



Reflection in Experiential Learning: Improving Affective Student Learning Outcomes

Inside U of A-Funded Scholarship

April 2, 2025

12:00pm – 1:00pm



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Land Acknowledgement



Reflection in Experiential Learning:
Improving Affective Student Learning Outcomes



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Event Introduction



Sanlyn Buxner, Ph.D.

Advisory Board Member, CUES
Research Professor, Teaching, Learning & Sociocultural Studies
Director, Graduate Studies
College of Education

**Reflection in Experiential Learning:
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Speaker & Panelists



Brian Mayer, Ph.D.

CUES Distinguished Fellow

Director of Undergrad Studies, School of Sociology

Professor, Sociology

Professor, Public Health

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences



Jacqueline Barrios, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Public & Applied Humanities
College of Humanities



Kathleen J. Kennedy, M.B.A.

Associate Professor of Practice, Retailing & Consumer Sciences
College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences

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Experiential Learning as High Impact Practice

AAC&U:

- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Experiential Learning as High Impact Practice

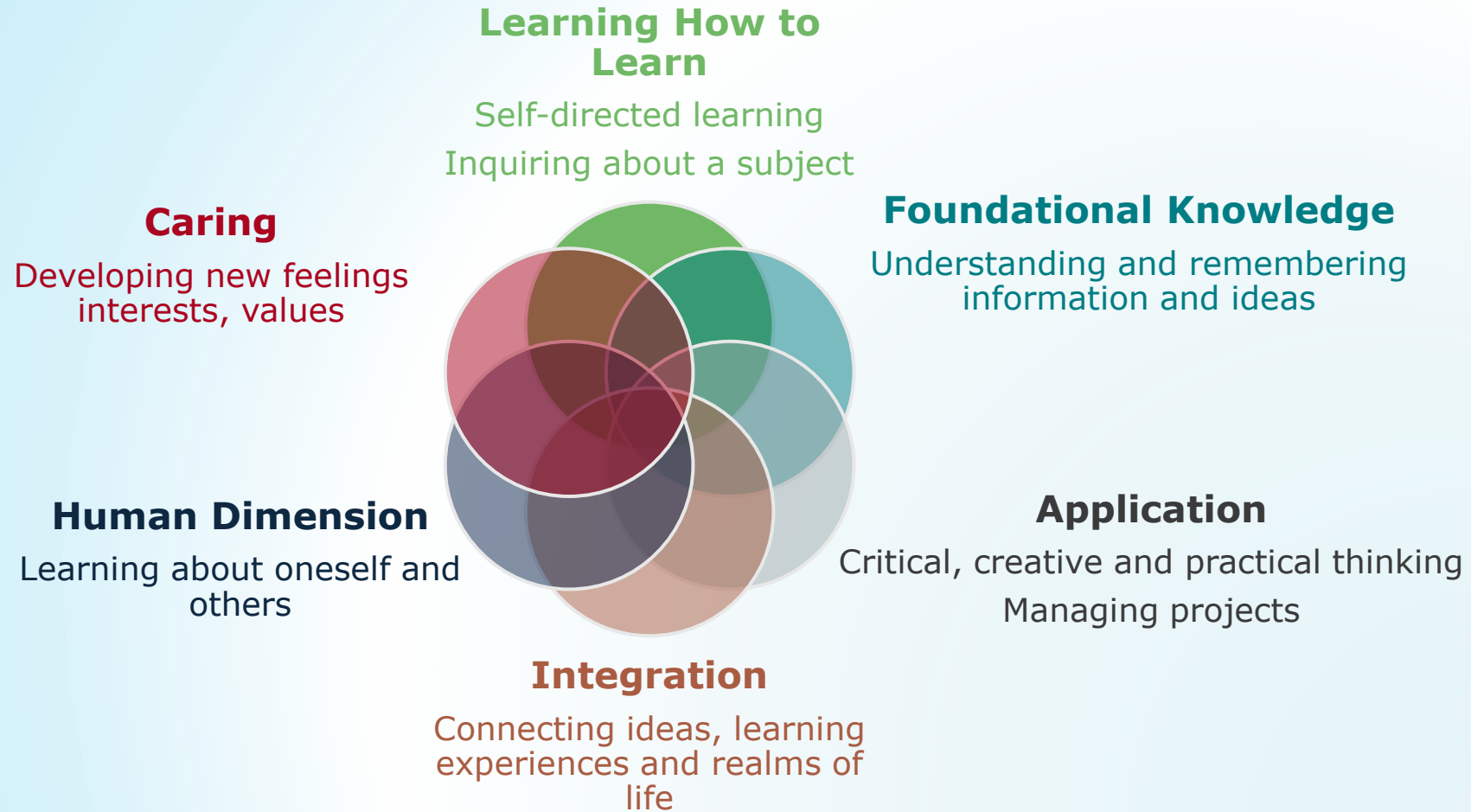
Challenges for Experiential Learning

- **Barriers to Access for some students (Jacoby 2015, Finley & McNair 2013)**
 - Unclear as to whether minority student groups have less access overall compared to more traditionally advantaged groups
 - Emphasizing community needs may focus attention, and recruitment, towards minority populations (Lieberman (2015)
- **Individual Experiences and Benefits may vary**
 - What skills, beliefs, and attitudes do students possess when entering the experiential learning cycle?
 - Does the approach to 'service' in service-learning require disadvantaged students to do more? (Clever & Miller 2019, Mitchell et al. 2012)

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning



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How Might We Assess Affective Outcomes?

Caring

Developing new
feelings interests,
values

Human Dimension

Learning about
oneself and others

=

Empathy as Skill:

Building Connections, Gain
Insights, Reflection on
Positionality & Bias

How Might We Assess Affective Outcomes?

Caring

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Empathy as Emotion:

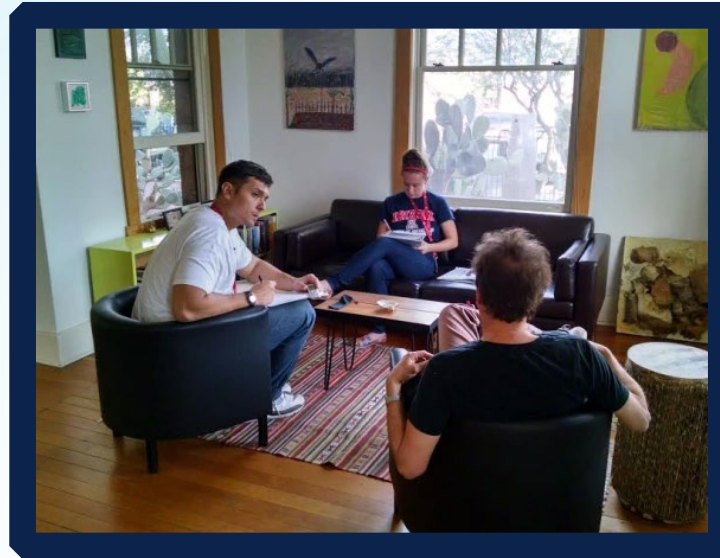
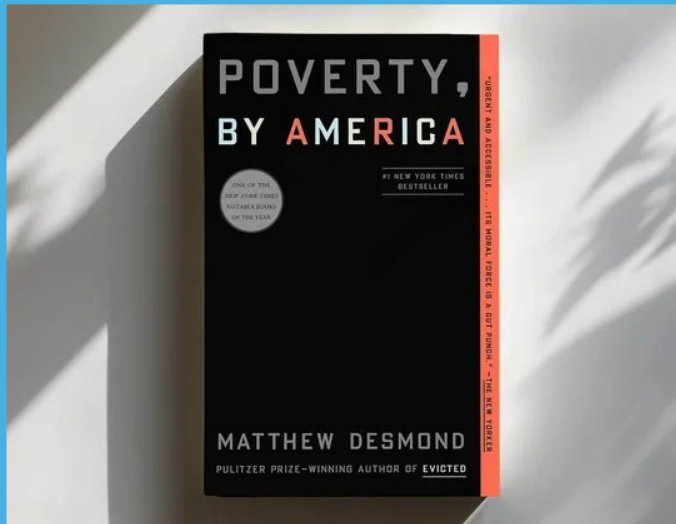
Reflecting on New
Motivations, Managing
Emotional States

