The New Experiential Learning

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> *I am a part of all that I have met;*
> *Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough*
> *Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades*
> *Forever and forever when I move.*
> —Alfred, Lord Tennyson , "Ulysses" (1842)

When I joined the Northeastern University English department in 2001, I had, unawares, entered an institutional landscape undergoing major transformations that would lead to Northeastern's—and my—significant engagement in what I am calling "the new experiential learning." Northeastern has been known for a century for its leadership in co-operative education, or co-op. As a program in which matriculated students alternate periods of paid employment, during which they are not enrolled in classes, with traditional campus semesters, co-op is one of the oldest, and also one of the most classroom-independent, forms of experiential learning. Co-op began in 1906 in the engineering school of the

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University of Cincinnati as a partnership with area industry, born of both increasing demands for industrial labor and the increasing expansion of higher education beyond a small number of elite institutions.[1]

Northeastern, founded in 1898 as the Evening Institute of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, and focused on technical training, became the second institution of higher education to adopt what was then called "the Cincinnati Plan." As Richard Freeland, the university's sixth president (1996–2006), writes: "The idea of 'co-op' spread rapidly, especially among urban institutions whose proximity to centers of employment facilitated this pedagogy. Co-op became particularly popular in engineering and also was quite common in business; by the 1920s 137 institutions, Northeastern among them, offered this experience in one or both of these fields" (Freeland 2019: p. 18). Northeastern co-op settled into a consistent form that distinguishes co-op from the internship model often associated with elite institutions and learners: "Co-ops are different from internships in that internships are often a summer or semester commitment, can be either part-time or full-time, can be paid or unpaid, and typically do not interfere with the regular flow of the academic year. Co-ops, on the other hand, alternate with semesters, quarters, or trimesters; are typically paid and full-time; and most often are 6-month commitments" (Ambrose and Wankel 2020: p. 194).[2] Co-op involves a commitment to training students for the workplace and historically has been relatively independent from curricular frameworks. It has historically not been associated with elite institutions.

Well into the twentieth century, as Northeastern's growing student body remained largely local, from modest financial backgrounds, and intent on entering the workforce as soon as possible, co-op earnings remained an important source of financial support as well as employment preparation. The normative undergraduate time to degree was five years, which allowed students to complete three co-ops (and introduced me to the puzzling student status known as "middler year"). By the 1990s, however, co-op wages could no longer keep up with inflation and the rising costs of university education; the institution itself, which depended on tuition, was facing rising costs and declining enrollments; and not enough students were being retained to graduation.[3] As part of a strategy to reorient as a "smaller but better," more traditional research university, Freeland initiated a transformation of co-op from a program of job into one pillar of what he called a "practice-oriented education" which was "based on the integration of three elements: co-operative education, professional

studies, and the arts and sciences" (Freeland 2019: p. 96). "Practice orientation" was intended to retain Northeastern's association with co-op as a market differentiator while allying it to markers of academic quality.

In my first years at Northeastern, which coincided with this initiative, my colleagues and I in English saw little connection between our curriculum and "practice-oriented" or "experiential" education. From our perspective, co-op remained a mild inconvenience, taking students out of classes for six months at a time, around which we worked to purvey knowledge and create intellectual community. But as time passed, I saw how much students valued Northeastern-specific experiences, such as co-op and the faculty-led, course-based summer study abroad program we call "Dialogue of Civilization," as well as more conventional experiential opportunities such as service learning. Although "practice-oriented education" never gained traction as a term, Freeland's initiative prefigured increasingly widespread institutional efforts, beginning in the first decade of the twenty-first century, to integrate non-, co-, and extra-curricular experiences, such as professional training (co-ops and internships), service learning, and study abroad, under the umbrella of "experiential learning." In an often-cited essay published in 2009 in *Liberal Education*, the journal of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Janet Eyler argued that "as advances in cognitive science have begun to blur the line between academic and practical learning, awareness of the relevance of experiential education to achieving goals of the liberal arts has increased." She defined experiential learning as a practice "which takes students into the community [and] helps students both to bridge classroom study and life in the world and to transform inert knowledge into knowledge-in-use" (Eyler 2009: p. 24). This article is one milestone on the way to mainstreaming experiential learning as a feature of higher education.

