Tracking Experiential Learning Outcomes across University Campuses

Alyssa Martin
N. John DiNardo
Adam Fontecchio
Learning Outcomes

• Define learning outcomes for experiential learning activities and create assessment queries that can be broadly applied

• Be introduced to challenges and opportunities in the development of a standardized, validated assessment tool for experiential learning

• Integrate experiential learning opportunities into curriculum to enhance curricular student learning outcomes (SLOs)
Experiential learning

High Impact Practices (HIPs)

- First-Year Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- ePortfolios
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

http://www.growthengineering.co.uk/what-is-experiential-learning/
What counts as experiential learning?
Undergraduate Research
Co-op/Internship
Capstone Experiences & Projects
Community-Based Service Learning
Study Abroad
Clinical Rotations
Student Teaching
Field Work/Field Trips
Laboratory Classes
Problem-Based Learning
Publishing/Conference Presentations
Learning Communities
Peer Education
Volunteer Work
How do you think about experiential learning at your campus?

• Pick 3 activities that encompass experiential learning at your institution

• Create a list of the learning outcomes that you would want or expect from each opportunity
What Characteristics Do Experiential Learning Opportunities All Share?
Motivation

• Limited research on impact of experiential learning

• National interest in developing better mechanisms to assess experiential learning

• No instrument exists to compare all types of experiential learning
Project overview

Approach:
• Develop a validated instrument to broadly assess experiential learning

Selected Goals:
• Identify core characteristics necessary for an experiential learning opportunity to promote student learning
• Identify whether specific student populations gain more from particular types of experiential learning
IN/CO Project Participants

**Drexel University**

- Adam Fontecchio, Director, Center for the Advancement of STEM Teaching & Learning Excellence (CASTLE); Professor, Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Eric Brewe
- Thomas DeChiaro
- John DiNardo
- Mark Freeman
- Alyssa Martin

**College of Charleston**

- Elizabeth Meyer-Bernstein, Director of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities; Associate Dean of Honors College; Associate Professor, Biology
- Susan Anderson
- Divya Bhati
- Denise Ciccarelli
- Zach Hartje
- Jim Posey

**University of North Carolina Wilmington**

- Paul Townend, Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Professor, Irish & British History
- Diana Ashe
- Jess Boersma
- Kristin Bolton
- Van O. Dempsey III
- James DeVita
- Robert Hicks
- Colleen Reilly
Mission:
Affect institutional change in STEM teaching and learning across the educational spectrum by conducting, catalyzing and supporting fundamental research
Project Steps

1. Consider common experiential learning outcomes to assess
2. Develop questions to assess experiential learning across multiple types of experiences and campuses
3. Establish data structures to promote cross-institutional data sharing while maintaining data privacy
4. Pilot assessment instrument
5. Analyze, store and compare collected data among and across campuses
6. Iterative improvement of instrument and broad distribution
Challenges of creating an all-inclusive experiential learning assessment tool

- How do we make sure we are assessing the *core* characteristics of *all* experiential learning opportunities?
- How do we define learning outcomes that encompass *all* experiential learning opportunities?
- Separating effect of experiential learning from prior experience
- Length of survey and compliance
- Data stewardship, access and privacy
Our approach

• Survey Sections
  – Characterizing the learning experience
  – Support systems during learning experience
  – Organizational structure of learning experience
  – Relationships related to the learning experience

• Considerations
  – Prior learning experiences vs. current experience
  – Resilience
  – Engagement
  – Problem solving
  – Motivation
  – Goal establishment
  – Knowledge
Where are we going?

• Developing survey questions
  – Validation through iterative process
  – Broad dissemination

• Establishing data structures for long term sustainability

• Establishing reliable instruments to inform institutional assessment around experiential learning
  – A national model

• Broadening the assessment conversation nationally and internationally
Towards...

• Practice
  – Experiential learning offerings
  – Enhancing integration of curricular and experiential SLOs

• Impact
  – Community of engaged learners
  – Enhancing learning outcomes

• How can experiential learning be integrated into existing programs/curriculum to enhance outcomes?
Breakout Activity

• How would you incorporate an experiential learning opportunity into an academic program/curriculum that you’re familiar with?

• What new or enhanced learning outcomes do you expect to see?
Questions?