

BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS:
A COMMUNITY COLLEGE INTERNSHIP IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

by

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ABSTRACT

Experiential learning has been used to enhance lessons learned in the classroom for centuries. This dissertation explores the research regarding the academic and vocational benefits for students when they participate in experiential learning, particularly in the form of internships.

This product dissertation utilized a qualitative research approach to examine how internship programs are structured at two- and four-year schools. Internship programs were viewed through the lenses of experiential learning theory, career development theory, and workforce development theory. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to identify eight programs to analyze. Internship program managers were interviewed, and publicly available websites were reviewed.

Internship program managers identified common challenges including implementing standardized processes across the institution, building and maintaining relationships with faculty, and agreement on the value of an academic course to accompany a student's work experience. The research also identified successful approaches that resulted in sustainable internship structures such as planning for growth at the outset of developing a new program, situating a centralized internship program under the guidance of the chief academic officer, and utilizing change management concepts when developing or expanding a program.

The major findings of this study resulted in recommendations in several key areas regarding the structure of internship programs. Recommendations are included for developing a strategic program implementation plan that is designed for program expansion, identifying and training an implementation team utilizing change management principles, developing a co-

requisite or pre-requisite academic course to be taken alongside the work experience component, and planning for budget considerations. The recommendations were used to develop an internship implementation guide.

The internship implementation guide is organized in a workbook format and designed to help strategic planners assess how their institution might develop a program that meets the needs of their students, faculty, and the local business community.

KEY WORDS: Internship, community college, career development

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to three people who started this journey with me but were not able to finish.

First of all, to my mother, Janet Jenkins: She taught me the value of education and the importance of being a life-long learner. From her position on the school board she fought for those without a voice, whether it was making sure a pregnant eighth grader got to walk across the stage at graduation or insisting that the girl's locker room be as good as the boy's. May I be as fierce.

To my wonderful Aunty Zoe: she was my cheerleader. It was always her voice I heard spurring me on when I struggled. She knew I could do it long before I knew I could. I miss you, Aunty Zoe, and you were right, I could, and I did.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background and Context	2
Changing Landscapes	3
Experiential Learning	4
Work-Based Learning	5
Apprenticeships	6
Cooperative Education	7
Service Learning.....	7
Internships	8
Paid or Unpaid Internships	9
Internship Program Structure	10
Community College and the Workforce.....	13
Internships at Community Colleges	14
Overview to the Research Study.....	15
Problem Statement.....	15
Statement of Purpose and Research Questions	15
Overview of Methodology	16
Researcher Assumptions	16
Role of the Researcher.....	17
Rationale and Significance of the Study	18
Definition of Terms	18
Experiential Learning	18
Internship.....	18
Unpaid Internships.....	19
Primary Beneficiary Test.....	20
Work-Based Learning	20
Cooperative Education Programs	21
Conclusion	21
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Experiential Learning Theory	24
Theoretical Groundwork.....	25
Dewey.....	26

Montessori Method.....	28
Lewin’s Contributions	29
Vygotsky.....	30
Piaget	30
Kolb	32
Kolb’s Learning Cycle.....	33
Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory	34
Kolb Detractors.....	37
Workforce Development and Internships	38
Human Capital Theory	40
Role of the Individual.....	40
Organizations and Human Capital Theory	42
Public Policies	44
Challenges with Human Capital Theory	46
Summary of Workforce Development Theory	47
Career Development Theory.....	47
Positivist Career Development Theories	49
Holland	50
Constructivist Career Development Theories	51
Self-Efficacy Theory	51
Planned Happenstance Theory	53
Chaos Theory of Careers	54
Super.....	56
Positivism and Constructivism Coexisting.....	57
Summary.....	58
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	60
Introduction.....	60
Rationale for Qualitative Research Design.....	61
Research Sample.....	62
Overview of Information Needed	62
Contextual.....	63
Perceptual	63
Demographic	64
Theoretical Framework.....	64
Research Design	66
Literature Review	66
Data Collection Methods	67
Interviews	67
Website Review	68
Protocol.....	68
Method for Data Analysis and Synthesis.....	68
Phase 1: Compile Database	70
Phase 2: Disassembling Database	70
Phase 3: Reassembling Database.....	71
Phase 4: Data Interpretation	71

Phase 5: Conclude	72
Summary of Analysis	73
Ethical Considerations	73
Issues of Trustworthiness	74
Quality	74
Validity	75
Trustworthiness	76
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	77
Summary	77
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS-PROGRAM STRUCTURE	78
Introduction.....	78
Research.....	79
Who Should be Involved in the Planning?	80
Internal Partnerships	81
External Partnerships	83
Alumni	83
Business Community	84
Methods for Developing Connections	85
Grantors	86
What Needs to be Planned?	87
Program Structure	88
Academic Course Components.....	90
Learning Contract	93
Grading	94
Internship Site Considerations	95
Hosting an Intern	96
Paid vs. Unpaid Internships	98
Marketing Internships.....	99
Challenges for Internships	102
Program Funding	104
Summary.....	106
CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS — SCALING UP	108
Introduction.....	108
Effective Planning for Program Implementation.....	108
Planning Phase.....	110
Initiating Phase	114
Expanding Phase	118
Sustaining Phase	119
Change Management.....	121
Resistance to Change.....	123
Summary.....	125
CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	126
Introduction.....	126

Research Question 1	127
College Structure	127
Recommendation	129
Internal Champion	129
Recommendation	130
Learning Evaluation	130
Recommendations.....	131
External Partnerships.....	131
Recommendations.....	132
Funding.....	132
Recommendations.....	133
Research Question 2	133
Recommendation	134
Research Question 3	134
Recommendation	135
Research Question 4	135
Implementation.....	135
Recommendations.....	136
Scaling-up.....	136
Recommendation	137
Recommendations for Future Research.....	137
Conclusion	137
REFERENCES	139
APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT	150
APPENDIX B: PROTOCOL FOR STUDY OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS.....	152
APPENDIX C: A COMMUNITY COLLEGE INTERNSHIP IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE.....	154

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: <i>Research Subjects-Interviews</i>	79
Table 2: <i>Research Subjects-Internet Review</i>	80

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Experiential Learning Cycle. (Kolb & Kolb, 2009a, p. 299).....	33
Figure 2: The Nine Learning Styles in the KLSI 4.0 (Kolb & Kolb, 2013, p. 14).....	36
Figure 3: Five Phases of Analysis and Their Interactions (Yin, 2016, p. 186)	69
Figure 4: LinkedIn post for College of Lake County’s internship program.....	102
Figure 5: The Arc of Scaling	109
Figure 6: Diffusion of Innovation: Adopter Categories	124

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning has long been the way for students to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and its practical application. Keeton and Tate (1978) define experiential learning as

learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes into contact with them as part of the learning process. (p. 2)

For a long time, many industries have used experiential learning practices to develop the skills of their workforce. For example, the medical field uses experiential learning in the form of clinical experience to train all levels of medical professionals, from entry-level certified nursing assistants to surgeons. Future teachers are required to complete a student-teaching assignment before being licensed. The skilled trades often utilize an apprenticeship model to connect academic knowledge with the physical practice of their jobs. Despite the successful application of experiential learning techniques in some academic areas, it has not fully expanded to others. The expansion of experiential learning is occurring, but in most cases, students are offered an option to participate and, as what has been attributed to Kay McClenney is, community college students “don’t do optional.”

The origin of experiential learning is unknown, but some examples go back to the times of Socrates and Aristotle who recognized that experience enhances learning. Socrates pioneered the elenctic or Socratic method of inquiry, where the teacher acts as a facilitator and guides students to examine their understanding of knowledge in the pursuit of truth (Stonehouse,

Allison, & Carr, 2011). Stonehouse et al. summarized Aristotle's views on learning through experience by writing: "As knowledge is gleaned from each particular experience, more general understanding is developed" (p. 23). Both of these scholars and teachers helped students develop knowledge from experience rather than relying on the "sage-on-the-stage" approach to education.

Since that time, psychologists, social psychologists, physicians, and educators have been researching and writing on the benefits of including hands-on experiences to deepen a learner's understanding. Dewey (1938), often recognized as the father of experiential learning, advanced the theory that young students best learn for themselves, through their experiences, rather than relying solely on the transfer of knowledge that was discovered by someone else. Dewey posited that "there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (p. 20). The field of study on experiential learning continues to grow as experts strive to understand the linkage between learning and doing.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The mission of community colleges is to provide "academic transfer preparation, occupation education, continuing education, developmental education, and community service" (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014, pp. 25-26). The mission includes preparing students for the workforce and meeting the workforce demands of the region. Whether a community college graduate immediately enters the world of work or continues their educational journey at a baccalaureate-granting institution, community colleges play a vital role in the educational ecosystem. According to Fain (2017), significant changes are occurring in the workforce and community expectations which has impacted the perception of the value and purpose of postsecondary education.

Changing Landscapes

Since the 1970s, policymakers have been balancing the need for efficacy in the education system with governmental efficiency in the face of challenging financial realities such as recessions, tighter budgets, and citizen demands (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). Funding metrics, which had been focused on enrollment and program costs, shifted to measuring student outcomes such as retention, persistence, and graduation rates (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). The expectation is that educational institutions are run in a fiscally responsible manner and that graduates qualify for jobs that pay a livable wage and finish with minimal debt (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). Education funding is being tied to performance such as the rates of student retention, persistence, and graduation (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). Community colleges have had to shift their attention from increasing enrollment to measuring and improving student performance outcomes.

Community colleges have been hard hit as states across the nation have reduced funding for higher education (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). As state budgets continue to tighten and higher education comes under increased scrutiny, performance-based funding is expected to intensify and include additional metrics such as job placement (Dougherty & Natow, 2015). Aside from the politics of higher education, the sense of the value of higher education is waning among American people. Despite statistics that show otherwise, nearly half of the respondents from a recent California survey felt that good jobs are available without a postsecondary education (Fain, 2017, para. 3). Community colleges are expected to do more with less while providing students with a quality education that supports the workforce needs of the area businesses.

There has been a shift in the entry-level job market. Today's employers expect their new hires to have both work-related experience and academic knowledge in their field of study (Selingo, 2017). Employers are hiring fewer graduates at on-campus hiring events and have

scaled back their rotational training programs (Selingo, 2017). These changes directly impact students who have little or no industry-specific experience, experience that could be gained in an internship.

Changes, which include fewer resources for higher education with evolving expectations for measurable results, performance-based funding-measuring student outcomes, decreased trust in the value of a postsecondary degree, and the shifting entry-level job market, make a strong case for community colleges to change their to approach education and how they connect education with the workforce. Community colleges can expand experiential learning opportunities, specifically internships, as one approach to better prepare students for the job market and improve persistence rates (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006).

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Learning and teaching are concepts that have been studied and debated for centuries. The question remains: Are students empty vessels waiting for teachers to fill them up with knowledge, or do students construct knowledge by integrating new information with their past experiences? This question lies at the core of the debate. The foundation of experiential learning is the belief in the latter portion of the question. As a primary school teacher, Dewey's (1938) work focused on the need to move away from an autocratic teacher-centric form of education to a progressive education for grade school aged children guided by a belief that a student's prior experience impacted how and what they learned (Stonehouse, Allison, & Carr, 2011). According to Dewey (1938), "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 35).

Dewey's theories on experiential learning have been applied to all levels of education. The implementation of experiential learning can take on many forms; however, this research

focused specifically on using work-based experiences that support academic classroom knowledge. Moon (2004) posits that experiential learning can transform an external learning experience into an internal experience and allow the learner to integrate, adapt, and apply external knowledge with physical activities. Providing a student with an opportunity to apply their academic knowledge to hands-on work experience can take the form of service learning, apprenticeships, co-ops, and internships. Understanding the distinctions between various modes of experiential learning will help to clarify which characteristics are most important for the research, design, and implementation of an internship program at a community college.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning (WBL), a broad concept that covers the on-going learning needs of an organization, can be defined as education that consists of “relatively structured activities occurring in the workplace that equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed at work and in society” (Raelin, 2008, p. 46). WBL ranges from entry-level skill acquisition to “metacompetance,” a more complex dynamic level of comprehension which is defined as the ability to internalize basic technical knowledge and over time synthesize that knowledge and apply it to address the complexities of changing work demands (Raelin, 2008).

Education-sponsored WBL activities fall on a continuum of career development activities that range from guest speakers to company tours to work experience, such as internships (Cahill, 2016). WBL may lead to an academic degree or certificate (Lester & Costley, 2010). WBL activities can be used to educate all levels of a company’s workforce and to train new hires through programs such as on-the-job training and internships (Raelin, 2008). WBL can be a long-term commitment, such as an apprenticeship program or cooperative learning agreement, or

short-term, such as service-learning or job shadowing. WBL is used to support the business goals of an organization, and the delivery options are limitless (Raelin, 2008).

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are gaining popularity in the United States in recent years as a solution to a perceived labor shortage and skills gap in some regions of the workforce (Nocera, 2017). The Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) has identified apprenticeship as a high-impact education practice (CCCSE, 2013). Apprenticeships, sponsored by area businesses, allow students the opportunity to gain on-the-job experience while receiving a formal education. Apprenticeships can be registered through state and federal authorities if the program meets standards of quality that were established in 1937 under the Fitzgerald Act (McCarthy, Palmer, & Prebil, 2017). Organizations that have registered apprenticeship programs can qualify for tax breaks, but apprenticeships are not required to be registered (McCarthy et al., 2017).

Cahill (2016) identifies three key features of apprenticeships:

- Intensive work-based learning experiences that generally last from one to six years and provide a combination of on-the-job training and formal classroom instruction.
- Intended to support progressive skill acquisition and lead to postsecondary credentials and, in some cases, degrees.
- The U.S. U.S. Department of Labor and some states administer registered apprenticeship programs, though unregistered apprenticeships that incorporate the key features of the model are also operated successfully by a range of organizations, including employers, industry associations, labor-management organizations, and workforce agencies. (p. 8)

Community colleges are creating partnerships with workforce development agencies and industry to design and implement flexible programs that can be customized to meet the needs of an organization or a region (Cahill, 2016).

Cooperative Education

Cooperative education (co-op) has been utilized in the United States for over a century (Haddara, & Skanes, 2007). Co-ops began in the United States, in part, to meet the need for job-ready engineers and to bridge the gap between a student's academic understanding of engineering and its practical application (Haddara, & Skanes, 2007). Many co-op programs are designed for students to alternate between full-time work experiences and full-time academic courses, allowing students to graduate with their baccalaureate degree with significant work experience (Pryor, 2018). According to Cahill (2016), the aim of co-op programs is to "link academic programs with structured work experiences through which participants acquire professional and technical skills" so that participants can "earn academic credit for work carried out over a limited period of time under the supervision of a professional mentor" (p. 7). Cooperative education has expanded beyond engineering programs and continues to be a viable experiential learning option for students.

Service Learning

Service learning became popular in the 1990s and was supported by the community service legislative efforts of Presidents Bush and Clinton (Kozeracki, 2000). As Kozeracki (2000) said, "Service learning has its roots in two different types of programs: community service activities, which were traditionally considered part of the extracurricular realm, and experiential education, usually available as practicums or internships" (p. 55). Service-learning matches a student's need for applying their academic knowledge with a community need (Fiume, 2009). An ideal example of service-learning is a Virginia program that began during the Great Recession. The program connected automotive students who were having difficulty gaining the requisite experience to get a job with low-income residents in need of car repairs (Hayward,

2014). Automotive students repaired the vehicles at a reduced cost, providing those residents with reliable transportation (Hayward, 2014). The program worked because the college partnered with area social service agencies that could identify individuals in need of support. The program was successful because it provided valuable work experience for the student and affordable, reliable transportation options for the residents.

Internships

Internships, the focus of this research, allow students the opportunity to enhance their academic knowledge with meaningful work experience. Inkster and Ross (1995) define an internship as “a structured and supervised professional experience, within an approved agency, for which a student earns academic credit” (p. 11). Internships have been identified by the CCCSE (2013) as a high-impact learning practice. CCCSE has recommended that community colleges increase the availability of internship programs. Experiential learning through internship programs can strengthen the “critical linkages among education, work, and personal development” (Kolb, 2015, pp. 3-4). Kolb recognizes academic skepticism in experiential learning theory: “It often appears too thoroughly pragmatic to the academic mind, dangerously associated with the disturbing anti-intellectual and vocationalist trends in American society” (p. 3). Kolb (2015) posits that the theory of experiential learning is supported by years of research and is not “another educational fad.”

Research shows that participation in internships can benefit students by increasing their job opportunities upon graduation at higher salaries, as well as provide a lasting career boost (Carter, 1998; Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Gault, Redington & Schlager, 2000). Until recently, internships were generally limited to one placement during the summer after a student’s junior year. The current advice, however, is for students to have several internships and begin those

internships earlier in their academic career (Denham, 2011). According to Townsley, Lierman, Watermill, and Rousseau (2017), “a student’s total number of internships also predicts career outcomes six months after graduation” (p. 27). The exact percentage of students participating in internships is difficult to calculate, and sources have reported anywhere from 10-75% of students graduating with a baccalaureate degree have completed an internship (Rothberg, 2015). There are no reliable statistics for the number of community college students who complete internships. Community college students who plan to transfer to a baccalaureate-granting institution can put themselves at a disadvantage compared to their non-transfer counterparts by delaying their internship experience (Boyington, 2015). More importantly, associate degree students and academic certificate students who lack experience in their field of study could put themselves at a disadvantage in their job search.

Paid or Unpaid Internships

There is controversy over whether employers should pay students since the internship is an extension of the classroom or whether employers are taking advantage of students by not providing remuneration for their efforts. The U.S. Department of Labor has wage regulations for student interns in place. However, until recently, they were largely ignored. Until a spate of lawsuits against media and fashion companies in the last ten years, unpaid internships were commonplace. The U.S. Department of Labor changed the rules regarding internships in 2018 (Easterly, 2018). Previously, there were six specific “tests” that employers could apply to their program to determine whether their internship could be paid or unpaid and stipulated which types of organizations were qualified to offer unpaid internships (see definitions section). Currently, employers can use the “primary beneficiary test” to determine whether the internship should be paid or unpaid. If the host site predominantly benefits from the work, then the

internship should be paid; if the intern predominantly benefits, then the internship should be unpaid (Easterly, 2018) (see definitions section). The U.S. Department of Labor definition notwithstanding, Krugel (2017) states that businesses who offer unpaid internships can run significant risks related to on-the-job work accidents. When a student intern is unpaid, the student is not covered by the company's worker's compensation insurance plan; therefore, expenses and potential lawsuits from an uninsured accident could far exceed the cost of a salary or stipend for a student intern (Krugel, 2017).

Internship Program Structure

Limited research describes how successful internship programs are structured at community colleges. There are occasional articles written about individually successful programs at community colleges. Therefore, programs from both community colleges and baccalaureate degree granting institutions will be studied to understand the qualities of successful programs.

The structure of internship programs includes program management, student assignments, learning assessment, decisions regarding whether credit can be earned by students, and whether the program is required or elective. Some internships focus primarily on the work experience, while others include a credit-bearing course that includes requirements that range from career development components such as interest assessments, resume and interview assistance, and soft-skill training. Others require reflection/journal exercises. The intent of this research is to understand which components are essential to successful and pedagogically sound programs.

King (2014) identifies four main administrative models for internship programs, although she states that variations on administration options is limitless. The traditional model is described

as “decentralized management by academic departments for experiential programs and courses granting academic credit” (King, 2014, p. 166). King (2014) identifies a second model in which “an institutional central office for credited programs in which a program director and staff assume many of the tasks usually performed by faculty” (p. 166). King (2104) describes a third option as one where there is “an institutional office for non-credit programs through career development, community service, financial aid, or some other student affairs office” (p. 166). Finally, King (2014) describes a fourth model which “involves centralized coordination and support combined with departmental control of credited programs and courses” (p. 166). Each of these program structures has benefits and drawbacks.

The traditional internship model is the oldest and most familiar structure (King, 2014). The traditional structure keeps the program close to the academic area, whose members are most familiar with the “standards of good practice and can exert quality control” (King, 2014, p. 167). One drawback to this model is the inconsistency between academic areas, making it difficult to standardize the process across the institution (King, 2014). King (2014) identifies differing levels of engagement among faculty as a disadvantage to this model. Faculty may not be able to be responsive to internship sites in a timely manner to the frustration of host sites and students (King, 2014).

The second model described by King (2014) is a centralized, credit-bearing program with dedicated program staff. A centralized program brings efficiency to an institution-wide program and eliminates the redundancy of separate offices in each academic division (King, 2014). A centralized internship program can develop a standardized approach to “non-disciplinary academic learning, such as critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and other generic liberal arts skills” (King, 2014, pp. 167-168). One of the shortcomings of this format, according

to King (2014), is “quality control for discipline-based learning is harder to maintain” (p. 168). The centralized program staff acts to remove faculty from the process which can negatively impact their involvement in the process and make them distrustful of the quality of the education that students receive (King, 2014). This can be mitigated by having the centralized office report to academic deans (King, 2014).

King’s (2014) third example of internship program is a centralized noncredit program. This type of program is very efficient and focuses primarily on “nonacademic learning that occurs through field experiences – career development, knowledge of the work world, appreciation of community needs, interpersonal skills, money management, etc.” (King, 2014, p. 168). King (2014) identifies noncredit programs as being at a serious disadvantage: “Noncredit programs are contrary to the general desire of faculty for an academic and curricular emphasis, and the full educational potential of experiential learning is not being realized or recognized” (King, 2014, pp. 168-169).

King’s (2014) final internship management model is described as a program with a centralized department to manage the internship operations, while leaving the academic departments in control of the courses. King (2014) identifies faculty oversight of the discipline-based knowledge, learning contract development, and learning assessment as advantages of this model. King (2014) recognizes the value of collaborating with a centralized department as a way to bring institutional standardization to the process. This type of centralized program can cause consternation from some faculty because this model does “deviate from tradition, because it provides a focal point for advocacy and expertise about experiential education instead of allowing each faculty member to be the ruler of his/her domain” (King, 2014, p. 169). This

model can cause confusion for the responsibility for some tasks and duties between the two departments.

The purpose of this research is to identify best practices for implementing an internship program. There are multiple variations of these four administrative models (King, 2014). It is essential to understand how successful programs are structured and how those internships can support community college students.

Community College and the Workforce

The rise of community colleges in the twentieth century was the result of a confluence of many circumstances. There was an increase in the number of students graduating from high school, a rise in technological advancements required for skilled labor, and a belief in the United States that higher education should be available to people from all social stratum (Cohen et al., 2014). This resulted in an expansion of the community college system at the end of World War II (Cohen et al., 2014). The GI Bill allowed returning veterans to attend college while the government covered some living expenses (Cohen et al., Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). As the system of two-year colleges grew, there was a differentiation between the types of curricula that were offered. Junior colleges were so named to signify their focus on providing general education for students who transferred to four-year institutions, while other schools focused on technical and vocational training (Cohen et al., 2014). By the 1960s, most two-year public schools identified themselves as comprehensive community colleges and provided both transfer education and workforce training (Cohen et al., 2014). Increased availability of financial aid accompanied by an expanding economy allowed for investment into education and training across the nation (Cohen et al., 2014). By the 1960s, community colleges were found in every state in the union, and as of 2011, there were 1,065 two-year colleges (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 16).

Community colleges are increasingly serving students who have a wider range of needs (Kasper, 2003). Community colleges are a starting point for many students and a cost-effective way to earn college credits. Of students who graduated with a baccalaureate degree in 2015, 49% received college credits at a community college (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2017). As community colleges matured, their mission expanded from a focus on academic preparation to an increased emphasis on vocational education continuing education, developmental education, and community service (Cohen et al., 2014). Community colleges play a vital role in the community by providing workforce training in the form of traditional vocational education, job re-training programs, and company hosted on-site customized skill-building classes (Kasper, 2003).

Internships at Community Colleges

Student engagement and persistence rates improve when students feel that their educational activities have a direct connection to their academic pursuits (Carini et al., 2006; Derous & Ryan, 2008; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, Gonyea, 2011). Students can make a stronger connection to their academic pursuits when they understand how classroom information applies to their careers. Internships can also decrease that amount of time it takes for recent graduates to search for jobs and increase their earning potential (Denham, 2011; Townsley et al., 2017). The above statements demonstrate that strong internship programs can support education by strengthening student engagement, preparing students for the workforce, and supporting the regional workforce, and this is especially true for community colleges which are designed to address regional workforce needs.

Internship participation can increase a graduate's salary and shorten the length of time needed to secure a position post-graduation (Denham, 2011). According to one study that

focused on graduates with a baccalaureate degree in business, students who participated in an internship earned an income that was 16.9 % higher than their noninternship counterparts (Gault et al., 2000, p. 50). Additionally, students with internship experience were also able to reduce their post-graduation job search time as compared to students who did not participate in an internship (Gault et al., 2000).

Internship programs are a concrete way to connect community college students with regional businesses can save a business time in recruitment activities. Understanding the structure of an effective internship program will support the community college mission to be an educational partner in developing the region's workforce.

OVERVIEW TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

Problem Statement

There is significant research on the benefits of internship programs, yet, there is a paucity of information on internship programs in community colleges. Some literature exists on internship programs; however, there is very little detail on how the programs are structured and how they meet the needs of the students, the college, or the community. Community colleges would benefit from a better understanding of the structures of effective programs.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

Student participation in internships is increasing according to Waxman (2018): "More than 62% of the Class of 2017 reported doing an internship at some point during their college years, compared to about 50% in 2008 and 17% in 1992" (para. 2). Community colleges view internships as a "good-to-have" rather than a "need-to-have" program. The purpose of this research is to investigate the qualities of successful internship programs. This research will

inform community colleges on the structure and implementation process of successful internship programs. Community colleges are fortunate in that the vast majority of their students live locally. When area businesses invest in and participate in an internship program, they are developing local talent rather than individuals who could move out of the area upon graduation.