The "advances in cognitive science" to which Eyler refers are the emergence, beginning in the 1990s, of the interdisciplinary field of the "learning sciences" (or "learning science"), which studies the experiences and practices of learners and teachers. The learning sciences offer an observationally supported model of learning sometimes known as "constructionism," which is student-centered and stresses the importance of the learner's active engagement, authentic practice, and reflection on learning. Constructionism is defined partly in opposition to an older model of "instructionism," which treats knowledge as primarily a body of facts to be disseminated by the instructor (rather than constructed by the learner)

and is associated with traditional pedagogical tools such as lecturing, memorization, and testing. As Keith Sawyer explains, "Instructionism prepared students for the industrialized economy of the early twentieth century. But the world today is much more technologically complex and economically competitive, and instructionism is increasingly failing to educate our students to participate in this new kind of society… [which is] a knowledge economy" (Sawyer 2005: pp. 1–2). Sawyer emphasizes the empirical nature of learning sciences research into constructionism, with researchers following teachers and classes over long periods and subjecting the data collected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Sawyer 2005: p. 14). But the premises that underlie constructionism owe as much to twentieth-century progressivist theory as to contemporary social science methodology, going back at least as far as the educational philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952), whose *Experience and Education* appeared in 1938, and beyond Dewey to the pragmatist psychology of William James (1842–1910). The emphasis on learner experience in education has, in fact, a long and politically progressive genealogy of which "experiential learning" is the latest manifestation.

Susan Ambrose and Laura Wankel (former Northeastern colleagues) propose a comprehensive definition of experiential learning as

> the practice of mindful reflection on the integration of theory and practice through authentic settings (e.g., professional work experience, research, community involvement, co-curricular activities, and industry challenges) with real-world opportunities, responsibilities and consequences that enhance the students' abilities to transfer knowledge and skills to new contexts and prepare them for a lifetime of learning and growth. (Ambrose and Wankel 2020: pp. 160, 161)

Ambrose and Wankel emphasize three learner behaviors that have become important keywords for experiential learning and contemporary learning theory generally: *transfer*, *integration*, and *reflection*. Transfer and integration are enabled, but not conveyed or caused, by instructors, and they take place *neither* in the classroom *nor* exclusively in extra-curricular social spaces. It is in the bidirectional and recursive motion among locations (classroom, office, community) that absorption of knowledge and practice of skills occurs, is reinforced, and enables learners to progress to new levels of knowledge and growth.[4]

Despite its respectable history, the evidence of the learning sciences, and attempts by scholars such as Ambrose and Wankel to convey a nuanced and flexible understanding of the affordances of experiential learning, it remains slow to gain full endorsement among administrators and faculty at many institutions.[5] This is perhaps particularly true for the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Several features combine to place experiential learning at odds with a traditional understanding, within the liberal arts, of the dissemination of knowledge and the fostering of intellectual development as non-instrumental and relatively autonomous from market forces. These features include the confusingly disparate practices that fall under the rubric of experiential learning; its association in some forms, such as co-op, with non-elite institutions and technical fields; its equally overt association with instrumental, teleological, and market-focused rhetoric; and many faculty members' lack of acquaintance with the newer, more expansive understandings of experiential learning that shift the focus of experiential learning from *where* the learner is located (that is, from a list of extra-curricular opportunities) to *what behaviors* an opportunity supports (transfer, integration, and reflection).

Further, attempts to convey what makes experiential learning powerful often characterize distinctions among learning spaces with an alienating, and implicitly hierarchical, dichotomy between "the classroom" and "the real world" (as occurs in the definition by Ambrose and Wankel above, even as they emphasize that "learning happens everywhere"). As Chris Gallagher writes, in such dichotomous rhetorical constructions, "Certain kinds of experience are endowed with an inherent status—real/unreal, direct/indirect, authentic/inauthentic—that does not hold up to scrutiny and, more important, undermines students' ability to integrate learning across contexts" (Gallagher 2019: p. 75). They also may undermine educators' trust and enthusiasm, since we regard our classrooms as microcosms of knowledge transmission, creation, and practice, not as "inert" or divorced from social value. For example, John Kijinsky, a former Arts and Sciences dean at SUNY Fredonia and at Idaho State University, argues that "the most valuable thing we can teach students is the ability to think through, with patient focus, demanding intellectual challenges. Solving a difficult linear algebra problem, working to understand an intricate passage from Descartes, figuring out how, exactly, the findings of evolutionary morphology explain the current human stride—all these are examples of the sort of learning that we should be proud to provide our students. And not one of them features 'real-life engagement'" (Kijinsky 2018:

