



Abstracts of the 2024 ELLI Conference
The University of Tennessee at Martin
April 2 – 4, 2024

Traditional Presentations (30 minutes, face-to-face)

High Impact and High Returns: Translating Textbook Learning to Tangible Career Skills Using Student Managed Investment Funds

Scott Parrott, Brittany Cole, Joey Mehlhorn, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Universities are held accountable for helping students develop tangible, hireable, on-the-job skills. Business-related programs must guide students in developing industry-applicable skills. The researchers on this study quantify the value and perception students place on real-world application of textbook concepts in an experiential learning setting. Two upper-division experiential-learning business courses were utilized—a portfolio management course and an agribusiness investing course—to survey students regarding learning expectations, knowledge gained, career skills, and applied analytical skills. Students in the courses trade futures contracts, trade equities, justify their trading decisions with financial analysis, and utilize state-of-the-art industry technology to apply classroom concepts. Additionally, students are provided information and tasks related specifically to finance certifications like the Securities Industries Essentials exam, the Chartered Financial Analyst exams, and the Certified Financial Planner exam. Students also engage in peer-to-peer mentoring. Results indicate students place much value on the hands-on, experiential learning in both courses. Specifically, students find value in experiencing classroom concepts in action, applying theories learned in other coursework, mentoring and working with other students, gaining experience towards professional certifications, and utilizing industry standard technology. Across the board, students feel the experiential learning options offered in both courses give them an advantage on the job market by teaching job-level skills and enforcing classroom materials.

Man's Best Friend or Best Study Buddy: Student Classroom Performance and Canine Interactions

Brittany Cole, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Test anxiety is a common problem among college students and often leads to a decrease in performance on graded assignments. Universities are searching for ways to combat student performance anxiety to increase student success, and many of these new learning tools involve providing experiential opportunities for students. This paper examines the influence of student and canine interactions on student performance on graded exams. Researchers divided a sample of over 600 students into two statistically identical groups. One group engaged in hands-on interactions with a dog before the exam, and one group did not. Using seven semesters of upper-level finance courses, researchers found students with animal interaction consistently score higher on graded exams. The results lend credit to the use of therapy animals on college campuses and providing soothing experiences to students.

Study in America: Bridging Online to On the Ground Experiential Service-Learning in Los Angeles, California, and Hawaii

Lea Velez, Nikki Johnson, Texas State University

Study in America at Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, provides faculty and students a unique experience of learning in locations throughout the United States. The two *Study in America* social work courses highlighted in this presentation are delivered in a hybrid, online format with students and faculty traveling one week to Los Angeles, California, for one course, and Honolulu, Hawaii, for the other course. The social work elective course in Los Angeles, entitled “*Innovative Community Engagement with Vulnerable Populations*,” focuses on innovation in addressing social problems such as incarceration and access to social services. The service-learning designated course offered in Hawaii, entitled “*Modern Day Colonialism and Indigenous People*,” addresses modern-day colonialism and oppression in communities. Best practices in traveling with students, developing partnerships with universities, community members, and local social service agencies will be shared with conference participants. These partnerships are viewed from the perspective of being mutually beneficial for the learner and the community, further fostering growth and understanding of the issues facing diverse communities. The presenters will also guide the participants in developing ways to capture data that supports experiential-learning courses.

Industrial Management Certification: Intentional Pedagogies Used with Nontraditional Learners in Rural Tennessee

Lorie Jones, The University of Tennessee Southern

The University of Tennessee Southern is located in Giles County, TN—a rural area of southern middle Tennessee—along the Alabama state line. In 2022, a local industrial facility headquartered in Belgium reached out to the University for assistance with soft skills training and career development for its employees. Two faculty members, Dr. Lorie Jones and Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Cochran Pruett, joined the University after spending decades in industry (Jones) and military operations (Pruett). The duo collaborated to develop a one-year curriculum based on feedback from a layered audit of training needs provided by the local industry. In the proposed presentation, the presenters will discuss the intentional pedagogies used in this nontraditional learning environment that successfully ended in the Fall of 2023 and was featured in the North American trade journal *Foundry Management and Technology*.

Making Economics and Personal Finance Education More Real

Mark Farley, The University of Tennessee at Martin

This presentation discusses and demonstrates the importance and value of taking students to visit the institutions discussed in class such as local banks, the Federal Reserve Bank, etc. The focus is on how to arrange visits and what students learn. Other ideas in the presentation include the value of free financial certification programs available to educators, educator and student presentations of high-quality basic and intermediate research, and the use of student organizations to promote experiential learning in financial economics.

Active Learning Exercises for the Operations Management Classroom

Benton Jones, Bryan College

Teaching operations management does not have to be boring for the instructor or for the student. The presenter, Dr. Jones, will share several active learning activities he has developed specifically for teaching operations management, and participants will experience one of those activities themselves! Dr. Jones has been teaching at the college level for over a decade and has taught operations management for the past several years; before teaching, he was an operations manager. These activities have been tested by students in a real classroom setting and have proved effective for engaging students' interest by requiring students to simultaneously use their cognitive, sensing, and psychomotor skills. Dr. Jones will explain the theory and share research related to active and experiential learning to support the instructor's use of such exercises. In this presentation, Dr. Jones will be sharing 10 learning exercises developed and used in teaching operations management.

