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Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms

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Submitted in partial fulfillment

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Abstract

In the field of experiential education, there is a general understanding that concepts and definitions of experiential education and experiential learning differ by individuals, departments, organizations, and institutions. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research study was to gather the perspectives of individual experiential educators across higher education (n = 121) on what they perceive to be experiential education's criteria and what forms of educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning forms. The findings demonstrated inclusive perspectives regarding both criteria and forms, such as receptiveness to experiential education being able to occur within classrooms, in short durations, and without third-party participation. The findings support broadening the parameters of what qualifies as experiential, which can have significant implications for encouraging and expanding equitable access to experiential offerings.

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With love…

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You always encouraged and supported

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Chapter One: Introduction

A definitional problem exists within the field of experiential education. What is experiential education? What forms of educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning? The origin of the modern field of experiential education is often attributed to the work of Dewey (1930), who wrote how progressive education should emphasize learning through experience. Dewey proposed the concept of an experiential continuum, which recognized that not all experiences are necessarily educative, without offering any firm definition of where various educative opportunities fall on that continuum. Kolb's (Kolb & Fry, 1974) Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) remains a critical piece of theory in the field of experiential education, by offering an approach to make experiences a meaningful educative opportunity, but it also does not offer a firm stance on what does or does not qualify as *experiential.*

Experiential education and the use of experiential learning forms have become more commonplace across higher education, but definitions, principles, and criteria of experiential education and experiential learning vary between individuals, institutions, and organizations. While common terms and phrases may be applied, such as "learning by doing" (Niiranen, et al., 2020), there is variance by what is meant by such phrases and no consensus across higher education about what exactly is meant by experiential education or experiential learning. Furthermore, Kolb & Kolb (2017) offer that "there is a widespread idea of what experiential learning is that fails to capture the full potential of the process of learning from experience," suggesting that the general approaches to definitions and criteria can be reductive, creating exclusionary parameters that eliminate some experiences from consideration as experiential.

This study collected and analyzed experiential educator perspectives on experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms. The data analysis sought to identify points of

agreement and dissonance among educator perspectives to determine if a consensus framework of experiential education and learning forms could be identified, along with the possibility of any outlier responses presenting the possibility of a more expansive and inclusive concept of experiential education.

Problem Statement

Across the field of experiential education there is not a single, universal definition of experiential education or experiential learning. Definitions across organizations, institutions, and scholars have commonalities in concepts and terminology, such as "learning by doing" (Niiranen, et al., 2020), "concrete experience" (What is Experiential Education?, n.d.), and "applied" (Gentry, 1990). Similarly, there are numerous sets of principles (Dewey, 1938; Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2013; What is Experiential Education?, n.d.; Gentry, 1990; Kolb & Kolb, 2018), which create parameters for the facilitation of experiential learning, yet do not firmly establish a definition of experiential education or experiential learning.

With this definitional variance, educators in the field may all mean something slightly or wildly different when using the terms. Additionally, what forms of education may qualify as experiential, such as internships and service learning, will also vary due to definitions and perspectives. Ultimately, this can create dissonance in the field and the scholarship, and it prevents a more inclusive model of experiential education by potentially having a narrower view of what is or is not experiential learning.

Experiential literature does not fully resolve this issue. Some recent literature attempts to get to the root of the issue by inquiring about what is meant by "experience" (Fox, 2008). Some literature begins to explore taxonomies (Gentry, 1990; Shulman, 2002; Barker, 2004;

Giamellaro, 2017; Gaszak, 2019) or at least recognize that the idea and definition of experience should be broader (Giamellaro, 2017). This study examined the range of definitions of experiential education and experiential learning, allowing for closer examination of perspectives to determine where generally there is harmony and dissonance among definitions. The study did not aim to produce a definition of experiential education or experiential learning, but rather to establish parameters for what is meant by those terms.

Purpose of the Study

Given that there are not universal definitions of experiential education and experiential learning, there is a need to investigate this definitional variance to begin forming more clarity around what is meant by these terms. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research study was to gather the perspectives of individual experiential educators across higher education on what they perceive to be experiential education's criteria and what forms of educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning forms. The data analysis identifies similarities and differences among educator perspectives, and it provides insights into the parameters for defining experiential criteria and forms.

An alternate starting point to investigating definitional variance could have been to conduct a meta-analysis of definitions, principles, and criteria established in literature, as well as those in use by institutions and organizations. However, a meta-analysis approach would run the risk of any definitions, principles, and criteria being co-authored or even co-opted, meaning the resulting analysis would be less likely to produce the unique perspectives of individual educators and, potentially, result in a narrower definitional spectrum. Likewise, the approach of collecting data from individual educators ran the risk of educators responding through the lens of the definitions, principles, and criteria they have been exposed to at their own institutions and

organizations; though, this approach still allowed for the study's participants to offer perspectives that may differ from the institutions and organizations with which they associate.

Ultimately, the data gathered from individual educators allowed for analysis on where there is consensus on definitions, where there is disagreement, and what the outlier opinions are in comparison to the relative norm. This data collection and analysis also serves the purpose of setting the stage for future work creating parameters for an experiential learning taxonomy, which can serve as a more inclusive and expansive model for experiential learning educators and students.

Importance of the Study

The importance of this study has both immediate potential for results in the field of experiential education, as well as setting the stage for the possibility of more impactful work and implications that could be transformative for both the field of experiential education, if not the whole of higher education.

Definitional Clarity

The immediate results of the data collection and analysis provide some definitional clarity on what constitutes and qualifies as experiential education and experiential learning. There is no expectation that the study will produce a singular definition. Rather, the resulting analysis can provide insight into what is generally meant when educator's use the terms; perhaps more importantly, the analysis reveals the breadth of what is meant by the terms. Shared within the field of experiential education, and subsequently at educators' institutions and organizations, the breath of perspectives offered in the study may encourage some educators, institutions, and organizations to look beyond their parochial definitions to explore additional opportunities for experiential learning. The study may also incite more conversation within institutions and

organizations about their own internal definitions and what variance may exist, moving toward their own more unified definition and understanding of experiential education and learning.

Experiential Taxonomy

The study also establishes a starting point for the development of an experiential taxonomy. Chapter 2 shares in greater detail the literature on what taxonomical and hierarchical approaches have been discussed in experiential education. An experiential taxonomy will, more formally, represent the breadth of possibilities with experiential learning. Akin to Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al, 1956), an experiential taxonomy will have the capacity to promote the idea that experiential learning can happen with different levels of depth and rigor while still being considered experiential. If educators, institutions, and organizations adopted a taxonomical approach to experiential learning that accepts a wider range of educational approaches as being experiential opportunities under the proper circumstances, it would allow for scale of opportunities as well as a more equitable and inclusive approach to experiential learning.

Scaling Opportunities

Offering experiential learning at scale can be a costly endeavor, even when leveraging emerging technologies (Aggarwal & Wu, 2019). Internships, for example, can require significant resources, such as staffing, partnership development, and digital platforms. If educators, institutions, and organizations welcomed a broader, nuanced view of what qualifies as experiential learning, it presents a pathway to embed smaller, cost-effective opportunities throughout curriculum and programs in addition to flagship experiences such as internships and travel study programs.

Equity and Inclusion

There are a number of factors and variables that create inequities for students in experiential learning, in some cases preventing students from participating in experiential opportunities at all. Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in experiential learning will be discussed further in Chapter 2. Creating a broader, more inclusive view of experiential learning presents the possibility of offering a wider, differentiated catalog of equitable, inclusive opportunities for students. For example, if an institution qualifies internships as being the sole form of experiential learning, inequities present in that form – particularly unpaid internships – may exclude many students from participation.

Research Approach

This study was approached and viewed through an equity lens, both through the acknowledgement of diverse perspectives and, more importantly, through the potentiality of the research to produce inclusive practices for students. The literature acknowledges that within the field of experiential education there are definitional challenges and limitations in scope (Dewey, 1938; Fox, 2008; Giamellaro, 2017; Kolb & Kolb, 2017). This research was approached with the acknowledgement and expectation that there will be diversity in educator perspectives on experiential education and experiential learning, with the data analysis ultimately determining what level of variation exists. The educator perspectives are, unlikely, to have been formed individually, but rather constructed through influence from literature, organizations, institutions, and education. The research approach sought to recognize and appreciated the complexity, nuance, and differentiation in these diverse perspectives, while at the same time exploring how the aggregation of individual perspectives may construct definitional parameters that can be representative of the diversity of voices included. Rather than seeking to champion a single

perspective and marginalize others, the research approach is seeking to find clarity through the diversity of thought.

Additionally, the data analysis and outcomes were viewed through an equity lens. The literature (Coker & Porter, 2016; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012) recognizes that inequities are present in experiential learning practices, which was discussed in the previous section and will be explored further in Chapter 2. Casting an equity lens on the research and data analysis kept at the forefront of the outcomes that the most critical potential impact of this research is in expanding experiential learning opportunities for students who do not have the same access and opportunity to narrowly defined experiential opportunities as their peers who have a higher level of privilege and opportunity. A resulting taxonomy, in particular, argues for an inclusive model of experiential learning opportunities that promote institutional scale and student access.

Research Questions

There were two primary research questions. The first question was in what ways do educators' perceptions of the elements, definitions, forms, and methods of experiential education align and diverge? The second question was what are the key forms, types, and methods of experiential learning that comprise the field of experiential education? The first research question sought to collect and analyze educator perspectives on experiential education, to determine similarities and differences in the philosophies around learning through experience. The second research question sought to determine to what extent various educational methodologies, such as internships and service learning, are perceived as experiential learning. The data presented an opportunity to define parameters around the criteria of experiential education, as well as the start

of a taxonomical hierarchy of experiential learning forms. Additional detail on the research questions will be provided in Chapter 3.

Research Design

The methodology used was quantitative descriptive research, specifically basic descriptive research. The goal of the research was to collect individual educators' perspectives on experiential learning criteria and forms. The research was conducted through a quantitative survey, which asked participants to identify their perspectives through Likert scale questions. Participants were recruited through the Society for Experiential Education (SEE) member community forums and through the researcher's professional network on LinkedIn. Additional details on the research design can be found in Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

Two terms in particular require definition for how they will be used within the context of this study. *Experiential education* refers to the philosophy and field of education that involves learner engagement in experiences. *Experiential learning* refers to the methodologies and forms of educational approaches used by educators, students, and partners to under the philosophies of experiential education. (*What is Experiential Education?.* Association for Experiential Education, n.d.). For example, an internship may be a form of experiential learning that falls under the educational philosophies of experiential education. These two terms were examined in the study. Study participants provided perspectives on the attributes of experiential education, and then participants provided perspective on what educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning.

Overview of Paper

Chapter 2 is a literature review that explores the roots of experiential education, scholarship on defining experience, definitions and types of experiential learning forms, and more. Chapter 3 explores the research methodology and approaches that were taken in this study. Chapter 4 is the presentation of results, and it provides key takeaways and interpretations of the quantitative dataset gathered in the study survey. Chapter 5 is the conclusion, which will include a reflection on results of the study and future opportunities for study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The modern roots of experiential education date back to Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938). While these roots of experiential education are important to note, the focus of this literature review will be more contemporary, situating the study within research, arguments, and complications of the field of experiential education as it exists currently.

Overview of the Modern History of Experiential Education

Experiential education's modern roots are often attributed to Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938), which emphasized the importance of the learner's direct engagement in the learning process. Dewey also wrote about the *experiential continuum*, which was a criterion of distinction among experiences to differentiate those that are educative as opposed to mis-educative. In the decades following Dewey, additional foundational ideas helped to inform the contemporary ideas around experiential education. Lewin (1946) developed the idea of "action research" and the learning cycle for action research, that would eventually be informative to Kolb's experiential learning theory. Piaget (1967) developed constructivism, which stressed that knowledge is connected to action and learners participate in the formation of their knowledge. Freire (2014) articulated the banking concept of education, which can be compared to the traditional lecture-style format of teaching; students are passively engaged in their learning like coins being stored in a bank. Freire stressed that real learning happens through inquiry and engagement with the world.

