# UNCW

# Applied Learning in Higher Education

The purpose of the Applied Learning in Higher Education (ALHE) is to highlight the applied learning practices on the University of North Carolina Wilmington's campus. It is the hope that increased quality, scale, and reach of applied learning practices will become a practical part of everyday lives for faculty, staff, and students. Applied learning can be integrated into a variety of courses and disciplines through various shapes and forms. ALHE is a compilation of applied learning practices on UNCW's campus that offers examples and strategies for integrating research-based practices into curricula.

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Ms. Salena Rabidoux, Editor-in-Chief

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# Introduction to Applied Learning

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So many conversations about the future of higher education in the 21st century seem to play out in the form of a Greek tragedy.  The best universities are proud of providing an education that consistently gives college graduates a better chance at improving measures of wellbeing (e.g., professional, financial, health).  And in the face of *neomania*—the obsession with an almost unquestioned belief in the superiority of the new—many faculty members and administrators counter that renowned universities have stood the test of time much better than the elite counterparts in big business, citing statistics such as the fact that "only 12.2% of the Fortune 500 companies in 1955 were still on the list 60 years later in 2015."

Yet, this hardly convinces those who wield present-day versions of Schumpeter's creative destruction as gospel.  Universities are next on the chopping block, critics say, old dinosaurs unable or unwilling to adjust to the new environmental factors of a digital world.   When business leaders identify critical thinking, problem-solving, and thoughtful expression as 21st-century soft skills all students need, defenders of a liberal arts education state that that's what the liberal arts have always been about.  Employers, in turn, disagree by a very wide margin with university leaders' reports of student preparation; employer surveys and books report that some would prefer to not hire millennials, in part due to multiple deficiencies tied to inability to apply knowledge

in new settings. Arthur Levine's *Generation on a Tightrope*, for example, and trenchant critics from within academia question whether or not students are learning anything truly useful in liberal arts settings, as evidenced by recent titles such as *Academically Adrift* and *The Worst Generation.*

What can be done to ensure higher education does not succumb to a tragic flaw in which being proud of one's past transforms into blinding pride or a sunk cost fallacy of just doubling down on what got us here over the course of a millennia?

This ebook, *Applied Learning in Higher Education,* is a collection of faculty reflections and studies on how they've employed applied learning modalities so as to address these challenges, better engage their students, and drive gains in deep learning. "Technology" is neither a panacea or shiny object to chase after, nor is it something to vilify—whereby face-to-face instruction is always superior to online; rather, new technology simply represents another set of tools for which the utility lies in how they may increase active student engagement and ownership of the learning process.

*What*, then, is applied learning if not one side of a reductionist binary opposition that would pit "authentic" hands-on learning against a substitute virtual world?

At University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), applied learning means asking students to take concepts from the classroom—traditional, virtual or "real world"—and apply or transfer those concepts to different contexts, often to study or solve real world problems.  Applied learning focuses on developing key competencies that both employers and graduate schools desire, including effective communication, applying knowledge to new problems, and reflecting critically to improve individual and organizational performance. We want flexible, engaged, excited, and dexterous learners. Applied learning is a common-sense approach to education that is also backed by evidence-based research.

"Learning is Doing!" is a sentiment I see being shared across historical traditions and approaches, connecting the ancient Greek philosophy of Aristotle, Dewey's early 20th-century essays on experience and education, Kolb's seminal work on experiential learning, McGrath's research studies on the superiority of active doing over passive lectures, Kelley's *d.school* emphasis on human-centered design thinking, and many more.

More concretely, in the case of UNCW, applied learning occurs all across campus, with multiple units sponsoring undergraduate research, community-based learning, social entrepreneurship, internships, field work, and class-embedded experiences.  In many instances, multiple practices are blended together.  Below you'll find just a few examples. (Please see ETEAL-online for more).

- Business students presenting a detailed market analysis to a business in Prague.
- Improving children's literacy, from schools in the Blue Ribbon Commission in Wilmington to Belize.
- Building sustainable oyster reefs in Brunswick County and conducting cutting edge biological research in Antarctica.
- Working with local restaurants on document design and search engine optimization techniques.
- Conducting public health assessments in Navassa and studies on longevity in Greece.

Over the last five years, we at University of North Carolina Wilmington have been building our faculty's capacity to facilitate high-impact applied learning experiences through *Experience Transformative Education through Applied Learning* (ETEAL). ETEAL acts as an incubator and accelerator for new and engaging student experiences. It supports the implementation and evaluation of innovative experiences through a competitive-funding process and a faculty-driven assessment culture that strives for continuous improvement.  And the results so far have been promising, with local, evidence-based research replicating national studies such as the work of George Kuh, Ashley Finley, and Tia McNair at the Association of American Colleges and Universities.  For example, one nationally-funded study of over 1,000 students conducted at UNCW showed that relative to students in classes that did not use applied learning, students in applied learning classes reported much more critical thinking, greater engagement in learning, and better psychosocial well-being and civic engagement.  Initial studies also suggest that ETEAL student performance improves in all areas we've focused on, including thoughtful expression, application of knowledge, critical reflection, and evaluation of impact, with year-on-year gains and performance by ETEAL-supported students surpassing other students in all four areas.

Equally important is the faculty and staff commitment we see to providing high-impact applied learning experiences to our students: 98% of faculty and staff responding in an independent survey state that applied learning is a critical educational practice at

UNCW; and once funded, over 85% of faculty and staff continue to use best practices in other courses without additional funding.  This commitment and the thoughtful reflections about what makes for great teaching is what our *Applied Learning in Higher Education* ebook is all about: Our dedication to continuous improvement, a commitment to practicing what we preach—reflecting on what successes we've enjoyed in implementing high-impact applied learning experiences as well as the challenges and opportunities for growth—and a celebration of the diversity of forms applied learning takes on campus, from more "classic" examples of service-learning or study abroad to an exploration of how we may implement the good practices of applied learning in online settings.

I would be remiss if I did not express my deepest thanks by acknowledging the amazing editorial staff and contributors. Thank you, Salena and Beth for your vision, thanks to Evan, Sofie, and Sheri for your design work and work managing the contributions, and thank you, once again, Salena, for making sure it all happens at the end of the day.

To our readers, I hope you enjoy reading the contributions and we welcome your comments, suggestions, and ideas!

CHAPTER ONE

*Critical Thinking & Reflection*

# Incorporating Critical Thinking & Reflection

Critical thinking is an intentional cognitive process that takes practice. When critical thinking is engaged, one can solve problems, make decisions, and formulate inferences. It is defined as a mode of thinking about any subject, content, or problem in which an individual improves the quality of their thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing their thoughts. It also requires communication and problem solving skills that can be charted through reflective practices (Paul & Elder, 2006).

As a result of the technology boom in the late twentieth to early twenty-first century, workplace functions have been forced to adapt (Prensky, 2001). The sweeping technological advances throughout the workplace led to the demand for critical thinking on a grander scale. College students are now required to have the skills and dispositions of a critical thinking master by the time they join the workforce. To assess whether an individual has obtained critical thinking skills, an instructor should assess for clarity, precision, relevance, depth, significance, logic, and fairness: "One distinguishing characteristic of high-achieving college students is that they tend to reflect on their thought processes while learning and are aware of the critical thinking strategies they use (Weinstein & Underwood, 1985). Progression in areas of critical thinking can be accessed through the rubrics located in Appendix D, Appendix E, and Appendix F of this eBook.

To get your students to think more critically, try asking types of questions that:
- Are open-ended and aimed at provoking divergent thinking
- Go beyond knowledge-level recall
- Promote evaluation and synthesis of facts and concepts
- Start or end with words or phrases such as "explain," "compare," "why"

Or more specifically:
- What are the implications of _____?
- Why is _____ important?
- What is another way to look at _____?

Certain teaching strategies and exercises can also help:
- Ask students to deliberate on real-life situations such as mock jury trials

- Ask students to write and/or present persuasive arguments that are data and evidence based

- Provide opportunites for students to debate content-related material

- Have students keep journals on their reactions and evaluations of what they read for class

- Create problem-solving exercises and provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively

- Give students essays to write that ask them to interpret, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate material

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# Lessons Learned from Integrating Applied Learning in a Course on Social Justice Topics

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## Instructional Context

The focus of this paper is a master's level course in the Department of Educational Leadership that is required of all students enrolled in the M.Ed. in Higher Education. EDL 558: Social Justice Topics in Education examines topics related to privilege, marginalization, and social justice work in education. Readings, discussions, and activities focus on theoretical foundations that frame social justice work, and engage students in examining the practical implications for multiple stakeholder groups.

## Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes in the course align with the philosophy of social justice that frames my approach to teaching, research, and service.  By the end of the course students will be able to: (a) demonstrate understanding of the theoretical foundations of diversity, multiculturalism and social justice; (b) discuss philosophical perspectives that have shaped the ways in which leaders in higher education engage in social justice work in higher education; (c) identify the ways in which power, privilege, and marginalization impact various institutional stakeholders in disparate ways; (d) critically reflect on the effects of social justice work across institutional and administrative contexts.

## Description of the Learners

I have taught this course in multiple semesters, including three iterations as an online course during condensed summer semesters (5 weeks), and four iterations as a hybrid course during a standard 15-week semester that included six synchronous class meetings.  Most students enrolled in the course are current and aspiring administrators in higher education leadership and student affairs, and represent a range of social identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation).

## Rationale for Integrating Applied Learning

My philosophy of social justice includes four components and frames my approach to teaching, research, and service: (a) learning about the experiences and development of marginalized/targeted populations, (b) understanding privilege within the individual and greater society, (c) engaging in work that attempts to ameliorate the climate for those populations on campus and in society, and (d) honoring the voices and perspectives of marginalized and targeted individuals with creative representations of knowledge. The integration of an applied learning project allowed me to require students to engage with the identities they are studying in the course. Participation with the identities and communities represented by those identities promotes more meaningful reflection and engagement in the course.

## Structure and Implementation

The course is organized around five learning modules that are focused on different aspects of identity: Race and Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality, Religion and Spirituality, Socioeconomic status and Class, and Physical and Mental (Dis)Ability. Students engage in course readings and participate in a two-part discussion board where they post a screencast reflection video at the start of the module and then post a second screencast video reaction to their peers' initial posts. The discussion board reflections provide both a starting point for classroom discussions and engage students in making connections between course readings and their applied learning experiences.

## Social Justice Project

The applied learning experiences are integrated into students' engagement on a Social Justice Project (SJP) that develops over the course of the semester. Students work in teams (2-3 members each) to engage in applied learning experiences that are intended to provide meaningful and prolonged engagement with multiple marginalized identities and communities who represent those identities. Previous SJP groups have examined Black lesbian identities (race-sexuality), female veterans (gender-military status), and students in rural and low socioeconomic communities (urbanicity-socioeconomic status). Students are required to complete two applied learning experiences per module for a total of ten activities. Possible experiences include interviews with individuals who identify as members of their SJP group, attending a performance, play, musical, or other performing arts event associated with the SJP group, and volunteering at an event or fundraiser associated with the SJP group.

Although students work in teams on the SJP, they individually complete reflections and prepare a Learning Activity Report (LAR) for each course module.  The LAR requires students to provide details about the applied learning activities completed, reflect on their attitudes and experiences while participating in the SJP, and examine connections to concepts covered in course readings.  Students in each SJP group utilize their reflections as data to inform the development of an alternative format presentation (e.g., video, website, art display, visual re-presentation, poetry, or performance) that encourages students to be creative and innovative in their approach, to honor the voices and depictions of their participants/population, and to utilize technology.

## Preparation to Engage in Applied Learning

The first module of the course includes two reflection activities designed to prepare students for engagement in course activities.  The first reflection asks students to consider the challenges and opportunities associated with the SJP and how the project would enhance their personal and professional development (Intention).  The second reflection requires students to record and share a video where they discuss how they identify in multiple categories (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.), and how those identities shape their work as professionals (Critical Reflection).

## Assessment of Student Learning

The reflection work that students complete for the SJP allowed me to examine their learning and development throughout the course.  I watch and compile notes on all student reflection videos throughout the course, which allows me to track the depth and breadth of their learning in the course.  Additionally, students are required to complete a pre-post survey that requires them to identify specific learning goals in the course (pre-survey) and to then examine how their actual experiences affected their learning and development throughout the course (post-survey).

## Lessons Learned - The Instructor Experience

There are two lessons that have informed my perspective as an instructor from integrating applied learning into the course:  (a) to be comfortable with uncertainty, and (b) to encourage students to be creative.  Although I provide guidelines and rubrics for students, students worked independently on their projects in the course. Online video reflections allowed me to regularly check-in with students to provide support and address questions or concerns, but there was a great deal of uncertainty because I allowed students to select the activities in which they preferred to engage, and to work

independently to complete those activities, which often involved reaching out to various on and off-campus stakeholders.  My trust that they were engaged in meaningful work has been rewarded in the creative projects that students have shared as their final representations.  Students typically expressed significant discomfort with the alternative format presentation that required them to use creative approaches to represent their learning.

By the end of the course, the SJP pushed the students in ways I had not anticipated that led to them feeling empowered by the course.  One student stated that "Originally, I anticipated the Social Justice Project would be primarily literature and/or research-based; however, it soon proved me wrong. I enjoyed how the Social Justice Project exposed us to engaging in conversations with members of the identity group as well as faculty/staff who work with them. It gave me a new perspective while completing the assignment."  Students learned about social justice topics by direct engagement with marginalized populations, and then represented their learning in ways that honor the voices of those populations.  Final representations have used film, dance, art, poetry, and music, among other formats, to represent their learning in personal and powerful ways.

## Lessons Learned - The Student Experience

Students also encountered uncertainty at the start of the course; however, by the end of the course students expressed: (a) an appreciation for being challenged, (b) a desire to continue learning more about social justice, and (c) enhanced outcomes from applied work with marginalized populations.  Students consistently commented that the SJP challenged them to think critically about both the communities with whom they engage and their own identities.  One student commented: "Thank you for pushing me and making me grow outside my comfort zone."   Another student stated that "I also gained a deeper understanding into my own privileges and my role in advocating for social justice. This differs from what I hoped I would gain because I was expecting to learn mainly just about other populations."  Numerous students commented on the SJP as a starting point for future learning and advocacy work. One emphasized this: "On top of gaining a greater understanding of different groups, I think my interaction and how comfortable I feel working with diverse students has increased. I thought I would gain knowledge, but I also gained understanding and a commitment to advocacy work through my education."

Several students noted the meaningful effects of the applied learning experiences on their learning and development in the course.  One student made an explicit connection between the applied learning experiences and their own learning and development in the course: "A really important course for future higher education professionals! The applied learning activities allowed me to explore my population group in depth and really learn about social justice as it applies to that group. Coming together in class and watching everyone else's videos also allowed me to learn about other populations and see the various facets of social justice come together."