If the audience is interested in hearing about the process of turning these ideas into a book, which is now published, Dr. Jones will be happy to elaborate on that experience, as well.

We are Global Citizens Too: Tennessee State University's Approach to Increasing Diversity in the Travel/Study Abroad Experiences of Undergraduate and Graduate Public Health Students

Elizabeth Williams, Mohamed Kanu, Baptist Health Sciences University

Many students of color are not encouraged to include travel/study abroad as part of their collegiate experience. Consequently, diverse students miss opportunities to broaden their understanding of academic subjects in global context or view themselves as global citizens and change agents. Altering this dynamic requires intentional planning on the part of academics and administrators to ensure travel/study abroad experiences are relevant to diverse students' cultural experiences and provide opportunities to combine learning and travel with meaningful service. When diverse academics and administrators plan these experiences, their presence further encourages students of color to participate in and benefit from travel/study abroad opportunities. Tennessee State University, as the only public, Historically Black College, and University (HBCU) in Tennessee with accredited undergraduate and graduate public health programs is at the forefront of offering travel/study abroad, namely in conjunction with student field placements and capstone projects.

This presentation will highlight why travel/study abroad is important for students of color and the assets diverse students bring to the travel/study abroad experience. It will further describe the planning of travel/study abroad to South Africa as a curricular experience for undergraduate and graduate public health students at Tennessee State University. The presentation will highlight the unique assets of an HBCU, and faculty and administrators of color committed to travel/study abroad, as well as provide examples of how both are important resources to promoting diversity and meaningful cross-cultural engagement in a global public health context.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to demonstrate the following:

1. Describe barriers to travel/study abroad for students of color and assets diverse students bring to travel/study abroad
2. Identify how travel/study abroad is developed as a curricular component of undergraduate and graduate public health programs at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU)
3. Assess the benefits an HBCU and diverse faculty and administrators offer to planning culturally relevant travel/study abroad and meaningful service experiences for students of color

Enhancing Cultural Intelligence through Urban Experiential Learning: Insights and Strategies from the Chicago Center's Short-Term Programs

Tyler Hough, The Chicago Center/The Philadelphia Center

This session presents a pioneering approach to enhancing students' cultural intelligence (CQ) through short-term urban experiential-learning programs, based on research conducted with 17 short-term programs in Chicago and Philadelphia. Drawing on the framework of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and the Adaptive Cultural Intelligence Scale (ACQS), this presentation will discuss the effectiveness of these educational strategies in urban settings. The session will highlight the Chicago Center's innovative programs and detail how experiential learning in an urban environment can significantly enhance students' cultural understanding and adaptability.

Key elements include the following:

1. Integration of ELT and CQ: Demonstrating how combining these theories provides a robust model for student development
2. Assessment of Student Learning: Using the ACQS to measure improvements in students' CQ as a result of their urban experiential learning experiences
3. Outcomes of Pilot Studies: Sharing insights from pilot studies that underscore the benefits of these approaches
4. Adaptation for Short-Term Programs: Exploring how the principles applied in semester-long programs can be effectively condensed for short-term experiences
5. Resources for Implementation: Providing campus practitioners with practical tools and strategies to integrate these concepts into their own programs

The presentation aims to equip educators and administrators with the knowledge and resources needed to implement similar strategies, resulting in greater appreciation of cultural diversity, and enhancing the overall learning experience for students in diverse urban environments.

Time Travel Through Experiential Learning at Coon Creek Science Center

Alan Youngerman, Natalie Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin-Selmer Center

Coon Creek Science Center (CCSC) in McNairy County, Tennessee, holds numerous experiential-learning opportunities for visitors of all ages. Participants are able to time travel back to the Cretaceous Period, walk on the sea floor, and beachcomb for fossils. CCSC offers a

variety of experiential-learning activities on site such as: paleontology, astronomy, forestry, biology, ecology, nature hikes, and agriculture, just to name a few. Through hands-on learning, participants can have interactive lessons and educational experiences with the world around them in an outdoor setting. By offering such a unique learning environment, everyone becomes an explorer and can *learn by doing* at this world-famous fossil site. This kind of place-based education immerses participants in the natural world, and fosters connection with the past, present, and future through education, exploration, and active experiences with the subject matter. Research has shown that fun, interactive, and engaging activities produce better learning outcomes and increases information retention among participants. At CCSC, staff and faculty are able to provide the setting, tools, and information for that experience to come to life. The Coon Creek Science Center is able to meet (and exceed) K–12 grade level standards at the state and national level for Life Science, Earth (and Space) Science, and can customize programming for Physical Science and Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science. Continued interest and positive feedback from local and regional participants of field trips, camp outs, STEM Camps, and Community Days for the public reflect the diversity and benefits of experiential learning at CCSC.