Kolb and Fry (1974) built off the earlier scholars and educators to define experiential learning theory (ELT) and its corresponding experiential learning cycle. ELT continues to be a widely popular and applied concept in the field of experiential education that provides a template for how learners can be engaged actively in the learning process through experiencing,

reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb & Kolb, 2018). Kolb and Kolb continue scholarship in the field of experiential education, evolving the original ELT; however, ELT has also gradually accrued criticism for its limitations (Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015; Giamellaro, 2017), during the ensuing five decades that experiential learning has become steadily more pervasive across education (Prince & Felder, 2006; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012).

Experiential Organizations

In addition to the foundational educators and theorists, there are a number of organizations with a focus or involvement in experiential education that contribute to the practices and principles of experiential education and experiential learning.

Society for Experiential Education (SEE)

The Society for Experiential Education (SEE), formerly the National Society for Experiential Education, is a membership organization founded in 1971 that serves as a "a global community of researchers, practitioners, and thought leaders who are committed to the establishment of effective methods of experiential education" with a broad focus on academic-focused experiential learning opportunities including "internships, micro-experiences, service learning, global experience, and more" (Society for Experiential Education, n.d.). SEE has established principles of best practice and ethical principles designed to be used in all forms of experiential learning (SEE Standards and Practice, n.d.).

Association for Experiential Education (AEE)

The Association for Experiential Education (AEE) was incorporated in 1977 as is "composed of experiential educators, practitioners, inquirers, researchers, and students with the shared goal of elevating the field of Experiential Education" (Our Mission & Values, n.d.). AEE has principles of practice (What is Experiential Education?, n.d.). AEE, while inclusive of a

range of forms of experiential learning, has a pronounced emphasis on outdoors and adventure education.

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) was founded in 1974 (Building a movement: CAEL Marks 50th anniversary, 2024). CAEL is a "national nonprofit that supports the creation of education-to-career pathways, fueling economic mobility and community prosperity for all" (About us: What we do, n.d.). CAEL's focus is more on work-integrated education, as well as credentialing work experiences for academic credit.

Institute for Experiential Learning

The Institute for Experiential Learning promotes Kolb Experiential Learning Theory and practices, in partnership with David and Alice Kolb, and as an organization is "committed to helping individuals, teams and organizations reach their full potential through the deliberate and transformative process of experiential learning" (About Us, 2023). While Kolb's experiential learning theory dates back to the 1970s, the Institute for Experiential Learning was founding more recently in 2010.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) was established in 1956 and has a focus on "college career services professionals, university relations and recruiting professionals, and the business solution providers that serve this community" (What is NACE & What Do We Stand For?, n.d). While not specifically an organization focused on experiential education, NACE's mission has a natural overlap with the work-integrated forms of experiential learning, such as internships.

Cooperative Education & Internship Association (CEIA)

Cooperative Education & Internship Association (CEIA) was founded in the 1960s (History - CEIA, n.d.) and considers itself a leading organization in work-integrated learning (Cooperative Education & Internship Association (CEIA), 2023). As evidenced by the organization's title, CEIA's primary focus is on the experiential learning forms of co-ops and internships.

Defining "Experience" and "Authenticity"

Definitions of and references to experiential education often include two concepts: experience and authenticity. Authenticity may sometimes be used interchangeably with terms like "real world" (Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022; Experiential Learning, n.d.; Experiential Learning, 2018). The complication with the terms experience and authenticity is that they are abstractions: they are concepts that have no tangibility or concreteness until an individual or institution attempts to provide examples of what they look like in practice. Dewey addressed this issue by stating, "Experience and experiment are not self-explanatory ideas. Rather, their meaning is part of the problem to be explored. To know the meaning of empiricism we need to understand what experience is" (Dewey, 1938, p. 25).

More recently, Fox reiterated in "Rethinking Experience: What Do We Mean by This Word 'Experience'?" that what "counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, always political" (2008, p. 52), and that experience is "already an interpretation and in need of interpretation" (p. 52). Building from Fox's work, Giamellaro wrote in "Dewey's Yardstick: Contextualization as a Crosscutting Measure of Experience in Education and Learning" (2017) that "no grounded definition of experience exists in the context of experiential education, and a theory to fill that gap is needed to provide a foundation for scholars and practitioners." Consequently, many individuals, institutions, and organizations may use a

term such as experiential to define a type of learning, but what is meant by the term experiential may vary slightly or significantly.

Giamellaro (2017) argued that "rather than struggling to define such an omnibus idea, practitioners and researchers should accept experience as a broad container and move toward the use of more targeted constructs that can be measured, compared, evaluated, and revised if the field is to be meaningfully advanced" (p. 9). This is a practical consideration, as digging more deeply into the definition of experience also begins to unearth conversation around emergent understandings of neuroscience and how it evolves the understanding of experience and the foundational Kolb's theory (Fox, 2018; Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015). In fact, breaking the concept of experience into more targeted constructs is what typically occurs. Prominent experiential organizations the Society for Experiential Education and the Association for Experiential Education both use the term "experience" as part of their definitions and practices around experiential education (Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022; What Is Experiential Education - Association for Experiential Education, n.d.); however, neither organization defines directly what is meant by the term. Instead, both organizations - like most institutions and organizations - ultimately define experience indirectly through identification of what educational opportunities qualify as experiential learning within their context. Some examples of qualifying experiential learning opportunities listed by organizations and institutions include outdoor and adventure education, non-formal education, place-based education, project-based learning (What Is Experiential Education - Association for Experiential Education, n.d.); co-op, simulation, practicum (Categories & Examples of Experiential Education, n.d.); study abroad, internships, and undergraduate research (Experiential Learning, n.d.).

Though the forms of experiential learning cited may different by institution and organization, there are often commonalities. Giamellaro (2017) presented the contextualization spectrum, which moves left to right across four categories: academic contextualization, secondary contextualization, primary contextualization, over-contextualization. The movement from left to right relates to the learner's degree of translation between subject knowledge and environment. The entire spectrum involves some direct involvement from the learner, but spans from learning *with* context to learning *in* context. On the far left of the spectrum is "abstract lecture" which most experiential educators would agree is not experiential. Secondary contextualization includes categories such as case studies and problem-based learning, which would elicit debate on whether or not they are experiential. Primary contextualization involves field studies and student research, while over-contextualization includes items like internships. Giamellaro contends, rightfully so, that the typical constructs offered as experiential begin in the primary contextualization range of the spectrum.

Tied to the conversation of what qualifies as an experience in experiential learning is the idea of authenticity. The Society for Experiential Education defines authenticity as the need for an experience to have "a real world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. This means that it should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation" (Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022). SEE's idea has been mirrored or adopted by other organizations and institutions (Experiential Education FAQs, n.d.; Experiential Learning, n.d.), with the common thread being that authenticity relates to real-world context and work moving beyond educational / theoretical and into having an impact on a community beyond the classroom. However, depending on an institution or organization's categorizations of

experiential learning, there is some challenge to this notion of authenticity, such as when a category such as “simulation” (Experiential Learning, n.d.) is included. A simulation provides hands-on learning for students and is likely to engage students more deeply than, for instance, a lecture; however, there would be debate across institutions and organizations about whether a simulation would qualify as experiential (Experiential Education FAQs, n.d.).

Forms of Experiential Learning

Despite the increasing commonality of experiential learning in higher education, or perhaps because of it, there is not a single, universal definition of experiential learning or what forms of learning qualify as experiential. Definitions across various organizations, institutions, and scholars have commonalities in concepts and terminology, such as “learning by doing” (Niiranen, Ikonen, Rissanen, & Rasinen, 2020), “concrete experience” (What is Experiential Education?, n.d.), and “applied” (Gentry, 1990). Similarly, there are numerous sets of principles (Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2013; “What is Experiential Education?”, n.d.; Gentry, 1990; Kolb & Kolb, 2018), which create parameters for the facilitation of experiential learning that consequently help to narrow the definition, yet do not settle it completely. Experiential learning is an umbrella term for many types of learning opportunities, such as service learning, problem-based learning, and simulations (Kolb & Kolb, 2017), and there is not a universal agreement on what does or does not fit beneath the umbrella, which complicates having a singular definition of experiential learning.

In defining different experiential learning forms, it is important to raise the question of the difference between experiential learning and active learning. Active learning is often used to describe in-class engagement beyond traditional lecture, like discussions and think-pair-share. Active learning, though, is sometimes used as a reductive, if not even pejorative, term in

comparison to experiential learning; though, the lines between the two can be quite blurry, as active learning experiences can sometimes apply ELT and experiential best practices. The gray area between the two terms calls into question if there is a necessity to separate forms of education into the experiential and active learning categories, rather than identify experiences individually as experiential when they apply necessary components of experiential learning theory, such as hands-on engagement and reflection.

The following are a variety of educational forms that may be considered experiential, dependent upon how an individual or institution defines experiential learning, as well as what design framework is used to create and moderate the experience.

Internships

Internships involve students working, typically, with external partners in a real work environment alongside actual organizational employees. The experience may be connected to a course or be its own independent experience (Moore, 2010). Internships provide an opportunity to connect classroom theory to real-life practice while developing both hard and soft skills. Internships can also allow student to assess their interest and fit in a particular field while gaining professional exposure and learning (Lei & Yin, 2019).

Service Learning

A service learning experience involves students providing some form of community service while, simultaneously, engaging with related academic concepts and theories. Service learning is often associated with a course (Moore, 2010). Service learning should be mutually beneficial to the student and the community partner (Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022). Service learning can produce superior results in academic, social, and personal outcomes for students compared to traditional lecture (Conway

et al, 2009).

Cooperative Education

Cooperative Education, or Co-Op, is a form of experience in which students engage in coordinated periods of study and work in their chosen field (Moore, 2010; Co-Op at UC: The Global Birthplace of Co-Op, 2023). The form was pioneered by the University of Cincinnati in the early 20th century, but has since been adopted by many institutions. A traditional Co-Op might, for example, entail a student engaging in a full semester of academic study, and then in the following semester working full-time in their field (Co-Op at UC: The Global Birthplace of Co-Op, 2023).

Study Abroad / Travel Study

Study Abroad is an umbrella term for any form of educational program in which the primary experience(s) occur internationally. The goals, design, and facilitation of Study Abroad are expansive and can vary greatly (Types of Programs and Providers, 2012). NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, also states that Study Abroad "advances learning and scholarship; builds understanding and respect among different peoples; and enhances constructive leadership in the global community" (About international education, n.d.).

The term Travel Study may be used to be more inclusive of all experiences in which students travel and live away from campus, including at domestic destinations.

Student Research

Student Research involves students conducting real research in a field, clinical, or laboratory environment under the guidance of a faculty member or mentor (Talafian et al, 2019). Student research can allow students to gain both technical and soft skills, and potentially position

undergraduate students for entrance into more competitive graduate programs (Wayment & Dickson, 2008).

Leadership

Leadership is an umbrella term for any intentional leadership opportunity students are provided through which they grow and reflect as part of an experiential learning design. The leadership opportunities, such as serving as an upperclassman mentor to underclassmen, allow students to develop skills, leadership capacity, and their own leadership identity. (Chung & Personette, 2019)

Project-based or Problem-based Learning (PBL)

In Project-based or Problem-based learning (PBL), students engage in projects that grapple with an identified problem or set of problems as the core means by which teaching and learning occurs. The projects are often authentic in nature and result in an actual contribution to a community (Pierce, 2018). A capstone project may refer to project-based learning experience that serves as a culminating academic project for an academic program or degree (Capstone Projects, 2022). PBL may support student academic understanding, ability to achieve self-directed subject learning, and increased subject-matter interest (Preeti, Ashish, & Shriram, 2013).

Simulations

Simulations offer students an opportunity to engage in a simulated real experience, which can come in many forms including deep investigations into societal issues through games and scenarios (Davidson, et al, 2009) or practice of technical skills through use of technology (Lin, et al, 2023). Simulations can be particularly useful in developing skills for situations that would present significant risk in real world scenarios, such as training in medical professions (Lin, et al, 2023) or engaging in societal or historical situations for which the students could not actually

participate in themselves (Davidson, et al, 2009); however, any simulation must acknowledge that it cannot fully reflect all of the real-world conditions that may be present in a non-simulated experience (Davidson, et al, 2009).

Laboratory Experiences (Labs)

Labs are a common form of constructivist pedagogy in STEM fields. As discussed by Abudlwahed & Nagy (2009), a key to making labs experiential is to design the full learning experience, which includes components pre- and post- the actual hands-on lab component, and an adherence to experiential learning theory.