# Applied Learning In Cultural Anthropology

## Dr. Barbara Michael
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Making connections between concepts of a discipline and real life — their own lives — is often difficult for students who have no experience doing research. Making those connections can solidify their understanding of the concepts. The problem is how to make that happen. Fortunately, cultural anthropology is a field offering a myriad of possibilities. Although many of the examples in a typical textbook or lecture are drawn from distant cultures, a student's own sociocultural environment offers a wealth of opportunities for applying concepts. Additionally, the activities that can lead them to apply concepts can easily involve fieldwork observations, a methodology key to the discipline of anthropology. These attributes of cultural anthropology make a course amenable to applied learning.

Cultural anthropology is not unique in being a discipline rife with terminology: symbols, exchange, gender roles, function, enculturation. Many of the terms and concepts are familiar to laymen, but are used by anthropologists in a more specific way. Not only are the terms and concepts used in particular ways, but a full understanding often also involves understanding processes. For example, an anthropologist might say that a person has been "enculturated," into his culture, but in order to understand this concept well, one must also be aware of the process of "enculturation." The challenge is to design assignments that guide students to these insights.

I have built a repertoire of assignments I call "Hands-On Assignments," that I use successfully in both face-to-face and online courses. While I cannot give students one of these assignments for every concept encountered in a semester, I work on the assumption that if I guide them to make the links between concepts and their

own lives for some of the course concepts, they will develop the ability to make those links themselves with other concepts. Underlying the assignments are a number of other learning goals. The data of cultural anthropology is generated from first-hand observations, so students must collect observational data. Next, students must analyze their observations to learn what these tell them about the concept they are studying, teaching students to hone their analytical skills. Both of these steps also help students understand how anthropologists go about doing research based on observational fieldwork with real people rather than in laboratories. Completing the assignment requires the students to practice inductive reasoning, the typical mode for a cultural anthropologist. In broader terms, the assignments lead the students to engage in critical thinking. To illustrate I will describe several of the assignments. Many people, including students, believe that while we learn things like table manners, other aspects of human beings are inborn; innate, a result of our biological nature.

Anthropology, however, tells us that most of our behaviors are learned as members of a particular society or culture. One way to emphasize the importance of culture in shaping our behavior and attitudes is to investigate responses to a biological need. The Hands-On assignment for the concept of culture asks students to consider what their boundaries are regarding food choices. What they will eat or not eat. They must examine their responses to analyze whether the choices are based on biology (what is nutritious to eat) or culture (what they learned is good to eat). The assignment has two parts. First they must go to an ethnic grocery (not the ethnic section of a chain grocery) and peruse the shelves, investigating what is there and then listing ten items they would eat, and ten they would not eat, giving the reason for putting the foods in each category (perceived taste, texture, smell, not a food, illustration on the packaging). For each of the foods on the list, they must write why our culture does or does not consider the item to be food or to be edible. They must also describe the grocery; layout, sensory experiences. The second part of the assignment instructs them to try something they would not typically eat or consider to be food. This might be as simple as a package of dried, shredded squid snacks, or an ethnic food they cook or eat in a restaurant. The main stipulations are that they should not try an Americanized ethnic food, and that the taste experiment must be something they never imagined that they would eat. They must analyze and write up this taste experiment and consider whether their responses are biological or cultural, or even perhaps if they have a biological response to a culturally taboo food.

Another Hands-On assignment asks students to describe and analyze an exchange relationship in which they are engaged. Students typically think that exchange means simply giving and getting something and that exchange has little or no meaning beyond the goods that move back and forth. Anthropologists recognize that even when material goods (or people, as in a marriage) are involved in an exchange, the exchange has other functions. This assignment requires students to analyze material and social exchanges to identify their underlying functions. For example, the exchanges of cookies or lawn care between neighbors builds social capital; exchanges of marriage partners solidify political alliances. Further, exchange relationships can initiate or end relationships; emphasize status or wealth; and have rules for aspects like balanced relative worth of items exchanged, or the acceptable period within which the reciprocity must occur. Students may recognize that they give a birthday gift to a close friend because they care about the friend, but this assignment leads them to consider that an exchange meets even unspoken rules, and maintains and supports the social relationship. The students must describe the exchange relationship, explicitly state the rules (which means they must identify implicit rules), and consider how long before the rules not being met will end the relationship. They must identify the functions of the exchange; what is it doing or accomplishing for the participants, beyond giving and receiving goods or services, or even good feelings. The assignment helps students to understand that behaviors or social relationships can have multiple layers of cultural meaning and function.

Globalization is another topic that can be examined via a Hands-On assignment. While students "know" that many of our goods are manufactured in other countries most of them think only of the ease of movement of goods, services, and people as a result of modern transportation, communication and technology, but have not confronted the implications of globalization on other cultures, especially smaller cultures. They also are not aware that they can gain some insight into globalization simply by looking into their closets. This Hands-On assignment requires students to make a survey of their clothing, choosing at least fifty items, and identifying the country of manufacture and tabulating the results. Then, they must choose one of the manufacturing countries and look up some basic information about its economic status, population size, household income, literacy level, and something about the impact of manufacturing for export on the lives of the people. The point is to consider the cost (human, ecological and monetary) of producing the materials for the clothing, and the costs (particularly the human rights, cultural, social, ecological costs) of manufacturing the clothing.

They must look beyond country reports on economics, and must include information about human rights, working conditions, and child labor. This assignment is given in conjunction with readings, films and discussions about the real cost of things and the idea of Progress that is often linked to globalization as a beneficial outcome. This assignment helps the students to think more critically about the costs and benefits of globalization, particularly about the relationships between more powerful and less powerful cultures. They also become more aware of how globalization can result in the loss of small cultures.

Other Hands-On assignments engage students in investigating how children are enculturated into gender roles, or how popular culture reinforces gender roles or reflects attitudes about men and women in certain segments of our society. Assignments might ask students to observe a church service as ritual, to identify the symbols used, to observe hierarchy as well as to analyze the function of attending and participating. Or, an assignment asks students to investigate how art supports American cultural values and ideals, and requires that students first identify these values and ideals. Another assignment underscores why anthropologists do observational field research rather than using questionnaires to collect data: because what people say they do and what they can be observed actually doing is frequently quite different. For this assignment students ask twenty-five students whether they wash their hands after every use of the restroom. Then, they observe the actual behavior of twenty-five other people and compare the results of the survey and the observations. If they can enlist an assistant, they can survey and observe both men and women and compare gender disaggregated results as well.

The level of engagement with the Hands-On assignments is strong and it is often possible to tell in reading the papers that the students have become anthropologists carrying out micro-research projects. More importantly, the papers show that students do develop their observational, analytical and critical thinking skills. Further, they learn that cultural anthropology does not only apply to understanding "The Other," but can offer revealing insights into their own culture. And this helps them develop the skills and tools to see our world from a new, anthropological perspective that is more holistic and integrated.

# Enhancing Applied Learning in the Geosciences Using Geospatial Mapping, Analysis and Modeling Tools

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**Introduction to Geospatial Technology**

Geospatial technologies, specifically Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS), provide educators with new ways to connect classroom learning with real world applications. These technologies are excellent avenues for applied learning because they require student involvement, the assignments can be catered to many disciplines, and can provide new approaches and perspectives to complex real-world problems. Students can utilize this technology to understand how geographic concepts can be applied to problems that are relevant to the world we live in from a local perspective as well as regional, continental, and global. Geospatial technologies represent some of the most creative and innovative methods to get students excited about learning socio-environmental problem-solving techniques and faculty in the Earth and Ocean Sciences Department (EOS) have been taking active roles to incorporate applied learning into most of the undergraduate and graduate courses and research activities. UNCW and the EOS Department have been developing the use of geospatial technology for several years (since 1999), have implemented a variety of applied learning strategies into several courses, and are at a critical point of development in our applied learning.  The use of this technology is so widespread in both the developed and developing world that it is the reason why enhancing our technology base here at UNCW has been so critical. At UNCW, geospatial technology has been used in teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level in primarily the EOS department, but there are also courses being offered in Environmental Studies (EVS), Public and International Affairs (PIA), and Sociology and Criminology (SOC). The research activity that utilizes this technology is also spread across campus in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Health and

Applied Human Sciences, and the Center for Marine Science. Lastly, the management and planning for the UNCW campus is also involved with mapping and geospatial technology; one of our geospatial courses (GGY 281: Introduction to GIS) works with the campus facilities office to build mapping databases.

The goal of the EOS geospatial program, especially since receiving extensive support through the ETEAL QEP, has been to equip our students with the necessary skills required for them to be successful in the workforce by providing them with opportunities to combine GIS, remote sensing, and GPS technologies.

GPS, initiated by the United States government in 1973, is a system of satellites launched into orbit at 20,000km above the Earth with the main purpose of more accurately providing location information for a variety of applications. Currently there are twenty-four main geostationary satellites in orbit that have, over time, been supplemented and replaced by additional satellites to ensure enhanced positioning accuracy. GPS technology is at the heart of numerous applications in a vast variety of disciplines that use location information. For example, urban geographers study topics such as transportation infrastructure and emergency services, and utility companies monitor power infrastructure that enable us to monitor daily changes occurring around us. Environmental scientists, ecologists, hydrologists, etc. utilize GPS as a core technology for geospatial analysis. The wealth of existing and potential applications is critical to sustainable development and basic research about our world.

GIS is a comprehensive set of principles, tools, and approaches that allow us to capture, store, manage, manipulate, analyze and display data that has a spatial component (usually enabled by GPS) into information that can be utilized to answer applied, real-world questions of immediate concern and as decision-making or planning tools. Remote sensing (RS) is a technology that is based on imagery captured remotely by sensors that can be mounted on satellite platforms, airplanes, unmanned aerial vehicles, or other devices. These images capture information in the visual, as well as infrared, or thermal parts of the electromagnetic spectrum, and are interpreted and analyzed to map any type of activity (e.g. forest fire) or map conditions (e.g. habitat types). Repeated imagery can be used to measure change over time, trends or patterns across the landscape, or be used to make informed decisions based on long-term datasets. Both GIS and RS rely heavily on ground reference data that needs to be collected in the field, typically with devices that are GPS-enabled. No analysis

or conclusions can be drawn with any degree of confidence without such ground referencing. Therefore, it is with this integrated approach to geospatial technology that we demonstrate and combine all three (GPS, GIS and RS) techniques into investigating real-world problems. Our goal is to effectively teach our students this complex and worthwhile technology through an immersive applied learning strategy in as many courses as possible.

**ETEAL benefits to Geospatial Technology Education**

Dr. Halls and Dr. Pricope, combined, have received three ETEAL grants to support our efforts to increase students' exposure to geospatial technology through applied learning. Before ETEAL, we started with two Trimble RTK survey-grade GPS and ten Trimble Juno GPS receivers for capturing locational data that is accurate for mapping. These receivers are relatively easy to use, and are heavily relied-upon for providing experiential learning opportunities in several courses. With the additional funds provided by ETEAL, we were able to purchase equipment in order to gather field data that can be implemented with GIS and remote sensing software for analyzing spatial patterns of change or create even more informative maps and graphics that can help our students better understand the world around them and be better prepared for life after UNCW. Specifically, we purchased ten Windows tablets paired with GPS devices that can run ArcPad, which is a mobile version of the widely utilized software package called ArcGIS. With the release of the Windows 8 operating system, the new tablets on the market have a built-in GPS sensor. ESRI has updated the ArcPad software so that it is now possible to automatically gather GPS coordinates and see these on the map. These data are collected in real-time, and while the spatial coordinates are being collected, additional information about these locations can be entered into the ArcPAD GIS databases. More recently, Dr. Pricope acquired an additional ten Android tablets (with built-in GPS) that can be used to collect field and survey data using an open source software called Open Data Kit that is then transformed into geospatial data. We now have enough equipment to allow us to take relatively large classes into the field and ensure everyone is able to learn and work with the technology at several different levels of courses from introductory through advanced, making this an incredibly exciting time to be collecting field data! Using tablets paired with GPS technology to collect data enables an easier and faster data collection workflow and reduces the potential error since the user can automatically see the data on the map. Thus, the tablets allow us to link GPS and GIS technology more seamlessly and truly demonstrate, in real time, how the data collection and technology aspects work together.

**Example course assignments**

In our GIS classes, such as Introduction to GIS (GGY281) and Advanced GIS (GGY 424/524), we first introduce major concepts and principles and then build on this knowledge using a variety of spatial analysis techniques (in the more advanced classes). A key conceptual framework for all geospatial analysis is to comprehend the importance of the "real world" with what has been modeled in the GIS. Therefore, multiple assignments that incrementally build on each other have been developed to teach the students how to think geographically, understand the inherent loss of information when the real world is transformed into spatial data, and to experiment with data collection by learning how to use a GPS to map features and natural habitats.

Whether they are collecting data on campus, in the UNCW forest reserve, on the EV Henwood reserve, at Carolina Beach State Park, or on Masonboro island (all locations where we have physically taken our students since the inception of the applied learning activities in our classes), students understand, sometimes for the first time, how data is generated in the field, what best practices are and how the entire process works. The process for learning GPS is:

- Students learn about GPS, spatial database design, data dictionaries, and how a GPS receiver works in many modes and resolutions.
- Students learn how to collect a variety of data types (waypoints, transects, polygons, pictures, videos, etc.) using various locations on the UNCW campus.
- Students learn the difficult nature of deciding the relevant features to map and strategies for field mapping.
- Students learn the methods for transferring data from the GPS receivers to the GIS database including precision and spatial accuracy, post-processing, and proper database development that ensures metadata creation.
- Students travel to Masonboro Island where they learn how to perform habitat classification field mapping. This field experience is critical to the learning process when the students realize how difficult it is to perform habitat mapping, to make decisions for habitat boundaries and classifications, and how to correctly record and document the field mapping process.

- Students transfer these data to GIS and learn proper editing techniques, how to build correct topology, and create cartographically pleasing map products.

- Students travel to Masonboro Island where they learn how to perform habitat classification field mapping. This field experience is critical to the learning process when the students realize how difficult it is to perform habitat mapping, to make decisions for habitat boundaries and classifications, and how to correctly record and document the field mapping process.

- Students transfer these data to GIS and learn proper editing techniques, how to build correct topology and create cartographically pleasing map products.

Students from the Advanced GIS (GGY 424 and GGY 524) course doing habitat mapping at Masonboro Island.

Students collecting data to create a map of all biking and walking trails in the UNCW Forest on our campus (Fall 2014)









Students collecting data on boundaries of burn units at E.V. Henwood Preserve. (Spring 2015)

Habitat mapping at Masonboro Island.

## Lessons learned

As we have been implementing applied learning techniques in geospatial technologies in several courses taught multi-disciplinarily, the student learning outcomes vary from class to class. We strive to maintain consistency in assessing students' ability for inquiry, critical thinking and thoughtful expression at the end of each activity through a series of post field work thoughtful expression essays, as well as synthesis and communication pieces that range from in-class discussions and questionnaires to presentation of posters at campus events and scientific conferences. Specifically, we have been assessing student learning in several ways:

## Essays/Questionnaires

When students are out in the field collecting data as part of a course (on campus, on Masonboro Island, or other locations in Wilmington) or during directed learning experiences (e.g. Directed Independent Studies, honors projects, final projects or theses), students are asked to write a brief essay or respond to a short questionnaire that serves as the thoughtful expression component of applied learning. We typically ask them to assess their level of familiarity and/or confidence in carrying out the activity. In those essays, they articulate their expectations, the purpose, and goals of each field experience and how it contributed to their educational development in geospatial technologies. Field work in the geosciences is not straightforward and it takes direct exposure for students to understand the work process that begins in the classroom, takes place in the field and then is completed by returning to the lab and using the collected field data for ensuing geospatial analyses of various kinds. At the end of the course we ask them again to reflect on what they have learned, what surprised them, or how confident they feel after performing the field activity.

