



# Fundamentals For Experiential learning

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# Why Experiential Learning?

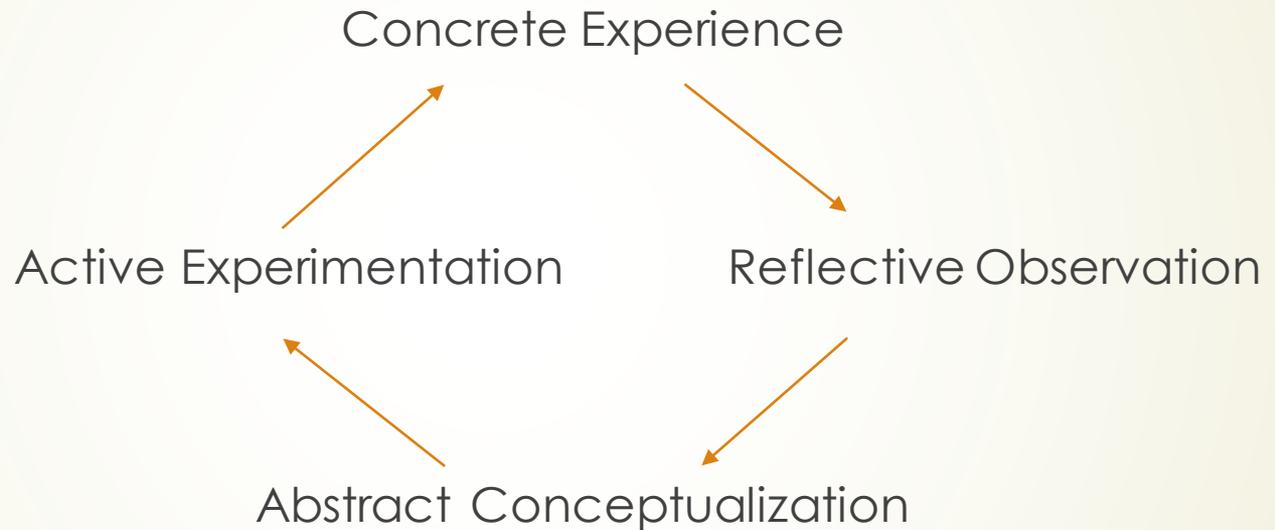
- ▶ To facilitate learning by doing - the natural way
- ▶ Academically focused experiences provide a **context** to apply and practice new concepts/methods/theories/policies
  - ▶ A context with real people who have real personalities, different interpretations, individual agendas and personal motivations
  - ▶ Make the abstract real, make the unfamiliar more familiar
- ▶ They can go to Google for facts, figures and information..... They will gain **wisdom and understanding from experiences**



# You Don't need to be the Wizard..... But Don't be afraid to think like Him

- ▶ The Lion didn't think he was brave ..... Until he had to be
- ▶ The Tin Man didn't think he had a heart ..... Until he got the chance to use it
- ▶ The Scarecrow didn't think he had a brain ..... Until he needed to use it
- ▶ The Wizard validated their bravery, compassion and wit but never gave them anything..... Students are responsible for their own learning, what opportunity will you give them?

# Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1986)





# Connect Experience With Curriculum

- ▶ Experiential Learning can occur across a wide range of modalities
  - ▶ Academic Service-Learning
  - ▶ Volunteering
  - ▶ Case Studies
  - ▶ Group Projects
  - ▶ Active research - experimentation, investigation, sampling, reporting
  - ▶ Study abroad
  - ▶ Capstone projects
  - ▶ Internships
  - ▶ Civic Engagement – generating dialogue, forums, raising awareness, petitioning, advocating, understanding community issues, etc.



# Academic Service-learning



- ▶ “a teaching and learning strategy used to achieve targeted course learning objectives by integrating meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” (National Service Learning Clearinghouse)
- ▶ “a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students. . . seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves. In the process, students link personal and social development with academic and cognitive development. . . **experience enhances understanding; understanding leads to more effective action.**” (Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles, Jr.)



# Academic Service-learning



- ▶ Research oriented - what would we like to know about this population/phenomenon or what resources would be beneficial to aid those working on the front-line?
- ▶ Action oriented - what can the students do to directly help those who are impacted by.....
- ▶ Project oriented - can the students in your class work towards a larger scale initiative or deliverables that will serve to further the communities ability to address.....



# Academic Service-learning



- ▶ Non-profits generally make the best community partners, especially those who cannot afford to hire professional help but are in need of professional work
- ▶ Be cautious when partnering with for profit businesses, we don't want our students talents to be exploited for someone else's profit
- ▶ Be open minded when designing an SL experience – wherever there's a need, there's potential for SL, but, there may of may not be a connection to your course



# Volunteering

- ▶ Students perform needed or wanted community service but not necessarily tied to course learning objectives
- ▶ A great way for students to immediately contribute to a cause, gain insights about community needs and make new connections
- ▶ A great precursor to discussing social problems and helping students to feel like empowered and engaged citizens
- ▶ Students can go to the CSA office on campus or visit <http://www.oakland.edu/csa/volunteer/>



# Case Studies

- ▶ Simulated scenarios, events or situations that enable students to learn and experience course concepts in contextualized relatable ways. “What would I do?”
- ▶ “The simplest way to provide an experience”
- ▶ Lead your students into the “Gray”
  - ▶ We all live in a subjective world with situationally dependent complexities, not necessarily right or wrong, good or bad, black and white, but, if, when, considering....