Clinical Practice Experiences

Clinical Practice Experiences are typically associated with medical fields. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (2013) defines them as "planned learning activities in nursing practice that allow students to understand, perform, and refine professional competencies at the appropriate program level. Clinical practice experiences may be known as clinical learning opportunities, clinical practice, clinical strategies, clinical activities, experiential learning strategies, or practice" (pg. 21). Clinical Practice using experiential design "utilises practices of support, learner participation and real patient learning to enhance students' development of vital professional capabilities" (Costello, et al, 2022).

Practica

A practicum is an opportunity for a student to apply theory to practice in an authentic setting, typically in the field of education. Within education, a practicum may include guided teaching experiences in addition to observations, reflections, and meetings with mentors (Williams, 2009). The term practicum is used interchangeably, in some instances, with the term internship; other times, the terms are differentiated by the depth of student hands-on

involvement, with practica leaning more into the observational elements (Section 3: Professional Practice, 2019).

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is, quite literally, an ancient form of education in which a novice works alongside an experienced individual who teaches the novice skills while undertaking the work, gradually allowing the learner to engage in more complex tasks as the novice begins to master the skills (Caldwell, 2011). Whereas an internship or practicum involves a student acquiring theory first and then progressing the practice, an apprenticeship involves hands-on work from the beginning as learning occurs.

Fellowship

A fellowship is a funded, short-term opportunity through which a student can pursue opportunities such as practical experience, continuing education, and/or research (What is a fellowship?, n.d.), and often applies to experiences related to graduate or postgraduate studies. Some evidence suggests that students who engage in a fellowship will not only gain skills, but will also advance their learning curve in the particular field of study (Lawrentschuk, 2015).

Additional Forms of Experiential Learning

Depending upon the individual or institution, additional educational forms may be identified as experiential learning. Some of these additional forms include creative performance and exhibits (Experiential learning, n.d.; Creative Exhibit or Performance, n.d.); extracurriculars, co-curriculars, and athletics (SAC Experiential Learning, n.d.); and work study (Experiential Learning and Work Study, n.d.).

Benefits of Experiential Learning

As experiential education has become increasingly common across the higher education landscape in the past quarter-century, it is important to note that recent scholarship has supported experiential education as effective at improving student learning outcomes. If experiential practices continue to proliferate, then it must be coupled with increasing evidence that such practices produce better outcomes for students than traditional methodologies.

In "A Meta-Analysis of the Relationship Between Experiential Learning and Learning Outcomes" (Burch et al., 2019) the authors concluded that their "review definitively, and quantitatively, shows the importance of experiential learning activities" (p. 239). The authors conducted a meta-analysis of more than thirteen thousand texts on experiential learning, among which they found only 89 which contained "empirical data with both a treatment and control group" (p. 239). However, from that meta-analysis of that data, the authors found that student learning outcomes were "almost a half standard deviation higher ($d = .43$) in classes employing experiential learning pedagogies versus traditional learning environments." (p. 239). Even further, the authors discovered that the efficacy of experiential learning was "robust across varied learning outcomes relevant to higher education" (p. 260) and they "were unable to identify a single context across the empirical studies where experiential learning did not produce a positive effect on learning" (p. 260).

The work conducted in "Impacts of experiential learning depth and breadth on student outcomes" (Coker et al., 2017) found that student learning improves both due to experiential learning depth and breath. For the context of the study, depth was defined as the amount of time committed to the experiential learning opportunity, while breadth was a student's exposure to different types of experiences (p. 1). This was a five-year study conducted at Elon University using data from graduating seniors' Experiences Transcripts and the NSSE results. All of the

seniors were required to engage in experiential learning as part of their graduation requirement. For this study, and the Elon requirement, experiential learning was defined as study abroad, undergraduate research, internships, service-learning, or leadership experiences (p. 8). The study concluded that "more experiential learning is better whether in the form of depth or breadth" (p. 18-19) as increases depth and/or breadth "were positively Coker associated with acquiring a broad general education, writing clearly and effectively, contributing to the welfare of the community, relationships with faculty and administration, and desire to attend the same institution" (p. 18-19).

In "Deliberate Practice and Performance in Music, Games, Sports, Education, and Professions: A Meta-Analysis" (Macnamara, Hambrick, & Oswald, 2014), the authors explored if there is empirical evidence to prove practice makes perfect, ala the 10,000 hours to expertise concept promoted by Malcolm Gladwell. This study was relevant since experiential learning is, in essence, a form of hands-on practice by which to acquire or hone skills. The meta-analysis found that there was variability in the value of practice in "that deliberate practice explained 26% of the variance in performance for games, 21% for music, 18% for sports, 4% for education, and less than 1% for professions" (p. 1608). Based on this study, there is some evidence that hands-on practice leads to improved results, in some fields more than others. The authors suggest that other factors have a larger impact on differences in individual performance, such as age, intelligence, and specific abilities (p. 1616). Even though practice was not determined to be the primary driver of individual aptitude, this outcome does not contradict the value of experiential learning. In the fields examined in the meta-analysis, each showed positive gains based on deliberate practice; in other words, larger variables may be what sets an individual's ceiling for aptitude in a discipline, but deliberate practice will raise anyone's floor.

"High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter" (Kuh, 2008) emphasizes the value of high-impact practices for improving student learning outcomes. In the context of the report, many of the identified high-impact practices intersect with traditional experiential learning opportunities, including internships, undergraduate research, service learning, internships, and capstone projects. Part of the rationale for the effectiveness of HIPs is that "students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks" (p. 14), which mirrors the argument for depth of experiential learning (Coker et al., 2017). Importantly, the report finds that "historically underserved students tend to benefit more from engaging in educational purposeful activities than majority students" (p. 17), which suggests experiential learning can be a powerful tool in closing equity gaps in educational attainment. Unfortunately, the report also notes that underserved students are less likely to engage in HIPs, which is a persistent concern still about equitable access to experiential learning.

"Inductive Teaching and Learning Methods: Definitions, Comparisons, and Research Bases" distinguishes deductive methods of instruction against inductive methods in the field of engineering. The article defines inductive methods as some of the common forms of experiential learning, including "inquiry learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based teaching, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching" (p. 123). The study found that inductive methods were generally more effective than deductive methods in "achieving a broad range of learning outcomes" (p. 123). This study was also later referenced by Kolb & Kolb (2017) as evidence of the efficacy of experiential learning in producing learning outcomes.

Challenges of Experiential Learning

In addition to concerns about how to define experiential learning and authenticity, experiential learning has other potential challenges and limitations. The following are some of the key challenges for students and institutions.

Student Challenges

For students, money and time can both serve as barriers to engagement in experiential learning. Financially, some experiences such as travel study can be very expensive, creating significant barriers to access for students with financial limitations. Another example is unpaid internships, which can be prohibitive for students who cannot afford to provide their time to unpaid work. (Coker & Porter, 2016)

Student perceptions and behaviors may also limit the learning potential of experiential offerings. Students may have negative preconceptions about certain forms of experiential learning that deter them from participating in that form. Students may also have preconceptions about which forms of experiential learning are more valuable than others, restricting their participation in forms that they have deemed less-than (Coker & Porter, 2016). Moore (2010) argues that students may prioritize grades over critical components of the experiential process, such as reflective practices, which will limit the learning outcomes. Additionally, Moore expresses concerns that for experiences such as internships, students may emphasize the opportunity for career exploration and networking while deemphasizing the learning experience (p. 10).

Experiential offerings can be developed in ways that are not equitable or inclusive. From a racial standpoint, Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law (2012) note how “strategies of instruction that consciously or unconsciously reinforce norms and privileges developed by, and for the benefit of, white people in the United States” (p. 613) can negatively shape experiential

offerings. Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law focused on service learning, and how the nature and framing of such projects if not developed well can be biased, reinforce racial stereotypes, and have no net benefit to the community. Inclusiveness in experiential learning can also refer to or the aforementioned financial aspects of certain experiential opportunities that can make them restrictive (Coker & Porter, 2016).

Instructional methodologies during experiential offerings may also present complications for students. Some forms of experiential learning, and / or approaches to experiential learning, emphasize student autonomy in the learning process. Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006) present a case against experiential learning focused on how unguided or limited-guided learning approaches are less effective than learning with strong guidance, particularly among novice learners.

Institutional Challenges

Institutions must identify the administrative model through which experiential learning will be governed. Rubin (2014) presents four models, all with respective pros and cons: Decentralized Management through Academic Departments for Experiential Programs and Courses with Academic Credits; Institutional Centralization for Credited Programs with a Program Director/Staff; Institutional Office for Non-Credit Programs [usually through Student Affairs]; Shared Model with Centralized Coordination and Support with Academic Departmental Control of Credited Programs and Courses. The success of experiential learning broadly at an institution depends on the identification of an administrative model that will be supportive of the experiential learning goals (Rubin, 2014).

Separately, Jeadron and Robinson (2010) identified eight components for experiential learning programs: campus climate; student engagement and leadership; faculty development

and engagement; curricular integration; community collaboration; administrative involvement and support; program development, management, and assessment; and sustainability and institutionalization. The components offered by Jeadron and Robinson show how experiential learning at an institution can be a complex undertaking with multiple stakeholder group, both internal and external. Deficiencies in any component may harm the final experiential learning product.

Experiential learning requires financial support, and like all endeavors in higher education, initiatives must secure financial support amid competition from other internal initiatives and priorities. Financial support may be especially challenging if an institution is facing declines in enrollment or funding and finances are funneled to maintain more traditional programs and opportunities (Shumer & Rolloff, 2014). Attempts to scale offerings can be costly; even when leveraging emerging technologies for scale, there are maintenance and staffing costs that can be prohibitive (Aggarwal & Wu, 2019).

For some institutions, access to experiential opportunities may be limited geographically; for instance, an urban institution may be in close proximity to numerous opportunities for partnership, research, service, and more compared to a rural institution. The cost and time associated with developing and implementing experiential offerings can be operationally difficult, if not impossible, and may be even more financially straining on institutions with geographic complications. (Aggarwal & Wu, 2019)

Faculty can play a key role in facilitating and scaling experiential learning at an institution, particularly depending on the administrative model and financial approach of the institution. Ross & Sheehan (2014) argue that faculty must be presented with more opportunities to articulate the value of experiential learning, that experiential learning must be positive

experience for faculty to facilitate, faculty must be involved in the integration efforts, and faculty must have control over their experiential opportunities as they would their own curriculum. Hesser (2014) also outlined steps to increase faculty buy-in at an institution, which starts with identifying "champions" of the work.

Assessing experiential learning can also present challenges. As Kolb & Kolb (2018) note, "The multidimensional teaching and learning strategies of experiential learning require equally diverse and complex assessment methods that adequately and fairly evaluate students' effective integration of the affective, perceptual, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of learning." Shumer (2014) notes that, like any educational program, experiential learning assessment must seek to determine if "those involved are learning something" (p. 251); additionally, the assessment process must seek to determine if the purpose of the experiential offering is being achieved and if there has been an impact on all stakeholders involved in the experience, which can include the faculty and external partners.

Taxonomies and Hierarchies in Experiential Education

Back to the modern roots of experiential learning, Dewey (1938) proposed the *experiential continuum* as a criterion of distinction among experiences to differentiate those that are educative as opposed to mis-educative. Though not a true, defined taxonomy, Dewey's discussion of an experiential continuum asserts that there is a hierarchical difference among experiences in regard to their educative capacity.

Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al, 1956) and, later, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson, et al, 2001) are often referenced levels of knowledge and cognitive processes in educational objectives. Through its hierarchical structure, the taxonomy acknowledges that some

forms of learning are more complex than others, as in the Revised Taxonomy moving from the first level (Remember) to the highest level (Create); however, all are still forms of learning.

Minimally, there are studies that produce evidence that various forms of experiential learning produce different levels of learning (Burch, et al, 2019; Kuh, 2008; Prince & Felder, 2006). However, there have also been some attempts to produce taxonomical expressions of experiential learning. Considering experiential learning on a taxonomical spectrum is important in proposing a more inclusive model of experiential learning; rather than identifying categories of learning opportunities that do or do not qualify as experiential, a spectrum encourages a more inclusive range of opportunities while acknowledging that, like Bloom's, not all learning is as deep or complex.