To better understand the qualities of successful internship programs, this research posed the following questions to understand effective programs better:

1. How are internship programs currently structured, at either two-year or four-year institutions?
2. From experiential learning pedagogy, what are the significant curriculum design considerations?
3. From a career development perspective, what are the critical curriculum design considerations?
4. How can an internship programs be scaled up to involve more students?

Overview of Methodology

This research resulted in a best practice guide to provide community colleges with tools to implement an internship program. The research was done through a review of publicly available documents related to internships and interviews with internship program coordinators. The research excluded health careers and other programs that have clinical experiences or required internships as part of their program requirements.

Researcher Assumptions

Based on the researcher's experience and background in the area of workforce development, there are three primary assumptions. First, the complex process of administering an internship program at a community college is best served by a department apart from the academic department. While some faculty members might have adequate industry connections,

that cannot be assumed for all programs. Relationships with many and varied industry partners are required to serve a large number of students. In addition to helping students secure internship sites, there is required site supervision and vetting of learning agreements and follow through on the part of the student and job site. Second, the academic component of an internship program can be standardized across multiple disciplines. The number of internship hours and classroom time per credit hour is uniform and dictated by an external agency. Other requirements, such as preparatory assistance (resume and interview skills development), reflection activities, and academic reporting, can be developed to meet the needs of any program. Last, there is an assumption that students do not participate in internship programs because of a lack of awareness of their availability, lack of understanding of the value they bring to their career, and the unavailability of internship classes held each semester.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher has worked in the field of career services, focusing on building business relationships and has had multiple conversations with regional business representatives who express frustration with their inability to connect with community college students or programs despite their willingness to provide internship opportunities. The researcher acknowledges that this experience could bias her judgment regarding research design and interpretation of findings. In order to mitigate the possibility of bias, the researcher is committed to interviewing program participants with various points of view, as well as studying more than one program. Additionally, the researcher will endeavor to triangulate data sources and methods, as well as seek input from colleagues in the field of career services and colleagues with expertise in the field of qualitative research.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The intent of this study is to add to the overall knowledge of internship programs in community colleges. The focus will be on program design and implementation, in the hopes that other community colleges can utilize the research to develop a successful program. Since student participation in an academic internship program has proven to decrease the amount of job-search time following graduation and increase their starting salaries (Gault et al., 2000), community colleges must offer these programs to their students.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Experiential Learning

For this research, experiential learning refers to an educational technique or type of learning. As further defined by Kolb (2015), “the emphasis is often on direct sense experience and in-context action as the primary source of learning” (p. xviii). This can include “internships, field projects, and classroom experiential learning exercises to add a direct experience component to their traditional academic studies” (Kolb, 2015, p. xviii).

Internship

This research uses the definition of internships provided by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). To be considered an internship, the following criteria must be met:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be merely to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end and a job description with desired qualifications.

4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals. (NACE, n.d.)

Unpaid Internships

The U.S. Department of Labor has established test criteria to determine whether an internship can be unpaid. There are some circumstances under which individuals who participate in for-profit private-sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation.

The Supreme Court has held that the term "suffer or permit to work" cannot be interpreted so as to make a person whose work serves only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the training meets certain criteria. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program.

The following six criteria must be applied when making this determination:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018)

Primary Beneficiary Test

The primary beneficiary test does not include a rigid set of requirements, but a non-exhaustive list of factors to determine who is the primary beneficiary of the internship. The factors include:

- the extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation;
- the extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by an educational institution;
- the extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit;
- the extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar;
- the extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning;
- the extent to which the intern's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern;
- the extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018, p. 1).

Work-Based Learning

There are three critical elements in the work-based learning process:

1. It views learning as acquired in the midst of action and dedicated to the task at hand.
2. It sees knowledge creation and utilization as collective activities, wherein learning becomes everyone's job.
3. Its users demonstrate a learning-to-learn aptitude, which frees them to question underlying assumptions of practices.

Work-based learning, then, differs from conventional education in that it involves conscious reflection on actual experience. Fundamental to the process is the concept of metacognition, which means that "one constantly thinks about one's problems-solving process...learning can be

more than just the acquisition of technical skills. It also constitutes the reframing necessary to create new knowledge” (Raelin, 2008, p. 3).

Cooperative Education Programs

According to NACE, co-ops are defined as activities that:

provide students with multiple periods of work in which the work is related to the student’s major or career goal. The typical program plan is for students to alternate terms of full-time classroom study with terms of full-time, discipline- related employment. Since program participation involves multiple work terms, the typical participant will work three or four work terms, thus gaining a year or more of career- related work experience before graduation. Virtually all co-op positions are paid, and the vast majority involve some form of academic credit. (NACE, n.d.)

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the research project as a whole, including a background of experiential learning and internships. It outlined the problems with internship programs in community colleges and provided the purpose for the research. This chapter provided the questions that guided the dissertation and an overview of the methodology. It also included the rationale and significance of the research, as well as the role of the researcher and the researcher’s assumptions and definitions of key terminology. Chapter 2 will review the literature about internships by viewing them through the lenses of experiential learning theory, career development theory, and workforce development. The chapter will also explore the connection between internships and career development and workforce development theories. Chapter 3 will focus on the structure of successful internship programs and how those programs benefit the students, the participating businesses, and the school. Chapter 4 will synthesize the research on internships and develop best practices for implementing a successful program. Chapter 5 will

outline best practices for scaling up a program. Chapter 6 will examine the implications of the study's findings and provide recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges do not typically have a culture of robust internship programs. An extensive survey conducted by the CCCSE (2012) found that 40% of students surveyed indicated that they had not yet participated in and did not plan to participate in an experiential learning event (p. 22). (The respondents included students in health career programs that require clinical assignments.) Faculty responses indicated that only 13% require experiential learning as part of their curriculum, 50% of faculty responded that they never require hands-on learning, and a significant percentage, 28%, did not know whether or not they required hands-on learning in their courses (CCCSE, 2012, p. 22). There was no data in the study that explained why community college students do not participate in nonrequired internships.

Experiential learning, specifically internships, has been identified as a high-impact learning practice. High-impact learning practices can be loosely described as ones where “programs and activities appear to engage participants at levels that elevate their performance across multiple engagement and desired-outcomes measures such as persistence” (Kuh, 2007, p. 14). Multiple studies have been done that highlight the short-term and long-term gains for students who have completed one or more internship experiences. However, there is little research on successful internship programs at community colleges. The aim of this research project is to develop guidelines for structuring and implementing cross-discipline internship programs at community colleges.

This literature review will provide a foundation for these guidelines and will view the topic of internships through three theoretical lenses: experiential learning, workforce development, and career development.

The purpose of theory is to help us understand a complex domain so that we can take more useful and intelligent actions. A theory enables us to step back from the nitty gritty details and see the big picture. A good theory is a simplified representation of reality, identifying relationships among the most crucial characteristics and ignoring the rest. (Krumboltz, as cited in Matthews, 2017, p. 322)

The theoretical framework sets the stage for how a researcher approaches the problem or the purpose of their study: “The theoretical framework is derived from the orientation or stance that you bring to your study, and every study has one” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 85).

This literature review will focus on understanding the three topics of experiential learning, workforce development, and career development. These lenses will direct the development of a guide for implementing a cross-discipline internship at a community college. The literature will inform the project on quality pedagogical practices and the value of an internship program to students, the institution, and the community.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

Experiential learning has been a part of education and workplace training since the times of ancient Greece (Stonehouse et al., 2011). Although experiential learning has existed for centuries, John Dewey is credited with bringing the theory to modern times, according to Smith, Knapp, Seaman, and Pace (2011). Dewey (1938) posited that students learn best when they are allowed to be active participants in the learning process, rather than relying on rote learning and recitation of facts. Smith et al. (2011) posit that since Dewey, other researchers have used his theories as a foundation to advance or critique experiential learning theory. There is a large volume of experiential learning literature that focuses on outdoor education; however, this will

not be an emphasis for this literature review. This literature review will focus on the theoretical underpinnings of experiential learning. Additionally, the literature review will focus on scientific research regarding the implementation of experiential learning, focusing mainly on program design.

THEORETICAL GROUNDWORK

Experiential learning theory is “a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (Kolb, 2015, p. 31). Kolb (2015), a psychologist who developed experiential learning theory (ELT), drew from thought leaders in many disciplines so that he could describe and explain how experience enhances learning and how educators could use that understanding to improve classroom learning. Those thought leaders came from disciplines such as education, psychology, and biology (Kolb, 2015). It was essential to Kolb that his understanding of experiential learning be supported by science.

According to Ültanir (2012), experiential learning is, in essence, a constructivist theory of knowledge: “Constructivism is an epistemology, a learning or meaning-making theory that offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn” (p. 195).

According to Moon (2004), knowledge is not accumulated like bricks that build a wall; instead, it is a less linear process. As information is received, a person’s cognitive structure processes the knowledge and selects which information it will absorb (Moon, 2004). The selection and absorption of information are flexible and multiple factors, such as a person’s age, their current life circumstance, past experiences, knowledge already gained, and a myriad of other conditions and impacts how a person processes information (Moon, 2004). According to Ültanir (2012), “knowledge is relative, temporary, and dependent upon observation. Moreover, cognitive knowledge cannot be learned receptively but is a mixture of personal experience, emotions, and

intuition” (pp. 207-208). Thus, when creating a learning program such as an internship program, it is necessary to provide a structure that recognizes the value and impact of the student’s knowledge and experience.

Dewey

Dewey, who began his career as a public school teacher, brought the concepts of experiential learning to the forefront with his theory on the best ways to maximize a child’s natural curious instincts in the classroom (Smith et al., 2011). Dewey eschewed the prevailing belief that “the subject-matter of education consists of bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past; therefore, the chief business of the school is to transmit them to the new generation” (p. 17). Dewey defined the “traditional view” of education as one that “is based upon natural endowments and that education is a process of overcoming natural inclination and substituting in its place habits acquired under external pressure” (Dewey, 1938, p. 17). This traditional view of education favored students who benefited from “external conditions” and ignored “internal conditions,” thus creating an “either-or” approach to education (Dewey, 1938). When educational content is considered static, students whose external conditions aligned with the topics being taught are better able to succeed; thus, those whose life circumstances allowed them more opportunities were further advantaged in the education system. Internal conditions, such as the ability to relate personal experiences to the subject matter and motivation, did not come into play in the traditional view of education (Dewey, 1938).

In contrast to traditional educational philosophy, Dewey supported a progressive democratic view of education, one that “enabled everyone to share in a common life and contribute to society” (Yardley, Teunissen, & Dornan, 2012, p. 35). Dewey (1938) believed that students learned better when they practiced educational concepts for themselves, rather than

relying solely on the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student and rote memorization.

Seaman (as cited by Smith & Knapp, 2011) synthesized Dewey's views by writing, "knowledge was a tool for acting in the world and, through acting, for changing the conditions of our future" (p. 7).

Dewey believed that not all experiences were created equal, and he warned against activity for activity's sake. Dewey identified growth as a necessary criterion when determining whether the experience has educational value (Dewey, 1938). An effective educational experience "arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future" (Dewey, 1938, p. 38). It is incumbent on the teacher "that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth" (Dewey, 1938, p. 40).

A significant tenet to Dewey's theory on education includes reflective thinking. Rodgers (2002) synthesized Dewey's writings and identified four criteria that encapsulate the purpose and benefits of reflective thinking on learning:

1. Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes the continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of the individual, and ultimately society. It is a means to essentially moral ends.
2. Reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry.
3. Reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others.
4. Reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others (p. 845).

Dewey's emphasis on reflection is not that it is the end result of an experience, instead, it is a "tool or vehicle used in the transformations of raw experiences into meaning-filled theory

that is grounded in experience, informed by existing theory, and serves the larger purpose of the moral growth of the individual and society” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 863).

Montessori Method

While Dewey is often referred to as the father of experiential learning, Montessori has been identified as the mother of experiential education. Montessori’s methods of instruction rely heavily on optimal elementary school classroom design (Swiderski, 2011). Montessori classrooms were organized in multi-aged groupings, utilized work centers rather than traditional rows of desks, and believed in a “teacher-as-facilitator” whose role was to encourage all styles of learning at all levels of intelligence (Swiderski, 2011). The Montessori method identified two stages of learning: introduction, the shorter of the two stages, and the second stage, where students were able to work with materials related to their lesson (Swiderski, 2011). Movement is essential to the Montessori method of instruction, as movement helps engage all of the five senses, taps into the things that come naturally to children, and encourages self-motivation and self-discipline (Swiderski, 2011). Students work cooperatively on group projects and individually in self-directed activities, with the teacher serving as the facilitator (Ültanir, 2012). Similar to Dewey’s vision of education, the role of the teacher in a Montessori classroom is decentralized, and students are allowed to experiment for themselves (Ültanir, 2012).

Montessori’s long-practiced educational philosophies support Dewey’s theories and observations. Both educators recognized that students learn in stages, understood the educational value of a student’s experience in the educational process, and acknowledged the importance of students learning from each other as part of the education process.

Lewin's Contributions

As a social psychologist, Lewin studied the dynamics of group behavior and had a profound effect on the field of organizational behavior, according to Kolb (2015). Lewin utilized action research in group settings to challenge the status quo and see if workers behaved differently depending on whether or not their input was sought during times of organizational change (Adelman, 1993). Action research, which aims to “effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders” is differentiated from traditional research, which seeks to learn what already exists (Huang, 2010, p. 93). One of Lewin's action research studies was conducted at a manufacturing plant and focused on implementing change in manufacturing processes (Adelman, 1993). The results of the research showed that the group involved in the decision-making process increased their productivity and their morale improved; however, the group not included showed a reduction in both metrics (Adelman, 1993). The process used the laboratory training groups, known as T-groups, to better understand how the group decision-making process evolved by using varying parameters for each group (Kolb, 2015). The knowledge garnered from T-groups was one of the most pivotal outcomes of Lewin's research as it relates to educational innovation.

The relevance of Lewin's group behavior action research on ELT, according to Kolb (2015), is the understanding that “learning from experience is essential for individual and organizational effectiveness and that this learning can occur only in situations where personal values and organizational norms support action based on valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment” (p. 11). This research is vital to experiential learning because it reinforces views of a democratic education process that values the experiences of all learners.

Vygotsky

Lev Vygotsky, a psychologist educated at Moscow University, studied the relationship between learning and development, finding that learning begins long before a child enters the education system and therefore brings that prior learning into the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978). In Vygotsky's view, "people learn and develop not just by responding to behavioral stimuli. They are shaped by and actively shape the activities in which they participate" (as cited in Seaman & Gingo, 2011, p. 158). Vygotsky, like others who research the process of learning, found that learning does not occur linearly, and he positions his theory as the zone of proximal development, which acknowledges input from social and physical environments along with developmental potential (Kolb, 2015). Vygotsky's (1978) research highlights the critical interchange between learning and development and the importance of seeing them as related, yet separate: "Learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning" (p. 40). The implication for Vygotsky's research is understanding how the experiences each student brings to the classroom can increase the development of their classmates, making the benefits of an experiential-focused classroom even more valuable (Seaman & Gingo, 2011).

Piaget

Renowned child psychologist, Jean Piaget, began his career with a Ph.D. in biology, researching the adaptation processes of organisms (Ültanir, 2012). Piaget formulated his child cognitive development theories by observing the behaviors of his children as they played and learned (Ültanir, 2012). Piaget divided cognitive development into four stages (Kolb, 2015):

1. Sensory-motor: (Birth-2-years old) learning occurs through touching, feeling, and handling.
2. Representational: (2-6-years old) children learn how to interpret symbols and words and attach meaning to them.
3. Concrete operations: (7-11-years old) children can begin to apply logic to categorize classes of information and generalize knowledge across those classes.
4. Formal operations: (12-15-years old) adolescents have the ability to utilize symbolic processes, which allow reflection and thinking more in the abstract. They can recognize the potential implications of their ideas and test those ideas.

Piaget's theories are essential in understanding how a child's learning occurs in the framework of stages of cognitive development and how they apply that knowledge to the world around them (Ültanir, 2012).

Piaget's theories, similar to Vygotsky's theories, address the interplay between the separate concepts of development and learning. According to Piaget, learning does not alter the course of development, but "development is seen as a prerequisite for learning-it is necessary for a child's mental functions to mature before complex subject matter can be taught" (Kolb, 2015, pp. 197-198). Piaget's theories focus on the building blocks of learning processes and how a child's past experiences impact the way they manage present-day situations (Smith & Knapp, 2011). According to Piaget's theories, as a student comes upon new information, they process it by comparing the new data to their past experiences and then adjust their understanding according to their current stage of development (Ültanir, 2012). Ültanir (2012) stated, "When examined from this point of view, cognitive development is a product of continuous effort. A student's thinking skills develop with an increase in knowledge and intellectual ability" (p. 207). From Piaget's perspective, children gain a deeper understanding of a topic as they gain more experiences and they mature and are better able to process information cognitively. Piaget frames the learning process as an iterative one whereby students gain a deeper understanding of topics with repetition. Although Piaget's learning stages end before most community college students

begin their postsecondary education, the theory can help inform the development of curriculum for internship programs with the understanding of the iterative nature of learning and how maturity plays a role in learning.

Kolb

David Kolb, a social psychologist, began his quest for understanding experiential learning after he participated in an organizational training session developed in the paradigm of Lewin's group dynamics theories (Kolb, 2015). During the training, Kolb felt that the process transformed him and his fellow participants which sparked his interest for a better understanding of the role of experience in learning (Kolb, 2015). Kolb viewed learning as a "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (Kolb, 2015, p. 67).

Kolb draws heavily from the research of Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, Vygotsky, James, and others and incorporates their theories of learning to help interpret the results of his own research (Kolb, 2015). Kolb (2015) identifies "foundational scholars" as leaders who laid the groundwork the different pieces of the experiential learning puzzle that they add:

- John Dewey: Experiential Education
- William James: Radical Empiricism, Dual Knowledge Theory
- Jean Piaget: Constructivism
- Kurt Lewin: Action Research, The T-Group
- Lev Vygotsky: Proximal Zone of Development (p. 29)

Each scholar may focus on only one specific age group or area of learning; however, Kolb assimilates their research and theories into a holistic understanding of learning and translates that knowledge into a practical application model for educators.

Kolb's Learning Cycle

Kolb (2015) posits that “learning, the creation of knowledge and meaning, occurs through the active extension and grounding of ideas *and* experiences in the external world and through internal reflection about the attributes of these experiences and ideas” (p. 78). Models, such as the one Kolb created for ELT, “show the interrelationships and interconnectedness of the findings” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 283).

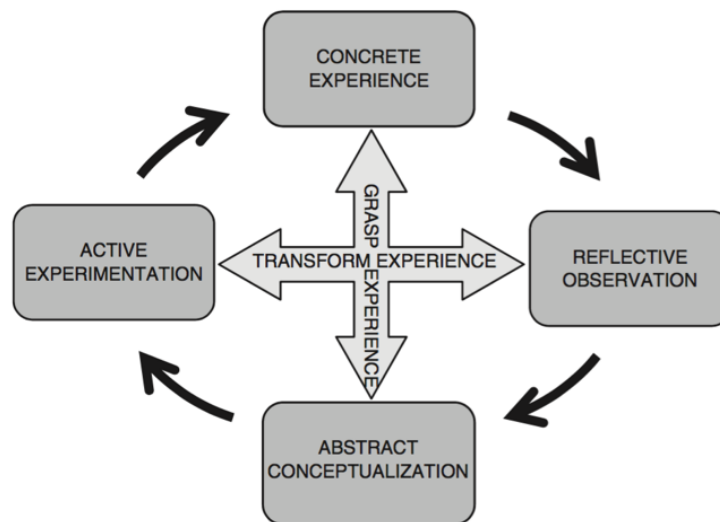


Figure 1: Experiential Learning Cycle. (Kolb & Kolb, 2009a, p. 299)

As the model demonstrates, learners advance through a four-step process that is represented by two axes. The vertical axis is prehension, the perception of knowledge, and the horizontal axis is transformation-information processing (Kolb, 2015). A student gains knowledge as an outcome of working through the push and pull between the prehension dimension and the transformation dimension (Kolb, 2015). The prehension dimension is a perception continuum that ranges between being aware of an idea or concept — apprehension, to being able to communicate knowledge and information to others — comprehension (Kolb,

2015). Apprehension is identified as a concrete experience (CE) and comprehension as abstract conceptualization (AC) (Kolb, 2015). The opposing axis is the transformation dimension, a process continuum, which ranges from watching-reflective observation (RO) to doing-active experimentation (AE). ELT is a recursive process, and as students repeat the cycle, their “questions become more sophisticated, their understanding deepens, and their actions become more effective” (p. 302). Kolb (2015) explains the interdependence of the experiential learning process by writing: “Experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting are not separate independent entities but inextricably related to one another in their dialectic opposition. They are mutually determined and in dynamic flux” (p. 56). Kolb’s theory of how learning occurs is both complex and simple: “The experiential learning theory learning space concept emphasizes that learning is not one universal process but a map of learning territories, a frame of reference within which many different ways of learning can flourish and interrelate” (Kolb, 2015, p. 291). Kolb’s learning cycle has detailed scientific research that supports the theory and complex nomenclature that describes the process. However, at its core the model demonstrates how a learner takes a piece of information and through reflecting, thinking, and acting the information develops into knowledge, and the knowledge deepens as the reflecting, thinking, and acting process is repeated (Kolb, 2015).

Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory

Kolb (2015) realized that the learning cycle alone could not explain all facets of learning that he observed: “When learning is conceived as a holistic adaptive process, it provides conceptual bridges across life situations such as school and work, portraying learning as a continuous, lifelong process” (Kolb, 2015, p. 45). Kolb (2015) recognized that learners demonstrated varying rates of growth during different stages of the learning cycle. Kolb (2015)

developed the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) as a way to understand and describe the phenomenon that he had identified. Kolb's LSI instrument asks testers a series of forced answer questions (Kolb, 2015). Based on the responses, Kolb's LSI categorizes the tester into a learning style: "Learning styles represent preferences for one mode of adaptation over the others; but these preferences do not operate to the exclusion of other adaptive modes and will vary from time to time and situation to situation" (Kolb, 1981, p. 289). While the measuring instrument may identify a learning style preference, a tester's category is not static: "As a result of our hereditary equipment, our particular past life experience, and the demands of our present environment, most people develop learning styles that emphasize some learning abilities over others" (Kolb, 2015, p. 114). Kolb's research helped to advance the understanding of the process of learning with the cycle of learning. The development of the LSI further advanced the field by including a measuring instrument that helps educators understand how learners absorb information differently.

Kolb's (2015) Learning Style Inventory (KLSI) 4.0 identifies a total of nine style types: experiencing, imagining, reflecting, analyzing, thinking, deciding, enacting, initiating, and balancing. Initially, Kolb (2105) identified four learning styles; however, as the LSI was put into practice, researchers and practitioners found that learning styles were more nuanced, and testers who landed at the edges of the four styles had attributes beyond learners that landed in the center of the spectrum. Kolb's evolved model, KLSI (Figure 2), illustrates how learning styles intersect with Kolb's learning cycle. For example, the "deciding style is characterized by the ability to use theories and models to decide on problem solutions and course of action. It combines abstract conceptualization (AC) and reflective observation (RO)" (Kolb, 2015, pg. 145). According to Kolb and Kolb (2009b), individuals with this type of learning style prefer an education

environment that focuses on experimentation and testing new ideas. They gravitate toward technology fields in their careers. Another example is individuals who fall into the imagining style (Kolb & Kolb, 2009b): “The Imaging style is characterized by the ability to imagine possibilities by observing and reflecting on experiences. It combines the learning steps of concrete experience (CE) and reflective observation (RO)” (Kolb, 2015, p. 145). Individuals who identify as imaging style learners prefer a learning environment where they work in groups, and they tend to hold the opinions and experiences of others in high regard (Kolb & Kolb, 2009b). Using the learning cycle and learning style inventory in tandem “helps in the identification and development of different teaching pedagogies suitable for different learning styles including the significance of experience within learning” (Akella, 2010, p. 103).