# Debating/role play

- ▶ Students portray roles or sides of a given issue to argue either on a team or individually against classmates
  - ▶ “The quickest way to gain perspective.”
  - ▶ Research the person, learn the arguments, work in teams, tap into the spirit of competition – Establish understanding
- 



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

How does **who we are** and **what we know** *connect* with what **we are experiencing**, what is **being taught** and what **we will actually learn**?

There is a difference between each of these and a way to bridge all of this.....



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

## **Critical Reflection**

The intent of reflection is to force students to pause and think about what has happened or is happening and how does it connect with what they already know and the content you are teaching them.

Make it “sticky”



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

“Stickiness” seeks to explain what makes a concept memorable or interesting

## “SUCCES”

**S**imple – Find the core of any idea, be concise

**U**nexpected – Grab people’s attention by surprising them

**C**oncrete – make sure the idea can be grasped and remembered later, use solid ideas

**C**redible – make the idea believable, provide evidence if possible

**E**mootional – help people see the importance of an idea, why should they care?

**S**tories – empower people to use an idea through narrative

“Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die by Chip Heath, Dan Heath” (2007)



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

## Critical Reflection.....

### IS

Analytical and Rigorous  
Carefully guided for critical thinking  
About showcasing reasoning  
Individual and collaborative – for sharing  
A chance to learn how one thinks and relates to course content  
A process designed to generate, deepen  
Document learning

### IS NOT

Touchy-Feely  
Just a flow of thought – diary entry  
About personal opinions  
To be done alone –introspective  
Therapy  
Busy work that is irrelevant to learning



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

Shift your thinking.....critical reflection is writing *for* learning not writing for after learning has taken place. **Not an expression of learning that has already occurred *but* a vehicle for learning itself.**

Focus on providing students with opportunities to apply lessons and concepts in different settings so they can develop new insights, ideas and unique ways of relating to the content.



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

Reflection is an **assessment** tool.....

**Preflection** – Take a snapshot of your students by starting your course with a preflection assignment before the experience takes place.

From COM 101....

*“What role do you believe communication plays in the creation of personal and academic success in college?”*

*“What steps have you taken or are you taking to increase your chances of success in college?”*

*“What does success mean to you?”*



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

Reflection should occur throughout the semester

- ▶ Writing and discussion prompts before and after key events
- ▶ Don't restrict reflection to writing only, discuss, students will benefit from hearing other students
- ▶ Use written reflections to prompt discussion and vice versa
- ▶ End of project reflection – connect to course content, personalize understanding and values, extend to future expectations and professional applications



# Connect Experience With Curriculum

Students come to us at various levels of cognition and ability and can move to different levels of skill and understanding as the experience goes on.....

1. Foundation: Knowledge and skills
2. Identify the problem: Relevant information & uncertainties
3. Explore interpretations and connections
4. Prioritize alternatives and communicate conclusions
5. Integrate, monitor and refine strategies for re-addressing the problem

Wolcott, S.K., & Lynch, C.L. (2001). Task prompts for different levels in steps to better thinking. Ideas evolved from King and Kitchener's (1994) reflective judgement model of cognitive development.

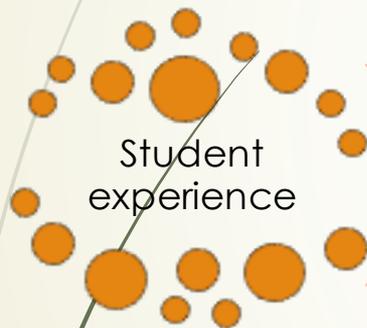


# Connect Experience With Curriculum – You Try

How can these objectives be met through experience?

- ▶ **On campus service projects** – Why is the service needed? How will a service be provided? Reflection? (*engaging and connecting to OU community, exploring areas of self-discovery, understanding human differences*)
- ▶ **Group research projects on something OU related** - case study, role play as staff or faculty member or their classmates – each student has a well-defined role and responsibility to contribute to the final project/report (*engaging and connecting to OU community, exploring areas of self-discovery, understanding human differences*)
- ▶ **Case studies on Communication successes and failures**, could be OU or external community – analyze in groups and among entire class, good communication practice and bad communication practice - what is the difference? (*engaging and connecting to OU community, exploring areas of self-discovery, understanding human differences*)

# College experience to Career path



- Applied learning
- First opportunity
- First impression



Internship, field experience, practicum

- Professional opportunity to showcase skill and value
- Employer - "Do we like this student?"
- Student - "Do I like this profession?"



Professional references  
Graduation

"Yes I would recommend or hire this new graduate because I know them and their work"



Job offer  
New Career

"I got the job because of the connection I made and what I can do"



# Upcoming Workshops.....

## Experiential Learning Series Fall 2016 at CETL

- ▶ **Serving the need and developing the community: One discipline is never enough** – November 23, 2016
- ▶ Discuss the importance and art of forging high quality community partnerships and why this is so important to our students
- ▶ Share a model for ensuring that genuine community needs are being met and students are learning holistically in the academic service-learning format
- ▶ Present examples of how disciplines can and should work together to meet community needs while facilitating the acquisition of important new skills for students



# Upcoming Workshops.....

## Experiential Learning Series Fall 2016 at CETL

- ▶ **Mirror, mirror.... the art of reflection before, during and after student experiences** – November 9, 2016
- ▶ Discuss the purpose of reflection as a vehicle for learning and as a tool for assessment
- ▶ Share a model for the facilitation of student and faculty reflection before, during and after student experiences
- ▶ Present a format for guided questions that drive thoughtful discussions and written responses while intentionally connecting experiences to the achievement of course learning objectives

# HAPPY TRAILS!!!

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*“Action without study is fatal. Study without action is futile.” - Mary Beard*