In *Guide to Business Gaming and Experiential Learning,* Gentry (1990) identifies in Chapter 2, "What is Experiential Learning?" the following as criteria as critical components of experiential learning: applied, participative, interactive, whole-person emphasis, contact with the environment, variability and uncertainty, structured exercise, student evaluation of the experience, and feedback. The criteria provide a framework by which experiential learning can be identified. Additionally, Gentry noted that there is a wide variety of pedagogies that can be labeled as experiential, and the criteria he proposed could assist in evaluating them on their full learning potential. Gentry provided three different pedagogies as examples along the spectrum: computer-assisted instruction, internships, and live cases. He said computer-assisted instruction fell short on the experience criteria, while live cases met the criteria easily (p. 20). While Gentry does not reference this methodology specifically as a hierarchy or taxonomy, it comes out that way in practice.

Shulman proposed the Table of Learning in “Making Differences: A Table of Learning” (2002). Shulman’s Table of Learning consists of the following elements: Engagement and Motivation; Knowledge and Understanding; Performance and Action; Reflection and Critique; Judgment and Design; Commitment and Identity. In presenting his Table, which he also refers to as a taxonomy, he diverts his discourse to present arguments for and against the use of taxonomies, largely taking a stance that taxonomies, at best, can serve as “an extended metaphor, a limited explanatory principle, or even a story” (Shulman, 2002, p. 40). However, regardless of his stance on taxonomies, his Table of Learning functions less like a taxonomy and more like other guiding principles for engaged learning (Gentry, 1990; Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022; What Is Experiential Education - Association for Experiential Education, n.d.). Shulman states that he proposed “the Table of Learning not because it's theoretically valid or true - no taxonomy is - but because I find it practically and theoretically useful, conceptually robust, and fun” (p. 42).

In “The Scholarship of Engagement: A Taxonomy of Five Emerging Practices” (2004) Barker proposes a taxonomy of five forms of engaged scholarship, taking the stance that “engagement requires not only communication to public audiences, but also collaboration with communities in the production of knowledge” (p. 126). Barker’s taxonomy posits definitions of various experiential forms: public scholarship, participatory research, community partnership, public information networks, and civic literacy scholarship; however, it does not serve as a taxonomy in the sense of differentiating the depth of the various practices. Additionally, Barker’s taxonomy is limited by its stance that engagement is engagement with communities, which limits its ability to address practices such as labs and simulations.

In “Dewey’s Yardstick: Contextualization as a Crosscutting Measure of Experience in Education and Learning” Giamellaro (2017) introduces the contextualization spectrum, which functions like an experiential taxonomy. Giamellaro uses the term contextualization as a means to “indicate the degree to which the subject knowledge being developed by the learners is connected to the world beyond the abstractions of the classroom” (p. 2). As examples, one end of the spectrum has a purely academic lecture, while the other end may include a language immersion program studied abroad among a culture with a different language (p. 2). The contextualization spectrum emerged out of what Giamellaro argues is a necessity for researchers and practitioners to continue to understand how experiences impact learning. Though the modern research around learning by doing is nearly a century old, Giamellaro notes that there is still “the messiness of measuring experience” (p. 1) that needs to be solved if educators are going to optimize approaches to experiential learning. Giamellaro concludes with the argument that experiential practitioners and researchers should “accept experience as a broad container” (p. 9) and identify “targeted constructs that can be measured, compared, evaluated, and revised” (p. 9), with his contextualization spectrum being one such mechanism by which this can occur.

In the “Experienced-Based Learning Taxonomy,” Gaszak (2019) presented the Experience-based Learning (EbL) Taxonomy, which was designed to differentiate experiences across five levels by using the following criteria: depth of immersion; student autonomy; requirement for preparation and foundation knowledge/skills; and potential for teachable error/failure. Level 1 included examples such as in-class guest speakers, stretching to Level 5 which included examples such as internships, clinicals, and travel study programs. Gaszak argued that experiential learning is more about what, why, and how an experience takes place rather than where, when, and who - including that an experiential opportunity can occur within a

classroom setting. Additionally, an item's level on the taxonomy is not a judgement of its value. Ala Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956; Anderson, et al, 2001), each experience still serves as a form of learning, and inclusion of any form of experiential learning contributes to the breadth and depth of exposure to advance student learning outcomes (Coker, et al, 2017). The taxonomy framework urged practitioners and institutions to accept a broader, more inclusive definition of experiential learning across the taxonomy to provide more equitable, inclusive, and fiscally-responsible options for experiential learning for both students and institutions.

Kolb and Kolb (2017) presented a similar argument regarding the recognition and adoption of a larger, inclusive set of learning opportunities as being experiential in "Experiential Learning Theory as a Guide for Experiential Educators in Higher Education": "From the perspective of [Experiential Learning Theory] there is a widespread idea of what experiential learning is that fails to capture the full potential of the process of learning from experience" (p. 13). In other words, the pervasive, general understanding of what experiential learning is and can be is often exclusionary, in that certain opportunities to learn by experience may not be recognized as experiential despite having the capacity to work within ELT and fulfill components of the Experiential Learning Cycle. Additionally, the pervasive understanding of experiential learning is reductive by not allowing experiential learning to be recognized in as many forms within education as it should be.

Chapter Three: Methods

A key observation at the root of this research is that educators, departments, and institutions have varying definitions of experiential education and its philosophical criteria, as well as differing perspectives on what educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning (i.e. internships, service learning). The data collection gathered beliefs and perceptions of higher education educators about these areas to determine if there are quantifiable differences among educators in some or all areas.

Research Questions

The research investigated the following questions:

- In what ways do educators' perceptions of the elements, definitions, forms, and methods of experiential education align and diverge?
- What are the key forms, types, and methods of experiential learning that comprise the field of experiential education?

The questions focused on experiential education provided an opportunity to analyze which criteria are perceived as the most critical or important to the educational philosophies of experiential education. The questions focused on experiential learning provided an opportunity to analyze what educational methodologies are perceived by educators to be most strongly associated with experiential learning. Prior to conducting the research, a desired outcome was for the data to present an opportunity to identify parameters around experiential education's criteria and what education forms qualify as experiential learning.

Study Design

The methodology used was quantitative descriptive research, specifically basic descriptive research. The goal of the research was to collect educators' perspectives on

experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms. The research was conducted through a quantitative survey, which asked participants to shared their perspectives via Likert scale questions. This method provided descriptive data about similarities and differences among higher education professionals regarding experiential learning. The quantitative approach to data collection allowed for consistent data collection and analysis. In contrast, a qualitative approach of asking educators to write their own definitions of experiential learning could result in highly variable responses, in both length and content, as well as a lower response rate due to the effort of writing such a definition.

Data Collection Plan

The data collection plan for this study focused on recruitment of participants participation in the quantitative survey among higher education experiential educators. Responses were collected from Monday, April 8, 2024 into Wednesday, April 24, 2024. The recruitment methods emphasized potential participants who are current members of the Society for Experiential Education (SEE), though that was not the exclusive pool of participants.

Description of Participants

The desired research participants were individuals who have worked, currently or formerly, at higher education institutions as faculty, staff, or administrators. The recruitment methods emphasized individuals who have even a fundamental understanding of experiential education and/or involvement in experiential learning. The survey closed with 122 participants. Among the participants, one identified as has having zero years of higher education employment; the responses from this participant were disqualified from the data set. Therefore, the final data was n = 121.

Recruitment

The recruitment of participants for the online survey included the following two methods:

Society for Experiential Education (SEE) Discussion Forum

SEE members have access to a discussion forum on the SEE website behind the member login. The researcher posted to the discussion forum (see Appendix C) soliciting participation in the survey on three separate occasions during the time the survey was accepting responses. All SEE members also receive the discussion forum posts directly to their email, unless they have opted out of such emails in their personal settings on the SEE website.

Researcher's LinkedIn

The researcher solicited participation in the survey via posts on the researcher's personal LinkedIn account (see Appendix D). Four separate posts were created during the time the survey was accepting responses. The researcher currently has more than 761 connections on LinkedIn, with many being current or former higher education employees.

Methods for Data Collection

The survey tool featured only quantitative questions, aside from a single, optional question at the conclusion of the survey (see Appendix A). The survey instructed respondents that their responses to questions should be based on their own understanding, perspectives, beliefs, and definitions of experiential learning, which may or may not align with the perspectives of their current or former institutions and organizations. In other words, the goal was to gauge the individuals' responses and not have the individuals serve as a proxy for institutional perspectives and definitions.

Asking participants to answer based on their own perspectives could have produced significant variability in responses. However, the research anticipated that there would be variability in perspectives, which is at the core of the research questions. Additionally, utilizing a

quantitative approach in the study limited extreme variability in responses by confining responses to Likert scales. The aggregated responses of individuals provided data to analyze where there is uniformity and disagreement on criteria and forms.

The survey consisted of the following sections: Consent to Participation; Experiential Education Perceptions; Experiential Learning Potential; and Demographic Information. The following subsections describe each survey section.

Consent to Participation

The first section of the survey contained survey details and information on consenting to participate. There was a single checkbox response asking participants to confirm they were consenting to participate in the survey. A participant could not advance to the next section of the survey without consenting to participate; therefore, anyone who declined to participate would only have had the option to exit the survey.

Experiential Education Perceptions

The Experiential Education Perceptions section asked participants to respond to twelve questions (see Appendix A) on a Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Participants were asked to "[s]elect the answer that most closely or frequently aligns with your perspective" for each of the questions.

Each question investigated a possible attribute of experiential education, such as "Experiential education must provide hands-on learning opportunities for the student." The responses allowed for analysis around areas of consensus and dissonance in these experiential education criteria.

Experiential Learning Potential

The Experiential Learning Potential section listed 22 items in alphabetical order (see Appendix A), ranging from Apprenticeships to Work Study, that may be classified as experiential learning. For each item, participants rated the item's potential to produce student learning outcomes through experiential learning, on a scale of Minimally Experiential, Moderately Experiential, and Highly Experiential. If a participant believed a particular item is not experiential learning, there was a "Not Experiential" option. Participants also had the option to reply "No Opinion" on items if the participant did not feel knowledgeable enough about the item to make an informed judgment. There were two objectives in the Experiential Learning Potential section. The first was to explore any trends among which items do or do not qualify as experiential learning according to the responses. The second was to review for any trends among potentiality in forms.

Following the Likert scale responses, there was an optional question on the survey that asked participants if there are any forms of experiential learning they believe are missing from the items presented throughout the survey. While the survey items were intended to be broad and inclusive, the optional question allowed for participants to volunteer more items that may be considered in future research and analysis.

Demographic Information

The Demographic Information section asked participants the following questions: highest level of education; years of employment in higher education; current status of employment in higher education; years of engagement in experiential education; and SEE membership status. See Appendix A for full question phrasing. The framing of the demographic questions prevented any participant from being individually identifiable.

Data Analysis Strategies

A descriptive research approach was used for the data gathered through the survey. Data was exported from the Google Form survey and compiled in Microsoft Excel. Responses were omitted from the final data set from any participants who identified as having no higher education employment experience (n = 1). The Likert scale text responses in the Experiential Education Perceptions and Experiential Learning Potential sections of the survey were converted to numeric values for data analysis as follows: Strongly Agree / Highly Experiential were assigned a value of 4; Agree / Moderately Experiential were assigned a value of 3; Disagree / Minimally Experiential were assigned a value of 2; Strongly Disagree / Not Experiential were assigned a value of 1. After conversions, the data was imported to JASP for analysis using descriptive tables.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed for responses based on demographic differences. Means were determined for each question in the Experiential Education Perceptions and Experiential Learning Potential sections and ANOVA was performed by highest education level, years of employment in higher education, and years of engagement in experiential learning. The purpose was to determine if there was any statistically significant variation in responses based on the demographic variables that would have an impact on the findings of this study.

Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Minimizing Harm

IRB approval was received (see Appendix B) prior to conducting research. As discussed earlier and shown in Appendix A, the survey tool had the consent form built into it as a first and forced response prior to allowing participants to engage with the remainder of the survey. The consent form notified the participants that the information gathered was not intended to be personally identifiable, and it will not be used in any way to identify any individual. The consent

form also elaborated on the researcher's purpose, to conduct descriptive research around perceptions of experiential learning among experiential educators. The researcher's contact information was provided to participants to allow for questions or clarification. Data will be stored on the researcher's personal drive with password protection; no one else will have access to the data. Data will be destroyed three years after the conclusion of the study.

