations that have inspired people to take collective action for systemic change. As they learn about human rights in class, students are invited to build community as fellow "rights-holders" and then to expand on that sensibility in their work with community partners. Emphasizing the link between rights and responsibility, the course is designed to give students more choice and more accountability in their own learning and development. During the semester, they can choose to focus on readings and research projects that are directly relevant to their lives or career goals. In lieu of a midterm or final, they write four reflections on the readings, responding to prompts that invite them to integrate a discussion of the academic content of the readings with their own perspectives and lived experiences. This approach positions students as agents in their learning process. Likewise, we build a learning community together in the classroom as students lead discussions of the readings and, through peer discussions, are given the chance—but not pressured—to open up to each other about how they have (or have not) been affected by the rights-related issues we study.

We address the foundations and principles of human rights through close reading of and personal engagement with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Students are asked to read the

declaration, choose a right that is important to their own lived experience, and share their stories of connecting with that right in class discussion. Through this process, students are invited to engage human rights on their own terms while also recognizing the diversity of the groups' stories and interests; in the words of one student, "Hearing people who were close to me talk about the human rights abuses they personally experienced really hit close to home."

The course focuses on a key contribution that international human rights makes to democratic practice in the United States, namely, an emphasis on the interconnectivity between what we have come to know as civil and political or "democratic" rights—rights to free speech, democratic participation, and due process—and what in international human rights are known as economic social, and cultural rights, or rights to equal education, fair remuneration for and safety at work, health care, food, and housing. It is important for students who will be working in local communities to understand that one cannot exist without the other: People with limited resources and education are less likely to seek change through democratic participation (for example, engaging the City Council, running for office, promoting candidates from their communities). At the same time, people experiencing violations of economic, social, and cultural rights understand and can readily articulate structures of oppression and know what they need.

To illustrate this point, I show the film *At the River I Stand*, featuring Martin Luther King Jr.'s last campaign: the 1968 sanitation workers' strike in Memphis, TN. In our discussion of the film, we focus on the fact that, despite the successes of the civil rights movement (including passage of the Civil Rights Law in 1964), these African American workers continued to experience violations of their economic, social, and cultural rights—they were paid poverty wages and worked with no protection. Students are asked to consider the ways in which the iconic placards stating simply "I am a Man" convey the concept of human dignity, which is a fundamental human rights principle that can only be realized when people's basic economic needs are met. We then connect that historical example with our case studies, which focus on economic, social, and cultural rights violations as experienced by children caught up in the juvenile justice system, undocumented immigrants, and people who experience environmental injustice due to their proximity to toxic industrial areas.

In recognition of how human rights discourse and practice promote human agency, we focus on examples of people coming together through grassroots community activism linked with human rights networks to realize and struggle for their rights to clean water, fresh air, equal education, due process, and so on. To emphasize the critical aspect of human rights activism, the course features many guest speakers (from lawyers to academics to the community activists) who have devoted their lives and careers to struggling for human rights. Through this variety, students are invited to recognize and respect multiple forms of knowledge, including that which is gained by lived experience, and to see the value of collaboration across difference.

Students participate in community-based team research projects around the San Francisco Bay Area, bringing their different disciplines and unique skills sets to bear on work in communities to extend and protect human rights. In the process, they develop capacities for leadership, communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution. To ensure that expectations are aligned, I work closely with community partners before the course begins and invite them to the class during the semester to talk about their organizations and strategies for social change. Once teams are established, I provide support but otherwise let students chart their own paths with their partners.

Recently, three teams of students wrote human rights reports on current issues that will be sent to Geneva through the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute. Another team partnered with Community Works, an organization that offers youth with felony-level offenses an alternative pathway through Restorative Justice Community Conferencing, to transform an overstuffed, unused binder full of resources into a website that lists the resources by category and maps them (see <http://info4027.wix.com/communityworks>). In neither example did the undergraduates come into direct contact with people experiencing human rights violations; however, they took direct action by researching and writing on local issues or producing a tool to support youth, their families, and communities. In addition to the team-based research projects students develop with community partners, they also write a “human rights briefing paper” as human rights actors would, framing the issues they face in the local community through human rights discourse and legal argumentation. In the context of such engagement with community issues, a human rights frame can reduce the incidence of the “white knight” phenomenon as students come to recognize that they have the same rights as those with whom they are working in community partnerships and have struggled, or someday will be struggling, for a particular human right themselves.

Through these experiences, students come to understand how people “do” human rights at the community level, linking the legal articulation of rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with community action and democratic practice. As one student described it, “We put our feet on the ground and experienced the struggle for human rights firsthand in this class.” Another student reflected on a “new sense of urgency as I see these issues plus many more in front of me to take action and not be a bystander....” A third wrote of his increased awareness that “Every law and every rule that we have currently established was thought up by ordinary people.... nothing is set in stone and we should act to change it for the better.” These quotes demonstrate students’ awakening to their own agency and ability, individually and in collaboration with others, to align democratic process with purpose and strategy to work toward the realization of international human rights through localized community engagement.

Having considered some of the complexities and possibilities associated with designing a course in which students engage with people outside the university to investigate and address public issues, we turn in our next example to the development of a four-year curriculum focused on community-engaged learning and partnerships. Curriculum development is often conducted by teams of faculty, sometimes in consultation with business or industry partners, to ensure that students gain skills employers would like them to have. But if we are designing an academic program that teaches students to engage in democratic processes for public purposes and if we intend to do that design work in ways that walk our talk, it seems not only reasonable but necessary to bring that public into the process. Our next example is a recent effort to do exactly that.

EXAMPLE 4: DESIGNING AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM AS PARTNERS, FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Barbara Harrison, University of Guelph

A team of community members, students, university staff, and faculty recently worked together over five months to design a new four-year higher education program centered around community engagement. We anticipate that this program will be inquiry-focused, with a high degree of student leadership. As part of a collaborative co-teaching environment, individuals from academic and community settings will share in the teaching and learning and will work as partners on the various projects that are the focal point of the courses.

Our team’s task was to design the overall framework and learning outcomes for the curriculum. We shared a commitment to collaborative design that was democratic and community engaged because we wanted our process to match the content of the program, a community-engaged process to design a program focused on community engagement. We also wanted to establish and foster the type of working relationships that we wish to continue as this program is built. We met five times, with some team members taking on tasks between meetings. The team’s work products were submitted in a report to the provost at the end of the process.

People were invited to join the team based on their individual strengths and their experience with community engagement in higher education. We had a roughly equal number of people working at the university and in community-based settings. Our team of 16 people comprised executive directors of nonprofit and community-based organizations; a senior manager working for the local municipality; an undergraduate student and a recent graduate; a doctoral student; two faculty members; and several staff members, including a university librarian, an educational designer, and a researcher. All but one member of the team (an international faculty member) lived in the local geographic area. Very few of us had designed a curriculum or academic program before or been part of such a diverse, trans-disciplinary team

of people from varying backgrounds working on a curricular project. When our team first came together, some of us knew one another and had worked together before, and others were meeting for the first time.

It was evident and predictable that at the beginning of the process some team members were more comfortable with the task of designing a curricular program than were others. Some members were also more comfortable with a fairly unstructured process than others, and this became more apparent as we started to envision the program together. Although our meetings were warm and hopefully felt inviting, our process felt stilted at times, perhaps due in part to the many unknowns. As we progressed and elements of the program became clearer, it appeared that people became more confident in their roles in the design process and increasingly had a sense of how the program was coming together. By the fourth meeting, the team gelled and ideas began to flow organically, with team members enthusiastically putting forward ideas and actively engaging in solving problems together. By the end of the fifth meeting we had designed the framework for the program, articulated course outcomes, and assembled some sample course outlines (which were developed by individuals seen to be specialists in the focal areas of the courses). At this last meeting, we reviewed what had been accomplished and talked about how to keep the project moving forward.

While our co-design process was a rich one, and the team worked very effectively together, there is much to be learned from our process that might suggest refinements. I share several insights from our experience.

a) Trying to walk the talk of our commitment to incorporating the diverse skills, knowledge, and beliefs of the stakeholders engaged in the design project was complicated by disparate levels of familiarity with the task and with one another, as well as the need to balance task orientation with attention to process. Although we regularly enjoyed a casual lunch together, which gave us time to get to know each other and to chat informally, we might have benefitted from additional, structured opportunities to learn about one another and our interests in the project, to build trust and otherwise deepen our relationships, and generally to cultivate the team becoming a community.

b) We struggled early on with each member of the team being confident that he or she belonged there and had a contribution to make. It took a few meetings before some team members seemed to feel comfortable that they had relevant knowledge, experience, and expertise. We dedicated our first session to the context of our task and to creating a platform from which we could co-design the program. Yet, our process would likely have been stronger had we dedicated more time to getting to know one another's possible areas of contribution and exchanging ideas about the project before beginning to make decisions. In part, such attention to process early on helps integrate the voices of individuals who have been involved with a project for some time and individuals who are new to it. It can also help facilitate discovering the

best approaches for engaging everyone throughout and ensuring that everyone continues to share a common vision and understanding of how to move toward it together.

c) While it might be ideal in principle to have everyone fully involved in every aspect of the design process, it likely was not realistic, and we assumed it was also not desired. Project facilitators believed that democratic processes do not require that everyone be involved at all times or in the same ways as long as everyone has opportunities to make comments, offer suggestions, and propose alternatives; and this is how we tried to approach the design process. Looking back on it, what co-development means should have been more fully discussed at the beginning to ensure that everyone at least had a voice in the decision to proceed this way and was reasonably comfortable with it. I now also wonder if we should have revisited during each gathering the question of how each could best participate, as a way of checking in with one another and ensuring that we were fully drawing on each other's expertise and fully tapping each other's interests. Doing so would have nurtured an even more democratic environment in which everyone felt free to critique one another's ideas, including those of the facilitators, and would have transparently addressed implicit power differences among team members.

d) Walking the talk of our democratic purposes was further complicated by external forces, likely a common dynamic in such collaborations. Our work had to fit within agendas and structures over which we had no influence. For example, we decided together when and how frequently to meet, but within a fixed, five-month time frame. Many of the opportunities noted here for better walking our talk are very much in tension with time constraints, including building stronger relationships within the team, determining the various types of contributions individuals could best make, and having sufficient opportunities for and levels of comfort with critique to allow for further development of design ideas. The reality of limited time can lead to unsatisfactory trade-offs and misalignments between purpose and process. As another example, at times there were tensions between what the university systems or senior administrators required and what our team would have chosen. Although some of us voiced concerns about particular elements of the ultimate design that were incorporated in order to accommodate these institutional pressures, we lacked final decision-making authority on some of the key elements of the program. It is important to acknowledge, which is not to say accept uncritically, the externally enforced parameters within which a process attempting to be democratic may unfold.

While this program has not yet come into being and remains funding-dependent, the participants in the design process remain enthusiastic advocates, seeking ways to bring it to fruition. Our work together demonstrated that while our intentions may be democratic, when working within external constraints we sometimes make trade-offs that may compromise our democratic ideals. It has served as a

valuable learning opportunity for us and perhaps can do the same for others engaging in co-design processes with a wide variety of stakeholders.

The co-designers of the program in our fourth example experienced tensions among the need to establish relationships that support democratic community engagement, the time it takes to allow various perspectives to be voiced and considered, the need to generate a product in a short timeframe, and tacit power dynamics. Similarly, our final example is an intensively co-created, multi-stakeholder experiential learning project grounded in the deeply democratic practices of popular education and community-engaged participatory research as both ends in themselves and means to social, economic, and political transformation. The example highlights the interdependence of co-learners, the influence of organizational values, the central role of relationship building, and the possibilities for challenging entrenched mindsets in ways that can help reshape how communities understand and advance social justice.

EXAMPLE 5: DESIGNING POPULAR EDUCATION AND GRADUATE WORK TO ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE

Kathleen E. Edwards, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Interactive Resource Center

As a doctoral student in a cultural foundations of education program, I intentionally structure and infuse my teaching, learning, and scholarship with community-engaged principles, practices, and content. I believe that everyone is a co-teacher and co-learner, that we learn *with* each other, and that learning can happen anywhere, not only within the walls of a traditional classroom. This democratic orientation has influenced not only *what* I study but *how* I engage in learning. My graduate work is an extended experiential learning opportunity, including numerous collaborators from and with whom I learn and whose teaching and learning I help to facilitate.

The experiential learning project I share here integrates popular education and community-engaged participatory research—democratic processes that walk the talk of the political, social, and economic transformation purposes my partners and I share. Popular education and community-engaged participatory research share democratic commitments to de-centering (but not dismissing) academic knowledge, emphasizing the value of knowledge gained through lived experience, and attending to community assets and capacity-building. How I view and practice popular education is as a justice-oriented form of non-traditional, community-based education in which co-teachers and co-learners harvest, develop, and enhance knowledge; ask critical questions; reflect upon and examine lived experiences; question the status quo; resist inequity and oppression; and imagine and work toward possibilities that require structural, systemic transformations. Similarly, community-engaged participatory research

includes community and academic partners who collaboratively design, implement, analyze, and report on questions relevant to all partners; it specifically examines justice-oriented topics related to the community.

The project, *storyscapes: mapping the narratives of space in downtown greensboro*, is an interactive art installation that re-maps downtown Greensboro, North Carolina, through storytelling by people experiencing homelessness (see gsostoryscapes.wordpress.com). I undertake it in partnership with the Interactive Resource Center (“the Center”), a daytime center for people experiencing homelessness. The Center opened in 2009, and I began working with them in the spring of 2010. An average of 220 people visits the Center daily; many of them also contribute to shaping how the Center runs: its policies and procedures, its day-to-day management, its growth and development. The Center describes its approach to working with people experiencing homelessness as asset-based and grassroots, and this has created an environment that makes popular education and community-engaged participatory research clear avenues for walking the talk of democracy understood in terms of both co-learning and social justice transformation. *storyscapes* emerged and grew from moments of authentic discussion that occurred while picking up trash around the building, preparing community meals, and playing cards in the Center’s dayroom (a large community gathering space in which guests, staff, and volunteers mingle, rest, read, create art, wait for appointments, etc.).

There is no clear beginning to *storyscapes*; it is an unconfined, undetermined, and non-linear exploration of critical storytelling, radical mapping, and community building. The catalysts for this project were two service-learning courses I co-taught with the Center’s volunteer coordinator, Tiffany Dumas, in fall 2012 and spring 2013. To align our pedagogies with our intentions to elevate the lived knowledge of people at the Center experiencing homelessness and to disrupt stereotypes associated with homelessness, Tiffany and I designed the education courses so that both UNCG students and community members (staff, clients, volunteers) at the Center could participate. This meant moving the classroom from the university to the Center’s dayroom. We started building our community by participating in story-circles, sharing and investigating stories of our own experiences in traditional educational spaces. From these personal accounts we began to map an understanding of education that exposed social, political, and historical issues and systems that obstructed the democratic potential of education. Students described these classes as powerful moments of learning due to the lived knowledge shared by everyone, specifically the Center’s guests; and the guests began to identify themselves as active educators in students’ learning rather than passive objects to be studied.

One of the most significant takeaways from the courses was interest in the role of stories in destabilizing systems of oppression. In response, another Center staff member, Gwen Frisbie-Fulton, and I co-designed a framework for what became *storyscapes*: a walking tour of downtown Greensboro based on the stories of places important to people

experiencing homelessness that included 12 poetry and art installations by seven authors, installed at the very locations of the stories. By the time the first *storyscapes* installation series was launched in September 2013, more than 100 community members—Center staff, guests, and volunteers; UNCG students; and others who were supportive of the project—had participated in some active and significant way. At the core of this first phase was a creative team consisting of the authors (Forrist Willis, Isaiah Wardlow, Shannon Stewart, David Pigue, Melea Lail, Donna Harrelson-Burnett, and Gwen Frisbie-Fulton, who also volunteered her time outside of her job with the Center), and me. Within that team we developed a shared philosophy about storytelling, and thus about *storyscapes*, which kept us focused as we planned and implemented the various elements of the project (writing workshops, event planning, fundraising, promotion, and education):

Storytelling serves as a catalyst for community engagement and agency. While we tell stories to convey a narrative of real or fictional events, we also use stories as a way to define ourselves in relation to the world around us; stories allow us to connect to the experiences of others. *storyscapes* uses stories to give reverence and respect to the humanity of those experiencing homelessness and celebrate their significant contributions to our community. Additionally *storyscapes* provides an opportunity for new meaning making for those sharing their stories and for those listening to them. (*storyscapes*, “the power of stories,” 2nd para., n.d.)

Just as *storyscapes* evolves in new and unimagined ways in response to the voices of co-creators and participants, so do the roles and relationships of the individuals involved. In this project I have moved in and out of the roles of co-teacher and co-learner, co-researcher, popular educator, activist, meeting facilitator, friend, and outraged community member. Others in the project have also played multiple roles, which have shifted for various reasons; we readjust when someone wants to learn a new skill, someone has a lot of knowledge about a particular topic, someone has particular access to people or processes; or because of the practicalities of time and availability.

Decisions regarding roles and role adjustments are always grounded in two basic questions: (a) Do these changes serve our purpose to generate discussion and change regarding homelessness, community, and public space within *storyscapes*; and (b) Do these changes challenge and support us in becoming more engaged and critical members of our communities beyond *storyscapes*?

These questions reflect our effort to be mindful of both the immediate work we are doing and how this work contributes to our broader lives as members of a participatory democracy. Holding to them requires that we be flexible. When people are simultaneously

looking for housing and jobs, visiting doctors, and meeting with various social service agencies, it is challenging to maintain a continuous co-researcher/co-creator role for the full length of the project. In response, we’ve revised continuity to mean a *continuous opportunity and invitation* to participate. Being flexible with respect to continuity creates challenges with training co-researchers and catching up new co-researchers; at times I find myself without anyone else to move the project forward with me. But it provides a necessary flexibility that makes the research possible for people who are homeless or transient.

Storyscapes continues to unfold, and it holds deep meaning for us because the subject of the project has emerged democratically and organically from the lived experiences of people who are currently or previously homeless. As we design future phases of this project, we are planning storytelling and radical cartography workshops both on campuses and at community centers in an effort to ignite local community conversations about the roles and values of multiple perspectives in a participatory democracy. The project will continue to be designed and conducted through a collaborative process by Center guests, staff, and volunteers (including members of the UNCG community), in a reflective manner and with a shared commitment to exposing the social, economic, and political inequities that silence the voices of people experiencing homelessness.

This project began with building relationships, not with identifying research questions or establishing learning goals. Such an approach requires an investment in people and a fundamental belief that everyone has valuable knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can contribute to advancing our communities. With the maturing of the relationships have come increased trust, deepening reciprocity, and a growing familiarity that lends itself to greater co-ness. These democratic processes also prepare all of us to use our knowledge, skills, and attitudes in other aspects of our personal and public lives. From experience, we know that working together creates something far more powerful than any of us could accomplish alone.

WALKING THE TALK OF DEMOCRACY: DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

Although the co-authors share an aspirational vision of our students as builders, with us and others, of a better world and a corollary commitment to cultivating empowered-actor-learners and empowered-actor-citizens, specific conceptions of democratic purpose vary considerably among us. As suggested by the examples we have shared here, for us, collectively, such purposes include cultivating capacities associated with:

- assuming responsibility for one’s own growth;
- disrupting stereotypes;
- de-centering authority;

- seeing the dignity of all, including those rendered “invisible” by oppressive and marginalizing social structures;
- collaborating effectively with diverse others;
- investing oneself in local communities;
- valuing individuals beyond immediate geographical or interpersonal communities;
- working to defend and extend individual rights;
- claiming the legitimacy of one’s own and others’ stories;
- seeking out perspectives that challenge one’s assumptions and the norms of one’s communities; and
- working to change structures so as to remove obstacles to and actively nurture the flourishing of all life.

Our five examples further suggest the wide range of contexts in which experiential learning can be designed to walk the talk of education for democracy. From single advising sessions and class periods to semester-long and multi-year projects and from individual interactions to learning communities within courses to multi-partner collaborations, we and many others are attempting to align our teaching and learning processes with democratic purposes.

Each of us brings a set of personal, institutional, or cultural influences to our context-specific conceptualization of democratic purposes and well-aligned democratic processes. Some of us are unlikely to initiate and invite students to join protests in support of social policy reform but will relentlessly cultivate in our daily interactions with students a deep awareness of interconnectedness and a strong sense of responsibility for how choices enshrine or challenge dominant, hierarchical paradigms. Others among us will always push students to think and act beyond the personal and local and to engage directly with structures that limit or negate basic democratic and human rights. Still others seek to cultivate capacities for effective and purposeful change agency in realms local to global, personal to systemic, concrete to abstract. We invite you to consider your own most closely held conceptions of democratic purposes and the ways in which your teaching and learning practices might most meaningfully walk the talk of those purposes.

DESIGNING FOR POWER SHARING

Regardless of where each of us locates ourselves with respect to our particular mix of democratic purposes and processes in experiential learning, we will face challenges and we must be intentional designers. We see the main challenge and opportunity of walking the talk to be cultivating the conviction that we are all empowered-actor-learners and -citizens rather than spectators. As Dewey (1937/2010) suggested, design for power sharing is key because in its absence,

automatically and unconsciously, if not consciously, the feeling develops, ‘This is none of our affair; it is the business of those at the top; let that particular set of [leaders] do what

needs to be done.’ ... What the argument for democracy implies is that the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. Power, as well as interest, comes by use and practice. (p. 128)

This challenge should not be underestimated. Power dynamics among students, faculty, staff, and administrators are intricate and frequently tacit (Sandmann, Kliewer, Kim, & Omerikwa, 2010). They are enshrined in everyday language, including in the little words *for* and *with*, which can be so revealing of the differences between technocratic and democratic orientations, and in words such as *just* as in “I am just a student, but I think ...” (Jameson, Clayton, & Jaeger, 2011). Nor does shared power necessarily mean equal power or power derived from the same sources, which increases the complexity of discussions of and efforts to establish power-shared processes.

In our experiential education practices, we seek to make power dynamics visible, to design inclusive processes that avoid ignoring or marginalizing anyone’s contributions, and to reflect critically on the causes, consequences, and alternatives of and to enshrined systems of power. Specific attempts to share power in our examples include:

- making visible through our communications venues (e.g., websites, syllabi, assignments) the ways in which we and our students share responsibility for defining goals, shaping how we work together, and producing outcomes;
- inviting all participants in course activities and community-engaged projects into positions of shared responsibility for question identification, project planning, time management, product design, resource mobilization, data gathering and analysis, dissemination, and other functions often assumed or dictated by instructors;
- crafting assignments that facilitate students in articulating their own learning rather than repeating the understandings of others;
- inviting students to critique theories, policies, and practices through the lenses of their own lived experience;
- co-creating syllabi and academic programs with students and community members;
- moving class sessions into the community and inviting a full range of stakeholders to participate as teachers, learners, and researchers; and
- soliciting marginalized or otherwise often overlooked individuals as co-creators in all of our activities.

In our experience, while many may express dissatisfaction with being on the receiving end of others’ power, opportunities to share, claim, and use power are not always readily embraced; this is both a challenge and a design opportunity.

ENCOUNTERING CHALLENGES DUE TO COUNTER-NORMATIVITY

The power sharing at the heart of cultivating and becoming actors rather than spectators can be deeply counter-normative (Clayton & Ash, 2004; Howard, 1999) in an educational system and a society that casts faculty as producers and dispensers of knowledge and students and community members as consumers and recipients of knowledge—in other words, as audience. As academics we often operate within a technocratic (expert-driven, deficit-based, hierarchical) institutional culture grounded in policies and norms that hinder, if not actively thwart, engaging with others in ways that honor and nurture a democratic, co-creative, asset-based, power-shared orientation (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). The shift from a technocratic (hierarchical) to a democratic (collaborative) orientation requires attending to the ways in which norms and structures influence how, why, and with whom we have relationships in all arenas of our work. Experiential learning is part of the shift from technocratic to democratic paradigms and practices, in many ways pushing beyond, but also caught up in, technocratic norms and systems. When we foreground explicitly democratic purposes and processes, experiential learning often becomes even more challenging.

Positioning and nurturing students as empowered actors may evoke confusion or resistance among them, especially in institutional, disciplinary, or cultural contexts that are highly technocratic. In our examples about first days (second example) and human rights (third example), some students have a difficult time embracing personal accountability in learning and blame instructors and staff for not providing answers or incentives as they have come to expect and rely on. Some temporarily lose confidence in themselves as they learn how to learn and collaborate in unfamiliar ways, which not only calls for ongoing reassurance and capacity building but can also be discouraging and, at least in the short term, disempowering to them and to us. Some do not recognize the value of democratic processes or the relevance of democratic purposes, which occasionally leads them to express frustration unproductively in class discussions or course evaluations. Critical reflection that is designed to surface, examine, and problematize the underlying issues of individual and institutionalized norms around power can help increase understanding and reduce frustration.

Faculty, staff, and community members may also find themselves outside their comfort zones and hesitant about or resistant to counter-normative practices such as these. Professional staff in the North Star (first) example sometimes feel torn between their desires to “help” students and to maximize the number of program participants and their “North Star’s” guidance to hold themselves and students accountable for shared responsibility, mutual respect, and learning outcomes that, even if challenging in the moment, represent higher education at its

best. More generally, hesitancy also extends to faculty members’ frequent reluctance to engage in explicit discussion regarding the requirements of justice- and rights-oriented values (Hartman, 2013).

For all participants, democratic experiential learning processes frequently raise the challenge of time and can raise tensions between effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity. Technocracy generally privileges efficiency, and our efforts to walk the talk of our democratic purposes often put us at odds with established incentive structures and the expectations of others. In our first days (second) example, George sometimes has to trade off technical content he would otherwise cover to devote time to activities that build his students’ capacities for the unfamiliar tasks of co-creating a community-engaged course and project; his challenge is to integrate these objectives creatively, which requires extended preparation and reflection time on his part. In our popular education (fifth) example, Kathleen must continually navigate and negotiate the tensions between inclusiveness and progress toward a looming dissertation deadline, just as her community partners sometimes find it difficult to participate fully when they must also allocate time to other priorities. Despite potential short-term inefficiencies, we believe the relationship building at the heart of democratic engagement is desirable and necessary if walking our talk is to be effective. The working, growing relationships developed through democratic engagement among administrators, community members, faculty, staff, and students serve well the democracy Dewey envisioned—both the way of life and the political system.

DESIGNING TO LEVERAGE COUNTER-NORMATIVITY

As we see it—and constantly remind ourselves—these and other challenges associated with trying to walk the talk of educating for democracy also have, as their flip sides, the potential to transform us and the broader systems within which we live and work. In other words, it is because these practices are so counter-normative—because they require and foster shifts from technocratic to democratic paradigms, identities, and structures—that they have transformative potential (Clayton & Ash, 2004). We seek, not despite but because of the challenges, to embrace and leverage this counter-normativity.

