LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Who are we in this tent, what do we do in here, and who else needs to come in?

There is a vigorous debate in the field about *how we define what is it that we do*. Some are referring to our work as *Work-Integrated Learning*, others are naming it *Experiential Education*, and still some others are labeling our work as *Career Education* or *Professional Practice* or *Cooperative Learning*.

All over the nation, offices, programs, and academic communities are rebranding their missions and visions in an effort to adequately describe to stakeholders ***who we are and what we do***. Perhaps more importantly, many are wrestling-with what we do not do, asking important questions about what does not fit into our work.

Many stakeholders are searching for an identity and asking very good questions along the way.

Some of these questions include should we include Service Learning and Community-Engaged Learning? What about Clinicals, Practicums, Mentorships, and Job Shadowing? Do programs like Undergraduate Research placements and Action research make sense for us? While fun-sounding, do things like Adventure Learning fit into our tent?

These debates and questions indicate that the field is going through a resurgence – a growth spurt, of sorts – which of course comes with it the expected and accompanying growing pains.

The resurgence is not a new one, however, as learning through experience is an ancient concept (350 BCE). In Book Two of Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle wrote *"for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them"* (translated by Chase in 1886).

Our tent, it could be said, is an old and established one.

Naming and visioning aside, regardless of what we call ourselves, perhaps the most important question is ***what makes our work unique?***

We know that Experiential Learning is distinct from didactic learning in that students are not permitted to take a passive role in the process (Freire). Rather, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, to feel the difficulty in the learning (Dewey). Throughout these learning opportunities, students are asked to become active participants (Kolb), embracing the adventure of the process (Lewin) by cooperating with others

(Schneider) and holistically serving the learning situation (Piaget).

Some say that relocating the learning to outside of the traditional classroom is what makes our work unique. Others may say that hands-on learning is key, providing students rich opportunities to reflect upon real-world applications. Still some others may argue that career readiness is the unique hallmark of our work.

To that question of uniqueness, each of these answers – both academic and pedestrian – are correct. What is interesting, however, is that each of these answers also apply to teachers and professors, to employers and educational partners, to staff members and administrators, and to anyone involved in the our field.

Really, these questions apply to anyone who wants to be in our tent.

As a modest reflection of the evolving field, this publication is also unique, but not just for the reasons listed above. Rather, and like the field, *Experience Magazine: Practice and Theory is reflexive*, responding to the ever-changing landscape of education and the connection of education to the global village.

Experience Magazine: Practice and Theory *features academic and practitioner submissions that cover best practice highlights, field trends, how-to articles and relevant information and resources for scholars and practitioners in the field of experiential learning. The audience for this publication reflects the diverse global field of experiential learning and will provide evidenced-based and practitioner-oriented resources for a wide array of experiential learning stakeholders.*

What you will see in this issue is a revisioning and retooling of this platform. Our aim is to meet the ever-changing field, full of new challenges and new opportunities, holistically and authentically, but we cannot do it alone.

CEIA is the leader in work-integrated learning and promotes best practices for co-ops, internships, clinical study, and service learning. Our upcoming conference, "Experiential Learning on the Rise", will provide helpful resources for practitioners in the field. We hope to see you there.

We are confident that you will find your voice, and hear it echoed by others, in these pages. More so, we hope that you also become active participants in its evolving creation. We do not want passive readers. We want to encourage you to stretch and grow. We ask that you embrace the adventure with us.

Come on in. While old, the tent is a big one.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Sharp

Michael J. Sharp, Editor

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Examining Effectiveness of Curricular Intervention on Career Decision-Making

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of a career intervention class on college students' career decision making and commitment. The Career Decision Scale was administered at the beginning and end of a semester-long class to 37 college students. The pre- and post-test of the CDS showed significant improvement on certainty and decreased career indecision. The results also demonstrated that students satisfactorily developed concrete academic and career plans, along with relevant action steps towards implementing these plans, after completing the class. The implications for helping college students make career decisions and plans are discussed.

Keywords: career indecision, career intervention, college students

Students arriving on a college campus are often in the midst of emerging adulthood, defined as the developmental stage between adolescence and the mid-to-late 20s (Arnett, 2000). This life stage is characterized by change and the exploration of possible directions for life in work, love, and worldview (Arnett, 2000). Particularly in the area of work, emerging adults can struggle with career decisions as time is needed to explore a variety of directions (Viola, Musso, Inguglia, & Lo Coco, 2016). Traditional-aged students embarking on the college experience developmentally fit within the exploration stage of career development, wherein an individual is focused on exploring potential career paths, acquiring skills, and making decisions relevant to their career (e.g., identifying career goals, making a plan to reach achievement; Lent & Brown, 2013).

Choosing a career can be particularly challenging for young adults who lack readiness or knowledge or are unsure how to reconcile inconsistent information; some may even struggle to identify the difficulties creating barriers for career decision-making (Amir & Gati, 2006). Choosing a college major is the first step in a series of important career decisions for college students. According to Nauta (2007), satisfaction with one's major is associated with academic performance and serves as proxy for job satisfaction later on, as similarities exist between the degree program and the future work environment. Students' satisfaction is dependent upon the fit between themselves and the major in terms of values, interests, and self-concept (Nauta, 2007). Additional factors influencing college major choice include potential for success in the major, effort to complete the program of study, characteristics of instructors, expected career income, prestige, gender, and influences from family and peers (Milsom & Coughlin, 2015; Pringle, DuBose, & Yankey, 2010). Students may also be influenced by the stereotypes they hold about a particular occupation in regards to the personality characteristics and associated skills sets (e.g., the outgoing marketing major or the introverted computer science major); however, these stereotypes are often outmoded or inaccurate representations of the field (Pringle et al., 2010). Therefore, it's crucial that students get accurate information and exposure to a variety of options to allow them to make informed decisions.

Career indecision refers to difficulties emerging from the career decision-making process and is a normative stage in decision-making which can come and go throughout the lifespan (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, & Tatar, 2017; Osipow, 1999). Traditional approaches to career development rightfully emphasize "interest, choice, performance, and satisfaction" (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 558); however, changes in the context of work (e.g., competition on a global scale, economic turmoil, etc.) require innovative approaches in supporting career decisions (Kuron, Lyons, Schwitzer, & Ng, 2015; Lent & Brown, 2013). Contemporary workers need to be prepared to take action and adjust direction as market conditions evolve. The ability to make authentic and strategic career decisions will be increasingly vital for graduates hoping to build thriving careers in our modern economic landscape.

Career courses have been found to be beneficial interventions for students experiencing career indecision, particularly in the higher education setting (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). Completion of a career decision-making class has been found to increase self-efficacy and reduce difficulty making career decisions (Fouad, Cotter, & Kantamneini, 2009). Students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in career exploration behavior (Gushue, Clarke, Pantzer, & Scanlan, 2006). Career exploration can be defined as "activities directed toward enhancing the knowledge of the self and the external environment that an individual engages in to foster progress in career development" (Bluestein, 1992, para. 3). As career understanding increases, self-efficacy in career-related decision-making and career decidedness also grow (Flum & Blustein, 2000). Courses may result in "a learning curve that is significant in helping students commit to the effort for achieving the best job search outcomes" (McDow & Zabrucky, 2015, p. 635). Engaging in career exploration fosters growth in self-awareness and occupational knowledge, which is particularly important during the exploration stage of late adolescence (Bluestein, 1989). Students who do not successfully complete the tasks associated with this stage may struggle as they enter the workplace (Bartley & Robitschek, 2000).

Though career courses are a well-documented and common approach to reducing career indecision, increasing occupational knowledge, and assisting college students with choosing a major (Reardon & Fiore, 2014), the number of empirical studies conducted in recent years with college students is limited. It remains uncertain whether career courses still benefit this new generation of students in the same ways. In addition, few studies have investigated the efficacy of a 15-week, for-credit course designed to take into account the needs of the Millennial generation. The goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of career intervention courses in reducing students' career indecision and supporting them in choosing a major and creating a career plan with both short-term and long-term objectives. The research questions of this study are: 1) Would career indecision be reduced as a result of taking a one-semester career preparation course? 2) Would college students increase certainty in making career plans as a result of taking a one-semester career intervention course? 3) Would a one-semester career intervention course be effective in helping students create a concrete career plan?

METHOD

Participants

There were 37 participants, including 24 first-year students, 7 sophomores, and 6 juniors and seniors, at a large urban Midwestern university. The majority of the participants were White and a small number were racial minority students. Twenty-one participants identified as women and 16 identified as men. Although participants' exact ages were unavailable, the majority were traditional college-age, between 18 and 24 years of age. These students were referred into the course by their academic advisors in order to receive support for their major and career decisions and planning.

Measurement

The Career Decision Scale by Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico, and Koshchier (1976) was used to measure the participants' career decision capacity. The CDS has a total of 18 items on a 4-point scale, which assess how accurately each statement captures participants' feelings and beliefs about their careers. For instance, participants indicate whether or not a statement such as the following: "Several careers have equal appeal to me. I'm having a difficult time deciding among them" represents their feelings about career. The subscale of Indecision is calculated based on participant responses to 16 items designed to capture career indecision, and the subscale of Certainty is calculated based on two items designed to assess career certainty (Osipow, 2008). The CDS has been widely used in career practice and research as a criterion measure in evaluating career intervention outcomes, and has shown sufficient reliability and validity at various settings with diverse populations (Feldt, 2013; Osipow & Winer, 1996). According to the CDS manual, the reliability for test-retest correlations was at .90 and .82 for the Indecision Scale for two separate samples of college students. For this study, the Cronbach's Alpha for the Certainty scale is .924 (pre-test) and .63 (post-test); and for the Indecision scale it is .68 (pre-test) and .84 (post-test).

The final assignment in the course, an Education and Career Plan, required students to reflect on their identities, interests, skills and values in order to select a major and was used to measure whether students were able to develop a personally meaningful academic and professional plan. The paper was a 3-4 page essay, designed to incorporate each element of the course and encourage students to identify several concrete short- and long-term goals for their educations and careers.

The assignment comprised six sections. The first asked students to indicate which major they selected, or planned to select, and why they chose that program. The second asked students to indicate their intended career choice and how this may or may not reflect their career assessment results. The third, fourth, and fifth sections asked students to describe short-term, long-term, and occupational goals (respectively) that they hoped to achieve. These sections required detailed explanations of how, and by what date, they planned to achieve these goals. The last section asked students to describe what specific barriers they anticipated in pursuing their educational and career goals, and how they planned to navigate these challenges.

The research team examined the course evaluation to understand how participants perceived their learning experience in the class. The evaluation was a 2-page, 11-item survey designed to assess the efficacy of the curriculum, the quality of instruction, and students' overall level of satisfaction with the course. As part of the evaluation, students were asked to rate the value of each component of the course on a Likert scale, and describe in what ways the course did or did not help to prepare them for professional success.

In addition, the instructor recorded field notes to better understand how the course impacted students from a teaching perspective. Instructor observations and reflections were captured for each course session, with particular emphasis on student interest and engagement with each topic.

Procedure

The course, Career Decision-Making, was a semester-long, 3-credit course designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore majors and careers, select an appropriate area of study, and develop a thoughtful post-graduate career plan. The course was taught by a career coach in the university's center for career services. The course sought: to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their identities, interests, skills, and values in order to select a major and develop a personally meaningful education and career plan; to encourage the development of communication and networking skills; and to expose students to a variety of different career paths and professionals, empowering them to proactively navigate an increasingly complex professional landscape. The course design included each of Brown et al.'s (2003) recommended components of an effective curricular career intervention: a workbook with written exercises, information about the world of work, modeling, computer-guided assistance, self-report inventories, individualized interpretation and feedback, and attention to building support for career decisions. It was comprised of five modules: an introduction to career development, self-assessment, occupational research, networking, and career preparation and planning.

The course begins with an overview of the career decision-making process – exposing students to a career wheel model that illustrates the circular nature of selecting a best-fit career: collecting information about personality, interests, skills and values, researching potential careers, trying out possible options through shadowing, informational interviews and internships, evaluating fit and, if necessary, beginning the process again.

Each student receives a workbook with a collection of resources, course information, and written exercises. To complete the course introduction, an in-class session is dedicated to presenting information on the evolving world of work.

In the second module, students take three self-report inventories: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs & Briggs Myers, 2015), a popular personality and career assessment, the Self-Directed Search (Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1994), an interests assesment - and an online, computer-guided assessment called Sigi3 (Valpar International Corporation, 1999), which includes a values inventory and career comparison tool). These results are discussed in class, and students receive a list of recommended careers based on each assessment result. The first major assignment of the course asks students to compare their results and select four careers of interest.

The third module introduces students to O*Net (National Center for O*NET Development), the Occupational Outlook Handbook (U.S. Department of Labor), and a variety of other online tools for career exploration. The second major assignment asks them to conduct occupational research on two of their four careers of interest, and narrow to one career option based on their findings. At the midway point in the course, each student meets with the instructor individually for 30 minutes. This allows students to receive personalized feedback on their assessments and guidance on narrowing their career interests.

The fourth module of the course supports students in building a network of professional support. The class attends a university-wide career fair where students interact with employers. They then participate in a speed-networking activity in class with their peers, and learn to use LinkedIn to connect with alumni and other professionals. The third major assignment is an informational interview project, which requires students to locate a professional working in their chosen field, using the tools they've learned in class, and conduct a 30-minute informational interview by phone or in-person. They write a paper describing the interview and present this information to the class.

The last module of the course covers job search preparation topics: interviewing, developing a resume, finding an internship, navigating university career services, and setting concrete professional goals. Guest speakers are brought in from across campus to emphasize opportunities for extracurricular involvement and leadership. Panel sessions are held with local employers from a variety of fields, who discuss the advantages and challenges of their industries and how they ended up in their current roles. To close out the semester, students discuss the importance of goal-setting and complete the final paper, a detailed education and career plan.

The course is intended to be as relevant and engaging as possible. Group activities are incorporated throughout to develop social skills. Students have several opportunities to network with local employers and discuss course themes with each other. Video content is incorporated throughout, including TED Talks and graduation speeches by influential thinkers in career development. There are also sessions on topics of immediate and practical relevance, such as time management, emotional wellness, and financial planning.

The instructor of the course administered the

CDS at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. Final papers were collected through online submission and graded according to rubrics available to the students. Each paper was evaluated based on how thorough, concreate and feasible the students' career action plan was.

Data Analysis

The CDS pre- and post-test were entered into SPSS along with the demographic information of the participants. Descriptive statistics were performed to summarize the mean and standard deviation of two pre- and post- subscales, gender and grade distribution. A paired sample t-test was performed to determine if there were significant differences between pre- and post-administration of the CDS. The 2 X 2 ANOVA were conducted to examine if there were any differences between gender or grade levels. A bootstrap analysis was performed to address the small sample size. The course evaluation data were reviewed by the research team to obtain general feedback about the effectiveness of the course.

