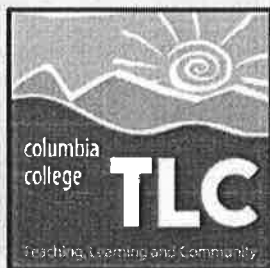


*Columbia College's Teaching, Learning and Community Initiative  
and MJC's Office of Student Services*



*Fall 2018 – Spring 2019 / Equity Workshop Series*

Equitable Learning

*A Cross-Campus Learning Opportunity for Columbia College/Modesto Junior College  
professionals in collaboration with students.*

The 2018-2019 *Equity Workshop Series* aims to foster a work place of genuine cooperation — one that encourages innovation as well as inclusive opportunities for growth — while improving our creative ability to confront shared issues related to student success and equity.

This workshop series is a continuation of collaborations stemming from a *March 28, 2018* gathering coordinated by the **Office of Student Services**, in which a cohort of Columbia College faculty, staff and administrators visited MJC to tour student service facilities, coordinate with counterparts and share recent advances (including a variety of initiatives, grants and innovative practices in student success and equity).

Thanks to the efforts of Columbia College's **Teaching, Learning and Community Initiative** (born from a 2017 Baker Station faculty retreat), collaborations continued among professionals from Columbia and MJC as representatives from both campuses attended the Columbia College Academic Achievement Center's Instructional Skills Workshop to discuss a wide-range of activity-based instructional skills, experiential learning models, innovative pedagogies and classroom practices.

One result of the summer 2018 retreat was a resolve to work together to consider various teaching methods, pedagogical approaches and recent scholarship to explore an ideal: equitable learning.

The following **Fall 2018 - Spring 2019 workshop series** is a collaboration between *Columbia College's Teaching Learning and Community Initiative* and the *Office of Student Services* to promote community and collaborative learning about issues related to student success and equity.

There is a growing body of scholarship suggesting that learning which encourages active-doing instead of passive (and usually temporary) acquisition of information is more far-reaching and more profound. While discussion-based learning reaches back to Socrates and Plato's Academy, recent neuroscientific research also seems to confirm what we've known for a long time: to develop the higher-learning skills — analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creation — students need more time for conversation and other forms of experiential learning in order to master a skill, knowledge system or performance indicator.

Therefore, this series focuses on experiential pedagogies and interdisciplinary learning activities and skills which have been proven, in some way, to increase student success and promote equitable learning in the classroom.

The emphasis of the workshops is not content knowledge, rather instructional skills, learning models and innovative pedagogies which inform our teaching with thoughtful practices that narrow equity gaps, help overcome educational barriers and even motivate students to succeed.

## Questions Typically Considered in Workshops

*What are unusual but important places we can use in the community as learning resources — such as cemeteries, cultural heritage sites, performing arts centers, libraries and other community resources — to teach? What role does and should the Internet, primary source readings, textbooks, news articles and other sources of information and knowledge play in learning? What is the role of conversation and reading in learning? Is there enough time for reflection and group-thinking as an important part of the learning process? How can we use “neural resting states” and other reflective methods to slow down and “chunk” learning? Would the Pomodoro and other techniques work in a classroom? What is and is not a classroom? How should students best conduct research and field work? Why?*



Photo by Mona with permission.

*Who is “in-charge” in the classroom most of the time and why? How? When is the instructor the sole-authority in the classroom and when do we seek common ground in the classroom? Why? When should the teacher be a student and when should the student teach? How is learning different from teaching? What do you learn when you teach? Why? What is the role of coaching and direct supervision in learning? When does one best learn alone? What is community learning?*

*What are your expectations for education? What is your student’s? How does learning both reinforce and confound expectation? Are there many kinds of teaching — literal, metaphoric, analogic and anagogic methods, for instance —and what are methods to guide equitable learning? How do we all learn in ways that are similar? How do people learn differently?*

*How are teachers examples for their students? How can we curate our lives to live more thoughtfully? In what ways is it a privilege and responsibility to teach and serve others? What is the role of service and other active forms of exchange (dialectic conversation, group projects) in learning? How does learning make us better? Happy? Why? What is the “Good Life” and its relation to learning?*

## Schedule of Activities

Fall 2018

▪ Monday August 20<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>

8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Instructional Skills Workshop at Foothill Horizons Outdoor School with Columbia College, UC Merced and MJC.

