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Implementation of a Pediatric Simulation Cooperative to Enhance Clinical Self-Efficacy

Christy Blount, Alissa Parrish, Cassie Burks, Nicole Blackburn,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

The collaboration between the two rural campuses providing pediatric simulation training for pre-licensure BSN nursing students is a strategic approach to address the challenge of limited pediatric clinical placements in non-urban areas. By sharing resources and expertise, these campuses have created an innovative solution to ensure students receive quality experiential learning using grant funds to procure a pediatric simulator.

The use of standardized scenarios, scripts, debriefing plans, and a shared medium-fidelity simulator ensures consistency and effectiveness in the simulation experience. This approach allows students to practice essential nursing skills in a controlled environment while caring for a child experiencing anaphylaxis.

The learning opportunities provided by the simulation are comprehensive, covering nursing assessments, patient communication, collaboration with healthcare team members, medication administration, prioritization, and SBAR reporting. These skills are crucial for nursing students to develop, especially in pediatric care.

The study's use of a quantitative, quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of the simulation in improving students' confidence in pediatric nursing care is commendable. The results indicate a significant improvement in self-efficacy among participants post-simulation, highlighting the value of simulation-based learning in enhancing clinical skills and confidence. The findings suggest that collaborative efforts between rural nursing programs can be highly beneficial in providing students with practical learning experiences that boost their clinical self-efficacy. By pooling resources and expertise, these programs can overcome geographical limitations and ensure students receive quality education. Overall, this initiative serves as a model for innovative teaching methods in nursing education.

The Perceived Effect of Physically Active Lifestyles on Depression, Anxiety, and Stress in College Students

Laura Taylor, Union University

Physical activity levels in college students tend to drop leaving university students more vulnerable to a high prevalence of mental health disorders. This study examined the relationship between the amount of physical activity students participate in over a seven-day period and the amount of negative emotional state (depression, anxiety, and stress) college students experienced while reflecting on their psychological health over a seven-day period. Additionally, it examined the negative emotional state between college students enrolled in physical activity courses (PACT) compared to students who chose not to enroll in physical activity courses. This study was conducted at a mid-sized rural university in Tennessee. The sample consisted of 307 undergraduate college students. Each participant completed a survey to collect demographic information and obtain a score for physical activity levels and negative emotional state. Physical activity levels were measured using the International Physical Activity Questionnaire, and

negative emotional state was measured using the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale. The results showed physically active lifestyles could not clearly predict sub scores for depression, anxiety, and stress in college students; however, there was not a significant correlation among sub scores for depression, anxiety, and stress between college students enrolled in physical activity courses compared to students not enrolled in physical activity courses.

Southern Shadow: Beyond the Classroom, Into the World
Lorie Jones, The University of Tennessee Southern

By stepping beyond the confines of the traditional classroom, participants in the undergraduate business programs and MBA program at UT Southern engage in an immersive experience involving leadership. A business leader is actively shadowed by undergrads, and an organizational executive is shadowed by MBA candidates. Students gain valuable insights while spending time in an active work zone with professionals in the field. Benefits include personal growth, professional development, and a deeper understanding of local and possibly global contexts. Use of AI in the shadowed organizations is explored as part of the learning encounter.

AI in Action: Teaching Business Analytics with RapidMiner
Lorie Jones, Laurie Pewitt, The University of Tennessee Southern

The presentation will explore the integration of AI into business education using RapidMiner, a beginner-friendly tool that is free for students and educators in a non-commercial setting. By leveraging RapidMiner's powerful machine learning and predictive capabilities, business educators may create hands-on learning experiences that simulate real-world scenarios such as forecasting and pricing strategies. The session will showcase practical examples from the co-presenter's dissertation research as well highlights concerning how the tool empowers students to build, evaluate, and optimize models.

Beyond the Glass, Face to Face: Positive Student Interactions with Travel, Cultures, and Experiential Learning through the Lens of Cross-Cultural Communicative Exchanges
William Bishop, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Student experiences in the post-secondary classroom regarding history, culture, language, and other contemporary social exchanges are best accentuated and fully engrained when the in-classroom knowledge is utilized, explored, and contextualized within outside cultural experiences. Travel and the chance to see, hear, experience, and participate in person in a dynamically evolving total emersion environment offers first-person insight into the third-person descriptions and analyses of the variety of sociocultural phenomena discussed in post-secondary courses. Research into the positive effects of student travel indicate that students experience increased personal benefits such as boosted confidence, an increased and more nuanced global sociocultural understanding, and an increase in interpersonal empathy. Academically, students have increased attention, contextualization, and the ability to employ higher-order skills more thoroughly and meaningfully when assessed. These factors are perpetuated and reinforced through the necessary communicative exchanges experiences offered through travel and the recounting of these travel experiences.

Zest for Success: Building a Business at the Lemonade Stand
Lorie Jones, Laurie Pewitt, Sherry Philpot, The University of Tennessee Southern

The poster presentation will demonstrate how a simple lemonade stand can transform into an engaging outreach event to teach middle schoolers essential business concepts. Learn how UT Southern partners with the local Chamber of Commerce to deliver the "Lemonade Day" curriculum to a local school. Lesson plans and activities include budgeting, marketing, and customer service. Benefits for students include building connections with higher ed, developing a hands-on entrepreneurship activity, and the experience of giving back. A resource will also be provided for educators interested in replicating "Lemonade Day" in their communities.

Ancient Solutions for 21st Century Assessment Challenges
Benton Jones, Bryan College

The ease of access to artificial intelligence (AI) by students toward the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century has caused a crisis of confidence by many professors in their ability to accurately assess learning, specifically critical application of new knowledge. Many responses to this newly emerged issue have responded in kind by applying advanced technology to monitor students' use of AI in the form of plagiarism checkers, lockdown browsers, etc. Unfortunately, no clear solution has emerged. In this presentation, the presenter suggests a return to age-old methods of assessment within the physical classroom to directly assess the retention and application of new knowledge, including the following: Hand-written essay exams, hand-written course papers, classroom discussion, extemporaneous presentations, dialogic examination, case studies, and critical analysis of AI-generated information (the provenance of which is generally unknown) using trusted print sources.

This approach is not a luddite 'push back' against artificial intelligence. Instead, this approach assumes that students will have access to artificial intelligence outside the classroom, and it attempts to instill and reinforce the values of ethical use of technology, critical thinking, and fact-checking by students as they navigate their use of technology, applying a new rendition of the flipped classroom.