Using Evaluation to Enhance Students' Experiential Learning

Amber Watts, Tennessee Tech University

The purpose of this proposed presentation is to share experiences and lessons learned regarding how the Tennessee Tech's Community Health and Nutrition Program utilizes assessment and evaluation methods to improve students' experiential learning. As the Experiential Learning Coordinator for Tennessee Tech's Community Health and Nutrition Program, this presenter also serves as the evaluator of the program. Part of this role is to collect information regarding students' experiential learning from various sources and determine how best to make program improvements and enhance students' learning experiences. Faculty triangulate data from various sources including using various methods of data collection for the stated purpose of program improvement. Evaluations for practicum experiences, end of program evaluations, preceptor evaluations, and course evaluations are different ways of assessing students' experiential learning that are measured for the program's record. Questions evaluators continually ask include whether these evaluations are being utilized to their maximum potential, and how best faculty can make adjustments to assessment practices. Adding meaningful improvements to students' experiential learning rely on truthful student evaluations; addressing diversity challenges and bias within evaluation; as well as giving students more opportunities to explore future careers, research, and service learning. Additionally, this presentation considers the adaptation of evaluations to accommodate online and offsite learning environments. Evaluation is the means in which programs can gain insight in areas that cannot be experienced in-person by the instructor. Evaluations can be seen as the "eyes in the back of one's head" if utilized in the proper way.

Comparing Apples and Oranges: Using Field Visits and Observations of School-Based Agriculture Education Programs to Enhance Career-Entry Decisions

Will Bird, The University of Tennessee at Martin

School-based agriculture education (SBAE) programs vary widely in schools across the state of Tennessee and the nation. SBAE characteristics that can vary widely include school enrollment, location of school, teaching facilities available, community resources, number of existing agriculture education teachers at a particular school, and subjects provided for students. Senior-level agriculture education students at UTM must take AGED 430, Methods of Teaching Agriculture Subjects, before starting their student-teaching experiences. Within this course, students discuss how SBAE can vary, pros and cons of each changing characteristic, and how each program may be appropriate for individual student's strengths and weaknesses. To help students better experience these varying SBAE program characteristics, students tour 6–8 various SBAE's in the west and middle Tennessee regions. The purposes of these field visits and observations are twofold: (1.) Determine what characteristics would be the best fit for student-teaching placement before graduation, and (2.) Determine what type of SBAE would be the most appropriate fit upon graduation from UTM. Students are required to maintain an observation portfolio to document what they see, experience, and like/dislike about each SBAE. During the past three years of this learning activity, program graduates have indicated the experiences provided vast insight to choosing a student-teaching location as well as in which type of program students would most enjoying gaining employment.

CSBS Case Study Competition Team Gets First-Hand Glimpse into Banking Important Current Topics

Alex Bowker, Amy Mitchell, Kayla Potete, Cheyenne Stewart, Elizabeth White, The University of Tennessee at Martin

The Dunagan Chair of Excellence housed in the College of Business & Global Affairs sponsors students to compete in a case study competition each year held by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors (CSBS). A Community Bank partners with a university and team of undergraduate students to conduct a case study. CSBS provides a topic, and the students research that topic through interviews, on-site visits, and analysis of financial documents. The students author a structured 25-page research paper and produce a video to enter the competition. In the past three years, the UTM team (comprised of different students) has won first-place twice in the nation in the competition. Both winning case studies have been published in a national journal and the students presented the paper in a presentation at the St. Louis federal reserve at the CSBS Conference. 2024 is the 7th year UTM has sponsored a team. The student team won this National Competition in 2021 and 2023. The 2023 team became the first CSBS two-time winner.

The topic chosen by CSBS for this year's competition will ask the students to (1) research issues around three significant bank closures in early 2023 and present how the partner bank is different from these failed institutions, (2) Conduct a 5-year financial analysis trend of the partner bank. (3) Learn about the role of social media in banking, among other topics. The team will walk

participants through what they have learned and how and what participating in a team event such as this one has meant to their educational and future professional careers.

Empowering Students To Succeed through Peer-Advising and Peer-Mentoring Programs

Amy Ingram, Stephen Bray, Auburn University at Montgomery

In response to declining retention rates and an increase in the number of underprepared and first-generation students, the presenters developed peer-mentor and peer-advisor programs at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM). The student body is largely first generation (55%), and many of the students are Pell Grant eligible (43%) and international (26%). The services provided by these programs not only benefit the institution in helping the diverse study body integrate into college and find belonging, but also have a profoundly positive impact on the ability of the peer mentors and peer advisors to persist and graduate. Recent trends also suggest that AUM students enjoy the work of peer mentorship, as involvement in the program increased by 30% for the 2022–2023 academic year compared to its previous year. In the current semester (Spring 2024), 58 students are serving as peer mentors in 85 courses, and four students are serving as peer advisors. This presentation will discuss the various cocurricular opportunities available to peer mentors and peer advisors at Auburn University at Montgomery and present institutional data—as well as informational anecdotes—that have inspired this institution to commit to investment in these programs, including data related to the positive impact on retention and persistence rates of those serving in these roles as well as the benefits these programs have provided to first-generation students, underrepresented students, international students, and military students.

A Student-Led Approach to Experiential Education: Addressing Student Engagement Deficits

Kimika Samms-Grant, New York Institute of Technology

Some students, particularly at-risk and underrepresented students, enter college without knowing how to access hands-on opportunities outside of the classroom to complement learning theories. Moreover, many students do not understand the academic and professional benefits of these opportunities. This lack of knowledge leads to the challenges colleges and universities experience boosting student engagement and their interests in career development skills training and opportunities. For many students, academic achievement is solely attributable to classroom learning theories. Therefore, even with invaluable career development and readiness services, students are not inclined to participate in experiential opportunities. How do educational institutions, therefore, get students to understand that academic achievement is influenced by a holistic approach to learning? How do educators improve academic and career support and services to provide transformational learning experiences? This session will focus on strategies for creating a student-led approach to experiential education, addressing university-wide student engagement deficits.