From this position, we encourage the design of experiential learning in ways that are intentionally disruptive and highlight, problematize, and offer democratic alternatives to currently enshrined technocratic approaches. Although our practices almost certainly remain imbued with intentional or inadvertent technocratic elements, each of our five examples is intentionally disruptive. Disruptive experiences alone, however, are inadequate to generate learning. They are seedbeds of potential learning—learning that undergirds becoming actors—that grow through critical reflection that surfaces, explores, and deepens their meaning. Intentionally designed critical reflection is essential to experiential education in general and especially to leveraging the

counter-normative nature of education that walks the talk of democracy.

By critical reflection here we mean much more than descriptive accounts that summarize experiences at their conclusion. Critical reflection is an intentionally designed process that “*generates* learning (articulating questions, confronting bias, examining causality, contrasting theory with practice, pointing to systemic issues), *deepens* learning (challenging simplistic conclusions, inviting alternative perspectives, asking ‘why’ iteratively), and *documents* learning (producing tangible expressions of new understandings ...)” (Ash & Clayton, 2009, p. 27). It is grounded in and designed to foster critical thinking through prompts, feedback, and assessment that emphasize asking *why* questions, considering multiple perspectives, making evidence-based judgments, and representing others’ ideas fairly (Ash & Clayton, 2009). And it “turns the spotlight squarely onto issues of power ... [by] uncovering and challenging the power dynamics that frame practice” (Brookfield, 2009, p. 298).

The “counting grass” activity in our first days (second) example, which sends students out to work on their own without guidance, integrates critical reflection on how and why they do and do not function as a team, how and why they respond personally to this unfamiliar approach to teaching and learning, and what all of this reveals about the sources and significance of hierarchy and power. Our program co-development (fourth) example demonstrates the necessity of critical reflection on both the substance and the process of a power-shared project if participants who have been excluded historically are to be at the table as empowered co-creators. Without critical reflection that is carefully designed to generate learning in accordance with our democratic purposes, such disruptive activities are likely to leave all of us bewildered, frustrated, or even angry; with critical reflection, we can fully leverage the transformational potential associated with the counter-normative nature of power-shared, experiential learning.

GROUNDING DESIGN WORK IN A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Aligning our processes with our democratic purposes in critically reflective experiential learning requires that we have a reasonably clear sense of those purposes. Precise articulation of the learning goals and objectives we seek to cultivate through processes that walk the talk enables focused design and transparency (as well as assessment). Given the importance of beginning with the end in mind (Covey, 1989), we suggest the utility of being guided by conceptual frameworks that can inform and help articulate what we mean by democratic purposes.

Intrigued by his conviction that “we grow up in educational ... institutions that treat us as members of an audience instead of actors in a drama, and as a result we become adults who treat politics as a spectator sport,” we highlight here as one framework that aligns with much of our thinking and practice the work of educator, author, and activist Parker Palmer (2011, p. 45). In many ways a contemporary successor to Dewey, Palmer has long and deeply reflected on and given

voice to meanings and possibilities of education, community, and social change (most famously in his 1998 book *The Courage to Teach*). Some of his recent work speaks specifically to the capacities citizens must develop if democracy is to flourish and to the ways in which such learning is dependent on educational practices that are themselves democratic. In *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, Palmer (2011) proposes five “habits of the heart that help make democracy possible,” clarifying that by “habits of the heart” he means “deeply ingrained ways of seeing, being and responding to life that involve our minds, our emotions, our self-images, our concepts of meaning and purpose” (p. 44, see Figure 1 for excerpts from pages 44–46).

As with Dewey before him, Palmer sees links between these habits that facilitate democracy and the manner in which education is conducted. The language differs with the century, but the fundamental concepts are the same: We learn from *how* we are taught as well as *what* we are taught, and it is important that we learn democracy ... democratically. Pedagogies that treat students as passive recipients of knowledge yield passive citizens without a sense of personal responsibility and agency who are ill prepared to function within a democracy. Neither learning nor democracy is a “spectator sport” (Palmer, 2011, p. 133).

Figure 1: Palmer’s (2011) “habits of the heart that help make democracy possible” (pp. 44–46)
[NOTE: We have excerpted heavily and encourage reading Palmer’s full explication and discussion of the habits as there are additional important ideas and nuances not conveyed in these excerpts.]

1. *An understanding that we are all in this together.* ... Despite our illusions of individualism and national superiority, we humans are a profoundly interconnected species, intertwined with one another and with all forms of life We must embrace the simple fact that we are dependent on and accountable to one another
2. *An appreciation of the value of “otherness.”* ... we spend most of our lives in “tribes” or lifestyle enclaves—and ... thinking of the world in terms of “us” and “them” is one of the many [associated] limitations ... The good news is that “us and them” does not need to mean “us versus them.” ... the stranger has much to teach us ... [if we] actively invite “otherness” into our lives
3. *An ability to hold tension in life-giving ways.* Our lives are filled with contradictions—from the gap between our aspirations and our behavior to observations and insights we cannot abide because they run counter to our convictions. If we fail to hold them creatively, these contradictions will shut us down and take us out of the action. But when we allow their tensions to expand our hearts, they can open us to new understandings of ourselves and our world, enhancing our lives and allowing us to enhance the lives of others.
4. *A sense of personal voice and agency.* ... many of us lack confidence in our own voices and in our power to make a

difference. And yet it remains possible for us ... to find our voices, learn how to use them, ... expressing our version of truth while checking and correcting it against the truths of others.... and know the satisfaction that comes from contributing to positive change

5. *A capacity to create community.* Without a community, it is nearly impossible to achieve voice ... [or to] ... exercise the “power of one” in a manner that multiplies In a mass society like ours, community rarely comes ready-made. But [we can create] community in the places where we live and work [and thereby] ... kindle the courage we need to speak and act as citizens.

All of the co-authors and many experiential learning practitioners who seek to cultivate empowered-actor learners and citizens have long held conceptions of purpose similar to these habits. Palmer’s framework is useful because it provides an organizing structure with which to articulate and further refine our goals in light of their implicit and explicit democratic dimensions—to ourselves and as we communicate them with others.

As just one example, the human rights tradition springs from an understanding of all human beings as fundamentally “in this together” (Hartman, 2013). Julie’s course (human rights, our third example) introduces students to a theoretical lens and worldview that highlights a profound mismatch between articulated ideal (i.e., legal) commitments and individuals’ everyday experiences. Julie invites students to inquire into that tension as it emerges in their own lives and as it has historically served as a catalyst for social change advocacy. Through the service-learning project in the course she gives students a structure within which to focus their own agency on helping to close this gap in the arena of human rights. Her democratic purposes, therefore, converge at least with the first, third, and fourth habits Palmer articulates.

This framework also offers a foundation for further development, as we conceptualize our goals, of the linkages between democracy as a way of being and as a political system. Continuing with discussion of our human rights (third) example, the democratic rights tradition agrees that we exist in broad communities with one another and further specifies that, as a consequence, we owe each other structural guarantees that embody deep respect. The structure of human rights, accordingly, is a necessary expression of a shared commitment to the inherent dignity of every person (Hartman, 2013). This tradition requires us as members of local, national, and global communities to work continuously to understand and advance the rights project as a co-created ideal, as exemplified in Julie’s course. To a greater extent than is made explicit in Palmer’s habits—and thus an important supplement for those whose conceptions of democratic purpose emerge from the rights framework—this tradition directs our attention beyond our individual identities and immediate interpersonal relationships.

It leads us to examine the ways in which the social, economic, and political structures that we continuously permit and co-create affect everyone’s opportunities for empowerment. This tradition encourages us to investigate what structures must be created to better recognize the dignity of every person.

Although experiential educators with varying conceptions of democratic purposes may not all agree with Palmer’s emphasis on the “spaces within [that] carry at least as much clout as any external command ... [in] liberat[ing] or limit[ing] us” (p. 152), we find particularly significant his insistence that the inward work of democracy is intricately intertwined with the outward expression of its ideals in terms of broad democratic structures:

If we want to teach democratic habits of the heart ... [and] ... if students are to be well served and are to serve democracy well, we need to ... help [them] explore their inner potential [and] their outer potential There are at least two ways to do this: by engaging students with democratic processes in the classroom and the school and by involving them in the political dynamics of the larger community ..., [in either or both ways] drawing them into a live encounter with democracy in action. (pp. 128 and 130)

When we look, in retrospect, at our set of examples, we see the distinctions between inner and outer and between campus and broader community. Our North Star (first) example focuses more on the inner realm of personal responsibility for learning and development and on interpersonal interactions through intentional design of on-campus programs. The human rights (third) example emphasizes the outer realm of social change through a project that engages students with community members in explicitly political activities. We also see possibilities for integration across and, indeed, blurring of these distinctions, especially in our popular education (fifth) example, which positions a practitioner-scholar with an identity as both academic and community member, its linkages between personal storytelling and structural transformation, and its interweaving of graduate research and social justice activism. Finally, we see in all five examples expansion beyond a focus on students alone to integrate faculty, staff, or community members into “inner/outer” and “campus/community” processes as co-learners and co-creators, which we view as essential to walking the talk of education for democracy, given its inherently lifelong and collaborative nature. We suggest that this typology may be useful as experiential educators design in various contexts and in ways that seek to build a bridge between democracy as a way of being and a political system.

Palmer’s habits could be used in several specific ways to support design of experiential learning that walks the talk of education for democracy. Incorporating them as lenses through which to reflect

critically on experiences can help to cultivate the habits as learning outcomes and metacognitive structures; to establish conceptual and practical connections between agency on campus, in local communities, and in broader global systems; and to make visible, navigate, build capacity for, and leverage the counter-normativity of power-shared processes. In our first days (second) example, George might use the habits in critical reflection to facilitate making connections between agency in the classroom, the profession, the community, and the political arena and leverage the counter-normativity of power sharing by asking such questions as:

What did we do this afternoon that invited you to act as an agent? On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident were you that you could effectively influence our process? Why? In that light, what might be some of the forces that more generally limit individuals in using their voices in a) the classroom, b) our profession, c) broader communities, and d) political arenas? What are some specific strategies we can use as we collaborate during this course to help one another use our voices with confidence? What form might those strategies take in the other three arenas (professional, community, political)?

Palmer's habits might also serve as design principles for us as experiential educators, guiding us to examine our processes critically with an eye to how authentically they walk the talk of democracy. Do we really believe that we are "in this together" with our students and others and do we reflect that in, for example, language of "we" rather than "us and them"? Do we, in our course design, class discussions, and advising sessions, truly invite "other" knowledge sources beyond those with which we are familiar and comfortable? Do we, in fact, invest in creating community with our students and other partners in ways that position everyone involved as a community builder? Do we understand and implement critical reflection as "democratic critical reflection"—in other words, is it "designed by all partners in light of learning goals shaped by all partners and for the participation of all partners" (Bringle, Clayton, & Bringle, forthcoming)?

A well-chosen framework makes transparent the knowledge, skills, and dispositions we are educating toward while also helping us to operationalize them. According to Hartman (2013), educating for democracy "may at times require explicit values commitments in the classroom and in the public sphere" (p. 60); such explication can be aided by an organizing conceptual framework, such as that offered by Palmer (and perhaps supplemented with others, for example, a more explicitly democratic rights framework as discussed above). Palmer's framework can help us hold in creative tension being—and encouraging our students to be—critical of the technocratic status quo yet also imaginative of more democratic possibilities. It can heighten our collective awareness that democratic commitments, practices, and policies are not settled orientations but rather choices that we need to

make and continually remake if we are, in Hartman's words, to "push from imagined ideal to implemented reality" (p. 67).

CONCLUSION

With the ultimate stakes encompassing both "general social welfare" (p. 124) and the "full development of human beings as individuals," (p. 124) Dewey (1937/2010) argued that democracy must "become part of the bone and blood of the people in daily conduct of its life" (p. 129); and education, he believed, might well be the single most significant determinant of that outcome. In *Dewey's Dream*, Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett (2007) make the case that "for universities and colleges to fulfill their great potential and really contribute to [democracy] ..., they will have to do things very differently than they do now..." (p. 84). What, though, does this mean for the work of experiential educators?

In this article we have shared some of our own conceptions of democratic purposes and some of our continually evolving attempts to walk their talk through intentional design of our processes. It may bear clarifying here that we privilege none of these processes or conceptions of purpose. As we see it, some of them, in Dewey's framing, relate more to democracy as a way of life and others more to democracy as a political system. Policies and structures that underlie democratic governance and institutionalize expectations for, if not the reality of, respect for human dignity and moral equality do not, on their own, make for a vibrant democratic culture. In turn, democracy as a political system may be especially well suited to the development of a pervasive and deep democratic consciousness insofar as it foregrounds awareness that we are fundamentally in relationship with one another and share responsibility for individual, community, national, and global well-being. A rich mix of interconnected and mutually reinforcing democratic purposes and processes, such as we have sought to illustrate here, is likely necessary in a comprehensive education for democracy.

We close with what we have come to see as an important common thread in our own work and what we commend as a powerful "North Star" for the community of experiential educators—Dewey's (1937/2010) eloquent articulation of "the foundation of democracy":
faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience. It is not belief that these things are complete but that if given a show they will grow and be able to generate progressively the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action. (pp. 124-125)

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Towards a Pedagogy of Internships

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This paper responds to the relatively scant literature on effective learning practices in one area of applied learning: internships. This dearth of literature is striking given the growing body of research and knowledge in such applied learning contexts as undergraduate research, study away experiences, community-based research, and service-learning. The authors describe an emerging pedagogy of academic internships that frames essential components of effective learning practices for this form of experiential education. The article explores two broad pedagogical questions: What can be learned in an academic internship? And, what principles and theories foster that learning? Domains and dimensions of learning are broadly considered and the theories and principles that comprise what the authors refer to as “pedagogical cornerstones” of effective learning in academic internships are explored. Select, hallmark formats of effective learning practices are described.

Internships are a growing presence on the higher education landscape. In the liberal arts and sciences, internships have grown partially in response to pressure for career-ready graduates and partially in response to research on effective practices for deep learning (Kuh, 2008). Internships have long been a feature of professional programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels and often serve as capstone experi-

ences in those programs as well. These internships are often required for the degree and tend to be facilitated either through the academic program itself, a central office in the department housing the program, a centralized academic internship center on campus, or in some cases career services offices. Many colleges and universities offer internships that are not connected to a course of study, the primary purposes of which are personal enhancement or career exploration; these internships are typically accessed through career services. And while these are worthy goals for any internship, our focus in this article is on the first two uses of internships, which share a focus on learning that is directly related to academic disciplines. We refer to such experiences as academic internships, which include what some programs call professional internships.

As is the case with any approach to learning, internships can be implemented more or less effectively. Much has been written about effective pedagogy in other forms of applied learning, including service-learning (see for example Howard, 2001; Compact, 2003), study away (see for example Bolen, 2007; Forum, 2011), community-based research (see for example Strand, 2000; Strand, Cutforth, Stoecker, Marullo, & Donohue, 2003) and undergraduate research (see for example Brownell & Swaner, 2010). The literature on effective practice for internships, however, appears to be sparse. In this article we attempt to frame the essential components of such practice—a pedagogy of internships.

Most descriptions of pedagogy emphasize teaching and are a combination of principles and practices. Michael Smith (2012) offers a more robust and inclusive conceptualization of pedagogy, flowing from his belief that “to educate is, in short, to set out to create and sustain informed, hopeful and respectful environments where learning can flourish” (2012, p. 1). A focus on teaching alone, according to Smith, fails to connect the learner, the teacher, and that which is learned. He emphasizes the role of the pedagogue in drawing out the learning, an

essential component of early conceptualizations of pedagogy that often does not appear in more recent ones. Informed by that conception of pedagogy, we organize this article around two main questions: What can be learned in an internship? And, what principles and theories help us understand how to draw out that learning? To stay within the scope of this article, only a few examples of effective practices are offered; readers can then assess prospective practices and create new ones tailored to the needs of their learners, settings, and subject matter.

WHAT CAN BE GAINED FROM AN INTERNSHIP?

An academic internship can be a powerful vehicle for a variety of student outcomes; to borrow from Berkowitz (1987, p. ix), it can be a means for ordinary students to do extraordinary things. We divide our discussion of these possibilities into two sections: 1) dimensions and domains of learning and development and 2) approaches to learning that can be nurtured in an internship so that students emerge as more engaged, integrated, and self-authored learners (Baxter Magolda, 2001).

DIMENSIONS AND DOMAINS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Internships can be vehicles for both learning and development in several aspects of students' lives. Learning implies an additive change; for example, students understand a topic or concept better or acquire new abilities. Development connotes a qualitative shift in the way students look at the world (including themselves) and make sense of their experiences; some scholars have compared it to acquiring new lenses (Kegan, 1982; Swaner, 2012). For example, students begin to consider the social impact of their individual decisions. Once new lenses are acquired, they are difficult to remove.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

As a way of fostering generative thinking about possibilities for learning and development, we suggest considering four dimensions: professional, academic, personal, and civic. In each dimension, learning and development can incorporate the domains of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values (Sweitzer & King, 2014).

The professional dimension. Some students seek academic internships primarily for career exploration. They may be studying in the liberal arts disciplines and want to see how the skills learned in those disciplines can be put into practice in a professional context. For others, the internship is a capstone in their majors, completing a highly structured and sequenced set of courses and field experiences; this use of internships is especially common in professional programs. Such internships are a chance to pull together and apply much of what was learned in course work and see how it relates to other disciplines they

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encounter in the field. For all students, an academic internship is an opportunity to take the next step in career readiness: to acquire more of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of a profession or an academic discipline and to explore how well those fit with their personal interests and strengths. The internship also offers the opportunity to understand the world of work in a more complete way and become socialized into the norms and values of a profession (Royse, Dhooper, & Rompf, 2011).

The academic dimension. Academic internships emphasize the applied learning of a particular academic discipline, thereby deepening understanding of key disciplinary concepts. Students can emerge better able to think like a sociologist, a chemist, or a historian, for example. There are also important essential abilities across disciplines that can be strengthened in an academic internship, including the ability to look critically at information, think creatively, perceive issues from multiple viewpoints, develop analytical abilities, and communicate clearly both verbally and in writing. Many of these abilities are traditional outcomes of what is referred to as a liberal education (Crutcher, Corrigan, O'Brien, & Schneider 2007); they also are critical to the work of many professions (Lemann, 2004). These abilities sometimes may be referred to as "soft skills," although that term is more commonly used to reference the interpersonal skills that would be found in the dimension that follows (Bedwell, Fiore, & Salas, 2014).

The personal dimension. The academic internship is an opportunity for intellectual and emotional development important to an intern's life, regardless of occupation. For one thing, such an internship offers an opportunity to develop qualities such as flexibility, sensitivity, and openness to diversity. The internship can also be a powerful catalyst for developing a sense of potential, testing creative capacities, and exercising judgment. For another, students can learn a tremendous amount about themselves during an academic internship. The opportunity to advance self-understanding and self-awareness is a crucial one and can include clarifying values and understanding reaction patterns, cultural profiles, ways of thinking, and styles of communicating (Baird, 2011; Kiser, 2012; Sweitzer & King, 2014).

The civic dimension. The need for college students to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will allow them to function as productive citizens in a democratic society has drawn a good deal of attention on college campuses across the country (Colby, Erlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Dorado, Giles, & Welch, 2009; Howard, 2001; Taskforce, 2012). Academic internships can be opportunities to prepare students for those roles. Even the professions that exist only to serve society and are largely funded by the public must grapple with the nature of their social contracts or missions. Given that every profession has an implicit contract with society to fulfill certain moral and ethical obligations, the work of each professional is by definition connected to a larger social purpose. Journalism should be about more than entertainment, for example, and a free press should be an anchor of a healthy democracy. Even the intensely private domain of business can be seen

as a public good as well as a private benefit (Colby, Erlich, Sullivan, & Dolle, 2011; Waddock & Post, 2000). For example, state governments charter public corporations, and these charters include requirements to act for the public good or else the charters can be revoked. The internship, then, is a chance to learn about the public relevance and social obligations of a profession and about how those obligations are (or are not) carried out at the internship site.

DOMAINS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Each of the dimensions discussed above has the potential to incorporate the domains of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values. The knowledge domain focuses on understanding factual information, terminology, principles, concepts, and theories, while the domain of skills focuses on what the intern will learn to *do*. Skills can be physical (the dexterity required to operate a digital camera) or intellectual (to apply a clinical interviewing technique). The domain of attitudes and values focuses on habits, beliefs, and motivations an intern may wish to develop or improve, such as being more patient or being less defensive about criticism. Each of these domains can be further teased apart, creating a useful exercise for generating possibilities of learning and development during an internship. One of the first scholars to attempt such an undertaking was Benjamin Bloom who, with his colleagues, posited the cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning domains (Bloom, 1956). Taxonomies have been developed in each of these domains. Bloom focused particular attention on the cognitive domain (which we refer to as knowledge) and proposed a set of six levels or steps, each of which signified a deeper understanding. Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl, revisited the cognitive domain, resulting in revised levels of learning: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating and Creating (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, Pintrich, Raths, & Wittrock, 2001; Krathwohl, 2002). Both taxonomies describe a progression from the simple to the complex. Krathwohl and his colleagues created a taxonomy in the affective domain, describing levels of awareness of and response to an idea and subsequent levels of valuing (Krathwohl, Bloom & Maisa, 1973). Completing the domains, Simpson (1972) created a taxonomy in the psychomotor domain.

It is important to reiterate that neither dimensions nor domains are intended as rigid, mutually exclusive silos of learning. Shulman (2002) reminds us that such systems are heuristics. Deciding whether a particular outcome is an example of professional, academic, personal, or civic development is less important than learning to consider all of these dimensions when thinking about the possibilities for an internship. Similarly, while knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes can be discussed separately for purposes of analysis and emphasis, in practice they unfold together in the process of learning and professional practice.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

AN ENGAGED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Student engagement and engaged learning are long-standing topics of discussions in higher education (Edgerton, 1997; Hodge, Baxter Magolda & Haynes, 2012). These discussions focus on engagement as a process, or, to quote Lee Shulman, as a proxy for learning (2002, p.6). However, Shulman also argues that engagement can be an end in itself, a demonstrable outcome of learning in addition to indirect evidence inferred from a process. The concept is discussed in both senses in this article; in this section, engagement is considered as an outcome.

Regardless of whether the focus is on professional, academic, personal, or civic learning and development, students can emerge from an academic internship as more engaged learners who take responsibility for their learning, ask intelligent and probing questions, think critically and creatively, appreciate complexity, hold multiple perspectives, remain proactive in the face of challenges, and solve problems effectively (Sweitzer & King, 2014). These attributes are also hallmarks of a liberal education. Bowen (2005) has argued that engagement is foundational to liberal learning, paving the way for the competencies noted above. He believes that engagement supports growth in understanding, values, and commitment typical of mature cognitive development. Swaner (2012) argues that Developmental Engagement nourishes intellectual complexity, which is evidenced in fundamental shifts in perceptions of self and others. These changes have profound implications for how students make meaning of their learning and experiences, and how they interact with others and society. Various indicators of engagement are considered outcomes because they can become habits, not simply of mind, but of heart (Edgerton, 1997; Shulman, 2002), and students need the dispositions as well as the skills for engagement and deep learning. For these habits to develop, and for engagement to occur, a mindful way of thinking—an active awareness—is necessary. Even visual attention appears to be needed for visual awareness of the context and mechanics of one's work (Konnikova, 2013). Developing conscious attentiveness, then, also can be an outcome of an internship.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Integrative learning is an important liberal learning outcome (Crutcher, et al, 2007). For students to thrive in their careers and their communities, they cannot view events exclusively from disciplinary or professional perspectives. The academic internship offers students the opportunity to learn in integrated ways, as when key concepts from the major are brought together in a field-based, capstone experience (Kinzie, 2013). When interns from different liberal arts and professional disciplines meet in seminars on campus, online, or on-site,

there is an opportunity for integration of perceptions and approaches in service to the problems and challenges they are working on in the field. The academic internship also facilitates the integration of the cognitive and affective aspects of learning (Sweitzer & King, 2014), which some have argued are inextricably intertwined in any learning (NSEE, 1998a). As noted earlier, professional practice is an integration of habits of the heart and mind, and even of hand (Shulman, 2002). The academic internship also is an opportunity to more fully *appreciate* the relationship between theory and practice. As William Sullivan (2005) explains in his discussion of *Practical Reasoning*, professionals must move with fluidity between their understanding of theory and the real, human situations that they face in their work (which do not always quite conform to the predictions of theories). Sullivan and Rosin (2008) have argued that even liberal arts disciplines require an integration of thought and action, referring to a life of the mind for practice.

A SELF-AUTHORED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Calls for students to take more responsibility for their learning are heard from individual faculty members who wish students assumed more responsibility for their learning; these calls also are heard in department meetings and at conferences. In taxonomies of liberal learning, there are calls for the cultivation of the disposition to be proactive in the learning process, to seize opportunities for learning, and to see learning as a life-long enterprise (Crutcher, et al., 2007). Some authors have referred to this approach to learning as self-authorship: the ability to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Hodge, Baxter Magolda, & Haynes, 2009).

There is certainly a developmental aspect to the journey towards self-authorship. Perry (1970), Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) and Kegan (1982) all describe a progression, often seen in the traditional age college years, of students moving from viewing the sources of wisdom and control of their learning as outside themselves to recognizing their internal source of wisdom, their ability to mediate competing claims to knowledge and wisdom, and to guide their own learning processes. Not all traditional age interns begin their academic internships with this developmental capacity. For some, the capacity may have been acquired long ago but lie dormant in operational terms. Regardless of an intern's developmental position, the internship can be a context for promoting a self-authored approach to learning.

This approach helps interns learn to evaluate critically, form their own judgments, and collaborate with others toward mature actions. It guides interns to learn how to analyze knowledge, generate their own ideas, express disagreement and argue their perspectives, as well as to stand up for their beliefs without needing approval from their site or campus supervisors. A self-authored approach to learning provides a context for interns to learn to accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions in ways consistent with their emerging

identities, negotiate with others, and engage in genuine, interdependent relationships at their field sites. It also supports students in finding their inner voices and lets them learn to manage complex challenges in the four dimensions of learning.

