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Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership

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Editor’s Notes

An Invitation to the Journal

Norman A. Dolch, Editor-in-Chief
University of North Texas

JNEL has been a forum on instruction and is now moving to also include articles on program and center administration as well. Be assured that the journal continues its commitment to focusing on pedagogical issues with students from the classroom to co-curricular activities. In fact, the journal is going to make an increased effort to publish case studies that can be used in instruction as well as other resources like exercises that can be readily used for instructional purposes.

From the outset, JNEL has reviewed texts and books for instructional purposes. Theresa Ricke-Keily of Notre Dame is now the book review editor and is moving the reviews towards comparative reviews of books in areas like fundraising, public relations, and finance. The idea is to maximize the usefulness of the reviews for instructors. Also, the January 2015 issue will have the journal’s first movie review, a review of a documentary on philanthropy.

As editor, I welcome ideas for inclusion in the journal. I encourage you to recommend JNEL to your library and also your colleagues. If you have a submission idea, please feel free to contact me at nadolch@sbcglobal.net. Also, I welcome ideas on how the journal can be more useful to you and your program.

Note: All articles in this sample issue appeared in the 2014, Vol. 4, No. 2 issue of JNEL.
Is Nonprofit Leadership Different from Business or Government Leadership?

W. Glenn Rowe  
Ivey Business School at Western University

In my view, the answer to the question regarding nonprofits and for-profits is no! There should be little or no difference in the style of leadership required for a nonprofit organization versus the style of leadership required for a for-profit organization. Having said that, I will argue that while there may be some differences in nonprofit and for-profit organizations, the similarities are too numerous to ignore—and the style of leadership required is one of them. On the other hand, the nature of government may mean that only one style of leadership is appropriate—a managerial leadership style. I will describe four leadership styles and apply these to the three types of organizations mentioned above.

With “tongue in cheek,” I have suggested in other venues that the only difference between nonprofits and for-profits is that the latter pays taxes while the former does not. Of course, there are other differences. First, for-profits are owned by shareholders and they are the residual claimants if and when a for-profit shuts down. If a nonprofit shuts down, the normal procedure is to distribute the net assets to other nonprofits. Second, much of the human talent working at a nonprofit are volunteers versus at a for-profit where the vast majority of the human talent is paid employees.

To me, the similarities are much more striking. First, nonprofits, for-profits, and governments need to operate with a mission over margin philosophy. Of course, as I have heard Shaun Elliott, CEO of the YMCA of Western Ontario, say many times, without a margin there is no mission. CEOs of nonprofits and for-profits and heads of government who forget this are mortgaging the future to pay for the present—never a good idea. The State Fair of Virginia went into Chapter 11 on March 5, 2012 and converted to Chapter 7 on March 7, 2012 (Schnarr & Rowe, 2012) because they forgot that without a margin there is no mission. On the other hand, General Motors got into trouble in the 1980s because they put margin ahead of mission. They have struggled since to recover. They did go into Chapter 11 in 2009 and according to Louis Woodhill (2012) they almost went into bankruptcy again in 2012.

W. Glenn Rowe is an associate professor of Strategic Management in the Ivey Business School at Western University. Please send correspondence to growe@ivey.uwo.ca
Second, nonprofits and for-profits need to use basic accounting principles. For example, when I voluntarily took on the treasurer’s responsibilities for a small nonprofit, I was surprised to find that depreciation was not an item on the income/revenue statement. The reason I was given was that nonprofits did not pay taxes so accounting for depreciation of our fixed assets and equipment was not necessary. I pointed out that buildings deteriorated over time, and that without accounting for this on our financial statements, we might be blindsided in 15 to 20 years when repairs that we had not prepared for needed to be done. Accounting for depreciation kept the deterioration of our building in our thoughts and, in my view, better prepared us for the eventuality of having to pay for major upkeep at some future date.

Third, nonprofits and for-profits need to assess their human talent—be it volunteer or paid employees—on a regular basis. The thought that it is harder to fire volunteers than it is to fire paid employees is a falsity that allows less than competent leaders in nonprofits to keep incompetent human talent in their organization. This is because nonprofit leaders forget that volunteers do get paid to volunteer—the pay is psychic income—and taking it away is more devastating than taking away a paycheck from paid employees in either nonprofits or for-profits.

So, with this background and brief review of some differences and similarities between nonprofits and for-profit organizations, what leadership styles would be suited to either a nonprofit or a for-profit organization?

Leaders of both types of organizations need to understand the paradox of the short-term and the long-term. It is relatively easy to look good as a leader in the short-term—cut R&D expenditures, cut marketing (especially advertising) expenditures, cut expenditures for human resources development and training, and cut capital expenditures. With even the same revenue stream, the surplus/net income will look very good for nonprofits and for-profits, respectively. But these are the building blocks—the foundation if you will—for the future/long-term success of any organization. So to build for the long-term, leaders need to invest in R&D, marketing, HRM training and development, and capital expenditures. Of course, this will not look good for them in the short-term, as it negatively impacts the surplus/net income. This is particularly troublesome if the leader’s compensation is tied to some form of ratio such as surplus/net income over revenues. Of course, this does lead to a difference between nonprofits and for-profits. For-profits may be able to use some form of stock market performance measure—but only if they are publicly traded. Which leadership style best understands this paradox and how to navigate through it?

In my research, I explicitly describe three styles of leadership that I believe are appropriate for nonprofits and for-profits (Rowe, 2001). This research implies a fourth leadership style, which I will briefly describe.

The most prevalent leadership style is managerial leadership. Managerial leadership comes from a deterministic philosophy. This philosophy is best exemplified as follows: the decisions I made were a result of what was happening in my organization and what was happening in my organization was a result of what was happening in the environment. These leaders are risk-averse and exhibit a least-cost behavior approach. They emphasize the short term because they need to have stability and order. Managerial leaders need to control the finer details of work they are supervising to the point of almost being over controlling or micromanaging. Generally, they have
little or no empathy when dealing with employees. They control through punishment, a system of rewards, and other forms of coercion. These leader/managers focus on the cost-benefit analysis of day-to-day actions and concentrate mostly on the short-term financial health of the organization. As noted earlier, short-term gains that result from a least-cost approach will generally not be good for long-term viability. Nonprofits and for-profits do need managerial leadership but my concern is that too many organizations are led by managerial leaders.

A second leadership style is visionary leadership. This style is much less prevalent and may be more dangerous than managerial leadership. While managerial leaders are focused on the past and present, visionary leaders are much more future oriented. They achieve organizational goals through their ability to influence followers—influence that is used to create an understanding of what is to be achieved through a shared vision. Philosophically, visionary leaders believe in free will (strategic choice) and that the decisions they make will impact their organizations and through their organizations impact the environments in which they operate. There is no doubt that Howard Schultz’ belief in gourmet, premium coffee led to Starbucks creating the gourmet, premium coffee industry we see in over 65 countries today.

Visionary leaders:

- rely heavily on their own values, and they invest in people and their network of relationships in order to ensure the viability of the organization. They articulate a compelling vision, and then empower and energize followers to move towards it. The formal structures of the organization will create few constraints for these leaders, as they make decisions and shape their vision based on their values, beliefs, and sense of identity (Rowe & Hossein Nejad, 2009).

Visionary leaders are dangerous because of their willingness to “bet the farm.” The better visionary leaders are willing to work with managerial leaders to ensure that both long-term and short-term perspectives are taken into account. As illustrated in Figure 1, visionary leadership without managerial leadership leads to worsening performance in the short term, whereas managerial leadership will lead to worsening performance, but it may take several years. One other caveat, when visionary leaders and managerial leaders work together, the organization is better led if the visionary is in charge and supported by the managerial leader.

