Guide to Experiential and Community Engaged Education at McMaster University

Resources in this series:

Part 1: Guide Overview and Introduction to Concepts

Part 2: Essentials of EE and Principles of Community Engagement

Part 3: Reflection as a necessary component of EE

Part 4: Adapting EE for the online context

Created by the Ad Hoc Experiential Learning and Community Engagement Working Group, led by Dr. Kim Dej, Acting Vice-Provost and Professor Sheila Sammon, Director, Office of Community Engagement
Introduction

EE and CE Definitions and Categories
Adapting Experiential Education for the Online Context

- One of the strengths of EE is the interactions between students and members of the community (or peer groups)––it is in connecting with others that students apply and reconceptualize their knowledge and skills.

- We can reframe our changing social and physical landscape as a valuable learning opportunity for everyone. How can we capitalize on the new circumstances to meet our learning goals and allow students to adapt and thrive?
Kolb’s foundational model established the importance of the experiential learning cycle that includes: Act, Reflect, Conceptualize, Apply. The experience itself is not sufficient, but rather works with the student’s knowledge base, other course materials, discussions, and reflections to support authentic learning. It is possible to provide a virtual Experiential Education opportunity by keeping this learning cycle in mind as you adapt to the online context.
Experiential Education at McMaster...

- Advances program and/or course-based learning outcomes through application of theory and academic content to authentic experiences, either within the classroom, the community, or the workplace. Educators purposefully engage with learners in focused reflection in order to deepen their knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values.

  Experiential Learning occurs as a result of student reflection including critical analysis and the synthesis of experience and academic content.

*McMaster-Adopted Definition adapted from Carleton University and Association for Experiential Education
Community Engagement at McMaster...

See the new tool for connecting university members and groups with potential community partnerships: The Connection, Office of Community Engagement.

- **Values** the expert knowledge and passion that members of the community (both local and global) have about their communities and issues affecting them.

- **Fosters** ongoing collaboration between University and Community Partners on how to better understand and consider the issues identified as priorities by local and global communities.

- **Performs** research, teaching and service with community members and partners for the public good within the local or global community.

Relationships and Reciprocity are key!
Categories of Experiential Education

- **WIL**: Work-Integrated Learning
- **CEL**: Community-Engaged and Community-Informed Learning
- **EL**: Classroom-Based Experiential Learning
- **CC EL**: Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Experiential Learning
What are your objectives for the EE course or EE component?
Applying disciplinary knowledge and skills to another context or group

Meaning-making through reflection and higher order thinking that leads to action

Reconciling theory and practice through reflection

Developing professional and academic skills

Through Experiential Education students meet course and program objectives such as:
Reassessing your goals and objectives for adapting to the online context:

**Purpose**
What is the **purpose** of the EE component/course? Is it necessary? Why and how?

**Objectives**
What are the student **learning objectives** or intended outcomes? How can they be achieved virtually?

**Relationships**
If you have **community partners**, have their **needs/priorities** changed? Can they still support and engage with you and your students? If not, how can you adapt your course/component objectives?
What else has changed due to the online context?

- Time? Place?
- Circumstances?
- Needs?
- Availability?
- Communication Lines?
- Student engagement?
- Health & Safety?
- Ethical issues?

- How will roles adapt (instructor, student, community partners)?
- What platform(s) will you use?
- How will you incorporate Accessibility and Universal Design?
Exploring Options

What are some options as you adapt to the online context?
EE Projects for the Online Context

Consider approaches that engage students with real world challenges that align with course goals/objectives:

- Remote Projects and Consulting
- Remote Internships and Coops
- Group Projects and Case Studies
- Virtual Field Courses
- Simulations

WIL

- Online Consultation with Partners
- Virtual Projects
- Web Conferencing, Discussion Forum
- Online Observations and Video
- Online Museums and Exhibit Tours
- Google Maps and Photo Collections

CEL
EE Projects for the Online Context

Consider approaches that engage students with real world challenges that align with course goals/objectives:

