ADMINISTRATORS LOVE EXPERIENTIAL SERVICE LEARNING, BUT WHAT DO STUDENTS THINK? NEW EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS FROM A MARKETING CAPSTONE COURSE

John M. McGrath, College of Charleston

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: *Experiential learning (EL) is touted as a way to improve student engagement and administrators are promoting, and sometimes requiring, its application to a wide range of academic offerings including Marketing courses. But what do students think about EL? This research examines student attitudes toward their EL course experiences and their level of satisfaction with these experiences.*
Method/Design and Sample: *This study employs a measurement instrument known as the Benefits of Academic Community Engagement (BACE) scale. It was administered on a longitudinal basis to discrete samples of students (N=142) over 11 semesters of a capstone Marketing course spanning six academic years at a medium sized university in the United States.*
Results: *The most important finding was that two aspects of EL, Social Responsibility and Personal Skills Development, were strong predictors of student satisfaction. This is notable because it supports the view that EL can not only enhance student learning outcomes beyond traditional teaching methods such as lectures and tests, but also lead to enhanced student satisfaction.*
Value to Marketing Educators: *Marketing course evaluation measures typically include items such as instructor organization, grade fairness, course content and other course and classroom factors. However, measures typically do not include any consideration of the role of EL in a course. This research suggests an affordable open-source, valid and reliable instrument to evaluate EL in a course that features this pedagogical approach.*

Keywords: *Experiential learning, service learning, course evaluation measures, Marketing education*

INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning (EL) is one of the emerging trends in Marketing education, as well as in the larger world of higher education. Many colleges have embraced the notion of EL as a way of enhancing their existing lecture-based courses (Forman, 2012; Frontczak, 1998) and some are now going the extra step and requiring it as part of their general graduation requirements, including Northeastern University, Seton Hall University, and portions of the State University of New York (SUNY) system ("Experiential Learning," 2018). Some administrators, including Sally McRorie, provost at Florida State University, have voiced strong support for this requirement, noting "Every student should — and can — participate in transformative, career-building experiential learning." (Farnum-Patronis, 2019).

From a behavioral perspective, supporters of EL suggest that its use encourages students to become more highly involved with course content by creating opportunities to apply their academic learning to actual real-world situations (Lewis & Williams, 1994), and that it increases student engagement, performance and the perceived value of their experience with the project (Myers, 2010). Advocates suggest that EL activities bridge the gap between academic curriculum and the practical needs of today's workplace (Cadotte, 2016), while building on students' theoretical knowledge by allowing them to apply and practice what they have learned in the classroom (Lange et al., 2018). The addition of a team-based component to EL projects is also seen as beneficial to improving student satisfaction and project outcomes (Rocco & Whalen, 2014).

From a psychological perspective, supporters of EL argue that it contributes to important cognitive associations with learning. Indeed, Newmann (1992, p. 12), argued that engagement in an academic setting is "the student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering

the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote." Martin (2007) and Yin (2018) have conducted important work in this area and have called for more investigation into this aspect of EL.

In practice, EL approaches are being applied in a wide range of scenarios, including cases, role-play activities and projects involving clients from the business world (Sojka & Fish, 2008). Dyer and Schumann (1993) and Young (2002) described the application of EL in Marketing courses. Young and Hawes (2013), Rocco and Whalen (2016) as well as Billups and Poddar (2018) described their use of EL in sales courses. Other examples include a description of an EL approach to a fashion retail incubator setting (Cappuccitti et al., 2019), a case study of EL use in the study of Geography (Healey & Jenkins, 2000), an extension of EL into the realm of computer simulations (Story et al., 2020), an examination of EL in a computer software education setting (Che, Strang, and Vajjhala, 2021), and a description of its use in the field of Engineering (Warnick et al., 2014).