A third style of leadership is strategic leadership. I define strategic leadership as:

- the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that enhance the long-term viability of the organization, while maintaining its short-term financial stability (Rowe, 2001).

This perspective presumes that strategic leadership is a synergistic combination of visionary and managerial leadership. It combines the best features of both these two styles. Strategic leaders think linearly and nonlinearly. They understand that most people they lead will be managerial in nature and deterministic in their beliefs about leadership—simultaneously, they will themselves believe in strategic choice (free will). Steven Ross suggested that strategic leaders are dreamers who do something about their dreams whereas visionary leaders are dreamers only and managerial leaders never stop to dream. This is encapsulated in the following quote (Loeb, 1993):
There are three categories of people—the person who goes into the office, puts his feet up on his desk, and dreams for 12 hours; the person who arrives at 5 a.m. and works for 16 hours, never once stopping to dream; and the person who puts his feet up, dreams for one hour, then does something about those dreams. (p. 4)

—Steven J. Ross, former chairman and co-CEO of Time Warner

Strategic leaders will generally create more value for nonprofits and for-profits than visionary leaders, managerial leaders, or a combination of a visionary leader and a managerial leader. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. The Impact of Different Leadership Styles on Organizational Value Creation](image)

Strategic leaders emphasize and accept nothing less than ethical behavior. They supervise day-to-day operations and long-term strategic responsibilities. Strategic leaders develop and execute strategies for immediate impact and the preservation of long-term goals that heighten the probability of organizational survival, growth, and long-term viability. Strategic leaders have strong, positive expectations with respect to the performance expected from themselves, their subordinates, their peers, and their superiors. They interchange and use explicit and tacit knowledge on both the individual and organizational levels.

A fourth leadership style is when a leader neither exhibits managerial, visionary, or strategic leadership. Fortunately, in my experience, these non-leaders are few and far between at the top of organizations. It is possible that they will be somewhat more prevalent in nonprofits than in for-profits as boards of directors of nonprofits may be more willing to “put up with” mediocre leadership than boards of for-profits especially if the leader of the nonprofit is an unpaid volunteer.

I have described the managerial, visionary, and strategic leadership styles to suggest that whether the organization is a nonprofit or a for-profit makes little difference as
to which leadership style is needed to lead for best performance—it is strategic leadership. Strategic leaders best understand the differential impact of corporate strategy and divisional strategy. They are able to give divisional unit CEOs the freedom and protection from corporate financial controls that inhibit divisional unit CEOs in pursuit of best performance for their division. Shaun Elliott at the YMCA of Western Ontario is an example of giving his three divisional unit leaders (Camping and Community Services; Childcare; and, Health, Fitness and Recreation) this autonomy (Rowe & MacDonald, 2006).

A for-profit example is Howard Schultz. I use him to illustrate the development of a visionary leader into a strategic leader at a for-profit. Orin Smith was the chief operating officer at Starbucks from 1994 to 2000. In my view, he was the managerial counterpart to Howard Schultz’ visionary style when Schultz served as CEO up to 2000. Shultz developed into a strategic leader as he learned to add the managerial to his visionary with Smith as his managerial teacher.

Watching the leadership changes at Starbucks (Schultz & Gordon, 2011) suggests that a managerial leader will lead an organization to worsening performance. From 2000 to 2008, Starbucks was led by two successive managerial leaders, and in 2008 Schultz made the unprecedented decision to return as CEO. He considered that Starbucks had lost its way and needed to be returned to financial health and, more importantly, needed to return to its values and to recover its soul—he considered that Starbucks needed to emphasize mission over margin (Schultz & Gordon, 2011).

So far, I have only mentioned governments in a peripheral manner. The very nature of governments requires that senior leaders exercise managerial leadership only. Whether they are only capable of exercising managerial leadership or are capable of exercising visionary or strategic leadership, they will be able to exercise only managerial leadership. Why?

Governments are large, unrelatedly diversified organizations. This very high level of diversification, the accountability for every penny a government spends, the political context of an election at most every four or so years, and the massive debt of many national, provincial, state, and municipal governments leads to governments being able to use only financial controls and to curtail the use of strategic controls. This emphasis on financial control leads to the exercise of managerial leadership only at the senior levels of government leadership (Rowe, 2001).

Returning to nonprofits and for-profits, I believe the question should not be: Is nonprofit leadership different from business leadership? It should be: What leadership style is appropriate for nonprofits and for-profits? My goal is to get boards of nonprofits and for-profits to consider that those with strategic leadership should be the first choice as the executive director or CEO, respectively. If a strategic leader is not available, then the organization needs a visionary leader supported by a managerial leader. If this combination is not available, then a short-term appointment of a managerial leader is appropriate while continuing to search for a strategic or a visionary leader. These leaders need to understand that mission is more important than margin but that without margin there will be no mission. Strategic leaders and visionary leaders supported by managerial leaders will get this mission plus margin idea better than managerial leaders.
References

A Look at Experiential Education in Nonprofit-Focused Graduate Degree Programs

Heather L. Carpenter
Grand Valley State University

Abstract

This study documented how experiential education is defined, the setting and support for experiential education, and the types of experiential education approaches offered within nonprofit-focused graduate degree programs associated with the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC). A comprehensive review of 49 program websites, 405 course syllabi, and 12 qualitative interviews with master’s program representatives revealed challenges with experiential education terminology but a variety of experiential education approaches being used within each program. Both support and evaluation for experiential education were primarily informal. The experiential learning approach was listed most frequently and the service-learning approach was rarely listed or mentioned. Further analysis revealed low levels of interactions between students and community organizations.

Keywords: nonprofit education; experiential education; service-learning

Heather L. Carpenter is an assistant professor in the School of Public, Nonprofit, & Health Administration at Grand Valley State University. The author would like to thank anonymous reviewers, Roseanne Mirabella, and Norman Dolch (JNEL editor) for helpful feedback on earlier versions of this article. Please send correspondence to carpenth@gvsu.edu
Experiential education has been defined as “a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values” (Association for Experiential Education, 2010, par. 2). There has also been a great deal of discussion and confusion over the meaning of experiential education. One proponent of experiential education defines it as a methodology or teaching approach (Furco, 1996); another classifies experiential education as a form of outdoor education (Fox, 2008), and another defines it in more general terms as a philosophy of education (Itin, 1999). In addition to having multiple definitions associated with the term experiential education, the term is often used interchangeably with the term experiential learning. In this paper, experiential learning refers to the intended outcome of experiential education, whereas experiential education refers to the process, grounded in an educational philosophy, and operationalized in specific pedagogical techniques.

Experiential education pedagogical techniques can take many different forms (Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennett, 2012). The forms, also called approaches, include internships, service-learning, outdoor education, work experience, field work, adventure education, vocational education, lab work, simulations, games, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and action learning (Crowe & Adams, 1979; Itin, 1999; Wurdinger, 1994). In addition, each experiential education approach can vary depending on course, degree, and program within each university.

Research shows that experiential education approaches can be beneficial to the students who participate in them, the universities that implement and oversee the approaches, and the nonprofit community (e.g., Bacon, 2002; Bright, Bright, & Haley, 2007; Bushouse, 2005; Gazley, Bennett & Littlepage, 2013; Perry & Imperial, 2001; Schachter & Schwartz, 2009; Walder & Hunter, 2008). However, virtually all of the research has focused on experiential education used within a single university or a single approach (i.e., service-learning) implemented within a limited number of universities.