▪ Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>

10 am – 4 pm

MJC Performance (Jam'N'Jive), Lunch Workshop with Professor Kim Davis (Dance, MJC)

▪ Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup>

6:15 pm - 10:30 pm

MJC Performance (Peter and the Star-Catcher) & Reception with Actors and Professor Lynette Borrelli-Glidewell

▪ Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

Columbia College

Special Event: Midterm Dessert Cook-Off with Professor Marcus Whisenant & Culinary Arts students)

▪ Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

3:30 pm - 5 pm

End of Semester Innovation Check-in (Virtual Conference Call)

▪ Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>

7:30-10:30pm

Gallo Center for the Arts Performance (*Les Freres Meduses*) and Reception with Professor Alejandro Sabre, David Chapman and Travis Silvers, Musicians and students.

▪ Thursday, April 4th

6 pm – 9 pm

Celebration of the Humanities Mealtme Conversation with Professor Aishah Saleh (Humanities) and Flora Carter.

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Future Events

*Date T.B.D. 10 - 2pm*

**Columbia College**

Special Event: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cook-Off: Main Course Cook-Off with Professor Marcus Whisenant & Culinary Arts students.

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COMMENTARY

# The Promise of the Experiential Liberal Arts

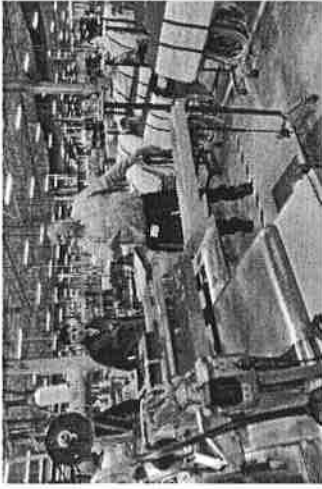
By *Tim Cresswell* | SEPTEMBER 02, 2018 ✓ PREMIUM

**E**xperiential education, an attempt to break down the barrier between classroom learning and everyday life, has long been a staple of professional disciplines.

For the liberal arts, the partnership hasn't come naturally. For many liberal-arts faculty members, an education should be for its own sake, not for job preparation.

Nonetheless, it is common now for liberal-arts colleges to advertise their embrace of experiential, "high impact" forms of education. These generally include place-based learning during study abroad, internships, civic engagement, and undergraduate research. Fully realized, the experiential liberal arts have the potential to transform higher education.

Large universities have taken the lead on this change. For example, my previous institution, Northeastern University, is fully connecting experiential education to the liberal arts. The university's College of Social Sciences and Humanities has defined a model that links traditional liberal-arts strengths (critical thinking, cross-cultural competency, etc.) with the long-established strengths in co-operative education that Northeastern is known for. In addition, it has embraced new competencies, particularly in areas such as data visualization, that clearly overlap with existing liberal-arts disciplines.



## Passion and Profession

Whether behind a desk or on a farm, students in purposeful-work programs explore connections between their intellectual and vocational goals.

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discipline of engineering is mixed with traditional liberal-arts skills. The logic for such a program is not simply to provide a practical route to employment within a liberal-arts context but also to bring the benefits of a rounded liberal-arts education to future engineers.

**I**n truth, none of this should feel foreign. The value of practice, of doing, has long been taught across disciplines in liberal-arts colleges. The value of labs in the sciences has never been in question. Education theorists argue that doing is one of the surest pathways to learning. My discipline, geography, has a longtime commitment to fieldwork as a practice that reinforces the value of classroom learning.