## Team projects

Since the field-based activities are always driven by problem-solving end goals, the students often collaborate with each other as well as work with departments on campus (such as Facilities Management) and local businesses/organizations in the community which opens up the doors for cross-fertilization of ideas, exposure to other fields, and a provides a validation of the value of their work. Especially when they involve off-campus collaborations, the applied learning activities intrinsically require effective communication of results and findings typically achieved in the form of reports and/or student posters at various venues.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

The process of learning geospatial technology is complicated because it involves multiple components: computer lab work, field work, spatial analysis back in the computer lab, and data presentation/communication.  Not only is it complex, but it is also time consuming; not all tasks can be completed in one course.  Therefore, we have structured the coursework to implement many applied learning experiences which provide knowledge-building and synthesis opportunities for our students in several courses. In these courses, the students use the knowledge and skills to address real-world problems and this gives them the opportunity for personal inquiry, critical thinking, and educational development beyond theoretical constraints. In their capstone course, Senior Seminar (GGY 495), the students are assessed for their abilities to not only utilize the technology but to be creative, innovative, and explorative with the technology.

# Transformation of Portfolio Leadership

**Mr. Carlos Medina**
**Dr. Darwin Dennison**
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Cameron School of Business

**Introduction**

The transformation of the Cameron School of Business (CSB) course, FIN 440 Portfolio Design and Management (3-credits, Blackboard assisted with Financial Computer Lab) is an emerging gold standard. The course includes value-based equity analysis, experiential portfolio management, and moral exemplification adhering to current ethical policies and practices. The Activated Portfolio Development Model provides the underpinnings for the course. The outcome is to produce value-oriented, well-informed professionals for leadership positions in major financial corporations worldwide.

An investment from a local bank provides students the opportunity to purchase stocks for the Seahawk Investment Management LLC portfolio (aka LLC). The instructor details portfolio design and management strategy, and probes students with questions regarding stock values. However, students make final equity decisions. The course emulates an actual applied learning experience including explicit value-based portfolio development.

FIN 440 utilizes applied learning activities that involve students in articulating their expectations regarding the purpose, assignments and goals of the course. Other activities provide students with opportunities to synthesize knowledge drawn from their previous and present coursework, as well as critically reflect on the impact of the course on their present educational development and future plans. Group discussions are conducted related to ethical issues and the moral attribution of capitalism (Dunning 2004).

**The Activated Portfolio Development Model**

The Activated Portfolio Development Model (APDM) provides the theoretical framework for the course. Components of the model were adapted from successful interventions designed to enhance participant behavior (Golaszewski, 2002). The modified model links finance information with pedagogical strategy to form an eclectic content-strategy matrix. The content for the course includes ethical standards to formulate moral attributions involving trade-tested, permission-less innovation (Horowitz, 2016).

**Pedagogical Strategy**

Applied learning is a pedagogical strategy that places students in experiences requiring them to integrate theories, ideas, and skills they have learned into new contexts, thereby extending their learning (What is Applied Learning? n.d.). There is some evidence that correlates multiple, high-impact applied learning experiences with continued academic success including depth of knowledge, graduation rates, and degree efficiency (Siefert, 2011).

The APDM involves students in the process of analyzing complex issues and then integrating their new knowledge to solve new dynamic issues. The model links content with pedagogical strategy forming an eclectic matrix. Ethical issues reveal dispositional and situational influences that are arbitrated in positive directions. The process involves honest self-assessment, openness to change, genuine self-discipline, and acceptance of responsibility (Nilson, 2013).

Experiential theory indicates that "before a system can be fully useful the concepts in it have to be defined… or permits the treatment of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the phenomena in a single system" (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Simply stated, experiential education needs action, reflection and transfer with measurement criteria and guidelines at each phase.

One component cannot occur without interrelated parts. The outcome is the transference. Each stage has a time paradigm designed to incrementally change the focus of the course from instructor-directed to a student course-management style.

## Model Phases

Figure 1 illustrates the input basis, the strategic time allotment and the output basis including the general target outcome measures. The time paradigm for the three phases is also noted.
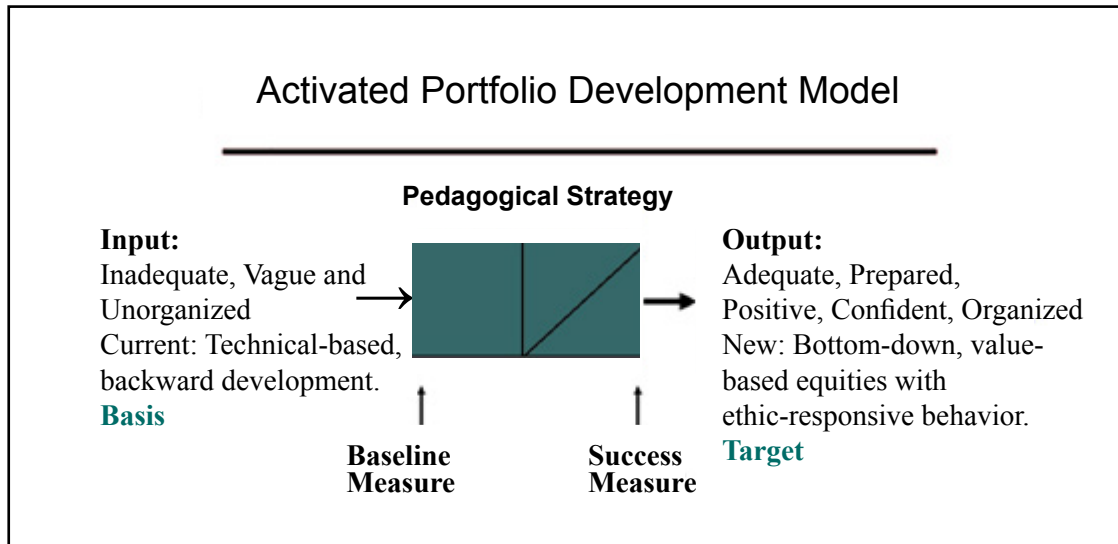


Figure 1. Activated Model

The instructor dominates the Establish Basis Phase. (See Figure 2). Students have specific objectives and use various methods to make certain that equity selections are viable and will prevail over time. In the Awareness Phase students are encouraged to discuss and engage in sensitive information related to ethics, insider trading, lack of disclosure, and even criminal activity in the profession. (See Figure 3).
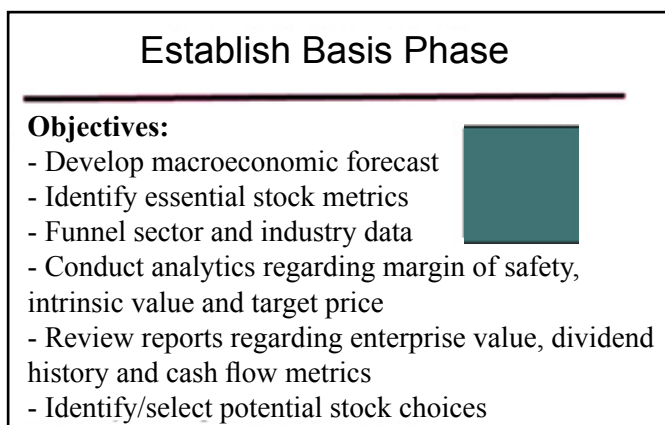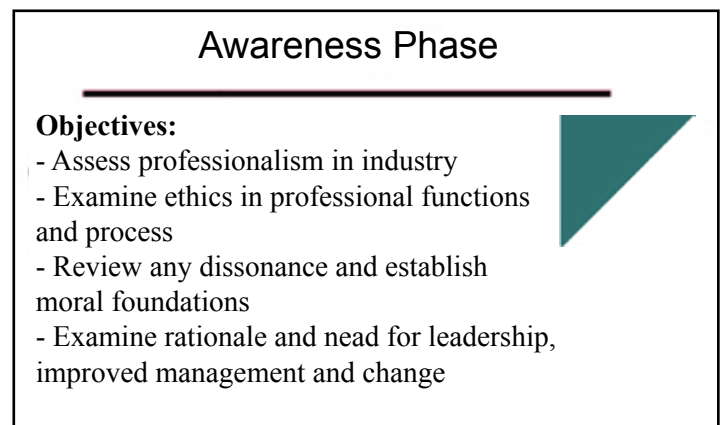


Figure 2. Phase 1



Figure 3. Phase 2

Often these incidents involve poor judgement, lack of principles, ignorance of corporate policy, and vague legal statutes. Susceptibility to an incident is related to both time and condition factors. If students are aware and knowledgeable about professional misconduct and have been experientially immersed in these cases, then dissonance reduction occurs when students have an opportunity to express their concerns and focus on potential resolves (Festinger, 1957).

Applied learning activities help students appraise these issues by suggesting their opinions, explaining their vulnerability, and acknowledging their role of leadership in these conditions. An additional outcome of this process is high-level critical thinking that provides insights into future professional ideas and concepts.

The third phase, responsibility, is organized to involve students in course management including the selection of stocks for the LLC, see Figure 4. Applied learning activities and tasks are in full force during this phase. Students are participating in feedback sessions to discuss risk tolerance, sector buy-sell-hold positions, negotiating for funds that are available from selling decisions, and adhering to and/or making decisions based upon macroeconomic forecasts. Freedom is expanded. The students are making decisions.

**Responsibility Phase**

**Objectives:**
-- Participate in feedback regarding applied learning
-- Identify and clarify personal investment values
-- Compare actual and ideal standards in experiential situations
-- Identify barriers and pursue objectives
-- Select stocks, prepare final report and presentation
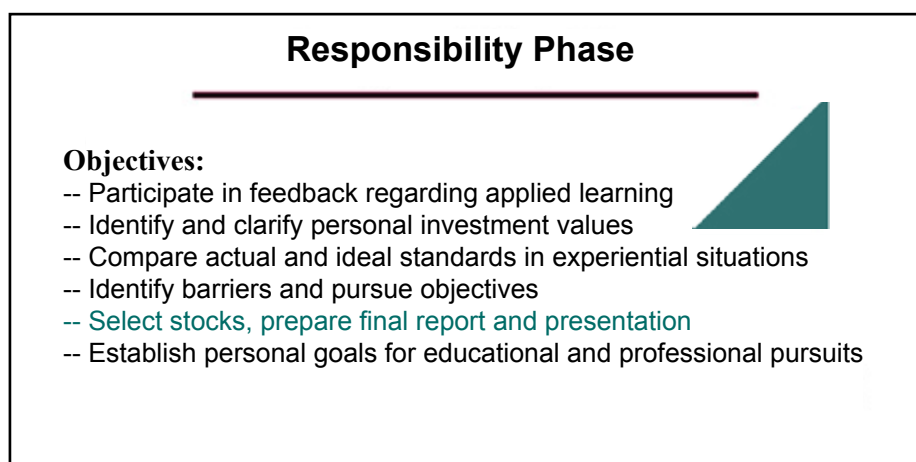-- Establish personal goals for educational and professional pursuits

Figure 4. Phase 3

During applied learning activities students complete assignments to clarify their professional values, determine their perspective on corporation policies and ethics, and establish personal plans for present and future educational pursuits. Feedback is provided regarding the results of intention, application of knowledge, and critical reflection activities. Openness and frank discussion between the instructor and

students is paramount, which establishes group collegiality. The applied learning format with experiential action provides a framework for leadership.

**Take-Away from FIN 440**

FIN 440 student artifacts include a technical report and the PowerPoint that is presented to the LLC Board. Additionally, students receive the Bloomberg Certification in Equity Analysis and an Ethics Certification from Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), the recognized leader in financial market education (Code of Ethics and Standards n.d.).

Instructor take-aways can be categorized as "Bad News" and "Good News." Students in FIN 440 find that investing is not to be conceived as a "get rich quick" process.  Students initially think of investing as a home run or striking out. But they learn that you have to keep coming back to the plate. Based upon students' reflections and communications, investment strategy has positive and negative consequences, but over time, value-investing prevails.

Bad News: The instructor thinks that students thought that they would be handed out the "magic formula" for investing – informing them of the process that would certainly assist them making positive and quick portfolio decisions. Students learned a lot of terminology and a lot of processes and strategies, but applied learning assignments provided insights of where the students were and what needs to be accomplished.

Instructor reflection: Students needed to know that reading is the best process to promote investment success.  Reading annual reports consisting of 150 pages from each company considered for the portfolio plus reading *The Wall Street Journal* every day and Barron's every week, students learn to take the time and effort to build investments slowly, accurately and strategically.

Good News: Students reflect that it is not so bad they were not handed "the magic formula to investing success." They wanted to receive it, but not receiving it placed the emphasis on them. Students reported learning a lot of terminology and many metrics that were seemingly used on a daily basis by professional investors.

Reflections suggest that students have a better appreciation for the importance of ethics in the financial marketplace. Everyone says that they want to behave ethically – but do they mean it or do they just think it is something they are expected to say? It is easy to learn how students could possibly cheat future clients if they are managing the investment funds of others. However, student output made it clear that a career path will be stopped dead in its tracks with a lapse of ethics.

There were many occasions in FIN 440 where students mentioned the CFA Institute. References in class to the CFA Institute remind students that it will be more difficult to succeed in this profession without continuing their education. Perhaps the CFA Institute could be important in helping them to move to the top of the investment profession or maybe it will be another entity. This transformation of portfolio management will produce leaders that are well versed in value-based investing as well as integrated ethical issues including positive aspects of capitalism.

*For more information on this project please contact Dr. Sackley or Dr. Dennison at sackleyw@uncw.edu and dennison@uncw.edu.*

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# Integrating Technology into Study Abroad to Enhance Intention and Critical Reflection

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### Introduction

Study abroad experiences provide students with exceptional applied learning opportunities as they immerse themselves in the culture of their choosing. Students may choose to participate in study abroad courses for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to preparing themselves for a specific career, to gain language proficiency, to meet new people, and to sightsee (Carsello and Creaser, 1976; Kim and Goldstein, 2005; McKeown, 2009; Norris and Gillespie, 2009). According to the Institute of International Education, 15.1% of students in the United States who receive Bachelor's degrees study abroad during their undergraduate career and, of participants, over half choose programs lasting eight weeks or less (Institute of International Education, 2016).