Essentially, this approach asks the students: Can you recall, share, analyze, explain, and apply what you are expected to know while 'unplugged'?

Bridging STEM Education and Community Outreach: A Collaborative, Experiential-Learning Experience for Pre-Service Teachers
Leigh Hester, Dakota Trammell, Athens State University

This presentation will showcase a unique partnership between pre-service secondary STEM education teachers at a small rural liberal arts university and a non-profit community outreach program within the university's service area. Pre-service teachers designed and delivered engaging STEM lessons for campers ranging from first to eighth grades. This collaboration provided authentic experience in hands-on learning, which will significantly benefit the pre-service teachers as they prepare for their future classrooms. The partnership also allowed the non-profit to provide quality STEM lessons to students taught by trained pre-service teachers.

Campers explored engineering by constructing boats, investigated chemical and physical changes by making ice cream in a bag and creating "potions" with dry ice, and experimented with forces through mini-rockets—along with many other exciting hands-on science activities. Meanwhile, the pre-service teachers gained valuable experiential hands-on learning.

During the camp's planning phase, pre-service teachers developed inquiry-based, developmentally appropriate lessons. During the camp, they taught daily sessions, managed classrooms, and assisted with logistics such as snacks, pick-up, and drop-off. The non-profit's educational enrichment team leader handled participant recruitment, supply purchases, and overall camp coordination. In this presentation, the presenters will discuss their roles in planning the camp, the challenges encountered, and key insights gained from this immersive hands-on teaching experience.

Beyond the Hard Skills: Integrating Soft Skills in Experiential Learning
Tim Newman, Dream Chasers Management Group

In today's evolving workforce, technical expertise alone is not enough. Employers are increasingly seeking candidates with strong communication, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills, yet many educational programs still prioritize content mastery over holistic professional development. Experiential learning presents a powerful opportunity to bridge this gap, but only when soft skills are intentionally incorporated into the design. This session will explore how experiential learning can be transformed into a vehicle for both technical and interpersonal skill-building. The presenter and participants will discuss key soft skills that employers value most, such as resilience, conflict resolution, leadership, and adaptability, and examine how different industries successfully embed these competencies into hands-on learning experiences. Through case studies and real-world examples from business, healthcare, STEM, and education, the presenter will highlight strategies for designing activities that challenge students to practice and refine their soft skills in authentic settings.

Attendees will learn how to integrate structured reflection, feedback loops, and collaborative learning models to reinforce soft skill development. The presentation will also explore effective ways to measure and assess these skills, ensuring that students recognize their growth and can articulate their strengths to future employers.

Participants will leave with actionable insights and practical frameworks for designing experiential-learning opportunities that cultivate well-rounded, workforce-ready individuals. The session will conclude with an open Q&A and brief discussion to allow for the exchange of ideas, ensuring that attendees gain both theoretical knowledge and practical strategies to implement in their own programs.

Soft Skills in Action: A Hands-On Approach to Experiential Learning
Tim Newman, Dream Chasers Management Group

Soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and communication, are best developed through practice, yet they are often overlooked in experiential-learning design. This interactive

workshop will provide participants with engaging, hands-on exercises to help students strengthen these vital skills.

The session will begin with a brief overview of why soft skills are critical in today's job market, followed by a series of immersive activities. Participants will engage in role-playing exercises that simulate workplace scenarios, including conflict resolution, persuasive communication, and collaborative problem-solving. Additionally, small groups will work through real-world case studies, reflecting on the soft skills necessary for success in each scenario.

Attendees will also participate in a guided brainstorming session, in which they will design their own experiential-learning activities that incorporate soft skill development. Facilitators will provide templates and structured feedback to help refine these ideas into practical, implementable strategies.

By the end of the session, participants will leave with a toolkit of exercises, techniques for assessing soft skills, and a concrete plan to integrate these strategies into their own programs. Whether they are educators, program designers, or industry professionals, attendees will gain valuable insights into creating well-rounded, workforce-ready individuals.

Enhancing Accessibility and Accreditation in Higher Education Through AI: Integrating Experiential Learning

Jacques Singleton, Topeka Singleton,
Arkansas State University

This proposal underscores the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to revolutionize higher education by improving accessibility for students with disabilities and optimizing accreditation processes. By integrating these advancements with experiential learning, this proposal aims to address the "Assessment, Evaluation, & Student Research" and "Post-secondary Education" conference tracks.

This session aims to equip educators, administrators, and policymakers with the knowledge to implement AI for more inclusive and efficient educational experiences; showcase how AI can optimize accreditation processes while enhancing the quality of experiential learning; and discuss practical applications and case studies demonstrating the successful integration of AI in higher education.

By exploring the intersection of AI, accessibility, and experiential learning, this presentation will provide valuable insights and practical strategies for transforming higher education. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of how to leverage AI to create more inclusive and effective learning environments.

Using Experiential Learning to Impact Nursing Students' Self-Perceived Clinical Judgment
Kellie Ashburn, The University of Tennessee at Martin

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), the organization responsible for nursing licensure, tasked nurse educators with improving student nurse clinical judgment education to ensure new graduates are prepared to practice safely. Research shows novice nurses are unable to appropriately apply clinical judgment when conducting patient care; half of all new nurses are involved in patient care errors, and only 20% of employers are pleased with the decision-making skills of beginner nurses.

The researcher of this study conducted a quasi-experimental study with 34 senior-level bachelor's of nursing degree students to determine the impact experiential-learning has on novice nurses' perceived level of clinical judgment using the Skalsky Clinical Judgment Scale© to quantify the participants' responses. Types of experiential-learning methods used include case studies, interactive gaming, group discussion, online polling, and reflection. Each of the four phases of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory were utilized. Results revealed a statistically significant increase in scores, demonstrating the effectiveness of using experiential-learning methods to improve students' self-perceived levels of clinical judgment. Practical recommendations include integrating experiential learning into nursing curricula to better prepare students for complex clinical environments. These findings are particularly relevant to educators seeking evidence-based strategies to address the clinical judgment gap in undergraduate nursing education; however, the experiential-learning method may be applicable to other educational disciplines as well.