Many traditional liberal-arts colleges, too, are embracing, if somewhat cautiously, forms of learning that would have been unthinkable in an earlier era. While business schools in those types of institutions are still rare, there has been a recent flowering of centers and programs focused on innovation and entrepreneurship. Such programs exist at Middlebury, Lewis and Clark, Bates, and Swarthmore, among other colleges.

At other liberal-arts colleges, some programs have long recognized the value of practical forms of education. Here at Trinity College, we have a distinctive, longstanding engineering program in which the very practical

discipline of engineering is mixed with traditional liberal-arts skills. The logic for such a program is not simply to provide a practical route to employment within a liberal-arts context but also to bring the benefits of a rounded liberal-arts education to future

engineers.

**I**n truth, none of this should feel foreign. The value of practice, of doing, has long been taught across disciplines in liberal-arts colleges. The value of labs in the sciences has never been in question. Education theorists argue that doing is one of the surest pathways to learning. My discipline, geography, has a longtime commitment to fieldwork as a practice that reinforces the value of classroom learning.



Similarly, the arts disciplines insist on the need to actually play music, perform theater, and create sculpture as part of the education. Even in the seemingly rarefied worlds of philosophy, literature, and critical theory, there has been a turn toward worlds of practice and habit, which have too often been subordinated to the heady life of the intellectual.

Fully integrating experiential learning into the liberal arts is a bigger step, although with clear benefits for the employability of liberal-arts graduates. Employers point out that the kinds of things they are looking for in prospective employees include meaningful internships, global experience, civic engagement, and collaboration in addressing real-world problems. These are all features of experiential education.

But the benefits of the experiential liberal arts go well beyond employment in specific jobs. When students are encouraged to reflect on, and learn from, an array of experiences, they gain the skills to navigate their way through life and multiple careers.

To be most effective, the experiential liberal arts need to follow the general lead of experiential education and go beyond the academic-affairs divisions of our colleges. A successful experiential liberal arts will connect to the admissions and recruitment processes before students arrive on campus and to the career-advising and student-success divisions once they arrive.

Centering an admissions process on a series of numerical indicators derived from SAT or ACT scores is clearly not consistent with the goal of John Dewey, father of experiential learning, to include places other than the classroom in the concept of learning. The admissions process needs to take a more rounded view of the skills, talents, and varied forms of knowledge that are likely to signal an aptitude for integrated learning across a continuity of experience — a principle that means, in Dewey's words, "that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after."

Such a process must recognize that valuable precollege experiences are not simply those that can be bought by well-to-do families, but also life experiences over which students often have little power, such as helping to raise siblings or dealing with an ill parent. Career services and student-success programs play a role, too. A career office generally fails if it becomes simply a place to visit when you are close to graduation. Offices of career development and student success must be fully integrated into the learning experience throughout the years of college.

Administrators and faculty and staff members across all divisions of a college need to go about the business of curating an educational experience that creates the habits of mind conducive to continuous reflection and lifelong learning — habits that promote exactly the kind of self-knowledge that advocates of the liberal arts have always promoted.

*Tim Cresswell is dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs at Trinity College, in Connecticut.*

*This article is part of:  
Passion and Profession*

*A version of this article appeared in the September 7, 2018 issue.*

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# EDUCATION WEEK

COMMENTARY

## We Learn by Doing: What Educators Get Wrong About Bloom's Taxonomy

Students must have a chance to apply what they're learning

By Ron Berger

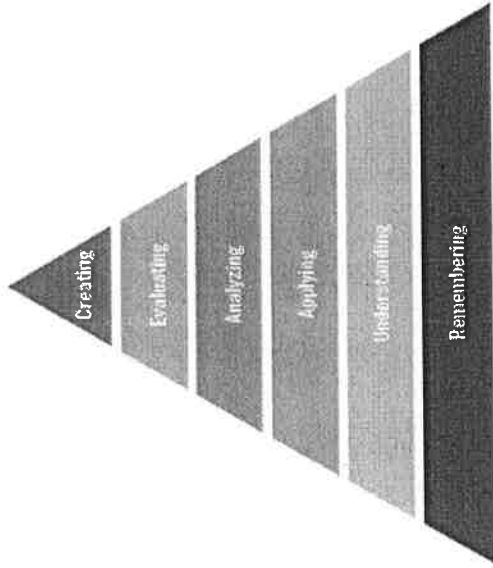
September 25, 2018

[Back to Story](#)