I have led a number of short-term study abroad trips and find the experience to be incredibly fulfilling due to the growth I witness in the students during and after the trip. Many of the students have little or no travel experience within, much less outside of the U.S., prior to the study abroad trip. In this case, they are certain to learn and grow in a number of ways, regardless of the educational focus. However, from my perspective, students get out of the experience what they put into it, which in part, is dependent on what they expect to gain. For example, students who choose the opportunity because their friends are traveling or because they simply want to see the sights in a foreign country will likely learn and grow, but those that dive deeper into the possibilities, anticipating cultural immersion and embracing the challenges associated will have an even richer, more fulfilling experience. Integrating the Experiencing Transforming Education through Applied Learning (ETEAL) student learning outcomes (SLOs) of

Intention, Application of Knowledge, and Critical Reflection directly into the study abroad course and using technology in the applied learning experience has nudged the students toward a deeper, more fulfilling study abroad experience.

**Project description**

The Blue Zones are geographic areas known for extreme longevity. The five original Blue Zones include the Barbagia region of Sardinia, Italy, the island of Ikaria, Greece, the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica, Okinawa, Japan, and Loma Linda, California (Poulain, M., Herm, A., & Pes, G., 2013). Within these areas, there are an unusually high number of centenarians. However, people are not simply living longer, they are able to maintain a high quality of life even in old age. Although each location is unique, many share similar characteristics which contribute to longevity. These characteristics include a landscape and climate that encourages physical activity and for residents to grow their own fresh fruits and vegetables and to raise their own livestock, a broad focus on the importance of family and friendship, cultural appreciation and celebration, and an appreciation of life. The study abroad course that visits a Blue Zone exposes students from multiple majors to life in a Blue Zone with the primary goal of having the students apply the lessons learned while in the Blue Zone to their own lives. Infusing the ETEAL SLOs directly into the curriculum and using videos to collect the Intention, Application of Knowledge, and Critical Reflection outcomes has enhanced the two-week Ikaria, Greece study abroad trip.

**Intention**

Prior to departure, each student records a video in which they articulate their expectations and purpose/goals of the study abroad experience in terms of their personal educational development. This five-minute video requires the students to critically consider the upcoming experience and develop concrete goals. This places an added responsibility on the student to approach the experience as an active participant. Additionally, the intention video allows the instructor to better understand the expectations of the students and provide opportunities for the students to meet those expectations. A student expressed the following as part of her video: "I chose to go on this trip because not only do I think studying abroad is necessary for broadening my worldly knowledge but I also think this trip will help me in my future occupation as a Physician's Assistant. The dimensions of wellness I intend to spend the most time exploring are physical, social, and spiritual. I think physical wellness will be incredible to observe as it has already been stated in the Ikaria, the Island of Youth video, that

there are much lower rates of heart disease, cancer and little to no instances of dementia. These are all physical illness that we can see in the actions and the health of the centenarians that we also can contrast with Americans. As a future Physician's Assistant, this is very useful information for me because I can help my future patients with non-medicinal changes to their lifestyle. I am very excited to watch how the centenarians keep their bodies healthy through activity, diet, and sleep schedules. When I am there I would like to try their tea they drink, the honey they eat every morning, and the wine the centenarians claim is the reason for their longevity. I also believe that their relatively low amounts of meat as well as high amounts of vegetables contribute to their overall health."

**Application of Knowledge**
Prior to departure, groups of 3-5 students are formed. Within these groups, students synthesize knowledge drawn from their previous and present coursework to determine a research question related to the Blue Zone. During the study abroad course, student groups attempt to answer the research question by capturing video footage of various lifestyle habits of the citizens and centenarians including, but not limited to, environmental influences on health behaviors and any observed social, cultural, emotional, spiritual, occupational, and/or intellectual aspects related to longevity and quality of life. Developing a research question, collecting footage, editing the footage, and producing a video provides students and opportunity to collaborate with others while abroad and upon return to the United States, students learn skills related to technology and develop a product which they can share with family and friends. When returning to U.S., it is easy to forget the powerful conversations, observations, and experiences, but a video may encourage the students to revisit the experience and remind them to continue to make positive changes in their own lives, and the lives of others, including family, friends, fellow students, and clients.

**Critical Reflection**
Upon return, students create an individual critical reflection video communicating the impact of the study abroad experience on their personal educational development and on others in the profession. This reflective video includes a discussion as to whether their pre-departure expectations and goals were met and how their group's video footage may have impacted their learning and professional philosophy. One student stated the following in her critical reflection video: "Interviewing the locals for the project helped me broaden my intellectual wellness because they taught me about the history

of the island and the reasons for longevity. Going to Ikaria has affected my future because, after observing the remedies they use in Ikaria, I am more committed to using natural remedies when I become a Physician's Assistant and not leaning towards medicating everyone who comes in. This will be better for the patients because typically medications have negative side effects and long term damages. By giving my patients more natural remedies to try first they may not have to deal with these repercussions."

**Successes and Challenges**

As a whole, the infusion of the ETEAL SLOs has been a huge success, and the SLOs will continue to frame upcoming study abroad experiences. The Intention SLO and associated video has focused the students and seems to enhance their experience due to time spent considering the upcoming experience. The Application of Knowledge SLO and associated video has forced students outside their comfort zone. They must approach the experience as investigators rather than tourists to answer their question of interest. The Critical Reflection SLO and associated video has encouraged students to take an opportunity to consider the whirlwind of experiences and summarize those into a related collection of memories and lessons learned.

Challenges associated with this applied learning experience are primarily related to the infusion of technology into the course. Generally, the GoPro cameras work well due to their waterproof, protective cases. Some groups found that the interviews they conducted were difficult to hear due to leaving the cases on the cameras while recording. This could be avoided by developing a familiarity with the cameras prior to departure. Many students did not have previous experience editing and producing videos. In the future, it would be beneficial to collaborate with a film studies student or faculty member to provide a tutorial prior to departure. This would encourage interprofessional collaboration and enhance the quality of the final product.

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# Collaborative & Cooperative Learning

# Thinking Collaboratively & Cooperatively

Collaborative leaning is a method of teaching and learning in which students explore a significant question or meaningful project together as a team. Cooperative learning is a specific method of collaborative learning in which students work in small groups to accomplish a certain teacher-structured activity. In many cases students will be rewarded as a team but graded individually. The team's success is not conditionally based on individual performance of one student; instead, all students help each other to achieve learning goals.

Cooperative learning activities are designed to include the following characteristics:

- **Positive Interdependence** – students perceive that they need one another to succeed at the given task
- **Promotive Interaction** – students promote other group member's learning with help, sharing, and encouragement
- **Individual Accountability** – each student's performance is assessed, the result of the individual assessments is provided to the individual and the group
- **Interpersonal Skills** – leadership, decision making, trust building, communication, and conflict management skills
- **Group Processing** – group members set group goals and assess their progress as a team

Implementing simulations or role plays is a great way to practice creative collaborative and cooperative learning inside the classroom. Simulations must have explicit and concisely stated objectives (Kille, 2002); a purposeful and strategic design as well as assessment procedure (Shaw, 2004); allow for enough time for students student, especially for role playing (Asal 2005); and conclude with an intention reflection (Petranek, 2000). Role play has added merit when it is implemented alongside problem-based teaching: "Listeners foster a deeper understanding of subject matter and become more responsible for their comprehension" as well as "more actively involved in the educational process" (Mont, 2014).  Learning in such an environment, students not only have the opportunity to simulate a real situation, but also to solve real problems (Bhattacharjee, 2014). Case studies that lead into role play or simulation extend students' mastery to higher margins. The power behind simulations is shown through the recreation of complex contexts that allow students to think critically and make informed decisions about processes and situations (Smith & Boyer, 1996:690).

To see detailed examples of Cooperative Learning please visit the "Cooperative Learning in the Classroom" section at LearnNC.

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# Lights, Camera, Applied Learning: An Applied Learning Film Festival Assignment

## Mr. Zachary Underwood
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At colleges and universities, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are in pursuit of the magic formula for student success and retention. Some claim it lies solely with academic pursuit or motivation while others believe more in student and identity development. At UNCW, one course in particular explores this idea of what it takes to succeed in college: the first year seminar, shortened to UNI 101. First year seminar "reflects a commitment to ethical and intellectual development and to promoting the growth of well-informed, creative, literate members of society" (University College, 2016a, para. 3). First year seminars are designed to assist students towards being successful by focusing on their development. Development for students involves not only what happens inside the classroom such as learning, but also practical or psychological ideas such as taking responsibility for managing one's time. In "Negotiating the Freshman Year," M. Clark suggests transitioning first year students should comprehend they are mentally changing as well as experiencing a new environment. This article is an exploration of an applied learning assignment's ability to reflect student development by giving first year students a chance to apply their learning both inside and outside the classroom.

"Applied learning is a model that lets students engage in hands on, real world, or otherwise practical experiences and helps them get more out of those experiences as well" (UNCW, 2016). In this instance, the student is collaborating with group members to apply their life lessons towards creating a film. First year students should work with hands-on assignments as a way to engage with lessons from the classroom (Twissel, 2014). Students "occupy dozens of environments simultaneously (mentally, socially, professionally, creatively), and learning helps one maneuver through these various

environments with greater ease. Knowing what to apply, and when to apply it, can be the key difference in success and failure" (Jaynes, 2012, p. 203). In essence, first year students are figuring out how to survive in college from their own experiences and their peers' experiences in order to apply these lessons to their academic, social, and practical lives. The film project is an applied reflection or narrative of their first semester experiences.

A film production group assignment is currently being utilized in a number of first year seminar courses at University of North Carolina Wilmington. The assignment is a group project that produces a three to five minute film about experiences within the first year. Students are the sole creators of the films and film styles range from silent films, short documentaries, or narratives. Themes each year align with student development, first year acclimation, and the transitional process. For example, this year's theme was *Overcoming Obstacles in the First Year: The Resilience of Seahawks.* In groups, students typically create films regarding one person's actual or hypothetical experiences, how one overcomes obstacles as small as losing their room key, as well as much larger obstacles such as realizing they have to be an adult.

In this instance, students are given a filmmaking assignment where they are forced to think about their own experiences or apply those lessons towards a film project. As opposed to a linear essay assignment or a presentation, students are working in a non-linear world of editing a story together. This is an applied learning environment where students are encouraged to think about the way they have accomplished their own success. It suggests students think about student success, transitioning, overcoming, and growing through the new identity of being a college student. Applying their own understandings of life lessons, academic lessons, or adaptations to assist them in the strange new world that is college, the students negotiate their own meanings through film, either accepting new identities, creating fictionalized versions of themselves or their roommates—all to demonstrate and explore the ways in which students navigate college.

Bain (2012) believes reflecting upon one's own work can be influential towards future decision-making or confidence. This may include looking for a past or current example of success or even failure for encouragement to apply towards their own experience as a college student. For example, a film submitted for the 2016 film festival made use of a cardboard time machine to go back in the past to see their

own father struggling through the same history class in the 1950s to remind them that struggling academically is a common experience. Stories through film allow students to commiserate with their peers, develop strategies for success, while applying lessons learned both inside and outside the first year seminar.

In essence, students are learning from their own experiences and storytelling. "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Assessing success for these students may be difficult, but faculty can see the success of transitional skills through the lens of the film. Students may not realize the purpose of creating a film at first; however, similar to other learning in first year seminar, students can construct their own meaning. Clark proposes the idea that some assignments could be more than just homework; they may force a student to think about how they can make changes towards improving their habits or academic skills to become a better student. This could be a small obstacle, such as getting to class on time, or a larger obstacle such as accepting a grade of a D for a class after getting straight A's in high school.

The planning phase of the film festival project involves students thinking about their own experiences and other's experiences. They must create a plan as a group with a script, a storyboard, and an initial idea for a film. Though it sounds like a simple task, creating a filming plan can be complicated for a group of students, especially on a theme that is so familiar to each student. The theme of the film festival keeps the focus on transitional issues and student struggles within the first year. Past themes include *Chasing Your Dreams*, *Avatars*, *Ambition & Adventure*, and *Making Waves at UNCW* (University College, 2016). These themes could push students to start thinking about their own challenges and development as first year students.

The film festival allows students to create and confirm their new understanding of being a college student. Purposeful activities or assignments in a classroom can allow a student to create a new identity. Establishing a new identity or facing challenges is a typical part of the first year experience and the film festival is a way for students to experience those challenges from a new lens (Torres & LePeau, 2013). Along those lines, utilizing film gives a freedom to students and provides a new way of viewing student development for faculty, administrators, and researchers. Films are a way to demonstrate student development theory, which may be difficult to grasp in written case studies (Kelly & Porter, 2014). The assignment could create examples for future classes

of transitional situations. Films could be utilized for future courses to demonstrate potential student development theories or strategies for success.

From this assignment, students create a film, which is an artifact of their experiences within the classroom as well as a long-lasting reminder of their transition at University of North Carolina Wilmington. Students are able to reflect upon their own experiences and put those experiences, both good and bad, on film. Within one course, the faculty member could show all the group's films in a single class to demonstrate the complexities of the first year and the variety of transitional issues that occur. This is also a benefit to students because they are able to gain confidence that they are not alone in their transition, as well as share their experiences with others. Students are able to see their peers openly make mistakes within their first year through film, as well as reinforce strategies for academic success.

This particular assignment is a way to get students to apply lessons learned inside and outside of class to produce a film about the first year experience. An advantage of this assignment is that it could be created as an in-person group project for face-to-face courses or as an independent assignment for online courses that are either synchronous or asynchronous. Films could be a future example for incoming first year students and allow students to freely associate how they are transitioning to the university. The films are artifacts of student development theories in action, showing ways in which students grow, apply failure, success, and persist at the university. Films are also a way to demonstrate a shared experience among first year students of their struggles and successes. This creates a shared meaning or understanding that the first year is a time of transition and a normal part of the college experience.

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# Using Applied Learning to Make Research Relevant

## Dr. Alexia Franzidis
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### Introduction

The use of research in businesses and organizations is multifold: it can assist in assessing user satisfaction, analyzing consumer needs, examining trends, and predicting outcomes. With heightened competition between businesses, research has become a necessary and desirable skill for graduates entering the workforce. Yet, despite the value of research, many undergraduate students are reluctant to complete a research methods class (Ax & Kincade, 2001), and have questionable perceptions about the use and benefit of research in their future careers (Secret, Ford, & Rompf, 2003).

This paper outlines the successful integration of an applied learning activity into a required face-to-face research and evaluation methods course in a particular discipline. Prior to the introduction of the learning activity, the instructor observed a lack of enthusiasm among students taking the class, mainly due to their disengagement with the content, and their non-appreciation of the perceived relevance/usefulness of the subject in their future endeavors. As a response to these negative attitudes, the applied learning experience was implemented in the Spring semester of 2015 and due to its success, was repeated in 2016. This paper provides insights into best practices and offers tips for other instructors to incorporate similar tools in their courses.

### Course Overview

The research and evaluation methods course was a 300 level undergraduate class, taught once a week (2 hours and 45 minutes), for 16 weeks, to a class of approximately 35 students. The course aims to teach students the methods and

techniques of research and evaluation used in and relevant to their emphasis area, such as hypothesis testing, conducting a literature review, determining the levels of measurement, sampling methods, and ways in which to analyze and interpret data. The course was designed and delivered in a consecutive order based on the steps in the research process. In the semester prior to the introduction of the applied learning activity, students were taught the content material, looked at examples of other research studies, completed a series of in-and-out-of-classroom activities, and - at the end of the semester - proposed a fictitious research plan on a topic of their choice. The instructor found the students to have an unrealistic understanding and appreciation of the steps involved in the research process and a failure to comprehend the practicalities of some of the required principles (for example, an achievable sample size). Many students seemed indifferent, because their project/research question would never come to fruition.