PEDAGOGICAL CORNERSTONES

We now turn our attention to the principles and theories that draw out or otherwise facilitate achievement of the gains/outcomes described in the previous section. The pedagogical principles that inform this discussion are derived from several streams of thought, drawing on the wisdom of practice as well as theory, philosophy, and research. These streams are often intermeshed in actual use and the principles and practices drawn from them create a synergistic learning context.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

The role of experience in formal education has been a topic of discussion dating back to the guild and apprenticeship systems, to John Dewey in the early 20th century, and continuing to the present day (see for example Eyler, 2009; Giles, 1990; Moore, 2013; Qualters, 2010). A consistent thread in these discussions has been the belief that experience is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for learning. Dewey strongly believed that the educational environment needed to stimulate students' development through genuine, resolvable problems or conflicts, which must be confronted with active thinking. He was convinced that even though all real education comes through experience, not all experience is necessarily educative. Experiences are judged educative if the person grows intellectually and morally; the larger community benefits from the learning over time; and the experience creates conditions leading to further growth (Dewey, 1933, 1938). Learning by discovery is how Duley (2014) describes experiential education, and he advocates the shift from traditional instruction to one in which probing and exploration are integral to the learning process. The National Society for Experiential Education describes experiential education as "learning activities that involve the learner in the process of active engagement with and critical reflection about phenomena being studied" (NSEE 2006, nsee.org). The logic of experiential education is holistic and integrative; its foundations are based on the process of making meaning out of experience and on students' curiosities and questions (NSEE, 1998a).

Another common thread in experiential education is the idea that for experience to lead to learning, it must be processed and organized in some way. And while this processing must be done by the students, educators can and should be intentional in structuring the educational experience to maximize learning (Swaner, 2012). The responsibility of experiential educators is to create contexts in which experiences stimulate curiosity and strengthen initiative, desire, and purpose;

educators also need to be acquainted with the students, understand which experiences facilitate such learning, and anticipate and respond as experiences unfold (Dewey, 1938, cited in NSEE, 1998a, p.19).

Several authors have written about the process of learning from experience in ways that suggest and inspire educational strategies. Eyler (2009) describes experiential learning as a process whereby the learner interacts with the world and integrates new learning into old constructs (p.24). The Experiential Learning Cycle of David Kolb (Kolb & Fry, 1975) is a frequently cited example. Kolb set forth a cycle of four phases that people go through in learning experientially: Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE). Recent research in cognitive science has indicated that such a sequence does unfold neurologically as learning occurs (Zull, 2002). However, Duley (2014) observes that Kolb's model (1984) uses the language of the objective, cognitive domain of learning, in keeping with the academic context, and excludes the subjective, affective domain that Duley believes is such an important component of any learning experience. Shulman (2002) posits a taxonomy using terms that connote emotion as well as intellect: Engagement, Understanding, Action, Reflection, Judgment, and Commitment. Even so, Shulman (2002) wondered whether the affective dimension was sufficiently attended to in his own model. As noted earlier, the affective and cognitive domains are often deeply interconnected in the process of learning, and the realm of affect can influence the acquisition of cognitive understanding (Kirk, 2014).

Experiential educators must be able to create a period of optimal challenge while intentionally creating opportunities for learning to be established. This challenge or dissonance, however, must be balanced with support if the student is to learn (Sanford, 1966, cited in Swaner, 2012). Borrowing from cognitive developmental theorists (see Kegan, 1982), this balance means creating opportunities that stretch (discomfort) but don't "break" (risk) the students as the equilibrium of new skills or insights takes hold.

CRITICAL REFLECTION

Reflection is often discussed in the literature on applied learning, especially for internships and service-learning (Compact, 2003; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler, Giles, & Schmiede, 1996; Seifer, 2007) and is an essential component of the two learning cycles described previously. However, it has both a history and a stream of theorizing all its own. Derived from the Latin *reflectere*, meaning bending back, reflection is a crucial factor in the discovery and internalization of knowledge. Despite the translation, reflection is not to be saved for the end of an experience, but to be integrated from the beginning (NSEE, 1998a, 1998b; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Critical reflection, in particular, has been posited to be most effective in experiential and applied learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Critical reflection is much more than simply thinking back on an

experience; it means carefully considering and challenging the way one understands the experience and the conclusions drawn. It is a process of metacognition intended “to improve the quality of thoughts and actions and the relationship between them” (Ash & Clayton, 2009 p. 27). Opportunities for this type of reflection and feedback are the most important factors in bringing learning outcomes to fruition (Eyler, 2002). In order for those opportunities to have an impact, the reflection must be intensive, challenging, continuous, and context-appropriate (Eyler, 2009 p. 30). Engaging in this way allows the learner “to look carefully at her experience, to question her own assumptions, to place the experience in relation to larger institutional and societal processes and discourses, to hear others’ voices, to grapple with the question of why things happen the way they do...to engage, in other words, in *serious* critical thinking.” (Moore, 2013, pp. 201-202)

The process of critical reflection highlights the dynamic, dialectical relationship between theory and practice (Eyler, 2002; Giles, 1990; Sullivan, 2005) and between reflection and action (Schon, 1983; Swaner, 2012). It “unifies experience and knowledge, mind and body, individual and community” (NSEE, 1998a, p.18). Sarah Ash and Patti Clayton (2009) describe well the power of critical reflection: “It *generates* learning (articulating questions, confronting bias, inviting causality, contrasting theory with practice, pointing to systemic issues), *deepens* learning (challenging simplistic conclusions, inviting alternative perspectives, asking ‘why’ iteratively), and *documents* learning (producing tangible expressions of new understandings for evaluation).” (p. 27)

Learners need a variety of structured and unstructured activities that support reflection to ensure that intended and more serendipitous learning goals are addressed. Learning journals, daily logs, simulations, small-group discussions, and focused conversations are all common tools for reflection (Eyler, Giles, & Schmiede, 1996; Moore, 2013; NSEE, 1998a, 1998b; Stanton, 1995; Sweitzer & King, 1995).

Reflection in general and critical reflection in particular take on added and crucial importance in an academic internship: they are key to the intern’s success, growth, learning, and development (Sweitzer & King, 2014). Critical reflection is a habit that can be learned, but is unlikely to occur spontaneously; it falls to educators to create conditions to facilitate it (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Eyler, Giles, & Schmiede (1996), Ash & Clayton (2004), Hatcher, Bringle, & Muthiah (2004), and the National Society for Experiential Education (1998b, 2009) offer guiding principles of practice or guidelines for selecting and assessing potential reflective techniques. In keeping with these principles and guidelines, interns and instructors need to work together to make reflection a habit; and instructors need to structure and connect reflection to learning goals, so that interns are challenged to reflect more deeply and critically through a widening range of lenses.

A common tool in experiential learning that embodies the principle of reflection is the Learning Journal (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Eyler,

Giles, & Schmiede, 1996; Moon, 1999; Stanton, 1994, 1995; Stevens & Cooper, 2009; Sweitzer & King, 1995; 2014). In a Learning Journal, interns recount and consider their experiences as the internship progresses. Such an academic assignment requires patience, practice, and discipline, helping to acquire the habit of critical reflection, and ensures that reflection is challenging, continuous, and context appropriate. The literature identifies a number of productive and intentional formats including the Reflection Map (Eyler, 2009), DEAL (Ash & Clayton, 2004), and Key Phrase, Double Entry, Critical Learning, and Critical Incident journals (Stanton, 1995; Sweitzer & King, 2014).

ENGAGEMENT

An engaged approach to learning has already been noted as an important potential outcome for an internship; it is also a crucial process. Engagement is “both the means to an end and an end in itself” (Bowen, 2005, p. 7). The connection is logical; as Marshall McLuhan wrote, the medium is the message (McLuhan & Lapham, 1994). One way, then, to ensure that students are engaged learners is to use engaged learning techniques. The call for pedagogies of engagement is described in Russ Edgerton’s seminal *Education White Paper* (Edgerton, 1997) as a pathway to real understanding and the development of civic sensibilities. David Thornton Moore (1999) reminds us that it is not enough for students to be exposed to knowledge or to have it present in their environment; rather they must engage that knowledge in some way. Hodge, Baxter Magolda, and Haynes (2009) refer to engaged learning as an approach that encourages students to seek and discover new knowledge by exploring authentic questions and problems. Authentic questions and problems can abound in an internship setting, and students need only be invited and guided to explore them.

Swaner (2012) has posited four forms of engagement, all of which can be easily incorporated into an academic internship. Holistic Engagement refers to inviting and encouraging students to focus on both thinking and feeling, addressing the lack of an affective dimension discussed earlier. To acquire habits of heart and mind, opportunities for practice must be part of the learning process. Encouraging interns in learning journals, campus seminars, and papers to critically reflect on what they saw and did, what thoughts the experience engendered, and what reactions it evoked are useful approaches to this sort of engagement. Another form is Integrative Engagement, which refers to actively working to bring disparate elements of an experience together. As already noted, the integration of reflection and action is critical to learning from experience. Reflecting on an experience through multiple lenses is also important, but if those perspectives are not deliberately integrated, then they remain simply juxtaposed in students’ minds.

Swaner (2012) and others (Bowen, 2005; Moore, 2013) stress the importance of Contextual Engagement, referring to widening

the context through which an experience is viewed. Bowen (2005) emphasizes the need for students to reflect on the social, cultural, and civic dimensions of their work and observes that an ethical dimension is added to the learning when the context is social or civic.

The fourth form, Developmental Engagement, and the transformation it engenders in students' perspectives, has been discussed as an outcome previously. Such transformations emanate from challenges in the environment that move students toward more complex ways of being.

These forms of engagement can and should interact with one another. Educational settings that activate these dimensions not only facilitate gains in knowledge, real-world application of learning, and intellectual complexity but also facilitate the transformational experiences we associate with engaged learning (Swaner, 2012). Depending on a variety of factors for the academic interns, some of these lenses will be much more easily acquired and exercised than others.

HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE

George Kuh and his colleagues have made an extensive study of student engagement and the practices that promote it, and internships of all kinds are one of them (Kuh, 2008). These High-Impact Practices *must* have six key characteristics to be effective (Kuh, 2008; O'Neill, 2010). Two of these characteristics, opportunities to apply learning and opportunities for reflection, already have been discussed. Internships must also be effortful, with purposeful tasks requiring daily decisions. Campus coordinators/instructors need to emphasize to all parties that interns should be doing meaningful work and that mundane tasks, while important and shared to some extent by the staff, should be kept to a minimum. The instructors and interns should monitor this boundary to ensure that the interns are continually challenged, especially as the internship progresses and skills and knowledge are developed.

The fourth characteristic of effective high-impact practice is quality feedback. Interns need frequent, useful feedback from multiple sources, including campus and field supervisors and possibly co-workers and peers. The campus instructor needs to model and encourage the principles of effective feedback: that it is specific and concrete, as opposed to vague and general; that it refers to very specific aspects of the situation being discussed; and that it is descriptive rather than interpretive (Johnson & Johnson, 2012).

Substantive relationships are another feature of high impact practices. Perhaps more than any other form of experiential learning or high-impact practice, the internship experience unfolds in the context of multiple relationships—with faculty members, peers on campus, co-workers on-site, the supervisors in the field and on campus, and in some cases the clientele of the field site. The quality of these relationships can vary greatly from the exhilaration of mentorship to the discomfort

of strained relationships. Students need to be guided and supported in building substantive relationships with all these parties as is possible and strengthening those less than effective.

Finally, Kuh (2008) and O'Neill (2010) emphasize engaging across differences. Because students are entering a world that is at least somewhat unfamiliar to them, and meeting people from a wide range of backgrounds, interns may need help in learning to see and honor multiple views of the world and of the internship site, thus engaging differences rather than simply encountering them.

High-Impact Practices, when implemented effectively, foster student engagement in learning in all the forms noted by Swaner (2012). They foster complexity in student's thinking, feeling, relating, and acting; and create connections between students' learning experiences and social contexts and communities (integrative and contextual). However, the characteristics of effective high-impact practices must be continually monitored and promoted. Challenging work can eventually become routine if goals are not re-examined and re-set; the relationships also require careful monitoring and attention (Moore, 2013)

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Effective, collaborative relationships with partner sites are essential for successful internships (Inkster & Ross, 1995, 1998; King, 1989, 2013; Woodside, 1989). Structurally, such partnerships can yield internships over many semesters. Pedagogically, partner organizations and their staff are part of a learning triangle. The intern, the field site, and the campus contact (placement coordinator and/or supervising instructor) must each take an active and shared role throughout the internship.

The literature on service-learning, an approach that shares pedagogical features with internships, frequently addresses the need for and characteristics of collaborative partnerships (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2006; Dorado, Giles, & Welch, 2009). Eyler and Giles (1999) found that authentic community partnerships promote better learning. Sandy & Holland (2006) found that it was the relationships that were most important to community partners, followed by communication, personal connections, co-planning, training and orientation, accountability, and leadership.

Reciprocity is key to relationships with community partners (Cruz & Giles, 2000); when it comes to service-learning, the student's work should meet a community-identified need (Howard, 2001; Sigmon, 1979). With internships, it is not necessarily the community's needs but those of the field sites that determine the work. In exchange, the internship site must recognize that students are there primarily for learning and development in all the dimensions discussed earlier, not for employment, although the student may be paid for the internship; this is a distinctive feature of an academic internship. Consequently, the responsibilities of all three partners must be well defined; if not,

collaboration is less likely to happen, and the internship is less likely to be successful (Woodside, 1989).

One of the partners, the site supervisor, has primary responsibility for the welfare and growth of the intern. This role calls for a professional who is academically and experientially qualified to supervise, invested in student learning and development, and able to serve as a role model (King, 1989). The role of the internship supervisor differs significantly from that of an employee supervisor and more closely approximates that of a pedagogue (Smith, 2012). The pedagogue's central concern is with the well-being of his charges. The work frequently addresses questions of identity and integrity, and the pedagogue is called upon to be wise, authentic, sincere, accurate, and truthful. Importantly, the pedagogue has the ability to "accompany" learners, i.e., being there for them and ready to respond and exercise judgment. Not all supervisors can supervise interns effectively, even if they do supervise employees. Inkster & Ross (1998) identified ways for site partners to assess the feasibility of supervising interns and then described steps to create an effective relationship with the intern. Supervisors need adequate orientation to determine an appropriate workload for the intern (quantity, quality, and level of responsibilities), conduct evaluations consistent with the requirements of the campus program, and develop a supervision plan and quality Learning Contract (King, 1989; Sweitzer & King, 2014).

The Learning Contract embodies the principle of collaboration. Negotiated before, or optimally a week or two into the internship and signed by all three partners, it describes the learning goals (across dimensions and domains of learning); the expected learning activities and outcomes; the supervision plan, including criteria and techniques for evaluations; and risk factors with specific safe guards (Stanton & Ali, 1994; Sweitzer & King, 2014). Because possibilities often expand as the internship progresses, the Learning Contract should be continually monitored to ensure that students are engaged in meaningful, worthwhile work (NSEE 1998; Sweitzer & King, 2014).

PHENOMENOLOGICAL STAGES OF AN INTERNSHIP

Stage theories have been used across disciplines to describe an intern's experience (Chisholm, L., 2000; Cochrane & Hanley, 1999; Grant & McCarthy, 1990; Inkster & Ross, 1998; Kiser, 2012; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1995). One such theory describes the intern's phenomenological experience: Developmental Stages of an Internship (Sweitzer & King, 1994, 2013).

Sweitzer and King (1994, 2013) identify two progressions that the interns experience. One is a cognitive progression towards the various gains/outcomes discussed previously in this paper. The other is an affective progression, an unfolding undercurrent of feelings and reactions to the internship itself, a phenomenon referred to as the "lived experience" (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). As noted in the discussion

earlier of experiential education, the affective domain is present in any learning experience and needs to be accounted for in theory and attended to in practice. However, it seems to take on added significance in an academic internship, particularly in settings where the work is interpersonally or intra-personally challenging or demanding. This progression is referred to as one of concerns, the term connoting both interest (as in making career contacts) and worry (as in being accepted by co-workers). These concerns can facilitate or impede progress towards goals.

The revised Developmental Stages of an Internship theory (DSI-2) (Sweitzer & King, 2013) posits a progression of concerns in four stages: Anticipation, Exploration, Competence, and Culmination. The theory also posits specific tasks that need to be undertaken to move through the concerns and maximize learning, while attending to both the affective and cognitive experiences. Figure one shows each stage and the associated concerns and challenges. Meeting the challenges of each stage effectively increases confidence (for example in problem-solving and critical thinking skills) and commitment to goals.

In each stage, interns respond to tasks on a continuum from engaged to disengaged (Sweitzer & King, 2014). Engagement, in this instance, means being proactive, taking responsibility to address tasks, initiating strategies, etc.; disengagement is marked by being passive and reactive, waiting things out, and resigning one's self to the situation (Swaner, 2012; Sweitzer & King, 2014). Figure two shows the details of such responses in one of the stages—the Competence Stage. These responses can be specific to the tasks or can be a matter of disposition or acquired habit (Sweitzer & King, 2013). Regardless, they are not static or fixed traits; they can be learned, strengthened, and chosen.

In each stage, it is also possible to experience disillusionment, a deep, pervasive shift in the interns' feelings, changing the emotional overlay of and challenging the commitment to the internship. Feelings of anger, blame, and frustration can develop and be directed at supervisors, peers, or the intern herself. The crisis can occur at any time and impede learning or lead to termination of the internship. It can also be a significant opportunity for self-authorship, re-engagement, and deepened commitment, provided interns avoid the dangers and seize the opportunities through support and problem-solving skills (Sweitzer & King, 2014).

Understanding this progression of concerns can enhance levels of self-awareness and self-understanding through critical reflection and allow events or conditions to be viewed as normal and considered without undue alarm, blame, or personalization. Such understanding can foster a proactive stance to possible events (Sweitzer & King, 1994; 2013) and offer a template to structure reflection, group discussion, and other formats that facilitate learning.

Figure 1. The DSI-2: Developmental stages of an internship

Stage	Associated Concerns	Critical Tasks
Anticipation	Getting off to a good start Positive expectations Acceptance Anxieties <i>Capability</i> <i>Relationship with supervisor</i> <i>Relationship with co-workers</i> <i>Relationships with clientele</i> Life context	Examining and critiquing assumptions Acknowledging concerns Clarifying role and purpose Developing key relationships Making an informed commitment
Exploration	Building on progress Heightened learning curve Finding new opportunities Adjusting expectations Adequacy of skills and knowledge Real or anticipated problems	Increasing capability Approaching assessment and evaluation of progress Building supervisory relationships Encountering challenges
Competence	High accomplishment Seeking quality	Raising the bar: Accomplishment and Quality
	Emerging view of self Feeling empowered Exploring professionalism Doing it all Ethical issues Worthwhile tasks	Having feelings of achievement and success Maintaining balances Professionalism
Culmination	Saying goodbye Transfer of responsibilities Completion of tasks Multiple endings Closing rituals Next steps	Endings and closure Redefining relationships Planning for the future

Figure 1. The competence stage.

Associated Concerns	Critical Tasks	Response to Tasks	
		Engaged Response	Disengaged Response
High Accomplishment Seeking	Raising the Bar: Accomplishment and Quality	Embraces tasks and challenges Sets high aspirations	Is content to continue with current level of challenge and activity; bored but not willing to change Is satisfied with status quo
Quality Emerging		Sets personal standards of excellence	Sets standards of "good enough"
View of Self Feeling Empowered	Having Feelings of Achievement and Success	Engages self and others in achieving the feeling of success.	Accepts whatever sense of fulfillment is present. Relies on others to supply it. "Guts it out" if not feeling success.
Exploring Professionalism	Maintaining Balances	Keeps personal & internship demands in-check	Is unable to manage conflicting demands effectively
Doing it All	Professionalism	Seeks to understand and adhere to professional and ethical guidelines	Ignores or accepts transgressions
Ethical issues		Seeks to identify as an emerging member of the profession/field	Is content to identify as a student
Worthwhile tasks			

CONCLUSION

Students can benefit from an internship experience in varied and powerful ways, achieving gains in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The service-learning movement has demonstrated that almost any disciplinary lenses can be applied to field-based learning, including the liberal arts and science disciplines, and the same is true of internships. Time-tested in the professional disciplines, the internship is also an opportunity to foster key liberal learning outcomes, such as analysis, problem-solving, teamwork, and social responsibility, and integrate them with professional and civic learning.

Making internships all they can be, however, requires intentionality, commitment, and attention to both theory and practice. Theories, principles, and perspectives from a wide range of academic disciplines and pedagogical philosophies can be brought to bear on the academic internship. From these and other sources come effective learning practices that attend to and integrate the affective and cognitive domains and foster deep, engaged learning.

A pedagogy of internship calls upon the academy, first and foremost, to recognize the internship as a legitimate, collaborative, academic learning experience requiring both structural support and the accountability of faculty, students, and partners. It demands of those involved in the learning triangle a conscious attentiveness to the process and goals of learning and the journey taken to reach those goals. Considerable weight falls upon the shoulders of the campus faculty and staff to ensure that systems are in place that foster deep learning, from selecting the site and supervisors to designing the Learning Contract, to embedding the experience in reflective ways of learning, to involving the student-intern actively throughout the process. Knowing how to use the domains of learning so that student-interns have the tools they need to empower themselves in each of the dimensions of learning and development is essential; understanding the power of engaged learning and critical reflection in the learning process is crucial; and, understanding the requisite role of the faculty/staff working with student-interns and the powerful role of supervision is absolutely necessary.

Through a challenging and supportive academic internship, interns can leave the experience with an awareness of their engaged, integrated, and self-authored approaches to learning and continue to develop their inner voices, intellectual and interpersonal skills, and their perspectives. In other words, they can leave transformed by a deep learning experience that affects not only how they approach future learning but also how they understand themselves as learners, future professionals, and citizens.

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Engaging Students in Disaster Relief Training Exercises

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Incorporating National Incident Management System training and exercise principles into homeland security and emergency management learning can help university students develop emergency response capabilities through practical application of knowledge in simulated incidents. In addition, they gain team-building and leadership skills, establish relationships with professionals that will carry forward into their careers, and obtain confidence in their abilities to respond under pressure to simulated critical incidents. This case study describes student experience in disaster relief and humanitarian service exercises in the United States, Kosovo, and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. The DEAL approach to critical thinking is used to provide student feedback concerning the use of exercises as an applied-learning tool.

The National Incident Management System (NIMS), when established by presidential directive in 2004, required all federal agencies to use incident management in emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation programs and activities. To obtain federal funds state, local, and tribal authorities were also required to adopt NIMS standards. Training and exercises were included in this

mandate. Responders benefited from emergency response exercises because they built confidence, developed teamwork, established interagency relationships, and tested and improved knowledge and skills.

Studies that have documented the impact of training and exercises on professional emergency responders were used to establish a framework to examine the effect of similar techniques on university student cognitive and affective learning (Moynihan, D.P, 2008; Miller, 2012; Reissman & Howard, 2008). A case study approach, using interpretive analysis of interviews, journals, and other documents, established the level of learning and benefits for students. Three propositions were devised about the impacts of student involvement in disaster simulations. Participation in exercises should increase student ability to use the incident management system, improve student skills in working together, and provide a view of how responders from various disciplines can work together.

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For almost ten years crisis response students from various institutions including Northwest Missouri State University and Indian River State College have been involved in table-top, functional and full-scale exercises in classrooms and in the field here in the United States and overseas in Macedonia. This program is described as background to the more recent experience of students from Utah Valley University, who were involved in training and simulation exercises in Macedonia in conjunction with students from the International Balkans University. This case study describes how the application of NIMS principles in disaster relief exercises has benefited university students and provides recommendations for their adoption in developing programs. Students have developed emergency response capabilities through practical application of knowledge in simulated incidents. From their association with other students in exercises, they have obtained team-building and leadership skills. Through the participation of professional responders, students have established relationships that will carry forward into their careers. Finally, students have gained confidence in their abilities to respond under pressure to simulated critical incidents.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

First, as part of a framework for analysis, applied-learning principles are related to NIMS and its exercise program. Then, the NIMS exercise and training program is described, detailing its purpose, its components, and the kinds and function of exercises.

APPLIED LEARNING AND NIMS-TYPE EXERCISE

Applied learning is defined as “learning by doing.” It’s the integration of “knowing that” and “knowing how.” It involves putting principles into practice. These are “pedagogical principles and practices associated with engaged scholarship, communities of practice, civic engagement, experiential education, and critical pedagogy” (Schwartzman and Henry, 2009). While education is a primary goal, applied learning may be part of a course or separate stand-alone exercises. Examples are study-abroad, community-based learning, service-learning, independent research, and internships or clinical experiences.

Examples specific to disaster management and homeland security are shadowing a professional, ride-alongs, role-playing, and demonstrating techniques or skills. Also, participating in local emergency management training simulations (i.e., active shooter exercise) fits under the definition of applied learning. Finally, internships and actual employment can provide applied-learning experiences to emergency services students. Utah Valley University students get internship credit by working for the university’s emergency response team, a student-sponsored initiative that provides first response on campus for medical emergencies. The students also work as EMTs for ambulance compa-

nies and volunteer firefighters. Criminal justice students volunteer as police cadets and work as TSA agents.

NIMS uses Merriam-Webster's definition to describe exercises: "Something performed or practiced in order to develop, improve, or display a specific power or skill." Exercises are different from activities. Activities are usually presented as part of a lesson, while exercises usually are stand-alone training (FEMA, 2008).

PREPARATION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES PROFESSIONALS

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is "a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines" (FEMA, 2014b). Originally published on March 1, 2004, the NIMS document was revised in 2008 to reflect the experience of stakeholders in recent national emergency incidents, including Hurricane Katrina.

NIMS is intended to:

- Be applicable across a full spectrum of potential incidents, hazards, and impacts, regardless of size, location or complexity.
- Improve coordination and cooperation between public and private entities in a variety of incident management activities.
- Provide a common standard for overall incident management (FEMA, 2014b).

NIMS provides consistency in preparedness and response across all levels of government, including federal, state, local, and tribal, as well as in the private sector and non-governmental agencies (NGOs). It allows agencies from all levels to work together to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of catastrophic events no matter the cause, size, location, or complexity. NIMS provides common protocol and procedures for training personnel and purchasing and using equipment so that when different agencies from varying jurisdictions arrive at an incident, they work together to respond effectively to resolve the situation. NIMS advocates using incident command, and establishing unified command if the event is large enough (FEMA, 2014b).

COMPONENTS OF NIMS

The components of a comprehensive incident management system include:

- Preparedness
- Communications and Information Management
- Resource Management
- Command and Management
- Ongoing Management and Maintenance

NIMS provides elected and appointed officials who are responsible for jurisdictional policy decisions a clear understanding of their emergency management roles and responsibilities to better serve their constituencies.

Following is a summary of each major component of NIMS (FEMA, 2014c, p. 2.15).