Consequently, up until now there has been no comprehensive picture of the various experiential education approaches employed in nonprofit-focused master’s degrees (master’s degrees in nonprofit management and masters’ degrees with a specialization in nonprofit management), the programmatic and institutional contexts in which these approaches are being implemented, and the support—or lack of support—these contexts provide. Paton, Mordaunt, and Cornforth’s (2007) article discussing the future of nonprofit education called for increased partnerships and students working alongside organizations. In order to respond to this call, faculty and program administrators need to ask hard questions about what levels of interactions they want their students to have with nonprofits and what role their programs are to play in the nonprofit community. Responding to this need, this study gathered information from 49 program websites, 405 course syllabi, and 12 interviews of master’s program representatives about a) how experiential education is defined, b) the setting and support for experiential education, and c) the types of experiential education approaches offered within nonprofit-focused graduate degree programs.

The nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs affiliated with the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council were a logical starting point for this study. NACC was created in 1991 with the mission to “support academic centers devoted to the study of the nonprofit/nongovernmental sector, philanthropy and voluntary action” (NACC, 2014,
par. 1). Since its inception, NACC has worked to standardize nonprofit management education by developing curricular guidelines and indicators of quality for member centers. Many of the nonprofit-focused master’s degrees associated with NACC are highly ranked with *U.S. News and World Report* and thought to be example programs.

The paper will inform program directors and faculty members in the planning and implementation of experiential education and provide a foundation for future studies of the impact and use of experiential education within nonprofit-focused graduate degree programs. This study is important and needed because no one previously has comprehensively researched experiential education in graduate nonprofit education.

**Literature**

Today there are over 208 programs at the master’s level that offer a concentration (three or more courses) in nonprofit management (Mirabella, 2014). There are also over 45 institutions that are members of the Nonprofit Academic Center’s Council (NACC, 2014). After viewing all the websites of the master’s degrees associated with NACC, the researcher determined the following types of master’s degrees were granted:

- Master of Nonprofit Management or similar
- Master of Public Administration or similar
- Master of Social Work or similar
- Master of Business Administration or similar
- Master of Public Policy or similar
- Master of Human Services or similar
- Master of Philanthropic Studies or similar

In some cases, more than one master’s degree program at a university is associated with a NACC member center. For example, at one university, both a master of nonprofit management and a master of public administration are associated with a NACC member center. Master’s degrees associated with NACC are housed in a variety of colleges, schools, and departments and cover a broad range of academic disciplines (Dobkin Hall, O’Neill, Vinokur-Kaplan, Young, & Lane, 2001; Mirabella, 2007; Mirabella & Wish, 2001; Wish & Mirabella, 1998). Because of the diversity of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs, there has been much discussion over where nonprofit management education degree programs should be housed (Long, 2010; Mirabella & McDonald, 2013; Mirabella & Wish, 2000).

There have also been studies that discuss the student and faculty demographics of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs (Dobkin Hall, O’Neill, Vinokur-Kaplan, Young, & Lane, 2001; O’Neill, 1998). For example, in 1998 it was reported that master’s degree programs in public administration or business administration that offered a concentration in nonprofit management primarily had full-time faculty members teaching within the program, while other master’s degree programs primarily had adjunct faculty members teaching in the program (O’Neill, 1998).

**Experiential Education within Nonprofit Management Education**

Scholars often discuss the processes and challenges of creating nonprofit courses, programs, and specializations within universities, the types of nonprofit courses offered and student and alumni outcomes (Dolch, Ernst, McClusky, Mirabella, & Sadow,
2007; Fletcher, 2005; Herman & Renz, 2007; Mirabella, Gemelli, Malcolm & Berger, 2007; Stephenson Jr., 2007; Wilson & Larson, 2002; Wish & Mirabella, 1998). However, there is little literature that focuses on experiential education within nonprofit management education. In the literature that does exist, scholars discuss one or two types of approaches implemented in a nonprofit-focused master’s degree program; for example, service-learning implemented in a MPA course (Walder & Hunter, 2008), the capstone approach used within a MPA program (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009; Smith 2005), or the experiential learning approach used within a nonprofit master’s degree program (Carpenter & Krist, 2011). There is little research that discusses the variety of experiential education approaches used within multiple nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs across the United States.

There is also a scarcity of literature about setting and support for experiential education within nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs. The majority of the literature focuses on general factors important for the success of experiential education approaches in a program, department, college, and university setting. Some of these factors include the emphasis of service within the university’s mission (Bucco & Busch, 1996); support for service by the dean or department chair (Holland, 2009); service-learning (or other) service activities evaluated at the program level (Dicke, Dowden, & Torres, 2004); service included in tenure and promotion policies (Holland, 2009); and service activities and research documented by the department (Kecskes, 2006). The setting and support variables are helpful for understanding the variety of factors important for the successful implementation of experiential education approaches.

Methods

The methods involved three steps to gain an understanding of the experiential education approaches in nonprofit-focused master’s associated with U.S.-based Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) member centers. First, 49 program websites of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with NACC were reviewed. This review provided surface level descriptions of the types of approaches (e.g., service-learning, experiential learning, internships, fieldwork, capstones) that were used by each master’s degree program type. Second, 405 course syllabi were reviewed. This review provided more detailed information about approach types, approach descriptions, and approach grade point value per course. Third, 12 one-hour qualitative interviews were conducted with master’s program representatives associated with NACC member centers.

Website Review

The websites of the 41 U.S.-based NACC member centers were reviewed to identify the nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with each member center. Master’s degree association was determined by either the NACC member center listing the nonprofit-focused master’s degree program on the member center website, or the department that houses the NACC member center listing the nonprofit-focused master’s degree(s) on the departmental website. This review revealed that 49 master’s degree programs were associated with the 41 NACC member centers as shown in Table 1.
The website review also involved scanning experiential education approaches that were similar to what were described in the scholarly literature. The website review provided a good first step in determining the types of approaches (e.g., service-learning, experiential learning, internships, fieldwork, capstones) that were offered by each master’s degree program and how these approaches were described on websites.

Syllabi Review

Syllabi were provided by 30 of the 49 master’s degree programs associated with 41 NACC member centers. The syllabi review included 405 courses. The syllabi collected were for courses that took place between 2006 and 2010. Master’s degree programs provided between 1 and 45 course syllabi, with 15 being the average number of syllabi provided by each program.

Experiential education approach descriptions were identified in the course syllabi. These descriptions were similar to the scholarly literature (e.g., Edmond, Rochman, Megivern, Howard, & Williams, 2006; Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001; Miller et al., 2005). References to experiential education approaches were found on average in 44% of the syllabi for each program. For example, if a program provided 10 syllabi, experiential education approaches were identified in approximately four of the syllabi. The syllabi review provided a good understanding of how experiential education approaches were being implemented within individual courses.

Interviews

Qualitative interviews were conducted with 12 representatives from nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with NACC. The qualitative interview method was selected due to the definitional issues of experiential education. It allowed for program administrators to describe experiential education approaches as well as the setting and support for experiential education in their own terms.
The interview selection process involved two parts. First, through the preliminary analysis of program websites and course syllabi reviews, 11 programs were identified and invited to participate in the study. Programs were selected based on the variety of experiential education approaches listed on websites and/or included in course syllabi. All 11 programs were contacted, and eight agreed to participate in the interviews.

The second part of interview recruitment and selection process involved sending an invitation to the directors of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with U.S. NACC member centers. For this part, four program administrators from master’s degree programs associated with NACC responded to this invitation. In total, 12 telephone interviews were conducted from June through September 2010. Table 2 shows the number of programs and interview selection method.