n.p.). Paul Bylsma also expresses a common concern of liberal arts faculty when he argues that career-focused educational opportunities, such as co-op, feed a pernicious "neoliberal turn" in higher education: "Students…see education as a ticket for admission into a society that values entrepreneurism, employability, and quantifiable skills and competencies as the ultimate tools for survival and success" and thus lose the "ability to envision success as an interdependent, rooted, and connected ideal of social, environmental, and personal flourishing" (Bylsma 2015: n.p.). These objections target both the transactional nature and the ideological implications of experiential learning opportunities such as co-op.

It is certainly true that the opportunity to encounter "demanding intellectual challenges" is a defining feature of higher education—as experiential learning advocates would agree. They might also assert that when (say) a Northeastern student has the opportunity to *apply and transfer* knowledge and skills gained through meeting those challenges—perhaps using knowledge of linear algebra in practicing catastrophe modeling at an insurance company in New York, or debating Cartesian dualism at the Northeast Regional Collegiate Ethics Bowl—their ability to negotiate intellectual challenges is enriched and advanced.

In the poster presentations that CSSH students construct when they have completed their co-ops, they are encouraged to make precisely such connections between prior classroom learning and new experiences gained on co-op. For example, the poster of Dieynaba Dieng, a political science and international affairs major who co-oped in 2020 as an Africa Region Project Assistant at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, lists, among others, these roles and accomplishments: "Drafted and edited monthly newsletter and blog posts; monitored data;… planned and coordinated the Africa forum…created webinar series about COVID-19 in Africa…Researched 54 countries' national health strategies and analyzed them into a stocktaking matrix to guide official survey to be sent to those countries' governments (did some research in French and helped with translations)" (Dieng 2020: Fig. 11.1). For these activities, Dieng drew on coursework in "writing, research and analyzing, which is a core part of my major," including First Year Writing, International Conflict and Negotiation, and courses on Middle Eastern politics taken on a Dialogue of Civilizations program (faculty-led summer study abroad) in Jordan (Dieng 2020: Fig. 11.1).

For Isabel Kilgariff, an English and Linguistics major doing an editorial co-op with National Geographic Learning, an Introduction to Rhetoric

Fig. 11.1 Poster courtesy of Dieynaba Dieng

class provided "technical copy editing skills and the ability to give and receive constructive feedback [learned] from peer reviewing," while she drew on her Linguistic Analysis course to use "the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to review pronunciation components in textbooks" (Kilgariff 2020: Fig. 11.2).

It is also true that students and their families connect higher education strongly with opportunities for enhanced employment status and financial success. In a 2019 survey administered by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, 84% of students entering bachelor's-granting institutions identified "to get a better job," and 73% "to be able to make more money," as "very important" reasons for going to college (Stolzenberg et al. 2020: p. 42). This may be discouraging for those of us in disciplines (such as English literature) where value is constructed as intrinsic rather than instrumental and for those of us (like Bylsma) who see the value of education, and the definition of human flourishing, as primarily social rather than economic. Nevertheless, the concern of students and parents with their current and future finances is highly rational. Though the returns on investment for a college education vary for different populations, the income gap between college degree holders and non-college-degree holders remains wide and, in a social structure without a robust

Fig. 11.2   Poster courtesy of Isabel Kilgariff

social safety net, in which unemployment or low-wage employment pose risks to health and well-being, significant. According to a study from the Pew Research Center, "Millennial college graduates ages 25 to 32 who are working full time earn more annually—about $17,500 more—than employed young adults holding only a high school diploma.… College-educated Millennials also are more likely to be employed full time than their less-educated counterparts (89% vs. 82%) and significantly less likely to be unemployed (3.8% vs. 12.2%)" (Pew Research Center 2014: n.p.). College remains both an important investment in future financial well-being and simultaneously one that is funded through a lien on that very future in the form of student loans: post-secondary students in the United States owe an astonishing $1.6 trillion dollars (Kerr 2020). Colleges and universities cannot afford, ethically or prudentially, to downplay the significance of students' investment in higher education or the importance of its contribution to their future financial stability as well as other forms of flourishing.