The remaining sections of this article will provide more background on the theoretical bases supporting the EL approach, describe a methodological approach to measuring the effects of EL and outline the results of a study using this technique in a Marketing capstone course that features a major community service-learning project as a key component.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiential learning explanation

At its core, EL theory is based on the notion of "learning by doing," an approach often credited to the early work of Dewey (1938). According to this approach, learning can be enhanced by embracing student experiences beyond traditional teaching methods such as lectures, readings, and tests. Drea et al., (1997) suggested that the primary focus of these traditional classroom approaches is on passive learning which introduces students to a basic understanding of the content, but does not add much in the way of practical application. This philosophy posits that this approach helps make the classroom material more relevant to students because they are encouraged to apply the classroom concepts with hands-on activities in an actual real-world situation, rather than just memorize the material (Drea, 1997; McCormick 1993). These EL experiences can be powerful because students can make their own decisions regarding their behaviors/actions and learn while engaging in those behaviors and from the consequences of their choices (Inks & Schetzsle, 2011).

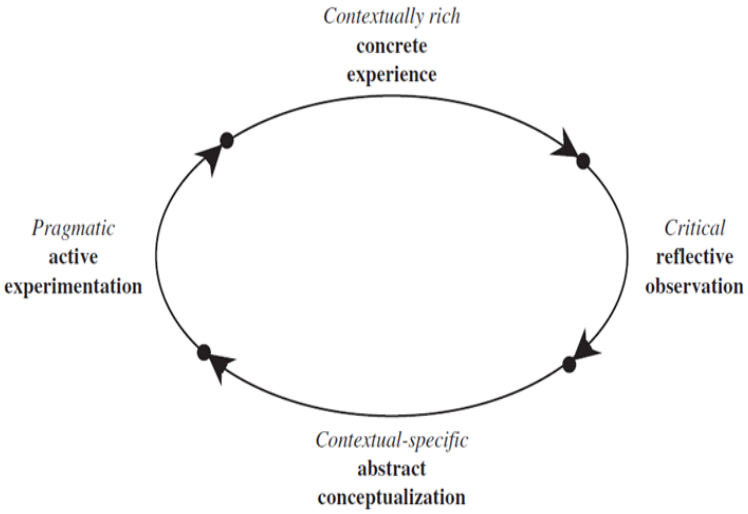
Kolb (1984) helped to codify Dewey's earlier work and identified four key elements that defined authentic EL: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Regarding concrete experience, suggesting that students learn through actual experiences, as opposed to simply observing or memorizing. Reflective observation posited that it is critical for students to step back from their hands-on experience and take note of their unique personal reflections on actions. And regarding abstract conceptualization, suggesting that students must integrate their EL experiences with their own knowledge of the subject gained from academic learning. And finally, Kolb holds that active experimentation is critical because it allows students to employ their learning to engage in and manage new experiences (Kolb, 1984).

It must also be noted that Kolb's conceptualization of EL has been questioned by some, including Bergsteiner et al., (2010) and Bergsteiner and Avery (2014), who have suggested that the concept has weak theoretical foundations. Miettinen (2000) has also suggested that Kolb's conceptualization of his model required more precise definition. In an effort to address some of these critiques of Kolb's work, Morris (2020) conducted an extensive literature review of existing studies in the field resulting in a refinement of Kolb's four elements as part of an EL cycle as depicted in Figure 1.

Step one in the cycle, concrete experience, was originally seen by Kolb as a rather broad concept but has been refined to denote "contextually rich learning environments that represented in the present moment, uncontrived, "hands on", real-world primary concrete experiences" (Morris, 2020, p. 1072). Morris (2020) also refined Kolb's conceptualization of reflective observation to add a "critical" dimension, meaning that students involved in this process should be encouraged to approach this part of the process in an "investigator-like manner and test the fittingness of new or pre-existing abstract conceptualizations against the present moment real-world experience" (Morris, 2020, p. 1071). Kolb's third element, abstract conceptualization, was also refined by Morris to include the notion of "contextual-specific" thought processes. Morris' views here is that EL can be seen as a series of "working hypotheses" for students, and as they encounter these experiences, they are encouraged to process them and to form their own personal takeaways (Morris, 2020, p. 1072). Finally, Morris modified Kolb's fourth element, active experimentation,

with the notion that these experiences should be pragmatic in nature, or "in other words, this involves testing the fittingness of abstract conceptualizations formulated against new concrete experiences" (Morris, 2020, p. 1072).

