

Working Paper 009

Preparing Students to Practice Economic Research

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Abstract

This paper is a practical guide for implementation of a collaborative experiential learning exercise. In 2016, our program brought economists from the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) into the classrooms of the University of Sioux Falls and Missouri University of Science and Technology, and students of those classes into the workplace. This program engages students in topical economic research, walks them through the research process, substantiating the theoretical base they had established in prior courses.

The contribution of this paper is two-fold. The first contribution is the development of the ten-steps guide on how to build a new partnership. This guide provides a starting point for new university-practitioner partnerships in various fields of study. The second contribution is the illustration of the theoretical transmission mechanism from experiential learning through intuition to executive arts.

The students in university classrooms today are the employees and leaders of the next decade. By investing time in developing partnerships between academic institutions and practitioners, we are integrating the academy and the workplace, broadening the base of experiences on which potential employees will draw, and preparing students to practice economic research.

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1. Introduction

In the first decade of the twenty-first century we observed the changing nature of the workplace documented by many academic research papers and popular articles. For example, see Newman and Winston (2016), Christensen and Schneider (2010), Tripathi and Sharma (2011), and Trilling and Fadel (2009), among others. The labor market changes from manufacturing to service, global competition, the need of constant re-tooling and learning new skills – all of these call for alterations in the ways we prepare our students for future careers. The workplace itself is changing. More people are working remotely, telecommuting, and teleconferencing around the world. Working in teams, and particularly in teams of people with diverse sets of skills, backgrounds, and cultural competencies, will become even more prevalent in the coming years.

In light of these changes, experiential learning can bridge classroom knowledge with the workplace by laying a foundation for the development of intuition and expertise. There are many examples of experiential learning depicted in theoretical and practitioner’s literature. Examples like apprenticeships and internships have gotten a lot of analysis. Here we describe an example of experiential learning such as a collaborative program between academic institutions and the practitioners aimed at advancing content knowledge through immersion in real-world projects. Participating students experience the workplace environment, in all of its challenges, learn soft skills needed to navigate that environment, and establish a base of experiences on which they can build. Supported by qualitative evidence from students’ reflections, we are confident that the development of those traits result from a structured experiential learning program.

The applied research course that we are showcasing in this paper is an application of the experiential learning model which blends the academic and practitioner’s sides of gaining expertise and intuition. As such, we argue that such a course could be viewed as the missing link in developing executive leaders. In the next section, a survey of the literature about intuition and practical experience illustrates the theoretical base for this application. From there, this application is described in more detail and transmission mechanism of the “missing link” is shown. In the last section, readers are invited to follow the step-by-step guide for replicating this innovative approach and developing their own collaborations.

The focus of this paper is to discuss the value of practical experience in terms of work skills acquisition, and the relation of practical experience to the academic curriculum of applied economic research. As we showcase an innovative collaboration between university economics classes and an economic think tank, we argue that integration of academia and the workplace is beneficial to all parties involved.

The focal point of our idea is based on the education literature that postulates that the experiential learning in the workplace is not just the opportunity to “apply” the material learned in the classroom, but it complements the academic learning by developing life skills that are unique and highly transferrable to any environment.

In 2016 our program brought economists from the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) into the classrooms of the University of Sioux Falls and Missouri University of Science and Technology, and students of those classes into the workplace.

This paper is a practical guide for implementation of a collaborative experiential learning exercise. The program described here recognizes the importance of building certain competencies before entering the workplace. The literature we surveyed genuinely aided our understanding of the experiential learning concept, which thereby helped us design the experiential learning program.

This paper is organized as follows. Part 2 summarizes the literature about experiential learning. Part 3 summarizes the experiential learning partnership and its outcomes; part 4 describes how to replicate this approach; part 5 concludes.

2. Experiential Learning: The Literature

This section summarizes the existing consensus in the scientific community regarding various aspects of experiential learning.