In response to these observations, an applied learning experience was incorporated to provide a more real-world experience. The format of the class was changed to include a more hands-on approach that would allow students to conduct primary research on a topic of interest. This included interviewing subjects, analyzing results, and answering their own research questions. Specifically, the applied learning activity was intended to relay the importance and value of research for the field, build skills for conducting and interpreting research, and create a sense of urgency and ownership.

**Course Design and Delivery**
The course was redesigned using principles of high-impact practices: intention, authenticity, reflection, and assessment and evaluation (National Society for Experiential Education, 1998).

In the first week of the semester, students were informed about the task and provided an explanation as to why this method was chosen. Students were then asked to think about a topic or theme they would be interested in researching. Topics needed to be authentic, relevant to their field, and applicable to their home community for ease of data collection. The following week, a summary of the collected ideas were written on the white board and students were asked to write their names next to the projects they were interested in (up to three projects). Following this, the instructor placed students into groups, ensuring that each student received a topic that was of interest to them.

Each group comprised approximately four members.

As in previous years, the content of the course was broken down into a step-by-step process whereby, in each lecture, students learned a component of the research process and applied the content knowledge directly to their project. Students were also assigned weekly reading tasks covering topics related directly to the material being presented in the lecture. To ensure that students read the materials, every reading task included a handful of questions that students needed to answer, with a small point value attached. The lectures were used to briefly review and discuss the information, and apply it to their projects.

Time was allocated in class for students to apply the week's topic to their project. Using class time and making it relevant to their assignment yielded a number of benefits. Firstly, students were more engaged with each activity as they could relate it to their topic and it enhanced their comprehension of the material as they could contextualize its relevance to and/or use in their research question(s). Secondly, it allowed the instructor to walk around and engage with class members to ensure they understood that component of content and were on the right track to continue their projects. Lastly, it assisted with group member participation. Due to the commencement of each step in class, the class had a very strict attendance policy. Group members were required to be present at the time of delivery and therefore participate equally.  Each component had an accompanying deadline and submission dates were staggered throughout the semester. Not only did this help students remain on schedule with the task but it enabled them to receive continuous feedback, and ensured an engagement with the task throughout the semester and not just at the end of the semester when the deadline was approaching.

To assist with the collection of data, funding was obtained through an internal grant (ETEAL) to purchase IPad minis and a gold-license subscription to Survey Monkey (to allow for multiple studies and questions). These materials enabled the research project to be completed within the time limitation of one semester, as survey responses could be transferred directly into the data analysis software. In addition, this type of technology is more appealing to the user. The instructor noticed that many students were excited about using technology and it was more environmentally sustainable than the mass printing of surveys.

Students were responsible for completing all steps within the research process, including conducting surveys (a minimum number of surveys was stipulated), completing their own ethical approval forms, and analyzing their data. At the end of the semester the students presented their completed projects to fellow class members.

**Assessments of Objectives**

A primary objective of the applied learning activity was to see if students had a greater appreciation for the value and importance of research. To assess this, the students were asked, at the beginning of the semester, to record their goals, expectations, concerns and hesitations with regards to the subject matter and the applied learning activity, as well as the skills they would like to develop through this exercise. They were also asked to reflect on any prior experience they may have had, and their perceptions on research.

The instructor collected these and redistributed them to students at the end of the semester. Students were asked to read, reflect upon and critique these and assess if and why/why not they had achieved their goals, what they would/would not do differently, and how they felt this experience would contribute to their personal and professional growth. This process allowed students individually to articulate and reflect upon their own educational journey. Students were also asked to reflect upon the process and delivery of the course.

As expected many students were not initially enthusiastic about completing a research methods class; however, they were excited about conducting a real project related to a topic they were interested in. At the end of the semester, many of the students commented that, while they may have found it challenging at times, they could appreciate the use of research and that it was not as bad as what they had initially imagined.

**Conclusion**

The presentation of the subject matter, in a step-by-step manner, made the incorporation of the applied learning activity fairly easy; however, prior planning was essential to ensuring its success, largely due to the time constraints associated with the task. Planning included the scheduling of continuous submission dates for tasks, the compilation of weekly reading tasks, and the planning of class/activity time. It was also very important for the instructor to guide students when choosing a research topic to ensure it was authentic and achievable given the time constraints (one semester). Overall, the instructor felt that turning this experience into a hands-on real-world task not only enhanced students' understanding of the material, but also assisted them to recognize the value and importance of research, and build the necessary skills to conduct and interpret research beyond graduation.

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# 3

CHAPTER THREE

*Service Learning*

# Community Connections

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities (Learn and Serve America National Service Learning Clearinghouse). It is most successful when implemented in or combined with various disciplines in universities and colleges. This provides a positive impact on the academic, social, and cultural variables for students by promoting civic responsibility and community awareness: "It increases understanding and depth of course content, promotes knowledge and understanding of civic and social issues, and increases awareness and acceptance of diversity" (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012).

## *Planning Service Learning*

**Preparation**

In preparing the instructor must consider a variety of activities, identify a community need, establish a concrete goal or objective from this project, and determine the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources for the project. A study found that service learning is most effective when students provide at least 15-20 hours of service per semester and are frequently involved with the representatives from the community (Marby, 1998). A number of assignments can be used in measuring and evaluation outcomes but some of the most popular are summative reflections, focus groups, group discussion and collaboration, journal writing, observations or video-blogs, essays, and presentations.

**Implementation**

Faculty should frequently connect the service learning project to the academic content at hand. Throughout the project—possibly weekly or bi-weekly—students should be asked to reflect on the project status in some form. Not only does this insure student involvement and participation, but the reflections also provide the students with "social learning or understanding diversity" (Rhoads, 1997).

**Assessment / Reflection**

Assessments often focus on evaluating the course and also the student academic, social, and community learning. Much like the weekly or bi-weekly reflections, the course reflection or final reflection can be conducive to a variety of forms: interviews, focus groups, and analysis of community impact, to name a few (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012). Balanced scales or surveys for evaluation keep outcomes and expectations clear for students. Students can also participate in a collaborative discussion at the end of the semester which assesses the impact of the project on student learning.

**Demonstration / Celebration**

Students present and celebrate their service project to the community and university members. Many instructors choose this to be the final portion of the student's assessment regarding involvement and impact. Instructors might choose to hold a separate celebration or invite members of the college, department, or university to the student presentation. Regardless of the format, it is of the highest importance to the student and community experience to demonstrate the myriad positive impacts of service learning on the community and institution (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012). Instructors are also encouraged to seek publication for a description and report of the results the service project has had.

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# Forest of DREAMS Mural Painting: Service Learning to Transform Preservice Teachers and the Community

## Dr. Janna Robertson &
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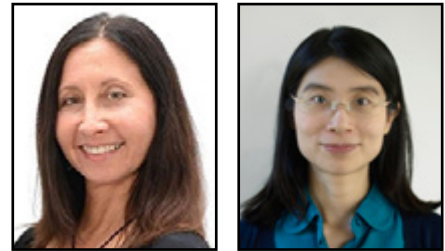
During Spring 2016, three sections of undergraduate students participated in a service learning project at DREAMS of Wilmington, an afterschool arts program for children. The project involved painting a 240 by eight foot mural on a retaining wall along one side of the property. The mural was located in a neglected section of town near several after school programs, so hundreds of children walked by it weekly. During thirteen Saturdays of painting sessions, neighbors, churches, schools, scouts, non-profits, businesses, community members and neighbors all participated in the project. The largest group of participants came from UNCW with a good portion being the students enrolled in the EDN 414 Integrating the Arts in the Elementary Curriculum classes (over 70 UNCW students).

We selected service learning so the students would gain valuable hands-on experiences and apply class knowledge and skills to real-world situations. Unlike community service, service learning is always mutually beneficial, by connecting the curriculum to the needs of the community (Kraft, 1996). In addition, service learning emphasizes participants' reflections (Taylor, 2002). Researchers have found many benefits of service learning, including positive effect on students' psychological development and academic learning (Kraft, 1996) and self-efficacy toward teaching (Bernadowski, Perry & Del Greco, 2013). In order for undergraduate preservice teachers in the elementary education program to learn about the transformative effect of community art and engage in community service, we collaborated in Spring 2016 to implement this service learning project in EDN 414. Robertson was the mural project facilitator and Liao was the lead instructor of EDN 414 course.

## Location

The mural was located on the edge of the area identified as the "Youth Enrichment Zone." This location has been identified by the City of Wilmington as an under-resourced area with the highest concentrated area of youth violence. Most African-American households in the 140 square block region are living below the poverty level (Blue Ribbon Commission, 2017). Since 2008, the city has provided resources for organizations in the zone to support youth in the area. The large neglected retaining wall became a large canvas to show students how art can transform space.

## Learning Outcomes

The undergraduate students were required to complete three volunteer hours working on the creation of the mural directly or helping others at the mural site to participate in the mural painting. As the mural theme and design included fantasy creatures, students also were involved with creating one creature per class to go on the mural. This provided them a sense of ownership of part of the mural. Finally, they were required to post six photos on Instagram and write a reflection answering several questions about the experience. The following are the students' critical responses to the experience. We analyzed the students' critical reflections and found several emerging themes described below.

*"I have lived in Wilmington my whole life and I am very familiar with the area that the DREAMS mural is located. The area is of low socioeconomic status that is located by a few schols. This part of Wilmington doesn't get much positive attention so having the community come together to create this mural is a big deal."*

## Neighborhood Appearance

Several students mentioned that the area where the mural was located was not a place they would go previously, but the Forest of DREAMS mural made the neighborhood more inviting. The favorable impact on the neighborhood was noted by several students.

## Art Ability

Using art to transform a community was not something most students had experienced. Because these students were not art majors, many mentioned their insecurities with creating art. However, many students gained confidence once they saw how this project involved different people from all over the town. The students stated that they felt a sense of pride and were glad their work would be there for years to come. One student stated, "As we started painting I was incredibly nervous I would mess up. But as time went on I began to realize that I was not bad at painting the creature. I know I for one felt so much pride in our creature when we left. I wonder what it looks like now."

## Neighbor Involvement

One of the most noted comments about the students' experience was about the local participation. Students were surprised at how many neighbors were involved. The interaction between university students and the community members was one of the more transformative aspects of the project. Several student misconceptions about the people who lived in the neighborhood were dispelled. In addition, students were able to work with children from the neighborhood and learn more about their life and their dreams.

## Community Involvement

Not only did the neighbors participate, but people from the greater Wilmington community also joined. The students were impressed that besides the required service learning for UNCW students, many community members helped out voluntarily.

Additionally, students saw many people generously offering to help with the project. Seeing how many community members were involved in the project assured students of the power of community art in bringing people together. One student commented, "On the Saturday that I was working at the mural there were people from all over the city. There was a girl's scout troop, UNCW students, UNCW

*"I loved seeing members of the neighborhood themselves participating in this activity. One man from the neighborhood was beside us painting a beautiful eagle. This was exciting to me because I assume members of this community do not commonly participate in fun events such as this because of their lack of money."*

professors, people from the neighborhood, and even the mayor came out to see how the mural was coming along. I think throughout the day I was able to see the people from different groups and organizations working together to achieve a common goal."

## Service Learning

The experience also changed how some students felt about volunteering and service

*"Many of the neighborhood kids came to the mural to help paint; even some of their parents joined them."*

learning. Some students mentioned that did not want to participate initially, because they did not see the value of community art and considered it busy work. However, once students experienced the transformation of wall, they changed their views. Using art to transform the community was different than other volunteer activities they had participated in for disadvantaged

groups since the focus was an enduring positive contribution. And students who hadn't volunteered before appreciated the opportunity, and felt accomplished in their efforts to help.

**Community Art**

Learning how community art can transform a locale is one of the goals for the EDN 414 class. Most students discussed having a new respect for art after seeing how it can transform a neighborhood and experiencing the results. Other students illustrated how important it was to have applied learning experience to understand the significance of community art.



*Students working on the beautiful mural in the Wilmington community.*

**Conclusions**

We found that most students' initial skepticism about the project dissipated after participating in the project and they found this was a valuable experience. The students benefited from going outside of the school and learning from a real world experience.

Planning and implementing such a service learning project had challenges too. The biggest challenge came from obstacles outside of our control. For example, before the project began, permissions from the city, insurance, and contracts had to be finalized. This delayed the project from January until March, and students questioned if they would have enough time to participate. We adjusted the project's schedule based on the students' availability. For several students, we accommodated them by having them work on two smaller murals in February. Flexibility was the key to the success of this project. The activity was so successful for the neighborhood, community members, and our students that we continued the project in the fall, but with some adaptations. The students worked with children in the public schools to create recycled art projects to decorate the chain link fences near the mural. Approximately 50 undergraduate students from EDN 414 participated with over 1000 school children. We look forward to this community art project to continue so we can have our preservice teachers, school children, community members, and neighbors transform Wilmington one block at a time.

*"I learned how great it is to volunteer. Just to go out into the community and meet all different types of people and build community with them despite how different we are."*

*"This project taught me a lot about art, but also taught me a lot about how to give back to the community and others. In the future we will be able to take our future students out to that wall and teach them about art and giving back to the community."*

For other classes wanting to impact communities with applied service learning, we suggest finding a need in the community and then fulfilling it. Beautifying a community locale is rewarding and can be used for any major course of study at a university where understanding people who live in a community is essential, such as education, public administration, health sciences, or social sciences. Nonetheless, there are several constraints, including getting initial permissions, procuring funding and supplies, arranging schedules and transportation and finalizing how the project will be maintained. We have committed to sustaining the mural and surrounding areas with future classes. Even though the neighbors have taken on many of the upkeep responsibilities, by having our university classes continue their involvement, we can expand the area we are impacting and deepen the positive relationship between the neighbors, community, and our university.

*"Before working on this project I did not really see the major importance of community art to be honest. I would like to try to get more involved in projects like this one because it makes such a difference."*

*For more information on this project please contact Dr. Robertson at robertsonj@uncw.edu and Dr. Liao at liaoc@uncw.edu.*

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# Constructing an Applied Learning Spring Break

## Mr. Zack Underwood & Ms. Jemilia Davis

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In spring of 2016, Jemilia Davis, Jamie Russell, and Zack Underwood created an applied learning spring break experience for pre-health students at University of North Carolina Wilmington. All students involved in the spring break experience were enrolled in a UNI 120: Civic Engagement for Pre-Health Students course for two-credit hours. This course was designed to facilitate civic engagement and explore leadership potential for pre-health students. The process gives students applied learning experiences that require much planning and coordination. This chapter is a reflection of the experiences for creating an applied learning spring break. The three sections of the chapter are planning, implementation, and conclusions.