Insights on the Impact of Community Service on Student Development and Future Careers
Scarlett Cook, Sandy Mehlhorn, Diana Watson,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

For many students at The University of Tennessee at Martin, community service is required as part of membership in student organizations and some courses. To gain a better insight into how community service impacts the emotions of these students and gauge how beneficial they think it is to their personal growth and future professions, undergraduate students were asked to complete a survey. The survey asked what type of community service projects students had been involved in, how many hours they volunteered, how it had impacted them, and if they would volunteer again, just to name a few of the questions. The researchers anticipated that through this research, data would be provided to support the theory that community service has a present and future impact on students by helping them in their future professional career and being more involved in community. Responses (n=50) indicated that students averaged 1–10 hours per month of community service and that they are extremely likely to volunteer again. Students felt as though participating in community service had a positive impact on their current lives and was integral in building the students' leadership skills. Students also felt that professional/graduate programs value community service and participating in the service helped build community connections. Overall, the students at UTM provided data that supports that participating in community service has multiple positive outcomes that not only affect current lives but also future endeavors.

Mission Objective: Vet School
Hannah Meier, Diana Watson, Sandy Mehlhorn,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

Being a member of the Tennessee Air National Guard is experiential learning at its finest. Learning to work for the government, managing forces of people from all backgrounds and age groups, and traveling the world are some of the experiences gained from this organization. Life skills learned from the National Guard are transferable to university life. For many students, managing the balance between university, work, and personal life can be challenging. Often being in the Guard is the first time students have to be their own time managers without parents/guardians overseeing their schedules and constantly reminding them of tasks that need to be done. For students who strive to attend ultra-competitive graduate programs such as veterinary school, the obtaining the skill of time management and achieving academic success are crucial beginning freshman year. In addition, responsibilities with the Guard and a 30/40-hours a week job, can be overwhelming without the right attitude and training to handle the stresses and challenges that are demanded. This study will demonstrate how the skills learned in the Air National Guard are transferable for navigating the demands of life as a soldier, student, and employee.

Experiencing Animal Agriculture on a Royal Level
Taylor Burke, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Livestock Shows are an integral part of the animal agriculture industry as they create ways for producers to come together, showcase their genetics, and push each other to constantly improve their livestock. The American Royal is one of the premier livestock exhibitions that promotes the animal industry from production to consumer goods. It hosts several events throughout the year, the largest being an annual two-week long livestock show in Kansas City. The organization is passionate about educating the next generation and recruits 10 collegiate scholars from across the country each year to assist with the show and obtain invaluable experience. The experiences offered at the event ranged from meetings with industry leaders like Dairy Farmers of America, American Hereford Association, and Seaboard Foods, to learning about organizations involved with animal health and consumer safety like Merck Animal Health and Corbion. In addition to exposing scholars to the wide range of the animal industry, American Royal also assisted in the traditional aspects of a livestock show such as show ring set up, facilitating judges, and organizing registration for classes.

Students participating as scholars led to a deeper understanding and appreciation for the far-reaching aspects of the industry, multiple networking opportunities, and the discovery of new career opportunities. Experiences such as these are essential for college students to be successful in their careers and to continue the advancement of the livestock industry as a whole.

Evaluating In-Person Versus Video Instruction of Animal Husbandry Skills
Rachel Werner, Stephanie Jones, Diana Watson, Amber Moore,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

With an ever increasingly digital world, more educational institutions are exploring ways to expand their online learning footprint. In the world of animal agriculture, animal husbandry skills are traditionally taught through in-person instruction and demonstration. This study is designed to compare a student's ability to comprehend and execute a skill when taught through in-person versus video instruction. In this study, 20 students with no prior equine experience will be recruited and randomly place into two groups. One group will be the control, being taught the process of administering an oral medication to a horse through classic instruction using face-to-face teaching prior to performing the task. A second group will be shown an instructional video of the same skill prior to their completing the task. An impartial observer will score the students on their skill level and proper execution of the task. This study is designed to determine if certain areas of study benefit from in-person demonstration. Areas of additional study could include more complicated tasks to assess the viability of more complex, hands-on skills and whether online instruction is even effective.

Theileriosis: An Emerging Threat in The State of Tennessee
Lilly Mosley, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Theileria orientalis Ikeda is an emerging parasite in the United States and is causing immense concern among livestock producers as it causes infectious anemia in cattle. In the summer of 2022, the first case of the reportable disease *theileriosis* was diagnosed in the state of Tennessee. *Theileria* is a blood-borne parasite that is spread by the Asian longhorned tick that infects and animal's red and white blood cells. This disease-causing parasite shows similar clinical signs to another common infectious disease, *Bovine Anaplasmosis*. Because of the similarities between the two diseases, delayed diagnosis and incorrect treatment occurs. This new disease has no approved treatment and can result in major economic loss due to death, illness, and decreased production in cattle. The mortality rate from this infection can range from 5–90% in naive herds. If cattle recover from the disease, they may still remain carriers posing a continual threat to other cattle. Animal science students, especially those with a strong interest in beef cattle production, must take a leadership role in educating producers about the dangers of this emerging disease and how the producers can protect their herds. This research is the first step in creating educational materials as a source of up-to-date information and knowledge on the progression and, hopefully, future treatment of the disease.

Gaining Experience in Wildlife Disease Surveillance
Mackenzie Stockton, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency is responsible for managing the state's fish and wildlife populations. The agency's conservation responsibilities include monitoring the deer population for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and hemorrhagic diseases, such as Blue Tongue and Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), particularly during hunting season. Through collaboration with TWRA, The University of Tennessee students assist in the research by collecting data from deer populations to assess morbidity rates and understand the effects of

disease on deer health and behavior. CWD is a prion disease that affects the brain and nervous system of cervids, leading to neurological deterioration. Lymph-node samples from deer are collected and sent to a lab for diagnostic testing. CWD is transmitted through contact with soil, water, or vegetation contaminated by infected carcasses. The environmental persistence of prions is a concern, as they can remain for years and pose a long-term risk. CWD has a poor prognosis, with no known cure or effective treatment, making it a reportable disease. Hemorrhagic diseases like Blue Tongue and EHD are caused by viruses spread by biting midges, resulting in fever, swelling, and hemorrhaging in deer. These diseases are diagnosed with blood tests and PCR analysis. Clinical signs of the diseases include excessive salivation, lameness, and even sudden death. The prognosis for these diseases is also poor, with little chance of recovery once symptoms appear. This collaborative effort described in this presentation helps TWRA monitor disease prevalence, implement strategies to prevent further spread, and allows students to gain first-hand experience in disease surveillance.