Based on the requirements for the final paper, the research team classified student responses into these categories: career plan (yes or no), career plan or major chosen (e.g., psychology, accountant), reasoning for the choice (good or weak, depending on how clearly students articulated their rationale), concreteness of short-term action plan (yes or no), feasibility of short-term action plan (yes or no), concreteness of long-term action plan (yes or no), feasibility of long-term action plan (yes or no), and barriers to implementation. Two research assistants, trained by the primary researcher, coded the final papers independently. The two sets of codes were reviewed by the research team, who checked for accuracy and consistency of the results and consolidated the codes in case of discrepancy between the two sets.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

The mean and standard deviation of the two CDS subscales – Certainty and Indecision – are presented in Table 1. The mean pre-test score of the Certainty subscale was lower than the mean of the post-test score, while the mean pre-test score of the Indecision subscale was higher than the score of the post-test. Comparing the pre- and post-test of items 1 and 2, it is clear that

Table 1

Descriptive Results of CDS

Table 1. Means and St.d, t-score of Pre and Post of Certainty and Indecision Scales

	Pre		Post		t-score	Mean Diff
	Mean	St.d.	Mean	St.d.		
Indecision	34.7	6.42	29.67	7.5	-7.04**	-5.4
Certainty	3.85	1.74	5.91	1.52	3.55**	2.05

** significant at p=.001

students made progress in deciding on a major, but still felt less decided, in the post assessment, on a career. Item 4 indicates that many students are having trouble choosing amongst several appealing careers, suggesting there may be difficulty in committing to a single post-graduate career option. Item 5 asked students if they knew of any careers that appealed to them. In the post assessment, only 3 students of 29 indicated that no careers appealed to them, compared to 10 students in the pre-assessment, suggesting the course was effective in exposing students to new career options.

Several students indicated on the pre-assessment that they agreed with item 7: "Until now, I haven't given much thought to choosing a career. I feel lost when I think about it because I haven't had many experiences in making decisions on my own and I don't have enough information to make a career decision right now." The majority of these students disagree with this statement in the post-assessment.

In general, students seemed intent on making the "right" career choice. This continued to be true for many, as evidenced by the relatively high agreement on item 10: "I want to be absolutely certain that my career choice is the 'right' one, but none of the careers I know about seem ideal for me." This trend persisted, even after students completed the course and learned about more career options. Similarly, item 11: "Having to make a career decision bothers me. I'd like to make a decision quickly and get it over with. I wish I could take a test that would tell me what kind of career I should pursue" indicates that several students are bothered by the idea of needing to make a career decision and would prefer to be told what choice to make by a career assessment. This remained true for some, even in the post-assessment. Many students persist in their indecision, regardless of exposure to options. It may be that they require something other than information to feel more confident in their decision-making. Incorporating items 13 and 14, which assess students' knowledge of their abilities and interests, it appears as if lack of self-knowledge isn't perceived as the main barrier to career decision-making after completing the course. The course had relatively little impact on item 15, "So many things interest me and I know I have the ability to do well regardless of what career I choose. It's hard for me to find just one thing that I would want as a career." Most students agreed with this item both before and after the course.

Hypothesis Testing

To determine whether or not the intervention would have any impact on participants' career indecision, a paired t-test was performed. Results showed that both the t-score for Certainty ($t=-7.04$, $df=33$) and Indecision ($t=3.55$, $df=26$) were significant with decent effect size (for Certainty .78 and Indecision at .81). The details are illustrated in Table 1. To examine if gender or grade level would impact results on the career decision scale, several 2X2 ANOVA were conducted. Only grade level was found significant ($F=11.8$ $df=2$ at the effective size of .43) for the pre-test Certainty scale. Juniors and seniors scored higher in pre-test Certainty than freshmen and sophomore students. Neither gender nor grade level, nor the interaction of the two, was found significant in other ANOVA results.

Results from Qualitative Data

The final paper results supported several of the Career Decision Scale themes. Most students were able to identify a best-fit major, but fewer identified a best-fit career. When asked to articulate both short- and long-term goals, every student was able to name specific and realistic goals, but 40% were unable or unwilling to provide a time frame during which they would complete these goals.

Students identified a wide range of best-fit majors and careers, some more traditional, like early-childhood education or criminal justice, and some less linear, like photojournalism or fashion merchandising. When asked to identify potential barriers to success, the most frequent response was financial barriers (21 out of 36 students), suggesting that students were cognizant of finances and saw this as highly relevant to their career exploration and success. Others mentioned family responsibilities, their own tendency to procrastinate, anxiety, and lack of motivation as potential barriers. Six students out of 39 specifically mentioned health challenges, their own or that of a family member, as a barrier.

The instructor's notes provided a sense of how and when students were engaging with each topic in the course. It was clear that the specific composition of each cohort of students affected their engagement. Students in the spring cohort occasionally reacted to the same course sessions differently than students in the fall, likely attributable to differences in group personalities and dynamics. A few topics seemed to resonate particularly strongly with the majority of students. Time management and combating procrastination were topics that students asked for specifically. Many also voiced appreciation for the personality and career assessments, confirmed by item 11 on the Career Decision Scale. The idea of having a test steer them in the right direction appealed to many. Some of the first-year students expressed limited interest in job search topics such as interviewing, organizational structures, and values, perhaps considering these sessions less timely than those involving assessment and exploration, given the perceived immediacy of major selection and greater distance to the post-graduate job search. Juniors and seniors expressed more interest in these preparatory topics, especially given that a few of them were applying for post-graduate jobs while enrolled in the course.

The vast majority of students indicated that the informational interview assignment was critical in helping them learn more about their careers of interest, either confirming their choice or eliminating it from consideration. One of the most impactful sessions seemed to be the second class, which set the context for the course by outlining contemporary trends in the world of work. Students showed high engagement with this topic, asked questions, and expressed agreement with or skepticism of the information presented about Millennials and their evolving career expectations. It was clear throughout the course that many students felt pressure, and in some cases anxiety, to make the perfect career decision. Some voiced concern about the tension between their high career expectations and stark financial realities.

DISCUSSION

It has been demonstrated that this curricular intervention showed significant differences in increasing students' career certainty and decreasing their indecision. As a result of the course, students reported they were more knowledgeable about the professional world and its expectations and more likely to complete their undergraduate education. 30 out of 36 students had selected a major and a few potential careers and mapped out short- and long-term educational and career goals. In spite of these many gains, detailed analysis of the qualitative data indicated a more complex picture.

Contemporary college students' career expectations are high, with many seeking comprehensive benefits and pay, work/life balance, variety, social impact, and significant personal meaning (Ng et al., 2010; Pinzaru et. al., 2016). These work values tend to remain stable from college through their transition into the workplace (Kuron et al., 2015). While students in this study evidenced increased awareness of their interests and professional opportunities as a result of the course, a significant proportion nonetheless remained unwilling to commit to a single professional career path. It may be, therefore, that students' high expectations for career, in particular the belief that one's chosen career should be lucrative, impactful, and personally meaningful, has negatively impacted their ability to choose a single career path at traditional college age.

The results from the qualitative evaluation indicated that even when students successfully identified short- and long-term goals, they were unwilling or unable to provide a timeframe for the accomplishment of these goals, even when this was a required component of the assignment. These data support the idea that some students resist the push to lock themselves into a time-bound career plan, perhaps either preferring to allow for a change of heart or recognizing the inherent uncertainty in today's job market. This way of thinking mirrors the narratives of the young adults in Davadason's (2007) study exploring construct coherence within stories of education, employment, and unemployment. The notion of a linear and cumulative working life is downplayed in favor of a life characterized by new experiences, challenges, and continual personal development. Changing jobs, moving on, and avoiding monotony require less explanation in these young adult narratives than job stability and continuity (Davadason, 2007, p. 218).

According to Kuron et al. (2015), "evidence suggests that modern careers are more boundaryless, values- and self-directed than traditional careers" (p. 997). Boundaryless careers can be characterized by movement from employer to employer, free of traditional career organizational boundaries, with emphasis placed upon work agency and choice (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper, 2012). Workers are facing fewer long-term employment guarantees, and opportunities for advancement are diminishing due to downsizing (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). As a result, workers often end up seeking new opportunities, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in their pursuit of career advancement. Further, the world of work can be unpredictable due to globalization, outsourcing, increases in temporary and part-time positions, and advances in technology (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). In this modern environment, career adaptability is defined as "…the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by the changes in work and work conditions" (Savickas, 1997, p. 254). This may indeed be a critically important career skill. Millennials, in particular, have a strong desire to find meaningful work, and many seek this through the attainment of a college education (DeBard, 2004). Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng (2015) have found that Millennials are more likely to have increased job and organizational mobility compared with previous generations (e.g., Generation Xers, Boomers, and Matures). Therefore, the period of emerging adulthood is an ideal time to assist contemporary college-aged students in exploring their career options and developing the capacity to adapt to a changing market.

Exposure to yet more information about careers and the economic landscape did not seem to lower students' expectations for their careers, but rather to create a kind of career paralysis, wherein more information actually limited their willingness to commit to even short-term educational and career paths. The term career paralysis describes the inability to make career decisions for fear of making the wrong one, often the result of feeling overwhelmed by the number of possibilities (Vermunt, 2013). These students' unwillingness to inadvertently choose the "wrong" career or even to commit to time-bound goals in spite of their newfound self-awareness and knowledge of the working world has implications for how career education might evolve to meet the needs of modern students.

Limitations

Several limitations need to be presented regarding the generalizability of these results. First, this study employed a convenience sample of a relatively small size. Participants were college students in a public, Midwestern, urban setting, and as such, these results might not be replicable with other college students in different settings. Second, the intervention was delivered in a natural setting without control of any possible contributing factors to the participants' career decision-making; therefore, it should be cautioned not to overstate the impact of the intervention. Third, the design involved a pre- and post-assessment with a time interval of 15 weeks, such that the potential maturation and change of participants throughout this period could impact the results of the post-test. In future research, a larger sample size with national representation would be beneficial to the generalizability of the study. An experimental design would increase the internal validity of the research findings. Moreover, a cross-sectional design including randomly assigned pre- and post-tests would enhance the robustness of the results.

As a final note, because the course is an elective option rather than a requirement, students were most often referred in by academic advisors. These referral conversations were an inherently uncontrollable variable and may have differed between the fall and spring semesters. As always, political and budgetary developments at a large urban university can have unforeseen impact on faculty, staff, and students.

Implications for Career Development Interventions and Future Research

This study provides a number of implications for developing and refining curricular interventions on career decision-making. Offering a for-credit course alongside individualized career services may be more effective than offering optional career services alone. For example, McDow and Zabrucky (2015) found that the majority of students in their control group did not attend career-related offerings on campus, while those enrolled in a career course all attended these offerings as a required component of the course. Participants reported that optional career services events on campus might become a lower priority compared with social activities or more pressing school assignments, and others reported being unsure of the value of these services, choosing not to attend (McDow & Zabrucky, 2015). Further, from students' point of view, having a career coach as the instructor of their course may provide an ongoing source of career-related advice and support for their future endeavors, a critical element of any effective career intervention (Brown et. al., 2003).

Though this course was open for students of all class years, class standing did impact which aspects of the material students found most valuable. Students in all class years expressed appreciation for the personality and career assessments and self-exploration components of the course. First- and second-year students, however, indicated that they found the job preparation components of the course less valuable, likely because the task of finding a job was perceived as less relevant to their immediate status. These students voiced choosing a major as their more pressing concern, which the assessments seemed to more closely address. In contrast, students closer to graduation expressed more interest in topics related to job search, networking and interviewing, reflecting their proximity to graduation.

Future research might examine the effectiveness of two separate courses, one tailored to the needs of first- and second-year students and one tailored to the needs of juniors and seniors. The earlier intervention might focus more on assessment, time management, maximizing students' educational experience with experiential learning opportunities and co-curricular involvement, and major selection. The later intervention would then be able to build upon this material, providing tools for post-graduate success such as resume building, information about networking, interviewing, job search and long-term professional success. Very few career interventions examine the longitudinal effects of career courses (Reardon & Fiore, 2014), creating an opportunity to rethink how we measure efficacy of career intervention.

Most students identified the informational interview assignment as the most valuable component of the course. This assignment is one that would likely benefit all students, providing them with an opportunity to expand their networks both for exploration purposes and for their eventual post-graduate job search. It would also lend second-hand knowledge of the specific requirements and working conditions of their tentative career choices. As such, this assignment would be a useful component of any curricular intervention.

There were some pronounced differences in career interests between students in the fall and spring sections of the course. For future courses, it may be useful to assess students' interests toward the beginning of the course, or to group students by fields of interest, to maximize the relevance of guest speakers and group assignments. While students likely benefitted from exposure to peers with diverse professional interests, it may also be valuable for them to interact with other students and professionals on similar paths.

Any curricular intervention to promote effective career decision-making must build on students' existing knowledge of work. Experiential learning opportunities - such as internships, co-ops, undergraduate research, service-learning and others - would provide a vital avenue for students to develop complementary skills and knowledge as they solidify an understanding of career. These components, when paired with career education curriculum, would optimally position students for post-graduate success.

Developmental stages need to be considered in the design of this type of curricular intervention. Students in a course of this nature arrive with diverse backgrounds, needs, self-awareness and knowledge of the professional world. As such, assignments and activities should be suitable to their stages of identity and career development. An assignment that may be useful for students in an advanced stage of career development may be counter-productive for a student in a more fundamental stage. Career, including its socio-economic implications, can be closely tied to self-worth and personal identity and, as such, should be approached intentionally. Any curricular intervention should be grounded in relevant theory and best practices.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the impact of a curricular intervention on students' major and career decision-making. The intervention demonstrated effectiveness in reducing career indecision and increasing awareness of the need to choose a major and develop an action plan for entering the workforce. However, though most participants identified a few careers of interest, many demonstrated a reluctance to commit to one long-term career choice.

Future interventions may need to consider the evolving needs of undergraduate students, particularly those students who fall within the Millennial generation. The traditional model of downloading vocational knowledge, though it has historically proven to be effective, may need to evolve to meet the needs and expectations of contemporary students. It may no longer be realistic to expect these students to select and adhere to a single career throughout their working lives, but rather to adapt to the dynamic professional landscape they will inevitably encounter upon graduation.