Study Limitations and Delimitations

Delimitations of this study include the target population of the study. By targeting members of the Society for Experiential Education as a key recruitment method, 66.36% of respondents indicated being a current or former member of SEE. This potentially means that the majority of participants have perceptions of experiential education and experiential learning that align somewhat closely with the organization's own philosophies, hence their engagement with SEE. A more diverse population of participants, such as including members of other experiential organizations, could produce a more robust and complex outcome of perspectives on the research questions.

Limitations of this study include that it is descriptive research based only on educator perspectives. This research was valuable in identifying majority viewpoints on experiential education and its forms, but further research or meta-analysis can be conducted on learning outcomes and student growth in each form that would allow for a more solidly data driven analysis of each item's potential and relationship to one another.

Validity and Reliability

External validity concerns are present due to the range of the target population. SEE's members are largely educators from higher education institutions across the United States, skewing toward the Midwest and East Coast. The variance in institutions, accreditation regions,

and other variables may have influenced responses, particularly if any one institution or region is overrepresented. The demographic questions did not ask for participants to identify their region or regional accreditor, meaning it is not possible to determine if there was an overrepresentation in this regard. Additionally, the demographic information of the participants skewed toward individuals who have a decade or more experience working at a higher education institution (76.00%) and a decade or more experience engaging with EE as an employee (61.98%). Participants with this level of experience could, potentially, either have contributed more nuanced and evolved understandings of experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms, or it is possible such participants have understandings rooted more in past practices that align with when they began engaging in the field. No data was collected in this study that would allow an opportunity to make such a differentiation.

Another concern with validity was that each participant may have defined the various forms of experiential learning differently. However, that was also part of the intent of the study, for participants to respond to the questions based on their own perspectives and definitions, because the research was working from the assumption that definitions are varied which is part of the difficulty of the field.

Concerns with reliability exist with the demographics of the target population. Given that the survey was presented widely to the SEE membership, the demographics of the responding participants had a majority representation from that group. The reliability of the data would likely be improved in a future study with an even more expansive set of participants including other experiential organizations, such as those references in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

Introduction

In this chapter, findings will be presented for the demographics, Experiential Learning Perceptions, and Experiential Learning Potential sections of the survey. Additionally, ANOVA was run to determine if there are any statistically significant variations in responses to any of the Experiential Learning Perceptions or Experiential Learning Potential responses due to three primary demographic variables.

Participant Demographics

The participants (n = 121) responded to five demographic questions (see Table 1). Participants' highest level of education is predominantly a minimum of a graduate degree (90.08%). More than three-quarters of respondents indicated having ten or more years of employment experience at a higher education institution (76.03%). Most of the participants (90.91%) indicated they are employed currently at a higher education institution. Two-thirds (63.64%) of participants indicated they are current or former SEE members, which fits with the recruitment directly through SEE forums.

For years of direct engagement in experiential education as an employee, 15+ years (37.19%) was the most common response. This demographic question had a more equal distribution across the categories than the other demographic questions. Balanced with the question about years of employment at an HEI, the years in experiential education responses show that there is less experience of direct engagement in experiential education than in higher education in general, with 38.02% of participants indicating they have nine or fewer years of direct engagement with experiential education as an employee.

Table 1

Demographics

	n	*%*
Education Level		
High School	2	1.65
Bachelor's	10	8.26
Master's	63	52.07
Terminal	46	38.02
Years at an HEI		
1-3 Years	7	5.79
4-9 Years	22	18.18
10-14 Years	25	20.66
15+ Years	67	55.37
Currently at an HEI		
Yes	110	90.91
No	11	9.09
Years of EE		
1-3 Years	18	14.88
4-9 Years	28	23.14
10-14 Years	30	24.79
15+ Years	45	37.19
SEE Membership		
Yes	77	63.64
No	44	36.36

Most Frequent Participant Profile

The most frequently identified participant profile (n = 14) was for participants holding a terminal degree, with 15+ years of employment, currently employee at an HEI, with 15+ years engagement in experiential education as an employee, who is a current or former SEE member. As discussed in Chapter 3, the wealth of experience among the majority of participants may present an opportunity for the data to demonstrate more evolved understandings of experiential education and experiential learning, or the data could reflect perspectives rooted more in past practices. This study's survey tool did not incorporate questions to differentiate between the two.

Experiential Education Perceptions

The Experiential Education Perceptions section of the survey (Appendix A) contained 12 questions that required a Likert scale response of Strongly Agree (numeric value of 4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), or Strongly Disagree (1). The first research question for this study sought to identify in what ways do educators' perceptions of the elements, definitions, forms, and methods of experiential education align and diverge. The two criteria that were scored most highly, aligning with Strongly Agree on the Likert scale, were "Experiential education must provide hands-on learning opportunities for the student" (M = 3.74, Mo = 4.00) and "Experiential education must provide students an opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences" (M = 3.82, Mo = 4.00). Both were the only criteria for which Mo = 4.00. Both criteria also align with norms and practices (SEE Standards and Practice, n.d.; What is Experiential Education?, n.d.) and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb & Fry, 1974). The next highest criterion was "Experiential education must provide students an opportunity to connect their learning experiences to future applications" (M = 3.31, Mo = 3.00), which similar to the top two criteria is

Table 2

Experiential Education Perceptions

	Mean (SD)
EE must provide hands-on learning	3.74 (0.50)
EE can occur within a single class period	3.03 (0.87)
EE must involve a third-party	2.28 (0.84)
EE must occur outside the classroom	2.19 (0.83)
EE can occur through simulations	3.10 (0.72)
EE must provide students an opportunity to reflect	3.82 (0.45)
EE an occur within a single day	3.21 (0.74)
EE can be student-led	2.81 (0.80)
EE must connect learning experiences to future applications	3.31 (0.63)
EE can occur inside the classroom	3.20 (0.71)
EE requires sustained involvement (i.e. multiple days or longer)	2.46 (0.80)
EE requires the opportunity to learn through failure	2.96 (0.74)

common to organizational norms and practices (SEE Standards and Practice, n.d.; What is Experiential Education?, n.d.).

Indicative of the breadth of perspectives on experiential education criteria, nine of the twelve criteria had a high standard deviation ($\sigma < 0.71$). However, no criteria had $Mo < 2.00$, indicating that despite the breath of responses, no single criterion was scored as a majority Strongly Disagree.

The data in relation to duration and location demonstrated a more open-minded and equitable approach to experiential education. The responses for both "Experiential education can occur within a single class period" ($M = 3.03$, $Mo = 3.00$) and "Experiential education can occur within a single day (24 hours)" ($M = 3.21$, $Mo = 3.00$) show agreement and support for the potential of shorter duration experiential opportunities. While depth of experience has been shown to improve learning outcomes (Coker, et al, 2017), there is advocacy for value and impact of brief experiential opportunities (Gaszak, 2019; Giamellaro, 2017). Shorter-duration opportunities also support the equity-minded framework of this study, as longer-duration experiential opportunities can present financial and logistical challenges that result in inequitable access to such opportunities (Coker & Porter, 2016).

Regarding location, the responses demonstrated support for experiential opportunities that occur within the classroom. Two questions were intended to serve as counterpoints to one another: "Experiential education must occur outside the classroom" ($M = 2.19$, $Mo = 2.00$) and "Experiential education can occur inside the classroom" ($M = 3.20$, $Mo = 3.00$). Were the scores for these questions to mirror one another, it would have indicated a contradiction in perspectives among the respondents. However, the scores counter each other as they should; if a respondent does not think experiential education must occur outside the classroom, then they should agree

that it can occur in the classroom, and this is reflected in the data. This finding is important, because it runs counter to any institutional and organizational definitions of experiential education that emphasize experiential learning occurring beyond or outside the classroom (Experiential Learning, n.d.; Experiential learning. BYU College of Fine Arts and Communications (CFAC), n.d.). Additionally, respondents supported the idea that "Experiential education can occur through simulations" (M = 3.10, Mo = 3.00), which demonstrates an overall support for flexibility in location and modalities. Similar to the equity concerns with duration, when experiential education is defined strictly as an opportunity that occurs away from the classroom, this creates inequitable access to experiential offerings who may not have the means to engage in offerings away from the classroom.

Another notable outcome was in regard to third-party participation. Respondents disagreed that "Experiential education must involve a third-party beyond the student and faculty/staff member" (M = 2.28, Mo = 2.00). Experiential learning forms that could, depending on the structure of the experience, require a third-party include internships, laboratory experiences (with external site / partner), and co-ops. Again, through an equity lens, these are experiential learning forms that may be most prohibitive for access. Not requiring a third-party correlates with the responses about duration and location, providing perspective that experiential opportunities do not necessarily need to expand beyond the classroom.

Experiential Learning Potential

The Experiential Education Potential section of the survey (Appendix A) contained 22 items that required a Likert scale response of Highly Experiential (numeric value of 4), Moderately Experiential (3), Minimally Experiential (2), or Not Experiential (1). Each item also provided the option for an participant to indicate "No Opinion" if the participant did not feel

knowledgeable enough about that item to respond. All "No Opinion" responses were removed from the data set for purposes of data analysis. Additionally, twenty (20) responses to individual items marked multiple ratings for that item; these responses were also removed from the data set.

The second research questions for this study sough to understand what are the key forms, types, and methods of experiential learning that comprise the field of experiential education. Among the 22 forms listed in the Experiential Learning Potential section of the survey, the data did not disqualify any of the forms from consideration as being experiential. All 22 items had means and modes ≥ 2.00, or Minimally Experiential on the Likert scale. Additionally, every form had a maximum value of 4.00, indicating it had one or more responses of Highly Experiential. The diversity of perspectives is still demonstrated, however, through 13 of the 22 forms having a minimum value of 1.00 and maximum value of 4.00, and through 16 of 22 forms having a standard deviation greater than 0.50.

Among the forms, there was the most consensus around six being Highly Experiential: Clinical Practice Experiences (M = 3.95, Mo = 4.00, σ = 0.26), Internships (M = 3.89, Mo = 4.00, σ = 0.36), Apprenticeships (M = 3.88, Mo = 4.00, σ = 0.38), Co-Ops (M = 3.78, Mo = 4.00, σ = 0.50), Practica (M = 3.75, Mo = 4.00, σ = 0.52), and Laboratory Experiences (with External Site / Partner) (M = 3.71, Mo = 4.00, σ = 0.48). Not surprisingly, all of these forms, particularly the first four in the list, could be considered work-integrated learning and/or high-impact practices (HIPs) (Kuh, 2008). These forms, particularly internships, are also emphasized frequently among the experiential organizations referenced in Chapter 2.

Conversely, seven of the forms had a mean value of < 3.00, all of which had a standard deviation ≥ 0.72. These forms include Simulations (M = 2.98, Mo = 3.00), Course-based Laboratory

Table 3

Experiential Learning Potential

	n	Mean (SD)
Apprenticeships	120	3.88 (0.38)
Athletics	102	2.60 (0.97)
Clinical Practice Experiences	117	3.95 (0.26)
Co-Curriculars	100	3.08 (0.66)
Cooperative Education (Co-Ops)	113	3.78 (0.50)
Course-based Activities	116	2.77 (0.77)
Course-based Group Discussions	116	2.17 (0.90)
Course-based Guest Lectures	117	2.07 (0.88)
Course-based Laboratory Experiences	119	2.97 (0.72)
Creative Performances	111	3.28 (0.78)
Extracurriculars	112	2.79 (0.80)
Fellowships	104	3.63 (0.64)
Internships	121	3.90 (0.36)
Laboratory Experiences (with External Site / Partner)	116	3.70 (0.48)
Practica	104	3.75 (0.52)
Project-Based Learning	118	3.46 (0.69)
Service Learning	120	3.63 (0.62)
Simulations	117	2.98 (0.84)
Student Leadership	120	3.09 (0.82)
Student Research	116	3.49 (0.68)
Travel Study / Study Abroad	117	3.63 (0.58)
Work Study	115	3.24 (0.79)

Experience (*M* = 2.97, *Mo* = 3.00), Extracurriculars (*M* = 2.79, *Mo* = 3.00), Course-based Activities (*M* = 2.77, *Mo* = 3.00), Athletics (*M* = 2.60, *Mo* = 2.00), Course-based Group Discussions (*M* = 2.17, *Mo* = 2.00), and Course-based Guest Lectures (*M* = 2.07, *Mo* = 2.00).