2.1. Methods of student engagement outside of the classroom

In addition to compelling evidence from the literature that learning outside of the academy develops expert intuition, evidence from best practices of internships, apprenticeships, and other methods of engagement of students outside of the classroom was examined. As the applied research course application was established, the ideas of Kolb (1984) were explored and the contemporary view of them, summarized by Moore (2013), was heavily drawn upon. The three pillars of the experiential learning approach are in the foundation of our approach. The first pillar is *Learning from Experience* introduced by Dewey (1938). This theory was applied by involving students in the professional life of the practitioner. The research assignments that were given dealt not only with economic content, but included workflow schedules, production deadlines, staff reassignments, and other naturally-occurring workplace events.

The second pillar of the experiential learning approach is *Communities of Practice* introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991). This idea postulates that learning is a function of active participation in the changing environment of the workplace. With staff researchers already forming a community of practice, students were organically integrated into it. This arrangement allowed them to experience the community of practice and engage in professional interaction within it.

The third pillar is *Workplace Learning* described by Billet (2001), Fenwick (2003), and Raelin (2008). This pillar suggests that each workplace has certain intrinsic characteristics that are specific to it, and as such, employees adjust to them. While the learning that occurred during the program was specific to the practitioner's organizational structure and research agenda, care was taken to guide students through reflection exercises at the end of the course. The goal

was to help them articulate the skills and competencies they acquired during this experience and understand which proficiencies are organization-specific and which ones are universal.

2.2. Core skills of contemporary workplace

What about the core skills, as opposed to intuitive insights, that are being acquired in the workplace? Are they different from the ones that can be attained in the classroom? Moore (2013) posits that the learning that occurs in the workplace is not simply an “application” of the concepts acquired in the classroom. The out-of-school environment requires different kinds of cognition, and thus the skills that are attained at the professional site are completely different from the skills developed in the academic setting. A portion of the value of practical experience is, then, in the additional cognitive abilities being developed; two of them, we argue, are expertise and intuition.

The support of new learning goals for the workplace environment in the twenty-first century is presented in Newman and Winston (2016) and Trilling and Fadel (2009). Both books argue that because the dynamics of the workplace call for teamwork, flexibility, and situated learning, the skills that are required in the practical world are unlike the skills and competencies attained in the classroom. Trilling and Fadel (2009) suggested that there are three groups of skills that are necessary for functioning well in the 21st century: (1) learning and innovation; (2) digital literacy; and (3) career and life skills. These skills are part of a unified, collective vision for 21st century learning that was developed by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

For learning and innovation skills, the literature specifically mentions critical thinking and problem solving; communication and collaboration; creativity and innovation. In experience-based education, the practice of critical thinking assumes a form different from the academic setting. Critical thinking at the workplace advocates action, preparation of well-articulated ideas, and efficient delivery of those ideas to others.

For the digital literacy skills, Trilling and Fadel (2009) discuss information literacy, media literacy, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy. The increased demand for the ability to access information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information critically and competently, and use information accurately and creatively calls for information literacy and fluency. Media literacy is described as the ability of students and employees to competently operate in various delivery methods (print, graphics, animation, audio, video, Web sites, etc.). The ICT literacy calls for the ability to use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate, and communicate information, as well as use digital technologies appropriately and ethically. By eliminating the classroom “walls”, students are exposed to the current technology tools and experience the challenges and limitations inherent to them.

For career and life skills, the literature points to flexibility and the ability to adapt, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural interaction, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility. While those are all inherent to the work environment, engagement in real-world projects also develops the concept of self and identity, for example, an understanding of what it means to “be” an economist.

Moore (2013) argues that under the right conditions the two forms of knowledge (academic and experiential) could be compatible, complementary, and mutually expansive. The potential for the workplace adding value to the school's curriculum and vice versa is a matter of pedagogy, of teaching practices, and of institutional missions¹.