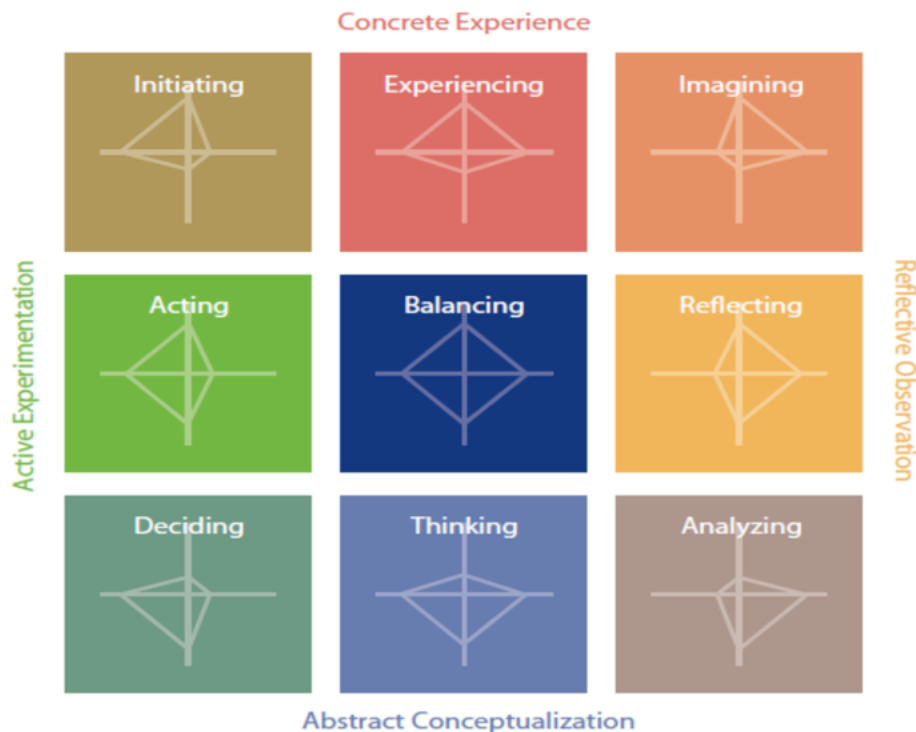


Figure 2: The Nine Learning Styles in the KLSI 4.0 (Kolb & Kolb, 2013, p. 14)

It is important to note that learning styles can be flexible: “Learning flexibility is the ability to use each of the four learning modes to move freely around the learning cycle and to modify one’s approach to learning based on the learning situation” (Kolb, 2015, p. 150). Although the KLSI can be an effective tool for helping students understand their learning preferences, it is important to remember that “learning style is not a fixed personality trait but more like a habit of learning shaped by experience and choices — it can be an automatic, unconscious mode of adapting, or it can be consciously modified and changed” (Kolb, 2015, p. 304). There is a connection between certain learning styles and education specialization and career paths, but it is unclear whether a student is drawn to a particular career because of their preferred learning style or whether the career choice develops a student’s learning style (Kolb, 2015). Regardless of whether the relationship is corollary or causal, understanding a student’s learning style can be another piece of the puzzle along the career-decision path.

Kolb Detractors

While many view Kolb’s work as seminal in the realm of experiential learning, this view is not shared by all. Miettinen (2000), for example, calls into question Kolb’s research methods, which Miettinen refers to as “eclectic”: “Kolb unites terms and concepts, extracting them from their idea-historical contexts and purposes and puts them to serve the motives of his own presentation” (Miettinen, 2000, p. 56). He challenges Kolb’s interpretation of Dewey’s 1938 seminal work, *Education and Experience*, which Kolb uses as foundational for his theories (Miettinen, 2000). Miettinen (2000) also indicates that Kolb combined conflicting theories and misapplied scientific research to support his theories. Miettinen (2000) questions why higher education has adopted Kolb’s approach in the realm of higher education:

Perhaps the idea of experiential learning forms an attractive package for adult educators. It combines spontaneity, feeling, and deep individual insights with the possibility of

rational thought and reflection. It maintains the humanistic belief in every individual's capacity to grow and learn, so important for the concept of lifelong learning.... Moreover, the belief in an individual's capabilities and his individual experience leads us away from the analysis of cultural and social conditions of learning that are essential to any serious enterprise of fostering change and learning in real life. (pp. 70-71)

Kolb (2015) responded to this criticism by affirming that the purpose for creating the experiential learning theory was to "create a model for explaining how individuals learn and to empower learners to trust their own experience and gain mastery over their own learning" (p. 53). Kolb (2015) does not view ELT's constructivist approach to explaining learning and individual learning styles to conflict with cultural and social learning.

Additionally, Freedman and Stumpf (1980) called into question the validity of the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). In their review of research, Freedman and Stumpf (1980) found that "the instrument is invalid, and that little empirical evidence currently supports this theory of learning styles" (p. 447). Kolb (1981) responded to their criticism by pointing out that the LSI is "the person's own self-description of how he or she learns compared with the similar self-descriptions" (p. 290) and is only one tool that a student can utilize to understand how they learn. Further, Kolb (1981) suggested that Freedman and Stumpf, who tested the LSI, used the wrong tools to evaluate the data, based in part on their lack of understanding of what the LSI was created to accomplish.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNSHIPS

The concept of workforce development, which accelerated in the 1980s, was a response to the growing global economy and the need for improved training and development to ensure a workforce with necessary technical and social skills (Leggett, 2013). Haralson (2010) defines workforce development as "a relatively wide range of activities, policies, and programs employed by geographies to create, sustain, and retain a viable workforce that can support

current and future business and industry.... Workforce development is an essential component of community economic development in any economic climate” (p. 1). Developing an effective workforce requires an ecosystem that includes an engaged business community, an interconnected education system, and coordinated economic development activities (Center for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2018; Holland, 2015). Effective coordination can lead to developing a workforce that balances the needs of employers and local citizens.

Workforce development needs to be viewed from multiple levels. At a macro level, the state and the federal government set policies that impact public and private education. At an organization level, entities set internal strategies that determine how they will attract and retain employees and provide on-going training opportunities (Leggett, 2013). Workforce development is “a set of processes that govern the identification, recruitment, assessment, and training of job seekers into employment as well as the maintenance and advancement of these persons in their careers that enhance self-sufficiency and revitalise the communities in which these individuals live” (Holland, 2015, p. 55). According to Leggett (2013), before the concept of workforce development evolved, organizations approached hiring with a focus on technical skills. Organizations began to revise their hiring practices to include an evaluation of “soft skills,” such as personality fit, organizational culture, and social skills, in addition to technical skills required to support the organization (Leggett, 2013). At an individual level, job seekers need to develop technical and soft skills to make them attractive candidates for organizations that are hiring.

Utilizing a workforce development lens will inform this study on effective practices for designing and implementing successful internship programs. Workforce development theory will help to ensure that internships can support the needs of the regional workforce through effective

program design and ensure that graduates have the experience and traits that employers are seeking.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT), one of the more prevalent theories in workforce development, is the lens through which this research understands the value of internships. HCT is an economic theory that expands the view of organizational “capital” beyond the traditional definition of tangible assets, such as a company’s physical structure and the goods and raw materials within and includes an organization’s investment in its employees (Becker, 1976). HCT identifies the expenditures of money and time on education and training as capital “because you cannot separate a person from his or her knowledge, skills, health, or values the way it is possible to move financial and physical assets” (Becker, 1994, p. 16). This section will use human capital theory to examine the interplay of individuals, organizations, public policies, and partnerships that support the growth and vitality of a region and the businesses within the region and the role that internships at community colleges can have in those relationships.

Role of the Individual

Human capital theory posits that investing in education and training will increase the value of a worker to an organization: “The value of human capital is inherently dependent upon its potential to contribute to the competitive advantage or core competence of the firm” (Lepak & Snell, 1999, p. 35). Individuals who earn more are, ostensibly, more valuable to an organization. Statistically, educated individuals out-earn their less-educated counterparts (Becker, 1994). To reinforce this further, during the Great Recession, the unemployment rate for workers without a high-school education was 15.8%; with a high school diploma, 11%; and with a college degree,

5% (Arthreya, Neeklakantan, & Romero, 2014, p. 2). One challenge, according to Arthreya et al. (2014), is the lack of appreciation for the value of education among young adults. A focus on internships at community colleges can help reinforce the value of education and work experience. Students who make a connection between their academic pursuits and meaningful educational activities, such as internships, improve the likelihood that they will reach their educational goals (Kuh, 2007). Rodriguez, Fox, & McCambly (2016) noted, “WBL has been found to increase students’ persistence, graduation, and employment rates with notable gains for students from underserved racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds” (p. 1). Internships help students make a connection between what they are studying and how that relates to their career goals.

Organizations distinguish between two types of skills: general and specialized. General skills, such as reading, writing, communication, and basic math ability, are skills that organizations expect their employees to have and are, therefore, unwilling to pay for education to develop those skills (Becker, 1976). Specialized knowledge, whether technical or industry-related, is an area where organizations are likely to invest by paying higher salaries or spending money to train incumbent workers (Becker, 1976). Internships are one way that students can gain industry knowledge and hone highly sought after soft skills, such as teamwork and communication, to the benefit of both the student and organization (Dabke, 2015). Ensuring that individuals have the right skills to complete the essential tasks of an organization requires an investment of time and money for both an individual and an organization.

A student’s investment in their education can pay significant dividends beyond gaining specialized or technical knowledge. Research suggests that students who invest their time and effort into internships realize a substantial return on their investment. Students who participate in

internships can show an increase in technical competency, such as applying theoretical knowledge on the job, and interpersonal skills, including teamwork and communication; they also better understand their career options and are able to develop professional networks (Albu, Calu, & Guse, 2016). Further, students who have more than one internship increase their salary and decrease the length of time to secure a job following graduation (Townesley et al., 2017). Equally important, students can discover that a career is not a good fit for them and change fields of study (Neapolitan, 1992).

Students can benefit from working while they are in school. Derous and Ryan (2008) found that a student working in a position that is relevant to their career, such as an internship, can result in a positive impact on their sense of personal well-being and academic study. Adding to that, first-year students from two- and four-year institutions who worked off campus more than 20 hours per week showed significant gains in “overall leadership, individual leadership, group leadership, and community leadership” (Salisbury, Pascarella, Padgett, & Blaich, 2012, p. 319). The study noted that the negatives of being away from campus, thus unable to be involved in campus activities and maintain peer interactions, were far outweighed by the leadership gains that students experienced (Salisbury et al., 2012). The variation between the leadership gains realized in on- and off-campus jobs can be attributed to campus jobs being treated as financial aid and not as an opportunity for student growth and career development (Salisbury et al., 2012).

Organizations and Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory recognizes that organizations invest in their employees through education and training as a way to build their value: “Education and training are the most important investments in human capital” (Becker, 1976, p. 17). According to Nafukho, Hairston, and Brooks (2010), “education and schooling are seen as deliberate investments that prepare the

labor force and increase productivity of individuals and organizations, as well as encouraging growth and development” (p. 546). Olaniayn and Okemakinde (2008) further support the theory that education can be viewed as a capital investment by positing that “education is an economic good because it is not easily obtainable and thus needs to be apportioned” (p. 479). Therefore,

The main outcome from investment in people is the change that is manifested at the individual level in the form of improved performance, and at the organizational level in the form of improved productivity and profitability or at the societal level in the form of returns that benefit the entire society. (Nafukho et al., p. 549)

Education and training can take on many faces, and they “embrace[s] mentoring programs, industry workshops, and on-the-job training programs” (Leggett, 2013, p. 4).

Investment in education will improve an organization’s bottom line (Becker, 1976).

When an organization invests in training and education, newly trained employees are better able to carry out the functions of their roles and become more productive, contingent, in part, on an organization’s ability to capitalize on having those individuals in the proper roles (Aliaga, 2001).

The ultimate goal of any organization is to stay globally competitive (Haralson, 2010).

Organizations are placing a higher priority on identifying necessary soft skills, as well as technical skills during the hiring process. Internships can play an important part in developing technical skills and soft skills: “While the interns may not be expected to know the functional nuances of work or possess domain expertise, they are expected to come with a positive set of soft skills that show them as engaging, energetic, and enthusiastic” (Dabke, 2015, p. 29). During an internship, students can show whether they have the aptitude for technical skills as well as soft skills.

Internships can act as a lengthy interview process, allowing interns to be evaluated and observed over an extended period of time, often leading to a better fit between an organization and a new hire (Gault et al., 2000; Rigsby, Addy, Herring, & Polledo, 2013; Zhao & Liden,

2010). One organization cited the upside to hosting as an intern by stating, “We benefit from an additional source of labour, we get to observe potential employees at work, and often the students bring knowledge/skills which we lack” (Scott & Richardson, 2011, p. 76). The interview is a two-way process. Not only can an organization determine whether a student is a good culture fit, but the student also has an opportunity to decide whether or not the role and the company meet their needs.

Public Policies

Developing workforce policies at a state and national level can support economic growth by encouraging activity that will have an impact on long term employability, improved productivity, and the ability to avoid a skills shortage (Leggett, 2013). Education policies can be general, such as President Obama’s setting a national goal of improving community college completion rates (Mullin, 2010), or policies can be targeted, such as federal and state governments programs that use sector-based approaches to ensure training in high-demand, high-paying fields, closing the skills gap, upskilling incumbent workers to avoid potential lay-offs, reskilling employees whose jobs have been outsourced, supported apprenticeship programs, and funded welfare-to-work style programs (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005; Kim, 2011; Raelin, 2008). According to HCT, education-friendly policies are integral to the vitality of a region. Olaniayn & Okemakinde (2008) stated: “Education plays a great and significant role in the economy of a nation; thus educational expenditures are found to constitute a form of investment” (p. 481). Often, the efforts of workforce development are focused on workers who have lost their jobs; however, “examining workforce development through the lens of human capital theory suggests that workers will realize higher returns on their investment in human capital when those investments occur early” (Arthreya et al., 2014, p. 5).

Community colleges are uniquely situated to serve in the role of bringing together groups involved in workforce development (Alssid et al., 2002). Alssid et al. (2002) cite successful workforce development collaborations that resulted in moving poorly educated low-income workers into highly paid careers by providing educational opportunities through the community colleges, with support from local social service agencies, to connect workers with internships and other job experiences in a local business. The programs were supported by policies and grant dollars from the local and federal government (Alssid et al., 2002). Each of these programs relied heavily on the interdependent nature of the relationships to avoid duplication of services. The colleges provided education and career counseling, the social service agencies identified appropriate clients from their caseloads, and businesses participated by providing work opportunities.

Federal, state, and local governments can create policies that support workforce development policies: “While the perspectives of participants in workforce development initiatives might vary, it’s important to note that the core objective — economic growth — remains ultimately quite compatible” (Haralson, 2010, para 16). Policies need to proactively address the attrition of human capital that occurs due to the aging of the workforce, increased mobility, and the need for higher levels of education and training (Haralson, 2010). When a major recession hit the United States economy in 2008, the federal government responded by pumping billions of dollars into the community college system to increase degree attainment and help provide local businesses access to the skilled workforce needed to be competitive (Leary, 2012). Each community college is unique and has the ability to be responsive to the region’s employment needs. A community college internship program can support local business interests with students who are likely to remain in the area.

Challenges with Human Capital Theory

HCT can be used to explain the benefits of increasing the education level for an individual, improving the knowledge and skill level of an organization leading to increased productivity and economic viability, and societal gains achieved when the education system is supported through public policies. However, some researchers feel that HCT fails to explain certain phenomena adequately. Left unanswered by HCT, according to Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008), is whether there is a direct line between education and economic success and what role societal structures have on the relationship between the two. Some countries have tried to develop an education system from the ground up have experienced difficulties in the process, and they have not realized the results that they had hoped (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

Fleming (2017) wrote a scathing review of HCT in which he posits it has led employers to devalue employees and relegate them to “contractor” status. This move away from a traditional employer-employee relationship and toward contract status, or the “uberization” of the workforce, reduces the responsibility for training and supporting employees and reducing the economic viability of the “contractors” (Fleming, 2017). HCT, once seen as a call to invest in their employees, can now be interpreted as a form of divestiture according to Fleming (2017). Lepak and Snell (1999) reinforce Fleming’s fears by putting forth a theory that points out that not all employees are equally skilled, and not all roles require strategic capabilities; therefore, they recommend developing a system that supports a two-tiered human resources structure that includes both direct-hire and contingent workers.

Summary of Workforce Development Theory

The use of an HCT lens can be valuable in understanding the role of an internship program that encompasses technical and soft skill education in developing the workforce ecosystem. According to Sagen, Dallam, and Laverty (2000), the complex relationship between career preparation and entering the workforce goes beyond technical skill training and encompasses the “current and projected labor market conditions, anticipated employer behaviors, and a linkage between individual human capital assets and experiences that will add value to those assets” (p. 765). Although there is no singular approach to career preparation, successful programs have included work experiences, mentoring, career exploration, volunteering, soft-skill training, and professional development activities: “Career preparation experiences of a supplementary nature will continue to remain important” (Sagen et al., 2000, p. 764). There is no doubt that a well-designed internship program could benefit community college students and help develop a skilled workforce.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Internships can be an important step in helping a student decide a career path. Therefore, career development theory (CDT) is a useful lens through which internships can be viewed.

For those students just beginning to figure out their choice of major and career interests, an internship can help them to become aware of the many different kinds of organizations comprising ‘the world of work,’ build early professional experience, and sometimes discover what they *don't* want to do. (O’Neill, 2010, p. 4)

Career development theory informs this study by identifying some of the factors that guide a person’s decision to choose a particular career path: “Career development theory has been transformed recently to focus on the meaning individuals make of their experiences” (Linn, 2015, p. 301). Appreciating the complex dynamics of career decision making is a vital element

of this study. That knowledge helps evaluate which factors may encourage or discourage student participation in internship programs and drive decisions to structure a program that benefits community college students effectively.

The term “career development” has dual usage, according to Herr (2001), “one that explains the development of career behavior across the life span and the other that describes how career behavior is changed by particular interventions” (p. 196). Understanding how career paths are formed through CDT can position the value of internships in the process of developing a career identity and identifying the important characteristics and learning outcomes that should be incorporated into an effective internship program. Sharma (2016) stated: “Theories and research describing career behavior provide the ‘conceptual glue’ for as well as describe where, when, and for what purpose career counseling, career education, career guidance, and other career interventions should be implemented” (p. 214). According to Matthews (2017), understanding CDT can help career professionals meet the needs of the job seeker by adapting the theories to meet their needs. This review of theories is not meant to be an exhaustive examination; rather, it is meant to provide a general framework for how CDT is approached.

Career development theory has been evolving over the past century: “The heritage of career development practice in the United States is rich, complex, and responsive to the social political, and economic forces shaping the national context” (Herr, 2001, p. 198). There are multiple ways to categorize theories to understand their similarities, their differences, and the significant contributions that each theory brings to the understanding of how a career is developed over a lifetime and how career behavior can be impacted. Chen (2003) separated CTD into two categories: theories based in a positivistic or objectivist frame of reference and ones that are understood through a social constructivist lens. Positivism “assumes that reality exists ‘out

there' and that it is observable, stable, and measurable" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 9).

Positivistic CTD theories match job seekers to a career based on an individual's traits and the expectations of a person in a particular career. Social constructivist theory posits that "reality is socially constructed; that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 9). Constructivist CDT theories focus on a person's career behavior and how social and environmental experiences impact that behavior.

Positivist Career Development Theories

Career development theories based in positivism view human characteristics as fixed traits: "Vocational behavior is generally identified by a scientific and logical match between a person's traits and the demands of the work environment. This match can be reasonably predicted and achieved by scientific tools such as assessment instruments" (Chen, 2013, p. 204). These types of theories are often referred to as "trait and factor" theories.

The recognized father of career development theory, Frank Parsons, saw how the urbanization of the United States in the 1800s brought significant change to the workforce (Herr, 2001; O'Brien, 2001). Parsons, along with other social reformers, led movements that demanded workers to be treated as individuals and worthy of dignity rather than regarded as the property of employers (Herr, 2001). Parsons was particularly interested in immigrants whose talents and experiences from their homeland were going unused as they toiled in unskilled positions in factories (Herr, 2001). Parsons's approach to vocational counseling was based on a positivistic view (Herr, 2001). Parsons (1909) identified the need for three necessary elements for successful vocational counseling: understanding of self, knowledge of work expectations, and the ability to understand yourself in connection to the work expectations. Armed with the understanding of

these three elements, Parsons would assist his immigrant clients by finding them career options that fully utilized their skills and knowledge.

Positivistic theories based in psychology expanded the practice of career development as the ability to “measure intellectual functioning began during World War I, accelerated and expanded to include interests, specific aptitudes, and personality in the twenties” (Brown & Associates, 2002, p. 4). Psychological theories that combined assessments, which measured an individuals’ skills and interests, with information about a job seeker’s upbringing were being used to identify suitable jobs or careers (Brown & Associates, 2002; Herr, 2001). Versions of those assessments, such as Holland’s vocational typology, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Big Five, are still used in career counseling today. At the core, this positivist approach posits that careers are developed over a lifetime based on the skills and personality traits that an individual possesses (Brown & Associates, 2002).

Holland

Holland (1972) viewed career development theory through a lens of vocational preferences based on personality traits and occupational type. Holland identified six personality types and patterns and six environmental models and patterns: intellectual, realistic, social, conventional, enterprising, and artistic (Holland, 1972, p. 38). Holland (1972), basing his theory on the concepts of “homogeneity, consistency, and congruency [was] trying to develop a succinct set of axioms, laws, and hypotheses” (p. 55) to understand the interrelationships between personality types and work environments. Holland (1972) developed the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI) and later the Guidance Profile (GP) to “classify fields and to assess a student’s attitudes about occupations, but not to predict his vocational choice” (p. 56). Holland has had a “tremendous impact on practice because of the instruments he developed and, all in all,

is the most influential model of vocational choice making that is currently in existence” (Brown & Associates, 2002, p. 6).

Constructivist Career Development Theories

Career development theories that are based in constructivism are built on the foundation that individuals construct their realities through their experiences and their environment. Careers are understood as a “socially constructed process that reflects both individual actions and the person’s interactions with others” (Chen, 2003, p. 205). According to Brown and Associates (2002), “constructs are measurable if researchers can observe them or can construct instruments that can be used to infer their existence” (p. 7). Many career development theorists have developed models based on a constructivist approach.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Several constructivist theories are based on the concept of self-efficacy. Henry Ford’s famous quote, “Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you are right,” gets at the crux of self-efficacy. According to Betz & Hackett (2006), “Self-efficacy is a cognitive appraisal or judgment of future performance capabilities, not a trait concept” (p. 6).

Bandura, a social cognitive psychologist, sought to understand the complexities of personal efficacy and use that knowledge to develop best practices. According to Bandura (1977), there are four main influences on self-efficacy:

- Performance accomplishments-repeated practice to gain experience resulting in more confidence
- Vicarious experience-watching others like you perform the task
- Verbal persuasion- trusted source giving positive (or negative) reassurance
- Emotional arousal-how internal stress response reacts to the situation.

Performance accomplishments is the strongest of the four sources (Bandura, 1977). Positive experiences in all four areas can increase self-efficacy, and negative experiences can decrease self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). For example, when a trusted source gives negative feedback to an individual, a person's self-efficacy can decrease. Bandura (1977) noted that when success comes too easily, self-efficacy is not improved.

Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli (1996) posited: "Unless people believe that they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act" (p. 1206); "Expectations of personal mastery affect both initiation and persistence of coping behavior" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). Perceived self-efficacy can influence which activities a person will attempt, but also how long that person stays with the activity and how much effort they exert (Bandura, 1977). For example, if a student believes they can be successful in a particular career, they will keep working through adversity. Conversely, if a student believes that they cannot be successful, they are less likely to make an attempt or will quit when they experience adversity. An individual's self-efficacy is influenced by personal success or failure, observing another's success or failure, verbal persuasion, and the level of stress or emotion during an experience (Bandura, 1977).

Lent (2016) added to Bandura's theories by including the impact of "other-efficacy" and "relationship-inferred self-efficacy" or "reflected efficacy." Other-efficacy, as explained by Lent (2016), concerns whether an influencer has the ability to achieve certain outcomes themselves. For example, a person who has experienced success in the entertainment industry can strengthen (or diminish) a budding musician's self-efficacy because of their inside knowledge of the business. Relationship-inferred self-efficacy refers to the belief that a person knows enough about a situation to provide credible input (Lent, 2016). Gratuitous support does not help. For

example, if a teacher shows the belief that a student can accomplish a difficult task, the student needs to feel that the teacher appreciates the complexities of the task and understands the student's characteristics for the feedback to have a positive (or negative) effect on the student's self-efficacy. It is only when the student judges the teacher's assessment as credible that there is a positive impact on a student's self-efficacy: "Self-efficacy makes a difference. It develops, changes, stagnates, or soars in a social context" (Lent 2016, p. 589).

Incorporating knowledge from SET will help to develop an internship program that ensures that participants receive adequate support. From marketing the program to developing the curriculum, recognizing why students participate in a program and what might keep them from being successful are both key components: "Self-efficacy can help to explain and promote a variety of academic and career development outcomes, in particular interest development, choice making and choice stability, performance attainments, domain-specific satisfaction and well-being, and self-management of a variety of adaptive career behaviors" (Lent, 2016, p. 577).

Planned Happenstance Theory

Planned happenstance theory and career chaos theory have similar constructivist approaches. Krumboltz's (2009) Happenstance Learning Theory (HLT) posits that "human behavior is the product of countless numbers of learning experiences made available by both planned and unplanned situations" (p. 135). These experiences create potential opportunities from which individuals can gain skills and knowledge which they can capitalize on in future actions (Krumboltz, 2009). HLT eschews a traditional view of careers where one begins their career and systematically works their way up a predictable ladder. According to Krumboltz (2009), individuals make decisions based on their genetics, upbringing and environment, experiences, education, and the imperfect world that provides positive and negative feedback.

HLT encourages a career path that takes advantage of all experiences and focuses on achieving a satisfying career and personal life (Krumboltz, 2009). Planned happenstance theory reframes career indecision as open-mindedness: “Planned happenstance theory includes two concepts: (a) Exploration generates chance opportunities for increasing quality of life, and (b) skills enable people to seize opportunities” (Mitchell et al., 1999, p. 118). Being open-minded fosters curiosity and creativity and allows individuals to take on experiences without knowing in advance what impact it will have on their career path (Mitchell et al., 1999). An example of how planned happenstance can impact a career would be if a job seeker attends a networking event and, as a result, meets someone who knows of an open position at their organization and offers to personally submit the job seekers’ resume to the hiring manager. Mitchell et al. (1999) share examples of individuals who found success when they risked accepting a lower-paying job, which blossomed into lucrative positions, and another who took job rejection and twisted it into an opportunity that ultimately led them to international acclaim.