- **Preparedness.** Effective incident management and incident response begins with preparedness, which involves integrating "planning, procedures and protocols, training and exercises, personnel qualification and certification, and equipment certification." Ongoing preparedness is achieved through training and exercises.
- **Communications and Information Management.** A common operating picture is important to the effective management and response to incidents. NIMS sets the standards for communications. Effective communications and information systems require "interoperability, reliability, scalability, portability, resiliency, and redundancy."
- **Resource Management.** NIMS defines standardized mechanisms and establishes the resource management process to assure that resources (such as personnel, equipment, and/or supplies) support critical incidents. This requires that the amount and timing of resources are "fluid and adaptable" to the requirements of the incident. Resource management functions include identifying requirements, ordering and acquiring, mobilizing, tracking and reporting, and recovering and demobilizing resources. Also, the reimbursement and inventory of resources is part of the management process.
- **Command and Management.** Within NIMS command and management structures allow effective and efficient incident management and coordination. The Incident Command System (ICS), multiagency coordination systems (like the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Unified Command), and public information provide "flexible, standardized incident management structures."
- **Ongoing Management and Maintenance.** The Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintain NIMS by developing NIMS programs and processes as well as keeping the NIMS document current.

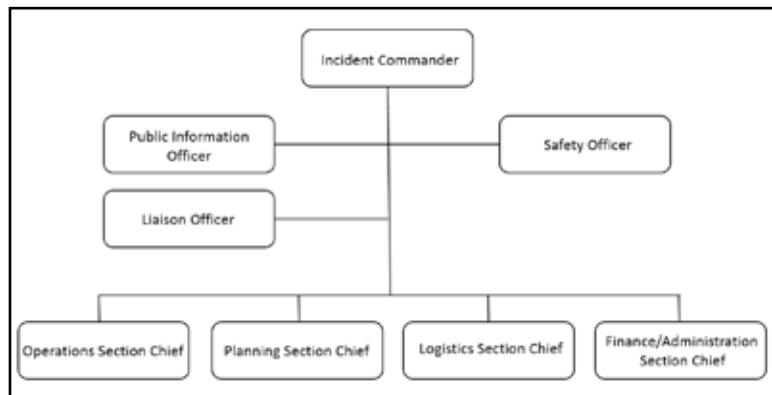
INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

The key tool used to establish command and management is the Incident Command System (ICS). Much of the training and exercises of responders focuses on ICS. ICS helps ensure integration of response efforts so that response occurs in a seamless, coordinated

fashion. According to NIMS (FEMA, 2014c), “ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards approach to incident management. ICS allows all responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure that matches the complexities and demands of the incident while respecting agency and jurisdictional authorities.” While it promotes standardization, it also is flexible so that its “organizational structure can expand or contract to meet incident needs” (p. 6.7).

Certain management functions are performed in every incident. Regardless of the size of the incident, five management functions still will apply: incident command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance / administration. In every situation, the problem must be identified and assessed, a plan developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for. Figure 1 shows the Incident Command structure and the names of the officers who provide leadership each function (FEMA, 2010a).

Figure 1. Incident Command Structure (4.11)



TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Training is essential in preparing responders to deal with incidents. Exercises are the basis of the training program mandated by NIMS. An exercise program has the following important characteristics:

- The program is carefully planned to achieve identified goals.
- It is made up of a series of increasingly complex exercises.
- Each successive exercise builds upon the previous one until mastery is achieved (FEMA, 2010b, p. 2.1).

Table 1 shows the exercise process by organizing the tasks into two dimensions: (a) exercise phase (pre-exercise, exercise, and post-exercise) and (b) type of task (those related to design and those related to evaluation) (FEMA, 2010b, p. 3.4).

The five main types of exercises in a comprehensive exercise program include (a) orientation seminar, (b) drill, (c) tabletop exercise, (d) functional exercise, and (e) full-scale exercise (FEMA, 2010b).

Table 1. Exercise phase and type of task.

	Pre-exercise phase	Exercise Phase	Post-Exercise Phase
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review plan Assess capability Address costs and liabilities Gain support/issue exercise directive Organize design team Draw up a schedule Design exercise using 8 design steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare facility Assemble props and other enhancements Brief participants Conduct exercise 	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select evaluation team leader Develop evaluation methodology Select and organize evaluation team Train evaluators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe assigned objectives Document actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess achievement of objectives Participate in post-exercise meetings Prepare evaluation report Participate in follow-up activities

The orientation seminar is the simplest form of exercise. It provides an overview or introduction. It familiarizes responders with roles, plans, procedures, and equipment. It helps resolve questions about coordination and assignment of responsibilities. Orientation seminars are used to a) discuss a topic or problem in a group setting, b) introduce something new (policies and plans), c) explain existing plans to new people, d) introduce a cycle of exercises or preparing participants for success in more complex exercises, and e) motivate people for participation in subsequent exercises. In the post-secondary setting, orientation seminars can be provided in the tradition face-to-face classroom. Seminars are supported with group activities and discussions (p. 2.5).

A **drill** is a coordinated, supervised exercise activity, normally used to test a single specific operation or function. Drills are not used to coordinate the activities of organizations or fully activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). It's used to practice and perfect one small part of the response plan and help prepare for more all-encompassing exercises, in which several functions will be coordinated and tested. Drills are effective when they focus on a single aspect of the overall emergency management system. They are used to test a specific operation or to provide training with new equipment, to develop new policies or procedures, or to practice and maintain current skills. In the emergency services classroom, drills can be used to practice medical procedures in an EMS class or put on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in a firefighting class. Evacuation procedures or the use of extraction equipment might be other examples of classroom drills. Drills usually are used as part of the "present, demonstrate and practice" model of teaching (p. 2.7).

Tabletop exercises lend themselves to "low-stress discussion of coordination and policy, provide a good environment for problem solving, provide an opportunity for key agencies and stakeholders to become acquainted with one another, their interrelated roles, and their respective responsibilities, and provide good preparation for a functional exercise." Participants examine and resolve problems based on existing operational plans and identify where plans need to be refined. The exercise begins with the reading of a short narrative, which sets the stage for the hypothetical emergency. Then, the facilitator may encourage discussion by use of problem statements or simulated messages. Maps, charts or other printed material may be used to set the environment for the situation. Participants (who might be organized in groups) role-play their responses to the statements and then discuss their response afterwards. The tabletop exercise provides an opportunity to analyze procedures and improve on processes. As part of the emergency services classroom, the tabletop exercise could serve well as summative evaluation at the end of a unit of instruction (p. 2.10).

Functional exercises are similar to full-scale exercises, without the equipment. Functional exercises permit testing of several functions with several agencies or departments without incurring the cost of full-scale exercises.

A functional exercise is "a fully simulated interactive exercise that tests the capability of an organization to respond to a simulated event." The exercise tests multiple functions from an organization's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and involves outside agencies and responders. Every effort is made to make it appear to be "a coordinated response to a situation in a time-pressured, realistic simulation."

The exercise is an interactive simulation of a real situation. Every effort is made to make it as realistic as possible without moving resources to the actual site. Messages (also called inputs or injects) are used to show the ongoing events and problems that might occur in an actual event. Because the exercise is in real time, it uses all the players' resourcefulness and knowledge to respond on-the-spot to the situation;

it can be stressful. A response from one player could trigger a sequence of unanticipated responses from other players. While the problem situation and injects should be scripted beforehand, because of the complexity of the situation, it is impossible to anticipate all actions or responses that might occur in the exercise.

It is good to do a functional exercise before doing a full-scale exercise. Some organizations (like hospitals) could perform a full-scale exercise as part of a community functional exercise. In the college situation, simulations as part of Campus-Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT) would be designed as a functional exercise (p. 2.12).

A **full-scale exercise** is "designed to evaluate the operational capability of emergency management systems in a highly stressful environment that simulates actual response conditions." It simulates a real event as closely as possible. To create this realism, all emergency personnel, equipment, and resources are mobilized and placed in action. It tests most functions of the emergency operation plan.

At the beginning of the full-scale exercise responders are called up in the same manner as they would be to a real incident. When they arrive on the scene or to their assigned locations, they see a "visual narrative" in the form of a mock emergency. It could be a plane crash with victims, a "burning" building, a simulated chemical spill on a highway, or a terrorist attack. From then on, actions at the scene provide inputs to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (p. 2.15).

Because they are expensive and time consuming, few colleges use full-scale exercises to train students for the emergency or humanitarian services. The following case study describes several attempts to use full-scale exercises in training students.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

NIMS has made training exercises a convention among first responders and emergency services personnel. NIMS claims that responders benefit from emergency response exercises because they build confidence, develop teamwork, establish interagency relationships, and test and improve knowledge and skills. Few traditional students going into the emergency services have had the experience of exercises. This research focuses on the impact of training exercises on the emergency service student and asks if the training exercise experience provides the same results for emergency services students as NIMS claims it does for professional responders.

The primary research question is this: Do training exercises build confidence, develop teamwork, establish relationships, and test and improve emergency knowledge and skills among university students studying in the field of emergency services?

A secondary question is this: How do students perceive training exercises in relationship to classroom learning?

METHODOLOGY

Yin (2013) defines a case study as an empirical study that examines in depth a “contemporary phenomenon” (a case) within a “real-world” context. Sometimes the lines between the phenomenon and the context are not clear. A goal of the case study is to help clarify these boundaries, which are not always “sharply distinguishable.” The number of variables within a case study may be more numerous than those in a survey where the variables are limited. Multiple sources of evidence may exist, but conclusions may result that are based more on assumptions than on hard proof. Case studies benefit from the “prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (pp. 16, 17).

While psychologists, anthropologists, and social scientists frequently use case studies as a valid research approach, hard scientists can also benefit from the methodology. It is useful in testing whether scientific theories and models really work in a real world context. While case studies generally have been oriented toward a “realist” epistemological perspective, they can also focus on multiple realities—a relativist approach. Luck, Jackson, and Usher (2006) argue that the case study has broad research application and epistemological, ontological and methodological flexibility, which provides “a structural process within which any methods appropriate to investigating a research area can be applied” (p. 103).

A case study is valuable as a tool in the evaluation of an organization (or a phenomenon) with the aim of improving functions (Yin, 2013; Fidel, 1984). Usually, it may be used to arrive at findings from multiple cases rather than just a single situation. It can draw from both qualitative and quantitative data or use solely qualitative data. Fidel (1984) claims the case study is appropriate when a) a large variety of factors and relationships are examined, b) no laws exist to show which factors are important, and c) when the factors and relationships can be observed directly.

This case study looks at several situations where exercises are used in the training and education of emergency services students. It compares the results from these situations to the expected outcomes from the application of exercises using NIMS principles to train emergency personnel. Recommendations are generated for the improvement and use of exercises in training post-secondary students, both in emergency services and other fields.

Documents, field notes, and interviews are used to provide information for analysis. Students were interviewed to provide critical reflection about their experience in a “global and multicultural humanitarian service experience” held in the Balkans in 2014. The DEAL model of critical reflection was used to provide student feedback. DEAL critical reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Fisher & Mittelman, 2013) answered the following questions:

1. What did I learn?
2. How did I learn it?
3. Why does it matter?
4. What will I do in light of it?

In a follow-up interview students also were asked the following: How did your experience training and doing exercises with International Balkan University students advance your self-confidence? How did it foster teamwork and enhance your leadership skills? How did it help you in establishing relationships with team members, students at the International Balkan University, and emergency managers in the Balkans? How did it test and improve your emergency knowledge and skills? How would you compare the training exercises to your experience learning in the classroom?

The researchers used a modified grounded theory approach for sorting and analyzing student responses (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Transcripts of the interviews were reviewed, key words were highlighted, and themes were identified. Themes and student comments were summarized in the findings. These resulted in the development of propositions for further study and to provide greater understanding of the use of reflection in the education process. The coding process revealed three emergent themes: cultural awareness, relationships, and field experience. Using inductive reasoning, propositions were generated from the findings and reported in the conclusions. To present the findings, the researchers developed narrative case descriptions based upon the three themes in order to present and interpret the findings (Yin, 2013).

BACKGROUND

The case study first examines the use of exercises in the Comprehensive Crisis Response Minor at Northwest Missouri State University, including C-CERT training and its relationship to the Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education. This provides background for the discussion of the application of NIMS principles and student exercises in the Utah Valley University Emergency Services Department.

COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS RESPONSE MINOR

The Comprehensive Crisis Response (CCR) Minor at Northwest Missouri State University (2010) used a multi-disciplinary approach to study crisis, drawing from courses and faculty in Geography, Psychology, Social Sciences and Communications. While half the classwork involved a crisis management core, electives offered flexibility so that students could tailor the minor to their individual and specific academic and professional needs. This approach provided the student with both theoretical and practical knowledge that is valued in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Also, students were encouraged to participate in

field exercises in Florida and now in Northwest Missouri and employ best practices through involvement with Northwest's C-CERT program.

Northwest launched its CCR program in January 2009 as an interdisciplinary minor housed in the Department of Social Sciences. The program expanded to be offered as an academic major in 2012 with a BS in Geography with an emphasis in Emergency and Disaster Management. The program now has 60 students enrolled (Northwest Missouri State University, 2014). The CCR core included five courses: Disaster Psychology, Crisis Communication, Principles of Public Administration, Introduction to Disaster Response and Recovery, and Principles of Humanitarian Relief. Students chose electives from two other areas of study and were required to be involved in an internship and could get credit for attending training exercises through the Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education (CHSE). For the first time in fall 2013 Northwest hosted its own full-scale exercise, called Missouri Hope. Students studying crisis and disaster management are required to attend. All students were encouraged to take C-CERT training.

MISSOURI HOPE TRAINING EXERCISE

The Missouri Hope 2013 Disaster Response Field Training Exercise, an intensive three-day domestic disaster relief field training exercise that is required for students studying majors or minors in comprehensive crisis response (CCR), took place Mazingo Outdoor Education Recreation Area (MOERA) and the Mazingo Youth Camp (near Maryville, Missouri) on October 4-6.

The exercise consisted of three major training lanes Friday and Saturday: rescue and evacuation on the ropes challenge course, disaster simulation, and incident command post. The American Red Cross conducted an introduction to disaster services course Friday evening and shelter fundamentals training Saturday. A mock news conference was held Sunday morning along with after-action reviews.

While the event was required for students studying crisis and disaster management, all students were invited. Credit was available for participation, which cost \$50 per participant. Over 30 students participated in the three-day exercises. Twenty-eight faculty, responders, and student leaders (28) provided support for the event.

"This is an amazing applied leadership experience," said Dr. Mark Corson, a professor in the CCR program and chair of the Department of Natural Sciences. "Many people find these experiential opportunities life-changing because they are challenged in ways in which they've never been challenged. People learn much about themselves as leaders and followers."

Participants were assigned to disaster response teams and rotated leader and follower roles. In addition to building their leadership skills, participants learned important first responder skills to ensure they are prepared when disaster strikes.

"Our catch phrase is 'Be a responder and not a victim,'" Corson said. "Crises happen all the time. You can never tell when and where

Table 2. Missouri Hope training schedule

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning		Team Orientation	Disaster Response – ICS - LSAR	AAR - Graduation
Afternoon		ICS – LSAR – Disaster Response	LSAR – Disaster Response - ICS	
Evening	Staff Orientation	Red Cross Intro to Disaster Ops	Red Cross Shelter Operations	

they will happen. People who are trained and ready will be able to take care of their families and neighbors, and they will be a responder and not a victim" (Northwest Missouri State University, 2013).

CAMPUS-COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (C-CERT)

C-CERT is modified CERT for post-secondary students and campuses. C-CERT is used as a means of student recruitment at both Northwest Missouri State University and Utah Valley University. CERT training was established to prepare citizens to respond to emergencies while waiting for first responders. Once first responders have arrived in the scene, CERT members can continue to assist where required. The CERT website states:

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services will not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will prevent people from accessing emergency services they have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. People will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate lifesaving and life sustaining needs.

One also expects that under these kinds of conditions, family members, fellow employees and neighbors will spontaneously try to help each other. This was the case following the Mexico City earthquake where untrained, spontaneous volunteers saved 800 people. However, 100 people lost their lives while attempting to save others. This is a high price to pay and is preventable through training (FEMA, 2014a).

CERT was established in 1985 by the Los Angeles Fire Department to train citizens to assist in disaster situations so as to avoid a repeat of a Mexico City type tragedy, where so many rescuers lost their lives. It spontaneously spread across the United States and was adopted first by Citizen Corps and then FEMA as a means of training and preparing citizens for disasters.

CERT training is a good model of how exercises become progressively more complex as they build upon the previous exercises. CERT

training combines orientation seminars, drills, and tabletop exercises, until a final simulation or functional exercise. The following lists the CERT course content, offered in six lessons during 24 classroom hours.

- Unit 1: Disaster Preparedness
- Unit 2: Fire Safety
- Unit 3: Disaster Medical Operations—Part 1
- Unit 4: Disaster Medical Operations—Part 2
- Unit 5: Light Search and Rescue Operations
- Unit 6: CERT Organization
- Unit 7: Disaster Psychology
- Unit 8: Terrorism and CERT
- Unit 9: Course Review and Disaster Simulation

In summary, “CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference. Through training, citizens can manage utilities and put out small fires; treat the three killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock; provide basic medical aid; search for and rescue victims safely; and organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective” (FEMA, 2014a).

FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE “ATLANTIC HOPE”

The Northwest MISSOURI HOPE field exercises were designed after the model used by the Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education (CHSE), called ATLANTIC HOPE. Field Training Exercise ATLANTIC HOPE is held annually at the Public Safety Training Complex of Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Florida. This four-day exercise, sponsored by the Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education (CHSE), tests the ability of disaster relief and humanitarian students to apply what they have learned about the planning and conduct of relief missions in a full-scale simulated disaster exercise (CHSE, 2013).

In this exercise participants are members of a humanitarian relief agency called International Humanitarian Action (IHA) and “deployed” on Thursday to the fictional country of Atlantica to help out in complex emergency. When participants arrive Thursday evening, the exercise begins, and students begin the role-play as if they were actually in the war-torn and earthquake-stricken country of Atlantica. On Friday they participate in a series of team-building and technical classes offered “in-country” by subject matter experts to prepare them before moving to the disaster area. By Friday evening they are in the field in Atlantica and on Saturday they begin the full-scale exercises, where students rotate through different simulations where they practice incident command, search and rescue, and medical first aid. Partici-

pants leave Sunday afternoon following an after-action report and press conference. In addition to technical skills, participants learn leadership and team-building as they work with students from other post-secondary institutions.

A second four-day full-scale exercise has been added for advanced students (who have attended the initial training exercises), graduate students, and first responders. This has replaced the two-week full-scale exercises that were held in Macedonia in 2006-2010.

FULL-SCALE EXERCISE “SVETLINA” HELD IN MACEDONIA

The Summer Institute for International Disaster Relief (an affiliate of the Consortium for Humanitarian Service and education) held two-week full-scale exercises in Macedonia in May 2006 through May 2010. The exercises called SVETLINA (or Light) were held at an army facility, Camp Pepeliste, in the south of the country. The Army of the Republic of Macedonia supported the event, providing logistics, security, role players, and some training. American and Macedonian students were divided into three groups, which were assigned to various tracks during the exercises. Students within the groups rotated leadership and other roles on a daily basis.

All participants received a handbook called *A Road for Peace: A pocket guide to peace-keeping and humanitarian operations in the field* (Forage, 2010). The handbook described the background for the simulation and provided readings about humanitarian services to use as guidelines in responding to incidents throughout the exercises. As in the four-day exercise, the simulation started as soon as student participants arrived on the first day. Incident command was established on the first day and rotated daily throughout the two weeks. During the first week students spent most of their time training at Camp Pepeliste. In the evenings they were involved in negotiations with the various role-players in the simulation—the Army of the Republic of Atlantica and the rebels. The goal was to obtain safe passage into the rebel-held territory and establish humanitarian space for serving victims of an earthquake that had devastated the country. Later they began negotiations for a prisoner exchange between the warring parties. At the end of the first week participants had an opportunity to do village assessment and meet and dine with real Macedonian people. A student gave his impressions of this experience:

During the first weekend, we split into smaller groups for our “village assessment.” I went to Crevl Bregovi with several other participants in an effort to learn about the locals and their needs. It was an incredible experience. Local leaders invited us into their homes, shared their food, and spoke with us at length about their lives. For the most part, locals there live in conditions that many would consider to be somewhat squalid—there was a general filth that was pervasive within the village. Few had functioning automobiles, and not many more had

access to computers or cellular phones. Much of their lives are based around subsistence, not money or assets or stature—these men and women are simply trying to meet their basic needs on an everyday basis, and they aren't always successful. Sewage systems are faulty or non-existent, clean water is nowhere to be found, and few have jobs outside of the village. In a way, it was beautiful. Heartbreaking, but beautiful. It made me wonder what it might be like to reduce my life to the very essentials; I feel like I would gain a new appreciation for the people and the things around me. Such may be the duality of rural life (Fisher, 2010).

At the beginning of week two participants moved from the barracks in Camp Pepeliste to tents in the field. They worked in their groups in search and rescue, medical first aid, flood rescue, fire suppression, and mine detection. They set up and managed a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). A student described his impressions of week two events: "Week two centered around the construction and operation of a camp for internally displaced persons, or IDPs. This involved creating a thorough operating outline including administrative and logistical planning, as well as coordinating the labor required to set up shelter and accommodations for approximately 20 villagers (many hundreds more in most real world situations). Setting up tents and food distribution systems was quite a challenge, as was providing the necessary security in order to protect the people in the camp. Atlantica in a state of crisis, and maintaining the safety and security of innocent civilians is certainly a top priority for any humanitarian" (Fisher, 2010).

At the end of the week participants worked on a humanitarian service project for a local community. In 2009 they built a shelter for a rural preschool. In 2010 they laid cement for a basketball court at an elementary school. In 2010, 15 American students participated from four universities—Northwest Missouri State University, West Point, the Citadel, and Indian River State College. In addition to travel and other expenses, American students paid a \$1,500 participation fee. Seven Macedonian students attended free from the peace and justice program at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje (Fisher, 2009, 2010).

Overall the feedback from both Americans and Macedonians about the exercise was positive. One student reported: "Over the course of the exercise, we touched on a lot of humanitarian subjects—safety, negotiations, incident command, camp building, search and rescue, fire suppression, and media relations. There was also a lot of focus on strategic thinking and situational awareness, two concepts that are integral to the work of any successful humanitarian. Overall, though, I must say that I enjoyed negotiating the most. I was either the lead or the co-lead on three separate occasions, and it was a great learning experience." He described the experience as "life-changing" (Fisher, 2010).

Table 3. Two-week Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	Travel	Welcome – Registration	Safety Orientation
Tuesday	ICS Orientation	Humanitarian Security	Negotiations – Humanitarian Space
Wednesday	Medical Operations	Medical Operations	Negotiations – Civil Military Relations
Thursday	Disaster Response	IED Mines Training	Negotiations – Prisoner Release
Friday	Navigation Exercise	Hike	Media Relations – Press Conference
Saturday	Humanitarian Project	Humanitarian Project	After Action review (AAR)
Sunday	Village Tour	Village Dinner	Rest
Monday	Camp Logistics	Convoy Training	Convoy – Establish Camp
Tuesday	Earthquake Village	Earthquake Village	Negotiations – Military
Wednesday	Flood Rescue	IDP Camp	Negotiations – Rebel Camp
Thursday	Fire Suppression	Village Project Prep	Negotiations – Prisoner Release
Friday	Construction Project	Construction Project	Negotiations – Press Conference
Saturday	Construction Project	AAR	Final Reception
Sunday	Camp Clean-up	Travel	

CRISIS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT AT UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Utah Valley University offers two bachelor's degrees in Emergency Services Administration. The Emergency Care degree graduates students with a paramedic certificate. The Emergency Management degree is 100% online and targets mid-career police, firefighters, paramedics, and military who need leadership and management courses for advancement in their careers. About 20 percent of the 600 majors in the Emergency Management program are traditional students who are seeking careers in government and non-profit agencies in crisis and disaster management and humanitarian services. Unlike the majority of students in the program, they don't have years of field experience. Students can take a number of courses that are specific to the area of crisis manage-

ment and disaster response: Principles of Disaster and Emergency Management, Humanitarian Services and Disaster Relief, Disaster Response and the Public, and Crisis and Disaster Management.

In response to this group of traditional students, UVU has designed supplemental experiential learning that will provide both the experience and connections with professionals in the field of emergency services. The following applied-learning activities were instituted so students could gain both experience and professional networks.

- Incorporate CERT training into basic course.
- Provide orientation and use table top exercises in all courses (including online courses).
- Use professional responders to help teach courses.
- Require internships and service-learning experiences (i.e., membership in the UVU Emergency Response Team, volunteer with Red Cross, other agencies, and active involvement in CERT)
- Encourage students to obtain EMT certification and use it to get work in ambulance services, critical care units.
- Get involved in training exercises with professionals (such as a recent active shooter exercise at UVU and the annual state wide Great Shakeout Earthquake Exercise).
- Join professional organizations like the Utah PIOs and EMS association.
- Qualify and be available for deployment to disasters.
- Provide opportunities for global and multicultural humanitarian service experiences and learning from international professionals.

In May 2014 students participated in a global and multicultural humanitarian experience in the Balkans. The experience was designed so that students would gain real-life humanitarian encounters with international professionals and train students at a university in the Balkans. Six students participated in the 2014 service learning project. They were required to have pre-requisites: CERT training, EMT certification or attend humanitarian service classes. While in Europe, they would be able to share their experience with other students, have a teaching opportunity, be involved in training exercises, and provide community service.

Students visited three countries in the Balkans—Kosovo, Macedonia, and Greece—where they met with and learned from professionals about programs and disaster response procedures in those countries. They met with (a) the faculty and administration of the Kosovo Academy for Public Safety, (b) the mayor of Gjilan, Kosovo (an area frequently struck by earthquakes), (c) officials of the Macedonia Protection and Rescue Directorate, (d) training officers of the Public Affairs Regional Centre, Macedonia Department of Defense, (e) a doctor in a hospital in Skopje, and (f) trainers and volunteers with the Hellenic Red Cross in Athens, Greece.

In Skopje they had the opportunity to train students and hold functional exercises at a cooperating university, the International Balkans

University. The six students divided into teams of two and taught three groups of 15 students each. The students had not had previous emergency training, so they were excited to learn about disaster response principles, search and rescue, triage, and emergency medical care. Following the training the three groups were involved in three simulations—an earthquake, bus accident, and fire. Each group of students had an opportunity to apply its new skills in search and rescue, triage, and medical care (Fisher, 2014).