**Planning Reflections**

Planning for this experience took months of coordination. The original idea was to create an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trip for students of any major that modeled an existing program at UNCW's Office of Student Leadership and Engagement. ASB trips recruit students to volunteer during their spring break and at UNCW attendance is variable. In an effort to increase student interest, Davis, Russell, and Underwood decided to tailor the program to an active student population, future health professionals known as pre-health students.

Pre-health students are interested in pursuing health professions that require graduate degrees. Students applying to graduate schools require hands-on-experience through community engagement such as volunteering. These experiences can help graduate applicants stand out amongst their peers. Many graduate programs require a certain number of hours of hands-on-experiences that give students insight into working with future patients. The applied learning spring break trip's goal was a way to help prepare

pre-health students to become uniquely qualified applicants for their professional schools.

This trip placed "students in experiences requiring them to integrate theories, ideas, and skills they have learned in new contexts, thereby extending their learning" (ETEAL, 2015). Furco (1996) emphasized a hands-on approach to learning about a community through service as a better way to learn about a given subject such as providing medical assistance. Students were able to simulate how they would think like a doctor through interactions with unique clients such as individuals who were members of different social or economic classes.

One of the hurdles for planning this type of experience was coordinating which location and service organization to utilize. Over the course of months, the planners of the trip contacted nearly a dozen organizations and determined a location for service. Many community sites were available, but were not able to work with a larger group of students. For example, this applied learning experience required a community site to host more than a dozen volunteers, which proved to be too many volunteers for smaller organizations.

Another hurdle for booking with community partners was volunteering at a time when the site was open. Certain types of non-profit community centers opened for short times or were only available for after-school care or meal times. Other sites required volunteer training. For example, volunteering for a local hospital was a possibility, but required training sessions, which were timely. These types of hurdles forced the planners to contact multiple community sites to find the best option. Once confirmed, the next step was to actually implement the curriculum for the class to get students to think about themselves and their community.

**Implementation**
A new applied learning environment is an opportunity for students to gain a new curiosity not just about the environment, but about themselves. Jemilia Davis wanted students to learn more about the field, but also to learn more about themselves. Bain (2012) suggests the best college students "found considerable motivation in just learning about themselves and how they could grow" (p. 47). As a professor for the course, Jemilia "planned ways to challenge assumptions and put students in compelling situations in which their existing models would not work" (Bain, 2004, p.

51). This is a worrisome situation because students are smart, energetic, and strong, but they are not accustomed to seeing themselves as role models or leaders.

Students in higher education arrive with certain stereotypes or perceptions. For example, some students are confident they are going to be a doctor, but they have never volunteered in a health setting. Some students may have the perception that academics are the only requirement needed for entering professional school and this perception is false. Others may not see themselves as leaders. Overcoming these perceptions to learn more about oneself and gain an appreciation for others within a given community are an interwoven part of the applied learning experience.

Similar to testing new assignments in a classroom, an applied learning experience's results are unknown until after the experience. Implementing ideas for an applied learning experience can be tedious. In class, Jemilia adjusted her teaching to incorporate an understanding of social awareness, self-awareness, and civic-mindedness. She adopted the idea that "Good teachers place themselves imaginatively in the role of a student and constantly ask themselves how they would react under similar circumstances" (McNamee, 2014, p. 87). The idea of the class was to frame a theoretical understanding of the real world and then the applied learning experience would give them an opportunity to see the world at work. Students reflected about the process throughout and this gave the instructor possibilities for adjustments, conversations during the trip, and after the trip.

## Conclusions

As with any new teaching situation, there are worries and concerns. For this experience concerns included several community organization cancellations, questions about funding, worries about if the student connected lessons from class to applied settings, and actually conducting the service in an applied learning environment. However in the end, it was worth it. In this instance, the student interacts in a new environment with previously studied material to help them to grow as future pre-health students. Students are able to put themselves in new situations as future doctors and think in a new way about others as well as their new role. As a community of learners, they were able to share the idea of applying their skills as leaders and share the experience of helping others as more than just students. They were preparing for their future roles as professionals in the field.

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# Trifold Promise: A Black Studies Anecdote for Experiential Learning

## Dr. Emmanuel Harris II

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Most often when people think about the exchange that occurs in university instruction, they tend to focus on the wisdom the professor might impart on the student. In such scenarios the image of the white, male bespectacled instructor behind a podium lecturing in a large or small classroom auditorium of mostly white faces is repeatedly represented in television and on the big screen. However, experiential learning has the potential to so thoroughly transcend traditional learning that stereotypical iconography seems obsolete, antiquated and even paradoxical.  Africana Studies, the umbrella discipline into which my research falls, demands experiential or service learning in that its American pioneers exalted a hands-on approach where research and pedagogy were combined with service to the students and consequently the community.

If we examine the philosophies of the individuals whose works are considered precursors to Africana Studies we see ample examples of what could be called experiential learning. W.E.B. DuBois' monumental work *The Souls of Black Folk* dedicates substantial passages to teaching in a manner in which students learn foundational knowledge that should be applied and transferred to life skills that would enable the uplift of an entire community and by consequence an entire race. His ideological adversary, Booker T. Washington, seems even more radical in his approach, advocating the acquisition of a skilled trade along with advanced letters in institutions of higher learning. More contemporary scholars, like Maulana Karenga, define Africana Studies as a discipline founded not only on the intellectual growth, but also personal and sociological enrichment in an environment of face-to-face applied learning. My own experiences with experiential learning, though reflective of Africana Studies, lend themselves well to any university discipline.  And when we complete such initiatives

with an open, engaged mindset, we find the potential for life-changing growth in three related spheres of influence, that of the student, the instructor, and the human subjects.

The applied learning initiative that I wish to explore here is fairly straightforward in nature, though the details of which were rather cumbersome. I served as the faculty mentor for an undergraduate student who we will call Yolanda for the purposes of this essay. She was to do archival research and conduct interviews for a book project entailing the documentation of the Allen family, a successful family of black farmers in Mississippi. During the research phase, we would travel to Yazoo City, Mississippi, to study the public records, better understand the land itself and to get to know the Allen's. The logistical and psychological complexities of the undertaking I strongly underestimated. Likewise, I failed to realize the profound ways our experiences would affect all those involved.

Coming from Wilmington, North Carolina to research a family of Mississippi farmers with a female, undergraduate student requires both delicacy and diplomacy. First we had to deal with the logistical issues. The Allen family farm is located just outside Yazoo City, about 45 miles north of Jackson. Flying there proved cost prohibitive plus traveling by plane would still require additional expenses associated with a car rental to get to the farm and to complete the archival research and interviews. Additionally, one of the blessings working with young bright students like Yolanda also comes with a challenging down side. She had started the university a year early and therefore at the time we would be conducting our research, she was too young to rent a car or have hotel room under her own name. The simplest solution meant I would pay for both and be reimbursed by the university. We decided to drive the thirteen hours from Wilmington. Yolanda informed me a few days prior to our departure that she did not know how to operate my car's manual transmission, though she was willing to learn. The thought of her learning to drive a stick using my car while on University business was not something that inspired great joy or confidence in me, so I resigned to the fact that I would drive the entire trip.

Yolanda, an African American young woman from Greensboro, North Carolina stands out with her impressive intellect, quick wit and selfless, extremely compassionate nature. An enthusiastic learner who also takes tremendous joy in helping others, she has the ability to excel in a university classroom in spite of taking little or no notes. She also speaks Spanish with near-native fluency and comes from a home wrought with

instability and with very limited financial resources. She is in constant movement, which is often mistaken for nervous energy, and she loved to talk, about anything. Thirteen hours in the confined space of a car proved to be quite the experience for both of us in many ways. And from her own admission, it also proved to be a wonderful opportunity to learn with and from each other.

The second challenge or learning opportunity involved the professional and personal mentoring which the project facilitated. Not only did we address the practical methodological questions inherent to conducting primary research, we also talked at length about life-skills as well as her dreams and ambitions. One of the struggles that particularly confront today's young, talented intellectuals concerns the career path that they might pursue and the means that they may take to get there. The problem becomes exacerbated especially by the plethora of options and interests to which they have been exposed. Add to that equation a young, African American woman with a strong sense of social activism coupled with serious financial need and an impending undergraduate commencement ceremony feels like a metaphorical, career-choice, day of reckoning.

Fortunately, documenting the Allen family story provided a model and oasis for us both. Herbert Allen, Sr. was a black famer living in Silver City, Mississippi in a region of the Delta flatland. His story and that of his family is not much different than that of any American farmer today, except that he weathered not only economic and environmental storms but also social, political and even racial ones in maintaining and being successful.  He started in the 1950's with one acre of land and his descendants now own 329 acres and rent 500 more which they also farm. He and his wife Linda raised nine children – eight of whom have survived – who all attended college. The decline of the farmer in America has indeed been precipitous, while the fate of the black farmer has been catastrophic. Featured in Ebony Magazine in 1995 as well as a few local papers throughout the years, the Allen family has become symbolic of the plight of black, rural life and a beacon of success for the black farmer. Our work in Mississippi would lay the foundation for a thorough, scholarly in depth study of their experiences. It would serve to fill some of historical gaps, preserve a collective memory and celebrate the rich cultural history of an ever-diminishing sector of the black family.

The result of this on-going research also brings to the forefront the beauty and joy of experiential instruction and learning. In the days that Yolanda and I spent with the Allen

family we were privy to a veritable family reunion convened ostensibly on our behalf. We toured the farm, saw the old family house, got close to many of the animals and talked, or rather more importantly, listened to the eight siblings and their families. We listened to their stories of growth and oftentimes prosperity in the face of adversity. We ate like kings. And we laughed a lot. Yolanda even took advantage of a break in the events to go fishing with one of the brothers – though, to her dismay, she did not catch anything.

However, what she did gain was an opportunity to see a portion of society that too often is portrayed in a negative light or as Toni Morrison states, used as contrast to the normative qualities of whites (Morrison 38). Here we found ourselves in a healthy, personally and emotionally enriching environment where a working-class, African American, extended family was the protagonist and it felt good. The opportunities afforded experiential learning furthermore had a trifurcating positive, lasting effect: it brought the subjects (the Allen family) together to rejoice in each other's company and celebrate the importance of familial bonds; for the student it provided a model for healthy, robust black relationships and exemplified social and psychological prosperity; and for the professor it allowed me to witness and further recognize the beautiful human fabric in which we are all a part.

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# 4

CHAPTER FOUR

*Applied Learning Online*

# Foreword
## *Bridging the Gap Online*

## Dr. Ron Costello
Associate Vice Chancellor, Distance Education

With the proliferation of online environments and the accessibility to them through computers and mobile devices, today's students are seeing less and less of a difference between physical learning environments and online learning environments. While the pitfalls of online learning environments are still very real, and must be accounted for, educators and learning designers are finding these challenges more manageable.  While online learning environments don't have a central hub or hangout like the ones that can be found on campus for example, opportunities for rich and substantive interactions among peers or between students and instructors are becoming more and more robust as technology improves.  Modalities and affordances in online learning environments have been multiplying and evolving at a rapid pace. The result is an evolving landscape in online learning that is challenging conventional theories about student attitudes and behaviors surrounding higher education.  For example, students are interacting with peers and instructors in the classroom, in the learning managements system, and through various online applications so often that it may be hard for a student to recall whether a particular interaction took place in the classroom or online.  This can lead to a somewhat seamless transition between traditional learning environments and online learning environments, which promotes a concept often referred to as "anywhere learning".  Just as the proliferation of social media platforms created a personal and perpetual presence online from a social interaction standpoint, new affordances and attitudes toward online learning could create a similar effect for the modern college student.  The idea of constantly being connected to robust learning networks that can provide students not only with

information, but also with valuable social learning interactions can improve both learning outcomes and access to learning opportunities that had not previously been possible.

These kinds of robust online learning environments are predicated on a shift from instructor centered, to subject centered instruction.  There is very little an instructor can say to a class that a student cannot look up on a search engine if they know what they are looking for.  However, instructors can help their students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills which will prove to be invaluable in the work place after they complete their studies.  Technological affordances have greatly improved the instructor's ability to help students develop these skills in the online learning environment.  Cognitive and collaborative tools in the online learning environment allow students to learn with technology and not from technology.  When computers were first introduced into the classroom, they did not improve academic outcomes because they were misused.  Back in those days, the idea was that a computer would replace a teacher as the source of instruction.  Technological affordances now have a tremendous impact on learning outcomes because they are not a means of instruction, but rather a tool of instruction used to foster communication and collaboration.  For these reasons, faculty development is critical to empower instructors to learn to utilize these technologies and integrate them into the online learning environment.

# Client-Based Projects and Online Courses: Challenges to Integrate Applied Learning

## Dr. Anthony Atkins
Department of English

Across the campus of University North Carolina Wilmington, applied learning is a larger campus initiative to help students gain experiences whereby they can "apply" what they learn outside of the classroom. Applied learning has a focus on the experiences of the student who is applying skills learned in class to a project outside of the classroom, maintaining a focus on the student and what the student produces or generates. According to Denise C. Nelson-Hurwitz and Michelle Tagorda (2015), who are discussing their BA program in a health field, "the intent of the culminating experience in the B.A program is to provide students the opportunity to actively apply classroom knowledge and associated skills to real-world application in the public health field" (n.p.). Applied learning is the vehicle with which students use to apply skills they have learned from doing in-class projects that are preparing them to leave the walls of the academy and into a world where their skills will be put to use in any number of contexts. Applied learning is directly connected to the application of skills learned in the classroom to situations or contexts outside of the classroom. This brief article will discuss client-based projects (CBPs) as one of the the best ways to integrate applied learning. It also addresses teaching applied learning and CBPs in online environments.

While there are challenges to integrating applied learning into the classroom, there are also challenges to integrating client-based projects. Significantly, understanding CBPs is essential to understanding the implementation of applied learning into online courses. In fact, research in CBPs mentions that CBPs facilitate "active and experiential learning" (Lopez & Lee, 2005, p. 172). Client-Based projects are precisely the kinds of projects that are well-suited for applied learning experiences. In addition to facilitating active and applied learning, CBPs also "foster skills such as problem solving, critical

thinking, communication, and teamwork—relevant skills that students need in the workplace" (Lopez & Lee, 2005, p. 172). Lopez and Lee (2005) also argue that CBPs motivate students because students know that their ideas or work may be used in a real-world context.  CBPs have been a staple of many classes in the professional writing program at UNCW. For instance, community clients that have worked with professional writing classes have been Kickback Jacks, Sydney's Bar and Tavern (now closed), Bento Box, Nicolas Italian, and more recently, Community Association Management Services (CAMS) and the Azalea Festival. Other instructors in the professional writing program have also worked with New Hanover Animal Control, among many other clients in the New Hanover, North Carolina area. Each one of these clients willingly worked with students in a variety of ways. However, even CBPs cause trepidation among some instructors. For example, Lopez and Lee (2005) also note reasons why some instructors avoid CBPs: Finding good clients, challenges to grading projects and concerns about time commitments (p.172). The benefits, however, outweigh the challenges when combining applied learning with CBPs.