- Group or Independent Projects, E-Portfolios
- Simulations, Virtual Labs and Field Trips
- Team-Based, Problem-Based and Challenge Based Learning Activities
- Project-based and Inquiry-based learning
- Remote Research

- Online Entrepreneurship
- Virtual Workshops
- Multimedia Presentations
- Online Museums and Exhibit Tours
Aligning CEL Course Objectives to the Online Context

Adapted from UofT Center for Community Partnerships, Community-Engaged Learning in Online Spaces A Guide for Instructors

It may not be possible for student learning to occur in the community or workplace. Community and industry partners may not be available to work with your students. Consider these alternatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective: Application of Disciplinary Knowledge</th>
<th>Objective: Collaboration with Community/Industry Expertise</th>
<th>Objective: Professional/Academic Skills Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative: Case Study, Inquiry based Learning, Problem Based Learning, Design Sprints, Gamification, Simulation</td>
<td>Alternative: Virtual Guest Visits, Simulations, Assigned Reading, Online Discussion with Community Partner</td>
<td>Alternative: Simulations, Virtual visit to location, Online discussion or interviews with field experts, partners and/or alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider: Base activities on new community defined priorities and local responses to COVID-19</td>
<td>Consider: Budget for honoraria, prepare students through assigned reading, LibGuide</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now What?
Discuss what impact of this experience and your interpretations will have on future actions and thoughts.

What?
Describe the nature of the experience, your role, observations and reactions.

So What?
Explain the significance or relevance of the experience and your interpretations.

The Simplest Reflection Model

DO IT.

Now What?
What will I do differently next time?

What?
What happened? What were the results?

So What?
What do these results imply? How did I influence the outcome?
Types of Reflection Assignments to Consider for the Online Context:

(Adaptions to the online context will be necessary)

- Write an essay.
- Create a video.
- Create a resume entry.
- Write a blog post.
- Reflect on a poem.
- Create a postcard.
- Class discussion.
- Digital Storytelling.
Conclusion

Keys to Success and Resources
Consider…

• What approach works best for achieving the course outcomes and objectives?

• Were there specific times and places for learning? How can you adapt these to the online context?

• Do you want your students to work individually, as a group, one-on-one, with a partner, or some/all options?

• Are community partners still available to work with you? Have their priorities changed?

• What changes are necessary so that course objectives may be met?
Keys to Successful Experiential Learning Online- Recommendations from the Ad Hoc Working Group:

**Community Engagement Keys**

**Communication and Relationships**
- Be adaptable and responsive to CP needs changing
- Minimize not increase CP workload
- Explore new needs in the community or COVID-19-specific needs as learning opportunities
- Use role-playing or other simulation activities
- The Principles of CEL still apply in the online context

**Experiential Education Keys**

**Reflection and Assessments**
- Keep communication lines open - keep in close contact with students to ensure learning and collaboration are functioning effectively
- Change the pace so that more time is spent working through conceptual and attitudinal evolutions for students
- Work incrementally and add more reflection and discussion time
- Use the time to make materials for future use (e.g., case studies, observations, lit reviews)
Online Resources

University Resources

- Office of Community Engagement and Resources
- McMaster’s CE Toolkit
- The Connection (OCE)
- MacPherson Teaching Remotely Website
- CE and Research Libguide
- McMaster’s Equity and Inclusion Office
- Health, Safety, and Risk Management
- UTS

Professional/Provincial

- Experiential Learning Toolkit (Niagara)
- Experiential Education, Online Learning (Calgary, Taylor Institute)
- EL Faculty Toolkit (Queens)
  - Designing EE (ECampus Pressbook Chapter) EE
  - Experiential Learning (Open Textbook UBC)
  - What is Experiential Learning (Carleton)
- Best Practices in EL (Ryerson)
- Experiential Education (York)
- Experiential Learning Hub: EL 101 (U of T)
  - Association for Experiential Education
  - National Society of EE
University Affairs article, “How to adapt experiential learning activities in the time of COVID-19”

Virtual Museums, Collections and Online Exhibits – see list of resources [here](#)

See [Our Future Hamilton](#) for community priorities