Evaluating Conformation at Equine Breeding Inspections
Autumn Brock, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

The evaluation of conformation and temperament are two important factors for determining which animals are capable of producing quality offspring. The Westfalen of North America organization provides equine breeders with the opportunity to present their mares, foals, or stallions for inspection to determine if the animals meet the pedigree requirements to obtain official breed registration status. Being involved with this inspection provided the opportunity to work hands on with equine professionals and to learn what is necessary to achieve a high-level certification. Mares and stallions are presented in hand first allowing for bridle conformation and evaluation of gait elasticity. The horse is then set at liberty for participants to score their canter and temperament. Mares with foals are evaluated together, with the foal free at the mares' sides. Stallions are also evaluated by free jumping and performing under saddle. To obtain official breed registration status, the horse will be scored based on its performance requirements as well as, the health requirements of a veterinary exam. This experience was invaluable for any student interested in the equine industry as well as veterinary students, allowing the development of proper equine handling while gaining a better understanding of how to evaluate correct conformation.

Tracking Potential Correlations Between Calving Times and Feeding Times
Ella Joyce Poston, Halle Ann Casey, Georgia Harvell, Amber Moore, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Many cattle producers have suggested that cows and heifers fed in the evening time will calve during daylight hours. A potential factor in supporting this theory could be that cattle have an increase in rumen contractions after feeding and a decrease seen in contractions before calving. This concept would lead to more daylight calving due to less rumen pressure. Previous studies have documented that twice daily feeding does influence calving times. In this study at The University of Tennessee at Martin, feeding was done once daily to determine if this act elicited the same response. This technique could improve the chances of producers being able to assist with dystocia and help them to monitor their herds more closely. Data was collected from four different groups: heifers fed in the morning, heifers fed in the evening, cows fed in the morning,

and cows fed in the evening. While many influential variables could have been in effect, the results from this project deemed inconclusive. No significant data was collected that indicated once-daily feeding had a measurable effect. By designing and completing this research project, students were able to gain valuable skills in research, large animal husbandry, and clinical observation.

Exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence in Veterinary Medicine
Charley Crawford, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Technology is rapidly increasing in today's society with the help of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence (AI) is the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that humans would normally perform. AI, specifically in veterinary medicine, has advanced tremendously within the last few years. Computer programs have been designed that can perform diagnostic tests that were once done by veterinarians. This technology is known to help veterinarians with making timely diagnosis' by giving them accurate results for their patients. Pre-veterinary students must understand the advancements that are being made in artificial intelligence as well as the limitations this phenomenon can bring to practice. Despite being promoted by the American Veterinary Medical Association, concerns have arisen that these advancements may have a negative effect on veterinary medicine. Exploring the use of AI in veterinary medicine allows students to grow with the industry and help navigate the future by determining if AI is worth the time, investment, and training that comes with this technological advancement.

The EdD and Experiential Learning: Is AI a Barrier or Support?
Tania Reis, Arkansas State University

Doctoral education can be an experiential and transformative experience for students. Most students earning an Ed.D. or Ph.D. in educational leadership are practicum focused and work full-time as K-12 teachers, administrators, or higher education professionals. Working in the field of education, many doctoral students are required to adhere to multiple state and national standards, stakeholders' criteria, and shifting expectations. Their professional workdays are booked and busy. Doctoral students report artificial intelligence is a valuable tool that helps support them in their workplace environments.

Still, doctoral programs demand a high level of rigor in regard to research and writing. Also, many of the pedagogical activities in a doctoral program build a holistic learning experience. Some of these experiences are better mitigated by artificial intelligence than others. This presentation will showcase examples from a single Ed.D. program in which artificial intelligence both enhanced and limited the depth of the student doctoral experience. The presentation will be conversational and allow for collegial sharing.

Connecting Coursework with Career Readiness: Experiential- Learning Option for Human Resource Students

Tina Camba, Gary Valcana, Athens State University

Students in human resource (HR) online courses have the opportunity to participate in experiential learning that allows them to gain HR experience while earning course credit. The experiential-learning activity provides learning and skill attainment beyond the online classroom. Through experiential learning, students actively participate in professional organizations and build networks to prepare for entry into the HR profession. Through engaging in hands-on-learning, students are able to attain the career skills needed to fill an HR role.

HR students are given the choice to select the experiential-learning option or to complete an alternate assignment. This experiential-learning option requires students to join the National Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Chapter and the University SHRM Student Chapter. Students choose from a list of qualifying experiential-learning activities, such as HR job-shadowing, independent research projects, participation in HR conferences, and engaging in HR professional development. Students can expect to engage and log an average of two hours of experiential learning per week during the semester. Students submit this log along with a reflection video highlighting "a-ha moments" from their experiential-learning experiences three times during the semester.

In this presentation, the presenters will discuss their roles in planning and administering experiential learning for both HR undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in online courses over a two-year period. They will discuss obstacles faced and lessons learned through this robust hands-on educational learning experience from an instructor perspective. Lastly, presenters will share insights gained from students who have engaged in this immersive experiential-learning opportunity.

Leveraging ChatGPT To Optimize Human Resource Management, Student Experiential Learning, and Career Readiness

Tina Camba, Athens State University

ChatGPT, a generative artificial intelligence-based chatbot, is a topic of interest and discussion for educators, scholars, and practitioners (Kwan, 2023). In the human resource (HR) field, employees are expected to be familiar with the benefits and downsides of using ChatGPT. Understanding the ethical and appropriate uses of ChatGPT is an essential career skill for HR practitioners. Students who seek to enter the HR field benefit from learning how to leverage ChatGPT and attaining this skill safely in a classroom setting.

Graduate students in a strategic human resource management program had the opportunity to participate in two experiential-learning activities to build career skills in the areas of recruitment and selection. This experiential-learning opportunity created a bridge between HR practitioners and HR students. Students watched tutorial videos from an HR practitioner who uses ChatGPT. Next, students were assigned three-part assignments to use ChatGPT to generate recruitment documents, such as a job posting and interview questions, submit revised documents, and

provide a written and recorded reflection on their key learnings from these activities. HR practitioners then provided feedback to students on their assignments.

In this presentation, the presenter will discuss her role in planning and administering ChatGPT-based experiential-learning assignments in an online classroom. She will address challenges faced and lessons learned as the educator and share surprising insights from students who used ChatGPT to build and bolster their recruitment and selection skills.

Enhancing Experiential Learning in a Graduate Online Internal Audit Course through AI Enhanced Simulations
Santhosh Abraham, Union University, Eric Bostwick, The University of West Florida

This paper describes a four-step process to improve student learning using technology-related projects in an online, graduate-level, internal audit course.