The student-centric approach of partnering with students to identify needs assessment of what skills they will need to master to position them for success postgraduation will optimize students'

enrollment in experiential opportunities since they will be aligned with projects and opportunities designed around their interests, passion, values, and culture. Additionally, partnering with students, allowing them to regulate class members' commitment and direct individual or group-inspired projects and assessments will help them clarify their "whys" and become more engaged and invested in their education and overall college experiences.

High Impact Learning during a Service-Learning Travel Study Trip to Kenya

W. Keith Dooley, Stan Dunagan, Susan Winters, Esther Sellars, Kane Reeves, and Todd Winters, The University of Tennessee at Martin, Tennessee State University Extension

High impact experiences for students like service-learning, research, and international travel develop life skills important for the future workforce. As part of a travel-study trip to the nation of Kenya in 2023, UT Martin students developed service-learning/research projects centered on sustainable agriculture, health, and educational practices in collaboration an NGO partner, Innov8Africa (www.innov8africa.org). Student projects focused on K-8 schools run by Innov8Africa in Narok County, Kenya, in which Innov8Africa has long-standing involvement in improving quality of life for the Maasai people. Projects included analysis, development, and demonstration of cropping systems, food preservation systems, soil fertility, erosion, water quality, educational materials, women's/family health issues, nutrition, dairy farming, and renewable energy. Students were also exposed to the unique culture, agriculture, geology, and natural resources of the east Africa rift valley. Upon returning from the trip, students wrote a reflection on their experiences, including recommendations for how Innov8Africa might enhance its service missions in the Kenyan schools. For the students and faculty leading the activities, the travel-study experience required critical thinking, problem solving, logistics, teamwork, leadership, emotional intelligence, and multicultural competency. In summary, student service-learning projects on an international travel-study trip can help develop valuable workplace and life skills.

Teaching Writing: How To Make AI Work for You

Lajuan Davis, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Communication skills that include brief, clear, and concise writing continue to top the list of employers' must-have employability skills for new recruits in the work world. However, today's educators who are inundated with curricular changes, paperwork, committee responsibilities, etc. are now having to deal with the onslaught of AI in the classroom. This presentation will appeal to K – 12 as well as post-secondary educators with tips, techniques, and materials that can be used to reinforce good writing skills in the classroom, using AI as a tool, and all requiring little or no additional effort on the instructor's part. Information on how to cite documents written with AI assistance and methods for making AI work efficiently for instructors and students will be offered.

Practical, Cost-Effective Assessments of Body Composition in a Classroom Setting

Alison Ellis, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Body Composition—What exactly does it mean? Body composition is the relative percentage of body mass that is fat tissue vs. fat-free tissue. From a health standpoint, experts agree that excess body fat, especially located around the abdomen, is associated with many chronic illnesses, thus making the measurement of body composition, or body fat, a key factor in determining one's overall health and/or potential risk of illness. Densitometry methods of assessing body composition, such as the Bod-Pod and hydrostatic weighing, are highly accurate; however, these methods require costly equipment, space for equipment, and specialized operation training. The focus of this presentation is to identify more practical, cost-effective methods of assessing body composition. Three hands-on assessments that can be completed in a classroom setting include circumference measurements, skinfold measurements, and bioelectrical impedance. These three assessments can prove to be more practical options if an instructor has limited space and resources, without decreasing the validity of body composition. This presentation will provide a description of each of these three assessments.

Incorporating Digital Accessibility into Teacher Training

Harriette Spiegel, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Basic awareness of digital accessibility is often overlooked in K-12 teacher training. This presentation will describe an experiential-learning strategy of professional development, providing teachers with hands-on practice in incorporating awareness of digital accessibility into their teaching. Digital accessibility is an element of computer literacy. Digital accessibility incorporates guidelines of accessibility that ensure that computer output is accessible to ALL computer users, particularly users with disabilities such as low vision, hearing loss, color-blindness, learning disabilities, and mobility limitations. This presentation will concentrate on common practices in computing that will ensure digital accessibility by computer users. Web accessibility is a subset of Digital accessibility, and addresses matters of online delivery of knowledge. For instance, teachers and instructors at all levels use online learning resources. For a student with low vision or blindness, text should be presented in a manner that also includes sound, such as a recording of lesson instructions. When such a student encounters barriers to understanding or learning, web accessibility is denied, with unfortunate results for both the student and the institution, who may be liable for disobeying laws. Another example is the use of transcripts or captions when video is used in instruction, and frequent litigation has occurred concerning an institution's failure to provide adequate alternatives to video instruction. This presentation will outline modules that can be used in the classroom to raise awareness of digital accessibility. As with all learning, a lesson learned early in life will prepare a student to practice good habits in the future.