Figure 1. Refinement of Kolb's (1984) Model by Morris (2020) (Morris updates noted in italics)



Morris (2020) nicely summarized the essence of EL when he noted Roberts' (2018) etymology of the word "experience", which means "to test", or "to risk" in Latin (Morris, 2020, p. 1072). In the final analysis, EL theory really comes down to this: learning is the process of creating knowledge by taking risks in the context of uniquely personal experiences grounded in existing theory—and this adds more value to learners than the traditional model of higher education where theoretical concepts are simply transmitted to students by instructors in a lecture format (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Service-learning explication

Service learning can be seen as a complementary subset of EL because it combines the hands-on learning aspect described by Kolb (1984) and Kolb and Kolb (2005) with problem-based learning in the service of a community client through civic engagement projects (Bringle & Clayton, 2012). Gerholz et al., (2018) define it as "a teaching-learning arrangement, in which students participate in a service activity matching a community need, while, in turn, reflecting on this activity…in a course-or credit-based arrangement" (p. 48). This approach can also be seen as an extension of Dewey's belief that educational institutions should help prepare students for their roles as responsible citizens. Blair (2016) agrees with Dewey's view and notes that by its very nature, learning can be a social process.

This type of civic engagement creates three important linkages: the connection of theory with practice; the link between cognitive and affective learning; and the cultural connection between colleges and communities (Butin, 2006). This cultural connection is also noted by Deringer (2017) who sees it as a central tenet of service learning because it encourages learners to be part of the larger process of community engagement. Fifolt et al., (2018) also discuss the role of EL in helping to bring communities together.

It must also be noted that there has been some questioning of the growth of service learning in higher education, particularly Butin (2006), who suggests that there are significant pedagogical, political, and institutional limits to its application. For example, Butin notes that many of the institutions promoting service learning are traditional four-year universities catering to an ideal type of student who tends to be more white, middle class, single, and between the ages of 18-24. This contrasts with the demographic profile of community colleges who cater to an audience that is more ethnically diverse, less affluent, married, and older (Butin, 2006). Butin questions whether service learning might not be as appropriate and perhaps even be more of luxury that these students (and by extension, their colleges) cannot afford (Butin, 2006).

Despite these valid criticisms, in an appropriate academic setting, service-learning projects can add

value to a curriculum because they provide a way to link theoretical academic learning gained in the traditional classroom with the opportunity to connect and contribute with real world community issues (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Because of its potential to enhance the student educational experience, service learning has become a major presence within higher education (Butin, 2006), and its growth has been supported by an organization known as Campus Compact, which counts over 700 higher education institutions as members nationwide from the University of California at Los Angeles to Northwestern University to Harvard University. The group believes that the service-learning approach has moved from the margins of higher education to become a mainstream movement ("Campus Compact Membership", 2022).

Context for this study

For the past 25 years, EL has been the centerpiece of the Marketing capstone course at the U.S. university described in this study, defined by the Carnegie Classification System (2022) as a medium-sized institution. A key component of the course is a major project that serves the local community. Despite the centrality of EL to this course, it has never been measured as one of the officially recognized metrics in annual student evaluations. These metrics include instructor organization, grade fairness, course content and other critical course and classroom factors, and have provided important insights into the relative effectiveness of the lecture component of the course over the years. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to share results of a method that evaluates EL in a course that features this pedagogical approach.