Let's say that you, as an adult, wanted to learn something new. Perhaps woodworking, coding, yoga, or guitar. You would likely search for experts and models to learn from—in person or online. You would study the models to identify what you are aiming for, and you would practice, copying those models, using experts to guide and critique your practice. The learning and the doing would be inseparable: As you try shaping wood, writing code, adjusting your body, or making chords with your fingers, you would get feedback from your own senses, from peers, and from experts, and you would adjust and learn as your understanding builds. The deeper concepts in these fields, such as joinery with wood or the logic of code sequences, would be learned from expert sources in concert with your practice.

It is unlikely you would want to separate learning from doing. You would not want to sit at a desk for months listening to someone lecture about carpentry tools or musical instruments without being allowed to pick up a chisel or guitar. You would not want to memorize 100 yoga postures from a book without being allowed to try them out with your body on a mat. But that is often what school is like for our students.

### Bloom's Taxonomy, Revised



Source: *Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching*

Almost all us as educators have been taught to use a framework called Bloom's Taxonomy. Published by Benjamin Bloom and his team in 1956—and then revised in 2001 by a group of researchers, psychologists, and curricular specialists—this framework for the cognitive domain is most familiar to teachers and school leaders through a graphic that organizes the goals of learning in a pyramid that starts with "remembering" and climbs to "understanding," "applying," "analyzing," "evaluating," and finally "creating."

Students must have a chance to apply what they're learning

Bloom's Taxonomy in both versions has contributed a great deal to education. It reminds all of us who develop curriculum and assessments, coach teachers, and teach students that we need to focus on all these skills. Classrooms that don't allow students to become experts in rich content knowledge are missing a vital foundation and contribute to a knowledge-equity gap in America. Conversely, classrooms that focus almost exclusively on content and memorization with little application, analysis, and creation cause a different problem. They contribute to a two-tiered educational system in which some students, often those from more affluent families, are prepared to be thinkers and leaders, while others are prepared narrowly for tests of basic skills through memorization. The taxonomy, then, is a useful illustration that students need a healthy balance.

Unfortunately, in my experience, Bloom's Taxonomy has also done a lot of damage. For the past 40 years that I have been working with teachers, I have observed the primary effect of Bloom's Taxonomy to be this: It creates a hierarchy in teachers' minds about how we learn. First, we need to remember knowledge, then we can learn to understand, then we can move up to applying that knowledge, and so on, until finally, at the very end, we are allowed to evaluate or create. Based on these discrete steps, teachers, schools, and districts craft curriculum and lessons that separate these skills and assume that students must be proficient in one level to move up to the next one.

This hierarchical vision of discrete, sequential steps in learning was not Bloom's intent. Nevertheless, it is now widespread among teachers and is as deeply troubling as it is fundamentally wrong. Most of the time we do not first memorize, then understand, then apply. We build our understanding in part through application and creation.

The price we pay in education for this misconception is profound. Students are kept at one level of this fictional pyramid because we think they are not ready to move up to "higher levels." For example, many American adults are not proficient with any mathematics beyond elementary school work, as almost everything they learned in high school has disappeared. We memorized procedures to pass tests, but we never applied that mathematics to real life—never fully understood or used it—and it never really took.