Institutions of higher education thus must, and do, attempt to navigate and create compromise among the different values, intrinsic and extrinsic, intellectual and material, that attach to their programs. For example, the AAC&U every few years commissions surveys of employers' view of

college graduates' preparedness for the workforce. The titles of recent reports frame a symbiotic relationship between employers and providers of liberal education; the most recent (2021) is "How College Contributes to Workforce Success." Lynn Pasquerella, the president of the AAC&U, introduces the findings with an emphasis on convergence between the two sectors:

> Since 2007, the findings have identified common ground between educators and employers with respect to expectations for college-level learning. In fact, a consistent headline-level finding across all our employer research has been that employers and educators are largely in agreement when it comes to the value of a contemporary liberal education—provided it is described using language that is common and accessible to both stakeholder groups. (AAC&U 2021: p. iii)

Callouts on the AAC&U website and in the report, such as "Experiences set students apart" (AAC&U website n.d.) and "Completion of active and applied learning experiences gives job applicants a clear advantage" (AAC&U 2021: p. 9), highlight areas where employer preference overlaps with AAC&U-favored teaching practices. At the same time, the data reveal a certain amount of doubt among employers. For example, "Only six in ten [employers] say that recent graduates possess the knowledge and skills needed for success in entry-level positions at their companies or organizations" (AAC&U 2021: p. iv). While Pasquerella's foreword to the 2018 report "look[s] forward to working together with institutions and employers to achieve our shared objectives around advancing liberal education, quality, and equity in service to democracy" (AAC&U 2018: n.p.), the 2021 report concedes that "civic-oriented outcomes have consistently been ranked lowest by employers" (AAC&U 2021: p. 5). Employer estimation of the ethical value attached to liberal education, as well as of its success, is considerably less elevated than that of education professionals.

Such gaps do not mean, however, that collaboration is not a worthwhile endeavor, or even that it will inevitably be dominated by the interests of business and industry over the values of higher education. Many of the top "learning priorities" indicated by the surveys' business respondents, including such usual suspects as effective communication, critical thinking/analytical reasoning, ethical judgment, and decision-making, are equally prioritized by educators, and are surely helpful to the functioning of democracy as well. Building a learning situation around different

motivating goals is one of Ambrose et al.'s key recommendations for enhancing learning in a context in which students may not immediately understand the intrinsic value of the material or task:

> Sources of value operate in combination. Indeed, the distinction between the traditional concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is rarely as dichotomous as theory posits. For example, by working hard in a course, a biology student may derive value from multiple sources, including solving challenging problems (attainment value), engaging her fascination with biological processes (intrinsic value), and advancing her chances of getting into a good medical school (instrumental value). Consequently, it is important not to think of these sources of value as necessarily conflicting but as potentially reinforcing. (Ambrose et al. 2010: p. 76)

Finding a way to combine values can be as motivating for entire sectors— e.g., business and education—as for students in individual courses.

Similarly, it does not follow that because students are concerned about employability and skills, they do not value either other forms of human flourishing or the intrinsic value of intellectual endeavor. At the same time that 84% of students responding to a National Survey of Student Engagement identified "to get a better job" as a very important reason to go to college, the next largest group—75%—identified "to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas" (Stolzenberg et al. 2020: p. 42). And while 84% of students surveyed identified "being very well off financially" as an "essential" or "very important" objective, the next largest selection—80%—identified "helping others who are in difficulty" (Stolzenberg et al. 2020: p. 46). Certainly, that formulation does not indicate specifically *political*, or even democratic, aspirations. It is perfectly possible to be a monarchist, or an anarchist, or have no visible political leanings at all, and wish to help others. Indeed, only 45% of students identified "keeping up with political affairs" as a priority, and the number went down to 21% for "influencing the political structure." But expressed desire to gain "an appreciation of ideas" and to "help other who are in difficulty" indicates a recognition of intellectual and civic values on which we, as educators, can build in our classrooms and beyond.