The course noted above, Marketing Management, is required of all seniors in the Marketing curriculum. A key EL component of the course, accounting for a significant portion of the final grade is the requirement to serve as a member of a team known as a "consulting group" that spends each semester working with a local not-for-profit "client" to research, develop and present a marketing plan. In other words, they are expected apply their three years of Marketing education theoretical learning to serve a community organization by delivering a professional quality marketing plan to a real-world client organization in the community. This course is evaluated each year using the standard university course evaluation metrics, as noted above, and usually performs quite well on this scale. Over the 11 semesters addressed in this study, the mean score equaled 4.37 (on a 1-5 scale with 5 = "excellent") with a standard deviation equaling .78. However, until the implementation of this longitudinal study, no measure ever gauged the impact of the EL component of this course on students.

METHODOLOGY

To address this evaluation measures gap, the instructor of the course employed the Benefits of Academic Community Engagement (BACE) instrument, developed by faculty members at SMSU (Miller et al., 2018). Its goal is to evaluate student reactions to EL projects by providing them with a simple, concise questionnaire instrument.

The BACE instrument was derived from an existing tool known as the Service Learning Benefit (SELEB) instrument which included a 12-item scale, designed to evaluate the benefits of service learning (Toncar et al., 2006). Miller et al. worked to refine the SELEB scale in several important ways. First, they expanded the scale from 12 items to 18 items to incorporate the input from faculty members across several different disciplines. Second, they adjusted the SELEB's seven-point scale to a five-point model, and third, they adjusted the wording of the existing questionnaire items to subtly refine them from a service-learning approach to the unique requirements of the ACE approach at SMSU (Miller et al., 2018).

The revised BACE scale was then further refined through a series of three studies administered among student samples in courses with significant EL-related pedagogy to confirm the instrument's reliability and validity over the course of three years (Miller et al., 2018). This process employed exploratory factory analysis that revealed two underlying factors, Personal Development (including questionnaire items that benefitted students personally), and Social Responsibility (including items that students believed benefitted the community). Reliability of the factors was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and the measures were 0.94 for Personal Development and 0.90 for Social Responsibility. In the final study (N = 612), the authors employed confirmatory factory analysis to examine the factor structure and the association among scale items. A partial least squares technique yielded an R-square value of 52.9, which was significant at the 0.0001 level (Miller et al., 2018). Based on these analyses, Miller et al. (2018) believe the items employed in the BACE scale can serve as reliable and valid measures of levels of student Personal Development and Social Responsibility.

In addition to the 18 items noted above, the questionnaire instrument also included a measure of

student satisfaction. This item employed a 10-point scale and was stated as "On a scale of 1-10 where 1 is a bad experience and 10 is an excellent experience, I would rate the community engagement experience in this class as a_____."

The questionnaire also provided respondents with the opportunity to express their attitudes about the course and its experiential service-learning approach via two open-ended items, one which asked respondents to "provide three words that best describe what you liked most about the community engagement part of this course" and to "provide three words that best describe what you disliked most about the community engagement part of this course."

In addition to these key questionnaire items, the instrument also collected standard demographic and curriculum background items such as age, gender, ethnicity, college major, number of credit hours completed, GPA, major, hours worked in a job or internship, and place of residence during the school year.

In their summary of the BACE model noted above, Miller et al. (2018) recommended that "additional data should be collected from a larger set of diverse institutions…to test this instrument's application in varied educational settings," (Miller et al., 2018, p. 11). This study addresses this challenge, and since the fall semester of 2016, the BACE scale questionnaire has been administered to students in the Marketing Management course at the university in this study.

Over 11 semesters spanning six academic years, 142 students completed the questionnaire instrument. The sample represents 11 discrete groups of students in the same course. Data were not collected in one semester because the instructor for the course was on sabbatical. The questionnaire instrument was administered at the same time as the standard course evaluation questionnaire near the conclusion of the semester just prior to the time when the students prepared to present their marketing plan final experiential service-learning projects. The instrument was completed via a traditional paper and pencil style on a voluntary basis by the student subjects with no extra credit incentive. Participation in the BACE instrument was higher than the standard course evaluation with an 11-semester mean of 81.6 percent (S.D. = 23.6) for the BACE instrument versus a mean of 73.6 percent (S.D. = 22.7) for the standard course evaluation instrument.