Chaos Theory of Careers

The Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) (Pryor & Bright, 2003, 2014) was developed as a way to address the limitations of a positivist view of career development. Pryor and Bright (2003, 2014) wanted a theory that could explain the nonlinear, complex, nonrational process that defines many career decision-making processes. Rather than seeing nonlinear career paths as failures or out of the norm, Pryor and Bright (2003, 2014) sought to understand the career development process from the perspective of chaos found in nature. Pryor and Bright (2003) describe chaos theory as a “systems theory approach to understanding natural phenomena, which emphasizes structure and order. It does not assert that nature is anarchic as the name may imply, but merely that it is not completely deterministic and therefore is not predictable” (p. 16). In

chaos theory, individuals are required to adapt to the complex environment. As such, CTC seeks to help individuals adapt to the complex environment of career development by using multiple experiences and learning from the feedback that those experiences provide (Pryor & Bright, 2003). CTC posits that change is inevitable, and career development must provide students with the tools to adapt to the change (Pryor & Bright, 2003).

Schlesinger and Daley (2016) built upon Pryor and Bright's CTC and developed a framework for career centers to operationalize the theory. Schlesinger and Daley's (2016) framework is conceptualized as a Mobius strip to show the never-ending nature of career development: "A career is not a linear path with a clear start and end point. Chance events that occur will create detours that enable new complex routes to develop" (Schlesinger & Daley, 2016, p. 93). Their theory introduces four steps: (1) explore, (2) prepare, (3) start, and (4) adapt (EPSA), which are designed to provide career service centers a structure to organize student activities (Schlesinger & Daley, 2016). The crux of EPSA is to replace traditional rigid career path planning with one that allows students to deal with inevitable changes and uncertainty in the job search process (Schlesinger & Daley, 2016). Schlesinger and Daley's (2016) four-step EPSA is a framework that promotes a continuous iterative process for developing a flexible path that allows students opportunities to explore a variety of options. Schlesinger and Daley's (2016) model outlines the process for preparing students for a variety of unexpected outcomes by getting started in the career field through networking, job shadowing, and internships and learning to adapt to the realities of the job search, whether economic conditions or other unanticipated circumstances impact the job market. This framework provides students with a lifetime of skills to adjust to the nonlinear reality of building a career.

Super

Super's (1972) theories on vocational development evolved from a predominately trait-and-factor-based model to one that recognized that individuals passed through developmental stages throughout their life and career, and each stage offered opportunities for growth and maturity. Super's five stages, which he adapted from Austrian psychologist Charlotte Buehler's 1933 work, *Der menschliche Lebenslauf als psychologisches problem*, are these: (1) growth, (2) exploration, (3) establishment, (4) maintenance, and (5) decline (Salomone, 1996; Super, 1972). As Super further developed his theory, he recognized that most careers did not develop in a linear progression; rather, individuals experienced transition periods that included recycling through previous stages (Salomone, 1996).

Super and other theorists explored the concept of career self-concept or career identity. Career identity is the formation process that occurs based on how a person perceives themselves — their abilities, interests, and opportunities — and how external factors, such as role models and environmental conditions, affect the process (Super, 1972). Career self-concept is developed and strengthened between the exploration and establishment phase (Super 1972). Once formed, career identity matures and adjusts throughout a person's life in response to experience and as new knowledge and insight are gained (Super, 1972). Vocational identity is a valuable concept because it can impact how a person decides which education path they choose to meet their career goals and can impact their resilience in staying on their career path during difficult times (Meijers, Kuijpers, & Gundy, 2013).

Super “made explicit the interaction of career development and personal development, the differential salience or meaning of work, how life roles and work roles affected individual career patterns, and the processes and elements related to career maturity and career adaptability” (Herr, 2001, p. 204). According to Super (1972), “when data on some topics are unavailable or

inadequate, no theory can be truly comprehensive” (p. 29). Super’s definition of career is “the sequence of occupations, jobs, and positions occupied during the course of a person’s working life” (p. 15), although Super refined his theory and his definitions throughout his career (Brown & Associates, 2002; Salomone, 1996). A significant challenge of Super’s work, according to Salomone (1996), is Super’s inability to develop any single aspect of his multifaceted theory entirely. Despite this drawback, according to Salomone (1996), Super’s “considerable legacy to career development and vocational psychology will be felt for decades to come” (p. 182).

Positivism and Constructivism Coexisting

For the purpose of this research, the goal is to understand the value of multiple approaches to CDT. While some researchers look at the differences between theories, others look at their similarities. According to Osipow (1969):

Generally, most of the theories are similar, they emphasize the same kinds of critical agents and periods in career development. The difference between the theories lie in their choice of emphasis, the research methods suitable to each, and the degree to which they specify the relations between various events. (p. 233)

Career development theory “can attempt to explain the past experiences, quantifying chance and client’s ability to profit from it, is more difficult” (Matthews, 2017, p. 320). Chen (2003) noted:

Although the continuing existence and development of a variety of theoretical schools in the field is important, there is also the opportunity to become more open-minded about the possibility of integrating concepts from very different theoretical models in career development theory and practice. (p. 205)

At its core, according to Krumboltz and Worthington (1999), the real value of career counseling is “to facilitate the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits, and personal qualities that enable each participant to create a satisfying life in a constantly changing work environment” (p. 323). Rather than using an either/or approach to the theories, the aim is to take

the most salient points from each theory to understand how and in what ways internships impact a student's career identity and what qualities in an internship program would most benefit students.

SUMMARY

Internships at community colleges have been identified as a high-impact practice for students. The purpose of this research is to develop best practices for implementing internships at community colleges. An internship program must be grounded in sound education practice and be informed by established career development practices.

This literature review looked at the value of internships from three relevant lenses: experiential learning theory, workforce development, and career development theory. These lenses highlight the educational value, the significance of work-based learning at an organizational and individual level, and the implication of the career decision-making process. The literature review highlights the understanding of experiential learning over its long history. Experiential learning theory is well-grounded in science, and research has supported findings of its value in strengthening academic knowledge by providing learners the opportunity for practically applying that knowledge. Human capital theory informs this research by pointing out the value that internships can bring to an organization that sponsors an intern. According to HCT, the value of internships is not confined to interns learning the specialized skills of their specific organization, but also being assimilated into the company culture by learning soft skills such as working in groups and professional behavior. The literature on career development theory provides valuable insight into how a student understands and identifies their career options. There is a conflict between theories that support the view that career decisions are based on the inherent skills in the learner and ones where the determinants are externally decided.

Utilizing research from both views can support student growth and guide the development and implementation of an internship program.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Successful research requires a systematic approach to a topic in a way that fits the researcher's interests and personality and provides an opportunity to improve the lives of others (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To that end, the purpose of this research is to better understand the design of a successful internship programs at community colleges whereby students from multiple academic areas can share a classroom experience while having a credit-based work experience relevant to their field of study. The questions driving this research are:

1. How are internship programs currently structured, at either two-year or four-year institutions?
2. From experiential learning pedagogy, what are the significant curriculum design considerations?
3. From a career development perspective, what are the critical curriculum design considerations?
4. How can an internship programs be scaled up to involve more students?

This research attempts to identify the essential characteristics of existing programs, focusing on program structure, program administration, and the implementation process. From the information gathered, a best practice guide was developed to serve as a resource to help community colleges implement an internship program.

This chapter describes the methodology for this research project. It includes discussions about the research design rationale, research sample, data collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations and delimitations. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the research methodology.

RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative research approach is used to provide context around the topic to be studied and learn how it impacts people in their everyday lives (Yin, 2016). The process of qualitative research helps to understand the meaning and value that participants place on the topic or problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Both of these qualities are vital to understanding how successful internship programs are developed and brought to scale. When studying successful internship programs, it is essential to understand how internship programs are supported at community colleges.

The qualitative research method is also useful when the information to be collected is complex and comes from a diverse set of participants (Yin, 2016). Hostos Community College, part of City University of New York (CUNY), for example, implemented an internship program funded by a Perkins Grant (Rosario, Flemister, Gampert & Grindley, 2013). The endeavor required cooperation from internal stakeholders such as the grant writer, the career services department, academic affairs personnel, administration, faculty, students, and external stakeholders such as area businesses and the local workforce development organization (Rosario et al., 2013). Each stakeholder played a vital role in the success of the program. As such, the focus of this research is on program design, which includes campus collaborations, community partnerships, and scaling up the program to involve more students.

According to Yin (2016), qualitative research is an effective use for developing new concepts. While some community colleges have successful internship programs, there is very little research available on the design of their programs. For example, the journal article written about an internship program at Hostos Community College gave an overview of the implementation process and the value of the program to the students and the community; however, detail on the steps for implementation of the program was limited (Rosario et al.,

2013). This research project attempts to outline specific steps that successful programs have followed to implement, grow, and sustain their programs.

A qualitative approach to researching the process for developing and managing internship programs for a community college will allow for a deep understanding of a complex situation. Utilizing information from multiple websites of various community colleges will help recognize the multiple realities constructed by the many stakeholders. This information, along with data mined from public documents, should provide a full picture of the complex issues when developing internship programs at community colleges.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

The researcher relied on purposive sampling techniques to identify programs to study and that yield the necessary data to understand the program structure of successful internship programs: “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). The sample selected must be able to address the research questions driving this research, thus it must include community colleges that have successful internship programs. Since there are more robust internship programs at baccalaureate-granting institutions, this research also investigates program information at four-year schools.

OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION NEEDED

This research must include information from various data sources to get a complete picture of the essential elements of a successful internship program at a community college.

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), qualitative research projects require four areas of information: contextual, perceptual, demographic, and theoretical.

Contextual

The contextual information is essential to understand the nature of the program being studied and to give a backdrop for understanding how that may impact findings (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). The researcher gathered contextual data to describe how programs fit into the community college academically. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) also recommend that there be a review of information about “the organization’s history, vision, objectives, products or services, operating principles, and business strategy” (p. 149). Contextual information includes the program details, such as whether or not it is a credit-bearing, whether on-site supervision is required and who bears that responsibility, whether there is a classroom component to the program, how businesses are recruited, and the level of guidance provided to business participants.

Perceptual

This research includes information about the perception of the internship program. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), perceptual information can be a critical piece for qualitative research by understanding attitude shifts, decision influencing experiences, and evaluative differences from various stakeholders. Perceptual information was gathered through the review of websites, social media, and interviews with community college employees involved with the programs.

Demographic

The research includes information about regional demographics including population density, employment statistics, and educational status. These data help give a full economic outlook picture of the region being described. The demographic information also includes the number of students participating in the program as well as the number and make-up of the participating employers. The researcher requested data regarding the academic majors or interests of students participating in the internship program for analysis. Information regarding the efficacy of the program was requested including post-participation employment, salaries, and survey information if that was available.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework sets the stage for how a researcher approaches the problem or the purpose of their study: “The theoretical framework is derived from the orientation or stance that you bring to your study, and every study has one” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 85).

According to Krumboltz,

The purpose of theory is to help us understand a complex domain so that we can take more useful and intelligent actions. A theory enables us to step back from the nitty gritty details and see the big picture. A good theory is a simplified representation of reality, identifying relationships among the most crucial characteristics and ignoring the rest. (Krumboltz as cited in Matthews, 2017, p. 322)

There are three theoretical lenses through which this topic is studied: experiential learning, workforce development, and career development. These lenses focus the research on the structure of successful internship programs and help to understand the structure through quality pedagogical practices. The lenses also help frame how the internship programs can support a student’s academic experience and career outcome.

Experiential learning has been a part of education and workplace training since the times of ancient Greece (Stonehouse et al., 2011). Although experiential learning has existed for centuries, Dewey is credited with bringing the theory to modern times according to Smith et al. (2011). Dewey (1938) posited that students learn best when they are allowed to be active participants in the learning process, rather than relying on rote learning and recitation of facts. Smith et al. (2011) posit that theorists since the time of Dewey have used his research to advance or critique experiential learning theory.

Workforce development theory started to emerge in the 1980s as the possibility of full employment was being realized (Leggett, 2013). Businesses began to look at ways to develop employees from an internal training perspective and by looking at hiring practices for “soft skills,” such as personality fit and social skills, in addition to technical skills required to complete their tasks and duties (Leggett, 2013). Workforce development theory has also been utilized to understand issues of re-training unemployed individuals and establishing programs to develop work skills in underserved populations (Klotz, Billett, & Winther, 2014). Utilizing this lens informs this study on effective practices for designing and implementing successful programs. Workforce development theory helps to understand the business perspective and ensure that those needs are being addressed through program design so that students are put in the best position for success.

Career development theory helps to inform this study by understanding what influences a person’s decision to choose a particular career. Issues of personality, career awareness, self-efficacy, and vocational identity are the foundation of career decisions. Understanding these various facets of the career decision process is vital for this study in evaluating which factors may drive or hinder student participation in internship programs.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This list of research design steps summarizes the process that was used to carry out this research. A more thorough description will be found following this list.

1. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with internship program coordinators from community colleges and four-year institutions that have internship programs.
2. A website review will be conducted for the programs where the internship program coordinators were interviewed to analyze the information available to employers and marketing tactics.
3. An analysis of websites from three community colleges that have internship programs, including any participation data, publicly available documents, and social media, will be conducted.
4. Interview data will be transcribed and analyzed.
5. Demographic data will be gathered on the institution, to include regional industry, economic data, and school size to provide context for the transferability of the findings.

Literature Review

A literature review is a vital part of a research project and provides context for the topic. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the existing literature “integrates, synthesizes, and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic” (p. 95). The challenge for this topic is the dearth of available literature on internship programs in community colleges. A literature review of current and historical perspectives on experiential learning theory is on-going for this project and centers on experiential learning as a high impact practice, workforce development theory, and career development theory. The focus of the literature review, found in Chapter 2, is to understand how successful internship programs might be structured.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Interviews

Interviews with the internship program coordinators was one source of data for this study (see Appendix A for informed consent). A semi-structured, conversational interview method was utilized, with interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes. A semi-structured interview consists of a combination of open-ended and closed questions that allows the researcher to make adjustments to the sequence of questions to gain a full understanding of the respondent's viewpoint of the issues being considered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Yin (2016) defines this style of interviewing as "conversational" and points to the opportunity for two-way conversations, where both the researcher and the respondent can ask clarifying questions, resulting in a much deeper understanding of the respondent's views on the issues. Yin (2016) offers these suggestions for conducting compelling conversational interviews:

- Allow the respondent to speak more than the researcher using active listening techniques. Have follow-up questions prepared to encourage full, detailed responses.
- Begin by asking a broad question that sets the stage, such as "What are your responsibilities in career services?"
- Avoid being directive in questioning and let the respondent share details.
- Guard against personal bias and judgment in the tone of voice, body language, and questions.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that devil's advocate and hypothetical questions allow a researcher to get a deeper understanding of a respondent's feelings and opinions about an issue. This type of questioning may be very valuable when topics of conflict arise during conversations about interdepartmental cooperation within the community college being studied.

Website Review

The researcher reviewed the websites of community colleges throughout the United States and identified schools that indicate that they have an active internship program. The research to develop a best practice guide for developing an internship program included information found on community college websites. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identify online resources, such as website documents, as a “ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (p. 162). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posit that researchers need to be vigilant when using online sources to guard against bias and ensure the information is authentic and accurate: “Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 189).

PROTOCOL

A defined protocol can help guide a researcher’s process and establish which data will be gathered (Yin, 2016). The protocol is developed for the researcher to guide the study’s approach from a broad perspective and influence what questions to ask and what literature is reviewed (Yin, 2016). This protocol is designed to inform the researcher on creating a useful interview guide, identifying appropriate subjects to interview, and collecting valuable data from documents. A complete protocol for this study is included in Appendix B and includes questions related to the initiation of the program, program structure, marketing, and program costs.

METHOD FOR DATA ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Data management and analysis are done simultaneously for qualitative research because the process continues to develop while the topic is being investigated: “The researcher usually

does not know ahead of time every person who might be interviewed, all the questions that might be asked, or where to look next unless data are analyzed as they are being collected” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 195).

The researcher investigated internship programs at community colleges and four-year institutions. The researcher reviewed websites, interviewed individuals from community colleges that have internship programs, and reviewed demographic data to understand program structure, implementation, and logistics to develop best practice guidelines for community colleges.

Yin (2016) provides a useful model to follow when analyzing data. The graphic below depicts his five phases of data analysis: compile data, disassemble data, reassemble data, interpret data, and conclude.

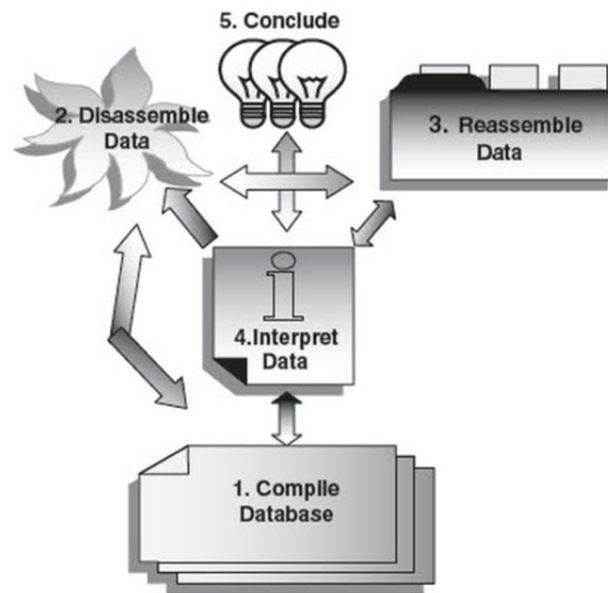


Figure 3: Five Phases of Analysis and Their Interactions (Yin, 2016, p. 186)

Phase 1: Compile Database

The first step of building a database is the process of understanding what information has been gathered, such as interviews, documents, field notes, and transcripts (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) recommends that each data type be put into similar formats. The researcher typed handwritten field notes and had audio recordings of interviews transcribed and put into Word documents. This process took bits and pieces of gathered information and placed the information in an organized system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The process allowed the researcher to become familiarized again with the data. This researcher utilized Endnote to assist with managing the literature review and kept transcribed notes in Word documents saved to an external drive.

Phase 2: Disassembling Database

Determining what pieces of information fall into which category was determined through the process of coding. During the coding process, each piece of collected data is combed through and given “*some sort of short-hand designation ...so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces*” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 199). One source can provide information in multiple categories. For example, when speaking with the person responsible for managing an internship program, the interview may contain information relating to the organizational process, faculty buy-in and participation, and institutional support. Thomas (2016) recommends three levels of coding to gain a deeper understanding of the data and how it relates to other data that has been collected. This researcher looked for themes related to program design, faculty engagement, student participation, institutional support, feelings about the program, and business community buy-in.

Phase 3: Reassembling Database

The next step in the analysis process is to identify “segments in your data set that are responsive to your research questions” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203), and as similarities and themes start to develop, formulate categories. Categories for the researcher began as students, internship program structure, and faculty influences. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the categories may shift as the researcher reviews the collected data. During this phase, the researcher also looked for patterns and started to move toward identifying theoretical concepts (Yin, 2016). Thomas (2016) recommends creating cognitive maps to aid the researcher in identifying themes. For example, interviews can be mapped, allowing the researcher to see how the interview progressed according to the research themes. Yin (2016) suggests utilizing matrices to enter coded information. These matrices “can start to become the basis for interpreting and then composing the narrative for your entire study” (Yin, 2016, p. 209). The matrices, for example, can organize information according to a timeline or can sort literature review information by multiple themes. Both methods, mapping interviews and creating matrices to catalog written information, were utilized for this researcher’s analytic process when categorizing data collected during the study of internship programs at community colleges.

Phase 4: Data Interpretation

Qualitative analysis is “*inductive and comparative*” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 201). It is not a straight line; instead, the process is responsive to the on-going research, making adjustments along the way to understand the significance of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This research attempted to understand the qualities of a successful internship program through an internet search of internship programs at community colleges, interviews with community college employees, current literature review, public document review, and field notes. The

challenge, according to Yin (2016), is that the data guides the research, and the researcher “must defend the logic and validity of the entire operation” (p. 189).

Yin (2016) identifies five elements of comprehensive interpretation:

1. *Completeness* (Does your interpretation have a beginning, middle, and end?)
2. *Fairness* (Given your interpretive stance, would others with the same stance arrive at the same interpretation?)
3. *Empirical accuracy* (Does your interpretation fairly represent your data?)
4. *Value-added* (Is the interpretation new, or is it mainly a repetition of your topic’s literature?)
5. *Credibility* (Independent of its creativity, how would the most esteemed peers in your field critique or accept your interpretation? (p. 221)

To meet these criteria, Yin (2016) identifies three modes for interpreting data: description, description plus a call for action, and explanation. The researcher utilized the description approach. Thomas (2016) writes that researchers need to ensure that the topic is viewed from several vantage points, referred to as triangulation, to add to the credibility of the study. The purpose of this research is to understand the qualities present in a successful internship program; therefore, having a thorough, detailed understanding of a program from multiple viewpoints was necessary. Yin’s guidelines helped ensure that information gathered from multiple sources and viewpoints was represented in the research process.

Phase 5: Conclude

Yin’s (2016) final phase in the data analysis process is to conclude from the data that has been collected. This phase is to help the reader gain insight from the information and learn the lessons divined from the research. The intent of this research is to draw on the experiences of successful programs so that guidelines can be created for community colleges to implement an internship program.

Summary of Analysis

Yin's five-phase analytical framework provides a roadmap for managing and analyzing data. However, the process evolved during the collection and evaluation process. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "the researcher does not know what will be discovered, what or whom to concentrate on, or what the final analysis will be like" (p. 197). Therefore, this researcher practiced coding documents and reviewing them regularly, being watchful for clues and patterns. Necessary, too, is being mindful of narrowing the focus of the research to information that identifies qualities of successful internship programs at community colleges.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical research calls for researchers to examine data fairly, protect human subjects, and practice high standards of research integrity (Yin, 2016). Massive amounts of data are available, and a research project has limited space available; therefore, a researcher must ensure that each data point receives a fair evaluation. According to Yin (2016), a researcher must decide on a research process that defines when and what data could get excluded and commit to following that process. A researcher must protect human subjects. Since this research does not involve human subjects, IRB approval was not required.

Strict requirements regarding the safekeeping of research materials and the length of time that information was followed. Research for this project was safely stored on an encrypted external hard drive. Confidential data was stored in the researcher's office in a locked file cabinet. The material will be stored for the required three years. Research integrity requires that the researcher is transparent in their process, open about the limitations of their research, clear about reflexivity issues, and above all else, truthful (Yin, 2016).

ISSUES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Qualitative research is an expansive field of research that employs a variety of research methods and styles to help understand the meanings of events and social constructs in peoples' lives (Yin, 2016). While it is different from quantitative research, which provides statistical information about occurrences which can be replicated and proven or disproven, qualitative researchers must adhere to standards to ensure that their research can stand up to rigorous review. The researcher conducted a qualitative research project seeking to understand the qualities of successful internship programs where students can attend the same core academic course and participate in an internship beneficial to their field of interest. Qualitative researchers must follow guidelines to safeguard the quality, validity, trustworthiness, and ethics of their project

Quality

Quality is a vital component of qualitative research, which must be considered proactively. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "What makes experimental studies scientific or rigorous or trustworthy is the researcher's careful design of the study" (p. 238).

Yin (2016) refers to qualitative research as a "craft" and lays out three objectives that need to be satisfied during the design and implementation of a quality research project. Transparency, the first objective, ensures that others who may want to examine the data and processes can review the information and understand how it was collected and synthesized (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) refers to the second objective as "methodic-ness." Methodic-ness affirms that there is an identifiable methodical research process and procedures, yet allows enough flexibility to allow discovery (Yin, 2016). Last, Yin (2016) identifies "adherence to evidence" as the third

objective, which requires the researcher to analyze collected data from multiple perspectives and test it for consistency from numerous sources, when possible.

To ensure that the design for the study of internship programs at community colleges meets quality and rigor standards, this researcher followed the five research process steps identified by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and provided thorough documentation:

- Identifying appropriate research design;
- Utilizing effective data collection methods;
- Applying appropriate analysis techniques;
- Interpreting findings to reach plausible findings; and
- Drawing logical conclusions and implications based on data obtained.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), if a researcher would like to “have an effect on either the practice or the theory of a field, research studies must be rigorously conducted; they need to present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, practitioners, and other researchers” (p. 238).

Validity

Triangulation of data, which helps to substantiate its validity, can take many forms including: using data from multiple sources, utilizing multiple methods of data collection, and having more than one investigator (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This researcher, through a thorough literature review, the inclusion of the information on multiple internship programs, and analyzing data from secondary sources met the standard of triangulation on this project.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend other strategies to ensure validity, such as respondent validation and acknowledging reflexivity. Reflexivity, as defined by Yin (2016), is “the dynamic interplay whereby participants (i.e., those being studied) may be influenced by the

presence and actions of the researcher, and conversely the influence on the researcher's thinking and observations resulting from the presence and actions of the participants" (p. 339). The researcher has experience in the field of career services, workforce development, and meeting with representatives from local businesses who expressed frustration with not being able to connect with students for internships. This experience can be both a benefit and a hindrance to this project. Therefore, reflexivity could come into play in this study. An interview subject may feel a need to inflate numbers to please the researcher or to make their program look good. Additionally, the researcher used data from secondary sources to confirm information gathered in interviews to the extent that is possible. The use of respondent validation, checking back with participants as the findings are emerging to see if the information rings true (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), can help keep reflexivity in check.