Table 2

<table>
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<th>Number of Programs</th>
<th>Selection Method</th>
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<tr>
<td>8 programs</td>
<td>Syllabi review/website review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 programs</td>
<td>Degree type</td>
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The interviews were digitally recorded and followed an interview protocol that included major questions and related follow-up prompts (available from the researcher). The interview protocol was developed based on the review of literature and included the following sections: about the master’s degree program, institutional support for experiential education approaches, and experiential education teaching approaches used within nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs. The first two interviews were pilot interviews, and the interview protocol was slightly revised based on feedback from those interviews. The goal of these pilot interviews was to test the interview questions for content validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The interview recordings were summarized and then coded thematically. The thematic coding involved looking for similar findings or categories in the interview summaries (Creswell, 2003). During the thematic coding, similar words and phrases (or, at least, apparently synonymous words and phrases) were identified to describe experiential education approaches. These similar words or phrases were organized into themes and were used to cross-define each type of experiential education approach. These similar words and phrases were then interpreted and compared to the words or phrases used to describe the experiential education approaches on the program websites and within course syllabi provided by programs. Similar themes and categories describing the institutional setting and support for experiential education also emerged during the analysis process.

Interviewees included representatives from 12 master’s degree programs associated with NACC member centers. Each interviewee played a significant role in the program administration of the master’s degree program and reported to the Dean of his or her respective school or college. In two cases, the director or coordinator of the nonprofit specialization was interviewed.
Six programs offered a nonprofit/philanthropic master’s degree or similar, three offered a public administration master’s degree or similar, two offered a public policy master’s degree or similar, and one offered three different types of master’s degrees. Table 3 shows how many interviewees represented each type of master’s degree program.

### Table 3
**Master’s Degree Program Type and Number of Interview Respondents**

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<th>Master’s Degree Program Type</th>
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<td>Master of Nonprofit Administration or Similar</td>
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<td>Master of Public Administration or Similar</td>
<td>3</td>
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The 12 master’s degree programs were housed within a variety of department and school settings. Seven were housed within private universities, and five were housed within public universities. Eleven of the programs were housed within a specific school or college, and the other master’s degree program operated across two schools. Three were housed within a School of Business, three were housed within a College of Arts and Sciences, and two were housed within a School of Public Service. These differences in programmatic setting are consistent with previous research by Wish and Mirabella (1998) that explains the different settings of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs.

In seven of the programs, 50% or more of the students worked full time in the government or nonprofit sector while enrolled in the program. The rest of the programs had the majority of students working part time while going to school.

### Findings

This section of the paper includes findings that describe experiential education definitional issues, setting and limited support for experiential education, informal evaluation of experiential education and the variety of experiential education approaches used by nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with NACC.

#### Experiential Education Definitional Issues

The definition of experiential education provided by the Association for Experiential Education states, “[Experiential education is] a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values” (Association for Experiential Education, 2010, par. 2). From this definition, experiential education can be interpreted as an activity that occurs either inside or outside of the classroom setting. Interview participants were asked to provide their own definition of experiential education. Interestingly, half of the interviewees described experiential education different from the association definition. They defined experiential education as being activities that occurred outside of the classroom, specifically within a nonprofit organization. One respondent said,
Experiential education is practical-field based, more than just sitting in a room and reading a book. Every one of our courses involves working with a live example of either going into an organization or doing a project within an organization or at the very least, having board or staff members come into the classroom and discuss a current issue they are dealing with.

Another respondent said, “Any time a student is not in a classroom but working within a nonprofit, or volunteering in a nonprofit, or on site in the community for work-related nonprofit studies.”

Additionally, four interviewees said they had not thought about or discussed experiential education prior to the interview. These responses possibly could be explained by the interviewees’ unfamiliarity with the terminology and the words “experiential education.” For example, interviewees may have thought of experiential education previously, but used different terminology to describe experiential education. The terms community engagement and service-learning are used more frequently in the literature, therefore interviewees may have had more familiarity with those terms.

Another explanation of experiential education not being discussed formally at the program level could be because experiential education was primarily implemented at the course level. Interviewees had little knowledge about the experiential education that occurred at the individual course level.

The lack of familiarity with experiential education in the case of one-third of the interviewees was surprising because experiential education was in fact taking place within their programs (as evidenced by the program websites, course syllabi, and examples provided during the interviews). Additionally, 10 interviewees (including two interviewees who said they had not thought of experiential education prior to the interview) were able to explain how experiential education was tied to master’s degree program goals. One interviewee said, “We want students in the program to come out with a portfolio of skills that are not just academic skills and theoretical concepts, but also real skills and how you relate the theories and concepts to solve real-world problems.” The other interviewee said, “Part of what we want our students to do is to know how to manage organizations, and their being in there and getting their hands dirty is a really good development tool for them.” It can be inferred from the interviews there was a clear disconnect between experiential terminology and programmatic practices, in at least these two cases. The definitional issues provide some insight into setting and support for experiential education within nonprofit-focused master’s degrees.

Setting for Experiential Education

As indicated in the methods section, master’s degree programs were housed in a variety of settings (e.g., departments, schools, and colleges). Another indicator of setting for experiential education was the program mission statement. The program mission statements were similar and were described as: to train/prepare/develop nonprofit/public managers or leaders. Previous research by Mirabella and Wish (1999) explains that mission and goals should differ by degree type (e.g., master’s of public administration, master’s of business administration, or master’s of nonprofit administration). However, in this case, the nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs all had similar mission statements even though they were housed within a variety of settings.

Additionally, in three instances, interviewees indicated a strong connection between the master’s degree program mission and the mission of the university. One
respondent said the setting of the university being a land grant institution influenced experiential education within the master’s degree program. Land grant universities were created to connect and serve the community (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002).

Limited Programmatic Support for Experiential Education

Data related to support for experiential education was generated by the interview questions, “What types of support is provided your faculty that engage in this experiential education?” and “Have there been impediments to implementing experiential education in your program?”

The interviewees explained there was limited support was available for experiential education at the program, department, and university level. For example, three interviewees indicated that no support was available for experiential education, and one respondent said there was not enough support. The remaining eight interviewees indicated that support for experiential education was available through the service-learning center on campus. Consistent with the literature that primarily describes service-learning as an undergraduate activity (e.g., Killian, 2004; Imperial, Perry, & Katula, 2007; Lambright, 2008; McCarthy & Tucker, 1999; Miller-Millesen & Mould, 2004; Nichols & Monard, 2001), service-learning centers generally cater to undergraduate students and programs. Therefore, it was not surprising when one respondent said, “There are resources available, but we haven't taken advantage of these resources.” Four interviewees indicated that support available at the program level was informal.

Five interviewees identified specific impediments to implementing experiential education. These impediments included student time and availability to complete projects, faculty age, and limited access to resources and community organizations. One respondent said, “It is often difficult for students who are working full time and then come to class in the evening to ask them for another day or a weekend for a project.” Another respondent indicated that younger faculty members were more interested in using experiential education approaches within the classroom. Limited support for experiential education was an expected finding because the literature emphasizes support for service-learning at the university level (e.g., through service-learning centers) (Heffernan, 2001; Howard, 2001).

Informal Evaluation of Experiential Education

One indicator of support for experiential education is ongoing evaluation. Interviewees indicated that assessment of experiential education took place in each program, even within the programs where interviewees who had not previously thought of experiential education. The majority of respondents (10) indicated assessments occurred informally. Six programs engaged in assessment by requesting informal feedback from community organizations, and four programs evaluated experiential education approaches through student evaluations. Two programs that formally evaluated experiential education, evaluated one type of approach (e.g., the capstone). Interviewees also explained the difficulties of evaluating experiential education through grading. For example, one respondent said,
Grading experiential learning in my opinion is very difficult. Either they did what they were supposed to do and wrote something about that experience that shows some level of reflection, or they didn’t and what that falls on a grade scale is very difficult.

Because support for experiential education is limited at the master’s degree level, it was expected that few programs would engage in assessment of experiential education. However, this was not the case; evaluation of experiential education still occurred, but on an informal basis. The definitions and setting and support for experiential education in nonprofit-focused master’s degrees provides context for the types of approaches that are offered within each program.