FINDINGS

Following the Balkans trip, students were asked to reflect critically on their experience, using the DEAL approach (Ash and Clayton, 2009). In interviews, students were asked to answer four questions. What one thing did you learn from your experience? How did you learn it? Why is it important? And, what will you do in light of it? In addition, students were interviewed to respond to the following questions: Do training exercises build confidence, develop teamwork, establish relationships, and test and improve emergency knowledge and skills among university students studying in the field of emergency services? How do students perceive training exercises in relationship to classroom learning? Five student participants responded to the questions. Their responses are organized under the three themes: cultural awareness, relationships, and field experience. Sub-themes also are reported: differences in handling disaster response, leadership and teamwork, testing and developing skills, applied learning versus classroom learning, and self-confidence and trust.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

One student respondent (R2) indicated she got a greater appreciation of the culture of the people in the Balkans. She had the impression that the Balkans were a “third world country” and she arrived in the region with “fear of the unknown.” She thought the people would be unfriendly and even dangerous. She found instead that the people “educated, nice, and welcoming.”

R2 realized from her experience that she shouldn’t prejudge people and should be more respectful of people. While their government may not be the best, the people have a “fairly decent life.”

“This definitely tops every other learning experience I’ve had,” said R4. “To be immersed in different cultures. To have to learn your skills and trust yourself to be able to teach other people who honestly don’t necessarily speak English that well. It’s a big learning curve to adjust to that. You grow so much and you learn to trust yourself so much more. And you really feel you know what you are doing.”

One of the respondents (R5), who works as an EMT on an ambulance, said the trip helped him “integrate with the culture and people.” Doing

emergency management in an international setting and taking into account cultural sensitivities helped him “break through cultural divide.” He said, “It helped me use some skills that I don’t get to use in my job in terms of leadership and management. It was something I don’t get from my own work and in the classroom.”

R5 recounted how his understanding of international relationships increased. Knowing the people he met helped to “humanize” them and helped him understand their culture better. He said he learned “by making his own connections and building relationships.”

DIFFERENCES IN HANDLING DISASTER RESPONSE

The Balkans trip helped students gain a greater appreciation of the importance of disaster preparedness and the needs of people in other countries, and increased their desire to go into humanitarian service.

“Because disasters happen anytime, understanding the challenges other countries face could be beneficial if [responders in] the United States [are] called upon to help,” mused R1, a female student who recently graduated in crisis management and disaster relief. Discussions with disaster personnel in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Greece helped her make a comparison between what she knows about the United States disaster response system and that of these countries. She noted some of the difficulties faced by responders in these countries: small villages in Kosovo, many islands in Greece, and extreme poverty of some populations throughout the region. These challenges make recovery more difficult and longer, she said.

R1 indicated that she gained a greater appreciation for emergency management in the United States, where greater community outreach exists partly because of funding and training of first responders. “We may not be more knowledgeable, but we can get there faster,” she said. From her experience in the Balkans another female student (R4) realized that disasters are a global issue and that every country needs emergency management. The trip also helped her see that while people may have differences, they are “just people” and “all need help.”

“It was interesting to me,” said R2, “that most of the average public does not have any basic first aid knowledge or training.” Students at the International Balkan University were able to learn both in the classroom and during simulation disaster situations. “They had very little knowledge on basic first aid, and until they experienced simulation exercises, they didn’t comprehend just how important having basic first aid knowledge is,” she commented. R2 said she learned to be more culturally sensitive from meetings with the various emergency services agencies in each of the countries the group visited. She also learned it from the other students and friends she made.

RELATIONSHIPS

Student Respondent 2 connected culture with building relationships. “I think building relationships was the biggest part for me,” she said. “I

learned so much about their culture and values, and I hope I was able to teach them just as much in return.”

She added: “As we assembled back together as a group at the end of the exercises the students expressed how grateful they were for the opportunity to participate and be educated by hands on experiences.”

“I think just by the hands on work with the students and time spent teaching them the skills that we have learned reinforced our own skills as well as building relationships with them,” commented R1.

R3, a criminal justice student, said he was pleased by the reception given him and his fellow students from the many agencies they visited. “We learned how they did things and they listened to us.” For example, he learned that candidates at the police academy are already hired, their studies are much more intensive, and that last a shorter time. They also live right at the school. He enjoyed the training and simulations with the students at the International Balkans University. He found they were eager to learn and learned quickly.

“We had good experience with the students,” he said. “Everything we shared was an added bonus to what they were learning.” He said he still connects with some of them through social media.

R4 said she also uses social media to keep in touch with the friends she established in the Balkans. “So I know that I feel like we have made a lasting impression on these people and I know they have made a lasting impression on us. They have made a difference for us. It has been really positive to have those connections,” she said.

“We met with all sorts of groups of people meeting with professionals at the crisis center, Red Cross, and teaching at the school.” The connections were mutually beneficial, learning from each other, said R5.

He said, “It sounds like a lot of information sharing rather than information teaching because they had a knowledge on emergency management. Any [future] work that would happen would be more of a collaboration rather than teaching on our part.”

Working abroad is important, said R5, because “in the humanitarian field we learn about cultures and backgrounds; if we take the initiative to build relationships, we can gain a lot from them.” Building relationships is a skill that he thinks will help him in humanitarian service and in his job search.

LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

Relationships with the other students who travelled to the Balkans helped build teamwork and leadership skills. R1 said she thinks the experience in the Balkans “helped develop teamwork among our group in preparing and planning not just for the teaching at the school but also the trip as a whole.”

R3 said people stepped up when certain kinds of leadership were needed. “I took more of a security role to make sure we were safe and gave directions to get where we need to be. That’s kind of where I thought I was an asset.” But he added, “We all went in there being equal but one person needed to take lead. Once [R1] took that role things went smoothly.”

R3 also discussed teamwork: “Each one of us in the group had different skill levels so as we split up, we each taught differently but were able to cover the same tasks.... The students were all able to what they needed to do to be involved in the exercises. We got together and discussed about what we needed to do so everyone was on the same page. The relationship we were able to build was strengthened.”

“You build a friendship there,” said R4. “You learn to work around each other’s skills and enhance them with your own.”

R4 added, “Two heads are better than one and we had six. So we were all able to come together and make ideas that were efficient that we could work with. Even when we had moments when we questioned whether we had what we needed. We would ask: ‘What can we use instead if we can’t get this?’ Just all that brainstorming and all that collaboration together made it possible for us to work for the same goal even though we all came from different places with different experiences.”

R5 also described the relationship process: “We were thrown into a situation where we needed team building,” said R5. “At first we established our own team and then established ourselves as leaders of teams when we started working with the school volunteers. We were thrown right into the fire. We each had our own background experience which we brought to the situation. We had shared that and it became a really good exercise in team building.”

“You really do make friends with people. [As] you make connections you help enhance your own personal life as well as your professional life,” concluded R4.

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The field experience in the Balkans provided students an opportunity to test and develop their emergency response skills and helped build self-confidence and trust. Trust is essential in developing relationships with team members and those people the responder serves. The field experience also provided an applied-learning experience, which supplemented and augmented their classroom experience.

TESTING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

Respondent 1 said: “Everything we taught in the training exercises was material that we learned in CERT and from our own emergency responder background. This just gave us the opportunity to really apply our own learning and teach it to others.”

R3 felt he was tested quite a bit. “For me this was a big eye opener,” he said, “because I have never done anything like this before. I figured the training I had was something everyone would know but when I got over there I realized that that was not true and I knew something more than the basics. I was able to share my experience with other people. It helped me to understand more of immediate things responders go through to better my skills so I can be a more helpful participant.”

R3 said he was surprised to discover that as a nation “we are not as prepared as we think we are.” European countries do exercises and training with each other. From the Hellenic Red Cross, he learned about European Union exercises that involve many nations and a multitude of agencies.

R4 also felt her knowledge and skills increased from the experience. “When you teach something you really learn it. You engrain it in your mind deeper. And you learn a lot of things connect when you are teaching—a lot of I things you didn’t realize when you learned it in class.”

From teaching the students at the International Balkans University, she realized how little they knew about preparation and recovery from disasters. Meeting with the Red Cross and other agencies reinforced this impression. She said she discovered she has a “passion” for humanitarian services and disaster relief. This made the trip and all the expense worthwhile. “It was exactly what I needed.”

R5 said “it was good practice in being a manager. It was an exercise in building skills—leadership, management and teamwork skills.”

APPLIED LEARNING VERSUS CLASSROOM LEARNING

“I am a firm believer of learning on the job—or in the field,” said R2. “You can only learn so much in the classroom. It is only until you experience disaster situations or have hands on experience during real or simulation disasters that you can comprehend how to respond and improve on mistakes made.”

“In the classroom we were able to teach the International Balkan University students basic first aid and emergency response such as triage and patient assessment. We did demonstrations in the classroom to help their understanding of what we were talking about, but it was not until the simulation exercises that the students grasped and comprehended how crucial basic first aid skills are” (R2).

“Exercises were a great step learning how to change the things from classroom and books to teach it to people who didn’t know this basic information,” echoed R3. “A lot of this you can’t learn from a book. Hands on is far more productive and helps me retain information I’m learning and teaching.”

R4 commented: “Classroom learning can only get you so far. Classroom learning is honestly mostly theory. And, while what we are learning is based on real life experience, until you go out and test that.... When you do go outside the classroom you step into a whole other world and you start to understand the benefit of what you are learning.” R4 continued, “Sometimes college can seem very arbitrary in today’s world and you wonder why you are spending all this time doing all this. You ask, ‘Is it really worth it?’ Having this kind of experience is not only fun but it also shows that your education is useful—that you can benefit yourself and other people by doing it. You really get to see what you are going to be doing in your field and you really get to understand what you can do and the influence you can have for good.”

Although R5 gets experience working for an ambulance service, he found that the Balkans trip allowed him to use some skills like leadership and emergency management that he doesn't use regularly in his job. "I was also able to do emergency management in an international setting—breaking down cultural barriers and taking into account cultural sensitivities. It was something I don't get from my own work and in the classroom."

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

Respondent 4 (R4) talked about the relationship between self-confidence and trust. "Self-confidence is built by helping to teach the skills we are already learning. Self-confidence comes when you recognize that you already know the information that you are teaching. Self-confidence comes when you actually realize that you know the information well enough to teach it. Self-confidence is important for anyone in our industry because there is so little time to respond. You have to trust yourself and your skills to be effective. Self-confidence builds trust. Trust is extremely important."

R5 had similar positive feelings. "Teaching helps build self-confidence," he said, "because it puts you on the spot. You have to go back and review what you thought you knew and make sure you do know it."

SUMMARY COMMENTS

R1 told how beneficial the training and exercises were with the International Balkan University. "We could have been better prepared in running drills," she said. "We did a good job teaching the disaster response material but we could have done better with the simulation. It was a little chaotic." She recommended that students doing something similar overseas have several classes before they leave so they could learn what to expect and practice and prepare.

R4 felt the number of students going on the trip was just right and the length of the trip was about right. However, she felt that the training of students should have been in more depth. More time should be spent teaching and working with the students at the university—perhaps two or three days would be enough. "This definitely tops every other learning experience I've had," she said. "To be immersed in different cultures. To have to learn your skills and trust yourself to be able to teach other people who honestly don't necessarily speak English that well. It's a big learning curve to adjust to that. You grow so much and you learn to trust yourself so much more and really feel you know what you are doing."

"The experience helped me integrate with the culture and people although a longer trip would help more," said R5. "A longer trip would help inundate you into their culture and help you acclimate, become more acquainted with them. In the short time we were there we were able to establish a fairly strong relationship, which I think would be the basis of me going back and feeling comfortable even by myself."

CONCLUSIONS

From this case study examining student applied learning in the humanitarian services and disaster relief, it is apparent that student involvement in exercises benefited their educational experience and prepared them for work in the field of emergency services. Students at Northwest Missouri University benefit from the school's participation in the Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education (CHSE) and a full range of exercises from the orientation seminar to the full-scale exercise. Students at Utah Valley University are not only involved in exercises but also are able to develop professional networks through their association with local first responders and international emergency personnel.

This study shows how the application of NIMS principles in disaster relief exercises has benefited university students. The case demonstrates how students have developed emergency response capabilities through practical application of knowledge in simulated incidents. From their association with other students in exercises, they have obtained team-building and leadership skills. Through the participation of professional responders, students have established relationships that will carry forward into their careers. Finally, students have gained confidence in their abilities to respond under pressure to simulated critical incidents. The applied-learning experience of training and exercises supplements and augments their classroom learning.

The following table shows examples of student training matched to NIMS exercises.

Three themes and five sub-themes emerged from the student participant responses to interview questions. The themes were cultural awareness, relationships, and field experience. Sub-themes were: differences in handling disaster response, leadership and teamwork, testing and developing skills, applied learning versus classroom learning, and self-confidence and trust.

Following their participation in the global and multicultural humanitarian service experience in the Balkans, the American students reported a heightened cultural awareness which helped create understanding of the disaster response capabilities in the Balkans as well as developed relationships with students and emergency personnel. They indicated that they gained greater respect for the differences that exist in handling disaster response and a greater appreciation of the culture of the people they met. As one student said, the people are "educated, nice, and welcoming." Good relationships among the students led to shared leadership and teamwork. They reported that as they applied their knowledge and skills to training the International Balkan University students, they gained greater self-confidence and built trust. The applied-learning experience supplemented and augmented their classroom work. A student summarized the experience saying, "When you do go outside the classroom you step into a whole other world and you start to understand the benefit of what you are learning."

Table 4. NIMS exercises matched with student training.

NIMS exercises	Student Training
Orientation seminar	Course: Humanitarian Services and Disaster Relief Course: Crisis and Disaster Management CERT training 3-day, 2-week exercises
Drill	CERT training
Tabletop exercises	Course: Humanitarian Services and Disaster Relief Course: Crisis and Disaster Management CERT Training
Functional exercises	CERT Training Training and simulation with International Balkan University students
Full -scale exercises	Missouri Hope Atlantic Hope 2 week Macedonia experience - Svetlina

This study is limited in its scope, since it examines the use of exercises at two universities—Northwest Missouri State and Utah Valley University. However, a number of propositions can be drawn from the findings in this study. These require further testing and verification.

- Using professional models borrowed from NIMS is effective in teaching university students in the emergency services
- Experiential learning is a powerful component of teaching and enhancing the student educational experience.
- In addition to the opportunity to test and improve technical skills, leadership and team-building are important training elements that come from exercises and simulations.
- Students build self-confidence and trust by doing exercises. Trust leads to the development of relationships among participants.
- Individual university programs can benefit from cooperative programs with other universities and agencies.
- International experience is valuable because U.S. students can learn about other cultures and gain a greater understanding and appreciation for how disasters are handled elsewhere.

- Programs offered by these two universities can serve as models for other universities. University programs that are not now using exercises as part of the education of their students would benefit from the adoption of training exercises designed after the NIMS model.

This case study confirms that exercise and training as mandated through NIMS for first responders also works in the education and development of students in the emergency services field. Exercises using simulation methods also provide applied-learning experiences that augment and supplement classroom learning. Students benefit from emergency response exercises because they build confidence, develop teamwork, establish professional and personal relationships, and test and improve disaster response knowledge and skills.

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A Horse for Abby: Creating Bridges for Life Skill Development

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Life skill development is essential for social empowerment and civic engagement, which are universally desirable learning outcomes. A longitudinal study using both a BRIDGE process and activity scaffolding was completed. The following hypothesis was evaluated: Structured equine experiences will result in increased third-party perception of life skill development. Multiple measures were used to assess life skills including third-party surveys, student-reflections, scholastic reports, and researcher reflections on participant experiences. A case study was conducted August 2011-March 2013, with a student participant (age = 9yr). Four phases (0, I, II, III) of activities consisting of no interactions and structured interactions were completed. During each phase repeated measures of survey respondents (N=9) were used to assess life skill development. Weekly reflection journals by student and researcher were qualitative and student scholastic reports (grades) were quantitative measures. Third-party perception showed an increase in perceived life skill development using the BRIDGE process. Scholastic improvement occurred while the student was actively participating; however, scholastic improvement was not persistent following termination of activities. This study illustrates that using a structured flexibility scaffold grounded in the BRIDGE process enhanced life skill development and highlighted the importance of mentorship in applied learning.

Keywords: life skills, scaffolding, mentorship applied learning

As many institutions of higher education are including civic and social responsibility in their mission statements, the importance of life skills development and of such skills for college preparedness are growing areas of research interest. Based on prior studies in sport (Gould & Carson, 2008; Camire et al., 2013), youth programming (Duerden & Witt, 2011), and in light of third-party perception of life skill learning (Boleman et al. 2004) research on life skill development should focus on quantitative and qualitative data, longitudinal studies, and examination of skill transferability. Collectively, the concept of life skills “refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life” (Sharma, 2011). Boyatzis (2011) indicates that traditional models of competency learning for leadership roles, in which individuals need to evoke emotional and cognitive learning, are not adequate. Effective mentors tap into “emergent awareness” and bring it to the forefront of knowledge; yet, there is still the question of intentional teaching of life skills (discussing definitions and introduction of how to build a team or acting responsibly) and the effect of positive mentorship or modeling in an applied-learning environment (Zimmerman et al., 2002). It is this process of developing life skills that warrants addressing in curriculum at the collegiate level.

Evidence of community violence on a global scale (World Health Organization, 2008), awareness of youth socioeconomic status on health development (Halfon, 2014), and the link to life skills development and emphasis on positive psychology (Larson, 2000) as mitigating risk for future tendencies toward violence or loss of civic responsibility, has also renewed interest in assessing the impact of life skills development and sustainability of such skills. Two of seven strategies preventing interpersonal and self-directed violence listed by the World Health Organization (2008) includes, “(1) increasing safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers; and (2) developing life skills in children and adolescents.” Vio-

lence has lasting effects on communities, individual mental health, and employment. Determining methods of teaching life skills which are fun, interactive and promote the constructs of applied learning would be beneficial to all disciplines (Sharma, 2011). This brings institutions of higher learning to a crossroads, if students should be civically and socially prepared, then alternative learning opportunities should be quantified as appropriate methods of fostering such skills.

As institutions of higher learning are becoming more competitive in attracting faculty and students, there exist additional pressures on both groups to demonstrate learning in a quantitative manner. Furthermore, an administrative pressure on faculty to document learning is often driven from accreditation pressures. Much like competitiveness in sport has increased the need for athletes to perform at increasing levels of special emphasis, there is need for structured approaches to meet assessment outcomes. This is particularly important for new faculty or graduate students embarking on learning how to teach. Assessment of applied experiences, specifically those involving animals, can be challenging, and standardization of life skills measures is necessary (Duerden & Witt, 2011). Engaged participants may have satisfaction in completing such activities, yet Postman (1984) cautions to avoid confusion regarding entertainment value and education. The draw of applied learning, such as adventure education, interacting with animals, or other play-based learning, can be perceived as more about entertainment and less about transformation. Extension education emphasizes animal interactions to enhance third-party perceptions of life skills in the areas of responsibility, goal setting, self-discipline, decision making and self-esteem (Boelman et al., 2004). Schwartzman and Bouas Henry (2009) strongly encouraged the need for longitudinal studies in applied learning, and this sentiment is echoed in reviews of life skill development in sport (Gould and Carson, 2008), in human-animal interactions (Cole 2005; Boleman et al., 2004) and in youth programs (Fitzpatrick et al., 2005). So how do faculty balance infusion of applied learning with other institutional pressures? Often, graduate or fourth-year students help to fill the gap between faculty work load and completion of such applied-learning experiences. This reliance is mutually beneficial in the learning process and can be used as a competitive draw for institutions. Students who act as facilitators for applied-learning experiences not only must have both life skills to become leaders and have self-sufficiency, but they must also effectively learn how to apply life skills to remain competitive in the workforce. Workforce preparedness in terms of skills needed to translate scientific principles into management and public policy is driving new graduate programs (Bechert & Cronk, 2012). Therefore, a challenge of creating a learning environment and not just a novel experience is a very real issue faced by faculty to meet competitive pressures asserted by institutions. Finally, the need to ensure that appropriate structure is provided to graduate students or other assistants would aid in the design, promotion and implementation of such programs.

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Based on these insights, a longitudinal study designed using a BRIDGE process (*Build, Roles, Innovate, Design, Go, Evaluation*) and scaffolding of activities. The following hypothesis was evaluated: Structured equine experiences will result in increased third-party perception of life skill development.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

A case-study student was selected based on age (age=9 yr), availability to participate in activities over the duration of the study, and a demonstrated lack of understanding of foundational life skills. Life skills included patience, leadership, work ethic, organization, self-initiation/self-starting, confidence, listening, communication, respect, and responsibility (Duerden & Witt, 2011; Field, 2000). Life skill understanding was assessed using oral and written questioning of the student. As a note, the student and the mentor were relatives. While this was not a selection requirement, the selection component of availability over the 20-month study was facilitated by this relationship.

The mentor in this study was initially an undergraduate student in the final program year. During this study, the mentor transitioned to graduate school. The study protocol was continued by the mentor to ensure consistency in the mentor-student relationship. Like the student, the mentor also participated in an initial life skills understanding screening prior to designing applied methods using the BRIDGE process and activities scaffolding.

Third-party participants (N=9) were selected based on their authoritarian role in relationship to the student and having a sustained and close proximity relationship to the student. This involved a mixture of relatives and public school teachers. These criteria were used with intent to have multiple measures of notable observed changes in the student's knowledge and progression during the trial. Third-party participants were oriented on life skills presented in this study and instructed on how to use the survey to assess the student's expression of life skills. Permission to assess the case-study student was obtained from legal guardians as outlined by the institutional human subjects review board. Third-party participants and the case-study student had the option to refuse participation at any point in the study.

MATERIALS

A horse facility that included a sheltered area and an exterior, open area was chosen specifically for a quiet atmosphere. The time of planned activities was again chosen to avoid other horse-related activities or extraneous participant involvement. The goal was creation of a stable, quiet environment in which proposed activities were the primary factor in the case-study student's learning. Environment was identified in the *Build* step of the BRIDGE process as a key factor to creating capacity for learning success.

Four horses were used throughout this case study. Initially, observation of several horses in their natural habitat, history of training, and observed characteristics were used to determine each horse's suitability. Secondly, horse selection also involved the student. In this manner, the mentor was able to evaluate the situation for safety and risk factors in response to the student's inherent manner of interacting with the animals as part of the *Role* step of the BRIDGE process. Each horse was restrained in an enclosure, and the student was instructed to groom the horse (using standard tools) to further ensure interaction quality. Selection of appropriate horses, which varied in breed, age and size, (Missy, PC, DD, and Dakota) were pivotal to transition from Phase I to Phase II. Missy and PC were used in Phase I, due to their behavior, physical size, and ability to provide incremental challenges to the student. The horses DD and Dakota were used in Phase II, again due to incremental challenges presented to the student.

PROCEDURE

This case study was conducted from August 2011 to March 2013 and was divided into four phases. Depending on the phase, activities included horse interaction on the ground or mounted activities in both closed and open environments. Negative controls of no horse interaction were also implemented. Table 1 demonstrates the four phases, duration and related activities, and measures during the study. The procedure design, measures, and third-party surveys were approved by the institutional human subjects review board.

Table 1. Procedure duration, activity and measures for case study.

Phase	Duration	Activity	Measures
0	1 month	No Horse Interaction	Surveys and Grades
I	8 months	Ground Activities	Surveys, Grades, Reflection, Photographs
II	6 months	Mounted Activities	Surveys, Grades, Reflection, Photographs
III	5 months	No Horse Interaction	Final Surveys and Grades

Phase 0. This phase was a baseline free of horse interaction or other structured applied-learning activities.

Phase 1. Weekly sessions were intentionally designed to ensure that the mentor fostered the concept of emergent awareness (Boyatzis, 2011) combined with intentional teaching of life skills and modeling (Zimmerman et al., 2002) as part of the *Build* and *Roles* aspects of the BRIDGE process. At the start of each weekly session, the horse would be prepared by bringing it into an enclosed area, restrained. Following initial grooming, the student would attach the lead rope to the horse's halter, release the restraint, and lead the horse to an obstacle course. Initially, obstacles were designed intentionally to force choices and encourage decision making. Finally, the student would lead the horse back to the barn and repeat the grooming process. Phase I was intentionally highly structured.

Phase II. Two scaffolding experiences were introduced in the Phase II sessions to promote movement through levels of thought and reflection adapted from Ash and Clayton (2009). Two horses, DD and Dakota, were used. In addition to grooming as completed in Phase I, both physical mounting and changing environments from an enclosed area to an open, external area were intentional transitions. These intentional transitions were part of the *Innovate* and *Design* components of the BRIDGE process and included use of the cascade shown in Figure 8. The student would independently put on a helmet and mount the horse using the five-gallon bucket as a stool. Once mounted, the horse was independently guided through obstacles. Following completion, the student would dismount and lead the horse. The student instructed the mentor on how to remove the tack (as part of intentional student engagement) and, as in Phase I, the student repeated the grooming process.

Phase III. This was the final phase in which no horse interactions or other applied learning occurred. The purpose of Phase III was to determine if there were sustainable impacts of the applied-learning activities.

MEASURES

Multiple measures were used to assess life skill development, including third-party surveys, student reflections, scholastic reports, and researcher reflections on participant experiences. Life skills that were selected for measures included patience, leadership, work ethic, organization, self-initiation/self-starting, confidence, listening, communication, respect, and responsibility (Duerden & Witt, 2011; Field, 2000). Third-party participants were instructed to evaluate the student's regular expression of life skills and to reflect on the level with which the student expressed each skill. For example, the concept of respect included multiple levels of expression. In this study, respect for others (human and animal alike), as well as expressions of respect for inanimate objects, was explained as holistic life skill expression.

Third-party participants used a survey that included ten life skills and two additional questions: "What is the student's ratio of hearing a command to completing a task given?" and "List your expectations for this student to learn about life skills while working with horses." The two questions were intended only for descriptive purposes and are not presented in the results.

Figure 1 demonstrates the line scale approach for participant ratings. To use this scale, the ends of the line are set at 0 in. (0 cm) and 3.5 in. (8.89 cm). The marks were then measured manually using a ruler and converted to a numeric measurement. For instance a mark made at the highest end of the scale would be considered a 3.5. This scale was used to eliminate forced choice and equal distancing of answers as found on a Likert scale. Utilizing this type of scale when the same participants are repeatedly rating on the same survey aids in ensuring that participants don't recall exactly what answer they provided previ-

ously, as would be much easier to do with a five-point Likert scale. This procedure was employed to obtain the most objective response when working with the same participants over an extended time frame.

Figure 1. Sample line scale questions from third-party survey.