2.3. Specificity of economics as a field of study

The cognition, intuition, and core skills acquired in the workplace appear to be universal. That is, they apply to any field of study. To determine if something distinct happens in economics in terms of students' engagement, the economic education literature was reviewed. The seminal paper by Allgood, Walstad, Siegfried (2015) summarizes the methods of teaching economics to undergraduate students and provides an opportunity to assess which methods are proven to be most beneficial to students in the academy. For example, cooperative learning, experiments, classroom and online discussions are all identified as the pedagogies that stimulate engaged learning and provide positive outcomes. Even though this article does not provide recommendations for the collaboration of academic institutions with practitioners in the field, the conclusion that engaged learning is the most beneficial to student achievement is encouraging.

In addition to engaged learning, the assessment of innovative structures of capstone courses in economics provided the foundation for our approach. For example, Li and Simonson (2016) describe the setup and the outcomes of a senior research course in economics in a public university. They conclude that the redesign of the course to provide an overview of the scientific research process showed positive effects on student learning outcomes and also on their satisfaction with the course. The model presented here builds on this idea by involving students in the actual scientific research process.

2.4. Partnership building

Lastly, the literature pertaining to the creation of collaborative partnerships between academic institutions and practitioners was surveyed. Fry and Kolb (1979), for example, suggest that the experiential learning approach integrates perceptive understanding of concepts with practical experience and is to be used in liberal arts colleges. In subsequent decades, many partnerships were formed and the literature about them is abundant. Reardon (2000) describes the value of a university's community engagements and Ishisaka et al (2004) present an example of an "engaged" social work education. Gavigan (2010) showcases the value of integrating career offices on campus with the academic departments to provide meaningful summer internships opportunities for students.

The experiential model that is the focus of this paper went even further. While the collaboration between the academy and practitioners is similar to the research above, the scope of students' work is different. The uniqueness of this project is that students were engaged in the practice specific to their future professional field (in this case, economics). This

¹ Moore (2013): p. 99.

expansion allowed students to not only contribute to the output of the organization, but to also gain an understanding of what it means to be an economist.

With the foregoing research as a base, a new experiential learning application was conceived. The main goal of this project was to bridge the two knowledge domains in which students operate: the academic classroom and the workplace. By using the theoretical underpinnings of intuition development, engaged learning and the curriculum of experience, and by applying experiential pedagogy, the university classroom and the professional environment were integrated.

Since the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) is an economic think tank, it is focused on providing value-added programs to students studying or intending to study economics, as well as those studying related disciplines such as business, finance, accounting or entrepreneurship. Thus, a natural partner from academe was the Business School of the USF. Participating students were from diverse courses of study: economics, marketing, accounting, and business. During the project, every effort was made to devise opportunities for students to debrief in ways that highlight the possible synergies between the academy and the real world, as well as the development of knowledge, competencies, skills, and expert intuition relevant to their future careers. It is therefore argued that an applied research course in any discipline is a vehicle to provide the missing link from core knowledge to expertise and intuition.

The next section ties together the experiential learning partnership model with the ultimate goal of developing highly effective leaders who are able to employ intuition in the executive arts. Based on the collected qualitative evidence of improved students learning outcomes, a suggested process by which similar experiential learning partnerships can be built has also been included.

3. The Experiential Learning Partnership

The focus of this section is to argue that the integration of academia and the workplace is beneficial to all parties involved and that those benefits spill over to firms seeking students and potential employees with this expanded skill set. Building expert knowledge and intuition through experiential learning contributes to the development of future leaders of the profession. It benefits the students as well as their future employers because they carry with them management experience and people skills. Though the case described here relates to economics, there is a high degree of confidence that this approach can be replicated in any industry.

The core idea and related application are based on the education literature that postulates that the experiential learning in the workplace is not just the opportunity to “apply” the material learned in the classroom, but it complements the academic learning by developing life skills and intuition that are highly transferrable to any environment.