As an example of active intellectual exploration, I think of Laura Packard '20, an English major (with minors in French, Writing, and Digital Methods in the Humanities) who worked with Dr. Erika Boeckeler, who discovered an uncatalogued medieval manuscript in our library's special

collections. Mentored across her time at Northeastern by Dr. Boeckeler, it was Packard who helped to date the mysterious find, now called the "Dragon Prayer Book," by "discover[ing] a reference in the book to Saint Catherine of Siena, who had been sainted in 1461." Packard found, as she led a group of student researchers, that "her exploration of the book had led her down a variety of academic paths, including studies of bioarchaeology, medieval language and music, and project management" (Thomsen and Zhang 2019). (Packard is now a technical writer at a maritime technology company in Boston.) For examples of students bringing their classroom learning to bear on civic life, I think of the collaborative work of the Department of Philosophy and Religion's Social Choice and Democracy Group, led by Dr. Rory Smead, who demonstrated the advantages of paired choice voting by collecting votes on the "cuteness" of more than 60,000 pairs of dogs from almost 1000 voters.[6] Supported intellectually by faculty mentorship and collaboration and materially by research funds from the College of Social Science and Humanities, students involved in these and similar projects are motivated to acquire disciplinary knowledge (such as in medieval music and social choice theory), gain and practice new skills (such as project management, ballot design, and developing privacy policies for information), and generate new knowledge.

In addition to such widespread immersive research practices, institutions can do more to mobilize their resources to offer students direct engagement with social structures and cultural producers, allowing them to practice, revise, and reframe the concepts and examples that they encounter in our classes. This is as true for students in humanities fields as in the social sciences. Lisa Doherty, Northeastern's co-op coordinator for students in English and Political Science, cites the pleasure of another English major in reflecting on how she brought her prior knowledge to bear in a co-op as a junior technical writer: "It was nice to take those same things that professors hammered into my head—be concise! think about word choice! use simple plain English!—in a public document....I was very proud when I got to deferentially point out that there should be an em dash in place of an en dash" (Doherty 2021: interview). Another English major, working for Prisoners' Legal Service (PLS) of Massachusetts, "gathered, organized, and summarized a massive amount of information...created surveys to send to clients, [and] summarized depositions, medical records, and staff brutality cases," along with "researching prisoner complaints and drafting direct advocacy [letters] on their behalf." One International Affairs and Environmental Studies major went on a

global co-op in 2020 at the Instituto Mesoamerican de Permacultura (IMAP), which was "founded by a group of Myan Kaqchickel people to promote and contribute to the integral and sustainable development of indigenous and smallholder communities in Mesoamerica" (Allard 2020). Her responsibilities while there included not only developing a newsletter and translating documents, but also watering, planting, and harvesting the group's agricultural property. Such experiences surely offer students the opportunity not only to apply classroom-acquired skills and knowledge developed in the classroom but also to develop important professional, civic, and ethical understandings.

As Dewey argued over 70 years ago, however, not all experience is educational (Dewey 1997: chapter 2); and as contemporary educational theorists such as Ambrose et al. emphasize, one of the most important elements for turning *experience* into *learning* is the opportunity for reflection. Authentic occasions for reflection, however, are not always easy to construct. Of group reflections in which students returned from co-op participate, Doherty observes: "Our students don't like it—mine don't, anyway. I go into those sessions and it feels like I'm pulling teeth. It's at the beginning of the [next] semester, and they're just so busy." Events like the poster expo, however, are more engaging and successful; they provide students with an opportunity to construct a narrative, give it a tangible form, and share it with peers and mentors. "I love that our [CSSH] students really are open to lots of different experiences," says Doherty. "They are so skilled in being able to communicate verbally and in writing. Social sciences and humanities students are the best story-tellers, right? How do you help them tell stories about themselves, and about who they are?" For the poster expo, "We really prompt them in terms of criteria—we were really thoughtful about the criteria we wanted them to cover" (Doherty 2021: interview). Though the design and emphasis of the posters is up to the students, each describes not only the nature of the organization and the student's responsibilities, but also how co-op activities drew on coursework, and helped the student to think about, or to rethink, next steps in coursework and professional ambition. The poster expo creates an authentic context for reflection and integration.