1. ***Identify a learning gap*** related to a course objective and/or future career activity: Common gaps include topics for which application or understanding is difficult using traditional instruction. Identifying gap topics not only highlights "low-hanging fruit" in which the largest improvements in student learning may be achieved but also guides the selection of projects so that technology is not just added for the sake of adding technology. The learning gaps identified in the example course were qualitative evidence and interviewing.
2. ***Match a technology-related assignment*** to the learning gap: This course used simulations developed by Ernst & Young and assigned an AI-enhanced article review describing how AI was used in the internal audit process of a particular firm.
3. ***Implement the assignment*****:** Since the projects were ready to use and were completed outside of class, the impact on faculty workload was minimal. Details will be included in the presentation.
4. ***Evaluate student learning*****:** Reflective feedback solidifies student learning. Student feedback was favorable and will be summarized in the presentation.

This implementation pattern will help faculty improve student learning by implementing technology-related projects in a guided way. Beginning with the identification of learning gaps results in significant learning gains for students and successful implementation will encourage faculty to continue adding technology-related projects to improve student learning.

Embracing Neurodiversity: Supporting All Learners in Higher Education
Clinton Smith, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Session Description: This session focuses on the importance of recognizing and accommodating the wide range of neurodiverse students in colleges and universities. Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in human cognition, including conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and others. The session explores strategies and best practices that institutions can adopt to create inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all learners.

Session Objectives:

- The objectives of the session are designed to provide participants with knowledge, strategies, and tools to create inclusive educational environments.
- Participants will gain a deeper understanding of neurodiverse conditions (e.g., autism, ADHD, dyslexia) and how they manifest in the learning process.
- Practical teaching strategies and classroom adaptations that support neurodiverse students will be introduced and discussed, ensuring equal opportunities for success.

Attendees will be encouraged to share their experiences and challenges related to supporting neurodiverse students in their institutions. Working in small groups, attendees will brainstorm solutions to these challenges using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive teaching practices. After group discussions, each group will present their ideas, fostering a collaborative environment and encouraging participants to think critically about how to apply these strategies in their own institutions. The session ensures that participants are not just passive recipients of information but active contributors to the conversation on neurodiversity. These engagement strategies will inspire attendees to take immediate, tangible steps toward making higher education more inclusive for neurodiverse students. The goal is to empower attendees with the knowledge, confidence, and resources they need to take meaningful actions in their own educational contexts.

The session is fundamentally focused on promoting the inclusion of neurodiverse individuals (students with disabilities such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and others). It seeks to break down barriers in the educational environment that these students often face. The session directly targets how higher education institutions can accommodate diverse learners, ensuring that all students—regardless of cognitive ability—are provided with fair access to educational opportunities.

Are You Stressed?
Shelley Stout, Laura Brown, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Seaward (2021) reported that 75–90 % of all visits to primary-care physicians are for stress-related issues. Everyone deals with stress whether good or bad. Stress can have negative effects on one's overall health if not managed. This session will provide a variety of hands-on activities to assist with effective coping skills and relaxation techniques. Activities will include art therapy, communication skills, mental imagery, and time management. Warning: Some of these activities may include crayons!

Cultivating Accessible Agriculture by Serving Outside the Classroom
John Cole, The University of Tennessee at Martin

A west Tennessee poultry entrepreneur needed a solution to improve the mobility of his chicken tractors that are used to house his flock of chickens. A UT Martin student partnered with the Tennessee Agribility program to provide an answer to the problem. The student, under the guidance of his course instructor, conceptualized, designed, built, and implemented a viable solution that aided the small-scale producer in continuing to use the portable shelters in his operation. This project gave a unique opportunity for the student to engage in experiential

learning outside the classroom while also serving the community through meeting the direct need of a disadvantaged farmer. The student was able to tackle a real-world problem, evaluate possible solutions, and complete a project that made an immediate impact on local agriculture.

Taking the (Ag) Business Out of Vet Science: Why Vet Science Students Are Not Minoring in Ag Business

Clint Ary, Brittany Cole, Jason Roberts, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Undergraduate veterinary science students prioritize vet school prerequisite courses over minor coursework. This decision may leave them lacking practice management skills. Minoring in agriculture business is a way for veterinary students to gain business skills. This paper uses a survey of upper-level undergraduate veterinary science and technology students to determine why these students are not minoring in business.

Only 14% of vet science and technology students surveyed pursue a minor. An overwhelming majority indicated workload levels, course rotations, and low interest as roadblocks to adding a minor. However, 90% were unaware the ag business minor only requires one extra course, and nearly 60% indicated a preference for removing the accounting requirement. Making the minor more accessible to veterinary science and technology students is worth noting because 90% of students believe a minor is helpful in a veterinary career. The additional stress of the minor coursework outweighs the benefit in its current form. Ninety percent of students indicate they are more interested in a veterinary practice management minor than an ag business minor because it is more applicable to their future careers. Overall, students are interested in pursuing minors to make them more competitive but want help from their advisors when planning their curricular choices.

The Ad Agency Project: A Model for Experiential Learning in Online Education

Elmer Ragus, Tina Camba, Athens State University

As higher education continues to adapt to the evolving needs of students and industry, experiential learning has become a critical tool for bridging the gap between theory and practice. *The Ad Agency Project* is an innovative, work-integrated learning initiative designed for online students in an integrated marketing communications (IMC) course at Athens State University. This project simulates a real-world advertising agency, where students collaborate remotely to research, strategize, and develop a comprehensive marketing campaign for a live client, fostering problem-solving, teamwork, and applied learning.

This session explores the best practices for designing and implementing experiential-learning projects in online courses. It highlights how interdisciplinary collaboration—specifically between marketing and human resources—expands students' understanding of business strategy, branding, and organizational communication. The discussion will also address challenges and solutions for facilitating hands-on learning in virtual environments, including engagement strategies, assessment methods, and the role of digital tools in project management and collaboration.

By attending this session, participants will gain actionable strategies for integrating interdisciplinary, online experiential learning into their own courses, ensuring students develop critical thinking, digital communication, and professional skill sets applicable across industries. The session will provide a scalable framework for faculty wanting to enhance student engagement and prepare students for real-world workplace expectations in an increasingly digital and collaborative professional landscape.