Applied learning, sometimes referred to as service learning, experiential learning, or active learning, is a university-wide initiative whereby the university is making concerted efforts to integrate applied learning on campus, in classes, and in the curriculum. In professional writing, service learning is a required component of our introductory course: ENG 204: Introduction to Professional Writing, which makes integrating applied learning into the professional writing curriculum somewhat seamless. However, integrating applied learning in all departments, colleges, and professional schools across campus can be a difficult task for disciplines not easily suited to applied learning strategies or pedagogies.

To give students the best opportunity to put their classroom skills to work outside of the classroom, applied learning fits the mold for teachers of professional writing. Applied Learning also has the potential to motivate students. For example, Pope-Ruark, et al. (2014) explain that "courses and projects that create authentic contexts for collaboration and writing have been shown to not only address these issues but also improve student learning and teamwork skills." Applied learning calls for authenticity within the context that students will work. Working with clients in the community is an effective way for those of us in professional writing to enact applied learning pedagogy. For example, several clients in our community have worked with students to develop, maintain, or create websites, manage and/or create social media outlets,

and design or redesign business flyers, letterhead, and other documents in hard copy or electronically. One client worked with us to create an entire book, which included using Adobe InDesign and Photoshop. Lopez and Lee (2005) note that instructors sometimes shy away from these kinds of projects due to fear of collaboration, grading, and possible conflicts with clients. I would also add to this idea by stating the concern of what kind of merit or credit a faculty may receive for going beyond the classroom and working in the community.

CBPs certainly introduce a host of concerns and challenges, but are one of the best ways to put applied learning in action. While applied learning is useful as a strategy to help students apply their skills, it also, often, requires additional course planning and preparation. Integrating CBPs and applied learning can be challenging in many ways; however, bringing CBPs and applied learning into the online learning environment presents additional issues that must be addressed so that the interaction and experiences for the teacher-student-client are meaningful and robust. Applied learning in online courses can look slightly different than it appears in face-to-face courses. Integrating CBPs in face-to-face courses allows for clients to visit the classroom, meet with students who are working on projects, and provide face-to-face feedback to students and teacher. These components of CBPs change drastically when introduced in online courses.

Teaching in online environments can be difficult, and presents unique challenges that face-to-face environments often need not consider. First, "online teaching exists in many forms" (Perry & Pilati, 2011, p. 97). Significantly, according to Perry and Pilati (2011), "one college's online course may be another's hybrid, and one college's hybrid course may be another's blended or Web-enhanced course" (p. 97). In addition to the ways in which online instruction is configured within different contexts, there continues to be a shortage of teachers willing to teach online. The reasons for this are not always clear, but many know that teaching online is not simply a matter of posting lecture notes on the web (Perry & Pilati, 2011). Quite frankly, according to Perry & Pilati (2011), faculty members moving to the online environment must learn new technologies and best practices for online teaching. In fact, standard practice would be for instructors moving to online teaching environments to be prepared by spending time in professional development activities designed to help instructors new to the online environment be successful and effective online instructors. Many faculty are unsure if the work is worth the reward. They ask themselves if the time and

effort they spend developing online courses will be reflected in tenure and promotion decisions (Perry & Pilati, 2011). Cher Ping Lim (2005) also explains that there should be "necessary sufficient conditions" when teaching online in higher education. Lim (2005) also confirms what many online teachers have already discovered, that "Internet technologies do not exist in isolation; they are interwoven with the rest of the tools, and participants in the learning environment" (p. 324). This means that before teaching online courses, a teacher must investigate the content management system and the tools available both to teachers and students enrolled in the course. Lynda Walsh (2010), working with a client and her online professional writing class, says that "a client project is a natural fit for wiki pedagogy" (p. 185). A wiki is one of those tools that can work in tandem with any content management system and within any online teaching environment. Walsh (2010) goes on to express why a wiki works well for her online students and her client:  "First, the wiki offers virtual space for student and client to cooperate across space and time, within and outside academic walls" (p.185). The wiki, according to Walsh (2010), also "allows for the inclusion of the client's perspective in the project which enriches the instructor's resources for evaluating the effectiveness of the wiki in the technical writing classroom" (p.185). The wiki, in this case, serves as another tool to help online teachers integrate CBPs and applied learning. What aids Lynda Walsh is her ability to plan ahead and seek out tools that will work for her client, (in this case a wiki) students, and within an already established content management system, such as Blackboard.

Online teaching requires significant course planning and preparation well before the beginning of a course or semester. As in the case of integrating applied learning and CBPs, it is the planning and preparation that pose much of the challenge of teaching in online learning environments. While there are many technologies available to enhance online learning environments, wrestling with teaching online while integrating CBPs and applied learning can prove to be overwhelming, especially for teachers new to applied learning and teaching in online environments. However, there are some practices that online teachers of CBPs may consider.

First, teachers should investigate thoroughly the content management system, how it works, and what tools outside of that content management system will help to facilitate applied learning with a client. Second, teachers should think carefully about the client that the course will work with and what kinds of projects lend themselves to applied learning pedagogy. Third, teachers should think carefully about the kinds of skills that

will be applied or transferred to the experience with the client who exists beyond the classroom walls. Lastly, teachers should think carefully about how the client will interact with the students in online environments. For example, will the client join synchronous discussions with the class? Will the client make videos for the students? Can students and the client meet face-to-face in any capacity? How might that work and/or what technologies will be used to facilitate communication? Many of these concerns can be addressed well before the class begins and thus facilitate the idea that course planning and preparation is one of the largest obstacles to teaching applied learning with CBPs in online environments.

While this brief article can only scratch the surface of teaching applied learning in online environments within a professional writing program, it is clear that integrating applied learning in online courses requires careful planning and preparation, meeting with clients, searching for additional tools to facilitate communication, and the building of relationships between client and students. Structuring applied learning through CBPs and reaching goals in an online learning environment can prove to be a challenging task, but the risk is worth the reward. Client-Based Projects are the best way for those of us teaching professional writing to integrate applied learning on our campus. Implementing CBPs into online professional writing courses simply takes additional planning and preparation, configuring the nuances of a CBP and the content management system that will govern the flow of communication and that of the project to be produced for the client.

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# Applied Learning in the Redesign of Online Courses for Faculty Members

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### Introduction

Distance education is a method of education that has been around for more than 160 years (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2009). Grounding its roots in correspondence studies, this method of education has evolved with the advances in electronic communications. New forms of distance education have emerged such as open learning, virtual schools, and online education.

Online education can be defined as the use of the Internet to partially or entirely deliver a course (Ko & Rossen, 2010). These courses, also known as online courses, can be delivered in different modes such asynchronous, synchronous, blended/hybrid or a variation of those. The demand for online courses is growing, especially in higher education settings. For instance, more than 6.1 million students took at least one online course during the fall 2010, which was an increase of 10% over the number reported in fall 2009 (Allen & Seaman, 2011). Besides the growth in online course enrollment, institutions are starting to make a commitment to online education as part of their long term plan. The number of institutions indicating online education as part of the long-term strategy increased from 63% to 65% in 2010 (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

As online education grows as an emergent method of instruction in higher education, the effectiveness and quality of online courses could be a concern. Similar to traditional face-to-face courses, online courses need to be designed following instructional design principles (e.g., Gagné, Wager, Golas, & Keller, 2005) and evaluated to determine the success of instruction and learning experience. The success of an online course

is often determined by its design, especially in asynchronous online environments. Online courses are often evaluated through instruments, such as Quality Matters (QM) rubrics. QM rubrics have been designed and grounded on online learning research, including at least eight major standards for higher education online settings (Maryland Online, 2008).

Once an online course has been evaluated using QM rubric, a re-design of the course is often needed. The purpose of the re-design is to assure the course follows sound pedagogical principles for online environments. Still, faculty and instructors teaching three or four load courses in higher education institutions might not have sufficient time to engage in a full instructional design process, including assess their online courses with QM rubric and re-design courses based on sound pedagogical principles.

Given the aforementioned issues, a master level course in Instructional Technology was modified to: (a) attend the current needs of faculty who could benefit from graduate students' assistance in evaluating and redesign their existing online courses; and (b) address graduate students needs to be engaged in authentic experiences in the design and development of online courses.

**Experiential Learning in Course Re-Design**

Experiential learning involves teaching and learning strategies that include community service, hands on experience, and critical reflection (Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012). Research has supported the benefits of experiential learning. For example, Eyler and colleagues (2001) identified 135 articles on experiential learning and most of those articles (i.e., 132 articles) reported positive or neutral results. Faculty benefits in an experiential learning approach include satisfaction in student learning and applied research. Student benefits include critical analysis, application of knowledge in practical settings, and improved course satisfaction (Eyler et al., 2001).

Overall, there are two dialectically related modes that learners go through: The Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) model (Kolb & Boyatzis, 2000; Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002). Two of those modes refer to grasping the experience - concrete experience (apprehension) and abstract conceptualization (comprehension) – and the other two modes are related to transforming experience - reflective observation (intension) and active experimentation (extension) (Baker, et al., 2002). The aforementioned modes are part of a four-phase cyclic learning process in which

learners start with a concrete experience, leading them to observe and reflect on the practical contact with the events and activities of the experience. The reflections and observations are grasped as abstract concepts or constructs, which serve as frames of reference for future actions. Afterwards, learners test their constructs, leading to new experiences and renewing of the experiential learning process (Baker, et al., 2002). The modes of the ELT model are represented below and are related to student activities in our ETEAL project of redesign existing online courses:

**Goal:** Redesign of existing online course

**Output:** Final Project

**Goal:** Review and evaluate existing online course

**Output:** Recommendations for faculty, revisions, & peer feedback

Act    Reflect

Apply    Think

**Goal:** Demonstrate effective instructional design principles and strategies in online courses

**Output:** Sample redesign modules

**Goal:** Relate readings, previous experiences to the redesign of existing online courses.

**Output:** Weekly blogs

Figure 1. Experiential learning approach in the re-design of existing online courses

**Course Design**

This study sought to understand how graduate students apply the knowledge gained in an Instructional Technology course into the redesign and redevelopment of existing online courses offered by faculty at a southern university. This Instructional Technology course was designed to help students acquire knowledge and skills on how to create interactive online learning environments as well as to design, develop, deliver, and manage online instruction. Using QM rubric, students analyzed the quality standards of existing online courses at the university. Students also engaged in instructional design process by evaluating online courses for faculty members and creating plans to address the main phases in ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model.

**Experiential Learning Strategies Applied to the Course**

The Instructional Technology course was re-designed and an experiential learning approach was implemented to the course. Several principles from National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE, 2011) were considered in the re-design of the course. Those principles are listed and discussed below:

**Intention & Reflection**

An initial set of prompts was given to graduate students at the beginning of the semester to guide their intentional narrative, which included their expectations/goals for the course as well as their intentions and experiences with online course design. Additionally, students were given a set of prompts at the end of the course to help them reflect on their experiences within the course and re-design of online courses.

**Authenticity**

Student acted as instructional designers in their course projects. They provided recommendations to a sample of faculty who volunteered their online course evaluation. Students applied instructional design principles as well as learning theories to address common needs in online environments (e.g., promote social interaction among online students).

**Simulating Authentic Situations**

Several deadlines for drafts and final document deliverables were set for students in the course, which should replicate the reality of an instructional designer working in the field. An iterative process for feedback and revisions were also implemented, including two presentations of redesign modules in the university's Learning Management System for peer feedback.

**Orientation & Training**

Guest speakers with diverse expertise in online courses were invited to provide students with relevant background information about the design and development of online courses and to share their current experiences/practices in the field.

**Monitoring & Continuous Improvement**

Students turned in multiple drafts of their final project before submitting a final version of the project. Besides instructor feedback, students were able to give each other

feedback in order to improve their redesign documents. During the final presentation, students received further feedback from the guest speakers who acted as clients (instructors of the courses being re-designed).

**Assessment and Evaluation**

Several formative assessments were provided to students throughout the course in order to inform and refine their final project for this course.

**Lessons Learned**

There are several lessons learned from this applied learning experience. First, applied learning will need extra planning to create a successful and meaningful learning experience for students and instructors, especially in online courses. Faculty must prepare activities ahead of time for students' collaboration. Collaborative tools such as Google Doc or OneDrive might be recommended for students, who are physically separated, to collaborate in live-document projects. Moreover, shifting from an intensive instructor feedback to a peer-review process might assist students in providing constructive feedback to each other as well as improving their writing and communication skills.

Other lessons learned from this experience include providing optional/suggested readings for students who lack prior knowledge in core areas of instructional design principles, which are essential for the re-design online courses. Those readings can be set for the first four weeks of the course to create and establish a foundation for re-design of online courses. Additionally, opportunities to interact and discuss with UNCW faculty, who originally designed the online courses, might be beneficial for students to improve their applied learning experience.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this experience was to provide students with a better understanding of the process involved in designing and developing online courses. This experience sought to prepare students in their future careers as instructional designers.  Students applied the knowledge learned in the course to identify and assess pedagogically sound online courses. As a result of students' course assessment, they provided recommendations for improvements to faculty members based on the knowledge gained from their coursework. The research garnered from this study will be used to continue and further explore the importance of incorporating experiential learning activities into distance education courses.

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# Conclusion

## Ms. Salena Rabidoux
Editor-in-Chief
Watson College of Education

*Applied Learning in Higher Education* provides several diverse methods for incorporating applied learning into all disciplines for all levels, freshmen to graduate students. When considering how to incorporate applied learning into future courses, remember to begin with the end in mind and identify the desired learning objectives. Keeping goals in mind makes way for endless applied learning activities. The benefits of applied learning have been well established (Waldner, McGory, & Widener, 2010), as research has shown that students in applied learning courses demonstrated higher-rated positive course evaluations (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993). We can best prepare our students for success after graduation by integrating real-world learning environments. It is the hope that this eBook will continue to spark innovative approaches to incorporating applied learning strategies into the classroom both face-to-face and online.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington takes pride in applied learning efforts integrated into instruction. The collection of faculty reflections and studies included in this publication are just a snapshot of the larger scale of applied learning practices happening across campus. The appendix offers some resources for integrating applied learning practices into daily practice. Appendix A offers a glimpse into the ETEAL funding opportunities for UNCW faculty and staff. Traditionally, UNCW has offered grant opportunities to support faculty and staff with integrating applied learning opportunities; most of the contributing authors in this eBook have been recipients of such funding opportunities.

The National Society for Experiential Education's (NSEE) 8 principles of experiential learning activities can help catapult brainstorming for integrating applied learning activities into courses (Appendix B) and The Association of American Colleges and University's (AAC&U) High-Impact practices (Appendix C) extend upon NSEE's principles.  Integrating both NSEE's principles and AAC&U's high impact practices could lead to a powerful applied learning experience.

Hopefully this eBook offers some practical applications and ideas for integrating applied learning experiences here at the University of North Carolina Wilmington and across other campuses. Whether you are interested in integrating critical thinking, reflection, collaborative and cooperative learning experiences, service learning, and/or exploring applied learning online courses, we hope this publication generates ideas for applied learning experiences in both face-to-face and online courses.