Figure 1. Experiential Learning: The Missing Link

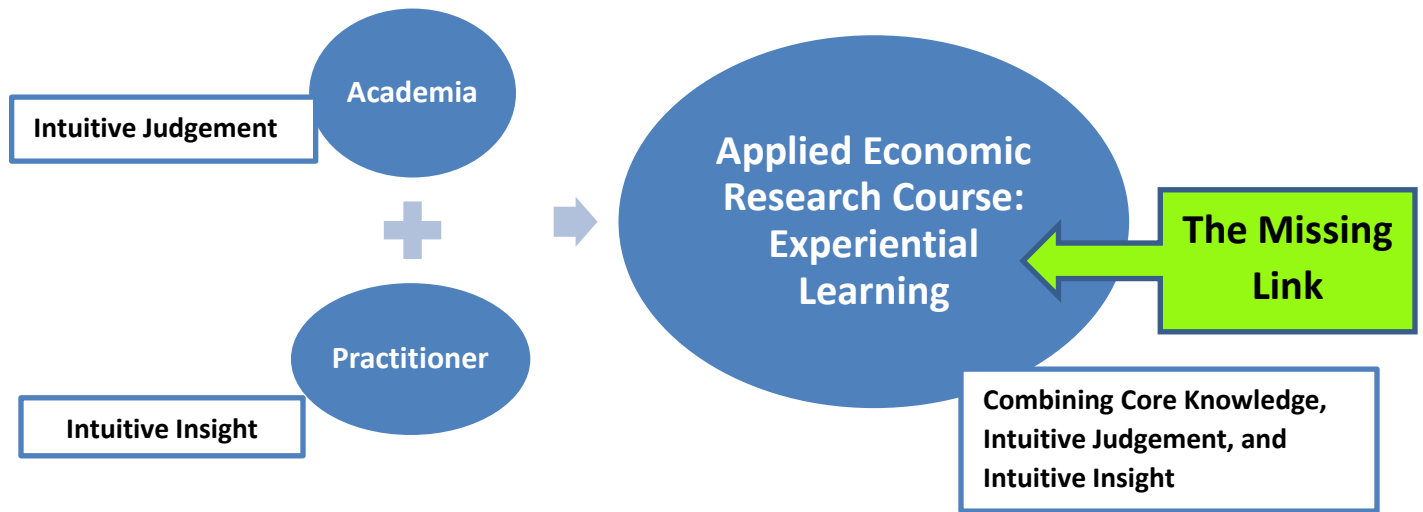


Figure 1 shows that the applied economic research course, described here, encompasses the core knowledge gained in the classroom and intuitive insight obtained in the office setting. It is thus hypothesized that this experiential learning opportunity connects young people on a career path with a leadership track. The contribution, therefore, is the recognition that experiential learning creates the potential for students to become executive leaders.

The progression of student's skills and intuition acquisition is shown throughout a career in Figure 2. The starting point of the trajectory is an applied research course conducted in the form of experiential learning. Upon graduation, using intuitive knowledge, intuitive insight, and confidence gained in the course, he or she enters a workplace, gaining additional practical experience and operationalizing intuition. With experience and intuition in hand, an expert develops into a team leader and eventually into an executive. The executive functions serve to create and maintain a system of cooperative effort.² The operation of such systems requires the highest development of the executive arts.³

To clarify this transmission mechanism, we refer to the classic book of Barnard (1945) on the functions of the executive. In this treatise, Barnard argues that the development of leadership abilities is of most importance for an executive. The higher the position of authority, the more general abilities are required. In addition to leadership abilities, the intangible types of personal traits are of major importance. Those traits, such as manners, speech, intuition, etc., make possible the development of important executive influences in the organization. In Figure 2 we show the progression of acquiring core knowledge, experience (which embodies the application of those skills), and intuition (encompassing both: intuitive knowledge and intuitive insight)

² Barnard (1945), p. 216.

³ Ibid, p. 222.

throughout a career. The contribution here is that a successful trajectory of becoming an executive leader starts at the experiential learning partnership model. Throughout this paper, we argue that such partnership is a missing link between the educational attainment and career aspirations of the next generation of professionals. We fully recognize, however, that this course is laying a foundation for such an alignment. The students will need to take matters in their own hands to ensure that the transformation of knowledge, skills, and experiences into an executive functionality does actually materialize.

