Cross-Border Coffee Break:

Experiential Learning What is it? What is it relevant?

February 23, 2018 10:00am EST

1. **How do you ensure consistency across projects for students? Is that important?**

   Striking the right balance between customization and standardization is difficult when running multiple projects simultaneously. But we do believe that ensuring some consistency across projects (for both students and company partners) is important. Some of the processes/policies we've developed to address this issue includes:

   - A common job description outlining roles and responsibilities of faculty advisors assigned to work with project teams
   - A common course syllabus outlining minimum basic expectations for all students, regardless of the project
   - Effective/consistent scoping of projects with companies, and a standard project outline format handled by our program office (staff)
   - Good communication/regular check-ins with all stakeholder groups

2. **Is registration for the *Learning by Doing* summit in Peru still open?**

   Yes, registration is still open. Click here to register

3. **What specific subjects in experiential learning will you cover in the Summit?**

   See the summit agenda online here for specific topics covered: https://gbsn.org/learning-power-experiential-learning-management-education-2/agenda/

   I did want to highlight one topic that I neglected but meant to mention in the webinar. We are including a session this year on *creative resource solutions*, which will look at cost factors and resource requirements for experiential learning; creative models for maximizing impact with limited time and financial resources; and leveraging relationships between schools and business organizations.

We recognize that while some institutions have extensive resources to allocate to experiential learning, this is an absolute impossibility for many schools.

Experiential learning is resource-intensive and very difficult to scale, and this is an incredible implementation challenge for many schools - especially large institutions serving thousands of students. But in the same way that constraints can serve a higher purpose in business, this can also spur greater creativity to get to the root of problems and generate some elegant solutions. We look forward to spending some time on this together in Lima.

4. Any new trends in education in this area?

A lot is happening in experiential learning. Some of the high interest topics in our peer network over the past few years have included (but are in no way limited to):

- Integrating experiential learning into the core curriculum
- Assurance of learning in experiential learning
- Facilitating reflection to maximize student learning
- Risk management (particularly with global projects)
- Engaging the private sector as partners in experiential learning

5. Did you experience any challenges, language wise between students and companies?

Language is often a factor in our projects. We address this in a couple of ways, depending on the situation:

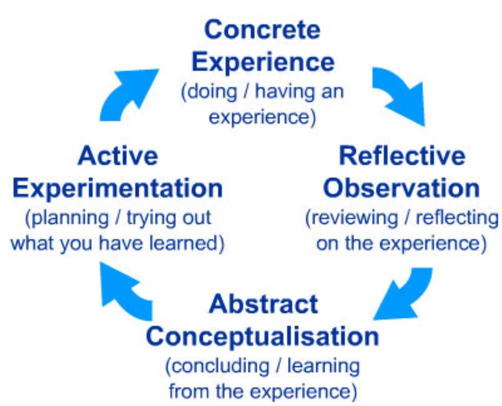
- By partnering with a local business school, where local students provide necessary language and cultural expertise on a team (we especially like this model – putting together a blended team with 3 or 4 Tuck students and 3 or 4 students from a partner school)
- By staffing teams with native speakers of the language whenever possible
- By hiring interpreters on-site to work directly with our teams (specifically to help with interviews)
- By knowing when to say no to a project because language is too much of a barrier

6. How is the evaluation process? Is it similar to the case study methodology?

My colleagues and I have spent some time on the topic of assurance of learning in experiential learning. A summary of our work is included in this January 2018 *BizEd* article, which introduces a set of six standards business schools can use as a guide to evaluate their own project-based experiential learning courses.: http://bized.aacsb.edu/articles/2018/january/taking-measure-of-experiential-learning

7. Is there a methodology similar to PBL with EL?

I think you will find many shared characteristics between what we call PBL and what we call experiential learning (this gets back to the challenge of terminology and definitions, which we touched in in the webinar). David Kolb's model of experiential learning surfaces in many discussions, and may be a good starting point for you. There is much more online if you want to dig deeper.



(Source of image: https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html)

8. Do you have any good examples of experiential learning in cross-cultural contexts, in order to foster cross-cultural understanding?

One of my favorite examples is Tuck's partnership model for OnSite Global Consulting projects. In this model, we partner with a business school outside the U.S. to carry out a consulting project for a company in the partner school's location. We staff the team with 3-4 Tuck students and 3-4 students from the local business school. In the first phase of the project they work together remotely, then come together for a 3-week primary research phase on-site at the company location. It is one of the richest cross-cultural learning experiences we have for students.

Here's a student blog post from one such project we did with IAE Business School in Argentina:

http://www.tuck.dartmouth.edu/mba/blog/growing-citrus-growing-ourselves-tuck-onsite-global-consulting-project-in-a

And as mentioned in the webinar, we have a standard (required) introduction to cultural awareness assignment and facilitated team discussion associated with every project. Happy to share more about how we do this off-line.

9. Have you detected any weak spots in your scheme and how you have solved them?

There are always weak spots and room to improve on our current practices. To ensure we take what we learn and use it for continuous improvement, we employ an extensive closing the loop process at the end of every cycle. We use the data we gather to introduce changes and improvements for future project cycles. We can compare data across projects in a given cycle and across years to see how we are doing in the eyes of our key stakeholders: students and company partners. Specific closing the loop activities/data sources include:

- A 90-minute in-person structured debrief with every project team (includes the faculty advisor)
- Phone debriefs with each client where we gathering feedback/ratings on different aspects of a project.
- Student course evaluations

10. Do you use any digital learning tools that facilitate experiential learning in a self-directed way?

No, we currently don't. But I would love to hear from others who do.

11. Do you sign agreements with companies for projects?

Yes, we do. We have a standard proposal template outlining project background, preliminary scope, process/timeline and budget estimate (if applicable). We ask for a client signature on that document before we staff a student team. This also becomes the hand-off document for the team and faculty advisor to ensure a smooth hand-off when the time comes.