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Co-op is Pre-Work: A Crucial Building Block for Students on the Autism Spectrum

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Abstract

Co-op is the pre-work that readies students for professional, meaningful employment upon graduation. Nowhere is this experience more critical than for students on the autism spectrum, whose full time employment rate is shockingly low. These students need distinct career preparation and deliberate onboarding steps to make pre-work successful. By being proactive with student preparation on the undergraduate level, we create a greater chance of long term career attainment for this population. The number of students on the autism spectrum attending colleges and universities continues to grow. Higher education is adapting to the academic transition of these students with programs and support, however, the professional transition requires equal attention. These are five tips for career services staff, educators, employers and parents to use in assisting with the pre-work process:

Advocacy: Allow students to speak up

Experience acquisition: Don't wait until college! Pre-work begins now.

Additional time and attention: Form a committee to address specific needs

Initiate a broader conversation: Connect to the university community

Jobs, employers and awareness: Identify employers who welcome diversity

Co-op is pre-work that equips undergraduate students to find full time professional, meaningful employment upon graduation. Co-op provides the foundation to build skills. It exposes students to new environments and norms. It provides practical information about a desired industry. Co-op exposes students to the 9-5, 40-hour week job. Co-op is critical for students on the autism spectrum. A 2015 study by the AJ Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University found that only 58% of young adults with autism held paid employment in the first 6 years after graduating from high school.[i] The study also indicated that 36% of young adults on the autism spectrum attended postsecondary education, with only about 40% actually disclosing their disability to their postsecondary school for accommodations of some kind.[ii] The number of students who completed a co-op or internship is not known. However, these statistics give a window into the number of students on the autism spectrum attending college, graduating from college and in turn, seeking professional work placements.

With a 1 in 68 occurrence of autism in children,[iii] it is no surprise these numbers are reflected in higher education. College autism support programs continue to grow throughout the United States. Autism resources vary from fee-based support college programs, voluntary (free) support college programs, standard academic support, and accommodations provided through the disabilities services office. Students on the autism spectrum will probably adopt at least one of these supports, as a smooth academic transition often ensures retention and success.

The professional transition is an equally important transition. Today's students enter college understanding the need to develop and explore a career path. Co-op and internship experiences are integral to career planning and have become the rule rather than the exception. At Drexel University, approximately 94% of our students participate in the co-op program.

My perspective on work readiness among students comes from 10 years teaching COOP 101, Drexel's co-op preparation/professional development class. Deficits are often more pronounced for students on the autism spectrum (or any student struggling with social interaction and/or communication skills). For example, students are required to write a resume for COOP 101. When a student struggles to complete the resume, often due to limited work, volunteer experience and/or extracurricular activities, this is a red flag. Social and communication struggles often prevent students from gaining valuable experience outside the classroom. They quickly understand their experience does not compare to their peers. Another deficit I have observed with students on the autism spectrum is interview preparation. In COOP 101, [i] we break down the interview preparation process by conducting small group interviews in class and practicing an interview question each week. Students who have limited experience on their resume will have limited examples to share with an employer in an interview. I also observe student comfort levels as we practice weekly questions and during the mock interview practice and gauge improvement over the term. These are a couple of markers that give me insight as to who may struggle and need extra support going forward with the co-op job search.

The Drexel co-op job search is a self-directed process. The strength and challenge of our program is the independence and ownership of the experience. COOP 101 and the Co-op Advisor are two important resources available to all students. Due to the size of Drexel's co-op program (about 5,000 students participating annually, about 1,700 employers), our students must take initiative and access support during the job search as needed.

In light of the dismal employment numbers for young adults on the autism spectrum, distinct career preparation and more deliberate onboarding considerations are needed to make pre-work as beneficial as possible. Here are five tips career services staff, educators, employers and parents can use to shape a strategy for professional success:

Advocacy: Allow students to speak up

The path to independence for students on the autism spectrum begins as early as possible, certainly by high school. Well-intentioned parents, teachers and staff often readily intervene and sometimes grant preemptive exemptions. These actions do not move the student self-advocacy process forward. Student, parents, teachers and staff must work collaboratively, with student buy-in anchoring the decisions. In addition to crafting a transition plan for post-high school work (a federal requirement for special education students) mapping out the high school years with specific self-advocacy markers is essential. For example, a student contacting teachers directly about missed work/ make-up work is an important first step. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting is another way students can speak directly about their academic needs. Full self-advocacy skills may not be realized by the time a student graduates high school, however, this is not necessarily a sign of being unprepared for college. Monitoring student growth and being mindful of opportunities to self-advocate are ways to measure proficiency over time. Student confidence, built over the years leading to college, can be hindered when parents involve themselves in college related situations. This does not mean FERPA authorizations are unnecessary or parents should not offer advice. Parents can support student action without taking action themselves and continue the self-advocacy momentum through the college years.

Once in college, the student needs to take charge of their interactions on campus and feel empowered to do so It is prudent for parents to consider interventions in terms of both frequency and purpose. Teaching self-advocacy skills is often difficult and counter to our instincts. However, the better the student self-advocacy skills, the greater likelihood of academic and career success.

Experience acquisition:
Don't wait until college! Pre-work begins now.

Students should not wait until co-op or an internship to acquire experience. *Pre*-pre work provides a strong indicator of what the student can realistically handle now and will inform their professional job search in the future. This *pre*-pre work step can make a significant difference in skill development, understanding workplace culture and confidence. *Pre*-pre work can be a paid job or a volunteer experience. Any experience is helpful, so follow the students' interests. The experiences could be connected to a high school or community group or sought out independently. Parents and teachers should feel free to tap into their networks to identify options and educate potential supervisors on the challenges they may encounter with the student. Experiences sought independently carry the responsibility of the student disclosing their disability and seeking accommodations as needed. Experience acquisition can begin slowly: one day of volunteering which moves to regular weekend shifts which moves to a part-time summer position. Paid jobs are great too, but often carry higher accountability and more stress, depending on the job. No one wishes to be fired from a job, but if so, this is a teachable moment. The stakes are much lower at the *pre*-pre work stage. As a college student, encourage students to seek out work study jobs, campus jobs, volunteer positions or activities. The initial transition to college may absorb much of their time and energy, but gaining experience can be discussed in the broader context of their time as an undergraduate. It is not too early or too late to increase and build on experience for the next career steps.

Additional time and attention:

Form a committee to address specific needs

For almost three years Drexel's Steinbright Career Development Center Neurodiversity Committee has used the principles of universal design to develop resources for any student struggling with communication and social interaction, which encompasses students with autism spectrum disorder, anxiety, ADHD and other challenges. We also provide ongoing professional development for our staff to be more effective in how to work with this population. Some committee accomplishments include career resources to review potential work environments, challenge assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses and job research for specific industries. These resources promote student self-awareness, which makes a difference in finding a job that is a "good fit". We have found that for students on the autism spectrum, a deeper assessment of "good fit" is not just useful but necessary. We also created a student goal checklist of professional behaviors while on co-op. These worksheets and checklists create structured discussions and constructive feedback.

One tactic devised by the committee is the "very useful lead-in", used for awkward student situations. The key words are **"our expectation"** and **"what I'm observing"**. Here's an example of how a colleague would talk to a student who is exhibiting personal hygiene problems. The staff member would say: "**Our expectation** is you are neat and presentable day to day on your co-op job. **What I'm observing** is that your clothes are dirty and smelly for our meeting today" and thus, a discussion begins. The positive feedback received from the "very useful lead-in" idea suggests that a simple approach can make noticeable difference. Due to the combined efforts of committee members, Drexel's career center now has an accessible "tool box" for our faculty and staff to better assist our students.[iv]

Another idea is the Individualized Co-op Plan (ICP). The ICP is a one-time meeting of University partners to help a student having pronounced difficulty with the co-op job search, interviews and/or success on the job. Steinbright invites the relevant partners, outlines the student's struggles and works collaboratively to create a targeted plan for co-op success. ICP is modeled after IEP meetings, but is more informal. We have had a few ICP meetings thus far and they have yielded good results for the students. At the very least, it has promoted more cross communication between departments and staff on campus regarding students struggling with their co-op experience.

Initiate a broader conversation:

Connect to the university community

The Drexel Autism Support Program (DASP) is free to all Drexel students. Currently, 30 students are members of DASP but it is significant to note that membership is voluntary and it does not represent Drexel's total autism spectrum student population. DASP members are assigned a student mentor and participate in programming to ease the struggles of college transition. The AJ Drexel Autism Institute lends their expertise to assess areas where students are most vulnerable in a college setting and offer a personalized plan of action.

The DASP Advisory Board was founded in 2015. The goal of the board is to create a more inclusive environment of neurodiversity by creating awareness, empowering students and providing support. Board members include Steinbright staff and faculty, academic advisors, Student Life, Disability Resources, Residential Life, Student Counseling and the AJ Drexel Autism Institute. Two board members are parents of children on the autism spectrum. The Director of DASP provides updates on DASP member involvement and campus programming, such as the Neurodragons Student Summit. There is value in sharing perspectives and the different ways we support our students. At a university the size of Drexel, the benefit of bringing together concerned partners is a significant step toward making positive improvements for all students on the spectrum. For example, Residential Life now includes information on working with neurodiverse students in their Residential Advisor trainings. Academic Advisors are aware of the many supports available (DASP, academic, co-op) and can direct their students accordingly. Academic Advisors, in turn, have encouraged more information sessions for faculty in their respective departments to help close the loop of support and understanding for neurodiverse students.

Jobs, employers and awareness: Identify employers who welcome diversity

Many major companies are taking a lead not just in diversity hiring, but neurodiversity hiring. These companies are providing a tailored onboarding process to meet the unique considerations of these candidates and boost job retention. Ernst and Young has recently begun recruiting employees with autism for accounting positions. SAP, the German software maker, set a goal to have 1% of its overall workforce with autism by 2020. The SAP Autism to Work program launched in 2013 is moving this goal toward realization. A Microsoft pilot program began in 2015 in the Redmond, Washington corporate headquarters for candidates on the autism spectrum. Google recently advertised "Inclusion@Google: Autism Edition Summer 2018 Internship Program". The description is clear: "Google is seeking applications from individuals in the U.S. who identify as being on the Autism Spectrum and are interested in a technical internship in Software Engineering". Specialisterne is an international employment agency dedicated to training people on the autism spectrum and locating job placements with major corporations. Large companies such as the ones just mentioned have the resources to support, grow and even outsource onboarding programs and inspire other companies to do the same. The Disability Equality Index (https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org/top_companies) publishes annually the nation's best places to work based on a variety of criteria.

Despite these positive moves towards diversifying their workforce, a criticism of these structured corporate programs is that they cater almost exclusively to technical, engineering or science majors. Candidates must disclose that they are on the autism spectrum in order to be considered for the job, and evidence indicates they are not inclined to do so. Some people reject any label, especially one that may carry them through their professional life. The reality is that students on the autism spectrum are represented in all majors and industries. At the present time, the number of participants in these onboarding programs is small but the demand remains large for professional placements.

Students can research smaller companies and non-profit organizations with these questions to discern their commitment to diversity: 1) does the mission statement mention diversity? 2) is there an employee resource group for neurodiversity or disabilities? 3) is there a human resources staff person dedicated to diversity hiring? 4) is the organization involved in any community outreach related to diversity?

Networking is a powerful job search tool, and a personal connection to autism brings both sensitivity and understanding. If you know someone who's life is impacted by autism, contact them directly and ask: would you be willing to hire a co-op student on the autism spectrum? If this person does not make hiring decisions for their organization, ask if they could make an introduction on behalf of a student to their employer. In more far-reaching thinking, could we all explore diversity in our workplace to create greater opportunities? Does your workplace have neurodiversity training for staff? What efforts are in place to recruit co-op students and interns on the autism spectrum? How do your recruiters handle students who may struggle in the interview with communication or eye contact? Is there mentoring available for all your employees? If the answer is no to any of these questions, step up and advocate change.

Conclusion

As part of the undergraduate experience, co-op jobs can serve a vital role in creating access to professional jobs. Presently, there is extremely little research on young adults with autism and even less on college educated young adults and their employment rates. By understanding the deliberate and specific preparation needed to support these students in their careers, professional goals will be attained.

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[i] Roux, Anne M., Shattuck, Paul T., Rast, Jessica E., Rava, Julianna A., and Anderson, Kristy A. National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood. Philadelphia, PA: Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University, 2015

[ii] Roux, Anne M., Shattuck, Paul T., Rast, Jessica E., Rava, Julianna A., and Anderson, Kristy A. National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood. Philadelphia, PA: Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University, 2015

[iii] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Autism Spectrum and Disorder Data and Statistics https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html

[iv] Drexel University's Steinbright Career Center Neurodiversity Committee has made substantial progress as a volunteer group. In 2017, the committee and the Drexel Autism Support Program (DASP) secured a grant through a family foundation. The Neurodiversity Committee has since hired a graduate student to work with us on several initiatives and move forward with our goals.

Research Spotlight: Tracey Bowen

Meet Tracey Bowen, 2018 winner of the James W. Wilson Award (For Outstanding Contribution to Research in the Field of Cooperative Education and Internships)

Tell us about yourself Tracey, how did you get interested in experiential learning research?

I am an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream in the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information, and Technology at the University of Toronto Mississauga. My research specialization is Visual Communications and Visual Literacy as well as Student Identity Construction in relation to work-integrated learning. I have always been interested in experiential learning, particularly in my former positions in Art Education. Before going to Grad school and becoming an academic, I was (and still try to create new work) a visual artist working in mixed media. My initial foray into experiential learning was when I was an artist in residence within the Greater Toronto area. Research in this case was related to the students' experiences of using visual means to explore the world. I was introduced to my "educational hero" at that time, Maxine Greene. I see research as part of the experience of being an educator. I look on my classroom as a lab where I collaborate with my students to examine big questions. I use this approach to research whether examining those questions in relation to visual communications or when trying to make sense of the complexities of transitioning from being a student to being a professional within the workplace. The WIL research always emerges from questions that emerge within the classroom.

Tell us about your current research.

I am currently examining the perceptions and perspectives of WIL students on gender bias within their WIL placements. This refers to the issues I mentioned previously. The research is based on questions that emerged from some of the Critical Incident Reports (reflective writing assignments) submitted by students in my fourth year internship class. I work in a STEM discipline, and send out approximately 100 students per year into tech-based companies. Many of the female students got interested in digital media because of the recruitment campaigns to engage more girls and young women in STEM in high school. However, the reality is that they are treated differently than the male students in the workplace. This is a huge gap in trust and is confounding (and frustrating) for so many of the female interns. I feel that it is my duty to examine ways to help all students advocate for themselves and for others so they can speak up against bias and discrimination within the workplace. The implications of the findings of this study will be used to develop the WIL curriculum in my department, and hopefully others.

What has been your most significant research achievement?

Winning the Wilson award!

Who is your role model and why?

As I mentioned previously, Maxine Greene is my Education Hero. She wrote a book called *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on education, the arts and social change*, which changed my worldview. In her book Greene charges all educators to ask themselves and their students: what else is possible? I use that as my mantra and I think you can go anywhere if that is your starting point.