These seven included the four forms that were explicitly labeled as being "course-based" and the two that may be seen as outside of traditional academics (Extracurriculars, Athletics). As noted previously, all of these forms still maintained a mean and mode ≥ 2.00, or qualifying them as at least Minimally Experiential from the perspective of the respondents.

The findings support the concept of an experiential taxonomy, hierarchy, or spectrum (see Chapter 2: Taxonomies and Hierarchies in Experiential Education). The mean scores of the experiential learning forms correlate quiet well with the more contemporary attempts at taxonomical approaches, such as the Contextualization Spectrum (Giamellaro, 2017) and the EbL Taxonomy (Gaszak, 2019). In both cases, the models plotted experiential forms left-to-right items in this study that were found to be Minimally Experiential, such as course-based activities, to Highly Experiential items, such as internships. To reiterate, broadening what is accepted as experiential, even if minimally so, presents the opportunity to provide more equitable access to experiential offerings for students by creating more experiential offerings that meet students' needs and means.

Additional Forms Findings

The survey included a single, optional qualitative question that followed the "Experiential Learning Potential" section. The question asked participants to identify any additional educational approaches they believe are experiential that were not included in the list of options in the Experiential Learning Potential section. A total of 44 participants provided a written response to the question; among the responses, 32 provides additional forms they felt were

missing from the Experiential Learning Potential list. The recommendations included some potential experiential learning forms that may be missing entirely from the list provided in the Experiential Learning Potential section. Such items include outdoor or adventure-based education, externships, competitions, job shadowing, conference attendance / participation, community engagement, volunteerism, and online / virtual experiential learning.

There were other items recommended that could, potentially, be subcategories of the broader items providing in the survey list. These items include the following, with the corresponding survey item in the parentheticals: art studio (creative performances), fieldwork (student research), community-engaged research (student research), and student officer positions (co-curriculars or extracurriculars). Similarly, some of the previously listed items could potentially be nested under the broader list categories, such as community engagement (service learning).

These recommendations provide some insight into the potential limitations of this study, as well as opportunity for future study, in that the experiential learning forms presented do not necessarily encapsulate the entire breadth of potential experiential offerings. One respondent shared a resource connected to the University of British Columbia (Experiential education at UBC, n.d.) that includes a map of "Clusters of Experiential Learning" grouping 73 items across categories of work integrated, student-led, land & place-based, strategy-specific, immersive (local & global), community engaged, and research-based. All of the recommended items could be investigated in future studies through a similar or more evolved tool as the one used in this study, furthering the breadth of items that empirically supported as experiential.

Demographic Response Variances

A one-way ANOVA was performed for the 12 Experiential Education Perceptions questions and the 22 Experiential Learning Forms items against each of the following three demographic variables: highest education level, years of employment in higher education, and years of direct engagement in experiential education as an employee. The following are findings by each demographic area that was investigated, with notes on any areas that were found to have a statistically significant difference (p <.05).

Highest Education Level

A statistically significant difference was identified between the responses in four different questions and highest education level.

Apprenticeships

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to Apprenticeships by highest level of education as determined by ANOVA (F(3, 116) = [4.291], p = 0.007). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between High School and each other group: Bachelor's (p = 0.010), Master's (p = 0.008), and Terminal (p = 0.003). High School respondents had a much lower mean Apprenticeship score (3.00) than Bachelor's (3.90), Master's (3.86), and Terminal (3.93).

Clinical Practice Experiences

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to Clinical Practice Experiences by highest level of education as determined by ANOVA (F(3, 113) = [48.699], p < .001). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between High School and each other group: Bachelor's (p < .001), Master's (p < .001), and Terminal (p < .001). High School respondents had a much lower mean Clinical Practice Experiences score (2.50) than Bachelor's (4.00), Master's (3.95), and Terminal (4.00).

Co-Ops

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to Co-Ops by highest level of education as determined by ANOVA ($F(3, 109) = [5.119]$, $p = 0.002$). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between High School and each other group: Bachelor's ($p = 0.002$), Master's ($p = 0.001$), and Terminal ($p = 0.002$). High School respondents had a much lower mean Co-Ops score (2.50) than Bachelor's (3.86), Master's (3.80), and Terminal (3.78).

Internships

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to Internships by highest level of education as determined by ANOVA ($F(3, 117) = [5.480]$, $p = 0.001$). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between High School and each other group: Bachelor's ($p = 0.001$), Master's ($p = 0.001$), and Terminal ($p = 0.005$). High School respondents had a much lower mean Internships score (3.00) than Bachelor's (4.00), Master's (3.94), and Terminal (3.85).

Higher Education Level Findings

Respondents who identified their highest education level as High School ($n = 2$) accounted for only 1.65% of the total respondents. Collectively, the findings do not raise concerns that there is a variation in responses due to education levels, given that the instances all involved the smallest group in this demographic, and the variations were infrequent.

Years of Employment at an HEI

A statistically significant difference was identified between the responses in three different questions and years of employment at a higher education institution.

EE must provide an opportunity to reflect

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to EE must provide an opportunity to reflect by years of employment at an HEI as determined by ANOVA ($F(3, 117) = [4.533]$, $p = 0.005$). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between responses from 1-3 Years and each other group: 4-9 Years ($p = 0.003$), 10-14 Years ($p = 0.008$), and 15+ Years ($p = 0.015$). 1-3 Years respondents had a much lower mean score (3.28) than 4-9 Years (3.96), 10-14 Years (3.88), and 15+ Years (3.81).

Creative Performances

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to Creative Performances by years of employment at an HEI as determined by ANOVA ($F(3, 107) = [5.312]$, $p = 0.002$). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between responses from 1-3 Years and 4-9 Years ($p = 0.042$), and between 4-9 Years and 15+ Years ($p = 0.002$). The mean for 4-9 Years (2.75) was significantly lower than the mean for 1-3 Years (3.67) and 15+ Years (3.45).

Laboratory Experiences

There were statistically significant differences between the responses to Laboratory Experiences (with External Site / Partner) by years of employment at an HEI as determined by ANOVA ($F(3, 112) = [5.123]$, $p = 0.002$). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between responses from 1-3 Years and 4-9 Years ($p = 0.036$), and between 4-9 Years and 15+ Years ($p = 0.005$). The mean for 4-9 Years (3.43) was significantly lower than the mean for 1-3 Years (4.00) and 15+ Years (3.81).

Years of Employment at an HEI Findings

Without additional information, a cause for the differences in both Creative Performance and Laboratory Experiences cannot be determined. With a greater number of respondents, it is

possible these two items would no longer show a statistically significant difference. The more interesting and notable finding is that the 1-3 Year respondents had a statistically significant difference compared to all the other groups in that demographic, and it was due to a much lower mean. The possibility exists that individuals newer to the field of higher education, and likely experiential education by extension, are not yet familiar with the experiential theories and best practices that emphasize the importance of reflection.

Years of Direct Engagement in EE

Surprising, there was no statistically significant variance to any of the items in either the Experiential Education Perceptions or Experiential Learning Potential sections based on the respondents' years of direct engagement in experiential education as an employee.

Conclusion

The findings of the research exhibited several positive takeaways. Most importantly, the findings of the Experiential Education Perceptions and Experiential Learning Potential sections show that higher education educators have a much more broad and inclusive perspective on what constitutes experiential education and what educational approaches qualify as experiential learning. As presented in Chapter 2, institutional and organizational approaches to experiential education can, at times, be narrowly focused on only a handful of key experiential offerings, such as internships. As a result, this can create inequities and barriers to providing experiential opportunities to all students. Whereas, if higher education were to more uniformly adopt the inclusive attitudes demonstrated in these findings, there will be additional, equitable pathways for access to experiential offerings that can include what may have, traditionally, been deemed as not experiential, such as course-based activities and extracurriculars.

In Chapter 5, there will be discussion of conclusions and implications for this study that explore how the positive, inclusive results of the survey can lead to both a more equitable landscape for experiential learning, as well as the construction of a quantitatively supported experiential taxonomy. Chapter 5 will also present potential areas for future research.

CHAPTER 5 - Discussion

Introduction

In Chapter 1, the problem of definitional variance was addressed, along with how this study can support the development of more inclusive experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms to support the equity-focused access that relate to the study's framework. Chapter 2 identified that the literature does not resolve the definitional challenges, bur the more contemporary literature does add even more complexity to the discourse. Chapter 3 detailed the methods for how this study sought the perspectives of higher education employees on experiential education and experiential learning through quantitative descriptive research. Chapter 4 presented the findings, which demonstrated more openness to non-traditional thought on experiential education than was expected. Chapter 5 includes a summary of research conducted in this study followed by and interpretation of findings that will explore how the findings address the study's research questions. Also included are discussions of the significance of the study and implications for practice. Lastly, recommendations will be provided for future research that can support and build from this study.

Summary of Research

The terms experiential education and experiential learning have become commonplace across higher education; however, there is no universally agreed upon definition for either term. Definitional variance exists between educators, institutions, and organizations, which can create dissonance in the field of experiential education and across higher education. The literature explored in Chapter 2 does not resolve the definitional complication; conversely, the more contemporary literature reaffirms that common definitions make be lacking (Kolb & Kolb, 2017) and that even the core idea of what constitutes *experience* (Fox, 2008) needs deeper exploration.

Existing principles and best practices (Dewey, 1938; Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2013; What is Experiential Education?, n.d.; Gentry, 1990; Kolb & Kolb, 2018) and frameworks (Gentry, 1990; Shulman, 2002; Barker, 2004; Giamellaro, 2017; Gaszak, 2019) help to provide some context and parameters around what constitutes experiential, without actually solidifying a unified definition.

With this definitional variance, educators in the field may all mean something slightly or wildly different when using the terms experiential education and experiential learning. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research study was to gather the perspectives of individual experiential educators across higher education (n = 121) on what they perceive to be experiential education's criteria and what forms of educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning forms. The survey tool included 34 Likert scale questions that provided the findings, as well as five demographic questions.

The findings in Chapter 4 discovered that educators, generally, displayed a much more inclusive perspective for breadth of experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms. Mean scores generated for the Likert scale responses show an openness to non-traditional experiential perspectives, such as experiential education being able to occur within a classroom, and inclusivity toward all experiential learning forms being rated in the survey.

Interpretation of Findings

Two research questions guided this study. The first was what ways do educators' perceptions of the elements, definitions, forms, and methods of experiential education align and diverge? The second was what are the key forms, types, and methods of experiential learning that comprise the field of experiential education? This section will address how the findings answered both of the questions.

Educators' Perceptions

The first research question asked in what ways do educators' perceptions of the elements, definitions, forms, and methods of experiential education align and diverge? This question aligned primarily with the first section of the survey tool, Experiential Education Perceptions. These questions probed into the criteria and composition of experiential education, and not about specificity of forms. The data displayed broad, inclusive attitude toward experiential education criteria.

The highest scoring items were that "Experiential education must provide hands-on learning opportunities for the student" (M = 3.74) and that "Experiential education must provide students an opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences" (M = 3.82), both of which align with experiential learning theory (Kolb & Fry, 1974) and organizational best practices (Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022; Association for Experiential Education, n.d.; About Us. Institute for Experiential Learning, 2023), making the results unsurprising. Part of the definitional challenge of experiential education is in agreeing on what qualifies an experience as being "hands-on" for students. Respondents showed favorable support for simulations (M = 3.10) and experiences in the classroom (M = 3.20), suggesting educators may be willing to embrace a less literal meaning of "hands-on" so long as it involves students in their own learning and engaged students in experiential theory and best practices.

The more surprising results came in regard to attitudes about duration and location. The responses for both "Experiential education can occur within a single class period" (M = 3.03) and "Experiential education can occur within a single day (24 hours)" (M = 3.21) show agreement and support for the potential of shorter duration experiential opportunities. The questions of "Experiential education must occur outside the classroom" (M = 2.19) and "Experiential

education can occur inside the classroom" (M = 3.20), support the perspective that experiential learning can happen within the four walls of the classroom. Collectively, these shorter duration experiences, especially within the classroom, may have traditionally been labeled as active learning as a means to categorize them as less-than experiential. However, the findings show support for existing advocacy for the value and impact of brief experiential opportunities (Gaszak, 2019; Giamellaro, 2017), which can consequently support increased scale and access to experiential opportunities. Course-based experiences, particularly of shorter duration, are an easier sell for faculty to develop and implement. More opportunities built within courses is one way to provide more equitable access to experiential learning offerings.