The experiential learning application is now being conducted between a practitioner, the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER), and an academic institution, the University of Sioux Falls (USF). AIER and USF piloted a collaboration to seamlessly integrate a university class in applied economic research with the ongoing work of an economic think-tank. The students register for the course, meet at the specified times, complete the deliverables required by the instructor, and are assigned a final grade for the course. At the same time, the practitioners, in this case researchers at AIER, section out a piece of their research, introduce the students to the research question, provide mentoring to the students throughout their research and offer robust feedback similar to what would be received if the students were the practitioner's employees.

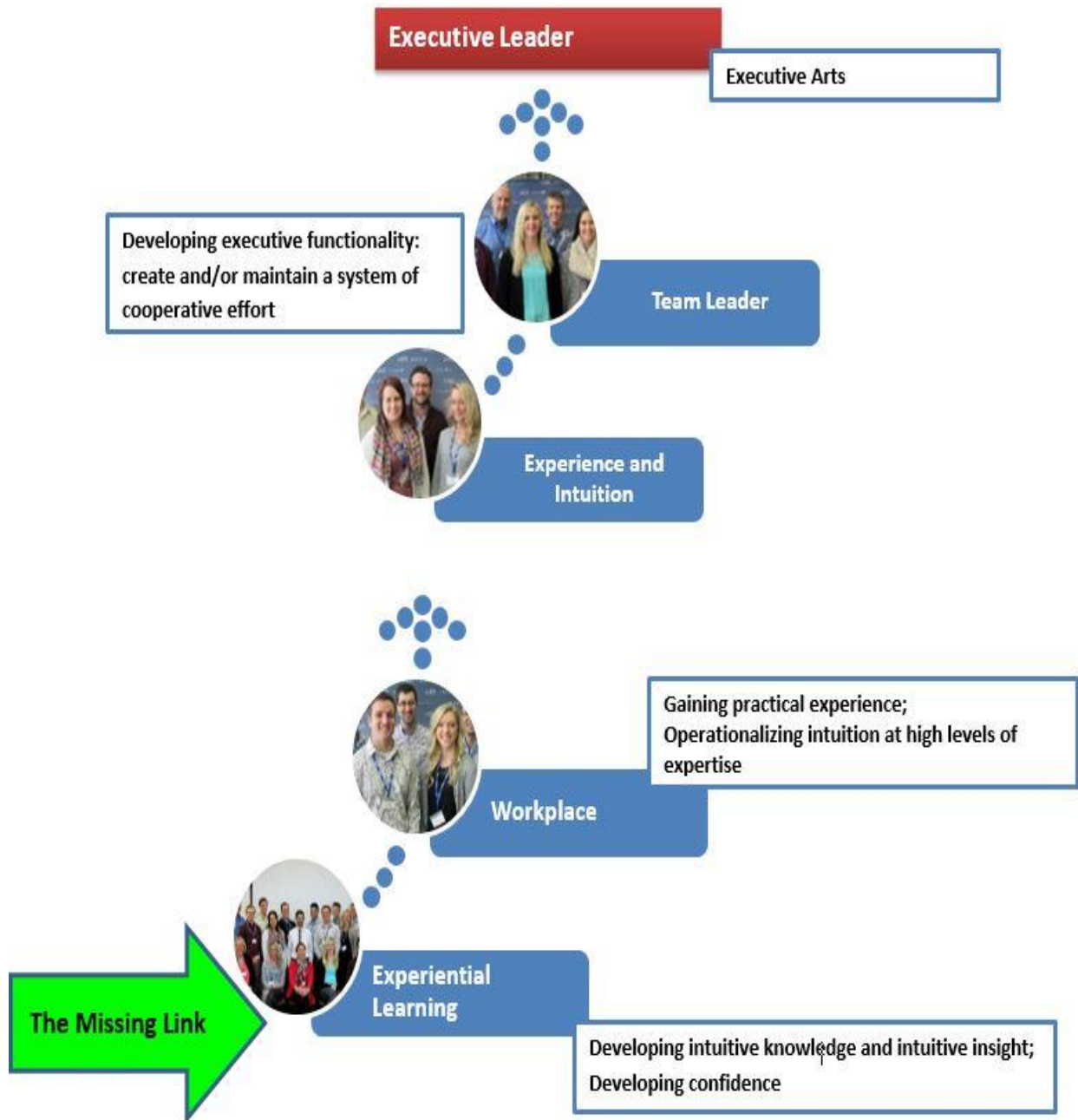
While the daily work of the students is done under the tutelage of the faculty member, there is an expert researcher able to guide, support, and further challenge the students in this endeavor. In order to minimize the supervisory burden on the practitioner, students are assembled into teams which tackle different projects that are within the research agenda of the practitioner. To sustain this collaboration, students engage with their assigned researchers via videoconference during pre-established times in the course, much in the same way business colleagues in locations around the globe would meet electronically to discuss a shared project. During these meetings, the mentor-researchers provide feedback, answer questions, and further develop personal relationships important to any team endeavor.