The Mentor or the Matrix? Traditional Athletic Coaching Mentorship vs. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Simulations

Richard West, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Athletic sport coaches develop their expertise through various methodologies, including formal education, hands-on experience, and mentorship. However, sport coaching literature consistently identifies mentorship as one of the most impactful learning methods for novice coaches. A significant barrier to this approach is limited access to effective mentors, which can hinder the development of practical knowledge essential for success.

This presentation explores how artificial intelligence (AI) can supplement and enhance the coaching/mentorship experience. AI-driven tools can provide novice coaches with simulated scenarios that extend beyond traditional training and tactical content, preparing them for real-world challenges. By engaging with AI-generated case studies, decision-making exercises, and interactive simulations, coaches can refine their leadership, communication, and strategic thinking skills in a controlled environment. Furthermore, this session will examine how AI-powered learning can be integrated into traditional mentorship models, fostering deeper discussions and practical applications within coaching relationships. By expanding the breadth of experiential-learning opportunities available, AI has the potential to accelerate skill development and bridge gaps in mentorship accessibility. Participants will gain insights into implementing AI-based experiential-learning strategies within coaching education programs to better prepare the next generation of sport leaders.

Digital Accessibility and AI

Harriette Speigel, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Among the many uses of artificial intelligence (AI), technologists are exploring ways to use AI to increase Digital Accessibility. Digital Accessibility ensures that a computer user with a disability such as blindness or deafness will be able to use computer-generated information without barriers. The barriers faced by computer users are caused by both lack of knowledge and bad computer practices.

For instance, many computer users are not aware that a word-processing program such as Microsoft Word has built-in features that will provide guaranteed accessibility of a particular document. A computer user with a disability of low vision using accessible technology such as a screen reader will depend on the machine's interpreting text from the document. If the creator of the document has followed the accessibility features of the word-processor, the user will have no problem reaching the information. But if these features have not been used, some of the information will be inaccessible to the user.

Similarly, in creating a video or audio document, best practices such as providing transcripts and captions will ensure that the computer user will be able to access all content. Transcripts are text-based descriptions of what is happening on the video screen or in the audio file, and captions provide text-based real-time interpretation of what is being said in the video.
Many other instances are known of Digital Accessibility's enabling users to have access to content, and the use of AI can both hinder and help the promotion of Digital Accessibility. This presentation will describe the implications of artificial intelligence for Digital Accessibility and how artificial intelligence has been harnessed in promoting Digital Accessibility.

Applied Capital Budgeting: From Class to Company
Brad Childs, Howard Cochran, John Gonas, Belmont University

This presentation showcases the transformation of capital budgeting concepts from classroom theory to real-world application in corporate finance through an innovative case study developed in collaboration with LP Building Solutions. Designed as an experiential-learning project for BBA and MBA students, the case study challenges learners to assess key financial metrics, including NPV (net present value), IRR (internal rate of return), payback period, and strategic alignment within the context of a major corporate investment decision. This case study revolves around the decision to move production into higher value lumber products and the various ways to accomplish this strategic goal.

This presentation details the development process of this case study, from securing the corporate partnership through strategic networking, to navigating challenges such as data confidentiality and aligning academic rigor with industry realities. The presentation highlights the tangible benefits for all stakeholders: Companies receive fresh, innovative perspectives and talent pipelines; students sharpen their analytical decision-making, and presentation skills; and universities enhance their curricula through active industry engagement.

Attendees will gain practical insights into the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned by integrating case-based learning pedagogies into the course design. The presentation showcases the value of a case study partner, offering a roadmap for future academic-industry collaborations across diverse finance topics. This compelling approach serves as an invitation to reimagine finance education by integrating immersive, hands-on, industry-driven, application-based case study learning experiences that prepare students for the dynamic world of corporate finance.

The Entrepreneurial "Hero's Journey:" Utilizing Joseph Campbell's Hero's Story Arc To Facilitate Entrepreneurial Planning through Future Narration
Jonathan Phillips, Belmont University

The presenter will deliver a pedagogical presentation on a unique undergraduate assignment that tasks students with writing a narrative of their future start-up guided by Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey" story arc.

This assignment fulfills a requirement in a course entitled Entrepreneurship in Film and Fiction, which examines the entrepreneurial vocation through works of fiction and film with a focus upon two primary objectives: 1) understanding the commonality between a successful entrepreneur's

path and the key plot points of great film and fiction, and 2) utilizing a firm understanding of classical story arc to understand and enhance the entrepreneur's path.

In the broadest sense, this course highlights the fact that entrepreneurial journeys share much in common with the journeys undertaken in great works of film and fiction, and those journeys often leave outside observers both captivated and inspired. Yet beyond this shared attraction, is a deep connection that may not only illuminate many aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset but also serve as a tool for aspiring entrepreneurs to succeed.

On a more detailed level, this class explores the quintessential story arc of the Hero by examining Joseph Campbell's The Hero's Journey and uses that model to examine key works of film and literature. In doing so, students are enabled to shed new light on the psyche of the entrepreneur and develop a new tool to develop their future entrepreneurial initiatives.

A cornerstone assignment in the course is the "Future Entrepreneurial Hero" narration. After engaging in self-assessment exercises (based upon the Business Model Canvas as explored through Business Model You), students write a 5 – 7 page narrative of their future lives pursuing their start-ups. Writing in a comfortable, narrative format, they write a detailed description of the key achievements and challenges they foresee in pursuit of their entrepreneurial endeavors. In doing so, they align their personal goals and milestones along the way.

Their entrepreneurial and personal aspirations are chronicled with Joseph Campbell's story arc as an organizing principle. As such, students couch their future pursuits along several critical plot points, such as the call to adventure, the crossing of the first threshold, the assemblage of mentors and allies, and the slaying of the dragon. Throughout the course and the narrative, the students recognize the immense amount of change, both in character and skillset, that they must undergo to achieve their future goals.