Trustworthiness

The challenge of qualitative research is that the purpose is to understand a social phenomenon from the participant's view at a moment in time, which excludes the ability to replicate the study, a standard for quantitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research, then, needs to use different tools to prove trustworthiness. One of the keys for trustworthiness lies in the researcher's transparency. According to Yin (2016), transparency is the first objective of doing original qualitative research by describing and documenting "qualitative research procedures so that other people can review and understand them...and be available for inspection" (p. 13). The researcher created an audit trail, which consisted of a research journal kept to record information about the research process, the researcher's decisions on issues that arise during the research, and details on the analysis process, all recorded in real time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Trustworthiness can also be proven through thoughtful design

of the project and the use of reliable, respected experts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A researcher must “be concerned with demonstrating the **authenticity**” of their work (Yin, 2016, p. 86). This researcher developed a protocol and kept a research journal to plan for the process and document the process as it occurs.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A significant limitation of this research is the lack of internship programs at community colleges to study. This research relied on components of internship programs at community colleges and programs at four-year institutions to create an implementation guide. Another limitation of this study was conducting most of the interviews by phone rather than in-person. The researcher was able to observe the internship program manager for nonverbal cues.

SUMMARY

Effective qualitative research can help gain an understanding of real-world experiences, including peoples’ views and perspectives, and the context in which those occur. Understanding how some community colleges and universities have implemented internship programs is a topic well suited for this type of inquiry. By following a systematic approach with transparency, the researcher hopes to add to the body of academic knowledge on this subject.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS-PROGRAM STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify structural elements of successful internship programs and to use that data to develop an internship implementation guide. As the review of the literature in Chapter 2 indicates, internships have been proven to be helpful to students, higher education institutions, and to the regional workforce.

Chapter 4 will concentrate on the essential structures and processes of successful, sustainable, and pedagogically sound internship programs at two- and four-year colleges. Internship program managers from five higher-education institutions were interviewed to answer questions aimed at understanding the structure of the internship programs at their college. Information was gathered through interviews with individuals who managed internship programs at two- and four-year institutions and through publicly available information on their colleges' websites. Additionally, an Internet search was conducted, and three programs were evaluated and analyzed. Information reviewed included the community colleges' websites, social media sites, course catalogs, and publicly available program documents.

Using the data gathered in the interviews and the Internet review, the researcher sought to answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1:

1. How are internship programs structured at two-year and four-year institutions?
2. From experiential learning pedagogy, what are the vital curriculum design considerations?
3. From a career development perspective, what are the critical curriculum design considerations?
4. How can internship programs be scaled up to involve more students?

The information gathered from the research will be divided into two chapters. Chapter 4 will be focused on answering the question of who should be involved in the planning process and what primary factors should be considered when implementing a program (research questions 1-3). Chapter 5 will focus on the elements of effective planning and scaling up processes (research question 4). Lessons gleaned from interviews and a review of internet documents and research on effective scaling up operations were used to develop a guidebook that community colleges can use as a resource to create a sustainable internship program.

RESEARCH

Four internship program managers (IPM) from five colleges were asked 16 questions related to the structure of their programs. One participant held the role of IPM at two different schools, SCC and MPC, and responded to questions for both schools (see Table 1).

Table 1: Research Subjects-Interviews

SCHOOL PSEUDONYM	ABBREVIATION	STUDENT POPULATION	PROGRAM INCEPTION
Suburban Community College	SCC	15,000	2011 (re-branded program as Internship from co-op program)
Medium-Sized Community College	MCC	3,500	Unsure
Eastern Private College	EPC	2,600	1988
Suburban Private College	SPC	2,800	2014
Midwest Private College	MPC	1,500	Approximately 2000

Schools reviewed for the internet review of internship programs for publicly available information are shown in Table 2. Information gathered from these institutions was primarily

found on their websites. The exception was NCC. Their internship program was featured in a two-part article that was posted on National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) website.

Table 2: Research Subjects-Internet Review

COLLEGE	LOCATION	ENROLLMENT	2- OR 4-YEAR	WEBSITE
Northampton Community College (NCC)	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	35,000	Community college	www.northampton.edu/
College of Lake County (CLC)	Grayslake, Illinois	23,400	Community college	www.clcillinois.edu
Bellevue College	Bellevue, Washington	32,000 +	Public, open-access, community-based, primarily associate degree-granting four-year institution	www.bellevuecollege.edu/

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING?

Planning a successful internship program requires input from several internal and external stakeholders. Internal partners come from all levels of the college and can be instrumental in the success of the program. Each of the departments has a role that can provide support with developing an internship program and sustaining it over time. Failure to develop an internal structure can slow a program's growth or even doom its success. External partners are central to the development and growth of a program and include the local business community and grantors that may provide funding for the program. Employers must be willing to host interns and provide valuable feedback to the program managers to ensure that the program is meeting their needs. Grantors can provide much-needed funding to develop and sustain a program. Developing and maintaining the internal and external partnerships will aid in the long-term success of an internship program.

INTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Faculty and administration are integral for developing a successful internship program. Visible support from the administration can go a long way to build the internal structures required for a scalable, innovative program (Asera, Pleasants McDonnell, Soricone, Anderson, & Endel, 2013). Support at the top is important because the implementation of a robust internship program will impact the complex web of structures and departments that make up colleges. According to Dreher (2014), each educational institution has formal structures and informal policies that dictate how innovation will be accepted and whom to include in the planning process. It is vital to be aware of how the formal and informal structures operate at an institution to be sure that the formal and informal leaders are involved in the planning process. Internship programs will require the support of internal entities such as curriculum committees, academic department leaders, the registrar's office, the financial aid department, admissions, institutional development, and public relations (Rubin, 2014). Intentional, regular communication is a crucial step to keep all parties informed of progress and changes.

The researcher asked each IPM if they could pinpoint an internal champion who was essential to the implementation or on-going success of their internship program. Four IPMs indicated that support for the development and expansion of their program came from the highest levels of the organization. MCC's IPM identified a senior vice president (SVP) of the college as the driving force for developing and implementing the internship program. The SVP came to MCC with a strong background in experiential learning, and their focus was on formalizing and centralizing the college's internship program. EPC's internship program, in existence since 1988, was supported by the college president's office as a way to connect academic experience with the workforce. The academic deans also supported EPC's program. SCC transformed their program in 2011 with the support of their college president. While EPC and MCC had process

goals that drove the implementation of an internship program, SCC's goal was outcome-focused. SCC's president wanted identifiable and measurable metrics for job placement in the career services department and the career and technical programs.

Faculty acceptance can be critical to the success of an internship program (Inkster & Ross, 1995, & Rubin, 2014). Key faculty members need to be part of the planning process to ensure that the internship program aligns with their vision of their program and their expectations of student learning outcomes (Rubin, 2014). Two IPMs indicated that the role of faculty was a primary driver for the development and growth of their program. The internship programs at SPC and SCC grew out of faculty interest in providing students with internship opportunities. The faculty brought their interest to their respective deans, and from there, the internship programs received institutional support. SCC's IPM reported that faculty were very interested in their students having the opportunity to participate in internships. Concurrently, the college president was openly discussing accountability metrics for job placement. As the faculty support and accountability measures converged, deans began to become more involved.

Interdepartmental partnerships are essential for the success of an internship program. Regardless of the structure of the program, career services and academic departments will need to work collaboratively to create effective program processes. As part of the process, planners will need to align and assign responsibilities and duties and create written documents that guide and support all participants. SCC's program planners developed robust processes and had a clear delineation of responsibility, i.e., career services taught a required prerequisite career development course. They assisted students in identifying internship opportunities, and faculty helped students with the learning contract, assigned a grade for the work experience, and

completed the site visit. The IPM for SCC's internship program reports that their strong internal relationships are a significant reason that the program runs smoothly.

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

A successful internship program depends on strong external partnerships. External partnerships include the regional business community, alumni, and grantors who provide funding for internships. Each IPM reported that strong relationships with organizations outside the college were valuable to the success of the program.

ALUMNI

Each of the IPMs from the four-year schools reported strong relationships with alumni or affinity groups. SPC leveraged affinity groups, such as fraternities and sororities, to identify internship opportunities for students. According to SPC's IPM, "The alumni network is just a huge, huge deal here. Not only for money, but for connections. And because there's Greek life here; there are sororities and fraternities that people join specifically to get a job later on." The IPM who worked at a two-year and a four-year school noted the significant difference between the approach of the institutions toward alumni. According to SCC's IPM, "We really didn't pay attention to our alums, unless they were famous, and we needed them for a keynote speaker for something. But that was the only time you ever found out who was an alum." SCC's IPM felt that failing to engage alumni was a missed opportunity at community colleges.

EPC also utilized their alumni connections for career development events and internships. According to EPC's IPM:

We had events like Pizza with Professionals, which was held over lunch, from 12:00 to 1:00. Usually alumni...would come in and they would make presentations to the students. "Here's what our company does. This is how I got into this field. Here are some things,

you know, dos and don'ts. By the way, we are offering an internship for next semester if anyone's interested."

EPC also used their alumni connections to organize two- to three-day trips to visit alumni at various locations to give students a broader view of job and internship possibilities.

Alumni play a large part in business relationships at SPC, but not solely through formal channels. Many of the faculty members keep email lists of their former students, and they are willing to use their networks to make business connections. EPC, which is affiliated with a religious organization, utilizes their religious connections to expand their reach and identify other opportunities.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Managing business relationships can be a challenge in a community college environment with limited resources and competing priorities. Tudor and Mendez (2014) found that intentional outreach to local businesses improves their connection to the institution, which positively impacts student hiring and internship opportunities. The focus of relationship building should be on creating mutually beneficial relationships where businesses are fully engaged with an institution (Tudor & Mendez, 2014). Community colleges have several connection points that could be valuable to local businesses, such as career services, small business development centers, customized training, education foundations for philanthropic pursuits, and advisory board opportunities. As an example, when SPC's IPM creates a positive internship connection with an alum, she recognizes the benefits of connecting that alum on multiple fronts. She contacts the development department and the alumni office to alert them of her engagement with the alum to help develop a deeper connection.

METHODS FOR DEVELOPING CONNECTIONS

Each of the IPMs reported that their programs had strong ties to local businesses, regional economic development entities, and area chambers of commerce. The methods for business engagement at the five institutions, however, varied significantly.

MCC has the most laissez-faire approach. They take advantage of meeting with employers when they are already on campus for the annual job fair, semiannual advisory committee meetings, and the semiannual open houses. According to the IPM, they have limited resources, and they have more businesses who have expressed interest in interns than they have grant funds to support the internships. The IPM indicated that they would like to do more on-site visits, but their lack of resources prevents that type of engagement at this time.

SCC reports strong ties to the business community. The director of career services manages all of the relationships. The director attends all meetings with the local chambers of commerce, the regional economic development entities, and partners with the workforce development board. The director also does site visits and meets with companies on campus.

The IPMs at the remaining three schools, EPC, SPC, and MPC, manage their business relationships in collaboration with their academic program partners and other business-facing entities at their colleges. The level of cooperation varies by the academic department. Some academic areas are better than others at keeping the internship program aware of contacts with businesses. SPC reported that some academic partners would invite her to site visits, others will let them know after the fact, and others will forget to share the information altogether. Luckily, according to SPC's IPM, the majority fall into the first category.

NCC articulated their approach to business outreach in a two-article series that was posted on the NACE website. The articles written by Kenyatta (2017b), the manager credited

with developing the program, identifies eight critical success factors for building strong business relationships:

- Be professional yet flexible. Be sure that the internship program has structure and organization.
- Educate employers. Provide a written guide for them to develop their internship program and include institutional expectations.
- Conduct a facility tour. Visit the site before interns are assigned. This is a good relationship builder and shows your commitment to understanding their business.
- Conduct a site visit during placement to reinforce the institutional commitment to the internship program and appreciation for their participation.
- Engage employers. Offer employers the opportunity to participate in more campus activities-serve on advisory boards, attend job fairs, and career readiness events.
- Communicate regularly. Do consistent check-ins with the site placement supervisor.
- Recognize participation. Spotlight internship placements on the college's website.
- Show appreciation. Host your internship companies on campus for a breakfast or luncheon.
- Present employers with branded merchandise, plaque, or certificate.

Despite a multitude of innovative technology available in higher education, relationships are best developed in the old-fashioned way by systematically connecting with businesses and nurturing those relationships consistently, according to Kenyatta (2017b).

GRANTORS

Grantors can also be external partners for an internship program. Grants can be used to fund all or part of a department's costs for internships and to help internship sites with their costs of hosting interns. Grants can be applied for through career services or the college's development office. All of MCC internships are supported through a state grant. The grant reimburses the internship host up to 50% of the intern's wages. Private grants fully support SPC's program. According to SPC's IPM, their school's internship program was funded through a small private

grant for internships. Their success with growing their internship program caught the eye of an alumnus, which led to a multimillion-dollar donation for the express purpose of expanding career services and their internship program.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE PLANNED?

A successful internship program can take on many looks and involve many departments. Developing an internship program or expanding an existing one requires that colleges meet the needs of their specific institution while ensuring the use of sound pedagogical practices. Critical structural issues must be decided early in the planning process. Divine, Miller, Wilson, and Linrud (2008) identify these critical ideological decisions that need to be made when developing an internship program:

- Will the program be required or elective?
- How should the placement process be managed? How much placement assistance should the school provide students?
- Will the program be graded or pass/fail?
- What should the work-hour requirements be? Which is more beneficial: full-time or part-time internships?

Inkster and Ross (1995) add to the list of crucial considerations by identifying these issues that must be addressed in program design: role of the internship coordinator/advisor; criteria for recognition and incentives for the coordinator/advisor's service; criteria for selection of sites; criteria for selection of interns; and criteria for assigning credit for an internship experience (p. 15). Resolving each of these criteria and considerations will help to develop a framework for a successful program. The team should include administrators, faculty, and career service representatives who can use these lists as talking points for the context in developing a structure for an internship program.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Internship programs can be structured in a variety of ways, and the reasons for those decisions vary by institution. Each of the programs studied for this research had a mostly centralized program. A centralized program has the majority of internship functions handled by one department. Internship functions can include developing a learning contract, site placement and supervision, and developing and grading assignments to assess the students. A cross-discipline plan is a centralized internship program that offers an academic course to students and includes students from multiple academic areas.

EPC's program is highly centralized, and the program was supervised by the provost's office until recently when it was moved to the student affairs division with a "dotted line" to the provost's office. The centralized office, staffed by nontenured faculty, is responsible for all facets of the internship. There had been an academic course that accompanied the internship work experience; however, it was discontinued, to the dismay of the IPM. Because experiential learning is a graduation requirement at EPC, their department serves about 20% of the student body before they graduate.

MPC's and SCC's internship programs are centralized and cross-discipline. SCC's internship students are required to take a one-credit academic course as a prerequisite or corequisite to their work experience. Students from all academic areas are included in the same course. MPC offers both elective and required internships. The IPM from the Experiential Learning Center manages only the elective internships. The MPC internship students meet as a cohort twice, at the beginning and at the end of the semester. MPC has some educational programs that require internships; those are fully managed within the academic department and were not the subject of review for this dissertation.

MCC has a combination of approaches to internships. The IPM manages only the internships that are supported by the state grant in the career services department, which are elective. Other internships, both required and elective, are managed by academic departments. The elective internships that are managed by career services do not include an academic course.

The IPM and faculty dually manage internships at SPC. Students who are interested in an internship begin with the IPM for site approval and processing paperwork for the registrar's office. Students are then referred to the appropriate faculty member to develop their learning objectives for the learning contract. Currently, no required course accompanies the internship; however, there is one in the planning phase that will be either a prerequisite or corequisite to the work experience.

There was a lot of discussion with each IPM regarding academic courses. Except for MCC, each IPM saw value in offering an academic course along with work experience. The IPM at EPC reminisced about the benefits of their cross-discipline internship course:

There was, in my thinking, ... a genius about meeting as a class from multiple disciplines. So, you had people who were in business, who were business majors working in a business. There were people who were in non-profit organizations. There were people in government agencies. I mean, I can still recall classes where one of our human services, like a psychology major, would say, "Well, this is what happened this week...." Of course, they won't go into detail. There is no revealing of identities or anything, but they would say, you know, "We had to deal with an individual who was belligerent and took a swipe at me and..." Other students in the class were like, "You're kidding me!"

So, they heard from each other, and then we'd have students who were in the business side and others on the non-profit side and we'd say to the business students, "Well, what's your organization doing to support non-profits?" And to the non-profits, you know, "What are you doing to provide value to businesses," and so on. And it was great to hear.... That mix was just wonderful, in my thinking, and if I could design the ideal program, that would be part of it again. Even if we only met like four times a semester or something like that.

The IPM at SPC, which is planning to introduce a classroom component to their internship program, feels that the course will bring some much-needed standardization to the

internship experience. The IPM at MCC did not see a need for an internship course to accompany the work experience. According to the IPM, students were getting hired, and many of their students were already working.

There is research that supports the benefits of an academic course that accompanies a work experience for the student as well as the institution. The course can include career development topics and soft-skill development. It can be offered as a prerequisite or corequisite to the actual work experience, such as SCC's one-credit offering. According to Hergert (2009), business students reported that they felt they benefitted more when they participated in an internship that was part of a formal course rather than only unstructured work experience. Students who took advantage of a career development course showed a decrease in "career indecision and increased their vocational identity and career decision-making self-efficacy" (Johnson, Nichols, Buboltz, & Riedesel, 2002, p. 11). In addition to gaining career development support, an internship course allows students a platform to develop soft-skills and to "share problems, frustrations, and successes to apply theory directly to their experience, and brain-storm problem-solving strategies in a supportive atmosphere" (Inkster & Ross, 1995, p. 68).

Not only are there significant benefits to the student when they participate in a structured group or class experience, the practice is also cost-effective for the institution as well (Hergert, 2009). Group information and orientation sessions and seminar sessions for interns to discuss work experiences can save time and money, as well as provide more profound learning experiences for students (Shumer & Rolloff, 2014).

ACADEMIC COURSE COMPONENTS

An academic internship course needs to be built on sound pedagogy: "Whether it's in liberal arts or professional studies programs, academic quality must be ensured if field-based

learning is a worthy component of the course or curriculum” (King, 2014, p. 106). According to Kolb (2015), successful educators “organize their educational activities in such a manner that they address all four learning modes-experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting” (p. 301).

Soft-skill development can be addressed in an academic internship course. NACE (2017) reports that employers have identified five skills necessary for career success: verbal communication; working in a team environment; decision making and problem solving; planning, organizing, and prioritizing workload; and gathering and processing information. NACE’s (2017) research showed that internships support the development of these essential soft skills.

Sweitzer and King’s (2014) internship handbook serves as a guidebook for students as they go through their experience. The book provides information on personal, professional, and civic development and includes lessons and tools for understanding and enhancing the soft skills identified in the NACE survey. Sweitzer and King (2014) also address issues of cultural competence, organizational structure, internal politics, and company culture. Their book combines soft-skill topics such as time management, self-awareness, and conflict resolution with traditional career services such as resume writing, networking, social media, and interviewing.

Personality profiles and interest inventories are mainstays of career services. They can be used by skilled career service professionals to advise students on job families that align with the results of the profiles and inventories. Students increase their vocational identity and decrease their career indecision when they take a career development course that includes topics such as career exploration, self-awareness, and career and life planning (Johnson et al., 2002). However, information derived from the assessments must be kept in proper perspective: “Skill assessments are often interpreted as aptitudes, which are virtually unchangeable predispositions to perform a

certain task at a defined level of proficiency” (Krumboltz, & Worthington, 1999, p. 315). One of the challenges of these types of assessments is that not all students have had exposure to all of the options they are asked to select (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999). Awareness of student experiences and exposure can further guide course development. Course developers can consider adding networking opportunities, company tours, and etiquette dinners. CLC offers an etiquette dinner to give students an opportunity to network with members of the business community in an upscale dining setting. EPC takes students to tour local and distant sites to expose them to a wide range of opportunities.

Reflection is a significant component of Kolb’s learning cycle, as discussed in the literature review. The practice of reflection is vital to learning because it “requires cognitive complexity and the capacity for critical thinking... deep reflection requires a rich and integrated cognitive structure to be able to adopt different perspectives and analytical strategies” (Kolb, 2015, p. 58). Ideally, interns are taking the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom and putting technical applications into practice, while learning to assimilate into the culture of their placement. Reflection exercises allow students to process their experiences, and, according to ELT, “when a concrete experience is enriched by reflection, given meaning by thinking, and transformed by action, the new experience created becomes richer, broader, and deeper” (Kolb, 2015, p. 301). Properly constructed reflection exercises can provide students with the opportunity to process their experiences and truly comprehend the depth of their capabilities.

CLC offers a one-credit corequisite course that covers a variety of career development and soft-skill development for their internship program. The course catalog description is as follows:

This course focuses on job readiness skills to prepare students to apply for an internship/job, improve in a current internship/job, or successfully work towards a

promotion. Topics covered include networking, resume writing, interviewing, social media tools, self-awareness, conflict resolution, and time management.

CLC's course aligns with the recommendations in NACE's research to provide essential soft skill development, as well as support the needs of the workforce and the student.

EPC does not offer an academic course, but they require weekly journals, which include reflection exercises, a mid-term paper, and a three- to four-page executive summary at the end of the semester. MPC does not offer an academic course; they will begin to require assignments that include reflection exercises as a part of their course grade in the Fall of 2019. Students will be required to complete weekly journals and submit a mid-term paper and a final paper.

LEARNING CONTRACT

The foundation of a good internship is an agreement between the campus staff and the site staff on the details of the work experience. This agreement comes in the form of a learning contract. The learning contract/agreement is the document that connects the work experience to the academic program by outlining learning objectives and allows for the assessment of outcomes: "The learning agreement should include clearly stated learning goals, resources and strategies for achieving each of those goals, evidence accepted as a demonstration of the accomplishment of the goals, and the means for validating and assessing that evidence" (Inkster & Ross, 1995, p. 35). The intern can develop their individualized learning agreement with guidance from the IPM or a member of the faculty. King (2014) also recommends that potential risks and safeguards be spelled out in the agreement or an addendum. This document clearly defines expectations for all stakeholders and can mitigate problems that arise during the internship.

The learning contract was a challenge for most of the schools in this study. The exception was EPC. EPC's IPMs were nontenured faculty and were responsible for developing the learning contracts with the students. In all other schools in the study, the learning contract was the responsibility of the supervising faculty. IPMs who shared responsibility for intern management reported significant inconsistencies across their programs. At SCC and SPC, some faculty were more engaged and more helpful in developing the learning contracts with the students. SPC's IPM reported frustration with some faculty:

But in terms of learning agreements and those things like that, nobody seems to have 100% ownership. Not to get down to the nitty gritty, but just to explain it, when a student says I have an internship, I want credit, I would tell them "Okay, here's what I need you to put together in a learning proposal" and I outline and give examples from our booklets. And I send them back to their faculty adviser and say they need to help guide you as to what you're going to have as your learning outcome, and, honestly, it's pretty weak. They come back with things like "I'll keep a journal every week," and send it to my faculty member.

SPC's IPM is hopeful that the process will become more consistent with the implementation of an academic course to accompany the work experience.

GRADING

One of the challenges of internship programs is determining how to assign grades to interns. According to King (2014), off-site supervisors must understand that the learning contract includes assignments and expectations beyond what happens at the internship site. Additionally, there is resistance on the part of faculty to allow nonfaculty to assess the learning of students (Inkster & Ross, 1995). If the learning contracts are inconsistent and do not clearly define learning outcomes, it becomes difficult to assess whether or not learning occurred.

EPC and MPC had the most seamless processes. EPC's IPM and other staff involved with the program are nontenured faculty. MPC's IPM is accountable for learning contracts and grading. The internships, however, were offered pass/fail so that the IPM can sidestep the issue.

The IPM at SCC reported that even among faculty there was no agreement regarding grading. Some faculty felt that internships were a good way for some students to improve their grade point average. The work experience, they feel, helped students who are better in the practical application of their knowledge than they are in the classroom. Other faculty felt the opposite. They felt that students needed to earn grades for an internship in the same way they needed to for an academic course. Even with the divergent points of view, it was rare that a student at SCC got less than an A for their internship course.

Each school requested supervisor feedback on the interns. No school allowed the on-site supervisor to assign a grade to the intern, although the site supervisor's feedback is supposed to be considered when determining the final grade.

INTERNSHIP SITE CONSIDERATIONS

Identifying criteria for appropriate internship sites needs to be considered during the planning phase (Inkster & Ross, 1995). Student interns need to be placed at safe locations where they are provided opportunities for challenging and relevant work experiences. For that to occur, host sites need to be vetted and prepared to host an intern. Gaining buy-in from all levels of an organization can ensure a positive internship experience (Szadvari, 2008). Support from the top level of a host site can make sure that the internship supervisor and other employees will have the extra time needed to manage the intern's activities properly.

Vetting an internship site is a shared responsibility at SPC. The IPM reviews the request and submits it to the dean for approval. In one instance, a student attempted to use a summer

bank teller job as an internship. The IPM's responsibility was limited to confirming that the learning objectives were developed in conjunction with the supervising faculty. Although she thought that the experience was weak, she did not have the authority to deny the request. She was required to submit the request to the dean. According to the IPM, "I think in the future, there's a lot of work to be done here at SPC, to make sure that all of those pieces are actually done in a legitimate kind of process-oriented way, that it's really held to a higher standard."

MPC uses midterm site visits, site supervisor evaluations, and student evaluations as part of their evaluation process for internship sites. The site visits allowed the IPM to see the physical space where students worked and meet the internship site supervisor. The site supervisor's and student's evaluations helped confirm that the activities aligned with the learning objectives.

HOSTING AN INTERN

It is incumbent upon the institution to prepare the host site for an intern. It cannot be assumed that host sites know how to prepare their workplace for an intern. Hosting an intern can disrupt the normal flow of activities and require site supervisors to add mentoring and teaching the intern to their list of regular responsibilities (Szadvari, 2008). Inkster & Ross (1995) highly recommend that colleges develop a training program for internship host sites. Training programs can take multiple forms, such as half- or full-day workshops, supervisor manual, and regular communication from the college.