Small Group Roundtable Discussions

Artificial Intelligence: A New Tool for Learning

Alisa Wilson and Harriette L. Spiegel, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Students enter college to advance their learning. Although many tools are available to assist learning, artificial intelligence (AI) is one that is not frequently used. Why are professors not using AI in their classrooms? Do they think students will abuse the tool? Do they think students will not exercise their own minds to complete assignments? The truth is both students and professors alike use AI daily to make life easier. Learning is a way of life that can be made easier with AI. Join this presentation for some interesting insights on teaching/learning and AI.

The Flipped Classroom: Experiential-Learning in a Student-Led Classroom

Noah Gamble, Markedra Mann, Maya Rash, Cheyenne Stewart, & Mason Vancleave (Students) and Lajuan Davis (Professor,) The University of Tennessee at Martin

Students in an advanced business communication course share their knowledge, perspectives, and learning outcomes from being placed in a flipped classroom: The students provide the blueprint and direction for course content and the professor serves as a true facilitator of learning. This class is one of the first the students have experienced in which they are given choices about what they learn and how during a semester. The first project on which the students collaborated was a Student Information Hub for all students and prospective students in the college of business to have a resource for finding information on important topics such as scholarships, internships, elective classes, etc. The students will share their reflections about working on project such as the Information Hub, the pitfalls and advantages to this type of learning, and whether they would like to have additional classes taught in the same format.

Workshop (90 minutes)

Changing Perspectives in Human Sexuality: Engaging Students on a Deeper Level in the Rural South

Vanessa Miller, Athens State University

Human sexuality is both a fascinating and curious topic. The undergraduate Human Sexuality course offered at Athens State University examines human sexuality from psychological, biological, behavioral, social, and historical perspectives. Topics include sexual research, cultural and theoretical perspectives, values and sex, love, communication and intimacy, sexuality and the law, and other contemporary social issues. This workshop will guide participants through a series of experiential-learning assignments in an undergraduate human sexuality class.

1. Exposure Assignment/Guest Speakers/Virtual Conference: Provides students an opportunity to be exposed to an aspect of human sexuality that they either may not have been exposed to before or have had some experience with but would like to examine on a deeper level.
2. Film Reflection Assignment: Through 1 of 4 films, students a) Identify and discuss the struggles of the main character and those around them, b) Examine societal views and acceptance of the main character, c) Give personal reactions to the film.
3. Media and Research Assignment: Provides students an opportunity to critique research. Students select and critique an empirically reviewed journal article dealing with an aspect of human sexuality. Students then compare the accuracy of facts in the media as compared to the research findings.

Participants will be given an opportunity to reflect, share, and develop active learning assignments for their own courses.

Creating Equitable Experiences for ALL Learners

Darcie Finch, Belmont University

Relevance or Implications of Topic:

Equity is giving each learner what is needed to be successful. However, in many learning environments, educators have continued to offer cookie-cutter instruction, lacking differentiation. As a result of being in the classroom teaching students and coaching teachers, one surmises that educators do not usually possess the necessary tools to meet the needs of students—culturally, racially, linguistically, physically, cognitively, affectively, and more (Kelly and Zakrajsek, 2021). Rather than beginning with academics, this journey to create equitable spaces must begin with the educator's heart to become more aware, build relationships, and make a life-long commitment to continue to do the work of social justice (Tisby, 2021).

Content of Presentation:

This workshop will include much engagement while the presenter model teaching and learning strategies to create equitable experiences.

- Part I: Share your name, where you are from, and what drew you to this session

- Part II: Discuss Conversation Agreements
- Part III: Question Rounds & Conversation
 - ✓ What is your sense of purpose in life? What drives you every day?
 - ✓ Explore the topic of implicit bias & inequitable experiences in the classroom.
 - ✓ Where have you experienced or seen inequities in the classroom? How did you handle the situation?
 - ✓ Do you have ideas on how anyone can alleviate these inequities?
 - ✓ What opportunities have or have not been available to you?
 - ✓ What next step will you take based on the circle today?
- Part IV: What did the presenter model today to create an equitable experience for you?
- Roundtable/Circle Closure: What is your takeaway as you begin or continue your journey to create equitable experiences in your classroom?

Participant Outcomes:

1. Learn ways to frame dialogue around diversity.
2. Experience and learn ways to increase equitable experiences in the learning environment for all learners.

Poster Presentations at Discovery Park (April 4, 10-1 p.m.)

Stoking the Creative Fires in The Agricultural Classroom

Anthony Delmond, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Writing is a valuable teaching tool, allowing students to incorporate, fortify, and apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom (Reaves, Flowers & Jewell, 1993). Agriculture students tend to be wary of writing assignments, instead preferring fact-based assignments and multiple-choice or true/false assessments. However, writing remains a crucial element of professional communication in agricultural business. To attempt to reduce the negative stigma agriculture students associate with college-level writing and research, this researcher developed a creative-writing alternative to the conventional paper in a lower-division agricultural business course. Students randomly received one of two prompts: A traditional research paper or an open-ended creative writing assignment. Students in the creative-writing treatment group were given several suggestions (for example, a narrative, a play script, or a comic book or graphic novel). Ultimately, they had to submit a formal proposal including the following: (1) the type of project, (2) its length and depth, and (3) how the project would allow them to demonstrate their mastery of the course content. The instructor provided feedback and approval. For both treatments, multiple benchmarks were added to keep students on track. Initial student response to the project was tepid. Upon completion, students filled out a survey to gauge their reactions to the experience as well as their suggestions on future iterations of the project. The long-term objective is to encourage student engagement with writing by using more accessible methods and allowing students to take a more active role in their learning experiences.