In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing experiential learning today and how can research contribute to their evolution?

I think we have done a great deal of research on skill transfer and the importance of WIL as a vehicle for students to see how well they have gained the knowledge and capabilities they need to be successful in the workforce post-graduation. What we haven't done very well, is focus on students' personal growth in terms of self-advocacy, empathy and resilience. We also assume that the graduate attributes that are privileged in so much WIL research, are universal in nature and provide appropriate measurements for predicting student success. However, students are not a homogenous group. Female students are not treated in the same way as their male colleagues, and we don't even know how LGBTQ students negotiate WIL placements, or if they feel excluded from the whole discussion. We need to examine these issues more closely, acknowledging the nuances and particularities.

For someone who might consider getting involved with research, what background or skills are most important?

Research is both an art and an intellectual endeavor. You need to be curious, thorough, and flexible. You need to respect the integrity of the process, the participants, and the discipline. However, you need a good question – something that is interesting, needs some attention and will have practical implications in the world. But even good questions need fresh perspectives, and above all an open mind. Research is not carried out in a vacuum. You need to be willing to call on others, to engage those with expertise to ensure that what you are finding has merit. And, research findings must be shared, so excellent communication and writing skills are paramount.

Editor's Note: *James W. Wilson was the Asa S. Knowles Professor of Cooperative Education and Director of Northeastern's Cooperative Education Research Center for many years. In 1987, he co-authored a comprehensive book about cooperative education, Cooperative Education in a New Era, as well as numerous other books and articles. He edited the Journal of Cooperative Education, and for many years conducted annual surveys of co-op programs in the USA. He arguably was the most prominent researcher in cooperative education in the second half of the last century. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to the promotion and advocacy of research activity in cooperative education. The award is not given every year. The award is competitively determined and is intended to recognize longstanding contributions to the field both by participating in research activity and providing leadership for others.*

Creating Innovators: The Importance of Self-Directed Experiential Learning Projects

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Abstract

Experiential learning is foundational to education at the University of Cincinnati (UC) and has been since cooperative education (co-op) began here in 1906. All UC undergraduate students are required to engage in at least one mid-collegiate course or academic experience that includes experiential learning. Experiential learning provides students with the opportunity to apply their learning and engage in reflective and integrative practices.

As educators preparing students for the future, we believe it is our responsibility to help students consider how they will use their gifts, talents and strengths to make a contribution to the world. This will look different for each student, but the common denominator is helping students develop innovative capacities as a result of their collegiate experiences. Why innovation? In our ever-changing world, there isn't anyone who doesn't need to be a creative problem solver and, at the core, that is exactly what innovation means.

Through this article, we will introduce the University Honors Program (UHP) at UC and our approach to guiding students through self-directed experiential learning. Self-directed experiential learning opportunities allow students to explore interests with the maximum amount of creativity which is necessary for students to become innovators within their fields (Wagner, 2012). We will explain how we require reflection and integration and how self-directed experiential learning can be a catalyst for inspiring students to become engaged citizens of the world.

Experiential learning is foundational to education at the University of Cincinnati (UC) and has been since cooperative education (co-op) began here in 1906. It has since expanded far beyond the co-op model and is now purposefully integrated into every academic program at the institution. All UC undergraduate students are required to engage in at least one mid-collegiate course or academic experience that includes experiential learning. Experiential learning provides students with the opportunity to apply their learning and engage in reflective and integrative practices. As educators preparing students for the future, it is our responsibility to help students consider how they will use their gifts, talents and strengths to make a contribution to the world. This will look different for each student, but the common denominator is helping students develop innovative capacities as a result of their experiences. Why innovation? In our ever-changing world, there isn't anyone who doesn't need to be a creative problem solver and, at the core, that is exactly what innovation means.

Through this article, we will introduce the University Honors Program (UHP) at UC and our approach to guiding students through self-directed experiential learning. Self-directed experiential learning opportunities allow students to explore interests with the maximum amount of creativity which is necessary for students to become innovators within their fields (Wagner, 2012). We will explain how we require reflection and integration and how self-directed experiential learning can be a catalyst for inspiring students to become engaged citizens of the world.

Program Overview

The UHP comprises undergraduate students in the top 7% of the university and offers an engaging environment in which students are inspired to experience and learn more. As of fall 2017, there were approximately 1500 participants. The UC experience of these academically talented and motivated students is enriched through honors seminars and experiences, which provide students with opportunities for experiential, interdisciplinary, reflective and integrative learning. UHP students are challenged through honors seminars and experiential learning projects that focus on five thematic areas: community engagement, global studies, leadership, research and creativity. Students are required to complete five honors experiences and maintain an online learning portfolio by graduation.

The UHP's vision is to develop students into global citizen scholars who lead innovative efforts toward solving the world's complex problems. We recognize the keys to becoming an innovative global citizen scholar include developing a sense of self, a reflective capacity and the ability to integrate learning from experiences rich in meaning. "To participate responsibility as local citizens, then, people must also be citizens of the world, aware of complex interdependence and able to synthesize information from a wide array of sources, learn from experiences, and make connections between theory and practice" (Huber, Hutchings, Gale, 2005). High impact experiences are important but guided reflection and integration are equally important for students to become global citizen scholars.

One important hallmark of the UHP is the focus on the individual student. As our program serves students from all colleges and academic disciplines, we provide unique opportunities for students to gain a better understanding of themselves. Students meet individually with their professional honors advisor to create a plan for exploring their interests. Our ratio is approximately 1:275. Through mandatory advising appointments with their assigned advisor (designated by a student's primary major), we learn about each student's goals, interests, aspirations, and strengths. We ask students to reflect upon the motivation for their goals and what they would do if they knew failure was not an option. We promote quality over quantity, though many students are still very involved in the program and the university at large. Intentionally choosing experiences that build upon one another leads to a stronger understanding of self as a global citizen scholar. Each student is required to articulate their definition of what it means to be a global citizen scholar at the end of their first semester in the program. This definition is then revised throughout the remainder of their time as a member of the UHP as part of their learning portfolio requirement.

Through a robust self-designed experience proposal, on-going reflection, a culminating reflection and a online learning portfolio showcase of the experience, students have the option to engage in a unique process of self-guided experiential learning to enhance their collegiate experience. Self-guided experiences (known as self-designed experiences in the UHP) provide an opportunity for students to pursue their unique interests without a grade assigned to their efforts. While students have the freedom to complete any combination of the three types of honors experiences (honors seminars, pre-approved experiences or self-designed experiences) to total five experiences by the time they graduate, most students will complete at least one self-designed experience. For high-achieving students, this freedom from external evaluation encourages innovation because the student's success (or failure) is not connected to a grade. Upon the conclusion of each honors experience, a student must reflect on the experience on their online learning portfolio. Students work one-on-one with their honors advisor to develop and execute academically sound experiences to explore interests to complement and/or diversify their undergraduate experience. Students have the option to develop one or more self-designed experiences and grant funding is available to support experiences with a financial obligation. During the 2016-2017 academic year, we approved 600 self-designed student proposals.

Student Directed Experiential Learning

Student directed experiential learning, known as the self-designed experience process in the UHP, is an example of a formula that Tony Wagner (Creating Innovators, 2012) suggests with regard to developing innovators. According to Wagner, educators should encourage the pursuit of play, passion, and purpose. Play refers to uninhibited exploration of interests which lead to the development of passion. Then, students should use their passions to frame their larger purpose and goals. Innovation begins with understanding oneself and creating opportunities to impact those around them. "True innovation means using your imagination, exercising the capacity to envision new possibilities… It's not about inventing a new machine or a new drug. It's about inventing your own life. Not following a path, but making your own path" (William Deresiewicz, 2010.) Self-designed experiences are the perfect example of how students can create their own path for growth and learning which can complement their educational curriculum.

Self-designed experiences range from independent, international travel experiences to students developing their own small businesses. Through the self-designed proposal, students complete five sections which require the student to: 1) articulate their personal connection to the experience, 2) create goals for the experience and their personal development, 3) identify academic resources that ground the opportunity in academia, 4) outline a plan for on-going reflection and 5) develop a plan for sharing their learning upon conclusion of the experience. Students are also asked to identify a project advisor who can guide the student through the completion of the experience. The project advisor is not the same as their honors advisor; the project advisor must have a level of expertise on the chosen topic. Students are encouraged to use alternative forms of reflection beyond the traditional form of journaling for their ongoing reflection. Examples of on-going reflection that the UHP staff developed to share with students include sketching, photography, guided discussion groups, lab notebooks, blogs, or video journals.

Students consider interests, both related and unrelated to their major, as the basis of a self-designed experience. Through the process of writing the proposal, students take ownership of their growth and learning. Self-designed proposals are an opportunity for students to explore interests that may not initially seem connected to their major, but through the reflection process, they find ways to weave their interests together into an integrated, cohesive story. The self-designed proposal template can be found here: www.uc.edu/honors/students/experiences/self-designed.html. Here are topics for several recent self-designed experiential learning projects:

- Researching the recolonization of butterflies in the Canadian Rockies.
- Designing a water bottle that was integrated into the body of a commuter-style bicycle.
- Developing a science fair afterschool program for juniors and seniors at an urban high school across the street from UC's campus.
- Collaborating with peers to learn several programming languages to design a video game.
- Writing a novel and researching multiple editing and publishing options.

Student Story

To further explain the impact of self-designed experiences, we will share the story of one student who we will refer to as Elizabeth. Elizabeth is a student at UC studying industrial design. She began her UHP involvement by participating in the LeaderShape Institute which is a 6-day national program designed to help students lead with integrity. The institute requires intense reflection and students create a personal vision for their future. Through reflection, Elizabeth discovered her passion for understanding others and making a difference one person at a time. She realized that her lived experience was not the same as others and that it would take ample time to truly learn about and appreciate others.

Elizabeth met with her honors advisor to brainstorm how she could explore the interconnectivity of the world and learn about others through community engagement. Over the next three years, she developed four self-designed experiences with the support and challenge from with her honors advisor, each building off the previous experience with the goal of deepening her growth and learning. All four experiences shared a common theme of learning about individuals from different areas of the world—rural Appalachia, urban Philadelphia, Guatemala and Japan. In preparation for each experience, Elizabeth spent time researching the culture to gain a better understanding before arriving in each destination. The travel to each location was not part of a required course or her academic requirements; rather, these self-designed opportunities were developed in pursuit of her goals and they counted toward her requirement of completing 5 honors experiences. Her guided reflection questions helped her process what she was learning and how her learning connected to previous experiences and future plans. Each experience broadened Elizabeth's appreciation for others as she learned the stories of those around her and began to understand the power of community. She applied lessons learned from each experience to the next, so that by her junior year, she had a nuanced understanding of how to collaborate with others toward a common goal and lead positive change. This not only impacted her ability to design for a wider audience, but she also considered how she wanted to make a difference in the communities where she lives.

During her junior year, Elizabeth co-founded Sidekick's Made, a non-profit organization, with two of her friends. Elizabeth wanted to make an impact before she graduated and homelessness is a significant issue in Cincinnati. The idea behind Sidekicks is to give comfort and stability to kids experiencing homelessness in the form of custom-made toys and storybooks. Elizabeth and her co-founders ask children to draw a new best friend. They inquire about elements of the drawing to make sure they understand the details and they let the child pick out fabric. Then, they create custom, one-of-a-kind toys for the children based on their drawing and provide them with crayons and paper for continued creative expression. This project is cross disciplinary and collaborative, and it is the sum of Elizabeth's exploration of understanding others and community.

Upon graduation, Elizabeth will continue her work with Sidekicks in addition to securing full-time employment. The opportunity to take risks, engage in prompted reflection and integrate her learning through the online learning portfolio have aided in her success. She attributes her involvement in the University Honors Program, and specifically her individual pursuit of interests through self-designed experiences, to what led her to where she is today. This directly informs her personal understanding of what it means to be a global citizen scholar.

Reflection and Integration

Reflecting on the learning resulting from the experience is more important than the success of the experience in the case of self-designed experiences. Students are required to write a 1000-word reflection about the experience that they submit to their honors advisor. This reflection follows the "what, so what, now what" format. We encourage students to circle back to the learning goals they established when writing the proposal and articulate how they accomplished their goals and what they learned from the experience (the "what"). While it tends to be easy for students to describe what happened in the experience, we challenge them to think critically about the impact and implications of the experience (the "so what" and "now what"). The 'now what' prompt is especially critical to help students integrate their learning and place the experience within the context of their future plans.

Once they write the personal reflection, they are required to write a 200-word summary of the experience for their online learning portfolio.

This succinct summary should explain the connection between the experience and the student's broader goals/aspirations. The learning portfolio is designed to be an opportunity to practice integration and share learning in a concise way. Learning portfolios help students "overcome fragmentation and make the connections that are vital for personal growth and academic success." (Aracario, Eynon & Clark, 2005). Each learning portfolio includes an introduction of the student, a showcase of each honors experience (brief overview and sample of their work), and an annual reflection about successes/challenges and lessons learned from the previous year. The annual reflection includes an updated reflection on their personal definition of what it means to be a global citizen scholar. The honors advisors read the yearly reflections and provide qualitative feedback to the student. These reflections often serve as the initial brainstorm for future honors experiences. Students are encouraged to share their learning portfolios with professors, peers, and potential employers. Sample learning portfolios can be found here:
www.uc.edu/honors/students/portfolios.html.

Summary

As educators, it is our responsibility to prepare students for life beyond graduation. Self-directed experiential learning opportunities are a great way for students to explore interests and develop a unique definition of what it means to be a global citizen scholar. With an understanding of how they can make a contribution to the world, students prepare to make a difference in their fields as a result of experiential learning opportunities. Through self-designed experiential learning projects, students gain a better understanding of themselves and how to approach problems with creativity. These skills will prepare them for life after college and help them consider what it means to be a global citizen scholar.

To finalize self-designed experiences, students must reflect and integrate their learning so that they are able to articulate their experiences to a wide audience and develop the innovative skills that will help them to solve problems in creative ways within their discipline. Online learning portfolios and guided reflection questions are practical strategies to help students reflect and integrate their learning.

Learning portfolios and reflection can be used to promote integration within classroom settings and in optional program (such as an honors program). When learning portfolios and guided reflection questions are layered with experiential learning opportunities, the student will gain a deeper understanding of their growth and learning. This is the result of students being required to think beyond what they experienced to articulate the immediate and long-term impact of the experience on their personal and professional goals. Depending on the scale and size of a program or college, there are tremendous benefits in offering individualized advising and coaching students to identify opportunities for customized experiential learning opportunities that align with their personal and professional goals. If it is not feasible to manage the oversight of helping students develop their own experiences, programs may consider including experiential learning opportunities within the classroom to allow students to explore their interests. Beyond the experiences themselves, students should be required to reflect and integrate their learning as a key learning outcome.