Cultivating Change in Growing Nations
Ben Therrell, Keith Dooley, Craig Darroch, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Agriculture is the cornerstone of civilization, allowing communities to grow and thrive by cultivating their land and utilizing local resources to produce foodstuffs and materials integral for societal development. Innov8 Africa is an organization that has partnered with UT Martin to share sustainable agricultural practices with the Maasai people of Narok County, Kenya. Innov8 Africa catalyzes agricultural education among the Masaai through eight K–8 learning modules: clean water, food security, reforestation, beekeeping, poultry farming, livestock banking, solar power, and computer technology. Six UT Martin students studied these modules and learned about Maasai culture to create agricultural projects tailored to the needs of the schools that Innov8 sponsors. Projects included demonstrating the effects of pollination on crop production, harvesting fly larvae as a poultry protein source, and producing silage for cattle using crop byproducts. Students also learned about Kenyan agricultural practices and experienced firsthand what life in a developing area is like. School visits brought new perspectives and an exchange of information among the students and Kenyans alike. Participating in a travel study such as this not only gives one a better appreciation of the world around them, but it also ignites a care and passion for new people and relationships. Preserving these connections across the world and

giving university students the opportunity to learn in this capacity provides a lasting, invaluable perspective of the world and their place in it.

An Analytical Reflection on an Online Class Project: Using Faculty Reflection to Enhance Students' Experiential Learning
Alana Daniel, Athens State University

The shift to online learning has caused a rethinking of traditional pedagogical methods, particularly in experiential learning, which relies on direct interaction, hands-on experience, and reflective practices. However, in online learning environments, these elements face significant limitations and challenges with online class projects. As education increasingly transitions to digital platforms, integrating experiential-learning approaches in online settings is essential. The purpose of this proposed presentation is to share challenges and lessons learned through a reflective lens on an online case-based project, examine the role of reflection in improving teaching practices, and evaluate methods to improve students' experiential learning. Furthermore, this presentation highlights the value of faculty reflection in online experiential learning, showing that reflective practices contribute to the improvement of teaching practices and the overall learning experience for students and educators alike.

Teaching Students about Workplace Bullying with Experiential Learning and a Little AI
Lajuan Davis, Shelby Davis, Nikolas Scott, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Students enrolled in 300-level business communication courses were tasked with the assignment of learning about workplace bullying, how to identify it, how to report it, and how to heal from it. In order to encourage the students to research the subject, they were required to give 3 – 5 minute(s) presentations on the topic in class. Previous to giving the presentations, students had to complete outlines of their presentations, which were uploaded to the online student learning system, Canvas. All students in the classes "scored" all presenters and the top-scoring presenters will be giving their impressions of the assignment at the conference. Additionally, after the presentations were given, the class professor demonstrated how AI could help them improve their research efforts and then allowed the students to complete an additional short assignment about their presentation topics, including "Am I the Jerk?" group discussions.

Learning To Use Simulation Software To Model the Effects of Climate Conditions on Soybean Growth
Elea Corson, Anthony Delmond, Joey Mehlhorn, Bethany Wolters,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

As crop modeling becomes an increasingly valuable tool to minimize the cost of field trials, a new crop of researchers and agronomists will need to be trained in the most up-to-date technology. Climate change has been a significant concern in agriculture due to its potential adverse effects on crop production and yield. In 2024, the Tennessee Soybean Promotion Board (TSPB) funded a grant to study how predicted elevations in temperature, solar radiation, and rainfall impact soybean growth in West Tennessee. By predicting how soybeans will react to future changes in climate, producers may be able to adopt strategies to reduce these impacts for future harvests. The Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer (DSSAT) crop

modeling program uses a dynamic model to simulate how selected crops respond to varying climate scenarios, soil parameters, nutrient levels, and management practices. To utilize this program, two faculty members on the grant and an undergraduate student attended the DSSAT 2024 International Training Conference in Griffin, Georgia. The annual conference targets researchers and professionals who will utilize the program in their work. The undergraduate honors student is planning to pursue a graduate degree in an area of plant science. This project has allowed her to train on a software program, develop multiple presentations, and coauthor a manuscript to be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal in her field of study.

Developing a Dairy Science Program: A Student-Driven Project
Montana Rollins, Abigial Hayes, The University of Tennessee at Martin

A vital need exists for more hands-on and applied training methods directed towards students seeking to gain knowledge and experience within the animal science industry. While many students at The University of Tennessee at Martin receive training in a variety of elements within animal science, a lack of instruction is present in the dairy science branch. This project focuses on the planning stages of a student-led educational dairy component of the university teaching farm. The proposed UT Martin educational dairy program seeks to promote the enhancement of both student and community learning. Additionally, this research project aims to complete the already present and well-rounded agricultural curriculum at the University, with students taking a leadership role in the planning of both the facility and its operations. This project will also focus on implementing a wide range of new curriculum and resources that afford students opportunities to gain research and business planning skills through similar projects. This plan will culminate with students developing formal proposals for grant funding. Furthermore, this project allows for a holistic approach of economic sustainability and advancing the innovation of agriculture in all aspects of education, research, and outreach.

Cardiovascular Disease and Rheumatoid Arthritis Among People with a History of Cancer
Claret Onukogu, Jagdish Khubchandani, Sri Banerjee, Rafael Gonzales-Lagos,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

Background/Aims
Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is connected to many comorbidities and vascular diseases. Cancer also has certain inflammatory impact on the physiological mechanisms; however, the precise connection between these variables is unknown. In this research, presenters determined if an association exsited between cardiovascular disease and overall mortality and how this connection may be modified by rheumatoid arthritis.

Methods
The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) survey was conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) for the six cycles or years of 1999 to 2010 with mortality follow-up through December 31, 2019. This data is published biennially. The presenters' study was conducted on participants with a history of cancer that were aged 40 years or older with cardiovascular disease living in the United States. CVD was determined by a history of stroke, congestive heart failure, coronary heart disease, and myocardial infarction. History of cancer was considered positive if the respondent answered "yes" to the question,

"Have you ever been told you had cancer or malignancy?" Researchers assessed RA status by using the arthritis question and determined diabetes by healthcare worker diagnosed recall of the diagnosis of the disease. In this prospective analysis, researchers performed Complex Samples Cox regression with adjustment for known confounders to determine the relationship of chronic kidney disease and mortality and if rheumatoid arthritis has an overall relationship in those living with diabetes.

Results
Among individuals living with cancer and rheumatoid arthritis, percent mortality for males was 58.2% and for females was 61.9%. For overall mortality, crude hazard ratio (HR) for diabetes was 2.13 (95% confidence interval [CI], 1.39–3.25 $p < 0.001$). The adjusted HR was elevated, 1.86 (CI 1.17–2.96, $p = 0.01$), among people with cardiovascular disease who also had rheumatoid arthritis but close to 1.0 (1.36 CI 1.09–1.70, $p = 0.01$) among individuals with cardiovascular disease who had no rheumatoid arthritis, after adjusting for medical (cardiovascular disease, asthma, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and obesity) and demographic risk factors (gender and age). Similar patterns do not exist in the general population.