Facilitation of experiential education was another notable area. Respondents disagreed that "Experiential education must involve a third-party beyond the student and faculty/staff member" (*M* = 2.28), which is a positive outcome. Limiting experiential opportunities to those requiring third-party participation means, typically, funneling students toward experiential learning forms that present the most notable issues of inequity and access, such as internships. The responses also showed disagreement with the question "Experiential education can be student-led without significant facilitation from faculty / staff / supervisor" (*M* = 2.81). Experiential education emphasizes placing students at the center of the learning experience, but the responses indicate that educators feel students cannot be left entirely to their own devices if learning is to be optimized. This perspective would mirror some of the literature that argued minimal guidance in experiential learning is problematic (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006).

Forms

The second research question asked what are the key forms, types, and methods of experiential learning that comprise the field of experiential education? This question aligned

primarily with the second section of the survey tool, Experiential Learning Potential. Among the 22 forms listed in the Experiential Learning Potential section of the survey, the data did not disqualify any of the forms from consideration as being experiential. All 22 items had means and modes ≥ 2.00, or Minimally Experiential on the Likert scale. Additionally, every form had a maximum value of 4.00, indicating it had one or more responses of Highly Experiential. These results are contrary to expectations, in a positive way. There was an anticipation that some forms, particularly those labeled explicitly as "course-based" would garner resistance that could push the mean scores to < 2.00, or Not Experiential on the Likert scale, but this was not the case.

The findings support an inclusive breadth of experiential learning forms, and echo the arguments made for spectrums or taxonomical approaches (Giamellaro, 2017; Gaszak, 2019). The receptiveness by respondents to all of the experiential learning forms is significant, because it supports scale and equitable access. If educators and institutions can adopt more forms of experiential learning, and apply theory and best practices, then experiential opportunities can be fostered across all corners of an institution, meeting students where they are at currently and providing pathways to new experiences.

Demographics

The limited demographic data collected of respondents in the final section of the survey tool provided an opportunity to identify any statistically significant differences in responses based on demographic differences. ANOVA was performed for the 34 Likert scale questions against three of the demographic variables: highest education level, years of employment in higher education, and years of direct engagement in experiential education as an employee. Statistically significant differences based on the demographics were very infrequent and largely did not present any implications in the study. The only area that may warrant additional

investigation was for the question asking if experiential education must provide an opportunity to reflect. There were statistically significant differences between the responses to EE must provide an opportunity to reflect by years of employment at an HEI as determined by ANOVA ($F(3, 117) = [4.533]$, $p = 0.005$). A post hoc test showed statistically significant difference between responses from 1-3 Years and each other group: 4-9 Years ($p = 0.003$), 10-14 Years ($p = 0.008$), and 15+ Years ($p = 0.015$). 1-3 Years respondents had a much lower mean score (3.28) than 4-9 Years (3.96), 10-14 Years (3.88), and 15+ Years (3.81). A larger sample size of respondents could eliminate this variance, or if it persisted with a larger sample size, it could raise the question of whether professional new to the field of experiential education have enough professional development pathways to inform them of best practices in experiential education, such as the commonly held position that reflection is a necessity (Kolb & Fry, 1974; Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities, 2022; Association for Experiential Education, n.d.; About Us. Institute for Experiential Learning, 2023).

Experiential Taxonomy

The study also sought to create a quantifiable foundation for the further development of an experiential taxonomy (Gaszak, 2019). An experiential taxonomy will, more formally, represent the breadth of possibilities with experiential learning that the study demonstrated educators are open to exploring. An experiential taxonomy will function similarly to Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al, 1956), in that it would promote the idea that experiential learning forms can happen with different levels of depth and rigor while still all being categorized under the overarching umbrella of experiential education.

The current iteration of the experiential taxonomy (see Table 4) utilizes the results of the study to group the 22 experiential learning forms investigated in the Experiential Learning

Table 4

Experiential Learning Taxonomy

	n	Mean (SD)
Level 5		
Clinical Practice Experiences	117	3.95 (0.26)
Internships	121	3.90 (0.36)
Apprenticeships	120	3.88 (0.38)
Cooperative Education (Co-Ops)	113	3.78 (0.50)
Practica	104	3.75 (0.52)
Level 4		
Laboratory Experiences (with External Site / Partner)	116	3.70 (0.48)
Service Learning	120	3.63 (0.62)
Travel Study / Study Abroad	117	3.63 (0.58)
Fellowships	104	3.63 (0.64)
Level 3		
Student Research	116	3.49 (0.68)
Project-Based Learning	118	3.46 (0.69)
Creative Performances	111	3.28 (0.78)
Work Study	115	3.24 (0.79)
Level 2		
Student Leadership	120	3.09 (0.82)
Co-Curriculars	100	3.08 (0.66)
Simulations	117	2.98 (0.84)
Course-based Laboratory Experiences	119	2.97 (0.72)
Extracurriculars	112	2.79 (0.80)
Course-based Activities	116	2.77 (0.77)
Athletics	102	2.60 (0.97)
Level 1		
Course-based Group Discussions	116	2.17 (0.90)
Course-based Guest Lectures	117	2.07 (0.88)

Potential section of the survey into five taxonomical levels. The organization of the items was driven primarily by mean and standard deviation, which is documented in Table 4. Mode was also considered to identify majority views on specific experiential learning forms contextualized against the item's mean score.

To reiterate, the purpose of the taxonomy is not to create division between the experiential learning forms and deem one as less-than in comparison to another. On the contrary, the taxonomy promotes the inclusive approach championed by the study's results. An experiential learning form in Level 1, such as course-based guest lectures, may not have the same depth and transformative learning potential as an item in Level 5, such as clinical practice experiences. Nonetheless, the Level 1 item is still experiential, when theory and practices are applied correctly.

With the goal of scale and access, a Level 1 item will be more easily implemented and scaled across an institution, and is likely already occurring across institutions. This perspective also allows institutions to potentially document and formalize swaths of experiential learning already happening at an institution that, prior to a shift in definition and mindset, were not considered to be experiential.

Findings Conclusion

As an overview, the findings demonstrated inclusive perspectives regarding both experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms, such as receptiveness to experiential education being able to occur within classrooms, in short durations, and without third-party participation. The findings support broadening the parameters of what qualifies as experiential, which can have significant implications for encouraging and expanding equitable access to experiential offerings. The responses also provided for the formation of a quantifiably

supported experiential taxonomy, particularly since the responses did not outright reject any of the items in the Experiential Learning Potential section of the survey as being experiential.

Significance of Study

Discourse about the definitions of experiential education and experiential learning have been amplified recently, just as this study draws to a close. In part, this coincides with the release of the most recent issue of *Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education* (O'Donnell, 2024), which focused a special theme on "Defining Experiential Education." As part of the issue, a roundtable discussion was hosted with preeminent experiential scholars David Kolb, Alice Kolb, and George Kuh (Green et al., 2024) discussing their current perspectives and definitions of experiential education. As such, this study comes at a time when the field of experiential education will be grappling widely with the noted definitional challenges, and diversity of perspective and scholarship will aid in advancing the field.

The study also supports the advancement of equitable practices in the field of experiential education. Scholarship addresses the inherent inequities in various forms of experiential learning (Kuh, 2008; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012; Coker & Porter, 2016). A critical part of the contemporary discourse on equity in experiential education focuses on unpaid internships. In 2023, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) released a position statement on the inequities unpaid internships (Unpaid Internships and the Need for Federal Action, 2023). The field of experiential education must continue to push for more equitable practices, processes, and legislation to support access for all students to experiential learning opportunities. While significant hurdles such as unpaid internships are addressed, this study presents an approach to increasing access and scaling opportunities simply through a shift in definition and mindset. If educators, institutions, and organizations are receptive to broadening their definitions of

experiential education and being more inclusive of what forms qualify as experiential learning, opportunities exist to meet students where they are and apply experiential best practices to opportunities, such as course-based activities, that do not have the same heightened issues of access as forms like unpaid internships. The outcomes of this study support such an approach.

Implications for Practice

The following are two key implications for practice as a result of the study: opportunities for scale and equitable access to experiential opportunities, and the application and/or adoption of the experiential taxonomy. The two implications are interconnected, as the issues of scale and access can be resolved as a result of the taxonomical approach.

Scale and Access

Educators, institutions, and organizations should continue to investigate carefully and meaningfully experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms. In doing so, what the outcomes of this study promote is for those conversations to be mindful of adopting a more inclusive mindset to criteria and forms. In exploring experiential definitions, educators and institutions should not get mired in exclusionary mindsets and practices that push certain opportunities from the experiential label. Rather, as the study respondents have, there should be a more inclusive approach to welcoming more forms and approaches under the experiential label. As some respondents noted in the single text question, the form itself is not as important as how the experiential opportunity is developed and facilitated with the application of experiential theory and best practices. If educators and institutions can embrace this approach, it opens the possibility of scaling offerings at an institution and providing more equitable access of offerings to all students. Rather than having experiential opportunities as a subset of the larger academic

experience, experiential opportunities could be embedded in any academic, co-curricular, or extracurricular endeavor, if done well.

Experiential Taxonomy

The experiential taxonomy developed as a result of this study can be adopted and applied by educators and institutions to promote scale and access in a more formalized, quantifiably supported manner.

For individual educators, the taxonomy can be a reflective tool to explore what forms of experiential learning the educator is already involved in and what opportunities exist to expand and refine their experiential offerings. In practice, this could function differently dependent upon the educator's role(s). For a faculty member, the experiential taxonomy can identify what experiential forms the faculty member has already incorporated into their courses, including lower-level taxonomy forms that they may not have previously considered to be experiential. That refined perspective can provide an opportunity for the faculty member to reflect upon and revise existing experiential offerings, particularly those that may not have been considered experiential previously, to incorporate experiential theory and best practices to enhance the learning outcomes of the offerings. Consideration of the full breadth of the taxonomy can also provide a means for the faculty member to incorporate new and additional forms of experiential learning into their courses, supporting scale of opportunities and equitable access to experiential learning for their students. In this regard, the experiential taxonomy can support faculty buy-in to experiential learning, because under this framework, incorporation of experiential offerings would not always necessitate the heavy lift of, for example, embedding a service learning project into the course's curriculum, or partnering with a third-party to conduct a research project.

For a staff member, use of the experiential learning taxonomy can also promote scale and access. As an example, an Internship Coordinator may focus on that higher level form of internships, but associated opportunities and processes could result in more formal experiential opportunities for their students. For instance, if the Internship Coordinator conducted mock interviews prior to placement, the labeling of the mock interview as experiential and designing the experience with best practices, such as reflection, can create additional opportunities and allow the overarching process of the internship to engage with several levels of the experiential taxonomy.

At a departmental or institutional level, the experiential taxonomy can have greater implications for practice. Like for individual educators, the taxonomy could support an institution in identifying and enhancing the breadth of experiential offerings for its students. Gaps could also be identified, and the taxonomy would provide easier entry points for departments to begin building capacity to offer experiential opportunities. For institutions that require student involvement in experiential learning as a part of the graduation requirements, the taxonomy can support a more equitable system for how students can earn their experiential requirements. At scale, such an approach would embed experiential opportunities as part of the fabric of an institution, allowing all students to gain from the benefits of experiential learning.

Limitations

Delimitations of this study included the target population. The recruitment methods emphasized educators who are members or associates of the Society for Experiential Education, and 66.36% of respondents indicated being a current or former member of SEE. Potentially, this indicates that the study is heavily influenced by educators whose perceptions of experiential

education and experiential learning align closely with SEE's, rather than being representative of the broader field of experiential education.

Limitations of this study included the design as a descriptive research based only on educator perspectives. The goal of the study was to collect educator perspectives, but assessment of each experiential learning form's true potential to promote student learning will need to be rooted more firmly in additional research and data.

Recommendations for Research

This study contributes to the discourse of defining experiential education and advancing equity in the field, but there are still significant gaps that can be explored. The following are several recommendations for research than can advance or build from the work of this study.