Addressing Diversity: Perspectives of Women Executives in Tennessee Counties

Lorie Jones, The University of Tennessee Southern

The need for equal gender representation is crucial at local political levels. Of the 95 counties in Tennessee, only 3 currently have women county executives, and this representation is even less than in 2022 when 5 counties were led by women in the executive role. Although women account for only 19.8% of county chief executive officers nationwide, Tennessee falls well below the average with a mere 3.2% representation across all counties. The purpose of this poster presentation is to display findings of the professional journeys of women county executives in Tennessee. Two themes will be shared: the nurturing/caregiving nature of women and the impact on children. The study expands the current knowledge base on the career progression of elected women to help equalize women's presence in county government across the state of Tennessee.

Increasing Student Career Development through Use of a Course Mentoring Program

J. Ross Pruitt, Joey Mehlhorn, and John Clark, The University of Tennessee at Martin

An interdisciplinary capstone course was developed in Fall 2020 to increase preparation for agribusiness and finance students entering their respective professions. Finance and agribusiness faculty joined to create and teach a course that seeks to develop professional skills among students to increase confidence in their emotional intelligence and networking skills as they prepare to enter the workforce. In the Fall 2023 semester, instructors added a mentoring component for students in their desired career fields. Mentors were contacted by faculty based on the mentor's current career and career path. Faculty then matched students with an appropriate mentor given the student's career aspirations. Mentors (n=15) were surveyed at the end of the semester to determine the mentoring program's effectiveness and to make improvements for future classes. Using a rating scale of extremely satisfied (5) to extremely dissatisfied (1), mentors rated the overall experience with the student positively with an average of 3.87. Mentors responded to a series of open-ended questions related to expected goals of the mentorship process; expectations that were not met; most important information they learned from the student; and ways for faculty to improve the experience. The open-ended questions provided meaningful feedback for improvement. Specifically, most mentors preferred having the student selected by faculty based on the students' career goals and résumés. Mentors also suggested students receive assistance in learning how to ask good questions, providing student biographies and résumés, and beginning the program earlier in the semester. Overall, faculty plan to make modifications and continue the mentoring program for future classes.

Wish upon a Moon Tree – Applying for an Artemis Moon Tree from NASA

Annika Jolley, Diana Watson, Philip Smartt, The University of Tennessee at Martin

The public has always had a fascination with outer space. Faculty are trying to bring a piece of outer space to The University of Tennessee at Martin. On November 16, 2022, the Artemis I launched on a 25-day mission to orbit the moon. On board were approximately 2,000 seeds from 5 different species of trees. Upon return, the USDA Forest Service germinated the seeds, which

then grew into saplings. These saplings were then made available to schools, museums, and libraries and other organizations that engage with the public. The application process required a great amount of detail. Areas that need to be researched and documented: Care plan for grounds keepers and arborist; protection of the tree; areas of study that would benefit from the tree; amount of exposure to the public and as an attraction to the University. This application process has allowed faculty to explore areas of science that we had never been exposed to and really opened our eyes to the protocols and details needed to handle such unique specimens. The hope is that by spring of 2024, the faculty's wish will come true and UTM will become home to an Artemis Moon Tree.

Interacting with Wildlife in Bolivia

Isabella Walker, Diana Watson, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Many pre-veterinary students are fascinated with traveling abroad to work with exotic species. In the summer of 2022, a student had the opportunity to travel to Bolivia and volunteer at La Senda Verde wildlife refuge. The facility had six different locations specializing in different species as well as a veterinary clinic. Most of the animals there for rehabilitation were due to injuries caused by interactions with humans. During the student's time there, she stayed in the clinic. She was given the opportunity to clean cages, feed the animals, give oral medications, administer injections, conduct laser treatments, change bandages, and perform general nursing care. Some of the species the student was able to interact with were aquatic turtles, margay, parrots, caimans, marmoset and squirrel monkeys, coati, and sloths. This experience made the student realize how fortunate she is to live in the U.S. where more funding and resources are available to care for animals. This student was able to observe the amount of compassion the employees in Bolivia had for the animals and how much good could be done with so little effort or funding. This presentation will contain information about how volunteering internationally has improved the student's communication skills and Spanish, helped her network, broadened her understanding of the veterinary field, and made her a more competitive candidate for veterinary school.

Case Study of Right-Sided Unilateral Cryptorchidectomy in a Six Month-old Pygmy Goat

Karle Meggs, Diana Watson, Amber Moore, Zach Morphis, Alex Castleman, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Surgery for cryptorchid livestock is not commonly performed due to the need for general anesthesia and the challenges that this procedure presents. In preparation for surgery, the patient [a goat] was held off feed for 24 hours and water for 12 hours prior to surgery. This approach allowed for decreased rumen size and fill. A right lateral abdominal radiograph was performed prior to anesthesia to attempt visualization of the retained testicle. The retained testicle was not visualized due to rumen content and soft tissue opacities. The patient was administered intramuscular sedatives, intubated, and maintained on isoflurane and oxygen. The goat was placed in dorsal recumbency, and the abdomen was prepared using basic surgical technique. A midline incision was performed, and an exploratory laparotomy revealed the retained testicle to be located near the internal inguinal ring. The testicle was isolated, ligated, and removed with no

complications. The remaining testicle was removed using a standard castration procedure. The patient recovered without incident. This case shows that cryptorchidectomy is a viable option for livestock producers and allowed students to observe an uncommon surgical procedure in livestock.