The poster format is also flexible, and in 2020 the exercise prompted students who had been on co-op in the spring semester to reflect on the impact of the pandemic. Students witnessed effects beyond their own circles, and had to make challenging decisions. "In mid-March, as the COVID-19 crisis began to spread in Guatemala, I made the difficult
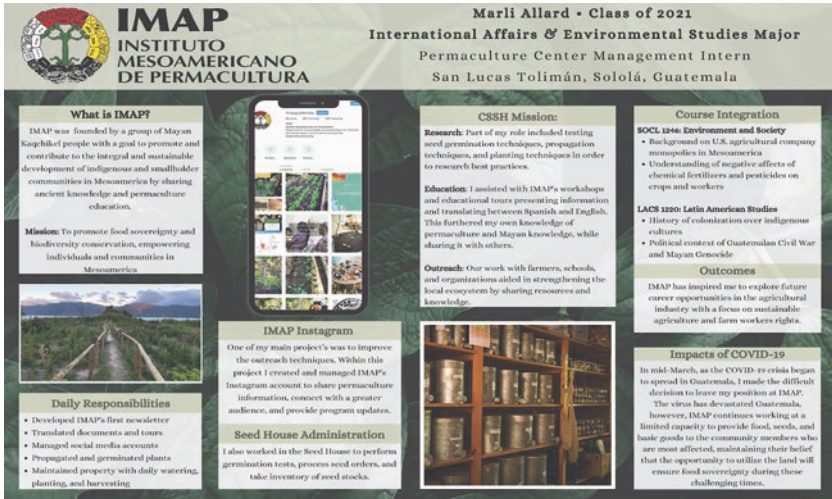
Fig. 11.3 Poster courtesy of Marli Allard

decision to leave my position at IMAP," writes Allard. "The virus has devastated Guatemala; however, IMAP continues working at a limited capacity to provide food, seeds, and basic goods to the community members who are most affected, maintaining their belief that the opportunity to utilize the land will ensure food sovereignty during these challenging times" (see Fig. 11.3).

But in a class on Latin American culture in the summer semester, as part of the CSSH "Pandemic Teaching Initiative," Allard was able to draw and reflect on this experience to share with students in the class a final project, in the form of a 20-minute recorded PowerPoint presentation, on the government response to, and human impact of, the coronavirus in Guatemala.[7] Many other students were able to continue working remotely, and the posters that address that transition suggest their ability to learn from, and adapt to, unexpected and serious challenges. "My workload became heavier than it was before," writes Dieng (an observation that will ring true for many), "but I enjoyed it because I was responsible for all these new projects, particularly the COVD-19 in Africa webinar series.… Tasks took me twice as long to complete. However, it taught me how to have more self-control and to improve my organization skills. My team and all IHI was so kind and constantly checking on one another to make

sure we're staying healthy, physically and mentally" (Dieng 2020: Fig. 11.2). These are cognitive and affective lessons whose salience is unlikely to diminish.

Co-op opportunities are designed to be authentic experiences of employment accessible to all students, which means that most of them are paid. But some of the non-profit and governmental opportunities that CSSH students value cannot afford to pay or (in the case of some governmental opportunities) they are prevented by law from doing so. CSSH maintains funds to offer students some support in unpaid co-ops. Such funds are important to ensure that student access to co-op opportunities does not reproduce socioeconomic inequities that constrain the education of less wealthy students. Corliss Brown Thompson and Sean Gallagher argue that co-op and other employer partnerships can be forces for equity, offering "an under-used model that can help achieve greater educational and economic opportunity for students and workers of color" though benefits such as developing belief in self-efficacy, identifying and practicing so-called soft skills (such as active listening and critical thinking), and gaining access to social and cultural capital and professional networks. They suggest that "Expanding access to experiential learning will…require a much larger pool of employers and industries engaged with the education system and offering and managing job and project opportunities for students" (Thompson and Gallagher 2020: pp. 3–4).

As one way of diversifying opportunities and employers, Ambrose and Wankel describe Northeastern's XN (Experience Network) projects, which connect learners virtually with employers to complete specific, short-term tasks: "Because not all learners have the time, authorization to work due to their immigration status (i.e., international students), or ability to physically engage with co-ops (given their life circumstances), another form of experiential learning that adapts to learners' needs are micro-internships.… These experiences are not paid but rather count toward course requirements" (Ambrose and Wankel 2020: p. 196). XN was originally designed to support online master's and professional degree seekers within coursework, but the university is now experimenting with making XN projects available to undergraduates, either as part of project-based courses, or as stand-alone one-credit experiences.