Variety of Experiential Education Approaches

**Approaches listed on program websites.** The experiential education approaches listed on master’s degree program websites included capstone, internship, experiential learning, practica and fieldwork. Table 4 shows the number of times each approach was listed on one or more of the 49 master’s degree program websites.

| Table 4 |
| Approaches Listed on 49 Master’s Degree Program Websites |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>MPA or MNA</th>
<th>MPP or MBA</th>
<th>MSW</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Approach</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers in the table add up to more than 49 master’s degree programs because some master’s degree programs used more than one type of approach.

The approach descriptions from the website review were then compared to the literature.

**The capstone approach.** In the literature, capstone courses or experiences may or may not be experiential in nature. Sometimes, the capstone includes a review of theories and major literature covered in the program in preparation for students taking a comprehensive exam at the end of their program. Or in some cases, students conduct projects within local organizations. The majority of the capstone approaches described on program websites indicated the capstone approach was experiential in nature.

The capstone approach was often described as the “last course” or “culminating experience” on the website. The capstone approach was listed on 24 different program websites and was used most frequently by MPA programs. This is not surprising, because the capstone course came out of public affairs education (de Leon & Protopsaltis, 2005) and the capstone is offered in approximately 80% of Master’s of Public Administration programs (Garris, Madden, & Rodgers, 2008).
The websites of nine programs explained that the capstone was an opportunity for students to integrate or apply knowledge learned throughout the program. Often, according to the website accounts, experiential education approaches were also used within the capstone approach. Most notably, the experiential learning approach was used. This approach involves students conducting a project within the course. In eight websites, students conducted a real-world research project addressing a problem within an organization. In nine websites, students were required to conduct a policy project. In five websites, students were required to work in teams and present the results of their work of their projects. This is consistent with previous research stating that the types of experiential education approaches used within each capstone course differ greatly among programs (de Leon & Protopsaltis, 2005).

**The internships approach.** Internships were the second most frequently listed approach among all program websites and were listed 15 times. Internships were listed on two different nonprofit master’s degree program sites and eight public administration master’s degree program sites. The prevalence of the internship approach in nonprofit-focused master’s degrees has been written about previously. In 1998, Wish and Mirabella reported that 60% of nonprofit management education programs offered internships.

In five websites, internships were described as being for students who have minimal work experience, also known as preservice students. In four websites, internships were described as giving students an opportunity to apply theory to practice. Students needed to complete, on average, 300 hours within an organization for the internship requirement.

**Experiential learning.** Experiential learning is described in the literature as “any learning activity that directly engages the learner in the phenomenon being studied” (McAleavey, n.d., par. 1). The scholarly definition of experiential learning is very broad; the term is arguably best characterized as students conducting projects within specific community organizations as part of a course. Consequently, the experiential learning approach also is known as a project-within-a-course approach.

Experiential learning approaches were listed on 11 program websites. Six websites stated that students could select a project within a nonprofit organization. The other experiential learning approach website descriptions were more general and explained how students participated in projects throughout the program. For example, one program website stated, “Over 50% of electives make use of hands on projects in the field” and another website said, “Students use their skills to impact the community working with local nonprofits to address concerns ranging from fundraising to strategic planning.”

The use of the word project to describe experiential learning approaches on program websites was consistent with the broad definition of experiential learning (McAleavey, n.d., par. 1). However, the number of experiential learning approaches listed on program websites was lower than expected, probably because the majority of experiential learning approaches are offered within a specific class and are probably not listed on program websites.

**The practicum approach.** A small portion (6) of the nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs listed the practicum approach. In one program, the practicum was described as an alternative to the internship. In three programs, it was described as a capstone in which students would complete during their final semester.
Describing the practicum as an alternative to the internship or as a capstone was similar to the discussion of practica in the literature. Often, in the literature, practica encompassed other approaches (Garris, Madden, & Rodgers, 2008). For instance, in the literature, often the terms capstone and practicum are used interchangeably; fieldwork and practica also are used interchangeably.

**The fieldwork approach.** The review of program websites suggested that four programs used fieldwork; two of these programs offered a social work degree and two offered a nonprofit degree. On all of the websites fieldwork was described as an off-campus experience. In one program, it was described as students “applying classroom knowledge to the field.”

The website descriptions of fieldwork were similar to the descriptions in the literature (Edmond et al., 2006; Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001; Miller et al., 2005), with the exception of nonprofit administration programs. These programs used the term fieldwork informally and described fieldwork as a field experience rather than a formal field internship in which representatives from community organizations supervised students.

**Other approaches.** Other types of experiential education approaches were also listed on program websites. These other approaches included public service immersion, organizational experience, simulations, and assistantships. Simulations were not described in enough depth on program websites to be able to compare to the literature.

Interestingly, the service-learning approach was not encountered at all during the program website review. The absence of the service-learning approach may be because service-learning approaches are primarily used within course contexts, and they therefore are not discussed on program websites.

**Approaches listed in course syllabi.** Experiential education approaches were listed in 178 of the 405 course syllabi. Evidence of experiential education was found in as little as 12% of the course syllabi for a program and as high as 100% (or all) of the course syllabi provided by a program. Table 5 summarizes the approaches and approach descriptions that were obtained from the syllabi. The words and phrases were common words used to describe the approach in each syllabus. These words were selected because they match up with the definitions of each approach taken from the literature.

The other approach listed in the table primarily includes interviewing a nonprofit leader. Practicum approaches were listed the least frequently. This may be because practicums, like capstone, are usually an entire course and may not be listed as an approach within a specific course. Interestingly, the fieldwork approach did not appear in any of the course syllabi. This absence may be because no MSW programs contributed any syllabi to the collection that was reviewed. The fieldwork approach is primarily included within social work education literature.

The experiential learning approach was the most frequently listed approach in course syllabi. Various project types were also listed within the experiential learning approach descriptions. Experiential learning project types are shown in Table 6.

Fundraising and development projects, organizational assessments, and marketing projects were listed most frequently. It is also important to note that nine course syllabi explained that the student could select any type of experiential learning project.
### Table 5
*Approaches Listed in Course Syllabi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Approach</th>
<th>Approach Descriptions</th>
<th>Number of Syllabi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Capstone         | • Integrative experience  
                    • Solve a real-world management or policy issue  
                    • Combine theory and practice  
                    • Integrate concepts studied throughout the program  
                    • Consultant to a nonprofit organization | 6 |
| Internship       | • Preservice students  
                    • Apply theory to practice to a nonprofit organization  
                    • Apply graduate level education in a nonprofit organization | 3 |
| Experiential learning | • Applied learning experience  
                      • Design a project for a nonprofit  
                      • Create a plan  
                      • Students acting as consultants  
                      • To be done on behalf of the client “nonprofit organization”  
                      • Develop a project for a particular service or program  
                      • Apply one of the methods studied in the course to a real decision  
                      • Working with a nonprofit  
                      • Each team will present their plan and product | 125 |
| Service-learning | • Reflections  
                    • Provide a consulting project to a nonprofit | 9 |
| Practicum        | • Cultural immersion  
                    • Grantmaking practicum | 2 |
| Simulation       | • Computer exercises  
                    • Lab reports  
                    • Role play  
                    • Policy simulation | 6 |
| Other            | • Volunteer  
                    • Interview a nonprofit leader  
                    • Develop a case  
                    • Scenario  
                    • Examine the facilitator’s role  
                    • Speech | 27 |
Interviewees were asked to describe how experiential education takes place within their programs. Interviewees responded by describing a variety of approaches. Table 7 shows the approach descriptions that emerged during the interviews along with the number of programs that mentioned each approach.