Does Embedding Experiential-Learning Experiences in Doctoral Classes Impact Program Completion?

Jacques Singleton, Topeka Small Singleton, Arkansas State University

An awareness of how experiential learning impacts adult learners has long been established by the likes of Knowles, Kolb, and other well-known theorists. However, another school of thought also exists within doctoral programs that disciplinary knowledge should be the nucleus of doctoral education. While no one in higher education would disagree, they would also agree that disciplinary knowledge is learned and assessed best through experiential-learning experiences. This study describes how embedded experiential-learning experiences within doctoral programs impact program completion. First, this study discusses program models used in online doctoral programs, describing how these models disseminate knowledge. Second, this study evaluates student performance on program outcomes via a key program assessment, the comprehensive exam. By analyzing comprehensive exam data and the embedded experiential-learning experiences in each course, the researchers/presenters show that participation in experiential-learning experiences impacts student learning in doctoral programs, leading to successful completion. Importantly, the researchers gain insight into how doctoral training practices should be developed to maximize student learning. This study, therefore, demonstrates that participation in experiential-learning experiences impacts student learning in doctoral programs, leading to successful completion, challenging current thought that experiential-learning experiences do not belong in doctoral training.

Cause and Effect of the Decline in Food Animal Veterinary Practitioners

Joshua Tripp, Diana Watson, Sandy Mehlhorn, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Since the 1940s, the number of practicing food animal veterinarians has declined nearly 90%. In 2023, according to a national report, only 2% of veterinarians specialize in food animal medicine. This reduction in practitioners has been attributed to student debt, an aging workforce, and lack of diversity in veterinary practices. The effects of this shortage can have broad implications on animal welfare and antibiotic misuse and consequently increases the potential of antibiotic resistance, and animal sourced pandemic outbreaks. This research will examine the causes and effects of this shortage and highlight the recommended methods of improving this situation. This study will increase public awareness of a growing problem that will affect human and animal health and bring attention to a critical and underserved area for those considering a profession as a veterinarian.

Comparative Anatomy Can Be Humerus

Katherine Landen, Ashi Patel, Diana Watson, Sandy Mehlhorn, Jack Grubaugh, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Animal anatomy can be a very challenging topic to learn due to variations among species. Two veterinary science students at The University of Tennessee at Martin undertook a project to create an educational tool for understanding this subject. The process began by collecting the right humeri from multiple mammalian species, then the humeri were prepared using dermestid beetles. Once the cleaning process was completed, the bones were organized by size to be displayed along with the common name and scientific name. The visual display will serve as a permanent educational resource for enhancing students' understanding of comparative anatomy and adaptations for various species. In addition, the project leaders have gained knowledge of tissue handling, greater insight into anatomical variations, and a deeper understanding of scientific names. The project was a collaborative effort between biology, veterinary science, animal science, and agricultural engineering.

Assessing and Evaluating Self-Reported Perceptions of Support Systems and Interpersonal Relationships in Rehabilitated Brain Injury Survivors

Daniel Selsvik, Athens State University

Experts estimate that 5.3 million individuals in the United States are living with a permanent disability caused by an acquired brain injury, and every year, at least 2.8 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury. These brain injury survivors often struggle with maintaining interpersonal relationships and receiving proper support following rehabilitation. The current research presented in this presentation focus on perceptions of support systems and interpersonal relationships. Findings suggest that the improvement of rehabilitation systems, including support systems and interpersonal relationships can vastly improve brain injury survivor outcomes. Through a quantitative methodology, brain injury survivors completed an Institutional Review Board approved 25-item survey aimed at identifying perceived levels of social support, social integration, and isolation, as well as quality of interpersonal relationships post-injury. This data can be used to improve rehabilitation systems, healthcare organizations, and community education supporting individuals following an acquired brain injury.

Student Internship Experiences: Student and Faculty Reflections

Jessica Crews-Garcia, Anthony Delmond, and Joey Mehlhorn, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Students gain valuable perspectives from university-sponsored internships as part of the college experience, and these internships allow students to prepare for their careers. Most programs across the country encourage or even require internships for graduation but division exists on how best to assess the experience and document student outcomes. As part of the agriculture business degree program at UT Martin, an internship experience is required for graduation. This requirement has been in place for the past 10 years and has been received well by students and employers alike. Over the years, faculty have experimented with several modes of assessment

with varying degrees of success. Methods that include student videos or in-person presentations of experience have proven to work best, but the use of formalized documents to assess pre- and post-experiences have been shown to provide the clearest evidence of student growth through the process. This research will demonstrate best practices from faculty's and students' experiences including successes and failures. Students' and faculty's comments will be shared and provide a roadmap for delivering internship experience in face-to-face and digital environments.