Conclusion
Among individuals who had a history of cancer, not only does cardiovascular disease lead to two times higher overall mortality but also rheumatoid arthritis occurrence impacts the relationship between cardiovascular disease and overall mortality even after controlling for potential medical and demographic confounders. Cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of death in many high- and middle-income countries in the world. More prevention efforts need to be made in order to prevent CVD and treat rheumatoid arthritis.

Creating Student and Employer Value Through Internships
Brittany Cole, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Students participate in internships to build skills, establish professional connections, and often, earn course credit in their degree programs. The value students take from internships is tangible in how the students leverage the internship for future success. What value do employers gain from offering internships, though? Students are inexperienced workers and require a substantial time commitment from employers for on-the-job training. Identifying where employers gain value in offering internships to students can help universities connect the right student with the right internship employer. Researchers surveyed approximately 100 companies that employed a college intern from August 2016 to December 2024. Over the same time, researchers also surveyed approximately 100 students who participated in college internships.

Research suggests employers find value in using internships to identify future hires, accomplish project driven tasks, and train lower- to middle-level managers in employee supervision. Students find value in internship experience through new skills learned, industry knowledge gained, and professional connections/networking opportunities. Ninety-five percent of companies surveyed detailed that having a positive internship experience with a student from a specific university encourages the employer to recruit interns from that university in the future, while 100% of students surveyed detailed that a positive internship experience leads them to

recommend their peers to apply for future internships with the company. Overall, researchers found that both students and employers find value in internship opportunities.

Student Expectations of International Travel Study: The Case for Costa Rica
Jessica Crews-Garcia, Joey Mehlhorn, Haley Kranawetter,
The University of Tennessee at Martin

Seventeen undergraduate students were pre-surveyed regarding expectations for an international travel study experience to Costa Rica in spring 2025. The survey instrument included demographic data, career plans, language expectations, as well as cross cultural expectations. Survey data was used to develop a more robust trip schedule that was focused to meet the students' needs and expectations. The presentation will discuss all aspects of planning and trip development with special emphasis on faculty and students' requirements for travel. A step-by-step guide will be shared that can be used as a template for planning future travel trips. Required planning and time were consistent with previous trips and student expectations were insightful for planning and trip development.

Teacher Influencer: Friend or Foe?
Will Perry, Clinton Smith,
Western Kentucky University and The University of Tennessee at Martin

The widespread use of social media has changed modern society. Users examine the popular personalities they follow on social media in search of the standard that these influencers portray. Conversely, followers of these influencers are subject to negative self-efficacy as their lives do not reflect those of influencers. This pervasive effect has influenced all subsets of followers, including teachers on social media. The focus of this study was to determine how teachers use social media and the effect following teacher social-media influencers had on the teacher audience. The findings focused on social media use as well as the relationship between following teacher influencers and self-perception.

Learning to Swim in the Deep End: Using Field Observations and Teaching Experiences to Help Students Make Informed Agriculture Education Career-Entry Decisions
Will Bird, The University of Tennessee at Martin

The school-based agriculture education profession has continually faced teacher supply and demand shortages for multiple decades. This trend exists within the state of Tennessee and is well documented with the AAAE Supply and Demand Study conducted among agriculture educators nationwide. This supply-and-demand study routinely reports teachers leaving the profession after three years or less as well as not entering the profession at all following the student teaching experience. Reasons associated with the justifications to leave the classroom include, but are not limited to, stress, extensive work hours, and feelings of being overwhelmed. As a profession, an ethical assumption exists that students (pre-service teachers) know exactly what they will face in the "real world" once they enter their classrooms. However, how are students to feel confident in their career path if they have not experienced a real classroom? Withing the AGED 200 – Introduction to Agriculture Education Profession course, professors have begun sending freshmen/sophomore agriculture education students to complete

observations and develop one lesson for a classroom of high school students. This activity was first incorporated into the class in Spring 2024 consisting of 9 students. Of those students, 7 indicated they had increased confidence and desire to be an agriculture education teacher. They also felt more self-efficacy in their teaching abilities. Two students discovered that the teaching profession was not for them. Furthermore, they felt appreciation for learning this fact so they could change majors without major graduation delay. This activity is ongoing, and further results will be reported.

Empowering Leaders Through Servant Leadership and AI: Building Connected, Future-Ready Teams

Amanda Batts, The University of Tennessee at Martin

This presentation explores the connection between servant leadership, a culture of connection, and the strategic use of artificial intelligence (AI) to develop empowered and future-ready leaders. The presenter and participants will examine core servant leadership principles—such as empathy, empowerment, and prioritizing team needs—that create a supportive environment for new leaders, particularly in K–12 instructional settings. By fostering genuine connections and belonging, leaders can enhance collaboration, morale, and resilience across their teams. Practical strategies will be shared to demonstrate how human-centric leadership, combined with AI-driven efficiencies, fosters innovation and sustainable success. Attendees will leave with insights on implementing servant-leadership practices to build strong, connected teams while leveraging AI as a tool for growth and empowerment. Though the focus is on developing K–12 instructional leaders, these principles can be applied across various organizational settings.

Engaging Student Research That Creates Deep Learning

Cynthia Gadsden, Tennessee State University

The revolutionary and technological marvels of artificial intelligence (AI) have captured the collective imagination. With unbridled enthusiasm and cursory forethought, AI has been integrated into almost every aspect of daily living. Yet, even in the wake of AI's lighting speed responses to every conceivable query, students in the classroom continue to respond favorably to assignments that engage and learning opportunities that require their active participation. Experiential learning offers a unique avenue to move learners from surface learning of course materials to deeper levels of understanding and true knowledge. Projects, activities, and assignments that combine scholarly research with critical thinking, creativity, culture, the lived experience, and art making appeal to students regardless of course topic.

In this session, art history practitioners and those in other disciplines, will find examples of art-related activities that demonstrate how student research can expand beyond the written paper. Students can instead use their research skills to recreate art or material culture objects from past civilizations, cultures, or people. Also, students can curate on-ground or digital exhibitions and presentations of their own artwork, or the work of other artists, scientists, or leaders to explore a specific topic more fully, while gaining contextual insights about people and places throughout the global community. In addition, class or individual assignments and projects can invite students to incorporate their lived experiences and/or stories related to their families, culture, and

home communities. Such practices can showcase a variety of perspectives that make learning more interesting, engaging, and meaningful.