Expanded Recruitment and Demographics

As noted in the limitations section, the recruitment methods for this study may have produced results that do not represent fully the field of experiential education. The survey tool used in this study could be distributed to additional, targeted populations, such as the membership of other experiential-focused organizations, like the Association of Experiential Education (AEE) or the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Other targets could include specific institutions or institution types (two-year, four-year, public, private), or institutions associated with different regional accreditors (i.e. HLC, SACSCOC).

Further, presumably, the majority of respondents were from the United States, based on the recruitment methods, though at least one respondent indicated a connection to a Canadian institution. The current tool did not ask for participants to identify their country of residency or employment. Further rounds of this study could be more intentional about gathering international perspectives of experiential education and experiential learning.

Expanded recruitment would also necessitate more robust and nuanced collection of demographic data in the survey tool. As mentioned, this could include country of employment, type of institution, regional accreditor, and a more exhaustive list of experiential associations. A more detailed respondent profile would provide additional clarity on where, and potentially why, respondent perspectives align and diverge.

Additional Experiential Learning Forms

As discussed in Chapter 4 (see Additional Forms Findings), there are other educational approaches that could be added to the list of experiential learning forms in the survey. In the effort to increase the breadth and inclusiveness of experiential learning forms, more items need to be put forward for educators to evaluate. The results of such efforts would then inform the further development of an experiential taxonomy.

Qualitative Study of Experiential Definitions

This study pursued a quantitative descriptive approach, because this provided parameters and focus through which educators could provide their perspectives. In the single, optional text response in the survey, several respondents used the opportunity to express their struggle with scoring some items on a Likert scale, because there are variables that can push a learning opportunity toward or away from being truly experiential.

With the foundation provided by this study, there would now be the opportunity to pursue qualitative studies on the definition of experiential education, experiential education's criteria, and what approaches qualify as experiential learning forms. The quantitative data could serve as an entry point to questions about the variables that influenced responses, and why certain items were rated as they were in the study. This is akin to the roundtable conversation mentioned previously in the chapter (Green et al., 2024).

Studies on Experiential Learning Outcomes

Studies and meta-analyses already exist on the topic of experiential learning outcomes (Burch et al, 2019; Coker et al, 2017; Conway, Amel, & Gerwien, 2009; Kuh, 2008; Macnamara, Hambrick, & Oswald, 2014; Preeti, Ashish, & Shriram, 2013). A targeted meta-analysis on experiential learning outcomes could provide a data set to balance against the educator perspectives collected in this and future studies. The results would inform where there is alignment and divergence between educator perspectives and quantitative learning outcomes. Such data could also be applied to an experiential taxonomy, which could then grapple with the question of how much should the taxonomy be influenced by perspectives compared to outcomes.

A meta-analysis would also help identify gaps in the current literature in regard to outcomes for specific experiential learning forms. This could produce recommendations for targeted studies on the learning outcomes on specific experiential learning forms that have not yet been evaluated through quantitative measures for effectiveness of learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Experiential education is a powerful, meaningful way to support the personal, academic, and professional growth of students. All students should have the opportunity and access to benefit from such learning opportunities, and the opportunities should not be definitionally or functionally limited to only students who have the means and privilege to benefit. The results of this study call on educators and institutions to pursue an inclusive approach to experiential education criteria and experiential learning forms, or continue to reinforce and enhance their current inclusive practices. The results of the study can support a change in mindset in how the term experiential is perceived. Additionally, educators and institutions can formally adopt the

latest iteration of the experiential taxonomy as a tool that can be explored and revised to promote scale and access.

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APPENDIX A: Text Version of the Electronic Study Survey with Informed Consent

Page 1: Consent to Participate

Informed Consent Online Survey

You are being asked to participate in an online survey for a research project being carried out by Paul Gaszak, Doctoral Candidate at National Louis University. The study is called "Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms," and is occurring from 03-2024 to 04-2024. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research study is to gather the perspectives of individual experiential educators across higher education on what they perceive to be experiential education's criteria and what forms of educational methodologies qualify as experiential learning forms. The data analysis will identify similarities and differences among educator perspectives.

This information outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant. Completion of the following online survey, expected to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences, and employed to inform future work on the definitions, criteria, and forms of experiential education and experiential learning. Participants' identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure confidentiality, the data file of compiled results will be kept in a password protected folder on a personal workspace. Only the researcher, Paul Gaszak, will have access to data. There are no anticipated risks, no greater than that

encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be useful to the field of experiential education.

Upon request you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher, Paul Gaszak at [redacted] to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Paul Gaszak at [redacted]. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Mr. Gaszak's committee chair Dr. Jaclyn Rivard at jrivard@nl.edu, or the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth; email: Shaunti.Knauth@nl.edu; phone: (312) 261-3526; or Dr. Kathleen Cornett; email: kcornett@nl.edu; phone: (844) 380-5001. Co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Consent to Participation: I understand that by checking "Yes, I consent to participate" below, I am voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study "Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms." I am confirming that I am 18 years of age or older. My participation in this online survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

CHECK BOX: Yes, I consent to participate

Page 2: Experiential Education Perceptions

- Section Directions:
    - For the following section, answer questions based on your own understanding, perspectives, beliefs, and definitions of experiential education. Your answers may

or may not align with you current and/or former institution(s) / employer(s) answers to the same questions.

    - Select the answer that most closely or frequently aligns with your perspective on the question.

- Experiential education must provide hands-on learning opportunities for the student.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education can occur within a single class period.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education must involve a third-party beyond the student and faculty / staff member.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education must occur outside the classroom.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree

    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education can occur through simulations.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education must provide students an opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education can occur within a single day (24 hours).
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education can be student-led without significant facilitation from faculty / staff / supervisor.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree

    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education must provide students an opportunity to connect their learning experiences to future applications.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education can occur inside the classroom.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education requires sustained involvement from the student in the experience (i.e. multiple days or longer)
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- Experiential education requires that students have the opportunity to learn through failure / setbacks
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Disagree

    - Strongly Disagree

Page 3: Experiential Learning Potential

- Section Directions:
    - Rate each item's potential to advance student learning outcomes through experiential learning.
    - Judge items based on your concept of an average / normal facilitation of the item.
    - If from your perspective an item is not a form of experiential learning, select the "Not Experiential" option.
    - If you do not feel knowledgeable enough about an item to rate it, select the "No Opinion" option.
    - *ex: If given "Internships" do you believe an average internship has minimal, moderate, or significant potential to provide students with a transformative experience that advances their learning outcomes? Or, if you believe internships are not a form of experiential learning, select the " I Do Not Consider This a Form of Experiential Learning" option.*
- Rate each item on this scale:
    - Not Experiential
    - Minimally Experiential
    - Moderately Experiential
    - Highly Experiential
    - No Opinion
        - Apprenticeships
        - Athletics

- Clinical Practice Experiences
- Co-Curriculars
- Cooperative Education (Co-Ops)
- Course-based Activities
- Course-based Group Discussions
- Course-based Guest Lectures
- Course-based Laboratory Experiences
- Creative Performances
- Extracurriculars
- Fellowships
- Internships
- Laboratory Experiences (with External Site / Partner)
- Practica
- Project-Based Learning
- Service Learning
- Simulations
- Student Leadership
- Student Research
- Travel Study / Study Abroad
- Work Study

- **OPTIONAL: Additional Forms of Experiential Learning**

- OPTIONAL QUESTION: Are there any forms of experiential learning that you believe are missing from the list of items above? If so, please write the form(s) in the space below.

Page 4: Demographic Information

- **What is the highest educational level you have completed?**
  - High school
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Terminal Degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., MD)
- **How many years of employment at higher education institutions?** This is the total chronological time you have worked in higher education. Include all of your roles and institutions, if applicable. Do not add time for positions worked concurrently (ex: if you served as an adjunct faculty member at two institutions during a year, that would count as a single year served in higher education).
  - 0 Years
  - 1-3 Years
  - 4-9 Years
  - 10-14 Years
  - 15+ Years
- **Are you employed at a higher education institution currently?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **How many years of direct engagement do you have with experiential education as an employee, inside or outside of higher education?** ex: designing experiential courses, coordinating experiential programs, serving as a student advisor, etc.
    - 0 Years
    - 1-3 Years
    - 4-9 Years
    - 10-14 Years
    - 15+ Years
- **Are you a current or former member of the Society for Experiential Education (formerly the National Society for Experiential Education)?** *
    - Yes
    - No

APPENDIX B: IRB Approval

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY
1886
ACCESS. INNOVATION. EXCELLENCE.

Office of the Provost
122 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60603-6162

www.nl.edu
P/F 312.261.3121

April 5, 2024

Paul Gaszak
[redacted]

Dear Paul Gaszak:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has received your application for your research study "*Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms*" IRB has noted that your application is complete and that your study has been approved by your primary advisor and an IRB representative. Your application has been filed as Exempt in the Office of the Provost.

IRB: ER01370

Please note that the approval for your study is for one year, from **5-Apr-2024 to 5-Apr-2025**.

As you carry out your research, you must report any adverse events or reactions to the IRB. At the end of your approved year, please inform the IRB in writing of the status of the study (i.e., complete, continuing). During this time, if your study changes in ways that impact human participants differently or more significantly than indicated in the current application, please submit a Change of Research Study form to the IRB, which may be found on NLU's IRB website.

All good wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Sincerely,

Shaunti Knauth

Shaunti Knauth, Ph.D.
Chair, IRB

APPENDIX C: Society for Experiential Education (SEE) Forum Posts

April 8, 2024 Forum Post

SEE Colleagues: I am seeking participation in a brief survey (10-15 minutes) among higher education educators (faculty, staff, and/or administrators) who have engaged, in any capacity, with experiential learning. This research study is in support of my dissertation titled "Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms." The outcomes of the research aim to benefit the field of experiential education by supporting definitional research about experiential education and experiential learning. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will remain confidential. No personally identifiable information will be collected or reported. This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of National Louis University. To access the survey, please follow this link

[redacted]

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at

[redacted]

Thanks,

Paul Gaszak

April 15, 2024 Forum Post

SEE Colleagues: I am seeking additional participants in a brief survey (10-15 minutes) among higher education educators (faculty, staff, and administrators) who have engaged, in any capacity, with experiential learning. To access the survey, please follow this link

[redacted]

This research study is in support of my dissertation titled “Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms.” The outcomes of the research aim to benefit the field of experiential education by supporting definitional research about experiential education and experiential learning. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will remain confidential. No personally identifiable information will be collected or reported. This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of National Louis University.

Again, to access the survey go to [redacted].

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [redacted]

Thanks to everyone for your help and support!

Paul Gaszak

April 22, 2024 Forum Post

SEE Colleagues: This is one final call for participation in a brief study (10-15 minutes) on experiential education that will close at 12:00pm CT on Wednesday, April 24. Follow this link for the survey.

The study is titled “Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms" and seeks input from current or former higher ed employees (faculty, staff, and admin). Please consider taking a few moments to complete the survey or share it with your colleagues. Thanks in advance for your support!

APPENDIX D: Text of Researcher's LinkedIn Posts

April 8, 2024 LinkedIn Post

Higher Ed Colleagues (Faculty, Staff, and Admin): Please consider participating in and sharing this brief survey (10-15 minutes) that is for my dissertation titled "Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms." Responses are being collected through Wednesday, April 24. Follow the link for additional information and to access the survey. Thanks in advance for your support!

April 12, 2024 LinkedIn Post

I am seeking additional participants! Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey already. Your support and input is greatly appreciated!

Higher Ed Colleagues (current or former faculty, staff, and admin): I need at least 15 more responses to this brief survey! If you can spare 10 minutes to take the survey, or share it out if you responded already, I would greatly appreciate it!

April 17, 2024 LinkedIn Post

The survey is for my dissertation titled "Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms." Responses are being collected through Wednesday, April 24.

April 22, 2024 LinkedIn Post

Final Call: I am seeking additional participants in this brief study (10-15 minutes) on experiential education that will close at 12:00pm CT on Wednesday, April 24.

The study is titled "Defining Experiential: Higher Education Educator Perspectives on Experiential Education Criteria and Experiential Learning Forms" and seeks input from current

or former higher ed employees (faculty, staff, and admin). Please consider taking a few moments to complete the survey or share it with your colleagues. Thanks in advance for your support!