Internship sites must recognize the role they play in the education of their intern, not just the role that they play for the organization. A robust and relevant learning contract provides the link between the student's academic goals and the intern's work assignments:

What distinguishes an intern from a volunteer is the deliberative form of learning that takes place. There must be a balance between learning and contributing and the student, the student's institution, and the internship placement site must share in the responsibility

to ensure that the balance is appropriate and that the learning is of sufficiently high quality to warrant the effort, which might include academic credit. (O'Neill, 2010, p. 6)

Student interns can contribute by being assigned a wide variety of duties, including individual tasks or as part of team projects. Student interns can be trained to carry out day-to-day tasks that prevent current staff from tackling long-range planning and projects that often get relegated to the back burner. Szadvari (2008) suggests that the learning curve can be a little bit longer for interns due to their lack of experience; however, that should be expected and recognized as part of the learning process. This reality should be included in host site training materials as a way to level expectations for intern supervisors.

Host site preparation varied between institutions involved in this study. EPC created a robust internship development guide and makes it available online for any institution to use. The guide includes recommendations for intern on-boarding procedures, legal issues related to interns, information for hosting international interns, a guide for developing work activities, and recommendations for supervising an intern. The guide also includes sample forms for supervisor and student evaluations. SPC utilizes EPC's guide.

SCC takes the most proactive approach for preparing host sites. SCC hosts a mandatory training seminar for first-time host sites. This session must be attended before placing an intern at their organization.

SCC and SPC provide host site applications on their website for employers. SCC, EPC, and SPC offer internship planning guides on their websites. MPC and MCC indicate that they offer internships on their websites, but neither institution provides instructions for employers on how to participate in their programs.

Although hosting an intern requires extra work and preplanning, it is essential to recognize that interns can have a positive impact on an organization (Inkster & Ross, 1995). Site supervisors report that hosting interns resulted in them having an “increased knowledge of developments in the field, renewed enthusiasm for their career or new awarenesses of career options, and increased creativity in their work” (Inkster & Ross, 1995, p. 13). Supervisors need to be prepared to provide regular constructive feedback as part of the internship experience. When the site supervisor is prepared for those responsibilities and has the support of the upper management and human resources, the experience for the host company and the student can be valuable.

Helping internship placement sites develop an effective plan will go a long way to ensuring that there is an appropriate infrastructure in place. This step can help a community college determine whether or not the site is a proper placement for a particular student or any student. Review of the company guidebook/workbook and comparing its alignment with the learning contract can help to ensure that both the student and the host site are adequately prepared.

PAID VS. UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

In 2018, federal guidelines were established to help companies determine whether or not the internship can be paid or unpaid (Easterly, 2018). The test, referred to as the “primary beneficiary test” is used to interpret who benefits more from the intern/host relationship, and the result determines whether the intern should get paid (Easterly, 2018). The primary beneficiary test does not include a rigid set of requirements, but a non-exhaustive list of factors to determine who is the primary beneficiary of the internship. The factors include:

- the extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation;
- the extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by an educational institution;
- the extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit;
- the extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar;
- the extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning;
- the extent to which the intern's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern; and
- the extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018, p. 1).

If it is determined that the employer primarily gains from the work done by the intern, then the internship must be paid (Easterly, 2018). Conversely, if the student principally gains from the experience, then the internship is deemed academic and can be unpaid (Easterly, 2018).

Several of the programs in the study offer support to students in getting paid in their internships. MCC's internship program is supported by a state grant that pays up to 50% of the student's wages up to \$8 for a maximum of 20 hours per week. SPC and EPC have internal grant funds to provide financial support to students who are in unpaid internships. SCC uses funds from charging employers a nominal amount for on-campus recruiting and job fairs to provide a stipend to students who are in unpaid internships.

MARKETING INTERNSHIPS

Developing a marketing plan for promoting the internship program and attracting students and businesses is critical. A professional, consistent, and branded message gives the

program “visibility and credibility, both in the department and in the community” (Inkster & Ross, 1985, p. 18).

Each school in the study approached marketing in different ways. EPC has the most comprehensive approach to promoting internships to its students. The IPM describes their approach to marketing:

Well, there is several ways. Handshake [career services management software] is one of them, so every week we would do an email blast to all students saying, “Here are the latest internship openings.” We have three bulletin boards, large bulletin boards, outside of our office. One was for jobs; one was for internships; and the other was for events. Different colors. The job’s board was all green background, the internship was all yellow background, and the events were all red. A red background. So those would be postings we put up from different organizations, and then we have a TV that’s outside of our office, so we’d have an ongoing column-point, revolving PowerPoint presentation that would highlight different events or different internships.

SCC has internship specific fairs to attract students. The internship fairs are held in addition to traditional job fairs. MCC markets its internship program at the beginning of a student’s college career by promoting internships in their First-Year Experience (FYE) course. SPC recently rebranded its career services and launched it in the fall of 2019. The launch, a multiday affair, included workshops and networking opportunities and featured alumni from across the nation. According to the IPM, there were 1,500 student touchpoints.

The goal of marketing to employers should not be limited to internships, but it should be to engage them with the college on multiple levels. A marketing plan should include social media in addition to traditional printed brochures and flyers. In addition to hiring interns, employers may be interested in job fairs, conducting campus interviews, speaking to classes or student clubs, participating in job preparation events, serving on advisory committees, and posting jobs to a job board.

In most of the schools studied, the IPM is responsible for employer engagement to identify internship host sites. However, SPC's IPM reports that students find most of their internship sites. For many reasons, SPC is in the process of changing its business outreach model. SPC is planning to transition employer outreach duties to career specialists. The career specialists are going to be assigned to specific academic areas and be responsible for business relationships that support those academic areas. Under this model, the goal is to have multiple people from the college responsible for employer outreach and not have the responsibility to fall to one person.

Each college utilized job fairs as a recruitment tool to attract more employers to internships. EPC has an unusual approach, which they call "Tailgating for Jobs." This is an informal networking opportunity for students and employers. According to EPC's IPM:

In the spring, we had Tailgating for Jobs, which was also jobs and internships. I started that three years ago. We just ended the third one this spring. Great success with that. Literally, to the employers we said, "Come out in your jeans and your polo shirts or t-shirts because the students are going to be dressed the same way." They would literally come in their trucks, their SUVs, their cars. They'd open up the back, and they'd recruit out of the back of their vehicle. We had freshly grilled hamburgers and hotdogs and chips and cookies and all of that. Then the students would come, and we'd make it kind of like a carnival atmosphere, and they would come and talk to the employers. So that worked out very well.

SCC utilized an annual employer breakfast to recognize engaged employers. Employers were identified as platinum, gold, silver, or bronze sponsors, as determined by their level of engagement with the college. SCC was also invited to the bi-annual program advisory committee meetings. The advisory committee meeting provided the IPM with a platform to meet with employers and explain all of the services offered by their department, including internships.

CLC's Career and Job Placement Center provides an excellent example of low-cost marketing through social media. CLC utilizes LinkedIn to announce internship and job fairs and

showcase its internship program. They post photographs of students wearing “Team Intern” t-shirts to announce their internship placements. CLC announced on LinkedIn that they placed 66 interns in the Fall 2018 semester. This type of marketing reaches other businesses, students, and alumni on LinkedIn, which can increase business and student participation. The t-shirts serve as a recruitment tool to attract other students.



Figure 4: LinkedIn post for College of Lake County’s internship program (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/careerandjobplacementcenter/detail/recent-activity/>)

CHALLENGES FOR INTERNSHIPS

There are barriers that students and colleges face regarding internships which need to be considered when designing an internship program. Students face economic and logistic challenges that can deter their participation. The majority of community college students work while attending school (Cohen et al., 2014). Internships are limited work assignments, and students are confronted with the choice of quitting their job for their internship or working an internship plus their job while attending school. Whether a student quits their job or tries to

juggle all three responsibilities, there can be a negative impact, including deciding against participating in an internship altogether.

Paying tuition for the associated credits for an internship can be a barrier. Many internships are elective and may not transfer to the student's destination four-year college. Community college students have to be concerned with whether or not the course credits transfer; the burden becomes more significant for the student. The task for the IPM becomes convincing a student to take a nonrequired course that may not transfer and asking them to quit their current job. While research shows these choices will ultimately pay off for a student, it is understandably difficult for a student to take that leap of faith. There are additional costs that are associated with completing an internship. Students will incur costs for work-appropriate clothing and transportation costs. These costs can create an insurmountable barrier for students and prevent their participation in an internship.

There are other impediments that community colleges may face in implementing an internship program. Adding more credits to a program can delay a student's graduation or create a barrier to completion. As discussed in Chapter 1, attainment of credentials can be used as a measure of institutional success, and there is a reluctance to add more credits or requirements that could impede student completion. Other challenges include managing course content and academic freedom issues regarding internship programs, such as implementing consistent policies across internship placements and grading.

The challenges are not unique to internships at community colleges. Four-year institutions have similar problems. IPMs from MPC and SPC said that some of their students cannot afford to pay the cost of tuition and fees for participating in internships. The summer semester, when students traditionally participate in internships at the highest rates, are the

slowest time in MPC's and SPC's internship office. Both MPC and SPC report single-digit participation in summer internships. When students do noncredit internships, there is no method to evaluate or assess learning. Additionally, there is no mechanism to support a student if the noncredit internship provides a weak work or learning experience or if a student finds themselves in an unsafe work environment.

There are examples of ways that two- and four-year schools address some of these challenges. EPC addresses the issue of summer credit internships by reducing tuition. EPC students pay the equivalent of a one-credit-hour for a three-credit-hour summer internship. In the 2018-2019 school year, 40% of EPC students had summer internships. Bellevue College offers tuition assistance for their credit internship course for students who demonstrate a financial need. These examples show how institutions can level the internship playing field and mitigate some of the challenges and barriers caused by extra costs related to participating in an internship program.

PROGRAM FUNDING

In an era where federal, state, and local funding is decreasing, adding a new program can be daunting: "Even though experiential education is increasingly viewed as a critical part of 'high impact' approaches to effective learning, most campuses have not yet incorporated its funding into the ongoing budgetary system of their campuses" (Shumer & Rolloff, 2014, p. 184). It is critical to have the agreement of internal stakeholders on the need and value of an internship program to ensure the successful launch of an internship program (Asera et al., 2013). As discussed briefly in the planning section of this chapter, a sustainable approach to funding should begin in the design and implementation phase of any new program and should include "putting

into place systems and funding structures that help sustain an innovation in the long term” (Asera et al., 2013, p. 3).

Program funding is critical to the success of any program in higher education. Shumer and Rolloff (2013) provide these suggestions for effectively generating revenue for experiential learning programs, including internships:

- Make the courses credit-bearing to ensure state allocations that are dependent upon the number of instructional hours.
- Provide academic credit to students. Requiring a course will increase enrollment and provide more value to the student.
- Ensure that the academic credit awarded for the course accurately reflects the hours required and the learning attained.
- Student learning should be documented and aligned with an academic area.
- Internships should be considered and run like a course so that budgets accurately reflect the time and costs of faculty involvement.
- Support services for internship programs should come from “hard money.”

These recommendations were designed for baccalaureate-granting institutions; however, they translate to the community college environment.

Credit-bearing internship courses allow students to utilize financial aid and have the potential for being eligible to transfer to a four-year institution, thus counting toward their baccalaureate degree.

All colleges in this study report that their program is funded by a combination of hard and soft money. MCC’s internship program, which places eight interns per year, only supports interns that are paid through a state grant and funds only cover students’ wages. The college supports the cost of employee wages to manage the program.

SCC also receives funding from the same state grant as MCC. SCC places approximately 125 students per year; the grant covers less than 10% of SCC interns. EPC’s internship program,

which serves about 240 students annually, is funded primarily by hard money. Students pay tuition for either a three- or four-credit-hour course. EPC utilizes the revenue from job fairs and tailgating events, which amounts to approximately \$17,000, to fund other experiential learning and career exploration opportunities for students that include field trips and networking events.

SPC's internship program relies primarily on grant dollars. The program began its upward trajectory when the college received a regional grant for internships. Before the grant, the number of students doing internships for credit was in the single digits annually. With the support of the regional grant, the college's internship program improved their participation. The increased participation attracted the attention of an alum who invested heavily in the college's career services department with an emphasis on internships. In the last three years and with the help of the regional grant, SPC averaged 80 student internships annually. SPC's IPM anticipates an increase in the number of students participating in internships as their career services department focuses on internships.

As evidenced by the schools in this study, external funding sources can be an effective way to support internship programs. Funding can be found from private sources as well as government-funded grants.

SUMMARY

An internship program can have a positive impact on the student, the community, and the college. The success of a program begins with having support at the top level of the administration (Shumer & Rolloff, 2014). The administration must allow an internship program to have an extended period to take hold and develop (Shumer, & Rolloff, 2014). It is also essential to create a comprehensive internship implementation strategy that will leverage

available grant funding and coordinate efforts with the college's development staff to take advantage of their expertise.

Chapter 5 will focus on implementing and scaling up an internship program.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS — SCALING UP

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges have limited resources and must take a thoughtful approach in developing an internship program that can grow, adapt, and sustain. This research relied on the recommendations from programs that were successfully scaled up. The goal of this research is to provide a guide for building an internship program with the capacity to provide quality work experiences to a large number of community college students.

EFFECTIVE PLANNING FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Program growth and sustainability happen through “scaling up” or “bringing a program to scale” and can be defined as “expansion, replication, and adaptation of programs to new areas or populations or the deepening of programs within an already-served area” (Major, 2011, p. 3). Whether developing a new internship program or expanding an existing one, “scaling often entails a mind shift — conceptualizing and working throughout an entire ecosystem...” (Major, 2011, p. 3). According to Asera et al. (2013), the concept of getting a program to scale is agreed upon by “educators, policymakers, funders, and indeed, anyone involved in education reform. The goal is clear, but the process is not” (Asera et al., 2013, p. 1).

The concept of scaling up can also have a negative connotation. Failed education reforms have led to frustration and discouragement about the possibility of making changes to the functions of education systems. Barriers to scaling up have been identified as “incentive” or “accountability” programs which do not always reward thoughtful program implementation,

selecting programs to replicate without consideration for differing socioeconomic conditions, and identifying appropriate leaders to design and implement a new program (Asera, et al., 2013; Elias, Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg, 2003; Elmore, 1996). These barriers can cause delays in implementing a program, or worse, program failure. Many of these issues should be addressed as part of the planning phase. According to Asera et al. (2013), “the groundwork for a successful scale-up effort takes place before the first student enrolls in a new program...The planning process is critical” (p. 11).

Asera et al. (2013) focused their research on the process of scaling programs at state and institution levels. The arc of scaling model, developed by Asera et al. (2013), shows the distinct phases of designing and implementing changes, the outward movement of the process, and the iterative nature of some of the activities as the program expands. This section of the dissertation will discuss each phase and focus on which internship program elements should be considered during each phase.

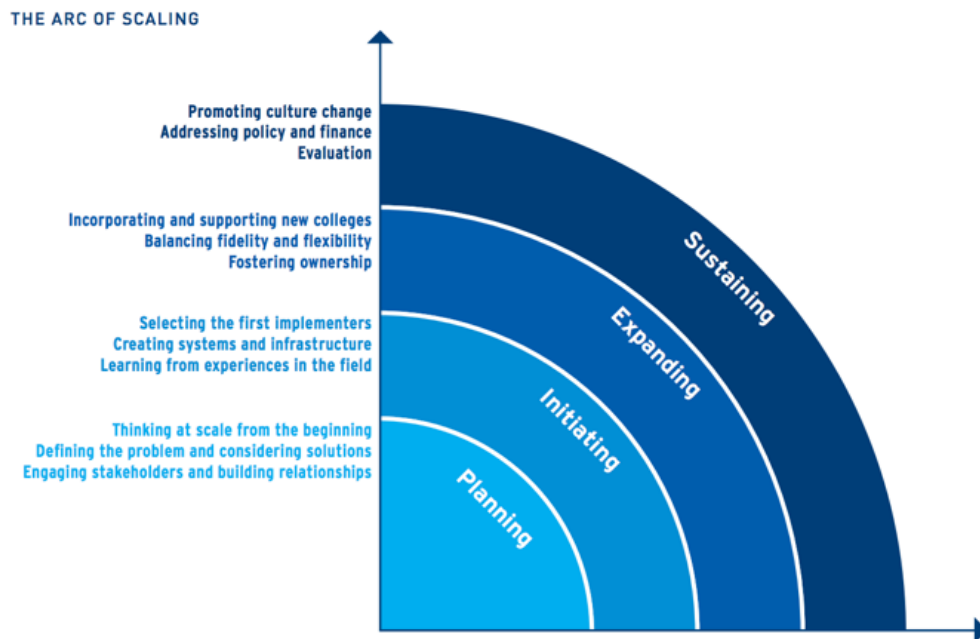


Figure 5: *The Arc of Scaling* (Asera et al., 2013, p. 10)

Planning Phase

The first phase in the Asera et al. (2013) model, planning, builds the critical foundation for the success of an internship program. The steps of this phase provide useful guidelines to an institution whether they are developing a new program or expanding or altering the structure of an existing program. The planning stage builds the foundation for systems and funding structures that sustain long-term success (Asera et al., 2013). Elias et al. (2003) stated “Front-end time is needed to build constituencies committed to the goals and process of change” (p. 312). Although detailed planning is the key to success, planners need to recognize that programs rarely happen as initially imagined, and that it is crucial to build in feedback loops to ensure that the program adapts from the lessons that are learned along the way (Asera et al., 2013; Kotter International, 2015; Kotter & Cohen, 2002;).

The planning phase, according to Asera et al. (2013), encompasses three vital steps:

1. Thinking at scale from the beginning;
2. Defining the problem and considering solutions; and
3. Engaging stakeholders and building relationships. (p. 11)

Each of these steps builds the foundation for a community college to establish and grow a robust internship program.

Beginning a program with an eye to scaling it up is an essential first step (Asera et al., 2013). Too often, new programs are grant-funded, small in scale, and that process leads to marginal change at a time when community colleges need large-scale reform (McClenney, 2013). Developing a program that can grow requires planners to view the implementation process from a systems perspective by identifying the departments and individuals who will be impacted by an internship program (Asera et al., 2013). This will help ensure that processes are identified and planned to be as efficient as possible. Leadership will be instrumental in the

planning process as they consider who will own which processes, who will be accountable for program elements, and how the program will be financed (Asera et al., 2013).

Building consensus on the need for internships at community colleges will be an essential second step: “For innovation to take root, it has to fill a recognized need and connect to the institution’s mission and ongoing work” (Asera et al., 2013, p. 14). For this step to be successful, it is vital to engage each stakeholder being impacted by the implementation of an internship program. It would be ideal to have access to an existing program whose effectiveness has been validated by data; however, those rarely exist, and leaders combine similar programs and apply knowledge of their college’s unique circumstances to implement a new innovative program (Asera et al., 2013). As with other innovations, leaders will likely need to use a combination of smaller scale internship programs and existing data on the need for and benefits of internship programs to develop a plan that fits the profiles of their students and the workforce needs of the area.

Faculty will play a vital role in bringing a program to scale. Including faculty representatives during the initial planning phase and sharing credible data that supports the need for an internship program can reduce initiative fatigue that can occur (Ross & Sheehan, 2014). Faculty can be instrumental in “identifying and validating problems, designing interventions, making the case to their peers for the innovation, and providing peer-to-peer professional development” (Asera et al., 2013, p. 18).

Inkster and Ross (1995) recommend that faculty and department administrators develop a policy statement which should include:

- the program’s philosophy and objectives,
- the responsibilities of the internship advisor,
- the eligibility requirements for entry into an internship,

- the procedure for securing an internship, and
- strategies for evaluation. (p. 15)

Following this strategy helps to increase the likelihood that there is a departmental consensus regarding the academic quality of the internship experience and provides credibility inside and outside the institution (Inkster and Ross, 1995).

The final step in the planning phase is engaging internal and external stakeholders (Asera et al., 2013). The importance of building relationships with internal stakeholders cannot be stressed enough: “Systems and colleges are made up of people, and relationships among the partners and participants often provide a background for conversations that lead to action” (Asera et al., 2013, p. 16). Having buy-in from the individuals who will be doing the work of developing internships and internship processes will be crucial to the success of the program.

The core of successful relationship building is “access, communication, respect, influence, and credibility”:

Access is perhaps the most simple and the most complicated element in assuring relationships, because knowledge is power, and lack of knowledge makes it difficult to do one’s job. It is vital for the program and its director to have formal or informal access to people ... so that all of them can support the operation of experiential programs. (Rubin, 2014, 175)

Establishing consistent open lines of communication will support relationship building during all phases of an internship program.

An instructive example of productive relationship building with internal stakeholders is the approach taken by NCC. NCC set aside a four-month planning and implementation phase before registering their first student (Kenyatta, 2017a). They began by outlining a vision and mission for the internship program (Kenyatta, 2017a). Establishing the mission and vision set the framework for how the work was going to get done and identified how success was going to be

measured. Once the mission and vision were set, NCC identified key contributors to be involved in the planning phase (Kenyatta, 2017a). Kenya (2017a) engaged the vice president of academic affairs, the vice president of student affairs, the director of career services, the director of online courses, and the school's legal counsel to ensure that the internship program aligned with the institution's vision and community engagement. She not only involved leaders from her institution, but she also sought guidance from internship programs at nearby schools (Kenyatta, 2017a).

According to Kenya (2017b), "success hinges on building effective relationships with students and employers and providing structure for both groups" (para. 1). NCC built a noncredit internship program that has placed over 125 students (Kenyatta, 2017b). NCC sought to build its program by providing a solid structure and building strong relationships with students. Kenya (2017b) identifies nine essential components that sustain NCC's internship program:

- Be available to meet with students face-to-face to assess career goals and ensure suitable placement.
- Be transparent and explain internship processes and set expectations.
- Be flexible when coaching students on resumes and interview prep before the internship.
- Create standardized documentation processes for interns, including internship agreement, professional code of conduct forms, and evaluations.
- Conduct site visits and regular email contact to assure interns that they have support if a conflict arises.
- Develop a capstone assignment, such as a reflection assignment or portfolio, to allow students to process their experience.
- Award a certificate as a tangible symbol of the intern's achievement. (NCC's internship program does not provide academic credit, and only students who complete all aspects of the program receive a certificate.)
- Develop a mechanism for recognition to showcase interns on the college's website. This provides acknowledgment to the current student, and it can serve to promote internships to other students and employers.

- Continue communication and follow-up with former student interns beyond their internship experience.

Kenyatta (2017b) felt that having these critical structures in place helped her to develop valuable relationships that supported the students and helped grow the internship program.

Kenyatta (2017b) recommends building and sustaining employer relationships, outlined in an earlier section, by focusing on connecting with businesses on an ongoing basis, providing engagement opportunities, and showing appreciation for their participation. These activities serve as a reminder that building employer relationships is never a completed task, and relationships require both formal and informal nurturing.

Initiating Phase

The second phase in Asera et al.'s (2013) model, initiating, is where the program details get fleshed out: "This is where the actual work of program development-refining and adapting the model-takes place" (Asera et al., 2013, p. 19). Asera et al. (2013) identify three main steps for this phase:

1. Selecting the first round of implementers;
2. Creating systems and infrastructure for data collection, communication, and peer learning; and
3. Learning from experiences in the field. (p. 19)

An internship program involves four levels of stakeholders that need to be engaged on an ongoing basis: administrators, faculty, students, and industry partners. Each stakeholder group has specific needs to be identified and met to ensure the long-term success of an internship program.

The first step in the initiating phase is identifying which academic program(s) will begin offering internships. The first program will act as a trailblazer to test policies and procedures, sometimes through trial and error, that will lead to establishing best practices (Asera et al., 2013). The academic program chosen to begin offering internships can be selected using a variety of criteria. Asera et al. (2013) suggest two ways that a program can be selected to pilot an innovation: competitive selection process, requiring an academic area to prove that they have the support of their staff and the infrastructure to implement the internship program, or self-selection, a program which has the willingness to participate. Other factors to consider are enrollment in the academic program and regional workforce demands.

Administrators play a vital role in the success of an internship program in the second step of the initiating phase, ensuring the necessary infrastructure to support the internship program (Asera et al., 2013). Asera et al. (2013) define infrastructure as the “framework that maintains the working rhythms of a program and provides consistency that helps keep implementers on course” (p. 20). Administrators can support an internship program by establishing processes that are crucial to the long-term success of a new program, such as: facilitating vital communication among critical stakeholders, guaranteeing appropriate data collection procedures are developed and adhered to, and ensuring the necessary information is disseminated (Asera et al., 2013). Rubin (2014) provides a comprehensive list of departments and their involvement in creating and sustaining an internship program:

- Those responsible for overall curricular concerns, such as the curriculum committee.
- Department chairs and deans, so that academic department matters, such as new courses and programs being planned, and instructional development and evaluations, can be identified and influenced.
- The registrar’s staff, because of all of the data and information they oversee, including how transcripts are shaped and made available.

- Career development and placement staff so that that experiential programs can be included in Major Days, Employment Fairs, student workshops, etc.
- Staff responsible for community service programs, such as Greek community activities, alternative spring breaks, residence halls, campus ministry, etc.
- Financial aid and student employment staff, so that Federal or state funds that might be used for internships or other experiential learning opportunities are not missed.
- Institutional planning and research staff and committees, so opportunities for new affiliations and organizational structures can be considered.
- Admissions staff, so that experiential learning can be used as a selling point for prospective students.
- Alumni affairs staff, so that alumni events can be used to increase possibilities for student participation in experiential learning.
- Public relations staff, for spreading the good news.
- Development staff, so that new funding sources can be sought and so the needs of experiential learning won't be ignored. (Rubin, 2014, p. 175)

Communication is vital to the success of any new program on campus, and Rubin's lengthy list highlights the valuable roles that many departments can contribute toward that success.