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Experiential Through our Eyes: Our Experience as the CEIA Undergraduate Research Project Grant Recipient Students

Alex Wilson and Courtney Eckstein

Four months ago, We, Alex Wilson and Courtney Eckstein, were presented with the opportunity to join a study that observes how Cultural Intelligence is impacted in college students that work and study abroad. The study is led by Willie Clark, Cheryl Cates Ph.D., and Emily Frazier, with May Hetzer as a mentor. During this experience, we learned many valuable skills that will be applicable in future careers and will help influence us in the correct direction of future research projects.

I, Courtney, will be a Senior at the University of Cincinnati. I am currently working toward my degree in Communications and Public health, as well as a minor in Biology. My future plans include graduating from UC in the next year and pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health. After that I will decide whether I would like to continue on to Medical School, PA school, or jump right into the healthcare setting. I would eventually like to be CEO of a hospital network.

And I, Alex, am a recent graduate of the University of Cincinnati. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Biology. I will be travelling to Greece this summer to work as a Marine Biologist and working on helping to whale population. At the end of the summer I will return home and look for a job that has my passion for saving marine animals.

We both received CITI training and were certified in ethical issues that arise when working with human subjects. This training also informed them of the current regulatory protocol in place for human research studies. We met with a representative from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to learn about what they could and could not do while conducting this study and the steps that we had to take to conduct a research study. We also learned what was to be kept confidential and how to take proper notes to turn into the IRB if necessary.

I, Courtney, was the people person of the study. I found the students to gather data from and made sure that the students submitted all our surveys in a timely manner. I also went to several workshops to learn how to present the data that was found in the best way possible. The first one was a workshop on how to gather research and how to organize it. This became very useful when the project was first started, and we were learning what it was about, and well as later in the semester when the data was being compared to previous studies performed by other researchers. The second workshop was how to build a poster presentation. This came in extremely useful when putting the final presentation together. I learned the proper aesthetic when laying out a project and how to make sure all data and logistics were accounted for. I also worked alongside Alex and learned how to do the statistical analysis of the project.

I, Alex, on the other hand, performed more of the background work. The data analysis was the main focus of my job. The pre and post assessments were compared utilizing t-tests, which determined whether the changes demonstrated by the students were statistically significant. This job allowed me to deepen my knowledge of statistical analysis, as well as learn how to accurately and appropriately represent it in a readable format. I designed the graphs for the handouts utilized at the end of the semester presentation, and also formatted and wrote several other portions of the handout.

We would like to thank the CEIA for giving them the opportunity to take part in this study and allowing us to gain these skills that will help us in the future.

Editor's Note: *The CEIA project grant is intended to provide funding to an evaluation, information gathering and/or assessment project in regards to the field of work-integrated learning. The project funds are targeted toward the use of undergraduate students who will assist with the gathering of data (an ethics review would be necessary) or the assessment of a WIL program, and/or the pilot testing of a new WIL initiative. Up to $4000 may be awarded bi-annually to an accredited post-secondary department or faculty with 65 – 75% of the project funds to be used to pay undergraduate student researchers, and 25 – 35% available for administrative costs including the purchase or use of required software to carry out the project. CEIA expects the grant recipients to publicly share the results of their project outcomes in relation to general practice within the field and CEIA reserves the right to use and disseminate the information through their networks and membership. CEIA must be acknowledged as a project funder on all disseminated documents.*

For those who would like to hire undergraduate research students with this funding, a new award will be given out by CEIA in 2018. The deadline to apply is November 1, 2018 at

http://www.ceiainc.org/knowledge-zone/research-grant/

News from the North: The Changing Landscape of WIL in Canada

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Abstract
This article describes why work-integrated learning (WIL) at the post-secondary level is an essential component of Canada's future economic growth. Co-operative education, while one of the most robust and well-known examples of WIL, is only one of the many ways that work experience can be incorporated into higher education's academic curricula. The article illustrates how the strategic alignment and collaboration between business, government and higher education is critical to ensure that our students graduate from post-secondary education ready and equipped to make a significant contribution to their employer as soon as they enter the workforce.

Co-operative education is a widely-known pedagogical model that integrates academic learning with work experience. In Canada, the University of Waterloo was the first school to offer the co-operative education model. Founded in 1957, co-operative education (co-op) was an essential component of the curriculum at Waterloo, connecting industry with academy through alternating paid work terms and academic terms. By the late 1970s, two decades after the Waterloo launch, Canada had 26,000 students enrolled in 50 co-op programs across 12 post-secondary institutions. By 2017, that number had increased to more than 112,000 co-op work terms across 56 post-secondary institutions. Sixty years since its launch in Canada, the co-op model has been widely adopted by higher education across the nation as an integral component of its degree or diploma programs.

In 1973, the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE) was formed as a member organization comprised of representatives from all higher education institutions engaged in co-operative education. Its purpose was to serve as a forum through which educators could meet, share their thoughts and assist one another as co-op practitioners. This association has led the development of a common definition of co-operative education and accreditation criteria for each co-op program to ensure high quality and best practices. CAFCE has been instrumental in promoting and advocating the value of co-operative education through dialogue with government and industry. Yet, co-operative education, while very prevalent in higher education, is but one part of the broader work-integrated learning continuum. Once again, post-secondary institutions in Canada are at the threshold of exponential growth and interest in other forms of experiential education.

This article portrays the social and economic context behind Canada's increased emphasis for work-integrated learning in higher education. The article discusses the business perspective and the government support that will enable higher education institutions to promote and integrate experiential learning within their degree or diploma programs. This article further shares how higher education institutions have come together in the evolution of CAFCE to embrace work-integrated learning.

1. Business perspective

The growing knowledge economy, the demand for innovation and disruptive technology to keep pace with global competition and an aging workforce has increased competition among employers for career-ready graduates. As a result, organizations are turning to work-integrated learning to fill the gap. We see evidence of this desire for work-ready graduates in a recent study conducted by Morneau Shepell, a human resources consulting and technology company. Based on responses from hiring managers at 95 of Canada's largest companies, the study found that 83 per cent of the companies surveyed participate in co-op programs and other forms of work-integrated learning initiatives that help them identify potential new employees. This percentage has increased from two years ago, where a similar survey indicates 76 per cent of employers said they were participating (BHER.ca, "Navigating Change: 2018 Business Council Skills Survey").

As this report states, with Canadian companies working harder than ever to recruit and retain talent, the voice of Canadian business is advocating for a clear mandate to higher education to equip today's students with the technical and soft skills required to succeed in today's workplace. In response, business, higher education and government have partnered to collaborate and create opportunities for our students while they are in school, allowing them to gain valuable work experience in addition to academic knowledge. One example of this is the Business Higher Education Roundtable (BHER), which brings together representatives from large Canadian enterprises and higher education institutions to examine and develop a coordinated strategy. "In 2015, the Business/Higher Education Roundtable set a bold target: for 100 per cent of undergraduate students to have access to some kind of WIL prior to graduation" (BHER.ca, "Work-Integrated Learning: Getting to 100%").

The findings from the Ontario University Graduate Survey of 2014 graduates seem to support the BHER platform that work-integrated learning is a key factor in early career success. Ninety-six per cent of University of Waterloo co-op graduates surveyed said they were employed six months after graduation and worked in positions related to skills they acquired at Waterloo (compared to 74 per cent of Ontario graduates). Within the group of 96 per cent of co-op grads, 79 percent were earning \$50,000+ two years after graduation compared to 39 per cent of Ontario graduates (*Ontario University Graduate Survey of 2014 graduates*).

2. Government support

In 2016, a series of funding initiatives were launched by the Federal government and by various provincial governments to help create thousands of paid work-integrated learning opportunities for students enrolled in higher education. One such initiative was the Canadian government's Student Work Integrated Learning Program (SWILP), which allotted $73 million to support the development of new WIL opportunities, with the intention of creating 10,000 new jobs with new employers. The SWILP program mandate is to "help post-secondary students in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and business programs get work experience they need to prepare for jobs in these high-demand fields" (Canada.ca, "Student Work-Integrated Learning Program").

This program is administered through a number of industry associations that serve as delivery agents that review and approve employer applications for funding to pay for students' work-integrated learning experiences.

Student Work-Integrated Learning Program (SWILP) at a glance

- For co-op students in science, technology, engineering, math and business programs
- Covers 50 per cent, or $5,000, of a student's wages
- Coverage increases to 70 per cent, or $7,000, for:
    - First-year students
    - Women in STEM fields
    - Indigenous students
    - Persons with disabilities
    - Recent immigrants (within five years)

3. Evolution of CAFCE

With the broader focus on WIL becoming an increasing priority in the Canadian government and across many post-secondary institutions, CAFCE recently revisited its own mandate. In November 2017, some 45 years after the inception of CAFCE, members voted to formally expand their mission and mandate to represent all forms of WIL across Canada, officially becoming Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada). A key priority for the board is to work on creating common definitions and quality standards for all forms of WIL.

Anne Fannon, President of CEWIL Canada, explains that "WIL is more than simply connecting students and industry. It is the infrastructure that exists around the experience, helping to make it meaningful and valuable for both employer and student. Everyone at CEWIL Canada is very excited about the focus on increasing WIL. We just want to make sure that it is done with quality outcomes in mind, leveraging the expertise that exists already within the country."

4. Conclusion

Once again, Canada is at the threshold of change in experiential education and work-integrated learning which is inclusive of co-operative education. With support from all levels of government, opportunities within growing industries and post-secondary institutions, career-ready graduates are aligned to fuel Canada's economic growth through innovation, disruption and enterprise.

"As the next generation enters the workforce, profound economic, social and technological change means that collaboration is key to unlocking our future economic potential," says Dave McKay, President and Chief Executive Officer of RBC and leader of the Business/ Higher Education Roundtable's work-integrated learning taskforce. "It takes commitment and investment to launch work-integrated learning programs, but the payoff is well worth it" (BHER.ca, "BHER applauds federal investment in skills development").

With employers, government and post-secondary institutions across Canada, the commitment to WIL grows stronger every year. When it comes to quality post-secondary education, here in Canada we truly believe… where there's a WIL there's a way.

Ross Johnston is the Executive Director of Co-operative Education at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He is also the Ontario representative for the Board of Directors of Co-operative Education and Work-integrated Learning Canada, the incoming President for Education at Work Ontario and vice president of Global Networks for CEIA .

Sharing Experiences and Taking Responsibility: White Faculty and Staff Working Toward Racial Justice

Dr. Robin Selzer // **University of Cincinnati**

Dr. Peggy Shannon-Baker // **Georgia Southern University**

Christina Black

Abstract

Frustrated at the lack of response among White faculty and staff to racism on their Cincinnati campus, the authors of this piece draw from their own experiences and assert that it is possible—and necessary—for White faculty and staff to learn from these experiences and take responsibility in fighting racism. In support of this assertion, we draw on Kolb's (1984) *"What? So what? Now what?"* model of experiential learning to address two specific goals within this article: increase accountability among White faculty and staff through the examination of localized instances of racial violence, and articulate concrete action steps that can be taken in response to racism. Beginning with an examination of racist violence on their own campus as well as the rhetoric surrounding these incidents, the authors demonstrate that each campus can be viewed as a microcosm in which systemic racism is enacted at the local level. The goal of this examination is not mere identification, but to cultivate a sense of personal accountability among White faculty and staff. We conclude with a series of practical steps as well as a call to action.

We began working on this piece not long after the shooting death of 18-year old Michael Brown Jr. at the hands of a White police officer in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014. In the years that have passed since, the details of this incident, and many others that followed, have been replayed over and over in the national media. For us—current and former White faculty and staff at the University of Cincinnati—this incident was an important one to engage with for a few reasons. First, Michael Brown Jr. was a student. He was just two days shy of starting at Vatterott College, a technical school in the area. The similarities between him and our many students of color could not be ignored. Second, we believe that acts of violence against people of color are not isolated circumstances perpetrated by singularly racist individuals. These acts are symptoms of a culture that systemically perpetuates violence against communities of color, where violence, according to Dr. King, is "anything that denies human integrity and leads to helplessness or hopelessness" (Brown, 2015). Third, we observed an unfortunate tendency among the members of our local community (especially those who are White) to treat the issue of racist violence as something that happens "over there," in some other place, construed as being both geographically and culturally removed from our own city and our own university. We could not have known at the time we made these observations that we would be faced with a case of racial violence at our own university, where, like in the Mike Brown case, the criminal justice system failed to indict the officer responsible for a Black man's death and has struggled to make any meaningful movement toward amends or reform.

Both the belief that racist violence is perpetrated by bad apples and this act of distancing oneself from the issue serve as absolution--a permission to do nothing. In short, we see the silence of White people, including ourselves, as collusion, and feel the need to disrupt this silence by challenging White people to stop doing nothing when such racial violence invariably arises.

To be sure, these observations are not new or unique. They have been made by activists and scholars the world over, many of whom are people of color who have lived experiences of racist violence. For us, the value in making these observations lies not only in their assertion, but in the process of taking these arguments off the page and determining what White staff and faculty members at universities all across the country can do to address this culture of racism. Many career education and professional development faculty and staff working in experiential learning know the value of moving from theory to practice and that the best real world problem solving will not be accomplished without asking the important question, "Now what?" To that end, there are two goals within this article: increase accountability among White faculty and staff through the examination of localized instances of racial violence, and articulate concrete action steps that can be taken in response.

WHAT?—THE CASE OF CINCINNATI AS A MICROCOSM

We believe that examining local instances of racist violence—both material and ideological—can serve as an entry point for why White antiracist activism must be continually sustained. Acknowledging that racial violence is happening everywhere—not just in highly publicized cases conveniently located a safe distance away—is critical to understanding and dismantling privilege. This has certainly been true in each of our experiences at the University of Cincinnati (UC), a microcosm of systemic assaults on communities of color happening throughout the USA. Within the past several years, there have been too many violent incidents to support this assertion, some physical, some ideological; some well-publicized, others barely noted.

EXAMPLES FROM CINCINNATI

In September 2013, fliers featuring a racist political cartoon were posted on campus. The cartoon criticized two upper-level African American administrators in the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, Carol Tonge-Mack, an Assistant Dean, and Dr. Ronald Jackson, the college's first—and the university's only—African American Dean, also an alumnus of UC. The cartoon depicted the two as ruthless rulers, and included derogatory, racist mischaracterizations. In an open letter addressing the incident, Dr. Jackson described the cartoon as "reprehensible" and "racist" (Wegener, 2013). The response to the incident included public statements, calls for dialogue, and public demonstration, all of which were organized and implemented predominately by people of color at UC.