1. What is the student's respect level?

low respect high respect

2. What is the student's responsibility level?

low responsibility high responsibility

3. What is the student's personal confidence level?

low confidence high confidence

Scholastic scores at each progress report (every nine weeks) were reviewed. Letter grades were converted to a numeric scale by setting a number equal to each letter grade the student received. For example, an "A" was set equal to a "1," a "B" was set equal to a "2," etc. The reason for this conversion was to ensure that both the life skills survey and the grades were on a similar numeric scale. Specific fundamental classes were chosen for grade measures, which included English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies/History.

As part of the BRIDGE process, written assessments were included in the design. Assessment emphasis included directed questions appropriate to activities scaffolding. For instance, a question asking the student to identify parts of the horse was one of the foundational or knowledge-based questions. Towards the end of the study, questions asking the student to draw connections between the activities and school life were included.

Feedback such as a grade or critique was not provided to the student, thus freeing the student of perceived pressure to participate or to please the mentor. The student was informed that these writings and drawings were optional each session. Student drawings and reflections were not originally intended to be a means of gauging changes; however, observations in the manner and language used in answers, handwriting/penmanship, and the amount of detail in illustrations were apparent and warranted discussion.

As a baseline, third-party surveys were collected in Phase 0. During Phase 0 the student's scholastic reports were also recorded. Measures during Phases I, II, and III included third-party surveys, scholastic reports, and student reflections. During Phases I and II, the nature of daily activities was recorded in journal entries following each session.

The student answered pre-determined, knowledge-based questions that were linked to learning objectives. Qualitative comparison of the student's handwriting, grammar, spelling, neatness, and artwork was observed at each phase to further characterize life skill data from third-party surveys. Furthermore, to record sessions, static photographs were obtained.

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS

Third-party surveys were used as quantitative data using a 3.5 in. line scale with end points defined by descriptors that included "low" and "high," or "poor" and "good," or "no" and "strong." In this manner each line served as a sliding scale from left, with the most extreme, and in this survey, most desirable measure being at the right end. Survey participants were verbally instructed to mark on the line any spot relative to end points for which they would evaluate the student's expression of the life skill. The marks were assigned a numerical value between 0 and 3.5 measuring the line in inches using a ruler. This line scale prevented forced choice such as in a Likert scale, so the third-party respondents were less likely to choose the same answer in repeated measures over the duration of the study.

For each life skill ($N=10$), marks were averaged for all survey participants to determine individual life skill value, as well as averaged by Phase to describe overall life skill development. These averages were then used to tabulate results on a percentage basis. Scholastic scores were also converted to a common scale; for example, a grade of A=1, B=2, and so on. Data were initially analyzed using a repeated measures ANOVA; however, due to having only one degree of freedom, the homogeneity of variance assumption failed. This was likely due to the surveys being randomly collected without participant identifiers, and the inability to pair data across the study. As such, averages and standard deviations were assessed using Proc Means in SAS version 9.3 (2012) as relative changes in terms of percentages, and trends upward or downward were evaluated. Trends in reflections and photographs were highlighted and visual differences in drawings were reviewed.

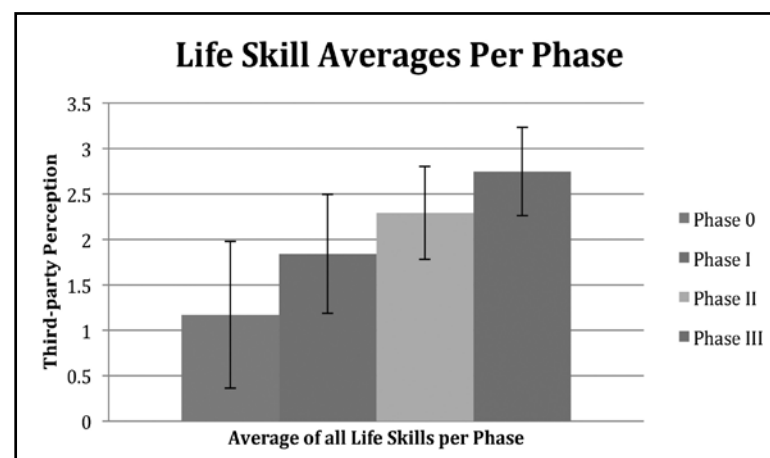
An overall increase in life skill perception was realized (Figure 2). To further describe this trend, differences between phases were manually calculated with Phase 0 remaining the baseline. An increase of 57% between Phase 0 and Phase I was noted. A 95% increase in perception between Phase 0 and Phase II, and 135% between Phase 0 and Phase III was realized. Since the closer to the 3.5 value, the more positive the life-skill perception, an overall increase of 135% was in the positive for all life skills.

A 25% increase occurred between Phases I and II (ground structured interactions to mounted structured interactions). The mounted structured activities (Phase II) compared to the final Phase III, when there were no activities, still showed an increase in perception of life skills at 20%. Finally, a comparison between the start of structured activities

to Phase III (no activities) demonstrated a 50% increase in average life skill perceptions. These data indicate that the greatest change occurred between the start and end of the study, with gradual increases in perception when the student was engaged in incremental applied-learning activities.

In addition to the overall increase in perception, there was a gradual decrease in variability for survey respondents over time (Figure 2). This may have been realized due to the survey participants becoming familiar with the survey tool; however, the nature of using a line scale prohibits exact or repeatable (memorized) choices. The reason the line scale was chosen was to prevent survey participants to be able to recall exactly where on the line they marked and to convert a qualitative response into a numeric value.

Figure 2. Overall average of third-party perception by phase of study.

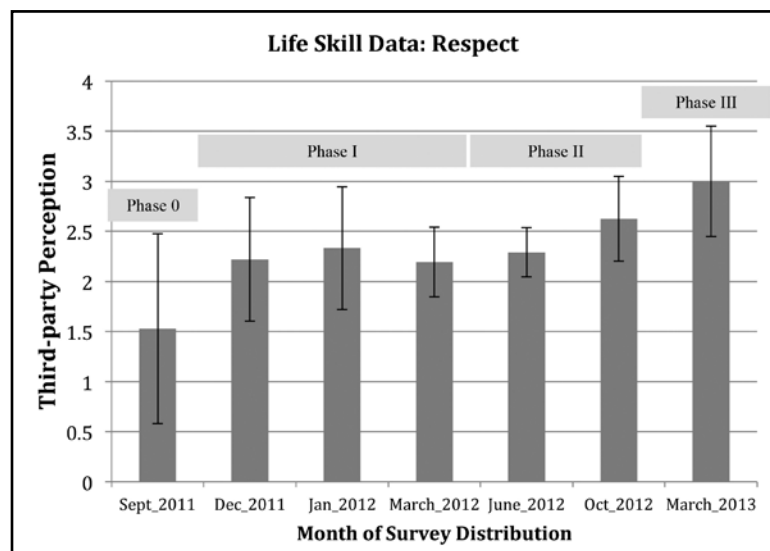


Trends were also assessed by looking at each life skill over the course of the study. There were notable "plateaus" or slight "depressions" in some life skills between Phases I and II (Figure 3). Recalling that the definition of respect included respect for others and for animals or objects, perception data matched the initial screening process. In Phase 0 overall perception was that the student expressed low respect (1.5 on a 3.5 scale, or 40% level of respect), which matched initial screening of the student. An increase in perceived respect between Phase 0 and Phase I was 48% (moving from no activities to structured activities). From baseline to Phase II an increase of 62% and between Phase 0 and Phase III an increase of 97% were also noted. While this shape and increase was positive, these increases did not exactly mirror the overall life skill average, so additional changes between Phases were reviewed to see what impact activities had on perception of life skills.

Only an a 9% increased occurred between Phases I and II, indicating that while activities increased perception of respect from baseline, the type of activity did not substantially increase perception. The difference between Phase II (with activities) and Phase III (without activities) was a 22% increase. While an increase was realized, it was not to the magnitude expected. Much like the overall life skills averages, a decrease in the variability was elucidated (Figure 3). Other life skills of confidence, patience, organization, and self-initiation followed the same pattern, and particularly, a spike in perception after Phase I established a plateau between structured activities, a slight increase in Phase II with the intentional transition, and a final increase in Phase III.

The skills of responsibility, communication, listening, leadership, and work ethic demonstrated a pattern of gradual increase towards the positive for the duration of the study. These skills did not have the same plateau or slight decrease as seen in the respect model. In these five skills, intentional structuring and even cessation of activities still showed a positive increasing trend in third-party perception of skills. These data indicate that applied-learning activities and intentional scaffolding of activities may result in greater targeting of responsibility, communication, listening, leadership and work ethic than other life skills.

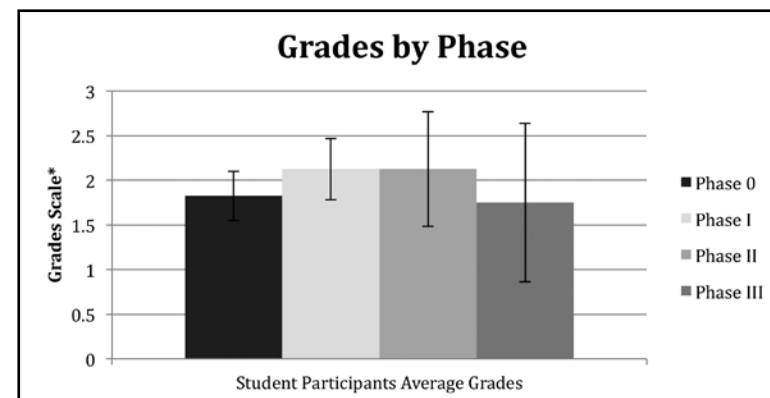
Figure 3. Third-party perception of the life skill: respect



Aside from life skills the student's scholastic scores were also analyzed to determine trends based on the applied-learning sessions (Figure 4). An increase (higher grades) occurred from Phase 0 to Phase I (moving from no activity to structured activities). No change was

noted during the transition between Phases I and II, which also corresponded to the transition between 4th and 5th grade. Between Phase II and Phase III was a 19% decrease in overall grade averages, which was closer to where the student started in 3rd grade (Phase 0). It is important to note that at the end of 5th grade (Phase III) the student went through a significant life event of family loss.

Figure 4. Average scholastic scores by phase of study



In order to further characterize the student grades, individual grade reports were graphed over time (Figure 5). Phase 0 (3rd grade) shows a steady pattern of unsatisfactory grades. In Phase I (4th grade) a higher average for the first nine weeks is apparent when structured activities began; however, this decreases slightly during the second nine weeks and stays linear for the third nine weeks, which may be a function of the novelty of the activities. In the 5th grade, the peak in grades in the second 9 weeks corresponds to mounted activities. By the third 9 weeks in the 5th grade, the student experienced the significant family loss, and a large decrease in scholastic scores was noted.

During Phase I the student's handwriting appeared sloppy and contained several spelling errors. The student became frustrated easily with questions during Phase I. Gradually throughout Phase I the student began to demonstrate understanding and wrote more neatly with observed confidence and less direction. Improvement in grammar, spelling, handwriting, and neatness continued throughout Phase II in journals and reflections.

Drawings from day 39 (third day of Phase II) and day 51 (15th day of Phase II) were visually compared. In the first drawing the student drew the horse much larger in perspective, but the student still had a positive reflection as expressed in a smile (Figure 6). After twelve days of mounted activities, the student changed perspective. On day 51, the drawing demonstrated realistic proportion and included surrounding details. This trend in perspective was interpreted as an increase in

confidence and comfort level with the horse and associated tasks. These qualitative results are not absolute measures of success but do contribute to describing personal development.

Figure 5. Scholastic score's by academic grade level.

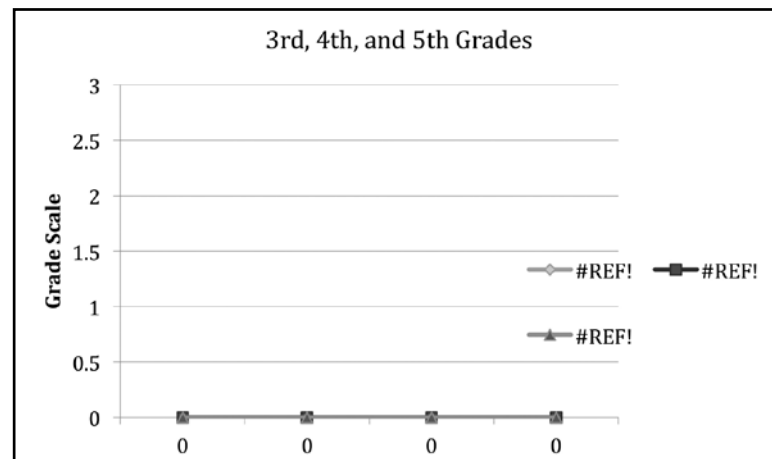


Figure 6. Student Perspective Comparisons, reflections from Day 39 and Day 51.



DISCUSSION

Life skills learning is cross-disciplinary. By utilizing a structure in which to offer applied-learning experiences, both participants and facilitators can embrace structured flexibility and emergent awareness

to promote an environment of transformation. Structured flexibility is an approach to showing the clear path to success, as students are often overly grade driven, but permitting spontaneous transformation to occur. In this study, the student demonstrated both self-initiated (leaving the confined space early) and mentor-initiated (changing horses/size of the challenge) transformative moments. These were intentional components of the plan; however, the timing was left up to the participant and mentor. During Phase II the mentor had to allow the process to occur when the student asked if she could do the obstacle courses outside of the round pen only four weeks after mounted activities commenced. This is a tremendous request and required courage, motivation, and self-esteem. Interestingly, the mentor found this transition more difficult to manage than expected, as this was "not in the plan." The mentor's challenge was to trust, have respect and self-confidence in the power of the experience. Incidentally, this observation points to the need for directors and professors of applied-learning experiences to serve in a stronger mentor-mentee relationship during transition times for undergraduate and graduate students alike. The mentors also have responsibility to engage in the experience and to promote the emergent awareness of both emotional and cognitive learning (Boyatzis, 2011).

Although the core element of applied learning should be reinforced, a structured flexibility approach ensures that learning progresses at individual speeds and durations of learning. In this example, the participant fast-tracked the process because of the choice to move beyond a perceived safety situation and into a more challenging experience. While this seems like a small step, sensitivity to student awareness of limitations and how to foster self-discovery of how to get beyond these limitations are the very nature of transformation. Sensitivity to this moment as an educator is vital to ensuring a quality and effective learning experience.

Building critical reflection in higher education is imperative for developing actively contributing professionals. In a global society that advances due to the nature of its diversity and interconnectivity, there exists a continued need for broadening student views and assessment of how learning is accomplished. In today's academic environment, faculty are challenged with balancing teaching with research, service, publication, and their own professional development to remain competitive. Administratively, pressures to provide evidence-based decision making to meet accreditation, student enrollment, and student retention goals often put more pressures on faculty to document student progress. The nature of applied learning can positively contribute to institutional progress, as the cycle of development of life skills, critical reflection at progressively higher levels, and creative solutions enhance learning environments. In essence, these transformations can be used as marketing tools, professional development for faculty, students, and when provided to administration, as documentation for accreditation. In this manner, the experience of applied learning has far-reaching impact beyond the participant and benefits more widely than perhaps initially expected.

BUILDING A BRIDGE

This study used the BRIDGE process to implement the applied-learning experience. BRIDGE building includes six phases: *Build*, *Roles*, *Innovate*, *Design*, *Go*, and *Evaluate* (Figure 7). This process was developed and used as a facilitated planning tool that is easy to follow and implement.

Figure 7. The bridge process of building applied-learning activities.

B	R	I	D	G	E
Build a foundation including learning objectives, type of experience and desired end result	Roles of those involved in the experience including participants and mentors are identified	Innovate directed and intentional activities to foster expression and learning	Design step-wise structure on which to scaffold activities using the cascade approach	Go! Get participants active and engaged. Permit structured flexibility in all activities.	Evaluation of the foundation, structure, roles, activities and assessments for effective learning

BUILD

Perhaps the most important phase of the process, *Build* is the general planning phase. This process is not unlike development of any sound research design or course development but should remain the emphasis and grounding feature. Three steps were followed in this study as part of the *Build*.

- Step 1—Determine applied-learning experience desired for either group of participants or for program outcomes. Link those experiences back to program or institutional level outcomes where appropriate as an additional layer of building connections.
- Step 2—Build desired learning outcomes, with emphasis on process. Use action verbs. For instance, “to study” is not considered measurable, but “to identify” and “to demonstrate” are actions that can be measured in a variety of manners. The assessments for this step can be infused in a traditional lecture-based component of a classroom. In this study, these assessments occurred as part of the post-activity journaling.
- Step 3—Determine how the activities contribute to the learning objectives. If a study abroad is desired but does not contribute to the learning objectives, then perhaps a domestic study away would be more appropriate. This step aids in ensuring that novelty is not the only draw for the applied-learning experience.

ROLES

What are the expected participant and facilitator roles? Who is going to do what? In the BRIDGE approach the importance of guests or mentors in the application phase cannot be underestimated. The data in this study support the importance of mentorship. Building peer-peer and mentor-mentee learning experiences that go beyond editing or working on the next step, but adapting more active reflective processes, have been recommended in applied-learning models to deepen the experience (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Data indicated that during participation in structured activities, overall improvement of scholastic scores occurred.

The grooming process— part of Phase I, ground activities— was explained to the student prior to horse selection. In Phase II, the student began explaining to the mentor how to achieve a process. This shift in roles helps participants find their own mentorship ability and, in the authors’ opinion, creates a faster approach to emergent awareness than when a participant is continuously directed. A caution is that the mentor needs to create that safe environment prior to encouraging a shift in roles. The BRIDGE foundation helps facilitate this safe environment.

Based on these data, transferability of skills may be linked to the mentor-mentee relationship and less to the activity itself. In the area of life skill development and adventure education, bringing in former (successful) program participants is recommended to focus debriefing activities (Gass, 1985). In this way, the common bond between participants and mentors is the experience itself. Relationship building permits some trust bond to be developed between the mentor-mentee. In this study, it was vitally important that the participant had the capacity to build trust with the mentor, as the risk involved with working around horses is greater than a traditional classroom experience. A mutually beneficial trust-building occurs between the mentor-mentee and, as such, prepared both individuals for transitions and transformations due to the experience. Trust is a vital soft skill that leads to preparing better leaders and principles of professional skills that are being addressed as cross-disciplinary challenges in graduate education (Bechert & Cronk, 2012); therefore, building BRIDGES between mentors and mentee at the undergraduate level should translate into more productive graduate students and graduates.

Halfon (2014) indicates that at-risk youth have greater obesity and mental health disorders due to lack of optimal resources for developing strategies for health promotion and well-being. Cole (2005) explained that specific life skill improvements were noted in anger management, self-awareness, leadership, problem solving, workplace skills, and interpersonal skills. By comparison, a control group of students who did not undergo an applied experience, but received the same six-week training on life skills as the test group had significant increases in the areas of leadership and anger management. Cole attributed the differences to the length of time the test group had to practice the skills and the infusion of structured teamwork (2005).

Fusion of applied-learning principles at various ages and directed interactions may provide essential opportunity for changing the health, and general social landscape of educational and learning environments. Given these data, applied learning is clearly more than just the experience. In order to achieve lasting impacts, thoughtful and intentional learning with reflection is vital. As institutions and programs look to increase student retention and to provide industry connectivity, then infusing mentor programs and directed intentional relationship building would positively contribute to the experience itself.

INNOVATE

This is the phase in which more research for best practices is needed. The emphasis in this phase is on developing new activities or directed assignments that ensure learning outcomes are met in the *Build* phase. In this study, this was accomplished through one-on-one interactions with the mentor and major professor; however, this could be accomplished, for example, with faculty or student focus groups, literature reviews of procedures, or adapting current assessments to the objectives. A collegiate level assessment that could be adopted is a degree of separation assessment. In this assignment, students are asked to locate current events (within the last few months) using any media source. The students, either in groups or individually, determine how the information presented in the article can influence their respective fields. This can be a direct impact or indirect impact. A scaled approach to grading would be completed by assessing a set number of points to each degree and how completely the student(s) connected the assessments. This type of assessment engages students in making industry-

related connections, while retaining a global view point, hence bridging an academic and professional gap.

DESIGN

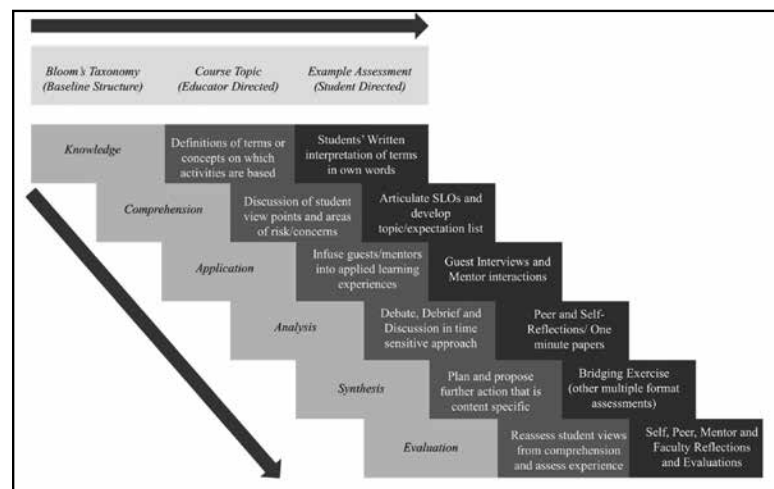
In this phase, step-wise activities are designed following multiple assessment methods that infuse oral, written, peer, and individual works. Figure 8 demonstrates how a waterfall or cascade approach for scaffolding courses helps guide progression of learning activities structured specifically on Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956).

This approach has value for individual learning activities or to scaffold an entire course or an educational program. Progression is intended to be from top to bottom and from left to right, with educators using the first cascade as a grounding or planning structure and the second cascade as an action plan. The inclusion of students in the planning process in the second cascade and mentors in the third cascade is intentional. Based on the data presented here, both of these steps are pivotal to ensuring that transitions, and the often desired transformations are made.

Learning assessment is often problematic, so areas for student growth must be clearly delineated. Cross-disciplinary objectives recommended specifically from this study include stressing the importance of building capacity for reflection as previously indicated by Ash and Clayton (2009); promoting student ability to desegregate what, who, when, where, and why regarding a topic or event; and creating clearly documented outcomes. Initial infusion of these areas can be through specific assignments and should include various media to enhance holistic communication in a level-appropriate manner. In this study, this scaffold was applied over the entire experience, as well as within individual days that the participant was involved in these experiences. To effectively use this approach, the participant context must be applied prior to starting the cascade. For instance, the participant in this study could not complete a higher order critical reflection exercise, so clearly directed questions were initially provided to aid in developing reflection skills. As a caution, when applying this approach at the undergraduate or graduate level, assessments and discussion need to be appropriate to the student group represented, as being too basic will result in loss of interest and being too advanced will eliminate the safe learning environment that is desired for transformation.

There are some key points in this scaffolding approach. Core to student success in a higher education model is that students have foundational active listening skills. Educators should provide opportunity for evidence-based discussions supported with well-defined learning objectives. These objectives are aligned with assignments that introduce students to reflection strategies through multiple learning mechanisms. A simplistic approach is to place these learning objects on both the daily activities in a handout or in an online format and on assignments.

Figure 8. Sample cascade scaffolding for applied-learning activities.



In this study, the student was both instructed orally and had the objectives/activities written in the reflection journals. Furthermore, the student reflected daily on what was accomplished in the activities. This reflection was reviewed to determine if the activities were meeting the initial objectives. This checks-and-balances approach also ensures that the process is focused but does not eliminate spontaneity during the activity itself. This extra attention in linking activities to the learning experience provides a structured and directed approach. Clarity of these boundaries provides a safe and positive learning environment. By having students involved in the process at the comprehension level, then safety boundaries, which are inherent to a transformative experience, are addressed early in the course. Moreover, this approach provides documentation of how learning outcomes were assessed, as is often required by accreditation.

GO

In the BRIDGE process, this is the activity step. The nature of the activities is directed by the prior steps, but the emphasis in this phase is the experience. In this process, structured flexibility is a theme that needs to infiltrate every activity. For instance, in this study, involvement of horse selection is one manner in which student was used in the process to build capacity for learning; however, the planning requires first to have safe animals with which to work, and this falls to the mentor. The structure limited size and types of horses available but was flexible because the student was involved in the selection of the horse for the activity. Again, level-appropriate and activity-appropriate choices are vital to ensuring engagement in the process.

Standards of teaching to the test or providing objectives prior to testing decreases student motivation (Tumlin et al., 2009). So while it is important to have a structured approach to applied experiences, it is important not to provide the "test ahead of the test." The point of a scaffold approach is to ensure that participants know boundaries, direction, and reasons for progressing. Learning occurs when moving beyond individualistic constraints and discovering how others think and approach problem-solving. Ensuring that participants engage in the experience in this phase is vital.

EVALUATION

This is the assessment, reassessment, and document phase. Ask various questions. "How did the process work?" "Were expected outcomes met?" "Were assessments appropriate to outcomes?" In order to make this process work, being critical reflectors will enhance future endeavors. Some major pitfalls include not having the right roles, missing the intent of the activities, having outcomes that are not measurable, dealing with unforeseen circumstances, losing support of faculty, students, or administration during the process, or losing focus of the process.

Emotional responses can steer the direction of the student's learning capabilities (Torres, 2008). If emotions are left out of the learning experience, then is true learning achieved? Often emotional, psychological, and physical safety is intertwined in applied learning. With regards to horse interaction, Boyd and Haveruk (2006) state, "Frequently...our clients begin to share their emotional and psychological issues of safety and vulnerability... they [compare their habit to] standing behind an angry horse." During this study the horse, Missy, passed away from natural causes, and during Phase III, the student lost a dear family member. Although there was clearly a deeper connectivity with the family member, the passing of Missy served as a precursor learning experience. The mentor was very careful in this stage to permit the student to pursue emotional safety while working with PC, a replacement horse. This unplanned transition in Phase I did not lead to negative impact on scholastic scores or third-party perceptions. The loss of the family member in Phase III did impact scholastic scores but not third-party perceptions. These results allude to the question, What is it about applied-learning experiences that can aid in transitions and impacting coping strategies? When Missy passed, the student took a greater leadership and confident role with PC. Trotter et al. (2008) explain that relative to facilitation and mentorship, when a student becomes frustrated or distressed, the next step is to process (quickly) why he or she is frustrated and to try another approach. Relating frustrations to a life experience that the student had previously or was currently experiencing resulted in greater success. In this example, if the student had been engaged in applied learning during Phase III with the concurrent loss of a family member, then transferability of life skills may have been achieved. This is one example of how post-activity evaluation is necessitated for characterizing future endeavors.