Eleven respondents indicated that students did a project within a course. Six respondents indicated that the capstone approach was used within their program. Some respondents explained an applied capstone approach that involved students conducting a project within a nonprofit organization, and other respondents described the capstone approach with students conducting a research or case based project. Only one respondent indicated their program used service-learning.

Several non-credit experiential education approaches were also described during the interviews. These approaches included research projects with community organizations, fellowship program, and student clubs. This study focused on experiential education approaches used as part of a course, therefore the non-credit approaches were not included in Table 7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Approach</th>
<th>Words used to describe approach</th>
<th>Number of programs that mentioned approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capstone/practicum/summary project</td>
<td>• Students engage in consulting project for a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Students work as a team&lt;br&gt;• Live case&lt;br&gt;• Case analysis&lt;br&gt;• Students choose a topic&lt;br&gt;• Workshop class</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>• Students perform x hours for an organization&lt;br&gt;• Prepare students for practice roles&lt;br&gt;• Relating curriculum to professional development&lt;br&gt;• Student driven&lt;br&gt;• Semester-long internship in practice setting</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project within a course/Experiential learning</td>
<td>• Develop x for a nonprofit organization&lt;br&gt;• Interact with organization&lt;br&gt;• Oral presentation&lt;br&gt;• Students act as consultants for a nonprofit,&lt;br&gt;• Students volunteer x number of hours for a nonprofit,&lt;br&gt;• Students research, interview and write a case study of a real-world management issue facing a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Develop professional product&lt;br&gt;• Students work on project for a govt. agency or nonprofit.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning</td>
<td>• Service-learning experience within the course</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>• Simulations focus on topics of group and individual decision making</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Leadership course</td>
<td>• Group relations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: International Course</td>
<td>• Students work within a community&lt;br&gt;• Students do projects within international setting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Presentations from nonprofit professionals</td>
<td>• Presentations from well-known CEOs/executives on specific topics (x2)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within a course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data triangulation. The data gathered during the interviews were also used to triangulate the data gathered during the website and syllabi review. The data about the experiential education approaches during the 12 program interviews matched up quite well with the findings that were generated through the review of the course syllabi and program websites.

Table 8 shows number of times each approach was listed on the program websites, syllabi and interviews.

Table 8

Number of Times Approach Triangulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Approach</th>
<th>Number of Times Listed on Program Websites (49)</th>
<th>Number of Times Listed in Course Syllabi (405)</th>
<th>Number of Times Mentioned in Interviews (12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capstone</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The experiential learning approach was listed frequently during both the syllabi review and by the interviewees. The capstone approach was listed most frequently during the program website review but not during the syllabi review or interviews. The other approaches category came up frequently during the syllabi review because there were approaches that emerged in the syllabi that did not match up with the standard approaches of capstone, internship, experiential learning, service-learning, practicum, field work or simulation.

Figure 1 shows a word cloud of the experiential education approach descriptions across 49 program website reviews, 405 course syllabi and 12 interviews; and Table 9 compares approach descriptions.

The approaches described during the interviews were similar to those found in the website review and course syllabi review. Two key findings emerged from the triangulation process. The first key finding was the service-learning approach was rarely listed on course program websites. This should not be surprising because service-learning is primarily discussed in the undergraduate context (e.g. Killian, 2004; Imperial, Perry, & Katula, 2007; Lambright, 2008; McCarthy & Tucker, 1999; Miller-Millesen & Mould, 2004; Nichols & Monard, 2001). The second key finding was that there were low levels of student engagement with organizations as indicated by the experiential learning approach described in course syllabi.
Scholars believe service-learning to be a model approach in experiential education where the student, community and university benefit from the service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Furco, 1996). The student benefit is the reflection component and real life experience working with a nonprofit organization. The organization benefit is the student project or consulting component. The university benefit is the student learning associated with the service-learning experience.

Enos and Morton’s (2003) Framework for Development of Campus-Community Partnerships sparked the researcher’s interest in creating a framework, shown in Table 10, which identifies the level of interactions between students and organizations during the experiential learning approach.

The words describing each approach and interactions between students and nonprofit organizations were used to create the interaction framework. Each level in the framework builds upon the other. For example, for interaction Level 2, the words interview or meet with a nonprofit were used, for interaction Level 3, the words present findings to a nonprofit were used, and interaction Level 4, the words work with a nonprofit were used.

The majority of experiential learning approaches fell within the first and second levels of engagement as identified in Table 9, with 37% of the approaches being Level 1, 40% Level 2, 18% Level 3, and 5% Level 4. Due to the small numbers of syllabi provided by some universities, it was unclear if one university had higher levels of engagement than another. Interaction levels were not identified for other types of experiential education approaches provided in the syllabi.

The interaction framework only assessed what was provided in the course syllabi and some syllabi may be missing key information about each experiential learning approach. For example, students may have presented the findings of their project to a nonprofit but this information was not provided in the course syllabi descriptions; therefore the approach was rated at a lower interaction level. Even so, the interaction framework could be used in future research to explore the differences in learning and preparedness of students between the interaction levels.
### Table 9

**Approach Description Triangulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Approach</th>
<th>Website Approach Descriptions (49)</th>
<th>Syllabi Approach Descriptions (405)</th>
<th>Interview Approach Descriptions (12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capstone</td>
<td>• Last course&lt;br&gt;• Culminating experience&lt;br&gt;• Integrate or apply knowledge learned throughout the program&lt;br&gt;• Conduct a real-world research project addressing a problem within an organization&lt;br&gt;• Conduct a policy project&lt;br&gt;• Work in teams&lt;br&gt;• Present the results of project</td>
<td>• Integrative experience&lt;br&gt;• Solve a real-world management or policy issue&lt;br&gt;• Combine theory and practice&lt;br&gt;• Integrate concepts studied throughout the program&lt;br&gt;• Consultant to a nonprofit organization</td>
<td>• Students engage in consulting project for a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Students work as a team&lt;br&gt;• Live case&lt;br&gt;• Case analysis&lt;br&gt;• Students choose a topic&lt;br&gt;• Workshop class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>• Required for students who have minimal work experience&lt;br&gt;• Opportunity to apply theory to practice&lt;br&gt;• Complete 300 hours internship within an organization&lt;br&gt;• For course credit&lt;br&gt;• Not required</td>
<td>• Preservice students&lt;br&gt;• Apply theory to practice to a nonprofit organization&lt;br&gt;• Apply graduate level education in a nonprofit organization</td>
<td>• Students perform x hours for an organization&lt;br&gt;• Prepare students for practice roles&lt;br&gt;• Relating curriculum to professional development&lt;br&gt;• Student driven&lt;br&gt;• Semester-long internship in practice setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>• Students select a project within a nonprofit organization</td>
<td>• Applied learning experience&lt;br&gt;• Design a project for a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Create a plan&lt;br&gt;• Students acting as consultants&lt;br&gt;• To be done on behalf of the client “nonprofit organization”&lt;br&gt;• Develop a project for a particular service or program&lt;br&gt;• Apply one of the methods studied in the course to a real decision&lt;br&gt;• Working with a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Each team will present their plan and product</td>
<td>• Interact with organization&lt;br&gt;• Oral presentation&lt;br&gt;• Students act as consultants for a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Students volunteer x number of hours for a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Students research, interview and write a case study of a real-world management issue facing a nonprofit&lt;br&gt;• Develop professional product&lt;br&gt;• Students work on project for a govt. agency or nonprofit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>• Reflections&lt;br&gt;• Provide a consulting project to a nonprofit</td>
<td>• Service-learning experience within the course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9 (cont.)