In terms of the students learning outcomes, we identified gains in both hard and soft skills. Students expanded hard skills of economic research such as developing research proposals, designing a research plan, compiling data, and writing a complete academic paper. In terms of soft skills, students reported that through this program they learned to be confident, independent thinkers. They learned to be able to self-guide their research progress, and communicate and defend their arguments and results to the experts.

The debriefings with students during and after the completion of the course were done robustly and with great care. Kahneman (2013) argues that timely feedback is essential to the development of expert intuition. During the regularly scheduled conversations, the professor has an opportunity to mentor students, correct courses of action, and help eliminate roadblocks. During the final debriefings with practitioners, students receive constructive, corrective feedback confirming their perception of the work environment, research processes and products. During those conversations and in formal written evaluation forms, students identified their confidence in being able to enter and grow in the profession of their choosing.

They were enthusiastic about entering the workforce and becoming successful practitioners themselves.

Figure 2. Skills and intuition acquisition throughout a career.



Students’ reflections, presented in Table 1, support the positive learning outcomes that we set as goals for this program. To meet the demands of the 21st century, students become knowledgeable, adaptable people who can work with others to innovate and thrive in the new economy.

Table 1. Program Outcomes

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Qualitative Evidence</i>
Research Process	“I learned what data analysis looks like and what it takes to do it.”
	“I know not to overlook the work that goes into finding this kind of data.”
	“Listening to the supervisors’ presentations gave me a lot of new knowledge and allowed me to analyze different research in ways I hadn’t thought of doing before.”
Communication	“Focus on tasks, focus on the outcomes, and convey the big picture. Don’t get bogged down by little details in a presentation.”
	“Learning to communicate more openly is something I believe I can relate to any job to make sure that the work I am doing is accurate.”
	“What I realized was that I am capable enough to stand in front of people with PhDs and speak in a sensible way.”
Professionalism	“I gained a better understanding of the professionalism that it takes to excel in the business world and the importance of conducting yourself in a professional manner at all times.”
	“I gained experience working with professionals in the workplace.”
	“I learned that economic researchers are not just anti-social people who lock themselves in offices doing work all day. ... These researchers are smart intelligent people who are problem solvers, statisticians, and people with personality who appreciate sarcasm (which I thoroughly enjoyed).”
	“AIER has given me an opportunity to partake in an economic research environment, my first experience outside of the services industry.”

4. How-To Replicate This Approach

Our vision is to build a network of academia-practitioner collaboratives throughout the country, and, with the help of technology, throughout the world. While the model has been developed and tested with a focus on economic research, the structure of the model and ultimately, the positive results, are not limited to that field. Practitioners can be pulled from policy think tanks, private industries, national non-profits, and government agencies, to name just a few.