STAYING ON THE BRIDGE

Quantifying the applied-learning experience is a continued challenge (Duerdman & Witt, 2011; Schwartzman & Bouas Henry, 2009). In this longitudinal case study, multiple measures of life skill enhancement were used. Several other case-studies and programs have been developed to observe the effect of horse interaction (Lentini & Knox, 2009; Hutchison, 2009; Tereault, 2006). Scholastic scores illustrated an increase while actively involved in human-animal interaction. Unfortunately, once the sessions were completed, a sustainable or notable increase of scholastic scores was not attained. Martinek et al. observed this lack of transferability to the classroom environment (2001). Explanations could involve the entertainment or novelty factors of interacting with horses as suggested in the initial increase in scores in Phase I, or that traditional public school compulsory exercises do not permit exploration and reflection that is translated to a grade or assessment. Gass indicated that in adventure education, as an experiential learning model, intentional transferability should include implementing condi-

tions into the design, resulting in transferring skills. Many types of applied-learning experiences are novel to the participant, and as such, clear scaffolding should be created to ensure that once the novelty of the experience wears off, then learning is sustained. Participant learning should mimic future needs, providing practice of transfer while still in the program, and having consequences of learning to be naturally derived, which places the responsibility of learning on the participant, are also important (1985).

Gauging life skills through a line scale aided in preventing the survey participants from recalling an exact mark or value which they had chosen the previous time they completed the surveys. This was completed with intent to create less bias in recording repeated measures. By using a line scale a range of selection was made available to each participant. This approach was useful in assessing learning skills as opposed to having specifically listed options, which could be advertently or inadvertently replicated.

Along with the student, the mentor also made transitions during this time in the study. The mentor went from an undergraduate program to application and acceptance into graduate education. Graduation marked a significant transition time, and while not quantitative, qualitative reflection themes mirrored those of the student participant during the transition of Phase I to Phase II. In essence both the student and mentor were learning to "mount" new challenges in both applied activities and in life. The metaphor of mounting a horse can be applied to other models in which transformative experiences are desired or encouraged. A need for continued deep reflection has resulted in greater motivation to complete tasks (Tumlin et al., 2009). Similarly, while motivation was not the focus, a sideline effect of relationship building and active participation resulted in reflection themes of greater personal awareness, enhanced motivation, and overall patience to live the experience. These observations are in agreement with prior human-animal research models (Cartinella, 2009; Cole, 2005; Waite, 2011).

As part of this study, the mentor engaged in the reflection process both at the personal level and in review of the student's journal entries. Several concurrent transitions were noted, although were not designed into the project, contributing to the structured flexibility of this project. A natural age/growth and development process occurred as the student transitioned through grade levels. Two transitions occurred, with the student aging from 9 to 10 years old and transitioning from elementary school to middle school (5th to 6th grade). Today's culture is such that students around this age are faced with external pressures and are often challenged with adult decisions earlier than in prior generations. Life skill development is considered a key part in this decision making process (Fitzpatrick et al., 2005). Without adequate life skills, poor decisions cause individuals to be at a high risk for mischief and even imprisonment. Even though this student was not considered at risk, a program for applied-learning activities may be vital to providing pathways to success for youth and incarcerated inmates (Camire et al. 2013; Cole, 2005; Halfon, 2014). Hutchison (2009) recognized this interac-

tion while stating, "The goals of the program... [are] to teach patience, discipline, and problem solving skills, to help the inmates prepare for release to the parole system...the nature of the wild horses is such that an inmate cannot intimidate, bully, or coerce a reaction from them." Halfon recommends that facilitation of conditions, which emphasize health, education, family, or mentor interactions, are necessitated for health and well-being of adults. These data indicate that applied-learning activities may provide an outlet for schools, at-risk youth programs, and other youth organizations to provide a path for life skill success. This case study emphasized safe challenges and teachable moments to empower the student to make appropriate decisions.

Immediate processing of the experience aids in developing a learning space as seen in this study and in prior research (Lindsteadt & Williams-Decker, 2009). In this study, the student reflected on the experience immediately following the activity. While this can be challenging in a timed course or semester, it is an important step to follow. Further, the link to mentorship and having directed experiences in practicums and internships enhance the ability to bridge information or knowledge into a synthesis or evaluation level of thinking. Employers desire these types of life skills, and these data indicate that following the BRIDGE process can increase third-party perception of life skills.

A key component to developing life skills with animals occurs when students realize that they are in charge of a 1200-pound animal, increasing self-esteem and confidence, and appropriately challenging safety. This experience is similar to any applied-learning activity in which students push their comfort boundaries. As an example, first-generation college students face challenges that are different from non-first generation students, and this foundation, or baseline of viewpoints, should be considered in designing appropriate, applied-learning activities. Students are then more likely to believe in themselves and have overall better results in their endeavors (Waite, 2011). To aid in life skill development and learning, faculty may need to introduce examples of core concepts to expand student awareness; however, emphasis should be placed on creating a student-centered environment.

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This case study has opened up several avenues for the continuation of research. For example, how does students' participation in life skill developing activities as adolescents affect them in their collegiate, adult, and geriatric lives? Could life skill development and "life training" become a requirement of curriculum? What is an adequate mentorship to supply students with the right tools? The amount of time and duration required for this type of applied learning is warranted. Indicating an understanding for transferability, the student reflected that life skills are "something that you should do at home and at school and with the horses."

For assessment purposes, there exists a need for research that defines adequate time, contact experiences, and structures for learn-

ing. In higher education, the academic calendar dictates duration and timeframe for activities. This study revealed that this type of interaction required scaffolding to keep the student engaged and a strong commitment from the mentor. The challenge for educators is to meet the needs of core competencies, admission and retention efforts, accreditation and structures inherent in ensuring consistent and quality education without losing the flexibility of personalized learning. Life transitions, such as intricacies of coping with death and loss or suffering from violence, should be a future area of applied-learning assessment to determine if specific activities enhance learning. Safety is a major consideration when conducting applied-learning activities. These sessions were conducted by using the horse as a tool to teach the student the definition of life skill; however, other models may also be very effective in life skill development. Continued learning and application of life skills over time are essential components to developing transformational experiences and transferrable skills.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Consequences of applied learning should be naturally experienced with structured flexibility, and the BRIDGE process provided a good balance between structure and experience. Concurrently, retaining strong mentorship and involvement in constructive, directed and applied-learning experiences during high-risk times is important. This study has demonstrated that personal struggles have an impact on scholastic performance, life skill development, and mentor relationship and can be pivotal to success.

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It Still Takes a Village: An International Perspective on Technology and Mentorship in the Northwest Corridor

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This undergraduate research is part of a new student-mentorship initiative on campus, Success Through Academic Research (STAR), sponsored by the Metropolitan College. Utilizing community-based applied action research, researchers developed a case study on secondary classroom technology usage in IPRC-Kigali, Rwanda, East Africa and in West Mecklenburg High School, Charlotte, North Carolina, United States. The objective of this research was to compare and contrast the educational technology divides at these two secondary institutions. Working with one focus group from each secondary institution, researchers were able to establish an online repository for data collection purposes. In both focus groups—IPRC-Kigali and West Mecklenburg High School—educational technology was imperative as both southern Rwanda and the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte, North Carolina, work to improve overall conditions of their respective communities. In this case study, we collected and assessed not only the computer-generated statistics but also the personal narratives of the students and staff constituting these communities as we sought parallels that yield technology support for both global communities. Face-to-face-interviews, web-based networks, field observations, international communiqués, and extensive scholarship review have provided research inroads for addressing the technological needs of students from Rwanda to the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte, NC.

Keywords: undergraduate, mentorship, technology, secondary education

In a recent CUR study (2013), researchers and student mentees shared the following:
Time spent as an undergraduate is formative and novel; getting a young researcher involved in the research community beyond the student's specific project can inspire and dramatically encourage students. A mentor can suggest that students travel to conferences in different cities or countries, help them construct research posters, or use other institutional contacts to help the students find summer research opportunities. ("Five Effective Strategies for Mentoring Undergraduates: Students' Perspectives," p. 13)

This undergraduate research is the next phase of the research mentor's initial field research in the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte and in the African countries of Rwanda and Nigeria Success Through Academic Research (STAR), sponsored by the Metropolitan College, is the highlight of a new student-mentorship initiative on Johnson C. Smith University's campus. In a 2013 study, academicians Walker & Davenport observed:

Thus, while students enrolled in liberal studies courses at Johnson C. Smith University have traditionally explored diversity via textbooks and required university lyceums, this project allowed students to develop their own study samples, to engage critical scholarship, and to produce significant research findings for the university and the communities surrounding the university. Such professional practice affords incoming freshmen a tangible, direct interaction with Charlotteans that no textbook or classroom lecture can provide and promotes meritorious academic scholarship during their first-year freshman experience. ("Corridor to Charlotte: JCSU as the Cultural Bridge to Domestic and International Awareness")

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Utilizing community-based applied action research, the research mentor-mentee team is currently developing a case study on secondary classroom technology usage at IPRC-Kigali, Rwanda, East Africa and in West Mecklenburg High School, Charlotte, North Carolina, United States.

The overarching aim of STAR was to identify faculty eager and willing to engage ten Metropolitan College freshmen in rigorous academic research. In order to facilitate this opportunity, STAR administrators requested faculty to draft a three-page sketch outlining their current research focus and the proposed research budget not exceeding \$500. Based on the submission of this sketch, or proposal, and the subsequent presentation thereof, faculty were matched with a select group of high-performing freshman students in February 2013. These faculty-student matches formed the base of a nuanced, guided mentor-mentee program on the university campus. Initially, 18 interested students entered the mentor-mentee program; their declared academic majors included accounting, biology, criminology, political science, chemistry, social work, computer science, computer engineering, global studies, and sports management. (Students were selected based on their academic achievements in their first semester of college and their commitment to engage in meaningful research activities in addition to their second-semester course workload).

Each research mentor-mentee team was required to participate in mentorship training, to provide the mentee meaningful academic research engagement and supervision, to prepare the mentee for conference presentation of the research, and to attend a monthly lunch seminar Q & A forum. Researchers (2013) noted, "It is this fundamental comfort and connectedness that allow mentoring relationships to evolve into the most productive, educational, and constructive interactions in the research environment" (Pita, Ramirez, Joacin, Prentice & Clarke, p.11). Objectives included faculty mentors assisting research mentees in the development and refinement of their communication and presentation skills in relation to their research project. Research mentor-mentee teams explored key concepts related to conducting research, with particular focus on the research question, design, procedures, and methodological approaches. Via weekly team meetings and larger discussion groups, research mentor-mentee teams had ample opportunities to review team project details at various developing stages. Additionally, research mentees presented and discussed research outcomes in formal campus seminars in preparation for future academic conferences, such as the 9th Annual Conference on Applied Learning in Higher Education, at which the authors of this research presented.

Research mentees for this community-based applied research project had established university majors in computer engineering and communications while the research mentor was grounded in English, STEM-related writing, and interdisciplinary studies. Utilizing a project syllabus and projected timeline, the research mentor-mentee team was able to tailor overall project details to encompass both humanities and STEM interests of the team.

The project syllabus and timeline included a triad of research, discussion, and writing to fulfill STAR objectives. The research mentor reviewed thoroughly the research expectations for the mentees, providing each with a detailed syllabus and project stage completion dates. After two weeks of introductory academic research skills and university facilities prep—including library and applied research lab—the research mentor doled out assignments for project completion based on the skill sets and interests of the two mentees. Each week, mentees met with mentor to discuss assignment completion, literature review, and succeeding steps. Mentees were required to maintain research logs and to submit weekly progress reports to STAR administrators.

The official launch of the project commenced with an official communiqué with IPRC-Kigali, Rwanda, and West Mecklenburg High School, Charlotte in the spring of 2013. Both secondary schools agreed to provide the necessary assistance for the successful completion of the research case study in which the research mentor-mentee team compared and contrasted a number of factors that contributed to the enhanced focus on varied educational technologies for both focus groups.

The Soul of the Northwest Corridor Initiative was a 2012 university-sponsored survey conducted to assess the area in which Johnson C. Smith University resides. The campus is close to a growing and vibrant uptown Charlotte and is situated in the heart of the northwest corridor of Charlotte, an area undergoing major upheaval and revitalization as more professional establishments and middle- to upper-income families seek out resources closer to uptown Charlotte, North Carolina. The university, touting itself as “employing a leading-edge methodology... as one component in its community-planning process,” has sought to play the central leadership role in the revitalization efforts along the Northwest Corridor. Given the university’s historical mandate and reputation as an outstanding institution of higher education within the Northwest Corridor, the university has made education technology one of its key emphases at local grade schools occupying the same area. Of particular interest has been West Mecklenburg High School with its Project L.I.F.T. grant designed to retain high school-aged African-American males via technology in and outside the routine classroom setting (<http://www.projectliftcharlotte.org/>). The university’s investment in educational technology along the Northwest Corridor provides newer inroads to drastically improving both education and technology in the Northwest Corridor long term.

Similarly, IPRC-Kigali is a newer combined technology-driven high school established in the capital city of Kigali, Rwanda, East Africa, to provide hands-on educational technology for students anxious to compete in increasingly global education and employment markets. Studies of government-sponsored schools like IPRC-Kigali expressed, “ICT [information and communication technology] has become an important tool for teaching and learning and has therefore attracted a great deal of investments in the African countries” (Mukama & Andersson, 2008, p. 158).

Therefore, in this case study, the research mentor-mentee team collected and assessed the personal narratives of the students and staff constituting these communities as they seek parallels that yield technology support for both global communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of more recent publications regarding both communities—West Mecklenburg High School and IPRC-Kigali—substantiates the fruitfulness of such a dynamic undertaking and international partnership between the groups. The social variables of gender, age, education, economics, cultural traditions, and religion cut across both southern Rwanda and the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte as both communities seek to revitalize mid-21st century. In the June 17, 2012, edition of *The Charlotte Observer*, in an article titled “Northwest Corridor Revival Needs Great Expectations,” journalist Ron Stodghill noted, “Counterbalancing the corridor’s rich cultural landscape of vibrant churches, historic neighborhoods, and plethora of small businesses is an entrenched culture of generational afflictions: joblessness, high crime, absentee fathers, poor health, and so on.” Similarly, communities such as Rivers and Imo States, Nigeria, hold narratives that speak to rich heritage overshadowed by poverty and crime. In a 2001 country synthesis report “Nigeria: Voice of the Poor,” field researchers observed:

Since a key finding is that poverty is linked to the inability of individuals and households to reciprocate and support other people, to build and use social capital within the community and the wider environment, the role of local level institutions in providing this opportunity to maintain reciprocity is crucial for the poor to be able to keep a sense of dignity in their lives.

According to a 2007 report from educational researchers Mukama and Andersson, “most schools in Rwanda, especially those in the remote countryside, do not have electricity let alone computers and telephone lines” (p. 157).

As both the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte and southern Rwanda work to improve overall conditions of their respective communities, it becomes imperative to bring education technology to the foreground. While more quantitative studies such as The Soul of the Northwest Corridor Initiative (2012) and the mixed array of government documents on the status of education in southern Rwanda are highly significant, these works do not chronicle the lives of individuals and subgroups within these communities.

The Rwandan government has invested much in technology-based education over the past few years as part of its strategic plan, known as Vision 20/20, which aims to see Rwanda become a middle-income nation by the year 2020 (Mukama, 2009, p. 539). According to educational researcher E. Mukama (2009):

The implementation of information and communication technology (ICT) in Rwanda as a development policy is expected to be realized in the course of four five-year rolling National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans extended over the 20-year span of Rwanda's Vision 2020, which started in 2001. (p. 539)

The country's president has taken the leadership role on advancements in education as the country pushes its 20/20 agenda. Not unlike the efforts to revitalize the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte, President Kigame and others are working tirelessly to ensure the stability and growth of their respective home communities. Technology and enterprise founder John Vrakas (2012) stated, "Under Kigame's leadership, Rwanda is evaluating its own needs, setting its own priorities, and avoiding the prescriptive reform regimes of Western donors" ("From Genocide to 3G: Innovations in Rwanda, p.85).

In fact, in a recent *ComputerWorld* article brief, Dan Nystedt (2007) highlighted the excitement of rapid technological advancements in the East African region: "The partnerships with the organizations...are part of an effort by Google to expand the computing services available in developing countries..." ("Google to Provide Apps To Groups In Africa," p. 14). To this end, compulsory education was recently increased to 12 years (Mukama & Andersson, 2008, p.156). In 2009, a government decision changed the medium of instruction from French to English for all students above the third year of primary school. The abrupt shift has created huge challenges for both students and teachers (Kigali Education Advisor/Information Resource Centre). Such challenges are evidenced by researchers Mukama & Andersson:

ICT incorporation in Rwandan schools, as reported by the participants, is a new phenomenon that the whole school community is trying to cope with. Seemingly, many efforts are being made in terms of establishing ICT infrastructures, and training teachers, students, and outsiders. (Mukama & Andersson, p.163)

Regardless of the challenges to enhance technology education for all learners in Rwanda, "programs like e-Soko are heralded by techno-optimists as proof that mobile technology can make major strides in uplifting the world's poor" (Vrakas, 2012, p. 84). The e-Soko project gives farmers tools to quickly assess the market values of their products. In a report by Vrakas (2012), he invariably stated:

Their confidence is bolstered by the devices' rapid spread, which itself seems like a force of nature. Mobile phone penetration in Rwanda grew from less than 1 percent in 2005 to 27 percent in 2010, with three mobile operators competing for the local market. Rwanda's rapid technology adoption, unfortunately, is an exception among developing countries.

Many developing nations have struggles to scale up effective government-backed programs that tap into technology's promise. Often, these countries lack the capacity for innovation and grow programs slowly, if at all. (p.84)

Mukama & Andersson are convinced that "as technologies continue to develop, they change human interaction and actions. Through this, the students' ways of learning are also modified in line with what is regarded as relevant forms of learning in educational institutions" (p.157). Communities like the IPRC-Kigali, Rwanda and the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte are also convinced of the purposefulness of upgrading educational technologies in order to thrive in the 21st century.

STAR RESEARCH CASE STUDY

The objective of this research was to compare and contrast the educational technology divides at two secondary institutions seemingly worlds apart yet maintaining similar internal and external community structures. IPRC-Kigali, for its own recruitment and management benefits, is actually housed alongside the Kigali Institute of Health Sciences, a prominent postsecondary educational institution (<http://www.iprckigali.ac.rw/>). West Mecklenburg High School, for its own retention and management benefits, has partnered with Johnson C. Smith University, a prominent postsecondary educational institution. Working with one focus group from each secondary institution, the research mentee-mentor team established an online repository for data collection purposes.

In both focus groups from IPRC-Kigali and West Mecklenburg High School, educational technology was imperative as both southern Rwanda and the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte work to improve overall conditions of their respective communities: "Creativity, innovation, knowledge, problem solving ability, appropriation, seeing the world in different ways, or transformation—these are some concepts utilized to emphasize cognitive change in learners' practice" (Mukama, 2009, p. 541). In this case study, the research mentor-mentee team collected and assessed not only computer-generated statistics but also personal narratives of the students and staff constituting these communities as the team seeks parallels that yield technology support for both global communities ("Preparing for a Collaborative Community Assessment," 2011). Face-to-face-interviews, web-based networks, field observations, international communiqués, and extensive scholarship review have provided research inroads for addressing the technological needs of students from Rwanda to the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte.

In this case study, the research mentee-mentor team specifically explored the technology resources in secondary school, IPRC-Kigali, and in secondary school, West Mecklenburg High School. The following community dynamics were assessed:

- What are the school needs related to construction, technology, and staffing?
- What are the student needs related to knowledge acquisition?
- How much is community involved in student education?
- How strong or weak are family/kinship ties?
- What are pressing needs and concerns of the community?
- How integral is formal and informal education to community development?
- What gender and health disparities are present in school and community?
- What are housing conditions within communities?
- How do school and community negotiate financial challenges?
- What does the school/community design look like?
- What does the school/community design look like to a secondary school in the
- Northwest Corridor of Charlotte, North Carolina? Vice versa?

The impetus for developing this series of assessment questions lies in the varied interests of school, student, and community: "In other words, they [researchers] maintain that both teaching and learning should converge to satisfy learners' intrinsic needs" (Mukama, 2009, p. 541). Based on exploratory research, the school entity is strongly invested in raising the bar in terms of technology resources for students but suffers from an incredible lack of financial resources and properly trained staff comfortable enough to teach educational technologies in an interdisciplinary context. As stated in the educational research of Mukama & Andersson, "Unconditional support of the school administrators is a necessary condition for effective integration and implementation of ICT schools" (p.163).

The student entity is eager to acquire knowledge that comes from enhanced technology resources. This entity is cognizant of a wider global community that is intrinsically connected via technology: "Thus, knowledge building is a continuous process embedded in action and involving individual, social, and active participation" (Mukama, 2009, p. 542). Familial support, positive or negative, plays a strong role in avowing or disavowing the student entity from attaining and fully utilizing education technology resources. The community entity surrounding school and student must be assessed for assigned cultural and educational values as these systems greatly determine student and school outcomes. Student and school are directly dependent on community for school construction, administration, and other financial concerns. Additionally, entrenched cultural notions such as gender-based assignments and work ethic complicate the development of both the student and school entities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research mentor-mentee team isolated two focus groups of approximately 20 students of mixed genders from both applied research communities. IPRC-Kigali students were generally advanced high

schoolers aiming for job placements in banking, finance, mechanics, and science. West Mecklenburg High School students were generally incoming freshmen anticipating career paths that involved avenues of personal expression mingled with curiosity about postsecondary educational options. Collectively, both focus groups achieved a gender ratio of 15:25, female to male. The IPRC-Kigali focus group consisted of 14 females and six males while the West Mecklenburg High School focus group consisted of four females and 16 males. Gender variation in both focus groups was largely based on school demographics and established education intervention patterns. For example, West Mecklenburg High School had already isolated a population of at-risk African-American males for research purposes. These males were provided an intrusive educational leadership coaching staff that consisted of community businesspersons, noted educators, and technology personnel. Using educational technology, including an online discussion platform model, these males were engaged and continue to be engaged in meaningful mini-projects designed to boost self-esteem, leadership skills, and academic performance.

For the purposes of this case study and the interdisciplinary interests of involved researchers, the research mentor-mentee team elected to employ a variety of qualitative methods to assess the educational technology uses and needs of both focus groups, IPRC-Kigali and West Mecklenburg High School. To date, two major exchanges have occurred among the focus groups and the research mentor-mentee team (see Table 1).

Table 1. Major exchanges

	Focus Group (IPRC Kigali)	Focus Group (West Mecklenburg)
Exchange 1	Web-based	Web-based
Exchange 2	2 Months	2 Months
Exchange 3	Semester	Semester

Exchange 1 consisted of background research on both IPRC-Kigali and West Mecklenburg High School along with the communities in which both schools reside and initial contacts with each school. All initial contacts with IPRC-Kigali were web-based given the time and funding constraints of the research mentor-mentee team. One member of the research mentor-mentee team volunteered service hours with students at West Mecklenburg High School in order to gain familiarity with the Project L.I.F.T. intervention program. Exchange 2 consisted

of a more substantive period of building rapport with both communities and focus groups. During two months in the spring of 2014, the research mentor-mentee team established a framework for assessing the educational technology uses and needs of IPRC-Kigali and West Mecklenburg High School. Both schools provided endorsements for the completion of the applied research project. In Exchange 3, the research mentor-mentee team will spend the fall semester of 2014 compiling and analyzing a pool of data from the sustained semester-long web-based and physical interactions with both focus groups.

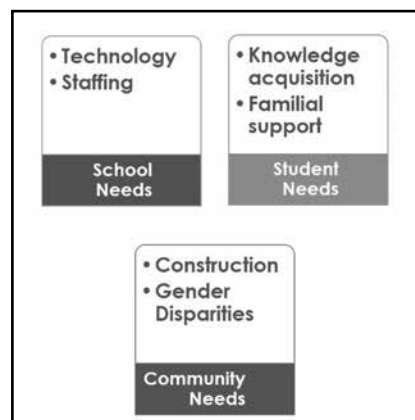
Qualitative methods for successful completion of the community-based applied research project on educational technology include:

- (1) Field observation via informal surveys and personal interviews
- (2) Focus group consisting of 1 secondary school in southern Rwanda
- (3) Unstructured participant observation in ongoing meetings with Rwandan Educators
- (4) A review of relevant literature, including research articles, agency reports, multimedia, and position papers.

STUDY ANALYSIS

The research mentor-mentee team assessed a compilation of informal surveys and personal interviews from Exchange 1 and Exchange 2 of the applied research case study. The narrative data for both Exchanges was collected during the winter of 2013 and the spring and summer of 2014. Students from both focus groups eagerly responded to 10 open-ended questions related to their school needs, their personal needs, and their community needs (see Figure 1). The IPRC-Kigali focus group consisted of 14 females and six males while the West Mecklenburg High School focus group consisted of four females and 16 males.

Figure 1. Student responses to school needs, student needs, and community needs



On separate participant observation visits with the focus group from West Mecklenburg High School, one member of the research mentor-mentee team posed questions to students on topics of technology needs and uses inside and outside the classroom, family influences and education values, and racial and gender disparities within their larger community. With the IPRC-Kigali focus group, the research mentor-mentee team gathered responses to the same topics via email communications, video technology, and personal interviews. Interviews generally lasted 10 minutes per student. Additional data collection involved formal interviews with Rwandan educators and former IPRC-Kigali students and Project L.I.F.T. managers located at West Mecklenburg High School and at Johnson C. Smith University. These interviews were more extensive and ranged from 20 minutes to two hours per interview. Due to established research confidentiality agreement in Exchange 1 with Rwandan interviewees, respondents from both focus groups were not identified by name. Working with a cross sample of 25 interviews, the research mentee-mentor were able to correlate findings with currently published reports on educational technology in the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte and in Kigali, Rwanda. The research mentor-mentee team identified two common themes or patterns from the interview cross sample.

One common theme that emerged from the narrative data set was that of race and gender. In both focus groups, student, staff members, and community persons discussed ways in which they deemed race and gender significant to their access to educational technology. The West Mecklenburg High School focus group determined race to be a more pivotal agent in their access to quality educational resources, including technology. One student commented, "Just look at this; they don't respect us and give us what we need because we are black." Another interviewee stated, "We have significant challenges, in part, due to folks not understanding the culture." The IPRC-Kigali focus group did not acknowledge race as a significant determinant in their access to educational technology. Rather, gender was determined to be a significant factor in access to educational resources. One student boasted of the increased access girls have to technology resources: "Now we have more girls getting degrees in business and technology, and they find good jobs." A former IPRC-Kigali graduate noted in a more extensive interview with the research mentor-mentee team, "Yeah, it's great! Rwanda has changed a lot, and so has my school. Females are advancing far more quickly than males in technology fields. I don't know what has happened, but it is a good thing." According to the American-based sponsors of the Rwanda Girls Initiative, "In Rwanda, however, less than 13 percent of girls attend secondary school" (Ruxin, 2011). Statistics on international education such as this one published in *The New York Times* run counter to gender education narratives found in many urban American communities, such as the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte in which race and boyhood compete with educational success.