These days, I am privileged to work with schools that understand the relationship between learning and doing. In the schools affiliated with EL Education—a professional network of public district and charter schools for which I serve as the chief academic officer—and many similar schools across the nation, students are engaged in doing meaningful work from the outset of learning. They are working as scientists or historians, researching local environmental or historical sites to produce useful artifacts for the community, such as a local field guide, a water-quality report, or a book on local history. They have frequent lessons to build background knowledge but they do not spend their year memorizing dates or facts just to pass a test. They are learning content, analyzing data, building understanding of both local issues and the broader fields of science and history at the same time as they are applying that learning to create and contribute.

When students are engaged in applying knowledge to building things of beauty and value as part of their learning, it does more than deepen understanding; it also cultivates student motivation and agency and pride in craftsmanship. When a student completes her education and enters the working world, she will be judged for the rest of her life not by test scores but rather by the quality of her character and the quality of her work. If students do not develop standards for high-quality work while in school—learning through striving for excellence in what they create—when do we imagine they will build this ethic?

I currently work with a number of public district high schools in our network, sited in low-income urban communities, from which almost every student graduates on time, and every single graduate is accepted to college every year. People often ask what the secret is—how can this be possible? There is no secret, of course, just lots of really hard work. But there is a difference: The students in those schools are continually creating sophisticated and beautiful work. Their understanding is deeper; their standards are higher; their mission is clearer.

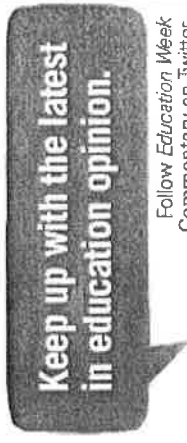
*Ron Berger is the chief academic officer for EL Education, a nonprofit school improvement network. Based in Amherst, Mass., he is a public speaker, the author of six educational books, and was a public school teacher for more than 25 years.*

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**"You would not want to memorize 100 yoga postures from a book without being allowed to try them out with your body on a mat."**

#### MORE OPINION



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**“Experiential Learning and Undergraduate Education: What Faculty Leaders Can Do to Foster Effective Undergraduate Teaching”** is an opportunity for up to 20 faculty leaders — including but not limited to those serving on the *Academic Senate*; the *Pathways Integration Team (PIT)*; *Instruction, College and Assessment Councils*; and the *Online Education, Professional Development, Student Success and Equity and Curriculum Committees* — to explore innovative teaching in a collaborative setting and then set “action plans” to institutionalize these practices at our college.

The project aims to sponsor four themed workshops, a field experience and various “out-of-the-box” activities to foster interdisciplinary conversations among faculty leaders designed to explore **community-based** and **experiential learning** practices (see attached articles: *“Your Students Learn by Doing, Not by Listening,”* *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *“We Learn by Doing”* *Education Week*). There is a growing body of scholarship suggesting that instructors who encourage “active-doing” instead of passive (and usually temporary) acquisition of information are more effective and the learning is more profound.

While discussion-based learning reaches back to the ancient Greek academy, recent neuroscientific research also seems to confirm what we’ve known for a long time, to develop the higher-learning skills — analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creation — students need more time for conversation and other forms of experiential learning in order to master a skill, knowledge system or performance indicator. The benefits of experiential learning are especially important to the success of disproportionately impacted student populations, therefore, this series focuses on theories and praxis which have been proven, in some way, to increase student success and promote equitable classroom learning. The emphasis of the workshops is not content knowledge, rather instructional skills, learning models and innovative pedagogies which inform our teaching with thoughtful practices proven to narrow equity gaps, help overcome educational barriers and motivate students to succeed.

After participating in an inaugural field experience intended to introduce the major themes of the series — **“Learning as Adventure: Project-Based Teaching;”** **“Teaching with Compassion and Altruism;”** **“Creating Community in a Diverse Classroom;”** **“Discussion of Primary Works as Learning;”** **“How Do We Know Our Students?;”** and **“The Broader Community of Learners: Working with Transfer Institutions and Fostering Partnerships”**— and create new friendships, faculty leaders will strive to build our institutional capacity by encouraging innovations in undergraduate teaching, particularly using community-based and experiential models. Therefore, the closing **Report-Out** will include the formation of “action plans” to implement what we have learned. The final session includes conversation and “next steps” for faculty leadership at MJC, those in positions to affect institutional change, so we can work together (within the existing shared governance structure) to design, support and implement “learning by doing” and “community education” in multiple college settings.