To make it easier for aspirants in these fields and others to replicate this program, the implementation has been distilled into a ten-step process. These steps reflect the learning from the initial collaboration and subsequent iterations including the expansion of the model to a

new partner university. Potential collaborators can step through the process as it is summarized in Table 2.

In the second iteration of this program, another academic institution – Missouri University of Science and Technology – joined USF and AIER. This experience allowed for the identification of a first-year learning curve. Both, the “new” professor and the AIER supervisor needed to adjust their expectations about what could feasibly be accomplished, what the dynamics of the teams would be, and how to solve scheduling and technology related problems. Even though one could theoretically follow the 10-step guide (Table 2), the implementation of each step will take time and effort. However, if the academics and the practitioner are prepared to be flexible and attuned to each other’s needs, the program will still be a success. The students were generally spared from encountering the hiccups around logistics, but the professor must be prepared to manage these in a timely manner.

To enact the vision is to scale up in a way that will include potentially many more partners in a single collaboration. It is the belief of the authors, that the work of the practitioners can, and ultimately will be leveraged across several academic institutions and many students. As this collaboration grows, stacking the process of joining the group semester-by-semester is highly recommended. That is, to minimize the impact of the first-year learning curve mentioned earlier, it is recommended that only one or two new partners be added with each new iteration. This will allow the practitioners to work more closely with the new institutions and curtail the disruptions for the other partners. This way, after the first iteration of the program, in each semester the “new” entrant will learn the ropes, while the “experienced” institutions will pull the project forward. We recommend, initially, that the teams be comprised of students from one university. Only later, when all parties are seasoned participants, the practice could be broadened to mix students from different universities to serve on the same team. This experience will enhance students’ confidence, ability to resolve conflicts, and expert intuition further.

Table 2. Experiential Learning Partnership Model – Building a New Partnership

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Step 1:</i> <i>Develop a Partnership.</i>	The partnership is the bedrock of this model and requires a significant infusion of time for both the university and the practitioner. It should be understood from the start that full implementation of this model will cover more than one academic year and may require additional investments in technology and staff time.
<i>Step 2:</i> <i>Select or Develop the Course.</i>	This model for experiential learning needs to be connected with a class where the students have committed time and are invested in the outcome. For the piloted program, with its focus on economic research, the course needs to include prerequisite courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and statistics. It is the belief of these authors that this model will work successfully in other disciplines as well. In those cases, modifications will need to be made to ensure students enter the class with the requisite knowledge and skill set to complete the project to the level required by the practitioner. Without those skills, the benefits of the experiential learning model break down.
<i>Step 3:</i> <i>Establish Desired Deliverables and Outcomes.</i>	While the precise learning outcomes and deliverables need to be established by the university partner, it must meet the requirements of both parties and there needs to be clarity around these issues before the course begins. In the initial pilot, it was established that students would produce an academic paper in a format that was ready for publication. When the program was expanded, this question needed to be addressed by the new university. In this case, less emphasis was placed on writing and a greater focus was given to the data acquisition, analysis, and presentation of results. Both sets of outcomes and deliverables functioned well within the model and still use experiential learning to link core academic knowledge with the ongoing work of the practitioner.
<i>Step 4:</i> <i>Enroll Students.</i>	While this is intuitive to most, there are additional considerations that need to be attended to at the university level including: registration timeline, the role of the course in the students’ degree plan, and enrollment management. One challenge worthy of note is the inherent mismatch on timelines between a university and a practitioner. That is, the enrollment process happens very far in advance of the course. Given the fluid nature of the projects being proposed by the practitioner, students may need to register for the course without knowing the exact focus of the research or project.
<i>Step 5:</i> <i>Select a Topic.</i>	The selection of the final research topic falls heavily on the practitioner. Moreover, in an effort to make this process meaningful for both partners, it should contribute to the work being done by the practitioner. As the topics are developed, practitioners need to be aware of staffing strengths and limitations. While this process is often an enjoyable change for the researchers and other employees who provide the mentoring and feedback, it can also be quite time consuming and draw them away from other work. Practitioners will also need to anticipate potential staff changes and how they will fill and resulting void. An additional consideration for the practitioner will be selecting topics or projects that allow the practitioner employees to showcase their interests and passions. It has been observed that on the topics where the mentoring researchers were highly interested and engaged, the