Several weeks later, Samuel Burbanks, a Black male doctoral student in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services, was the target of a racist, threatening letter mailed to the university's Graduate School. Burbanks (2014) discussed the letter in a public statement published by the school's student newspaper, which read in part, "The letter I received is a form of racial harassment and part of the psychic violence that has been all too frequent at the University of Cincinnati." The silence in response to this incident from the UC community and university leadership was deafening.

As if these incidents of bigotry were not reprehensible enough, UC has also been the site of deadly, racially-motivated violence on more than one occasion. In August 2011, Everette Howard—another young, African American male—died after a campus police officer used a Taser on him at a campus dormitory. Most recently, in July 2015—nearly a year after the death of Michael Brown Jr.—a UC police officer shot and killed Samuel Dubose, a Cincinnati resident, during a traffic stop. In July 2017, following two mistrials, a judge dropped all charges against the officer responsible for Dubose's death.

Most recently, under threat of a lawsuit and the guise of free speech, the University accepted a request from well-known neo-Nazi and White nationalist leader Richard Spencer to speak on campus sometime in 2018. The University's efforts to avoid a lawsuit backfired when Cameron Padgett, the Georgia State University student who initiated the speaking request on behalf of Spencer, filed a lawsuit against UC alleging that his right to free speech was violated when the University charged Padgett and his team with security costs for the pending event.

The similarity of the circumstances in all of these examples—along with the many, many deaths of people of color at the hands of police officers—serves as a tragically apt example of how violence against individuals and communities of color is systemic. The environment within the University of Cincinnati is but one microcosm within the broader context of violence. But you would not know this if you read the public statements issued by university leadership in response to these events.

SO WHAT?—RHETORIC OF RESPONDING TO RACIST INCIDENTS

The University continues to call incidents like these "teaching moments." The common refrain is one that characterizes these incidents as departures from the norm or as violations of shared community standards. For example, a public statement on civility in response to the racist cartoon stated, "Please join us in reaffirming our collective commitment to civil discourse and respectful behavior by extending to everyone in this community the same respect, cooperation and caring that we, ourselves, expect" (Ono, 2013). Years later, when the University was embroiled in controversy yet again over its acceptance of Richard Spencer to campus, University President Neville Pinto appeared alongside campus leaders, faculty, staff, and students in a video response titled, "#1UC." In the video, participants share a message of hope to an ostensibly unified campus, saying things like, "Be assured that your broader community stands with you," and, "We are one UC. We choose love."

The subtext of these public statements is one of brash assumptions: that everyone within the community is treated with respect and care, that the members of this collective community buy into these notions, and that these concepts have been previously affirmed and upheld. "This doesn't define us," President Ono said, "but we must grow from this" (Sparling, 2015). In other words, statements such as these imply we usually get this post-racial society right. This isn't like us. But it is often also these calls for peace that silence the folks who begin to question White supremacy as the underlying problem. For example, in the video response to the Spencer controversy—a decision reportedly made at least in part in the spirit of free speech—one video participant recites the line, "If we become divided, he wins." This statement, which presupposes a unified campus community, puts any who would publicly question the University's stance in the role of "divider" and potentially discourages dialogue, especially from those marginalized by the University's choice. Christina Brown, a leader with Cincinnati Black Lives Matter, has rightfully called out this kind of rhetoric as a strategy for further silencing Black activism.

How many people of color have to die before we acknowledge a pattern, before we admit that these incidents do define us? How many lives lost? How many racist cartoons have to be posted? How many threatening letters penned? At what point do we understand that these issues are in fact woven into the fabric of our institution? That these are not bumps in the road--but the road itself? If we ask our students to be self-aware, reflective thinkers, to learn from their actions and experiences, should we not also be practicing what we preach?

Of all places, America's universities should be the places where we can have an open, productive, truth-seeking dialogue around these issues. And yet it doesn't happen. The denial is insulting at best, deadly at worst. As Ronald Jackson (2013) wrote in his resignation letter (submitted two months after the defamatory cartoon was posted), "I find this not only unfortunate but also indignifying for anyone, but this is especially hurtful and shameful in an educational environ designed to trained [sic] the next generation of industry and civic leaders to be good citizens."

Because all young students of color are valuable members of our college communities, we cannot afford to think of these issues as unrelated to us in higher education. In the wake of these occurrences, it is clear to us that the problem of racism (at UC and elsewhere) is not one that will be solved without members of the White racial majority exploring the ways that we can engage in anti-racist work. After witnessing the burden that this culture of discrimination and "psychic violence" (Burbanks, 2014) has been on our colleagues of color, we believe that responsibility is on the White community to speak up and out on issues of racial inequity.

NOW WHAT?—SPEAKING OUT, TAKING STEPS

In the interest of taking action on this belief, we came together to reflect on some of the effective practices of learning by doing that we have used in our lives and in our work to address these issues, as a teacher educator, student affairs staff, and experiential learning faculty member. Of the many lessons learned through this process, most important is connecting with like-minded people doing like-minded work who care about the effects of racism. Sharing creative strategies for anti-racist action can push White people to be more explicit in addressing issues of bias and discrimination in their personal and professional settings. Through our dialogue, we identified three areas of focus for our anti-racist daily practice: educating and identifying the self, interacting with students (e.g. teaching, advising), and advocating among colleagues and supervisors.

EDUCATION AND IDENTIFICATION

An important initial step we all recognized in our reflections on doing anti-racist work as White people was our continual self-education and self-identification. In general, we came to know our own racial privilege through examining the intersectionality of our identities and in finding our own voices. Understanding our own oppressions based on gender, sexuality, and/or class provided a critical lens through which to view oppressive cultural structures more generally, and helped us to develop a desire to cultivate empathy and to acknowledge privilege within ourselves. It is critically important for us to be mindful of our own access to privilege as White academics and how we have enacted—consciously or not—our privilege over others. For example, following the postings of the cartoons, we enacted our racial privilege to choose whether to respond and when to do so. Our colleagues of color did not have this same choice. Situations like this demonstrate that, as White people, we need to consistently engage in a process of self-actualization by examining our values, beliefs, and actions as they come to fruition in the face of bias and discrimination. Educating the self is also about familiarizing oneself with what is going on around you, what is available in terms of resources, and who is in your community or organization. In many cases, this means actively seeking out information about equity issues such as statistics on minority enrollment and persistence at a university, even if those facts are not part of your institution's or department's typical talking points.

Mindful, active self-identification was also a critical point for us as White people seeking to address racism. Specifically, we believe that identification as White allies or White anti-racists can sometimes serve as a label to denote enlightenment or self-congratulation (or, in today's parlance, "wokeness") as opposed to a dedication to continuous work. The label of ally or anti-racist should never imply that our anti-racist work is complete, nor that we are not implicated in the problem. These identifications do not cancel out our continued access to White privilege. We believe that the focus should not be on how people identify, but what they are doing.

CONFRONTING RACISM IN OUR INTERACTIONS

To be sure, balancing a university job and activism can be risky (June, 2015). However, White academics can actively address structural racism in our work culture. In terms of White responsibility, we believe that using our privilege to commit to anti-racist acts can have an effect on individuals and systems alike. We see this play out in our daily lives as teachers, colleagues, advocates, and advisers.

Although we acknowledge that it is a challenge, we believe that it is possible to use one's privilege to draw attention to incidents of racial violence and to the often-obscured and ignored experiences of those who are oppressed. This might mean challenging someone who says something subtly or overtly racist; raising the question of racial dynamics when contributing to a dialogue on funding, hiring, or policy decisions; promoting and celebrating the work of our students and colleagues of color; or showing up to public protests of racial violence or injustice. We can also start conversations and empower other White people to act. Ultimately, our activism can help our students, and is therefore worth the risk.

ANTI-RACIST ADVOCACY WITH STUDENTS

One of the most important ways we can have a positive impact is through interactions with our students. For example, in our classrooms, we talk about racist ideologies or systems, such as racially disparate disciplinary practices in schools (where Black students, especially young black men, face more and harsher discipline than their White counterparts). We can also engage in critical reflections on experiential placements so that diverse opportunities do not reinforce students' stereotypes, but instead they start to see the more systemic nature of racism. These dialogues can result in the recognition that racism is pervasive. This action breaks the polite silence so that such acts of racial violence in schools can be brought to the attention of the administration or community organizations by a diverse group of voices. Here, individual actions become part of a chain of events addressing these acts of violence from the individual level to the organizational level and higher.

This same logic follows when working with students outside of the classroom. Through advising or co-curricular work, we can share resources on supportive communities and organizations with students of color and White anti-racist students. For example, during service-learning experiences, program leaders can not only support critical dialogue with the students about their experiences, but also position themselves as a person open to discussing the racialized experiences of culture shock or discrimination. At UC, we make a point to promote our Racial Awareness Program (RAPP) among students we serve. RAPP is an initiative that uses intensive development programs and outreach to educate students and staff on social justice issues and fighting oppression. By encouraging students to engage with such organizations, we help them learn effective responses to bias, violence, and racism, both locally and around the world. Through our students, our impact can span space and time.

ANTI-RACIST ADVOCACY WITH COWORKERS

In addition to our work with students, it is also important to maintain anti-racist advocacy among our colleagues and supervisors. For example, we can make it a point to utilize minority-owned businesses as vendors. While sitting on hiring committees, we can make sure that the committee has diverse representation and reaches out to a diverse range of potential candidates as soon as the posting is available. Furthermore, White professionals should be intentional about networking with colleagues of color to ensure equal access to the advancement opportunities that professional networks provide. In other words, we must be intentional about ensuring that professional development and advancement opportunities are consistently available to and comprised of our colleagues of color.

Finally, we can encourage this dialogue in our campus community at large. To do this at UC, we organized a panel for our annual Diversity Conference titled, "White Privilege & Responsibility: Showing Up to Discuss Racism on UC's Campus." During this panel, we discussed our explorations of our racial identities as White women, acknowledgements of White privilege, and the ways we have enacted anti-racist daily practices. White accountability like this conference presentation is critical. Yet, we know that as White people, we should never dominate the dialogue. Listening to the experiences of people of color (without expecting them to teach us) will always remain paramount.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

We believe in the transformative power of individual actions. However, we acknowledge the reality of White hesitation (Holt Shannon, 2001). Frequently, well-meaning White faculty or staff members may be hesitant to speak out about racism on their respective campuses. This hesitation could be a fear of possible missteps, a feeling that the privileged White voice can't speak truth to experiences of discrimination, or even a legitimate fear of reprisal in the form of professional consequences. We understand those hesitations. We have felt them, and know that they do not compare to the economic, social, and spiritual consequences of racism that people and communities of color experience. In truth, we realize that writing this article is easier than almost any of the action steps that we have suggested.

In spite of our empathy for White hesitation, we stop short of believing that these fears are a legitimate reason for inaction. This is especially pertinent to those in higher education, who are privileged to have access to information to know better, show up and do better, and be better. The level of privilege experienced by White faculty and staff members at universities is not only one of race, but also one of socioeconomic status, access to education, and therefore, access to power. This racial privilege is that which our colleagues and students of color do not experience in this country. We understand the fears and hesitations associated with the dialogue around race and racism in academia. But we also argue that these fears are not a reasonable excuse to opt out of the dialogue.

It is time to disrupt the status quo of "loud, pronounced, egregious," cultural silence and "lackluster" responses around racism at universities in a time of a public relations crisis (R. Jackson, personal communication, November 25, 2014). Addressing the level of violence endured by communities of color in this nation is a moral imperative for leaders in academia, especially if they are White. It is time that White academics exercise critical self-reflection and accountability on this issue. There remains much work left to do, and we are motivated by the dialogue and calls to action with like-minded community members.

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How Do You Save the Planet?: Service Learning and Student Philanthropy in an Introductory Environmental History Course

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ABSTRACT

Service learning is a recognized part of the environmental studies curriculum at many institutions, but students usually complete these projects as part of courses in the STEM disciplines. This article explores the use of service learning in an environmental history course that focuses on the American environmental movement at an open-access, two-year teaching campus of a major research university. It details the design and execution of the course in Spring 2018, when in addition to regular service learning volunteer work, students participated in a Pay it Forward student philanthropy project. Issues explored include deploying service learning in content focused courses; encouraging students to think critically about philanthropy in American society; and general tips on course design and execution.

INTRODUCTION

"How do you change the world?"

That is a question I asked my students at the beginning of my class, "Environmental Activism." Although they do not know it at the time, the question is both an intellectual and personal challenge. On an intellectual level, the question is asking them to understand the history and development of the American environmental movement, and to understand how various activists, groups and organizations went about trying to improve natural conditions, save endangered species, and protect their children and families from toxic waste. But personally, it is also asking them to think about the work that needs to be done to create real social and environmental change, and how they see themselves engaging in that work.

Each part of this question represents one part of the class. "Environmental Activism" is a sophomore level class taught at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College (an open-access branch campus), cross-listed in the history and environmental studies programs. It is designed as part of a core of classes to introduce students to different ways of approaching, and understanding, environmental issues outside of a solely scientific and technical context. But since it also fulfills general education requirements, the course also attracts students who are simply interested in the topic, as well as a smattering of history majors. In terms of disciplinary learning outcomes, it is designed to introduce students to the structure, development and diversity of American environmentalism, as well as the broader field of environmental history, which examines how human and natural forces interact and shape human societies over time. In order to help students connect theory to practice, it has an optional with service-learning component, where students complete a service project with a local environmental organization over the course of the semester.

This was the structure of the class when I taught it for the first time in Spring 2016. In addition to regular lectures, readings and discussions, students were required to identify and volunteer with a local environmental organization, and then provide a final presentation on their experience, that connected the history and structure of the organization to what we had learned in class about the American environmental movement. Although I identified about twenty-five environmental organizations in advance and matched one to two students with each group, overall I provided little supervision for the service learning projects. This was a good model for the first time teaching the class, as it allowed students to follow their interests, and I was able to survey the diversity of opportunities in the Cincinnati area, and which organizations would be good partners in the future. The level of student engagement was mixed. Some got very involved with their organizations and continued after the class was over, while others simply fulfilled their service hours, and did not make any real effort to connect, even critically, with the organization.

The primary lessons I learned from this first environmental service learning course were to choose partners more intentionally and carefully, and include more intensive reflection over the course of the project. I would apply these to the next time I taught the course in Spring 2018, which would be a fundamentally different, demanding (sometimes overwhelming) and ultimately more rewarding experience for both myself and the students.

PAY IT FORWARD

Originally, my primary revisions to the class were going to be with the historical content. My research focus is on the long history of environmental justice and activism by marginalized and minority groups, as well as critical histories of the mainstream movement. But in the Spring 2016 section, I had done a mediocre job of providing students with the tools to think about how particular groups develop certain types of environmental consciousness, and ultimately participate in certain types of activism, depending on their race, class, gender and general position in American society. But in Spring 2017, I taught a new class, "Race and the Environment in American History," which forced me how to address these issues head on in class, ultimately providing the pedagogical tools to help students understand how different forms of environmental inequality and privilege have developed historically in American life, and how they shape different forms of activism.