The *State Chancellor’s Office Goals for 2022* include reducing equity gaps “among traditionally underrepresented student groups, with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40 percent within 5 years and fully closing those achievement gaps within 10 years.” There is both research (see attachments) and a previous project at MJC (*NEH Common Ground Cohort*) which supports the idea that community-based and experiential learning can reduce equity gap drastically. Simply put, those activities which encourage “active doing” instead of the “passive and temporary acquisition of information” are more accessible to all learners as they play to a student’s strengths instead of accentuating academic deficiencies.

In fact, MJC's recent *Common Ground Cohort (NEH)* grant was able to reduce the equity gap from **40.8% to 7.7% over two years** in pilot classes in the liberal arts as a result of its curricular innovations in community-based, experiential learning modules. This mini-grant hopes to extend these results across divisions and inculcate new, systemic approaches to encourage experiential and community-based learning models. The project also aligns with our Educational Master Plan (EMP) at MJC in several ways. For one, the first priority of our EMP is "**academic excellence in teaching and learning**" and a commitment to "**intentional, well-communicated pedagogy, curriculum.**" This project will explore a wide-variety of best practices proven to increase student success and retention (Workshops #1-3). The fourth priority of our EMP is the institutionalization of "**evidence-based assessment, refinement, and sustainable practices.**" One of the unique wrinkles of this project is bringing together faculty leaders from across the shared governance structure to build new consensus and desire for action related to the improvement of teaching and learning and the use of data and scholarship to better "know" our students (Workshop #4) and encourage student success.

- **Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup> Field Experience: "Learning as Adventure: Project-Based Teaching"**

**River Journey Adventures** is the only locally owned and operated Knight's Ferry rafting adventure. The day's adventure begins with a brief physics lesson before the group sets out to understand momentum, trajectory and the pathways of learning. After our collaborative summer journey down the Stanislaus River, we will enjoy a catered BBQ and time for a brief introduction to the faculty workshop series focused on project, discussion, service and community learning models.

- **Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup> Workshop #1: "Teaching With Compassion and Altruism"**

The first of the Fall 2019 workshops focuses on how instructors can practice compassionate listening and interaction, how faculty leaders can set intentions. **Lori Wong**—trained and certified through Stanford University's *Center for Compassion and Altruism, Research and Education*.

- **Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> Workshop #2: "Creating Community in a Diverse Classroom"**

The animating principle of this faculty-led workshop is the belief that students succeed at higher rates when they see their own **geographic, historical, religious and philosophical and cultural interests** are used to teach disciplinary content. A focus is placed on closing equity gaps in the classroom. Participation from the **Common Ground Cohort (NEH Grant)**.

- **Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> Workshop #3: "Discussion of Primary Works as Learning"**

The third collaborative workshop of the series models **discussion and inquiry-based learning** in an evening mealtime conversation on topics of wide interest, using primary sources and Socratic method.

- **Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup> Workshop #4: "How Do We Know Our Students?"**

This workshop focuses on **the use of student data and various studies** to brainstorm ways of more effectively using action-based learning models to promote student success. Also included in this discussion is an overview of **characteristics of effective undergraduate-level classrooms**. Participation from MJC faculty and college administration.

- **Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> Group Report-Out: "The Broader Community of Learners: Working with Transfer Institutions and Fostering Partnerships"**

This **Report-Out** includes a concluding group discussion on the potentials of expanding the notion of "community learning" both within our institution and with partner institutions such as **CSU Stanislaus and UC Merced** through faculty collaborations, educational pathways and curricular agreements.