	students were also more interested and engaged. This all requires a high level of flexibility on the part of the university faculty member. Specifically, it may be the case that the topics and/or project details are not available until immediately before the course begins.
<i>Step 6: Develop a Work Plan.</i>	A challenge of working within the confines of a semester-long course is that the work plan will need to incorporate the academic calendar as well as time for practitioner to provide meaningful feedback. Having pre-scheduled touch points between the students and their mentor researchers allowed students and researchers to plan their schedules to ensure full participation.
<i>Step 7: Assign Students to Teams.</i>	One of the successes of the pilot program was the ability to match students together in balanced teams that included a mix of quantitative, technical, and writing skills. While there will invariably be noticeable imbalances between teams, this is an example of the aforementioned “ill-structured projects” and as such, supports the learning goals of this model.
<i>Step 8: Coordinate Program Details.</i>	During the semester, the mentoring researchers and the students came together via WebEx. These videoconferences were important to introduce students and mentors, to establish trust, and to provide a forum for ideas, questions, and concerns to be put forward. Coordination extended well beyond the setting of dates and times. Resources are required on both ends to ensure that the proper technology is in place and working. Additional coordination is required to track team progress and meet assessment requirements.
<i>Step 9: Assess Program Successes and Shortcomings.</i>	Ultimately, the model exists to produce results. In light of that, short-term and longer-term student assessments are needed to measure the degree to which the experiences of the students are sufficiently advancing their level of professional expertise and supporting the development of intuition. This has been done with open-ended reflection questions, online surveys, and structured debriefing sessions immediately upon completion of the course. Longer-term follow-up methods and measurements are still being developed. The feedback from the students will be combined with the employer survey data in an attempt to match the experiences in this learning model with the expertise needed in various industries.
<i>Step 10: Modify the Program.</i>	As the research reflects, the workplace continues to change and, as such, ongoing adjustments will need to be made to the model. The immediate feedback from students allows for adjustments to be made from one academic year to the next. Incorporation of longer-term feedback will, naturally, positively change the model in more subtle ways.

5. Conclusion

As the literature documents, changes in the labor market, combined with global competition, require a change in how human capital is developed. As such, by breaking down the walls between college classrooms and the institutions that will employ college graduates, we expose students to the workplace practices and actively engage them in the learning process. The hands-on nature of our project forced students to be flexible as they experienced challenges working in groups, adjustments to the scope of their projects, or changes in the research staff supporting their work.

It is well understood that the skills needed in young graduates today are not likely to be the skills that will carry them for their entire careers. Partnerships, such as the one described in this paper, provide opportunities for problem solving, communication and collaboration, and develop a foundation for skills that are transferable. Such partnerships are to be fostered. Beyond the application of economic theories, students gained an understanding of research methodologies, proficiency in digital literacy, and advanced skills in data management and analysis.

The contribution of the experiential learning exercise showcased in this paper is two-fold. First, is the development of the ten-steps guide on how to build a new partnership. This guide provides a starting point for new university-practitioner partnerships in various fields of study. The second contribution is the illustration of the theoretical transmission mechanism from experiential learning through intuition to executive arts. It is the goal of future studies to empirically support such a claim. We want to caution, however, that the availability of such experiential learning partnerships and the transmission mechanism does not guarantee the conversion to a successful executive leader for every person. It is up to each individual student who goes through the program to take this opportunity and develop it to fruition.

The students in university classrooms today are the employees and leaders of the next decade. By investing time in developing partnerships between academic institutions and practitioners, we are integrating the academy and the workplace, broadening the base of experiences on which potential employees will draw, and preparing students to practice economic research.

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