Human Dimension

Learning about
oneself and others

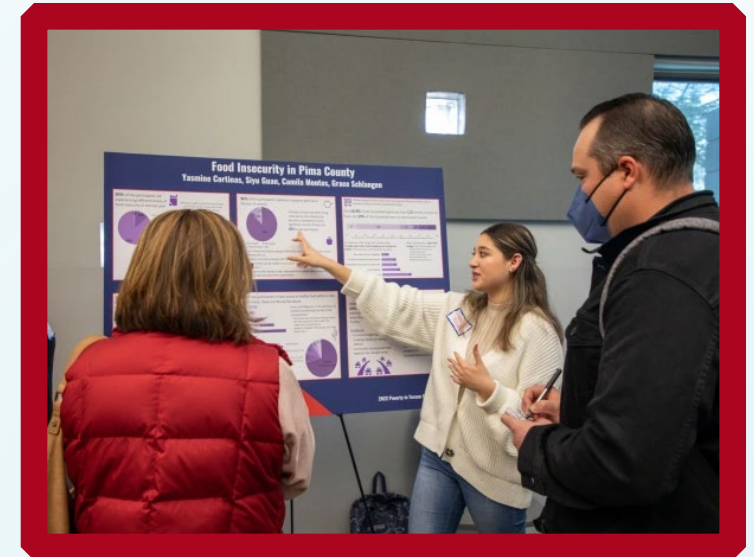
Case Study: The Poverty Workshop

Abstraction Learning About Poverty



Experience Studying Patterns of Poverty

Reflection Sharing Observations on Poverty



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The Data: Pre & Post Research Reflections

- **Two Reflection Assignments:**
 - Describe one's 'Positionality'
 - Reflect on use of one's 'Positionality'
- **Fall '22 + Fall'23**
 - 62 completed & matched
 - Qualitative Coding for 5 key themes

Table 1. Student Identified Positionality		
Total n=62	Count	Percent
Female	42	68%
Male	11	18%
Total		86%*
White	28	45%
Hispanic/Latino	19	31%
Black	7	11%
Asian/Indian	3	5%
Total		92%*
High Income	37	60%
Low Income	21	34%
Total		94%*
*Does not equal 100% because not all students disclosed in all categories		

Reflections in the Human Dimension

Connecting With Others

- I was pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to connect with and have conversations with everyone that I interviewed. My biggest fear going into the fieldwork was that I would so different from the people I interviewed that we wouldn't find any common ground...*

-Sarah

Empathy as Learned Skill

- When discussing a woman's situation, I utilized empathy to put myself in her shoes, to understand what she must feel like and is going through. Using empathy can help you pull back at times when you sense discomfort. - Julia*

Reflections in the Caring Dimension

Empathy as Emotion

- *With each interview, I saw how my complicated positionality went into action. I believed I would be more "stoic" to their circumstances but that was not at all how it was. I could understand what they were going through. Hearing those things... would even make anyone hurt.*
- Jack

Differences in Affective Outcomes

	Empathy as Emotion	Empathy as Skill	Connection	Social Structural Explanations	Increased Topic Interest
Male vs. Female	-.40**	-.29**	-.26**	-.18**	-.11**
High Income vs. Low Income	-.21	.16	-.21	-.29*	-.11
White vs. Non-White	-.10	.08	-.10	-.23**	.05
P(T<=t) Two-tailed T-test assuming unequal variance. *=p<.05, **=p<.01					

Conclusions

- **Integrating Affective Learning Outcomes through Active Reflection is Essential to Experiential Learning**
 - Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning provides guidance on how affective learning supports cognitive learning
 - Reflection can support culturally responsive teaching by encouraging students to be aware of human dimensions
- **Differences in Utilization of Affective Outcomes are Likely to Occur, Making Assessment Difficult**
 - Can aspects of Fink's 'Human Dimension' allow for individual variation while providing equal opportunity for growth?



Q&A



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Contact Information



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Upcoming CUES Events

[View CUES Events](#)



April 30, 1-3PM

Featuring members of the 2022 CUES Spanning Boundaries Team
BIO5 Institute | W.A. Franke Honors College |
College of Architecture, Planning & Landscape Architecture

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