RESULTS

Demographics

The demographic composition of the sample from the university in this study included a skew towards male respondents, representing 59% of the sample with female respondents equaling 41%. Respondents reported a mean GPA of 3.31. This reflected the overall composition of the population of marketing majors at the school in this study where 66% identified themselves as male and 38% identified as female. The mean overall GPA of the population of marketing majors was lower (2.78) than the mean reported by the respondents noted above. The mean age of the sample was 21.7 years. This information was sourced from the registrar's office of the school in the study. The sample was heavily skewed toward white respondents, which represented 87% of the sample with black respondents equaling 5%, Asian, 4%, Hispanic, 3% and respondents reporting "other" represented 1%. Seniors represented 79% of the sample with 21% responding that they were in their junior year of college. Because the instrument was administered in the Marketing capstone course, 100% of respondents reported their major as Marketing.

Overall student satisfaction score

This measure of student satisfaction was the same 10-point scale used by Miller et al., 2018, anchored by the terms "bad" (= 1) and "excellent" (= 10). The mean satisfaction rating measured across discrete samples of students in 11 semesters of the capstone course was in the positive range ($M = 7.76$; $SD = 1.69$) spanning six academic years (see Chart 1 and Table 1 below). During this time period, the lowest semester mean was 7.00 and the highest mean was 9.17. This mean satisfaction score for the sample was significantly higher than the mid-point of the questionnaire item scale $t(138) = 22.7$, $p<.05$.

Student open-ended attitudes

Student attitudes were captured by asking students to describe what they liked and disliked most about the project. As noted above, the questionnaire instrument provided respondents with the opportunity to write in three words for positive reactions and three words for negative reactions with open-ended questionnaire items. Responses used in this analysis were collected over 11 semesters spanning six academic years.

Chart 1. Experiential Service-Learning Satisfaction Score 6-year Trend

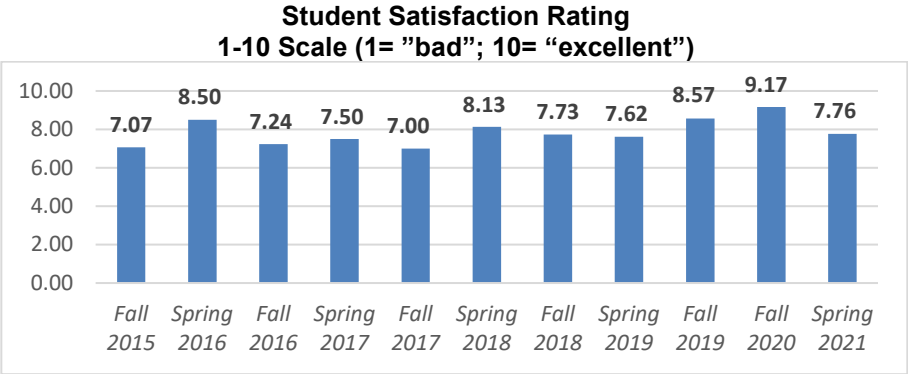


Table 1. Experiential Service-Learning Satisfaction Score 6-year Cumulative Data

Number of Responses	Range (Bad Experience)	Range (Good Experience)	Mean	Standard Deviation
142	**1**	**10**	**7.76**	**1.69**

The most commonly reported positive open-ended comments were one or more of the following three words: "real," "world" and "experience." For the purposes of this analysis, each individual word was counted each time it was provided by a respondent (for example for the response "real world experience," the words "real," "world," and "experience" were each counted once). Twenty-three percent of all responses met the criterion of being one or more of these three words. The words "teamwork" and "challenging" accounted for an additional 8% of all responses. To put this into perspective, these 5 words represented 71% of the top 10 positive comments volunteered by respondents (after the top 10, responses tended to be unique words noted infrequently by respondents). These results are provided in Table 2 and in the word cloud depicted in Figure 2 below.