The second theme that is significant in both focus groups is the impact of class privilege on equal access to educational technology resources. Students in the focus group from West Mecklenburg High

School equally emphasized that socioeconomic factors have hindered their knowledge acquisition in the 21st century. The families and communities of this focus group were also largely impacted by what they perceived as a technology divide based on monetary means; hence, class matters. Student responses included comments such as these: “My family cannot afford data like some people—that’s a big bill.” “I didn’t turn in my homework because my grandmother does not have Wi-Fi but his mama does because she works at the” and “We don’t have enough computer time at my school.” The focus group differentiated between video gaming technologies and those technologies geared for classroom educational success. In the IPRC-Kigali focus group, students acknowledged the class variables when it came to educational technology in their communities; however, most of the students identified themselves as having class privilege in their communities. The educational technology resources made available to the IPRC-Kigali focus group were not viewed as reasonable handouts based on socioeconomic factors—including income and location—as much as these resources were considered necessary tools in 21st century global advancement. In a published interview, former Minister of Education Dr. Charles Murigande stated, “By far the most significant change has been democratization and equal access to education. Before 1994, education in Rwanda was reserved for the privileged few, but over the last 17 years access to education has increased tremendously.... The corruption that used to determine who could pursue his or her studies has been eliminated, and the only thing that determines how well a student does in school is their own hard work” (2014). And, during the research mentor-mentee team’s observations at the sixth edition of the Rwanda Day Summit held in Atlanta, Georgia, Rwandan President Paul Kagame encouraged Rwandans from the diaspora that “Agaciro [Kinyarwanda word meaning ‘dignity’] is about creating a sense of self-worth, and self-worth is only achieved if all of us together value one another” (Rwanda Day, 2014).

The choice for value in the educational arena for both focus groups was both complex and simple. Research findings indicated two communities worlds apart who shared similar cultural roots and patterns, economic and gender disparities, and educational programming. However, the IPRC-Kigali focus group made a choice to view their world and the world at large through a different lens whereas the West Mecklenburg High School focus group was heavily mired in community politics and demographic profiling. These varied perspectives of self-worth and value to state significantly impacted the appreciation of education and the creative use of available educational technology resources.

STAR RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The research outcomes of this community-based action research are multi-layered. First, the research mentor-mentee team clarified the formal research design for full-fledged Johnson C. Smith University student research participation in both domestic and international affairs

as it relates to the mission of the research mentor and the nonprofit collegiate organization, Collegiate Sisters for Action, Inc. (CSA). Second, the research mentees involved in this applied research are better able to craft their own senior investigative research projects as mandated for degree completion by the university. Third, the research mentor-mentee team has successfully demonstrated the university faculty-student capacity to engage in broader-ranged cross-institution collaborations (Green, 2003). Faculty from the humanities division of the university clearly see the possibilities of linking their research to concentrated studies in STEM. Likewise, STEM researchers at the university more readily weigh the benefits of merging their research interests with those of humanities scholars.

In commencing this STAR research project, the research mentor-mentee team acknowledged the difficulties in reaching an international community, including financial and trustworthiness (“Conducting a Community Assessment”). As the team anticipated certain educational technology limitations, the researchers were not as prepared for the time and politics involved in executing the full research design. The IPRC-Kigali and West Mecklenburg High School focus groups, nonetheless, created interesting inroads for more fruitful dialogue and interventions in the areas of educational research and technology (Schultz, 2007). Using the direct narratives and educational profiles collected from both focus groups, the research mentor-mentee team desires to establish and maintain a public student-developed, student-friendly online repository and interface that fosters cross-institution, cross-national collaborations, study abroad networks, and funding opportunities for young researchers.

STAR RESEARCH MENTORSHIP

Mentoring and guiding university students through the research process provided immense pleasure for the research mentor as the STAR research model created a new platform for the faculty mentor’s own research interest development. The two research mentees working on this applied research project were from two distinct disciplinary backgrounds that proved quite challenging for the research mentor. While the applied research project required the research mentor-mentee team to lean more on humanistic models of investigative research, the team was wary about straying too far from their respective disciplinary traditions (Stein, 2000). To resolve tensions—from personal preferences to external funding complications—the research mentor-mentee team tasked each other with research responsibility pertinent to their respective disciplines. For instance, the research mentee from the discipline of computer engineering developed online survey tools and web interfaces for the overall project while the research mentee from the discipline of communications often was the lead spokesperson for much of the face time with students and school personnel. The creativity and expertise of the research mentor-mentee team created a dynamically rich research foundation from which to build.

The short-lived STAR mentorship program established at Johnson C. Smith University allowed young scholars, or mentees, to integrate into the campus community, strengthen their resolve for academic achievement, and contribute to their preparation to complete their senior capstone projects (Stein, 2000). In scheduled sessions with peers and faculty mentors alike, mentees participated in peer-feedback sessions, with intended goals of learning to provide and to accept constructive feedback on conference presentation skills and possible published peer-reviewed publications. In addition to appraising peer presentations, mentees also were expected to participate in seminar discussions and Q&A sessions to develop an appreciation for, and understanding of, the ways in which the research process unfolds, even in disciplines other than their own. In a 2013 article titled "Five Effective Strategies for Mentoring Undergraduates: Students' Perspectives," researchers from the University of Central Florida emphasized:

Other studies investigating the merits of undergraduate research have shown development of research skills (Kardash 2000), enhancement of intellectual curiosity and logical thinking (Bauer and Bennet 2003), and increased college retention rates (Nagda et al. 1998). Positive effects are seen across the spectrum of disciplines from engineering (Zydney et al. 2002) to social science to the humanities (Ishiyama 2002). (Pita, Ramirez, Joacin, Prentice & Clarke, p. 11)

Future goals for the STAR research mentor-mentee team involve re-directing the focus of the project to ensure the original aim of capturing the individual oral narratives of women and children from similar socio-economically disadvantaged communities is not lost (Shultz, 2007). Using the STAR mentor-mentee cohort model, the research mentor will actively recruit interested students to continue with the community-based applied research that now has a solid platform. Within the next couple of years, the research mentor-mentee team would like to unveil an online educational resource database that addresses the disparities in gender, education, and health from the Northwest Corridor of Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, to those international communities such as southern Rwanda, East Africa.

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Metamorphosis Stage 2: Year Two of a Student-Run Public Relations Agency Experience

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In the second year of a student-run public relations agency, the instructors discovered a need for improved client and student feedback. Using student end-of-course reflections and survey questions posed by Hon and Grunig (1999) in the Institute for Public Relations booklet, "Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations," clients and enrolled student responses were analyzed to determine their satisfaction with the agency/practicum experience. Mid-year significant follow up measures were enacted to address emerging client service problems. Using the lens of action research, the survey results and subsequent managerial actions were extremely positive and encouraging for the future of the student agency.

Entering the second full year of a student-run public relations (PR) agency, the instructors discovered a need for improved client and student feedback. Each of the two PR instructors had years of professional and academic experience, met regularly with their students, and communicated extensively with the agency's clients. Yet, that was simply not enough. Paralleling the general belief "that the fundamental goal of public relations is to build and then to enhance on-going or long-term relationships with an organization's key constituencies" (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 2) the instructors initiated a survey of the agency's clients as well as students enrolled in the practicum courses.

Shadinger and Gruenwald (2013) detailed the 2012 experiences of PRomo, a student-run public relations agency at a medium sized, mid-western public university, noting challenges and suggesting revisions to the experience. Starting in the fall of 2013 a new instructor assumed

responsibility for the PR Practicum course. She joined the existing Advanced PR Practicum instructor in supervising the PRomo agency experience. In year two of Promo, students were immersed in activities that exactly meet Gibbons and Hopkins' (1980) key points for individual growth: direct interaction, planning, implementation, responsibility for mastery, and opportunity for individual growth. This approach also directly addresses the societally pervasive issue described by Elmore (2010) where students "are underexposed to real-life experiences" (p. 4). Nearly all of the students come to the PR Practicum course with no experience or knowledge of the PR field.

The PR agency is populated by students enrolled in the PR Practicum and Advanced PR Practicum classes at the university. To allow for the students' lack of PR experience all of the agency clients are campus-based: newspaper promotions, health center events, speech team social media, communication department blog, university tutoring center, and a nationally linked fundraising event. Both practicum classes meet at the same time one day each week.

Students in the PR Practicum class receive one credit hour and have one 50-minute class meeting per week. Three to five additional hours of work are expected outside of the class meeting time, which is used for planning and actively participating in client-oriented projects, events, and/or activities. The PR Practicum course is the prerequisite for Advanced PR Practicum.

The Advanced Practicum students receive two credit hours and attend two 50-minute classes each week. Six to ten additional hours of work are expected outside of the class meeting times. The Advanced PR Practicum students provide leadership for a team composed of PR Practicum students. The advanced student/team leaders meet frequently with the client to review progress on the client's PR project. The team leaders also meet a minimum of once each week with their teams to plan and work on their clients' projects. The team leaders also meet once a week with the instructor and the agency's executive director to review progress on their respective projects and team operations.

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The agency's executive director was an Advanced PR Practicum student during the previous school year. She applied, interviewed, and was selected by an interdisciplinary panel of faculty members. The executive director held periodic meetings with the agency's clients, randomly sat in on team meetings, and attended events the teams implemented for their respective clients.

Early in the fall term the instructors decided that additional information and input was needed from the clients as well as from the enrolled students. The hope was to uncover ideas or issues that would improve the client and student experiences. Schon (1987) supports this type of reflective approach where actions are converted into learning experiences, teaching opportunities, and professional growth through the action research process. Stenhouse (1975) also supported such inquiry as a way to improve teaching skills and test pedagogy.

As the term progressed, issues began to develop between the student team leaders and several of the clients. These issues helped focus the survey questions and gave direction to the ultimate purpose for the research: reinforcing Levin and Greenwood's (2001) statement that "action research focuses on solving context-bound, real-life problems" (p. 105).

This paper views the student public relations agency client experience through the lens of action research. Following Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) clearly identified "action research process of participative data gathering, data analysis, feedback and action planning, intervention and evaluation, the named problem was addressed and improvements made" (p. 121).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the book, *Artificial Maturity*, the author describes what he feels is the "fool's gold" or major problem facing the current generation: "1. Children are overexposed to information, far earlier than they're ready, 2. Children are underexposed to real-life experiences far later than they're ready" (Elmore, 2010, p. 4). This over/under exposure issue leads to situations where students are unable even think critically or to solve problems. Elmore (2010) proposed key elements for addressing the effects of Artificial Maturity, and these were central to the development of the PRomo agency experience. They included community service, concurrent information and accountability, face-to-face experiences supplementing a technology lifestyle, and simultaneous responsibility and autonomy. Todd (2014) found that Millennials rate their professional skills much higher than their employers in entry level positions in areas such as writing skills, oral skills, and job task preparedness. The PRomo instructors consistently noted that entering PR Practicum students routinely believe they have much better communication and problem-solving skills than they subsequently exhibit while working on client projects. A recent world-wide comparative study of students revealed that American students' scores had declined in nearly every category, including reading, science, and math ("Waiting for Su-

perman,” 2010). The single exception was confidence. According to the survey, American students think they are awesome. In order to help to reduce the discrepancy in skills for entry level employees, the student-run agency can allow the students to gain valuable experience that will aid them in internships and in their first jobs. Given the students' lack of PR knowledge, along with their limited understanding of professional values and teamwork skills, the need for work in these areas is well documented (Educators Academy of Public Relations Society of America, 1999; Neff, 2002; Brown & Fall, 2005; Bush, 2009; Collier, 2013).

Concurrently, students in the agency setting are exposed to the best-practice findings of team-based operations and direct client interaction (Maben, 2012; Motschall&Najor, 2001; Benigni& Cameron, 1999). Michaelson, Bauman-Knight, and Fink (2004) suggest a team-based classroom learning approach provides a more robust educational environment. Bush (2009) also posits that “student agencies are highly beneficial to public relations pedagogy in two areas that are most difficult to teach: process-oriented experiential learning and professional skills” (p. 35). The Commission on Public Relations Education recommends that one of the key areas for improved education is “supervised work experience in public relations” (The Professional Bond, 2006, p. 7).

METHODOLOGY

Action research was chosen as the lens of this inquiry since the focus of the instructors was to improve the student and client agency experience as a direct outgrowth of the course instruction and activities. In line with Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) key action research concept of “situationality” the students were enrolled in public relations practicum classes, and the students were all campus-based and student-service focused (p. 7). Regarding Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) additional concept of being “out of praxis,” there were only four class meetings for all of the students, no lectures, tests, or textbooks. All work was client-driven, team-based, and conducted outside a traditional classroom (p. 7). The team leaders also attended a weekly meeting to debrief the PRomo agency management concerning client project status and the functioning of their respective teams.

The number of clients was limited (seven for fall term, eight spring term) and the number of students was also relatively small (Advanced Practicum: seven fall, 12 spring; PR Practicum: 13 fall, 15 spring). While these limited numbers do not necessarily lead to robust qualitative or quantitative research results, they are important for helping the instructors identify trends and issues that can be addressed to improve the practicum experience for students and clients. Concurrently, and also in line with action research methodology, the survey was augmented with the student team leader's end-of-course reflection reports.

Utilizing a survey to determine additional information about client and student satisfaction with the agency experience and as a method

to improve the teaching methodology is supported by several action researchers (Corey, 1953; Noffke, 1997; Tomal, 2003; Pelton, 2010). The processes of the first year's operation resulted in a basic communication problem early in year two. Identifying the problem and implementing specific changes are labeled a “first-order change” by Coghlan and Brannick (2005, p. 121). This approach mirrors the description by Bartunek et al. (2000) of administratively driven action research, reflection, and resolution of a communication problem between clients of an institution and the institution's employees. Researching, reflecting, and revising the public relations practicum courses and the student communications agency experience is a best practices approach for the utilization of action research.

A survey was initiated in the second year of the PRomo agency experience. The survey was a mixed methods survey of students in two public relations practicum classes and their contact persons for their respective team's public relations project. The questions being investigated were the satisfaction of the students with their overall experience, the satisfaction of each team's client with the services provided by student team, and the overall effectiveness of the agency/practicum classes. The survey utilized the same questions posed by Hon and Grunig (1999) in the Institute for Public Relations booklet titled “Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations.” On the survey, a five-point Likert scale was used for all quantitative questions, with five indicating Strongly Agrees and one indicating Strongly Disagrees. Questions 11 and 17 were designed to utilize an inverse reaction (using reversed scoring) to validate the respondent's understanding of the agency processes and the respondent's attention to the intent of the survey instrument.

The survey also included some open-ended questions to allow for more individualized and qualitative responses.

All of the student team leaders were new each term. Also, all of the team leaders were required to complete the PR Practicum class before they could enroll in the Advanced PR Practicum course. Finally, all of the Advanced students had taken at least two PR courses prior to enrolling in the agency experience. Several of the PR Practicum students had not taken any PR classes, while a few had taken one PR or media writing class.

RESULTS

Each term the clients were the same seven faculty and staff members. More clients responded to the fall survey (5 out of 7) than to the spring survey (3 out of 7). The two PR Practicum classes had combined student survey responses of 18 (out of 19) in the fall term and 24 (out of 28) in the spring term.

The student opinions were somewhat positive both terms, with a slight overall increase in the average scores in the spring term (See Appendix A). Nearly all of the students were new to the practicum/agency

experience each term. Only four students out of the two-term total of 47 students worked on a team in the fall and then served as a team leader in the spring term.

The client's satisfaction scores reflected a gap between the average scores from the fall to the spring term. At the end of the first term communication between the team leaders and the clients, combined with poor service issues, had become so acute that several clients contacted the instructors for intervention in the agency service process. This displeasure with team service and communication was reflected in the client's low fall 2013 score averages for questions 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, and 16 (See Appendix B). Responses to questions 1, 2, and 13 appear to reinforce the clients' positive feelings towards choosing to be involved in the agency/educational experience, in spite of any concerns about the processes or outcomes (See Appendix B).

Overall, the client responses were marginally positive during the fall term and improved in the spring term (See Appendix B). Client responses to questions 5 & 7 were positive in the fall, improved in the spring, and appear to indicate a continued willingness to work with the student agency, in spite of the fall term communication and service issues. Responses to questions 11, 13 and 17 mirrored the improvements in the other scores and clearly supported the improvement of the client-agency relationship, team leader communication, and service. Implementation of new procedures in the spring 2014 term appears to have improved the client satisfaction with the agency experience, as indicated by the improved client scores to questions 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, and 16.

As a result of several management-initiated steps, the client's satisfaction with the agency experience improved significantly in the spring term. In spite of having limited PR knowledge or related experiences, the students exhibited an overall positive response to their PR agency experiences and slightly higher average scores in the spring term.

The qualitative responses reflected Hon & Grunig's (1999) observations about the quality of public relations being based on the quality of relationships between the clients and the agency. In the fall semester, prior to adding the supplemental communication between the executive director and the clients, several students mentioned that the experience was not positive or productive. For example, one student said, "Our client didn't really give us anything to show for our work, they were not cooperative, and they didn't value our work." Another said, "My ideas were shot down. I felt embarrassed and unimportant." However, in the spring semester, after the implementation of a new communication reporting structure, students reported overall better communication. Students who felt that their team had a strong relationship with the client had a more positive experience in the agency overall. "It was great. My client was there to help me every step of the way," one participant stated. The students appreciate the applied learning in the agency as a definite benefit. As a participant observed, "The class taught me what it will be like to lead an organization's media. It was hard work and I've learned from that experience."

Some participants mentioned wanting even more challenges from their clients. In response to the question to describe their relationship with the agency as beneficial, one participant wrote, "For the most part yes, I think we could have been given more to do but we still learned quite a bit."

The clients appreciated strong communication with the teams. Those who felt that they were not getting good frequency of communication with their teams described a less positive experience. This was much more prevalent in the fall semester than in the spring. One client said, "The communication from the team was not enough in my opinion. Therefore, some of the needs of the program were not met. With a lack of communication, planning was difficult" Statements such as this were indicative of the communication problems mentioned by fall clients. One client wanted more face-to-face meeting times rather than just electronic communication. However, another said, "I think the group does the best it can because I recognize that this is a learning environment. My needs are not *so* immediate that a fluke now and then is a problem."

Other clients tied the quality of their experience with the agency to the quality of the team working with them. Their impressions of the agency were driven by the relationship they had with the team. This echoes a sentiment by Daggs (2011) regarding the concept of organizational face. In her article, Daggs argues that consumers and publics form relationships with organizations through relationships with members, not the organizations themselves. As the members may change or interactions with the members are negative, the perception of the organization is likewise negatively affected. One client stated that she hopes to get a similar team in future semesters because this team was much more effective than her previous team.

ADVANCED PR STUDENT END-OF-TERM REFLECTIONS

All of the Advanced PR Practicum students/team leaders were also required to submit reflections on their agency/practicum course involvement. The students were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluation of the leadership opportunity, agency functioning, client relationship and the general learning experience. While initially expecting exact directions and project details, several students mentioned enjoying the freedom to lead their team and implement the client's project. Additionally, many of the team leaders described the client relationship as a challenging part of the job. As one team leader commented, "For the [team] leader being assigned to this client next semester, I would most likely tell them to be very persistent in talking to [the client] and making sure they know exactly what he wants them to do for the program or whatever else he assigns them to." Several team leaders also mentioned having to learn more about themselves as delegators and how to develop effective follow-up systems with inexperienced team members. In the end the comments are best summed up by one team leader's reflection: "Being a team leader was intimidating for me and

I learned that sometimes I'm not very good at delegating responsibilities and essentially telling people what to do. This class helped me gain confidence in being a leader and facilitating a project that had multiple parts."

DISCUSSION

Every Monday the team leaders met with the executive director and summarized their previous week's client project activities and any team-related issues. Even though the Advanced PR Practicum instructor usually attended, the executive director summarized the meeting in a weekly report to both instructors. As noted previously, fall term problems with team leader communications and follow through were severe enough to warrant intervention.

In the spring term several key communication steps were added that impacted the overall experience for all participants. The agency's executive director had a private meeting with each client before the term began. The executive director also scheduled additional meetings with each client during the fourth and seventh week of classes. These two additional meetings served as direct follow up/feedback sessions to determine if the team leaders were meeting the needs and expectations of the clients. Infrequent communication and miscommunication with clients had emerged as a problem during the fall term.

Despite clear directions for each team leader to follow up with their respective clients, the instructors found themselves needing what Coghlan and Brannick (2005) call a "third-order change," where the instructors had to "question their own assumptions and points of view [concerning student persistence and execution] and develop and implement new ones" (p. 121). The instructors realized that repeated reminders and weekly report meetings were insufficient to motivate a few upper-level students.

Knowing the executive director was scheduling client meetings helped keep each team leader focused on regular communication with their clients. It also gave the executive director additional information to include in her weekly report to the instructors. These additional client meetings appear to have completely eliminated the communication and follow up problems of the previous term.

The surveys and reflections appear to support the instructor's belief that the agency/practicum experience is very positive and offers students an intense and intensive opportunity to expand their understanding of public relations activities and the field in general.

While this study was very useful in helping identify and remedy issues with the experience for both the clients and the students, the study is not without its limitations. First, the spring term response rate involved less than half of the participating clients. Therefore, a full gamut of responses was not available from all clients. In the future, we might consider doing an online survey to encourage more responses. In addition, the same form was used for both students and clients. Some students were a bit confused, even with verbal instructions to fill out

the survey from their own perspective. For future studies, the form will need to be revised to make sure that the form accurately reflects the experiences and ideas of both the clients and the students. In addition, the practicum classes do not attract large numbers of students, making statistical tests and generalizations problematic. Surveys and analyses were further limited by the number of clients, which is also limited by the number of students in the Advanced PR Practicum class.

CONCLUSION

Clients and students generally viewed the agency process as a positive learning experience, especially after the spring term. Regular communication is an extremely important element of relationship building. Students are still learning about the professional world, its practices, expectations, and various working requirements. Consequently, throughout the term students continued to require follow up, feedback, and direction as they acquired new and expanded professional skills.

Future agency/practicum sessions should incorporate the recent communication steps and continue to build on the professionally oriented project and leadership experiences. As PRomo continues, the internal-to-the-campus/client environment can lead into an organizational pattern of feedback loops and interaction sequences that build relationships between the agency and the clients while also integrating communication processes and public relations activities. This approach duplicates the "recursive" systems model where patterns of collaboration become reciprocal for all parties (Senge, 1990; McCaughan and Palmer, 1994; Haslebo and Nielsen, 2000). Senge (1990) postulates that systems, like the PRomo team leader and client relationship, begin to exhibit "dynamic complexity" as a result of the passage of time combined with multiple causes and effects. McCaughan and Palmer (1994) propose that systemic questioning can greatly assist management in understanding how a system is functioning. As a "recursive" system, PRomo could greatly benefit from just such an on-going, introspective effort. Dynamic, actively engaging, non-traditional education operations such as PRomo are not immune from the need for regular reflection and periodic systemic adjustments.

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APPENDIX A
Student Survey Responses - Averaged

Questions	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Two-term Averages
1. The management of PRomo gives people like me enough say in the decision-making process.	3.72	3.83	3.79
2. The management of Promo believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.	3.50	3.67	3.60
3. Describe your experience as a PRomo client. How do you feel about how well PRomo listens to and responds to your needs as a client?			Qualitative
4. I believe the PRomo organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	3.61	3.67	3.64
5. Promo's leadership treats people like me fairly and justly.	3.56	3.79	3.69
6. What is your opinion of PRomo's ability as an organization to accomplish what it says it will accomplish? Do you think it can? Why or Why not?			Qualitative
7. I would rather work together with PRomo than not.	3.78	3.88	3.83
8. I can see that PRomo wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.	3.89	3.83	3.86
9. Do you feel like PRomo is committed to maintaining a long-term relationship with you as a client? Why or Why not?			Qualitative
10. I am happy with my experience with PRomo.	3.28	3.79	3.57
11. I feel there is no benefit from a relationship with PRomo for a person like me.	2.50	1.71	2.05
12. Describe your relationship with PRomo. Do you find it to be beneficial? Why or Why not			Qualitative
13. PRomo takes care of people who are likely to reward the organization.	3.44	3.79	3.64
14. PRomo will compromise with people like me when it knows that it will gain something.	3.50	3.46	3.48
15. Do you feel that PRomo expects something in return from you as client? If so, what? If not, why not?			Qualitative
16. PRomo is very concerned about the welfare of people like me.	3.56	3.67	3.62
17. I think that PRomo succeeds by stepping on other people.	2.00	1.83	1.90

APPENDIX B
Client Survey Responses - Averaged

Questions	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Two-term Average
1. The management of PRomo gives people like me enough say in the decision-making process.	3.8	5.0	4.3
2. The management of Promo believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.	3.8	5.0	4.3
3. Describe your experience as a PRomo client. How do you feel about how well PRomo listens to and responds to your needs as a client?			Qualitative
4. I believe the PRomo organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	3.3	5.0	4.0
5. Promo's leadership treats people like me fairly and justly.	4.3	4.7	4.4
6. What is your opinion of PRomo's ability as an organization to accomplish what it says it will accomplish? Do you think it can? Why or Why not?			
7. I would rather work together with PRomo than not.	4.0	4.3	4.1
8. I can see that PRomo wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.	3.3	4.3	3.7
9. Do you feel like PRomo is committed to maintaining a long-term relationship with you as a client? Why or Why not?			Qualitative
10. I am happy with my experience with PRomo.	2.8	4.3	3.4
11. I feel there is no benefit from a relationship with PRomo for a person like me.	2.3	1.3	1.9
12. Describe your relationship with PRomo. Do you find it to be beneficial? Why or Why not			Qualitative
13. PRomo takes care of people who are likely to reward the organization.	4.0	2.0	2.6
14. PRomo will compromise with people like me when it knows that it will gain something.	3.3	2.0	2.7
15. Do you feel that PRomo expects something in return from you as client? If so, what? If not, why not?			Qualitative
16. PRomo is very concerned about the welfare of people like me.	3.3	4.3	3.7
17. I think that PRomo succeeds by stepping on other people.	1.3	1.3	1.3

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