Another important consideration for administrators is selecting the right person to manage the internship program. This fundamental step can impact the long-term success of the program. It is essential to recognize that creating and implementing a new program is a different skillset than administering an existing program (Elias et al., 2003). According to Elias et al. (2003), the individual or group who develops a program needs to have an entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to build relationships. The program innovator needs to have the ability to build consensus and communicate the program's vision and goals to internal stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students, and external stakeholders, such as workforce partners and external funders (Elias et al., 2003).

Managing a program requires a different focus, thus a slightly different skillset (Elias et al., 2003). A program manager is charged with student and business recruitment, ongoing

communication with faculty and administration, and supporting staff who carry out the program. They must strike a balance between innovation and continuity: “Success seems to accompany a spirit of continuous improvement and reinvention without excessive divergence from what exists” (Elias et al., 2003 p. 314).

Whether the program innovator is the program manager, or the role is transferred to a new individual, the lessons learned, including the challenges encountered, must be transmitted to maintain institutional knowledge, sustain growth, and encourage innovation. It is vital that the administration adequately analyze the skills that are required for implementing and managing the internship program and hire for both skill sets.

The final step in this stage is learning from experiences in the field which provides the framework for ongoing process improvement: “Even with well-developed plans and models, turning theory into action is challenging” (Asera et al., 2013, p. 21). Not all potential outcomes can or should be planned for, but as situations arise, new policies or processes can be established.

Developing the necessary mechanisms to gather feedback from the collected data and ongoing communications mentioned is an important step. Adjustments may need to be made in the process of recruiting students or businesses. Programs may receive feedback that host companies are not adequately prepared to host an intern, requiring new program manuals or orientation sessions to be offered. Alternatively, program managers may note a wide fluctuation in site visit processes or student evaluation that needs to be addressed. A new program can experience any number of challenges and even setbacks but ensuring that the infrastructure is in place for feedback loops, programs can learn from their experiences and continue to grow and develop a sustainable program.

Expanding Phase

The next phase in Asera et al.'s (2103) model is expanding. Program expansion will be guided by the approaches identified in the planning phase and the lessons learned in the implementation stage (Asera et al., 2013). The activities in this phase include:

- Adding internships to more academic programs;
- Balancing flexibility with program conformity; and
- Building a sense of ownership and enthusiasm within each academic program.

In this stage, the internship program develops the processes to add more student participants, increase the academic programs that offer internships, and identify new businesses that host interns or more interns at current sites.

The expanding stage is very recursive and improves upon the processes developed for the initiating stage. Community colleges will need to address the method for adding internships for new academic programs either through a self-selection or competitive process as in the initiation phase. Either expansion method will need to employ the same kinds of communication and inclusivity that were recommended in the initiation phase.

SCC began their internship with a program that had been in existence for a decade. The initial program was developed as a co-op and service-learning program. The administration wanted increased accountability for the career services department and wanted them to meet metrics that showed how the department benefited the students. With that directive, the team changed its focus to academic internships and increased the number of academic programs that offered internships. They increased participation from 20 students doing co-ops per semester to 50 or 60 students per semester completing internships.

The second step in the expansion stage focuses on balancing flexibility with adding new academic programs and conforming to the existing programs. The expanding stage will need to continue to learn lessons from the field, as in the initiation phase, but not reinvent the wheel as new programs are added. Asera et al. (2013) recommend focusing on communicating the purpose of the program, how the program is going to be implemented, and the program's expected outcomes to develop a shared understanding of the program's benefits.

The final step in the initiating phase is building a sense of ownership: "Community colleges often struggle with small programs that are viewed as fiefdoms or only 'owned' by their creators" (Asera et al., 2013, p. 26). As more people become involved, it becomes increasingly important to keep lines of communication open and continue to share data and information and programmatic successes.

Sustaining Phase

Sustaining a program is the final stage in Asera et al.'s (2013) model. Keeping a program moving forward requires flexibility, while maintaining the integrity of the program, and "relies on changing the norms of practice and keeping successes visible" (Asera et al. 2013, p. 27). The focused activities of sustaining are these:

- Promoting culture change;
- Policy-including financing-both of which have the potential to help or hinder scale-up efforts; and
- Evaluation, an ongoing process that supports the sustainability of innovation. (Asera et al., 2013, p. 27)

These activities support the long-term health of the program and ensure that a successful program becomes part of the organizational culture.

The first step, promoting culture change, can be a significant challenge at a community college (Asera et al., 2013; Kezar, 2009). One of the challenges faced by higher education is the vast range of change initiatives across campus serving the interests of too many stakeholders, which can lead to programs getting lost or duplicated and the institution experiencing initiative fatigue (Kezar, 2009). According to Asera et al. (2013), “Sustaining an innovation requires moving it from a marginal position to a central one” (p. 28). Aligning program initiatives with the college’s mission and vision and communicating information about the program can go a long way toward giving a program greater visibility and keep it from being lost (Asera et al., 2013; Kezar, 2009). Kezar (2009) also recommends limiting the number of initiatives and combining similar programs to reduce duplication in program management expenses. Promoting culture change is a significant task that requires the ongoing work of individuals at all levels of leadership.

The second step in this phase of Asera et al.’s (2013) model is ensuring that the policies in place support the long-term success of the program. Financing the program is a significant consideration. As discussed earlier, there is a long list of necessary activities to be completed by multiple departments to run a successful internship program. While financing was addressed explicitly in an earlier section, issues such as whether internships should be credit-bearing, how to support the participation of low-income students, whether grant funding should be pursued, and where the program should be situated within the college structure are all issues that directly relate to the long-term success of the program. As stated earlier, Asera et al. (2013) recommend these issues should be addressed in the early planning phases to ensure that the program can realistically continue and become part of the institutional culture.

The final step in the sustain phase of this plan is evaluation (Asera et al., 2013). While evaluation is listed as a final step, the data collection has been on-going throughout the plan (Asera et al., 2013). Program participation can be measured against the metrics for success that were identified at the beginning of the program. The college needs to know the number of students and employers who are utilizing the internship program each year and the costs involved. Ongoing analysis of marketing tactics and techniques can identify areas to improve participation. Feedback loops established at the beginning of the program can identify areas where processes are hindering or helping program growth. The evaluation step can help to determine whether the internship program has become part of the culture of the organization.

Change Management

Implementing an internship program can be a culture shift for many community colleges. According to McClenney (2013), “transformation is horrendously difficult, and cultural change is at the heart of the work.... It requires all parties to imagine their way out of the boxes in which we work. It demands unprecedented leadership at all levels, as well as collaboration” (p. 28).

Furthermore, according to McClenney (2013), higher education has “substantial issues pertaining to institutional culture and to the traditions and architecture” (p. 27) of their systems that need to be considered when making changes and implementing programs. Furthermore, Dreher (2014) identifies two levels of change that an organization will go through. One focuses on the formal processes of implementing a new program, and the second focuses on the acceptance or institutionalization of a program, the latter being a slower, more challenging process (Dreher, 2014).

The planning phase of Asera et al.’s (2013) model gives guidance for implementing large scale changes and provides examples of community colleges that have successfully

developed and executed changes. Asera et al.'s (2013) planning phase parallels Kotter's eight-step change management and accelerating change models (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, Kotter International, 2015). Analyzing the scaling up process through a change management lens can provide further insight into the successful implementation and subsequent scaling up of an internship program.

Kotter's change models begin with creating urgency, building a coalition to guide program development, and developing a vision with strategic initiatives (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Kotter International, 2015). The overlay of Kotter's and Asera et al.'s models reinforces that the implementation of an internship program at a community college is a significant change to the approach of many community colleges concerning career development for community college students. Change can be challenging, but there are guides for successful change models that can be used by the planners and implementers to shepherd them through the process.

The increased importance of internships and employers' expectations described in the literature review in Chapter 2, needs to be communicated to key internal stakeholders in the planning phase to create a sense of urgency. Neither the faculty nor the administration may be aware of changes that have occurred in the past decade where internships are concerned. Once there is a shared understanding of the problems for students due to lack of internship availability, it is easier to build consensus among faculty, administration, and career services.

According to Asera et al. (2013), "stakeholders need to acknowledge and agree on the definition of the problem before they can identify a potential solution...innovation is unlikely to succeed broadly unless it addresses an agreed upon problem" (p. 15). The most effective way to do this is to work with the different levels of the organization simultaneously and not consecutively (Dreher, 2014). It is essential to listen to suggestions and communicate program

updates often enough that change is seen as incremental rather than overwhelming (Dreher, 2014).

Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is likely to occur, and a plan should be put in place. Resistance to change could stem from lack of confidence in the change agent, lack of clarity for the need for the change, misunderstanding what change is being proposed, or the fear of losing autonomy or something of value (Dreher, 2014). Deans and faculty at SPC were concerned about losing students through early graduation, thus reducing revenue to the college and placing their livelihood at risk. Change can ignite rivalry and turfism among staff when there is a lack of clarity regarding the division of labor and ownership of new duties (Elias et al., 2003).

Resistance can be interpreted through many lenses. According to Bareil (2013), a traditional view is that resistance to change is an enemy and a significant threat to successfully implementing innovation. In this view, change is implemented from the top down with hard deadlines that must be met, and resisters are viewed as disruptive and hostile, and their behavior must be managed by damage control tactics (Bareil, 2013). Another interpretation of resistance recognizes that the change process is fluid, that resisters provide valuable feedback to leadership, and that the feedback should be used to adjust the plan. (Bareil, 2013). According to Bareil (2013), organizations should utilize the existence of resistance as a barometer to measure the success of program implementation. Bareil's (2013) paradigm for assessing change behavior aligns with observations of change using the theory of diffusion of innovation (DOI).

DOI theory describes the rate at which members of an organization adopt new ideas or changes (Meade & Islam, 2006). Adopters can generally be placed in categories: Innovators, 2.5%; Early adopters, 13.5%; Early majority, 34%; Late majority, 34%; and Laggards, 16%

(Kaminski, 2011, p. 2). DOI theory can help planners understand how an organization adopts innovations. This knowledge can help them craft the correct message, identify the most effective internal change agents, and inform how information should be disseminated so that vital stakeholders are likely to respond. Figure 6 illustrates the diffusion of innovation.

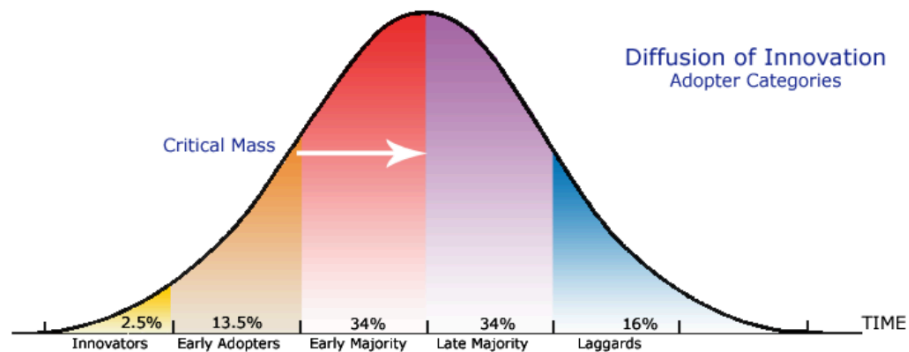


Figure 6: Diffusion of Innovation: Adopter Categories (Kaminski, 2011, p. 2)

There is a wealth of literature on implementing changes in organizations, making it possible to learn lessons from both properly and poorly executed initiatives in organizations of all sizes. Dreher (2014) shares strategies that have been learned while implementing programs at institutions of higher education:

- Have clear goals and rationale for change;
- Plan for stages and not wholesale changes;
- Be flexible and accept input from others;
- Be open about the dangers of not making changes;
- Understand what resistance means;
- Be transparent and communicate often;
- Identify success metrics and measure them from the beginning;
- Publicize your program, both internally and externally, and;
- Plan and formalize rituals and ceremonies.

A college implementing a new program or expanding an existing program will experience challenges. Processes and procedures can be put in place to mitigate the impact of barriers and frustrations that can be anticipated.

SUMMARY

Implementing an internship program can make waves throughout campus because of the many departments involved in the process. The lack of scaled-up internship programs at community colleges can be a challenge in developing an internship program at a community college. However, utilizing an established model, such as Asera et al.'s (2013) arc of scaling with an understanding of change management practices, while anticipating resistance to change, can help planners to manage resources better.

Information gleaned from the interviews with the IPMs from five programs along with the recommendations on scaling up and change management was used to develop an implementation guide and can be used as a resource for community colleges interested in creating an internship program.

Chapter 6 will include a discussion about the data collected, limitations and delimitations of this dissertation, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative research project was to gain a better understanding of the structure of successful internship programs. It was hoped that through a systematic analysis of the structure of successful internship programs at two- and four-year colleges that the researcher could develop an implementation guidebook with recommendations from lessons learned in the process.

The research used a purposive sampling technique to identify internship programs suitable for study. Program coordinators from five internship programs were interviewed in a semi-structured format. They were asked 16 questions that focused on gaining an understanding of the structure of their program. Additionally, the websites of three community college programs were selected for review. The research sought to answer these research questions:

1. How are internship programs currently structured, at either two-year or four-year institutions?
2. From experiential learning pedagogy, what are the significant curriculum design considerations?
3. From a career development perspective, what are the critical curriculum design considerations?
4. How can an internship programs be scaled up to involve more students?

The data obtained were evaluated through the three theoretical lenses of workforce development, experiential learning, and career development. This chapter will include the analysis of the data obtained and extrapolate recommendations to be included in an implementation guidebook.

The five programs were reviewed through interviews with four internship program managers (IPM). One IPM had worked at both SCC and SPC. The data were analyzed using Yin's (2016) model, which was outlined in Chapter 3. A database was created from information gathered in the transcribed notes from interviews and websites and put into a spreadsheet based on the responses to questions. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, some topics were covered several times throughout the session. The data were then coded according to program organization, internship courses, faculty, grading, goals, program champions, business relationships, grants, and marketing. As themes developed, the data were reassembled and placed into categories. The final phase of the process is to interpret the data and draw conclusions. This chapter will review the implications and recommendations based on this final phase and will be organized around the research questions that formed the basis for this research.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

How are internship programs currently structured, at either two-year or four-year institutions?

Program structure encompasses many aspects of an internship program and includes: who manages the program, where the program is situated within the college structure, to whom the duties of the program are assigned, whether the program is credit-bearing, how relationships with internship host sites are built, how student performance and host sites are evaluated, and how the program is funded. In addition, the impact of internal champions was discussed with each IPM.

College Structure

All of the programs that were analyzed were centrally managed, although there were variations. Two programs were stand-alone departments, and three were in career services.

Except for one program, learning contracts and site visits were a shared responsibility with faculty. The gray area resulting from the shared responsibility caused concern about quality among the IPMs. There was a wide variance in student experience based on their faculty supervisor. There was no apparent solution to issues or frustration. The IPMs communicated that due to issues related to academic freedom, there was little that could be done to remedy the situation.

Within each of these schools, however, individual departments would have separate internship programs that were managed within an academic department. MPC's experiential learning department only managed elective internships. The IPM was aware of the other programs that required internships for graduation, but the compulsory and elective internship programs did not intersect. SPC had professors that would hold "independent study" internship courses, without input from the IPM. The IPM felt that there was a financial motive to operate outside the formal internship program. MCC offered credit-bearing, compulsory internships, but those programs were managed within the academic programs, and the IPM had no responsibility for those internships. The IPM had limited knowledge of the programs, including the companies that hired the interns or which departments required internships. Similarly, MPC has several departments that require internships, but those internships were managed within the academic departments.

The lone exception was EPC's program, which reported directly to the provost. The internship program staff were nontenured faculty. The IPM felt that this structure gave their department more respect and more acceptance from the academic faculty. This structure also aligns with recommendations by King (2014).

Recommendation

When developing an internship program, place the management office under the direction of the Chief Academic Officer. This action can help to align an internship program as an academic program and improve faculty cooperation. Centrally located internship programs also reduce duplication of effort, such as developing internal processes, developing and maintaining internship host site relationships, and marketing efforts.

Internal Champion

Most IPMs were able to identify an internal champion and describe how the champion was able to influence the development of their program. MCC's IPM was unable to identify an internal champion, in part, because of his relatively short time in his role. Additionally, his role is to manage the internship grant and he has not been given a directive to grow the program.

EPC, MPC, and SCC indicated that upper-level administrators played a significant role in the implementation or growth of their internship program. The impact of internal champions made it easier to manage and promote the program and have the necessary resources. Both EPC and MPC have a separate office devoted to developing and executing an experiential learning program. The administration's role in supporting an internship program consisted of requiring Deans to report internship participation, which facilitated the process for growing the internship program.

The IPMs at SCC and SPC felt that the growth of the internship program was driven by faculty participation. They felt that the faculty recognized the value of internships for students and wanted to be sure that students had the opportunity to participate.

Recommendation

Work to get buy-in at all levels of the college. Administration support is necessary to receive the necessary funding for the program. Faculty buy-in is also essential because they are the conduit to the students.

Learning Evaluation

There was a significant inconsistency in learning evaluation between the internship programs that were studied. MCC was the only school that offered a noncredit internship, so grading was not a concern. The remaining programs relied on learning contracts; assignments, such as journals and papers; and site supervisor feedback to assess the student's learning.

SCC, EPC, MPC, and SPC managed internship programs were credit-bearing, thus required grading. The two IPMs who were satisfied with the grading process was where the internship staff was responsible for managing all aspects of the learning assessment, EPC and MPC. EPC hired nontenured faculty to administer the experiential learning programs, and they were responsible for helping students create the learning contracts, developing assignments, and grading assignments. The IPM felt that this process eliminated the potential for ambiguity. The IPM for MPC was also responsible for all elements of developing and evaluating assignments. MPC students were not given a letter grade; they were assessed on a pass/fail basis.

The IPM for the SCC and SPC internship programs expressed frustration with the learning assessment process. The guidelines were ill-defined, and the IPM lacked authority for oversight of the process. Within both schools, some faculty viewed internships as a way to boost a student's grade point average, and some faculty wanted to apply very stringent criteria. The IPM could advocate on a student's behalf but had no authority over the process.

Recommendations

Develop clear guidelines for division of responsibilities and expectations for the execution of duties. Create a comprehensive definition of an internship that can be used throughout the program. Make internships credit-bearing and develop processes to assure agreement on faculty duties, such as learning agreements, communication with host-sites, and grading rubrics to ensure a standard experience among students.

External Partnerships

Building external relationships is an on-going and active enterprise for creating and maintaining internship programs. Most of the IPMs utilized chamber of commerce networking events to increase awareness, developed partnerships with local economic development entities, and met face-to-face with employers to develop relationships. The IPMs at four-year schools relied heavily on alumni for internship sites. At most of the schools, the responsibility was shared between faculty and internship program staff. The exception was the director of SCC's program who held most of the responsibility for building and maintaining internships.

Building external relationships went hand-in-hand with maintaining internal relationships. Some faculty had relationships with businesses and alumni. The strength of the internal relationship impacted whether or not the faculty member would share their information.

Resources, both time and money, were at issue when identifying ways to engage businesses. MCC, the program that served the fewest students, limited their business outreach to meeting employers who attended their annual large-scale community job fair. EPC, the program that served the most students, had the most robust business engagement efforts, including inviting business representatives on campus several times per year for networking opportunities.

The IPM stated that they had to do very little marketing for new internship sites due to awareness of the program.

Most of the programs relied on past internship sites to host new interns each semester. SPC's IPM stated that her office did not offer very much assistance to students in finding internships. Students would share their internship placement information and by the time they came to her office, the student had an idea where they wanted to apply. The difficulty with that assumption, however, is that it is unknown how many students did not go to the internship office because they already had connections to internship opportunities. EPC utilized the same sites multiple times over the years. Employers were impressed with the quality of student and their preparation and were anxious to host more students.

The use of social media as a way to engage area businesses is used effectively by CLC. They utilize LinkedIn to showcase internship placements and businesses who attend job fairs and other on-site recruitment efforts.

Recommendations

Build a database of employers who are interested in hosting interns. Develop a communication plan to keep employers engaged while student capacity is built. Identify a key contact person to manage the communication plan.

Funding

Ensuring adequate funding is a crucial consideration for a sustainable internship program. Every school in the study uses a combination of hard and soft money to support its programs. Except for MCC, all of the programs have credit-bearing internships, and the revenue from the tuition supported their program. SPC and SCC raised additional funds by charging businesses for job fairs and on-site recruiting events to support internship program expenses.

Grants played a role in all of the internship programs. SPC had the most success utilizing grants for their program. They were able to parlay a modest private grant into a multimillion-dollar alumni gift. Grant funds were available to students who took unpaid internships at all schools except MCC whose grant funds were paid directly to employers who hosted paid internships.

Recommendations

Credit-based internship programs help pay costs related to managing the program. Grants can be available from multiple sources to support program development, student wages, and employer participation. Investigate available grants and plan budgets upfront.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

From experiential learning pedagogy, what are the significant curriculum design considerations?

The focus of an internship should always be on student learning. According to Kolb's (2015) experiential learning theory, learning deepens as a student acquires new information, reflects on the knowledge, compares old knowledge to the new concepts, and then puts that knowledge into practice. Each of the credit-bearing internship programs used various reflection tools as part of the internship program. Students were given journal assignments that ranged from recording activities to processing experiences. Some were given writing prompts. Each of the IPMs for credit-bearing programs reported that they felt that these assignments were valuable to the student.

Only one program included a classroom experience that students could take as a prerequisite or a corequisite course to the work experience. One IPM said that his school had quit requiring an academic internship course, and he felt that the program and students were missing a valuable component because of the change. He said he would advocate for returning the

classroom experience because the students could compare experiences and learn from each other. The remaining programs were in the process of adding a classroom component. Each IPM indicated they felt strongly that the addition of classroom activities would benefit the students and deepen the internship experience.

This finding aligns not only with Kolb's (2015) ELT but also with research that found that students felt that internships are more beneficial when the work experience is accompanied by an academic course (Gault et al., 2000).

Recommendation

Develop a corequisite or prerequisite course to accompany the work experience. Provide assignments that include reflection exercises that challenge students to connect their academic knowledge with their work experience. Allow students to reflect on issues of leadership, teamwork, and collegiality — issues identified by NACE as essential skills that need to be developed.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

From a career development perspective, what are the critical curriculum design considerations?

Career development topics are wide-ranging. Career management skills, such as job search strategies, networking, and creating compelling resumes and cover letters, are offered by all programs. Other career development topics include career exploration, values assessments, interest inventories, and assessments that evaluate learning styles. SCC's internship program has the strongest career development component. SCC includes career exploration exercises, self-awareness assessments, time-management tools, and teamwork skills. MPC is planning to adopt a program of study that includes reflection exercises, professional development activities, and career exploration topics.

These findings are supported by other research that shows the benefits of career development exercises for students. Students who participate in career development exercises increase their vocational identity and decrease their career indecision (Johnson et al., 2002).

Recommendation

This recommendation aligns with the recommendation for research question three. A prerequisite or corequisite course should include career development exercises, including career management skills, career exploration, and assessments that help students understand their strengths and interests and how that could translate into a career.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4

How can internship programs be scaled-up to involve more students?

Implementation

Information regarding scaling-up a program was scant in the data collected. The programs analyzed for this study were relatively mature, and none of the IPMs had participated in the planning phase of the program. As outlined in Chapter 5, discussion about planning and implementation relied heavily on research by Asera et al. (2013) on scaling-up innovations at community colleges. Asera et al. (2013) shared details about community college systems that took small innovations and implemented programs successfully across multicampus institutions. Asera et al. (2013) recommend that the program start small with an eye toward future growth. The institutions in the study used concepts from change management theory. They created multidisciplinary teams to bring new innovations to campuses, maintaining the integrity of the program while adjusting some details to fit the uniqueness of the institution (Asera et al., 2013).

Asera et al. (2013) developed a four-step scaling-up model that is the basis for the recommendations for this section.

The cornerstone of the process is having the support of the administration and gathering support across campus from multiple points of view. IPMs from four programs were able to identify an internal champion for the internship program. The internal champions were able to make sure that the program had visibility on campus and the resources to continue, and support came from faculty and deans at each of the schools. In the cases of SCC, MPC, and SPC, the faculty support took some time to develop and came after the IPM was able to prove that they would be able to bring value to the program.

Recommendations

Develop a cross-discipline team, supported by the administration, to create an internship program. Assemble teams of people who can implement the program and provide them with the training and resources necessary. Develop an implementation plan that includes long-term and short-term goals. Set benchmarks for success and create an assessment process.

Scaling-up

The process for scaling up existing programs is recursive, as outlined in Chapter 5. As the details of the program are identified in the first two steps in Asera et al.'s (2013) plan, the process is evaluated, expanded, and fine-tuned in the final two steps. This process parallels the actions taken by some of the programs. For example, during their evaluation process, MPC and SPC identified the need to add an academic course. In the case of SCC, as more faculty became aware of the internship program, they engaged with the IPM so that their students could benefit from internships.

Recommendation

Create a growth strategy during the initial planning phase. Follow the plan for growth while making any necessary adjustments. Measure the program participation against benchmarks set during the planning phase.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since there is a dearth of research on community college internships, the researcher recommends that additional studies be conducted on internships at community colleges and the benefits to students. Research on the reasons why community college students do not complete internships could help colleges better understand how to market internship programs to students or alter the internship process to remove barriers to student participation. Also, there are very few scaled-up internship programs to review; therefore, the researcher relied on existing research of the scaling-up process of other innovations to get a comprehensive understanding of that process. Identifying scaled-up internship programs to analyze would help other community colleges with the planning and implementation of their programs.