But then, in Spring 2017, I was part of a cohort of University of Cincinnati colleagues that applied for and received a Pay it Forward grant from Ohio Campus Compact, which provided my class with $1,000 to distribute to a local non-profit organization as part of a larger service learning and student philanthropy class. Working with staff and faculty from the UC Service Learning Program and Ohio Campus Compact, I realized that in order to successfully take advantage of this opportunity, I would have to significantly restructure the service learning component of the course, and, in general, more intensively manage the students projects than I had previously.

With this in mind, my first step was approaching local environmental organizations in the fall of 2017 to see if they would be interested in partnering with the course. My goals was to divide the class into four to six groups, with each completing a significant project that would provide a real benefit to the organization. After multiple meetings, I eventually decided on four nonprofits: Groundwork Cincinnati Millcreek; the Greater Cincinnati Civic Garden Center; the Miami Group of the Sierra Club; and Scrap it Up Cincy. These organizations represented the breadth and diversity of the environmental movement both locally and nationally, and all four were eager to partner with the students.

In addition to forcing me to focus in on a smaller number of nonprofit organizations, the Pay it Forward grant also led to the restructuring of the course assignments. For their final presentations, I wanted students to talk about their experiences as well as make connections to larger class themes. But we also needed to decide which groups would be receiving the grant(s). With this in mind, I decided that wrap the final presentation into a grant "pitch" that each group would give as part of a formal panel at Mediated Minds, the UC Blue Ash undergraduate student research conference. In addition to discussing their projects and the organization, this would force them to work with their partners to decide how the money would be spent and convince their peers that their project should be funded.

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At the beginning of the semester I looked through the syllabus and realized that the course would be quite challenging for students, both in terms of material and workload. But, I figured, this was part of the challenge getting the real value from a course that synthesized a strong content component with service learning, so I did not immediately revise course expectations. This was a key mistake.

On the first day I told students that the service learning project was a core part of the class, and they would be expected to work in groups for both the project and their final presentation. On the advice of the staff at Ohio Campus Compact I did not mention the student philanthropy component until about a month into the semester, and it made sense to have the students get started with their projects before we rolled this out. I assigned them each to one of the four partners based on personal preferences the second week, and then worked to arrange orientation meetings. I did not attend any of these meetings, but told students they were mandatory. Nevertheless, some were not able to fit these initial meetings into their schedule. This was another small, but key, oversight. Students at UCBA are usually overcommitted in terms of coursework and outside responsibilities (work, family, etc.). In order to ensure better attendance, I should have scheduled the meetings well in advance, putting them on the syllabus, or actually had the partners come to class sessions, to meet with students.

By about a month into the semester, the majority of students had begun working on their projects but others were having difficulty. Some of these challenges were their responsibility in terms of procrastination, etc., but for other students, there were issues with the partner. One group of students was working with the local chapter of the Sierra Club on a campaign to create a "bag tax" to reduce the use of plastic bags in the City of Cincinnati. Although this was an important effort, the chapter had no full-time staff, and for this campaign, was also part of a larger coalition that was also all volunteer. This led to a lot of miscommunication and lack of direction, especially for the students. To help provide direction, I attended a coalition meeting with the students to assess the situation and open up lines of communications, and afterwards, helped the students decide on the best ways they could support this effort.

This intervention raises an important issue with service learning classes. Personally, my instinct is to let students solve issues with partners on their own. That is part of the experience. But sometimes assistance from the professor is necessary. After this meeting the Sierra Club group had a lot more direction, and required very little assistance from me. Service learning instructors need to strike a balance between giving students independence but also providing direction and direct support when necessary. They also need to be flexible with class time. At the beginning of the course, I told students we would have one or two in-class work sessions, and they would generally be expected to schedule group work outside of class. But I realized that class was often the best time for all students in a group to meet, and was also ideal for me to have give to ten minute conversations with each group to check-in and provide direction. By the end of the semester we had five classes where I set aside twenty to thirty minutes for students to work in groups on their projects.

By the middle of the semester, most of the students were engaged in their projects, and I had introduced the Pay it Forward opportunity. I gave students detailed instructions on how to approach their partners about the program, how to develop the funded project, and their responsibilities with the final presentation and grant "pitch." But although this part of the course was going well, we reached some significant issues with the content side. The course was designed to provide a survey of the American environmental movement, and by about week nine, we were getting into a critical exploration of different aspects of the movement, particularly environmental justice, radical environmentalism, and the role of philanthropy in shaping the environmental movement. In order to explore these issues in-depth, I assigned two monographs and a few other longer readings. This was a significant amount of work at the time in the semester when students were putting real effort into their service-learning projects. As a result, a number of students did not complete the reading (and failed the assignments associated with them) and attendance on days when we were supposed to discuss the readings suffered.

This issue also raises a bigger picture concern that instructors in introductory courses that marry service learning with course content need to consider: workload. Since this was a sophomore level course that also fulfilled general education requirements, I had a number of students who were not mentally committed to completing the amount of work I expected in the course, and it showed. All of the negative feedback I received in course evaluations was from students complaining about the workload. When placing these types of expectations on students, think about their major and where the course fits in their degree plan. In a history course with significant content expectations—fifty to one-hundred pages of reading per week, along with papers and other forms of written assessments—having the students also complete a service learning project is a challenge. In the future I am going to work to more closely align readings with the service learning project, so students see the relevancy, and work to have the majority of enrollees be students majoring in history or environmental studies.

MEDIATED MINDS

In response to workload concerns, I cancelled or cut back some of our final readings at the end of the semester. Both explicitly and implicitly I wanted students to concentrate on their Pay it Forward grant proposals. Because of our commitment to the program, and our partners, I wanted these presentations to be as strong as possible, and was willing to make small sacrifices in other areas of the course.

In order to streamline the presentation, I told students to split their groups up into two teams for their fifteen minute presentation: "Team Grant" and "Team History." The history team would be responsible for outlining the organization and connecting it to the history of environmental activism, while the grant team would present what the Pay it Forward grant would be used for. Two days before Mediated Minds we had presentation run-throughs in class and the students completed peer evaluations.

The overall presentations at the conference went well, and one of the groups, Groundwork Cincinnati Mill Creek, actually won the best presentation award for the entire conference. In order to make sure all students attended each presentation, I had them fill out peer review sheets. I also invited the executive director of Greater Cincinnati Green Umbrella, our local sustainability consortium, to serve as outside evaluator. She gave excellent critical commentary and raised issues some of the students had not even considered.

The final task was for us to decide which organizations got the Pay it Forward grant. The class has $1,000 from Ohio Campus Compact, and I decided that we would award two $500 grants. Originally, I had planned awarding the grants at Mediated Minds, either through a student vote, or from the recommendation of outside evaluators. But based on the advice of Ohio Campus Compact staff, I decided to have the students debate and then vote on the projects at the next class meeting. This was arguably the best class session of the semester. A few weeks before, I had the students brainstorm what they believed a grant officer should consider when awarding an environmental activism grant. We had an excellent discussion about balancing feasibility with potential impact, thinking about long-term goals vs. short-term accomplishments, and funding established groups versus new start-ups, with new idea. I took all of their ideas and boiled them down to a one-page rubric where they had to rank each proposal based on four factors: feasibility, need, impact and passion. Each group had to complete the evaluation for the other three groups in the class.

By this point in the semester, the students had a good rapport with each other, and because of their experience constructing their own projects and presentations, had thought critically about the benefits of different types of projects at environmental nonprofits. They debated within their groups more than thirty minutes, and I allowed them to ask the other groups questions to clarify costs and timelines. They put a lot of thought into ranking their classmates projects and had strong rationale for why they had scored different projects the way they had. We then shared all of the scores with the entire class, but then I said this was not the last step. For most grant giving agencies, the scores are only a guideline, and grantmaking is done by a final vote, which we did by secret ballot. Each student was told to rank the projects one to four (they were allowed to vote for their own) and in the end there were two clear winners: The Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati, and Scrap it Up Cincy.

Overall feedback from students on the service learning projects was tremendously positive. Students remarked that they were hesitant about the projects in the beginning, but enjoyed the experience, understanding how nonprofits worked, and making a difference in their community. Many also enjoyed and appreciated the “hands-on” aspect of service-learning, and how they could see progress in a short amount of volunteering.

THOUGHTS ON CRITICAL PHILANTHROPY

Before final takeways, I want to offer some thoughts on one of the goals of the course: Helping students take a critical approach to the role of philanthropists and foundations in shaping public policy. This goal emerged from my own research practice. As a historian of environmentalism, my earliest work was on the emergence of alternative forms of environmental activism, particularly by urban minority groups, during the 1960s, what might be called the long history of the environmental justice movement (Gioielli 2014). One of my unanswered questions with that book was why more “mainstream” environmental groups have, until very recently, not paid attention to the concerns and specific issues of marginalized groups. That led me to explore the history of environmental philanthropy and, specifically how, during the 1960s and 1970s, a tight coterie of America’s largest charitable foundations provided key funding to certain groups, eventually cementing environmentalism as a politics that would be reformist in orientation, focusing on the universalist concerns of white, middle class suburbanites and their allies within the socioeconomic elite (Gioielli 2014)

For this class this semester, I was hoping to be able to bring that critical perspective to the students, to help them understand that philanthropy and private giving is not value neutral, but is in fact, highly political. Depending on the context, foundations can reinforce inequality and existing socioeconomic hierarchies, or they can be quite democratic and progressive. I lectured on the role of philanthropy and foundations in shaping the agendas of environmental organizations, we conducted readings on the role of the Ford Foundation in shaping the field of environmental law, and worked to apply these themes to our discussions of environmental organizing in general (Sabin 2015).

I was also hoping that the Pay it Forward project, by putting the students in the position of philanthropists, would help them think more critically about the power of foundations and other private giving entities shaping the environmental movement, and American civic life in general. This was not the case. Partially it was my fault, as I did not build in a critical discussion or reflection on the power that the grant-maker has to shape organizations, their priorities, and ultimately society and public policy. If I do a student philanthropy project again, I will develop assignments that help students make connections between our critical discussions in class and their own practice.

But I also think that the problem lies with the larger Pay it Forward and student philanthropy pedagogy. These types of projects encourage students to become involved in the community, but also to see the private action of nonprofits and foundations, and private giving in general, as fundamentally a good thing, that is an important part of American democracy and civic practice. This philosophy follows from Tocquevillian model of that sees independent, civil society organizations and activism as an important part of American democracy, allowing citizens to congregate together to create community, address social needs, and put pressure on the state for more public oriented action(De Tocqueville 2003). What De Tocqueville's model leaves out, of course, is that not every American has the equal ability to form and fund these types of organizations (women and minority groups) and that, since the late nineteenth century, the accrual of massive personal fortunes by the likes of a Ford or a Rockefeller, or more recently, a Gates or a Koch, means that some Americans have exponentially greater power in the nonprofit sphere than others (Zunz 2011). But the Pay it Forward model, by having students usually work with local nonprofits in a volunteer role, and then donate small amounts of money, reinforces a model for civil society practice that is in many ways more idealistic than realistic. The policies and practices of large foundations play an outsize role in the actions of many nonprofits; nonprofits can reinforce existing hierarchies and inequalities in society, directly and indirectly; and women, minority groups and the poor often times have little access to forming and managing these types of organizations that would give them a larger civic voice in local communities.

This is not to say that there is not potential within student philanthropy pedagogy to provide a more critical perspective, and to lay bare to students the sinews of power within American civil society. But the existing structure, on its own, will not do this. Instructors need to work to have their students thinking critically, especially during and after the grantmaking stage of the course, about who has access to this money and power, and what it means for American society. In the case of environmental activism, what it means for how the environmental movement is defined, and whose environmental problems get addressed, and how.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Work to arrange partner organizations and decide student projects well before the semester begins.** For two of the groups students were provided with leeway as to what their individual volunteer work would consist of, but this led to some miscommunication and conflict with the partner organization. Better to have clear expectations at the beginning, and then allow students to change them if they so choose.
- **Be creative when looking for partners.** Three of our partners were traditional environmental organizations, but one, Scrap it Up, was a creative reuse center, that takes all sorts of old materials and resells them for use in crafting and art projects. It was a new organization whose founders were keenly interested in waste diversion, reusing materials to keep them out of the landfill. They turned out to

be our most enthusiastic partner, and also exposed students to a completely different way of thinking about environmental activism and sustainability.

- **Schedule, schedule, schedule.** Especially at a commuter campus and/or where students have significant commitments outside of coursework (jobs, family, etc.) schedule initial meetings and orientations with partner organizations well in advance, as well as dates for presentations and any sort of "check-in" assignments. Not all students will follow the schedule, but this reduces potential conflicts and misunderstandings.
- **Be flexible.** Each service learning course, especially where students are completing projects and/or engaging in student philanthropy, is its own special beast that requires constant attention and tuning. Many students are not great communicators when things are not going well. Check-in with individuals and groups on a regular basis, and adjust deadlines and expectations where necessary.
- **Manage expectations in content focused courses.** In hindsight, I simply gave students too much reading. I wanted to provide them with a thorough overview of the American environmental movement, but even without a service learning project, this "coverage" model is unrealistic. In the future I will tailor readings to make them relevant to student service projects, and also focus on a few key themes in the movement. If students have a significant project to complete, I will "front-load" readings in the first two-thirds of the semester.
- **Use team-building/ice-breaker exercises at the beginning of the semester to help students build camaraderie and trust.** I did not do this, but think it would be helpful for students to make connections with each other earlier in the semester, rather than later, as well as possibly identify the strengths and weaknesses of each group. Also consider assigning roles to the group (note-taker, meeting organizer, chief writer, etc) to help lessen the possibility that one or two group members complete the majority of work on particular assignments.
- **For student philanthropy projects, have the students debate and decide amongst themselves who will receive the funding.** Also have them design the grantmaking rubric. This was the single best decision I made the entire semester. BUT in the future, I would also have students complete a reflection and discussion so that we could explore some of the assumptions that existed behind our final decisions, ultimately leading to more critical approaches to the role of foundations and philanthropy in environmental governance, activism and policy making.

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Making an Impact: Reverse Mentoring with Millennial and Gen Z Interns and Young Professionals

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Abstract

Millennial and Gen Z interns and young professionals have been the recipients of negative work stereotypes over the past several years. These misunderstood generational cohorts are loyal to supervisors that care and teach them the skills and meaning behind their work. They want to give back and make an impact early within their careers. Reverse mentoring programs are the answer to bridging a cross generational divide. Reverse mentoring fosters a learning environment that is an innovative way to encourage knowledge sharing while emphasizing leadership development for Millennials and Gen Z interns and new professionals. The implementation of reverse mentoring programs creates a traditional mentoring role reversal scenario. In reverse mentoring, a younger, new professional acts as the mentor to share expertise, new insights and trends with the senior leader in the organization, acting as the mentee. Reverse mentoring is a cross generational learning tool for organizations to develop future leaders and give established organizational leadership perspective on understanding trends, technology, and recruiting and retaining early career employees.