**Approach Description Triangulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Approach</th>
<th>Website Approach Descriptions (49)</th>
<th>Syllabi Approach Descriptions (405)</th>
<th>Interview Approach Descriptions (12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>• An alternative to the internship</td>
<td>• Cultural Immersion</td>
<td>• Part of capstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The capstone</td>
<td>• Grantmaking Practicum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>• Off-campus experience</td>
<td>• n/a</td>
<td>• n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning experience in the field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply classroom knowledge to the field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>• see below</td>
<td>• Computer exercises</td>
<td>• Simulations focus on topics of group and individual decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public service immersion, organizational experience, simulation, and assistantship</td>
<td>• Lab reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Role play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Policy simulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>• Volunteer</td>
<td>• Interview a nonprofit leader</td>
<td>• Group relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop a case</td>
<td>• Scenarios</td>
<td>• Students work within a community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Examine the facilitator’s role</td>
<td>• Speech</td>
<td>• Students do projects within international setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speech</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Presentations from well known CEOs/executives on specific topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The descriptions reflect the words that were used to describe each approach and do not reflect the number of times the term was used.

### Table 10

**Interaction Framework for Experiential Learning Approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Level</th>
<th>Interaction Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Study a nonprofit (or something else) but do not interact with the nonprofit being studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Study a nonprofit and interact with the nonprofit in some manner (e.g., interview the staff or executives within a nonprofit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Study a nonprofit, interact with the nonprofit in some manner (e.g., interview the staff or executives within a nonprofit), and present findings to the nonprofit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Study a nonprofit; interact with the nonprofit in some manner (e.g., interview the staff or executives within a nonprofit), present findings to the nonprofit, and work collaboratively with the nonprofit to create the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion, Recommendations for Future Research, and Practice Implications

The website review, syllabi review, and interview data revealed a variety of expected and unexpected findings based on the literature. Interviewees had challenges with the experiential education terminology but were clearly using experiential education within their programs. Additionally, support for experiential education was formally available at the university level through a campus wide service-learning center, and limited at the program level from individual faculty members and program administrators. Moreover, assessment of experiential education primarily occurred on an informal basis.

Each program used a variety of experiential education approaches. Consistent with the syllabus and website review, the most commonly mentioned approach was experiential learning also known as “a project within a course.” Reviewing the syllabi closer revealed low levels of interactions between students and community organizations. The service-learning approach was rarely mentioned in the website and syllabi review, and in the interviews.

Based on these findings, future studies should focus on more documentation about the informal and formal aspects of experiential education in nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs and on levels of interactions between students conducting experiential learning projects and community organizations (see Gazley et al., 2013 for an example). Future studies can also focus on the impact of experiential education approaches on students. Finally, future studies can explore further which setting and support factors influence the types of experiential education approaches offered within each program.

The findings also have implications on faculty and program administrators. As stated in the beginning of this paper, program administrators need to ask hard questions about what levels of interactions they want their students to have with nonprofits and what role their programs are to play in the nonprofit community. Some programs may not be comfortable having students present findings to community organizations. Other programs may recognize that students would benefit from increased interactions with nonprofit organizations.

Limitations and Delimitations

As with any study, there were some limitations. Using master’s degrees associated with NACC in this study was a challenge. This limitation was addressed by the extensive website review (discussed in the methods section) that identified specific master’s degrees associated with NACC member centers. Another limitation relates to the emergent nature of the data. Since each program administrator may use different vocabulary to describe experiential education, the interviews allowed for program administrators to define experiential education in their own terms.

Another limitation was that not all types of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs are equally represented in this study. The interview sampling strategy identified programs that used experiential education and some types of degree programs used more approaches than other types of programs. In the second part of this study, not included in this paper, program administrators of all eligible nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with NACC member centers and all other nonprofit-
focused master’s degree programs were invited to participate in a survey. The second part of the study made sure that a variety of experiential education approaches descriptions, settings, and support mechanisms were represented. Additionally, the second part of the study and analysis revealed few differences between NACC and non-NACC programs.

Last, there were some limitations in using the syllabi data. It was challenging gathering a comprehensive picture of how experiential education approaches were being used within a program as a whole because some programs did not provide all syllabi. In order to address this limitation, specific examples of experiential education approaches were pulled from course assignments. However, there may have been other experiential education approaches used within a course that were not described in the course syllabi. Even with the limitations described above, the website review, syllabi review and interviews provided a first look at how experiential education approaches were used and described within nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated with NACC.

Conclusions

The overall purpose of this paper was to define and document the setting, support and types of experiential education approaches used within nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs associated NACC member centers across the United States. This paper provides a foundation for understanding experiential education approaches within the context of nonprofit management education. Program administrators and faculty members of nonprofit-focused master’s degree programs can use these findings as a kind of lens through which they can look at experiential education in their own programs and courses. The findings also lay a foundation for future studies that will, hopefully, focus on the impact of multiple experiential education approaches on students and on any community organizations with which the students interact.

References


In her introduction to *Donor Cultivation and the Donor Lifecycle Map: A New Framework for Fundraising*, author Deborah Kaplan Polivy states that her frustrating experiences with nonprofit organizations and their shortsighted approach to fundraising led her to write this book. In her role as a consultant, she witnessed many panicked attempts to raise money without having cultivated a donor base or at least having cultivated it poorly. Polivy draws a distinction between “development” and “fundraising,” stating that development includes donor cultivation which is an ongoing process that engages donors and deepens their philanthropic commitment to the organization. Fundraising, on the other hand, is the result of that cultivation and development. Her intent is to combine her consulting experience with the *Donor Lifecycle Map* created by Sarah Clifton to create a “conceptual framework for donor development.” In fact, so much emphasis is placed on this map that it becomes the spine of the book, and it’s surprising that Clifton is not listed as a coauthor.

This book might be useful to someone in the beginning stages of a development career so he or she can understand the importance of the role of a support person. It could also serve as a reminder to development leaders and board members that building a philanthropic minded donor base is a marathon, not a sprint, and it takes years of dedication to the details for a small donor to blossom into a big donor. As far as its use in a course on fund development, it might also be useful there for the same reasons.

The book consists of 11 chapters, and in Chapter 1 she advances her belief that nonprofit organizations are almost exclusively focused on the capital campaign or the annual fund drive. They do not recognize the importance of maintaining consistent communications with the donor that would offer additional giving activities that could build a deep relationship and ultimately result in a significant major or planned gift. Polivy cites Sarah Clifton’s donor lifecycle progression as first gift, second gift, second-year active with donors of similar interest and commitment, multiyear active, major or stretch giving, and finally, ultimate giving (planned gift, major gift, or bequest). Polivy believes that the multiyear donor who gives small amounts is often taken for granted.
while the major gift donors are heavily courted. She outlines the three goals of cultivation: to increase (1) the number of donors, (2) the size of their gifts and (3) the number of donation opportunities. Clifton holds that the standard donor pyramid doesn't work, because it doesn't take into account this cycle of giving. The flaw in this assertion is that the giving pyramid is not designed to be a donor cultivation model; it is used primarily as a planning model for campaigns. The donors who are identified in the pyramid model will naturally be at different stages of the donor lifecycle, so the two are actually complimentary.

Polivy’s claim in Chapter 2 that donor diversity is an important issue is not a new one, and she claims that the use of the donor lifecycle map can help ensure that an organization does not become dependent on one particular funder, as well as be at the mercy of one particular donor or a small group of donors. She uses Eli Broad as an example of a philanthropist who wields too much power over arts groups because there is not a diverse (or large) pool of donors to the arts. While her assertion that relying on only a few funding sources is not healthy is true, she seems to assume that this lack of diversity is due primarily to a failure of nonprofits to cultivate new donors, and not the fact that there are a limited number of donors with the potential giving power of Eli Broad. However, her point that too many nonprofits are overreliant on government and foundation sources while the largest share of giving is from individuals who need to be cultivated should not be argued.