CONCLUSION

Community colleges can help to increase their student's employability by providing internship opportunities. Internships have a sound pedagogical foundation and are a way to extend the classroom and bring knowledge to life. The product of this dissertation, *A Community College Internship Implementation Guide*, was designed as a workbook (Appendix C). The format was selected to provide a framework for building a strong foundation for an internship program and to share recommendations based on the experiences of the five schools that were analyzed for this study. The challenge will be to change the culture by helping all internal

stakeholders understand the importance and value of experiential education in the form of internships. The investment of time and energy into developing a program can improve the opportunities for our students.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Information and purpose: The interview for which you are being asked to participate in, is part of a research study that is focused on examining the qualities of successful cross-discipline internship programs at community colleges. The research is interested in understanding how the program developed, how the program is managed (i.e. marketing, employer relationships, student recruitment, etc.) and how the faculty and administration feel about the efficacy and the future of the program. The purpose of the study is to add to the body of knowledge about internship programs at community colleges.

Your participation: Your participation in this study will consist of an interview lasting approximately one hour. You will be asked a series of questions about the college's internship program, how the program was developed and managed. You are not required to answer the questions. You may pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At any time, you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Benefits and risks: The benefit of your participation is to contribute to the body of knowledge about cross-discipline internship programs at community colleges. There are no risks associating with participating in the study.

Confidentiality: The interview will be tape recorded. The tape will be transcribed by the researcher. Your name, the college's name, or any identifying information will not be associated with any part of the written report of the research. All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential and stored in a locked file cabinet or on an encrypted, dedicated external hard drive. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher:

Katy McGuinnis; 847-239-2383 or m McGuinnis@ferris.edu

Sandra Balkema; 231-591-5631 or SandraBlakema@ferris.edu

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I am aware that I can discontinue my participation at any time.

Signature _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: PROTOCOL FOR STUDY OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Protocol for Study of Internship Programs

1. Initiation of program
 - a. When did the program begin?
 - b. What was the impetus for creating the program? Who were the internal champions?
2. Program Structure
 - a. Who do you consider to be your partners, both internally and externally?
 - b. Who is responsible for maintaining business relationships?
 - c. Who has control of curriculum? Where does the course reside? How many credit hours per course? Do students participate year-round?
 - d. Do faculty support the program? Are there any conflicts? How are they managed?
 - e. What do you think about the program? Is it of benefit to the students? To the college? To the employers?
 - f. Please explain how a student receives a grade.
 - g. How are students placed into internships? Who supervises the student on-site?
 - h. What changes have been made as the program matures?
 - i. Is there a mission or vision statement for the program?
3. Marketing
 - a. How do students find out about the program?
 - b. How are businesses recruited for the program?
4. Costs
 - a. How many students participate in the program? Does it operate at capacity? Is enrollment steady?
 - b. How is the program supported? Grant dollars? Hard money?
 - c. Are there any supportive services offered to support low-income students?

**APPENDIX C: A COMMUNITY COLLEGE INTERNSHIP
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

**Bridging the Skills Gap Between Students
and Employers:**

**A Community College Internship
Implementation Guide**

Katherine R. McGuinnis

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
LAYING THE FOUNDATION	2
Find the Right Target.....	2
Assemble a dynamite team.....	4
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	4
<i>Program Structure</i>	8
IMPLEMENTATION TEAM	14
Training the Team	14
Developing the Curriculum	15
Creating Guidelines	15
Who will start first?.....	16
Getting Buy-in	17
GATHERING RESOURCES.....	19
Setting the Budget	19
Show Me the Money.....	19
MAKING THE PLAN	21
Academics First!	21
Turning Talk into Action	21
THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG: Building industry partnerships and student placements	22
PROGRAM EVALUATION	23
RESOURCES	24
REFERENCES	25

INTRODUCTION

A robust internship program at community colleges is a concept whose time has come. Experiential learning has been used extensively in many industries. Education has used student teaching as a way to train new educators, and healthcare utilizes clinical rotations to provide hands-on experience to new nurses, doctors, and mental health counselors. The federal government is investing in apprenticeship programs as a way to increase their availability and viability in the United States (Nocera, 2017). However, employers are frustrated with a perceived gap between the skills of their job applicants and skills required to perform essential functions (Nocera, 2017). Internships offer a way to bridge that gap for students and employers.

Implementing new programs can be a challenge to any institution, including community colleges. The purpose of the guidebook is to share lessons learned by other colleges during the management of their programs. Because community colleges are both ubiquitous and unique, and robust internship programs at community colleges are not common, it is difficult to discern “best practices.” However, my dissertation research did find common approaches to internship processes that align with high-quality education practices. Those common approaches resulted in this implementation guide. The wide range of circumstances may require an organization to modify a recommendation to fit its unique needs.

This guide was created to help identify internal and external stakeholders and to steer conversations regarding implementing an internship program. The workbook format is designed to provide thoughtful guidance for developing a new program or growing an existing one. You may notice that the implementation guide is heavy on the planning component. Laying a strong foundation before the program is marketed to the first student will help build a sustainable program (Asera, Pleasants McDonnell, Soricone, Anderson, & Endel, 2013). Embedded in each step are the recommendations developed from studying practices at existing programs and through a literature review of experiential learning, workforce development, career development, and scaling-up theories. The final section of this workbook is a list of resources that will be helpful in developing an internship program.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Developing a strong foundation for an internship program will set the stage for a long-term, successful program (Asera et al., 2013). It will include assembling a cross-discipline team, identifying a strong mission or goal for the program, and developing the right message to communicate to internal and external stakeholders (Asera et al., 2013). Addressing these foundational issues can help mitigate problems further down the road.

Find the Right Target

Community colleges share similarities, yet they have unique characteristics due to local conditions such as their geographic location, regional politics, and local industry. To develop a successful internship program, each community college will need to take the general lessons learned by other institutions and apply them to meet their specific needs.

While an internship program is still a twinkle in the eye of an institution, planners need to be able to articulate two things:

Why is an internship program important to the institution?

What will be accomplished by implementing an internship program?

Internships can address many issues that face community colleges. These can help if graduates have difficulty finding jobs in their field of study or if local employers have difficulty hiring qualified applicants. Internships can address these issues and more, but the first step is articulating why your institution wants to implement an internship program.

RECOMMENDATION: Developing a mission and vision for an internship program can help to ensure the program is aligned with the college mission (Inkster & Ross, 1995).

HOW WOULD STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL BENEFIT FROM AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

HOW WOULD EMPLOYERS IN YOUR REGION BENEFIT FROM AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

HOW WOULD YOUR INSTITUTION BENEFIT FROM AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

ARE THERE ANY OBVIOUS OBSTACLES TO AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AT YOUR COLLEGE?

Obstacles could be related to the college's structure, finances, personnel, and community relationships. Or obstacles could be caused by regional workforce concerns. Obstacles could be short-term or long-term. Having a clear vision of what you are trying to accomplish with an internship program, while recognizing potential challenges, can help develop a strong, sustainable program.

Assemble a dynamite team

An internship program will require coordination with many departments. While the decision to implement an internship program may come from top levels in the administration, support throughout the college will be key (Asera et al., 2013). A steering committee can set the strategic goals and make structural decisions for the program. The steering committee will also identify an implementation team. The decisions of the steering committee will serve as guideposts for the implementation team.

Decisions made by the steering committee should include institutional concerns such as whether the program will be centralized or decentralized, where to situate the program within the structure of the college, whether academic credit will be given for the work experience, and whether the internship program will include an academic course. Other questions to consider are: who will manage the program; what role will faculty play; and who is responsible for developing and implementing the curriculum? Additionally, the steering committee needs to develop plans to train the implementation team.

Strategic Goals

AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM ALIGNS WITH OUR COLLEGE'S MISSION BECAUSE:

THE GOALS OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM ARE:

The goals should be measurable and specific and should align with the mission of the college.

TO ACCOMPLISH THE STRATEGIC GOALS, THESE THINGS NEED TO BE COMPLETED IN THE FIRST 1-3 MONTHS:

Assemble a cross-discipline steering committee. Develop a process map. Some issues that may need to be addressed in the first three months are to decide on issues of program structure, prepare program budget, develop strategy for curriculum, identify implementation team, develop training for implementation team, and set deadlines and benchmarks for success. Set marketing/communication strategy. Be sure to involve departments that will be involved with the success of the program such as Advising, Registrar, Admissions, Career Services, and the foundation or grant writing departments.

4-6 MONTHS

Some items that may need to be accomplished during this time frame are: empower implementation team, assign tasks and duties for implementation team, decide on curriculum strategy, identify programs to participate in internship program, and identify employers. Create policies for student, faculty, and employer participation. Develop forms and documentation processes. Resources for forms is available in the final section of this guide. Refine process map. Implement communication plan.

7-9 MONTHS

How is the program doing against benchmarks? What processes need to be tweaked? Are there any institutional barriers for success? Are there grants available to help program implementation or student participation?

10-12 MONTHS

Is the curriculum development and approval on track? Is the marketing geared toward students effective? Is the marketing geared toward employers effective? Does the campus accept the program? Are businesses satisfied with the performance of interns?

2ND YEAR

What changes need to be implemented for year 2? What worked well? What processes could be improved? Are there more programs that can be added? How will those programs be marketed to students? Employers?

3RD YEAR

How many students are participating in internships? How does that compare to the goal set in the planning phase? Are more staff needed to manage the program? Is the institution still supporting the program?

Program Structure

There are many decisions that need to be made before an implementation team can take action. There are several considerations that fall under the concept of program structure. Consider how your institution would accept and implement an internship program when developing the program structure. There are articles and books that could be helpful in the decision-making process in the Resource section.

RECOMMENDATION: A centralized program allows a community college to take advantage of shared administrative costs. A centralized program has the benefit of implementing standardization of processes across campus and developing and maintaining host site relationships.

REVIEW THE DEFINITIONS BELOW AND BRAINSTORM THE PROS AND CONS FOR EACH TYPE OF PROGRAM FOR YOUR COLLEGE.

CENTRALIZED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

A centralized program is one where all internships are managed in one department. It can be an independent department or combined with another department such as career services (King, 2014).

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

DECENTRALIZED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

A decentralized program is where internships are managed within each academic department (King, 2014).

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

RECOMMENDATION:

Align the program under the Chief Academic Officer. This can help to an internship program to gain recognition as an academic program and improve faculty cooperation (Rubin, 2014).

REFLECT ON THE PROS AND CONS FOR EACH REPORTING RELATIONSHIP BELOW. THIS WILL HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE STRUCTURE FOR YOUR COLLEGE.

PROGRAM UNDER CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PROGRAM UNDER STUDENT SERVICES

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

RECOMMENDATION:

Awarding credit for internships provides legitimacy to internships as learning activity (Inkster & Ross, 1995). It also provides a source of revenue to support the program.

REFLECT ON THE PROS AND CONS FOR CREDIT OR NONCREDIT INTERNSHIPS FOR YOUR COLLEGE.

INTERNSHIP FOR CREDIT

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NONCREDIT INTERNSHIP

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

RECOMMENDATION:

Develop a corequisite or prerequisite internship course to accompany the work experience. Provide assignments that include reflection exercises that challenge students to connect their academic knowledge with their work experience (Kolb, 2015). Also, allow students to reflect on issues of leadership, teamwork, and collegiality. Resources for developing content for an internship program is available in the last section.

REVIEW THE DEFINITION ABOVE AND BRAINSTORM THE PROS AND CONS FOR AN INTERNSHIP COURSE FOR YOUR COLLEGE.

INTERNSHIP COURSE

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Other considerations (leadership, pass/fail, objections, curriculum design, grant availability and application process, remuneration for faculty for any role that they play in the internship process, such as site supervision and/or visitation and learning contract support):

Who should be on the Implementation Team (faculty, deans, Career Services, Registrar's office, curriculum design expert). Be sure to include individuals with varying work styles. Recognize that people with differing points of view can develop creative solutions to barriers. Include informal leaders in addition to formal leaders.

Implementation Team training ideas. Who will develop a training program to ensure that each team member has the same understanding of internships, how other community colleges have implemented internship programs, and the latest research on the benefits and challenges of internships? Does the college have internal resources or use external resources?

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The steering committee sets the framework for the internship program, and the implementation team will put the plan into action. The implementation team needs to be a multidisciplinary team that has the necessary information and resources to take action. The team needs to begin with the same foundation of knowledge and be empowered to act. There should be regularly scheduled communication between the implementation team and the steering committee.

Training the Team

Training the implementation team is an important next step. The steering committee can work with the trainers who were identified in the foundation stage of implementing the internship program. Topics to be covered include:

- How internships help students and support the academic knowledge gained in the classroom
- Benefits of an academic course to accompany a work experience, either prerequisite or corequisite
- Advantages for having an internship program centralized
- Reasons for aligning an internship program with academics rather than student services
- Grading policies
 - Factors on Pass/Fail compared to letter grades decision
- Understanding various duties that must be completed:
 - Developing curriculum
 - Curriculum approval
 - Creating guidelines for students, faculty, and host sites
 - Designing forms for students, faculty, and host sites
 - Recruiting students
 - Recruiting businesses
 - Approving internship sites
 - Mid-term site visits
 - Grading assignments
 - Reporting grades to registrar
 - Internal and external communication
- Project Management
- Change Management
 - Effective training must include information on change management theories and best practices. It is vital that the implementation team has the necessary tools to affect long-lasting change throughout the campus. They need to understand the importance of communicating their progress, including key stakeholders in decisions that could impact their work processes or departments, and effectively respond to skeptics that are resistant to change.
- Timeline and expectations
 - Internship program implementation timeline
 - Procedures if an implementation team member is unable to continue in their role

Developing the Curriculum

This is a significant undertaking. Some curriculum approval processes can take 18 months. Be sure to leave enough time for the approval process. It is important to check with your state board and regional accreditors to confirm that your program complies with credit-hour formulas for internships and other policies.

It might be possible to make reasonable and moderate extensions to an existing program. This could significantly reduce the time that it takes to get a program up and running. Another option could be to begin with noncredit internships while the course syllabus, learning objectives, teaching methods, and lesson plans are developed for a credit internship. It would give the implementation team time to identify articulation partners and present the internship course to the curriculum committee.

Information in the Resources section includes some text books that could be appropriate for an internship course.

Creating Guidelines

When developing processes, it is important to plan for the future (Asera et al., 2013). The program will be scaled up to meet the institution's long-term goals. Therefore, processes need to be clear and responsibilities need to be distinct for the current state of the program and the future.

Student:

- How does a student qualify for participation? Do they need a certain number of credit hours? Do they need to meet a threshold GPA? Will the program be open to students who attend another institution?
- How much placement help will the college provide a student? What student preparation support will the college provide?
- How will student activities be reported? To whom?

Faculty:

- What role will faculty play in the internship process? How will faculty be selected to participate?
- Will training be provided? Will expectations be given to faculty regarding participation? Will expectations be viewed as infringing on academic freedom?
- How will faculty report their activity for remuneration? Will faculty participation impact existing labor contract?

Business:

- Is there training for the host site supervisor?
- Who approves internship site? What assistance will the college provide a new host site in developing an internship? Who approves the internship job description?
- Is there required paperwork for the host site supervisor to complete? How are an intern's hours monitored and tracked?
- Who manages conflicts between the host site supervisor and the student?

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Who will start first?

An internship program will need to start small. Trying to do too much too fast can lead to ill-defined processes and procedures. Processes need to be tested. Internship sites need to be vetted and developed. Faculty and staff need to be informed and trained on program goals and procedures. Internal and external stakeholders need to be given the opportunity to provide feedback to make improvements. This process is easier to do on a smaller scale with an eye to building up.

Some things to consider when deciding which academic program or group to start with: Are faculty onboard with the internship program? Is the local industry supportive of the initiative and willing to host an intern? Are there enough students looking for work in the field? Does the initiation team want to select a program, or should there be a competitive selection process?

The Resource section contains information that may provide guidance in scaling up innovative programs at community colleges.

Department/Program	Key Faculty	Enrollment	Industry Support

Reflect on the identified programs and discuss the pros and cons of each to determine the best fit for your team.

PROS

CONS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Getting Buy-in

Creating a comprehensive communication plan will ensure that important stakeholders are kept abreast of the developing internship program and understand when the internship program will impact their daily work. Communication is a two-way street, and it is important to develop a plan that includes gathering information as well as disseminating material.

It is vital to have the support of influencers within the college. Key influencers will include individuals from departments that are impacted by the decision to have internships. This will include academic departments, career services, the registrar's office, admissions, academic advisors, grants department, alumni relations, education foundation, and switchboard operators (Rubin, 2014). It can also serve as a vehicle to create enthusiasm for the internship program throughout the college.

Faculty members should be included in the communication plan. Faculty will have valuable points of view, and their voice needs to be heard throughout the planning and implementation processes. Some faculty will have industry connections that can help to build a strong internship program.

Students engagement is vital to the success of the program. It is important to recognize that they might not understand the basics, like what an internship is and how it is different than a job. They might assume that it will be enough if they do an internship when they transfer to their four-year institution. They may not know how they can fit an internship experience into their already full lives. It may take a complex communication plan including multiple classroom presentations, hallway tables, posters, job fair tables, club visits, and more to communicate the message to students. Having faculty buy-in will certainly help the process.

Engaging external stakeholders is a very important step. Identifying and connecting with regional employers and getting their input can help to develop a program that addresses their needs. Because there will be a time lag between the initial communication and placement of the first intern, having a structured communication plan in place will help keep employers engaged and updated on the progress of the internship program.

RECOMMENDATION: Use free social media, such as LinkedIn, to promote employer engagement such as internships, internship placements, on-site recruitment, job fair participation, classroom and club presentations, etc.

Target Audience	Topic	Frequency	Dates

GATHERING RESOURCES

Setting the Budget

The decisions made by the steering committee and the implementation team will significantly impact the budget. Credit vs. noncredit, centralized program vs. decentralized program, and using existing staff or creating a new department are decisions that will affect the bottom line. Be sure to include costs for:

- staff
 - program manager
 - employer relations
- office space and furniture
- compensation for faculty participation
- marketing

Show Me the Money

In a world of tight financial resources, the success of an internship program could come down to finances. A credit-bearing course will generate income from tuition and fees. There are external funding sources that can help support the development of an internship program. Engaging the college's grant department can help access information about public and private grantors that can help support the college in developing and implementing an internship program. Grantors may provide financial assistance to an organization that would like to participate or help defray the costs to an institution.

RECOMMENDATION:

Work to get buy-in from all levels of the college. Administration support is necessary to receive the required funding for the program (Dreher, 2014). Faculty buy-in is also essential as they are the conduit to the students.

While this is not an exhaustive list, some options include:

- Illinois Cooperative Work-Study Program: Grants awarded for two-year and four-year institutions. The grant provides support to businesses by reimbursing wages for interns but does not support administrative costs incurred by the college (<https://www.ibhe.org/icws.html>).
- State Campus Compacts: For over 30 years, they have provided support for service-learning and internship programs that promote student preparation, community partnerships, economic development, equity, and respect (<https://compact.org/who-we-are/our-coalition/state-regional-compacts/>).
- AmeriCorps: Offers internship/work opportunities for students and institutional grants. The internship/work opportunities pay a small stipend and can help with health insurance as an option. It places limits on outside responsibilities of a participant, such as second jobs and classes. It also provide grants to eligible institutions, such as higher education,

that support AmeriCorp's current priorities through evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions. The current AmeriCorp priority, as of this writing, is Economic Opportunity, which includes preparing people for the workforce. The President's current budget indicates that funding for AmeriCorp is designated to be eliminated, although it has been left out of previous budgets and remains funded (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/join-amicorps>).

- AmeriCorp VISTA: This program provides administrative and organizational help to programs that address poverty and workforce development. The use of VISTA funds could support a college in the beginning stages of internship program development (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/amicorps-programs/amicorps-vista>).
- Private funders: There are private organizations, such as Ascendium Philanthropy, formerly Great Lakes, which offer multi-year step-down grants. These grants provide funding which is higher at the beginning of the grant period and lower by the end with the expectation that grant recipients institutionalize financial support. Ascendium Philanthropy is currently focusing on programs that support rural communities (<https://www.ascendiumphilanthropy.org/>).
- U.S. Department of Education has discretionary grants that are made available through a competitive process (<https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grants-apply.html>).
- Additionally, there are sites that aggregate information about grants, such as Higher Education Grants – GrantWatch (<https://www.grantwatch.com/cat/15/higher-education-grants.html>). These websites can expand awareness of available grants and funding options. Several options can support the institution, students, and businesses that host interns.

MAKING THE PLAN

Academics First!

The learning contract is the linchpin between the student, faculty, and host site. It is the document that helps to ensure that all parties recognize that the internship is foremost about translating the student's academic knowledge into action. It isn't just about learning the tasks of an organization, but learning how their academic knowledge is applied in the industry. The internship coordinator and the faculty advisor will serve as advocates for the student to ensure that the internship experience is robust.

Helping employers develop their internship program can mitigate the chances of having an internship that forgets to focus on education. An employer handbook can guide a host site in the internship development process and can include simple recommendations, such as having a place for an intern to sit, identifying a supervisor, and identifying tasks and duties prior to the beginning of the placement. It can go even further and recommend types of tasks that might be appropriate for a student intern or help a business set up a rotational structure where a student intern spends time in multiple departments. Refer to the Resources section of this guidebook for links and additional guidance.

Turning Talk into Action

When it is time to put students into internships, keep the end goals in mind. Establish open lines of communication with the host sites. Over communicate in the beginning. The conversations will help you to understand what was missing from the initial plan and guide the next steps. Early communication can help identify problems before they get too big.

Don't ignore the marketing opportunities. Take pictures and post on social media. Let other students and other employers know what is going on at your college. Get them excited about hosting an intern at their site.

Take advantage of knowledge from other people working in the field. There is a listserv of 1,200 internship professionals. Registration information is reference section. The listserv is active and the participants are helpful. While many of the internship resources are focused on four-year institutions, much of the information translates to community colleges.

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG: Building industry partnerships and student placements

One of the biggest challenges to developing an internship program is having the right mix of interested students and internship host sites. Imagine having 20 marketing students all looking for internships at the same time and no existing industry partnerships to draw on. The opposite is also problematic, having 20 marketing host sites and no interested students. Developing both sides of the equation is vital.

Internship program managers will need to develop program structures and processes that support employers while they create internship programs. As the database of internship host sites develops, the mechanism for placing students can be honed.

Part of the process is preparing students for the internship search. Encourage students to look at the pre-approved internship sites as well as other opportunities. This is a chance for students to sharpen their job search strategy skills. It can also be a valuable lesson in networking.

Some suggestions for processes and structures:

- Have a defined process for internship site approval.
- Create a marketing plan for attracting businesses.
- Develop a guide to help employers create an internship program. InternQube offers a guide for use <https://www.internqube.com/>
- Have more host sites than the number of anticipated students.
- Create a database of internship host sites.
- Develop a communication plan to keep employers engaged whether or not they have a student intern.
- Post all internships on job board so that all students have access to the information.
- Share internship opportunities with faculty.
- Ask for permission to present internship opportunities to classes and at club meetings.
- Utilize social media to showcase internship activities.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluating progress toward program goals is a vital step. The axiom, what you measure is what you'll get, holds true in this instance. Of course, measuring the number of internship placements is an important number, but there are other data that can be useful. Some recommendations:

Student recruitment process

- Number and timing of student recruitment events
- Number of students recruited through classroom presentation, workshops or meetings, faculty referrals, or other means
- Number of students who expressed interest compared to the number of students placed

Employer recruitment process

- Methods for recruitment
- Number of host sites signed up per each method
- Number of internships posted per semester
- Types of internships per academic discipline

Faculty participation

- Number of student referrals per academic discipline
- Number of student referrals per faculty member

Participant Satisfaction

- What do students, employers, and faculty think about the program?
- Do any of the stakeholders recommend changes to the program?

Once you know where the program stands, it is important to identify the process for making corrections. Did you underestimate or overestimate the program's capacity? Are the needs of the students being met? Are there inconsistencies in the process that need to be addressed? Are there bottlenecks in the process that can be fixed? Are there issues or concerns with certain employers?

Internship programs can support student learning and student success. Developing a culture of internship participation at community colleges can be a challenge. Establishing and following a thorough and thoughtful process will make it possible.

RESOURCES

The good news is that there are many resources available to help develop and run an internship program. Below are some resources that may be helpful.

- There is a free listserv of over 1,000 internship professionals across the United States. The Internship listserv is hosted by GradLeader through <https://www.simplelists.com/>
- InternQube is a robust site that provides multiple resources. There is a text book and several articles and videos related to internships. <https://www.internqube.com/>
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has great information on internships <https://www.nacweb.org/tag/internships/>
- *Strengthening Experiential Education: A New Era*, edited by Garry Hesser, 2014
 - Sourcebook with information on funding, program recommendations, quality in experiential learning, increasing faculty involvement, and more.
- *The Internship as Partnership. A Handbook for Campus-Based Coordinators & Advisors*, by Robert P. Inkster and Roseanna G. Ross, 1995
 - Sourcebook with information on program recommendations, role of faculty advisors, learning agreements, sample forms, and more
- *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning*, 4th ed. by H. Frederick Sweitzer, and Mary A. King, 2014.
 - Textbook with information on program content.
- “Thinking Big, A Framework for States on Scaling up Community College Innovation,” Rose Asera, Rachel Pleasants McDonnel, and Lisa Soricone, with Nate Anderson and Barbara Endel. 2013. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561274.pdf>
 - Research on scaling-up and includes recommendations for developing processes.

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