Teaching the Maasai How to Can: A Service-Learning Project in Kenya

Victoria Holliday, Kane Reeves, Todd Winters, The University of Tennessee at Martin, Tennessee State University Extension

Due to climate change and geopolitical unrest in the world, food insecurity has become a major problem in Kenya. As part of a travel-study trip to Kenya, students developed service-learning projects based around assisting the Maasai people with sustainable agriculture practices. This high impact learning experience is in collaboration with a non-government organization called Innov8Africa (www.innov8africa.org) that works in K-8 schools in Narok Co., Kenya. One of 15 different student/faculty projects was an attempt to teach the Maasai community how to preserve food from their kitchen gardens. Canning was a concept that was new to this culture. Maasai children and adults at Eor Enkitok Primary were given an opportunity to perform the canning process alongside the instructors with crushed tomatoes in large pots over an open fire. Canning jars were sterilized over one fire, tomatoes were blanched over another, and the final cooking/sealing step was done over a third fire. In the end, the activity was successful. For the student and faculty leading the activity, the exercise utilized critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, leadership, emotional intelligence, and multicultural competency. The Maasai who were involved were excited that they would be able to store tomatoes for over a year and were interested in trying the canning process with additional fruits and vegetables. In summary, student service-learning projects on a travel-study trip can help develop valuable workplace and life skills.

Students Plus Podcasting Equals Learning! A Cross-Disciplinary Look at Using Podcasting Apps to Elicit Higher-Order Thinking

Molly Campbell, Stephanie Jones, Will Bird, The University of Tennessee at Martin

Podcasting has increasingly gained popularity as a means of entertainment, information consumption, and education by many persons in society. These technological developments and their ever-growing popularity make podcasting an ideal option for university faculty to utilize to enhance student engagement, thinking, and learning. In the AGED 430, Methods of Teaching Agriculture Subjects, students are taught how to use a variety of teaching methods for student learning such as lecture, demonstration, problem solving, discussion, and technology based teaching. Similarly, students enrolled in ANSC 405, Current Issues in Animal Science, are exposed to various concerns facing animal agriculture and livestock production systems. Students in these courses are required to prepare and deliver a 35–40 minute podcast segment over an assigned topic. Once students mastered the podcast platform, the students began to think far more critically about how, what, and why they were discussing the topic. Students had to

research the topic, plan and prepare the podcast script, design a set, then creatively work together as a team. Student feedback suggests that podcasts enable students to creatively address a topic in a low-risk presentation environment that fosters student development and engagement in higher education. Both educators and students find podcasts to be an engaging and unique way to foster independent learning. When asked, students who participated in creating podcasts found that learning to use the software was a challenge, but, ultimately, students found podcasting as a meaningful, engaging, and fun way to gather and disseminate their knowledge and understanding of agriculture topics.

A Passport to Knowledge

Howard Cochran, Brad Childs, Marieta Velikova, Belmont University

Participants in this session will learn how to plan effectively an international experience for students. In this poster presentation participants will be able to speak with experienced faculty who have collectively led field studies to 20 different countries, understand the imperative for global education, become aware of the benefits and challenges of organizing a short-term trip abroad of a month or less, and be able to address assessment questions.

Many students and faculty are unable to study abroad for an entire semester. Short-term study abroad programs become a feasible alternative. Prior research has shown that several types of experiential learning seem to be subject to threshold effects; therefore, the immersion experience must be pursued beyond a mere token effect. Itinerary development must be intentional with respect to assessing course objectives by emphasizing learning rather than leisure. Living and learning abroad will challenge perceptions as well as encourage the development of behavioral and psychological competencies needed for an effective cross-cultural experience. Students will be more aware of the necessity of emotional resilience, flexibility, perceptual acuity and personal autonomy when operating in a cross-cultural milieu. Students embracing these competencies will be more prepared to engage a more globalized world.

Role of the Renaissance Foundry Model in Guiding Experiential Learning in the Systematization of Species Mass Conservation

Shanae Tyree, Tennessee Technological University

Within chemical engineering, scaling is often a concept that challenges student learning, particularly when applied to species mass conservation because traditional formats that communicate theoretical concepts often generate confusion in students when they are learning to apply these concepts to real-world problems. When different interpretations and presentations of the same principle are in textbooks, obtaining a more complete understanding of the principles is important to build on the concepts provided and offer clear vocabulary and definitions to yield scaffolds to students in more advanced courses so that complex applications can occur more readily. In turn, experiential-learning strategies are helpful to address this type of confusion as they help students make connections to learning through reflection and application. In this proposal, the presenter investigates how the Renaissance Foundry Model, an innovation-driven learning platform, fosters experiential student learning through reflection by presenting a

systematization of the concepts involved in conservation principles in species mass within an Advanced Reactor Kinetics graduate-level course. As part of this study, the researchers aim to answer the following research question: How did presenting the systematization process improve student learning as applied in species mass conservation? As a preliminary study, the presenter will present the interventions and the design of curricula that aligns with experiential learning principles and the Foundry model to help students better understand systematization. Understanding student learning through the use of systematization and the Foundry model holds implications for facilitating student learning in advanced engineering courses and offers lessons learned for pedagogical strategies in engineering education.