As a university internship coordinator for over 15 years, I have heard from many internship site supervisors about their thoughts and experiences related to supervising the generation cohort known as Millennials (students born between 1980-1994) and most recently Gen Z (students born between 1995-2012). Millennials are currently the largest generation in the United States labor force. Baby Boomer and Gen X managers complain about poor work habits, perceived sense of entitlement, lack of loyalty, and other issues related to negative work stereotypes for Millennials. Another generation group that is piggy-backing off of the Millennials is Gen Z, who are often referred to as "Millennials on Steroids." This is the group that are the 'new interns,' those that are being hired for upcoming summer internships.

Internship supervisors and summer seasonal employers need to look beyond the stereotypical labels and ideas that both generational cohorts are experiencing. Supervisors must find a way to work with their interns that fall into the Millennial and Gen Z generation categories. These groups want to learn and grow more than anything else and in a 2016 Gallup survey, 89 percent said they respect and are loyal to supervisors that care and teach them skills and the meaning behind their work. Internships are excellent opportunities for Millennials and Gen Z to make a difference, give back and thrive in a work environment that is important to them. This article will provide information on engaging Millennial and Gen Z interns in the workplace through reverse mentoring programs.

Currently, there are five identified generations that are working side by side in the private, non-profit and public sectors. The generational titles and birth years often vary but most are familiar with the following categories of Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Gen Z. All of the generations contribute in unique and different ways, but two generations continue to get the short end of the stick: Millennials and Gen Z. The media sheds light on older generations painting a picture of doom and gloom as the Millennials and Gen Z join the workforce as interns and new professionals. The reported negative characteristics of Millennials and Gen Z are often characterized as a group that is narcissistic, unfocused, lazy, entitled, self-interested and tough to manage. While the Baby Boomers were likely to toss out similar complaints about Generation X in the 90s, the Millennials, and most recently, Gen Z have been saddled with more 'generational stereotypes' than any other group.

Traditional media sources along with newer social media outlets allow us to share opinions and ideas at lightning speed and just like gossip, word travels fast. Is there truth in the negative portrayals? Is it the media perpetuating the stereotypes? First, it is important to understand and recognize what events, technologies and parenting strategies shaped the Millennial and Gen Z generations. The Millennials are the first generation to grow up with the advanced technology that we use daily. This group, along with Gen Z, grew up with Facebook, Instagram, snapchat and more. The technology has allowed them to filter their lives and present themselves at their best, without the daily frustrations, setbacks, and uncertainty. This use of technology raises serious questions: is face-to-face, two-way communication and even the ability to talk on the phone becoming a lost art? Are Millennials and Gen Z ready to experience honest critique, criticism, and face-to-face confrontation? These students are used to providing and receiving instant feedback on their performance and personas linked to social media and other forms of technology. How do we help these generations understand that building confidence and a professional skill set and developing strong and lasting personal relationships takes time? Millennials and Gen Z want to achieve job satisfaction and fulfillment in the workplace. However, these are very slow processes that take time, patience and most importantly guidance. The realization that many life journeys are arduous and failure will happen before achieving great success is necessary. These are difficult ideas to understand based on parenting strategies that focused on protecting and shielding this generation from defeat, disappointment, loss and other essential character and 'grit' developing life experiences.

As with all generations, it is important to recognize perspectives and work characteristics. As Millennials and Gen Z continue to graduate from college and advance within the workplace, employers can coach and mentor in the areas of helping these unique generations build confidence, patience, social and communication skills, while finding a balance between life and technology. More than any other generational cohort, the Millennials and Gen Z want to understand the 'why' within their work, while finding purpose and also making an impact. They want a coach, not a boss, and desire regular feedback and the opportunity to grow within their jobs while giving back to their organizations (Trunk, 2007). Providing unique mentorship programs that not only have the seasoned employee mentor the new professional, but further the program by creating a reverse mentorship situation creating a cross generational learning experience is recommended (Murphy, 2012).

Reverse mentoring gives the traditional mentor new insight into old work challenges while the Millennial or Gen Z intern has the ability to contribute to the organization on topics related to technology, social media, and current trends (Greengard, 2002). This idea of "mentoring up" gives new talent a voice and allows them to engage while finding value and purpose within the organization (Zielinski, 2000). When comparing reverse mentoring with traditional mentorship, the key difference is the role reversal with the mentee, rather than the mentor in the senior position within the organization. The benefits of reverse mentoring are plentiful for both parties involved.

The benefits to the senior leader:

- Share back new ideas with other leaders in the organization
- Receive feedback and guidance on leadership skills
- Understand what it is like to be a new hire or intern in the organization
- Gain insight on how organizational policies and culture are being perceived
- Learn from the experience and knowledge base that the younger mentor brings to the relationship on technology and social trends

The benefits to the young professional/intern:

- Ability to have an early impact within the organization
- Develop leadership
- Gain relevant and important networking opportunities and contacts
- Learn about additional areas and departments within the organization
- Access to long range plans, visions and strategic thinking of senior leaders
- Opportunity to share new knowledge and ideas with the organization
- Strengthen interpersonal relationship and communication skills

Organizations that have piloted reverse mentoring programs have identified best practices or lessons learned from launching these initiatives (Murphy, 2012). Creating programs that clearly communicate defined expectations is recommended before implementing reverse mentoring. It is necessary to gain committed individuals and establish a regular meeting schedule. Forty-five minute to an hour-long meetings are recommended, and finally the mentor should summarize the meeting with a progress tracking system that is defined for both parties. The reverse mentoring relationship is one that will evolve over time. Documentation of what is working and what needs to be adjusted for future meetings or reverse mentoring pairs is paramount to the program's success.

Finally, reverse mentoring programs serve as a useful tool for retention and recruitment of Millennials and Gen Z. Reverse mentoring is a personalized opportunity to give back and make a difference in the workplace. The most common contribution that early career interns and employees find is that their new ideas, pulse on emerging trends, and instant connection to technology makes them a valuable resource in the workplace (Murphy, 2012). Millennial and Gen Z mentors are also in a unique position in that they tend to have new perspectives on programs, services and processes used within organizations. Reverse mentoring is a new approach for cross generational understanding while developing new talent (Cohen, 2003).The establishment of reverse mentoring programs at the internship level can be one of the most beneficial outcomes of an internship program. Companies can tap into the experience, unique perspectives and insight of Millennial and Gen Z interns while providing these new professionals with real work experience and a relationship that will strengthen their growing network of industry professionals.

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Accelerating Professional Competency: Focusing on Architectural Licensure

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Abstract

In cooperative education programs, it has been well documented that students learn at an accelerated pace when compared to academic-only programs. Typically, we cannot be specific in terms of what exactly is learned on the job. In some cases, however, cooperative education faculty can indeed get specific in attuning their students in terms of what they should seek to learn on the job in order to help them actively participate in their on-the-job learning. This article discusses a curricular change being developed for architecture co-op students who are seeking to become licensed professionals. In short, without placing extra requirements on employers, students in this program are asked to learn the specific aspects of professional work which they will need to know in order to practice at a level worthy of professional licensure. We will discuss the contents of the criteria, how criteria are developed in relation to professional licensure requirements, proposed student assignments during the co-op term, and reflection afterward. These issues will be described in relation to how they benefit student learning and incentives as they relate to meeting professional licensure requirements. This is a curricular change which is currently being implemented. Subsequent articles will cover the progress of this program in terms of student participation and reflection, employer evaluations, and eventually student outcomes.

Background

Since the beginning of this millennium, the number of Architecture professionals has been declining as a result of a number of demographic and socioeconomic reasons. First of all, the baby boom generation is matriculating into retirement, and there are fewer people in lower age brackets who can replace them[1]. The general population pyramid shift affects other professions, therefore the paradigm of the architecture profession may shed some light on how to address this issue. Other factors more particular to architecture are 1) its decline during the 2008 – 2012 recession. The architecture profession typically faces sharp declines during economic recessions and sharp increases during recovery periods. During the "Great Recession" of 2008 – 2011, the number of licensed architects fell by 6.85%[2]. Many who lost their jobs during that time found permanent positions in other industries. 2) The licensure requirements for architects are more demanding than most professions. The average age at which architects earn licensure is currently 32. This can be a major detractor to young people contemplating their career and can explain the fact that, according to NCARB by the numbers, the number of licensed architects grew by only 3.37% between 2005 and 2015, while the general U.S. population grew by 8.43%[3]. The demand for architects is still high, however, the profession is facing a shortage and if architects are not available to meet that demand, the construction industry will find ways to replace the work of architects ultimately at the expense of the built environment's quality. This is already happening with the advent of owner's representatives, construction managers, and contractor-led design build enterprises who are taking over roles traditionally held by architects. To stem the tide, the profession has been trying to find ways of shortening the licensure process while maintaining its integrity.

Architectural licensure which is standardized by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and administered state by state is based on three requirements: Education, Experience, and Examination. These were completed in succession until 2010, when the profession, with the intention of streamlining the process, allowed these requirements to be completed in overlapping timelines. Education and Experience can happen simultaneously. The education requirement is governed by the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) and the experience requirement is prescribed by NCARB's Architectural Experience Program (AXP). It was instituted in July of 2016 to replace the Intern Development Program (IDP) which although well-conceived, was more complicated and less connected to the examination. For the examination portion of the licensure requirement, NCARB allows qualified students in certain accredited university programs to take the six licensure examinations before degree completion. This initiative, first piloted at 14 NAAB-accredited schools of architecture in August of 2015, is named Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL). The IPAL program allows for the completion of all three licensure requirements (education, experience, and examination) to be completed before graduation. Among these was the University of Cincinnati (UC), which because of its well established co-op program, is better positioned to be successful than most. Students must apply and qualify to participate in the IPAL program by having completed a minimum of 2000 of the 3740 required hours in AXP before beginning their first graduate level co-op, and committing to take all six sections of the Architectural Registration Exam (ARE). In each of the program's first three years, about one third of the graduate class at UC enrolled. The other two thirds opted to take their AREs after graduation.

Alignment of Co-op with Professional Licensure Requirements

The advantage of AXP is its alignment with the six sections of the ARE. It gives students a clear set of skills and knowledge areas that they will be expected to have upon licensure. The first two sections cover the management of an architectural practice and project respectively. The other four cover the basic services that architectural firms provide: programming, schematic design, design development and documentation, and the construction phase, as seen on next page:

Experience Area	Required Hours
1. Practice Management	160
2. Project Management	360
3. Programming & Analysis	260
4. Project Planning & Design	1,080
5. Project Development & Documentation	1,520
6. Construction & Evaluation	360
TOTAL	**3,740**

Source[4]

Over the six sections, 96 individual "tasks" or areas of knowledge are listed in a checklist fashion making it easy for students to identify depending on what they are doing at any given time. The minimum required length of the "experience" portion of the licensure requirement is two years of full time work, or approximately 96 weeks. Therefore, if on average, one task is covered per week, students can complete their experience portion at this pace during six semesters of co-op. Students who enter the Master of Architecture program with a degree from another pre-professional architecture school can average two tasks per week during their three co-ops in graduate school. This is still a very manageable pace.

The examination portion of the licensure requirement tests students on both their academic education, as well as what they are learning during their professional experience. In order to give students the best chance of success, the co-op program needs to prepare and support students in their *self-directed learning* — a central concept of cooperative education[4]. The 96 tasks given through AXP are therefore a clear roadmap for students seeking to learn what is expected of them as they become licensed professionals. Once they review and become familiar with these tasks, they recognize when they are mentioned at work and know to pay attention. They can ask about them when working on a related task, and in some cases they can research by studying past projects with the employer's permission. Typically, the abilities listed in these 96 tasks have not been fully acquired upon licensure until several years after graduation. Remember, until 2016, there was no concise list like this in existence. Before AXP, there were areas of knowledge and abilities which were much lengthier and drawn over 17 experience areas making it much more difficult to use effectively, and it had no connection to the ARE's organization. Currently, since the average age at which architects become licensed is 32, many practicing architects are skeptical about the ability of an architect who just became licensed upon graduation. It is well recognized that professional experience beyond academic education is essential for competent architectural practice. After all, since professional licensure was first legally instituted in the United States in 1897,[5] professional experience was required.

Focus on *What* to Learn During Co-op

Therefore shortening the time to licensure must happen in the context of focusing on what is to be learned during the experience period. In our case, it means helping students focus on *what* it is they need to learn while on co-op. Merely giving students the list of 96 tasks is certainly helpful, but not enough. To effectively accelerate professional capabilities, students need guidance from an architect faculty member before co-op begins in order to understand the importance of these skills, setting up the expectations, the organization needed to follow through, and to see examples in terms of the depth of understanding required in each of these "tasks." Familiarity with these tasks and the fact that they are agreed upon by their profession gives students the confidence that they will have the knowledge and abilities necessary to practice effectively. In turn employers and potential employers can ascertain that they are effectively developing the capability of handling the work at hand. If used effectively, this guide has the potential to help students gain confidence in their abilities while instilling the confidence employers have in them. Developing a professional level of competency at an earlier age increases students' potential level of success and choices in how they can define their career path. Obtaining licensure at an earlier age as a result of an accelerated and more focused process can bring leadership opportunities within reach sooner as well.

At this point, the AXP program is in its early stages and although its potential makes sense, the UC architecture program is evolving its method of administering it to co-op students in both the Bachelor of Science in Architecture (BSArch) and the Master of Architecture (MArch) programs. Currently, students in both programs are introduced to the architectural licensure process, AXP, and its organization into six general experience areas, its coordination with the ARE, and of course the all-important 96 "tasks." Since BSArch students often do not pursue licensure, assignments during co-op related to AXP are given to graduate students who are over 95% likely to pursue licensure. MArch students are taught the use of AXP tasks by a licensed architect who is familiar with them, and during co-op they are asked to cover 32 tasks over the 16 week work period. Upon return from co-op, students turn in a copy of the 96 tasks having checked off the ones that they completed, and during a one-on-one appointment they are randomly quizzed on the ones for which they claim familiarity.

The MArch class of 2020 which enrolled in fall of 2017, is the first to follow the above set of directives. Over the next two years, we will follow the students' success rate in terms of level of proficiency ascertained through one-on-one meetings, architect employer comments, student comments, progress toward professional licensure, and first career steps post-graduation. Next year, initial results will provide feedback on how to continue to boost student competency, and provide a path for success.

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