ePortfolios and Integrated Experiential Learning for the Student Co-Op Experience
Overview

• Explore “Experiential Learning” at NU College of Professional Studies (CPS) Graduate programs
• Review INT6943 Student ePortfolios
• Review student feedback
Experiential Learning Model

Concrete Experience → Reflective Observation → Abstract Conceptualization → Active Experimentation

David Kolb
The Process of Experiential Learning
Experiential Learning through Co-op Education

Opportunity to learn/grow outside the comfort zone of the classroom

Applied directly/immediately to a workplace project

Co-op at NU
Integrative Experiential Learning Pilot

• Students learn in class and on the job
• Craft and complete a relevant project addressing an employer’s need
• Course approved in 13 MS programs including:
  – Corporate and Organizational Communications
  – Leadership
  – Project Management
  – Non Profit Management
Integrative Experiential Learning ePortfolios

Students identify stakeholders, obtain buy-in, document, reflect

Guided by instructor
Share experience with peers
Showcase their work
Student Satisfaction

• 22 Students thus far, plus 5 in ongoing course
• All 16 students report satisfaction with course and instructor
• Future plans for corporate partnerships
Roxanne Ward received an M.S. in Corporate and Organizational Communication from Northeastern University. She received a B.A. in English from the University of Maryland University College, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude and was the Student Commencement Speaker. Ward is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Tau Delta, and Alpha Sigma Lambda honor societies. Her academic paper, "Win Friends and Influence People Through Rhythmic Language in Jonah's Gourd Vine," was published in the 2009 online edition of Constellation.

Ward currently resides in the Charlotte, N.C., area, and is the campus administrative officer at Northeastern University's Charlotte campus.

https://northeastern.digication.com/roxanne_ward_standard_operating_procedures_manual
My Project


This SOP manual is being created for Northeastern University-Charlotte. Because we are a fairly new organization, campus procedures and standards for performance have not been clearly documented, leading us to duplicate efforts, lose quality, and miss opportunities to retain organizational knowledge. The problem is perpetuated because we do not have a documented resource to help guide us when we are uncertain of how to move forward with a task or situation.

This project will help resolve this issue and perhaps prevent us from a future crisis. Therefore, our management is excited to see this project come to fruition and completed. It will provide more guidance to their staff and it is a reference to which they can refer staff instead of constantly needing to repeat it or recall it over time. When we are able to cut down the time to train staff, reduce the time searching for information on how to perform a function, and know exactly where to go when we have a question on any procedure, that will indicate project success.
**Research**

The main questions I need answered in my research are how to create a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual and how is it used in a higher education setting. Some resources that could be helpful are visual examples of SOPs, particularly ones that are used in higher education; step-by-step processes to developing the manual; and best practices for writing and follow up. My research involves primarily articles on the subject and examples of completed documents.

See the attached document for a summary of my resources.

Ward_ResearchReport.docx

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**Research Summary**
- Key Source 1
- Key Source 2
- Key Source 3
- Key Source 4

**Research Bibliography**

**Best Practices/Artifacts/Templates**
- Artifact 1
**Recommendations**

**Step 1:**
First examine current job descriptions to capture tasks associated with their responsibilities. To start, I took all staff job descriptions and separated them into the following key areas:

- Communications and Marketing
- Enrollment and Recruitment
- Event Management and Space Rental
- Facilities, Health and Safety
- HR, IT, Financial Management, Campus Services
- Student & Faculty Services, Academic Programming
- Welcome Center Operations

Each key area has its own Word document, which was posted on our campus SharePoint site for our team’s markup. The idea is to pull out tasks or processes from the job description.

Some responsibilities within the job description will either trigger ideas of tasks used to perform that responsibility or will simply not generate a specific task. Some responsibilities will overlap or repeat. The goal is to modify the responsibility to just a few words (fewer than five) that describe a task or process, add in tasks under a responsibility, or delete vague or redundant language from the document.

**Step 2:**
Develop a task template that allows the user to fill in the necessary information for completing a task. This will allow us to collect step-by-step processes in an orderly and simple way.

**Step 3:**
Assign a communications lead person to write and edit the SOP, keep it in one voice, make sure the voice is positive and in layman’s terms, and manage the visuals and best practices. This will help sustain the guide and its relevance to the organization.
Project Charter

Project Name: Development of a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual

1.0 Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide the Charlotte campus staff with a comprehensive resource that:

- Documents campus procedures and standards for performance
- Explains departmental processes
- Improves quality
- Reduces duplication of efforts
- Retains organizational knowledge
- Assists with the training of new employees

2.0 Project Objectives

The objectives of the project include:

- Must be consistent with the university’s policies and procedures
- Must be specific to the operations of the Charlotte campus
- A completed SOP available to staff for reference in both printed and electronic format
Implementation Reports

This section reports on the progress of my project implementation, based on the metrics described in my Evaluation Plan.

The performance metrics identified for my Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual include:

1. The Task Template is designed so that it allows staff to capture all pertinent information necessary to complete a task accurately.
2. The communication lead person has kept the manual in one voice and made certain the voice is positive and in layman’s terms.
3. The processes in the manual have been tested for accuracy and readability.
4. The manual is available electronically and allows users to access links without error.
About Me

Hello Everyone!

My name is Edward Richardson, an MSL major in the CPS. I feel that being a focused visionary is one of my biggest personality assets. I possess an entrepreneurial spirit who seeks various methods for dealing with an issue, even before a crises presents itself. I love developing strategy and innovative methods that will allow me to gain and maintain competitive advantage. Mental efficiency keeps me driven, energetic, and enthusiastic. This allows me to maintain high performance in my professional life. I can be an extrovert when in a team environment, but can be somewhat quiet and reserved when I’m observing a person, situation, or project.

I'm motivate professionally by not working to work for another employer, as odd as it may seem. I personally have been subjected to some very harsh behaviors exhibited by managers in the government and private sectors. I refused to mistreat my subordinates as other managers did. I know what type of organizational leader I need to be. Managers simply fail to realize that subordinates have a great deal of power. My subordinates do not work for me, it is I who work for them. They look up to me to be an effective and ethical leader. Someone they can trust and depend on. My personality reflects this.

https://northeastern.digication.com/edward_richardson
“The research that I’ve done in prior courses [was] ... supporting documents to a case study or literary essay ... Yet in this course, I was actually using the research to guide me in creating my own project.”
“[The instructor] taught me to refer to employees as staff or team members in lieu of using the term ‘subordinates’...they have a greater sense of value within the organization. It makes a big difference.”

Edward Richardson
Edward Richardson

“I learned how to develop, plan and control a technical project that has greatly enhanced my skills and prepared me for the next level...creating [a system] for my own organization. The skills gained will result in cost savings and higher performance following start-up.”
Employer Feedback*

- Overall satisfaction with project outcomes
- Additional time commitment not a burden
- Report students were very well prepared by the course to manage projects
- Deliverables influenced business processes
- Students able to demonstrate skills they had not previously used.

*compiled from surveys and interviews conducted with managers
Employer Feedback continued*

- Some concern about confidentiality
- No concerns about course design
- Most employers interested in additional communication outlining course expectations.
- Overall, interested in experiential learning model

*compiled from surveys and interviews conducted with managers
Summary

• *Experiential Learning* at NU CPS Graduate programs integrates course work with professional work

• INT6943 student ePortfolios show evidence of work and reflection

• ePortfolios provide a showcase

• Student/Employer feedback was overwhelmingly positive
Citations/References


• **The Process of Experiential Learning**, Kolb, D. A. 1984

• Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc. [http://learningfromexperience.com/](http://learningfromexperience.com/)