

**MOBTS 2018 at Coastal Carolina  
University June 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Submission is for “Discussion Format”

**Title, Abstract & Keywords**

*Using Professional Development Experiential Learning Workshops to Build Career Skills*

This presentation will provide an overview of a series of professional development (PD) experiential workshops for students that are part of a college wide experiential learning strategy. PD experiential workshops are used to target skills not normally taught in the classroom such as running an effective meeting, preparing your own taxes, managing your digital brand, learning digital photoshop and others. The results of surveys conducted for each workshop will demonstrate that running PD experiential workshops is a unique and effective way to augment student skill building and better prepare students for the real world challenges of their careers.

**Keywords:** College Initiative, Experiential Learning, Professional Development

**Introduction.**

*Provide a brief introduction that establishes the purpose and focus of the discussion. Describe what the intended outcome of the session will be and who the target audience is.*

Research has shown that there are gaps between the needs required in the job market and the skills student acquire through curriculum (David, David, & David, 2011). Ensuring proper skill development is often dependent on how course-based curriculum is designed and delivered. However, what happens outside the classroom can also impact on how well prepared students are for their careers. Co-curricular experiential learning workshops offers an effective way to augment skills that are not taught in the classroom but which are still essential for students to be successful in their careers.

This presentation will outline how experiential professional development workshops are a key component of a college-wide experiential learning initiative. The impetus for the professional development (PD) workshops was to ensure a higher level student experience and enhanced skill development. Each professional development workshop was targeted at skills not covered in the classroom and supported by the idea that experiential learning allows for the development of tacit knowledge through exposure to applied exercises or engagements. Another key motivator for the workshops was the belief that multiple experiential learning opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom, enhances student experience and skill building.

Overall, PD experiential workshops will be shown to be a powerful tool for business schools to meet the demand of being more responsive and accountable for ensuring

students are job-ready (David, David, & David, 2011). Participants will be presented with examples of different workshops along with the results of student surveys. The audience of this workshop will be professors, administrators and anyone interested in helping students to be more effective and confident in their careers.

**Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications.**

Briefly specify the relevant background literature that the exercise is based upon and how your session contributes to effective teaching and learning in the field of management.

Experiential learning is an effective method for improving student learning by providing students with opportunities to apply and practice theoretical concepts (AACSB, 2015; Kolb, 1984). Students have been shown to be more adequately prepared for their careers when they have been able to apply knowledge and skills beyond what theory offers (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). Experiential learning can include community-engagement, service learning, simulations, model building, study abroad, and student research (GMCTE, 2015), and has mostly been viewed as a way of improving curriculum. Less focus has been placed on co-curricular experiential learning for students to offset skills not taught in the classroom. Given that experiential learning has been incorporated into PD workshops for professionals (e.g. civil servants) (Dobos, 2013) and PD for teachers at various stages in their careers (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016; Suryani & Widyastuti, 2015), it is surprising that PD experiential workshops for students has not been foregrounded as an important area for student development. Some examples exist such as the a co-curricular activity known as the Chase Charlie Races (Judge et al., 2011) in which sports management student reported that their learning and career direction was

positively impacted by this co-curricular activity. In another example, guided visits to a series of organizations in Washington were shown to have a positive impact on improving global citizenship in students (NguyenVoges, & Lyons, 2017). The fact that such examples are rarely documented suggests that PD experiential workshops may be overlooked in many colleges as an impactful way to develop students.

The effectiveness of experiential learning to teach practical skills is based on the fact that that students must go beyond recall of knowledge to both apply knowledge and develop skills (Datar, Garvin, & Cullen, 2011). This aspect makes experiential learning applicable in various ways beyond the classroom. This is important because in many cases the skills that make the difference in a student's future career are simple practical skills that often involve enhancing interpersonal skills or learning how to do things that are not considered a main part of one's job. The developing of such skills through hands on experience is one reason service learning has been shown to impact students and their careers in a positive manner (McLaughlin, 2010). By targeting specific skills needed in the workplace, running experiential learning PD workshops is therefore another effective method for setting up students for greater success in the long term. This presentation will provide examples of successful workshops implemented to target such skills, including workshops on how to run a meeting, how to prepare your own taxes, managing a digital brand and digital photo editing.

**Session Description.**

Provide an overview of what you will actually do in the MOBTS conference session. Include a timeline for the session and how participants will be involved. Remember, reviewers are looking for participant engagement in these sessions

This session will be comprised of a presentation and discussion with attendees. We will share a description of various PD experiential workshops along with the results of student surveys that address student learning, engagement and overall satisfaction. We also place a high value on engaging participants in discussion with the intent of tapping into their expertise and perspectives. We will therefore pose several discussion questions throughout the presentation and invite participants to contribute ideas and engage in open dialogue. The result will be an insightful learning opportunity for everyone present.

In terms of timing, the session will be 1 hour long. This will include 20 minutes to tell the history and explain the PD experiential learning workshops and survey results, 10 minutes of questions from the audience to ensure clarity and 30 minutes of facilitated discussion around targeted questions.

**Application to Conference theme:**

The focus of discussing co-curricular PD experiential workshops aligns directly with the MOBTS theme of Reflective Reinvention: Harnessing our Heritage to Reshape Management Education by “creating a forum for discussion of what management education of the future looks like and generating dialogue around what learning is and how learning has changed over time.” Overall, this workshop is directly aligned with the

theme of Reflective Reinvention because it taps into the demand for educators to better prepare students to meet the complex demands of the work place today and in the future.

### **Unique Contribution to MOBTS**

We have not presented this topic before and it is not currently under review anywhere else.

## References

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