All of these efforts require significant, consistent, and well considered institutional investment in resources to support students and faculty alike. They require a robust and specialized administrative staff. At Northeastern, in CSSH alone, we have ten co-op coordinators who work with employers

to develop new opportunities and maintain existing relationships, prepare our students (in required one-credit courses) for success in their positions, and scaffold their post-employment reflection and seven academic advisors who help keep students' eyes on the four-year horizon amid the many opportunities they can elect; there are about 80 such coordinators across the university. Creative forms of recognition—research stipends, 0-credit courses, short-form credit-bearing courses, badging—must be in place to support student involvement with research and community projects. Centrally, a variety of university offices support not only co-op but also service learning, study abroad, preparation and guidance for applying for post-college fellowships such as Fulbright, Marshall, and Pickering fellowships (all of which have been held by CSSH students), and librarians who partner with faculty on everything from introducing research to first-year undergraduates to helping them complete sophisticated digital projects. Compensation models must be developed for faculty, at whatever rank and in whatever position, who take on additional responsibilities in teaching, developing curriculum, mentoring students, and piloting new initiatives. Indeed, non-classroom teaching experiences can be a meaningful source of income, as well as professional development, particularly for full-time and part-time faculty not on the tenure track.

In fact, one of the underappreciated strengths of an institutional focus on experiential learning is the collaborative and diverse communities of learning and practice it necessitates and thus creates. In Tennyson's "Ulysses," from which my epigraph is taken, it is partly the loss of engagement in a collaborative enterprise—"one equal temper of heroic hearts"—that Ulysses, returned to Ithaca, mourns. Ulysses is hardly the exemplary subject of experiential learning. Although he has "much…seen and known; cities of men / And manners, climates, councils, governments," he has no patience for applying this knowledge to "mete and dole / Unequal laws unto a savage race." He has been forced, for the purposes of this dramatic monologue, into Tennyson's preferred poetic stance—that of nostalgic reflection—but he longs to be back in action: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." Our students are neither epic heroes nor myth-haunted poets, but striving and seeking characterize what learners do as well. At best, our students' educational odysseys should enable them to integrate experience and reflection and feel, like Ulysses, that they are "a part of all that [they] have met" (Tennyson 2007: ll. 68, 13–24, 3–4, 70).

NOTES

1. See Niehaus 2005 on co-op's beginnings at the University of Cincinnati. The nineteenth century was an era of expansion for United States higher education. The first women's college, Mount Holyoke, and the first historically black institution, now known as Cheney University, both opened in 1837. The Morrill Act of 1862 granted land to states to provide "Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts," which ultimately funded 70 institutions—largely on land and with wealth expropriated from Native Americans. Because many of the Morrill Act colleges as well as other institutions did not admit African Americans, the period after the civil war saw the founding of a number of private HBCUs. The second Morrill Act of 1890 required states to provide institutions open to African Americans.

2. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, "Although the term 'cooperative education' is used at many institutions, no generally accepted definition for this type of experiential education or for higher education students exists." A 2019 study by the University of Nebraska Lincoln, however, identifies some commonalities: Most institutions distinguish co-ops from internships on the basis of duration (co-ops are longer) and remuneration (co-ops are paid), and most expect a degree of curricular integration and award credit, "even if only in a 0-credit capacity to show student activity." See Wallace, 1 February 2020, n.p.

3. Richard Freeland summarizes the challenges that Northeastern faced: "Declining numbers of high school graduates after the mid-1970s combined with growing competition within the local market, including from the rapidly expanding Boston campus of UMass, made it difficult for Northeastern to maintain the scale on which its financial stability depended. Between 1980 and 1989, the size of the freshman class declined gradually but steadily as did overall undergraduate enrollments.… For a tuition-dependent institution like Northeastern, this pattern of rising costs and declining enrollments was not sustainable.… Northeastern's historic operating model of high volume, low prices, minimal selectivity, and local orientation was no longer viable" (Freeland 2019: pp. 43, 44).

4. Here contemporary learning science revives the influential formulation of experiential learning by David Kolb as "an ongoing recursive operation…of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting" in which "each trip through the cycle returns [the learner] to the experience with new insight gained by reflection, thought, and action" (Kolb and Kolb 2012: p. 1212).

5. David Moore observes that "colleges do offer students and faculty opportunities to engage in experiential learning, and nod to these possibilities in their mission statements and recruitment materials, but they typically marginalize these options in terms of scope, funding, organizational location,

and, most important, integration into the core educational practices of the institution" (Moore 2013: p. 11).

6. See https://socialchoice.nuphilosophy.com/dogproject/philosophy
7. See https://cssh.northeastern.edu/pandemic-teaching-initiative/responses-to-covid-19-in-latin-america/

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