“Building a Foundation” is the title of Chapter 3, and it includes the necessary nod to building a case statement that evolves from the mission statement. Another fundraiser is also quoted as saying that making the case is not about meeting the organization’s needs, but the organization meeting the needs of society. The narrative discusses a change in the way public television stations made their cases to donors, and how they had shifted their focus to emphasizing how the stations’ broadcasts impacted the local community. While much success was claimed with this change, there was no example of how the television station made that case or what kind of measurements it used to show social impact. As the author of this review knows from personal experience, Neilson ratings show viewership but do not reflect social impact, and many funders are reluctant to give funds to public radio and television for that reason. Probably the most important point made in this section is that excellent back-room support operations are absolutely crucial to creating a donor cultivation program that takes a donor from first-time contribution to a planned gift during his or her lifetime. Making an error on a donor thank-you letter, or neglecting to communicate with new first-time donors is a sure way to guarantee that they never get beyond being a one-time contributor.

Chapter 4 offers a list of “personal” donor cultivation tools that almost any nonprofit could adapt for its own use. In this reviewer’s opinion, it covers the usual things that a top development officer should do but sometimes forgets. The suggestions to cultivate donors are to schedule face-to-face meetings, thank them immediately, call them (especially when they have increased their donation), invite them to serve as a volunteer (which often leads to more and larger donations), interview them for a feasibility study, and donor recognition, to name a few. Polivy also goes into detail about how to use each of these tools, which is especially helpful to the novice fundraiser. However, there is not much new here for the experienced fund development person, although being reminded of the best practices will hopefully encourage the seasoned profes-
sional to “get back to basics.” Chapter 5 offers up a list of nonpersonal tools, such as newsletters, reports, events, social media and radio, television, and newspapers. These are really educational communications tools that also serve as marketing vehicles, and combined with the personal tools they help attract new donors, broaden the potential donor base, and deepen the commitment of the current donor.

How to integrate these donor cultivation tools with the donor lifecycle map is the subject of Chapter 6, and the breakdown is fairly easy to understand and implement. Polivy highlights each stage of the map and accompanies each stage with a list of the appropriate donor cultivation tools. Starting with the first-time donor, she lists tools such as newsletters, social media, personal letter, and annual report on the Internet. At the end of the map, the tools used for ultimate or planned gifts would include special recognition, site visits, special donor events and personal visits. She clearly shows an increase in the type and frequency of using those tools as a donor moves through the lifecycle.

Polivy challenges our perceptions of top potential donors in Chapter 7 by pointing out that many organizations are cultivating younger audiences because they understand the importance of donor cultivations over time. People are also starting to retire early with substantial wealth in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, so only targeting those who are in their twilight years may not be a solid strategy. She also states that our focus on wealthy men does not reflect reality as a large number of substantial bequests come from wealthy women who are widowed and have no children. Additionally, 50% of business owners are women and there is a tremendous potential for philanthropy.

By her own admission, the donor cultivation system that Polivy proposes is not an easy one. It takes long-term thinking, significant planning, a commitment of appropriate resources, and the patience to suffer delayed gratitude and reap the rewards of increased major gifts and bequests. In today’s pressure-cooker environment, short-term thinking often prevails, and the initiative could get sidelined by those who have a difficult time embracing change. She points out that the organization’s culture can also present obstacles; however, that culture is dictated by the CEO, other organization leaders, and the board. In Chapter 8, Polivy puts most of the onus of the responsibility of leading this change on the CEO, stating that he or she is the person responsible for implementation of internal operations. Yet without the support of the board, launching such a capital intensive initiative would be very difficult if not impossible. In order to actually implement the donor cultivation program she proposes, it would seem that an organization would have to be in a good financial position in the first place so that the possibility of derailment of its long-term strategy is significantly reduced. Even though Polivy’s model is solid in theory, in practice it is problematic, especially for nonprofit organizations that are struggling financially, and in the current economic climate, most are.

The case study that makes up Chapter 9 is really more of an interview with public television executive Robert Altman about his strategy to increase his station’s share of major gifts from donors. Altman makes the point that public television has historically been thought of as a distributor of programming, and the station needed to better connect with the community. He mentioned focusing on the impact of the station on its viewers and how the organization’s mission statement had been changed to incorporate sensitivity toward diversity and used words such as “enrich,” “empower,” and “advance.”
However, there is no mention as to how that mission statement was converted into action, such as producing more local content or having more community affairs programming. It seems that in order to make a case to a donor, specific actions need to be identified and some kind of measurement tool developed to measure the station's positive impact on the community. Even Altman claims that the results of his efforts have not been dramatic and that as the CEO he needs to be patient. So it is unclear what point this case study/interview was attempting to make.

The creator of the *Donor Cultivation Map*, Sarah Clifton, actually writes Chapter 10. Her suggestions about how to re-engage lapsed donors are interesting and cover the drivers of donor loyalty (service quality, risk, trust, shared beliefs, learning, personal links and multiple engagements). She then expresses her belief of the three reasons donors stop giving: decreased financial status, the failure of the organization to address a donor's complaint or to recognize the donor, and competition from other causes more important to the donor. She asserts that the first action is to contact the donor and ask him or her directly why he or she stopped giving, then address the issue and correct it if possible. Clifton classifies lapsed donors in three areas: lapsing, inactive (for two to three years) and deep lapsed (three to five years), and stoppers (regular givers who suddenly stop consistent giving). She then refers back to Polivy’s Chapters 4 and 5 that outline non-personal and personal tools that can be used to revive these lapsed donors.

In the final chapter, Polivy reiterates what she has covered in the book, again using the Donor Lifecycle Map developed by Clifton as the centerpiece of her “operational framework for total financial resource development.” Polivy basically takes the best practices of donor stewardship and places them at strategic points in the lifecycle map, asserting that the appropriate stewardship at the right time in a donor’s life is crucial. And although she attempts to distinguish between the lifecycle map and the giving pyramid, the similarities are there. She simply gives us another way to think about how to transition the first-time donor into a giver of an ultimate gift. Even she admits that this is a long-term strategy and that measurable results should not be expected for at least three years.

While, in my opinion, much of what Polivy writes is not original, it should certainly ring true to anyone who works in the development space. The real question is this: Even if we intellectually know that these cultivation practices work, do we really apply them in our fundraising efforts? Although there is not much new here, the book’s real value is that it is a reminder that if we want our organization’s fundraising efforts to yield more donors and increasingly generous donations, we need to consistently use the cultivation tools she suggests consistently. It is also a reminder that fundraising and donor development are long-term propositions that should be an integral part of any long-term strategic plan and should be budgeted for accordingly.
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- Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2005) will be used for all issues of spelling and hyphenation.
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  Sanchez (2000) presented the same results. Researchers have argued ...

- Whenever including tables or figures, authors should remember that the APA Manual suggests they present those tables and figures in the following way:

  Tables should be called Table 1, Table 2, and so forth. The label of the table (Table 1) should be placed flush left at the top of the table. The title of the table should be placed flush left under the label of the table and should be printed in italics with uppercase and lowercase words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Interview Attempted and Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attempted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 1</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Round 2</td>
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<td>Round 3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures should be labeled Figure 1., Figure 2., and so forth. The label of the figure (Figure 1.) should be placed flush left at the bottom of the figure, with the words Figure 1. in bold-italics (notice the period after the number of the figure). The title of the figure should follow the label of the figure, printed in regular font in lower-case (except for the first letter of the first word), and end with a period.

Figure 1. Title of figure.

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Robinson and McLullen (2009) found that nonprofits can be profitable. Indeed, their research showed profitable results for most of the years studied. They argued “for the use of a profitability index to compare nonprofits” (p. 345).

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- Set the margins at 1 in. (2.54 cm) on all sides (top, bottom, right, and left).
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