# Index

# Appendices

# ETEAL Request for Proposals

## ETEAL Funding Award Categories

### ETEAL Pedagogy Initiative Awards

- The standard $3,500.00 award category open to all applied learning pedagogy projects
- Application process is competitive and preference is given to first time applicants, interdisciplinary projects, new or innovative pedagogy, and projects with sustainable funding plans or impact beyond the initial semester of implementation.

### ETEAL-OIC Entrepreneurship Awards

- A special category for applied learning pedagogy projects with a focus on Entrepreneurship. Up to $3,500.00 available per project and applicants compete only with other ETEAL-OIC entrepreneurship award applicants
- Open to all disciplines and programs - past winners include the departments of English and Educational Leadership.
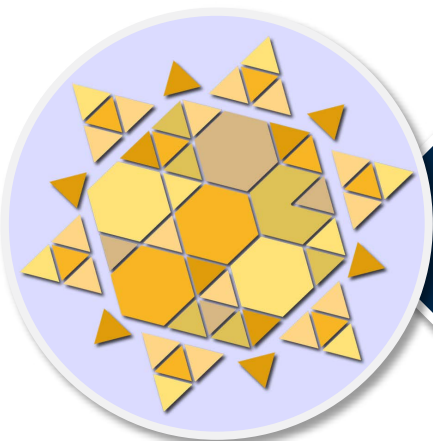
### ETEAL and Sustainability Awards

- An additional $1,500.00 is available to any ETEAL project which relates to environmental sustainability and follows the additional Green Initiative Fund guidelines.
- These projects must fulfill both ETEAL pedagogy initiative and Sustainability requirements in order to receive funding.

**ETEAL Proposal Scoring Rubric**

This scoring Rubric is used by our evaluation committee to assess funding priorities for all of the ETEAL proposals we receive. Proposals are rated on each of four dimensions and those with the highest scores are given the highest priority for funding.

| Dimension | Not Adequate 0 | Requires Further Development 1 | Acceptable 2 | Exemplary 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PEDAGOGY:** Enhancement to Pedagogy (by using best practices, including critical reflection and incorporating applied learning priorities) | Proposal either did not address Pedagogy or applied learning priorities, or the information was unclear. | Proposal needs additional development to demonstrate how it will enhance pedagogy, address good practices of applied learning, including critical reflection, and/ or incorporate applied learning priorities. | Proposal demonstrates how the experience will enhance pedagogy, address good practices of applied learning, including critical reflection, and incorporate at least one of the listed applied learning priorities. | Proposal artfully addresses the enhancement of pedagogy by: incorporating multiple good practices, skillfully incorporating critical reflection throughout the experience, and/or incorporating multiple applied learning priorities. |
| **ASSESSMENT:** Clear Experience Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) which are aligned to ETEAL SLOs; Student Work addresses all ETEAL SLOs; Link must be drawn between Experience SLOs and ETEAL SLOs. | Proposal either did not address learning outcomes (Either ETEAL, experience, or both) or information was unclear. | Proposal does not adequately list the experience-specific student learning outcomes AND/OR needs additional development to demonstrate how student work products will be aligned to each of the ETEAL SLOs and corresponding assessment strategy. | Proposal contains a list of experience-specific student learning outcomes that are appropriate to the applied learning experience, AND demonstrates how student work products are aligned to each of the three ETEAL SLOs and corresponding assessment strategy. | Proposal demonstrates excellent use of best practices in defining student learning outcomes and assuring that assignments/ assessments align with ETEAL SLOs. Work products provide students creative opportunities to demonstrate all of the ETEAL SLOs. |
| **ALTC COMMITMENT:** Participation in ALTC activities and sharing of practice | Proposal does not address ALTC Commitment and/or does not show clear understanding of the ALTC's goals. | Proposal needs additional development to clearly demonstrate an understanding of ALTC goals, plans to participate in ALTC activities, and plans to share practice | Proposal demonstrates clear understanding of ALTC goals and plans to participate in and share practice with the ALTC, but lacks specific detail or needs further development. | Proposal demonstrates how participation in the ALTC will support teaching practice and how instructor plans to share their practices with the community. |
| **BUDGET and TIMELINE:** Itemized with justifications, clear timeline of purchasing and project implementation. | Proposal does not include a budget table, justifications, timeline is unclear, and/or requests items ETEAL cannot fund. | Proposal contains a budget, however it needs additional justification, adjustments to timeline, or requests some items which ETEAL cannot fund. | Proposal includes an acceptable budget with clear justification of each item. Project timeline may need additional detail. | Proposal includes a detailed budget with clear justifications with a clear timeline for purchasing/ implementation |

# ETEAL Proposal Writing Guides

## NSEE's 8 Principles of Experiential Learning Activities

- **Intention:** All parties must be clear from the outset why experience is the chosen approach to the learning that is to take place and to the knowledge that will be demonstrated, applied or result from it. Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience.
- **Preparedness and Planning:** Participants must ensure that they enter the experience with sufficient foundation to support a successful experience. They must also focus from the earliest stages of the experience/program on the identified intentions, adhering to them as goals, objectives and activities are defined. The resulting plan should include those intentions and be referred to on a regular basis by all parties. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds.
- **Authenticity:** The experience must have a real world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. This means that is should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation.
- **Reflection:** Reflection is the element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience. For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. Reflection is also an essential tool for adjusting the experience and measuring outcomes.
- **Orientation and Training:** For the full value of the experience to be accessible to both the learner and the learning facilitator(s), and to any involved organizational partners, it is essential that they be prepared with important background information about each other and about the context and environment in which the experience will operate. Once that baseline of knowledge is addressed, ongoing structured development opportunities should also be included to expand the learner's appreciation of the context and skill requirements of her/his work.
- **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:** Any learning activity will be dynamic and changing, and the parties involved all bear responsibility for ensuring that the experience, as it is in process, continues to provide the richest learning possible, while affirming the learner. It is important that there be a feedback loop related to learning intentions and quality objectives and that the structure of the experience be sufficiently flexible to permit change in response to what that feedback suggests. While reflection provides input for new hypotheses and knowledge based in documented experience, other strategies for observing progress against intentions and objectives should also be in place. Monitoring and continuous improvement represent the formative evaluation tools.
- **Assessment and Evaluation:** Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented with regard to initial intentions and quality outcomes. Assessment is a means to develop and refine the specific learning goals and quality objectives identified during the planning stages of the experience, while evaluation provides comprehensive data about the experiential process as a whole and whether it has met the intentions which suggested it.
- **Acknowledgment:** Recognition of learning and impact occur throughout the experience by way of the reflective and monitoring processes and through reporting, documentation and sharing of accomplishments. All parties to the experience should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment. Culminating documentation and celebration of learning and impact help provide closure and sustainability to the experience.
- **Source:** National Society for Experiential Education. Presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting, Norfolk, VA

## AAC&U High-Impact Practices

- **Performance Expectations set at appropriately high levels**
  Projects, problems, and other work assigned to students should challenge them appropriately, encouraging them to go beyond their current levels of achievement and ability.
- **Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time**
  Whether it's as part of a semester long course or an intensive study abroad experience, students should spend a significant amount of time on a given project and if possible, work in progressive stages that culminate in a final project that incorporates all that they have learned in the project.
- **Interactions with Faculty and Peers about substantive matters**
  Regular activities or meetings, either in-class or out-of-class, which encourage students to engage with their material such as in learning communities, seminars, or discussion groups.
- **Experiences with diversity, wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that different from those with which the students are familiar**
  Students should have exposure to diversity, both through experiences with people and cultures different than their own and through exposure to people, ideas, and perspectives that they have not encountered before.
- **Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback**
  Providing students with constructive feedback during an applied learning project supports their ability to critically reflect on their learning, find ways to improve, and get a sense of the project's overall impact.
- **Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning**
  Through Intention and Critical Reflection, as well as continuous reflection throughout each experience, students examine their own learning and experiences, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and establish goals for future learning.
- **Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world application**
  Internships, practica, field experiences, or research are all great examples of high-impact practices which provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding to 'real-world' problems and challenges.
- **Public demonstration of competence**
  This can be a presentation, an article submission, or any number of public discussions of their work that allows students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge .

**Source:** Categories adapted from *Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale* by George D. Kuh and Ken O'Donnell, with Case Studies by Sally Reed. (Washington, D.C.: AAC&U, 2013).

# ETEAL Critical Reflection Prompts and Resources

## The Importance of Critical Reflection

ETEAL Critical Reflections serve two vital functions: First, they help students reflect back on what they've learned and experienced in an applied learning project, cementing the skills they gained and helping them see the impact their work will have on their own future and the future of others. Second, these Critical Reflections also capture evidence of how much a student has learned in their ETEAL project, and this in turn helps us provide more resources for applied learning, better support for instructors, and stronger advocacy for projects like your own.

## Goals and Guiding Practices

Reflecting at the end of an experience is a great way to get your students thinking about all the work they've done in your project. It's an important step, to stand back and look at everything they've accomplished and think about all of the skills and experience they've gained. In ETEAL Critical Reflections, our goal is to both help students realize just how much they've accomplished in their applied learning projects as well as to get information about their ability to apply knowledge, to think intentionally, and to evaluate the impact their work and learning has on themselves and on others, now and in the future. Below, you'll find an example of both basic and more detailed prompts:

| | |
|---|---|
| These basic prompts are not bad but they may not be sufficient to get your students to reflect critically. Try to avoid questions that could be answered with simple lists, yes or no responses, or with a single sentence. | • What did you learn in this experience?<br>• What was your biggest challenge?<br>• Was there anything you would have done differently if you could do this project over? |
| These prompts are more effective. The prompts ask students to think more broadly about their learning and encourage them to think beyond this semester and beyond themselves. Adding follow-up items or secondary questions to prompts is a good way to make sure students give you a full, thoughtful answer rather. | • What new challenges or difficulties did you face in this experience that you had never encountered before? How did you address them?<br>• How will the work you did in this project impact your future professional or academic career?<br>• Why did you choose to take part in this course? What was the purpose of this project? |
| Ideally, prompts will ask students to explore their learning and then address the 'why' and 'how' and discourage students from simply listing their responses or given vague answers. You should tie your prompts to your project whenever possible and encourage your students to think critically.<br><br>Prompts don't necessarily need to be longer to be more effective, however, as long as they get students to think about their learning and respond critically | • Were you able to apply the things you learned in this experience and in your prior courses in this project? How so? How do you think you'll be able to apply these skills in the future?<br>• What challenges did you face in this experience? How did you address them, and why did you approach the challenge the way you did? Are there any alternate approaches you might take if given that challenge again?<br>• How do you think this project will impact future students? Your discipline as a whole? Your community? What other impact do you think this project might have on others? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Intention**<br><br>From the Rubric:<br>"[The Student] Explains in depth the purpose for engaging in the experience and directly links it to personal educational development through expected educational outcomes." | Intention should be captured in your intention reflections, before your project begins but after students have been brief on what to expect.<br><br>For more information on Intention Reflections and prompts, see our Intention guide on the ETEAL website: Intention Guide and Sample Prompts |
| **Application of Knowledge**<br><br>From the Rubric:<br>"[Student] Connects and extends previous or current coursework and synthesizes it in an innovative way within the applied learning experience." | Application of Knowledge prompts should be tailored to the project and to your discipline whenever possible.<br>• Connect your previous learning to what you did in this experience, providing details of what knowledge you drew on and how it affected your performance.<br>• Discuss the relevant theories, ideas, and skills that you were able to apply during this experience or that helped guide this experience.<br>• Describe how the courses, methods and tools you've been exposed to previously (or are being exposed to this semester) impacted your success in this course. Provide 1-3 specific examples to demonstrate application to the [this] class. |
| **Critical Reflection**<br><br>From the Rubric:<br>"[The Student] Envisions a future direction for growth and/or application of strengths, and reveals significantly broader perspectives about personal educational development." | • How do you think [the skills gained in this project] will be useful for you in a professional setting? Why will it be useful in these ways?<br>• Predict how you anticipate this experience will influence your approach as you go forward in your major and/or after graduation.<br>• How did the projects and the overall learning experience impact your view/impression of ecology? How did the projects and the overall learning experience impact your view/impression of global change (climate, sea level, anthropogenic impacts, etc.)? |
| **Evaluation of Impact**<br><br>From the Rubric:<br>"[The Student] Considers the results of the experience with a thoughtful evaluation of its impact on others or on the profession/field." | • Summarize two things you did during the experience and examine the results of these actions on the project, on others, on the discipline in general, and on yourself (whether intended or not).<br>• Analyze the implications of what you learned from this experience on your future in terms of education or career goals.<br>• Describe your learning from this experience as it relates to your future in nursing and the impact of nursing as a profession. (*This learning matters because…In light of this learning I will* – consider how the learning has value in this situation and in broader terms). |

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# Applied Learning Critical Reflection Scoring Rubric

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

|  | Benchmark 1 | Milestone 2 | Milestone 3 | Capstone 4 | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Intention** <br><br> [EBC 1] | Identifies a purpose for engaging in the experience without discussing personal educational development. | Identifies the purpose for engaging in the experience and mentions personal educational development, but does not link these. | Explains the purpose for engaging in the experience, and discusses the link(s) to personal educational development. | Explains in depth the purpose for engaging in the experience and directly links it to personal educational development through expected educational outcomes. |  |
| **Application of Knowledge**[1] <br><br> [EBC 2] | Makes vague references to knowledge drawn from previous or current coursework, but does not demonstrate how it was used in the applied learning experience. | Refers to knowledge drawn from previous or current coursework and provides some insight into how it was useful in the applied learning experience. | Connects previous or current coursework and provides concrete evidence of how it affected performance the applied learning experience. | Connects and extends previous or current coursework and synthesizes it in an innovative way within the applied learning experience. |  |
| **Reflection** <br><br> [EBC 3a] | Describes own performance in general or abstract terms, without indicating impact or significance on personal educational development. | Identifies at least one strength and/or challenge highlighted by the experience, and indicates a somewhat broader perspective about personal educational development. | Evaluates strengths and challenges encountered in the experience, and reveals broader perspectives about personal educational development. | Envisions a future direction for growth and/or application of strengths, and reveals significantly broader perspectives about personal educational development. |  |
| **Evaluation of Impact** <br><br> [EBC 3b] | Provides a vague or oversimplified statement of the impact of the experience on others or on the profession/field. | Provides a specific example of the impact of the experience on others or on the profession/field. | Discusses the results of the experience, providing concrete examination of its impact on others or on the profession/field. | Considers the results of the experience with a thoughtful evaluation of its impact on others or on the profession/field. |  |

[1]Modified from Transfer dimension of Foundations for Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric

EBC 1. The student will articulate their expectations, the purpose, and/or the goals of the experience in terms of their personal educational development. [Thoughtful Expression]

EBC 2.  The student will synthesize knowledge drawn from their coursework to address the issues/challenges/questions involved in the experience. [Critical Thinking, Foundational Knowledge, Inquiry]

EBC 3. The student will communicate the impact or significance on their personal educational development *and* on others in the profession or in the field at the *conclusion* of the experience. [Critical Thinking]

NOTES:

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