Table 2. Experiential Service Learning Top 10 Positive Student Sentiments 6-year Cumulative Data

Open-Ended Word Response	Frequency	Percent of Total Responses	Cumulative Percentage
experience	34	9%	9%
real	30	8%	17%
world	21	6%	23%
teamwork	16	4%	27%
challenging	14	4%	31%
communication	12	3%	34%
helpful	10	3%	37%
interesting	10	3%	39%
engaging	9	2%	42%
creativity	7	2%	44%
Number of top 10 responses	163		
Total number of responses	374		

Figure 2. Experiential Service-Learning Positive Student Sentiments 6-year Cumulative Data

The most commonly reported negative open-ended comments were one or more of the following words: "time- consuming," "communication", "work," and "group." For the purposes of this analysis, each individual word was counted each time it was provided by a respondent according to the same protocol described above for positive responses. Forty percent of all responses met the criterion of being one or more of three words. To put this into perspective, these 5 words represented 81% of the top 10 negative comments volunteered by respondents (as noted above, after the top 10, responses tended to be unique words noted infrequently by respondents). The results are provided in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

Table 3. Experiential Service Learning Top 10 Negative Student Sentiments 6-year Cumulative Data

Open-Ended Word Response	Frequency	Percent of Total Responses	Cumulative Percentage
time	40	15%	15%
consuming	24	9%	25%
communication	22	8%	33%
work	11	4%	37%
group	7	3%	40%
hard	6	2%	42%
stressful	6	2%	45%
meetings	5	2%	47%
challenging	4	2%	48%
difficult	4	2%	50%
Number of top 10 responses	129		
Total number of responses	259		

Figure 3.
Experiential Service Learning Negative Student Sentiments 6-year Cumulative Data

BACE Scale measures and impact on student satisfaction

Reliability of the scale used in this study was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and the measure for the 18-item scale was α = .903. Results of the BACE scale questionnaire items were also compared, as well as the aggregate mean scores for each of the scale's 18 items for SMSU versus the university in this study (see Table 4 below). The data were analyzed using an independent sample t-test to determine if there were any differences between the aggregate means of the two studies. Results indicated that means were lower for the SMSU sample (M = 4.06, SD = .155), but the differences were small and not statistically significantly different than those for the university in this study (M = 4.08, SD = .860), t(142) = .278, p = 0.781

Confirmatory factor analysis was also performed on the 18 questionnaire items using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .88, above the commonly recommended value of .60, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (x^2 153) = 950.78, p = .000). The findings mirrored the Miller et al. (2018) study, yielding two factors that explained a total of 47.05 percent of total variance. The first factor, Social Responsibility, accounted for 24.09 per cent of total variance and encompassed nine questions from the BACE scale instrument related to how their EL activities helped enhance students' desire to serve and be involved in community, as detailed Table 5 below. The items, paraphrased for brevity, include: Citizenship Skills, More Involved, Continue to Serve, Make a Difference, Benefits Community, Aware of Needs, Personal SWOT, Cultural Differences, and Type of Work. One questionnaire item, Recommend to Other Students, cross-loaded with another factor and was removed from the analysis. The reliability of this subset of nine questionnaire items was found to be strong at α = .828, based on the .70 rule of thumb suggested by Nunally (1978). The second factor, rephrased slightly as Personal Skills Development, accounted for an additional 22.96 percent of total variance. This factor encompassed seven questionnaire items centering on leadership and work-related skills related to the employability of students after graduation. The items, paraphrased for brevity, include: Real World, Workplace Skills, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Employable, Leadership Skills, and Organizational Skills. One questionnaire item, Theory and Practice, cross-loaded with another factor and was removed from the analysis. The reliability of this subset of seven remaining questionnaire items was also found to be strong with α = .834

Table 4. BACE Scale Mean Score Comparisons at Two Universities

	BACE Scale Questionnaire Items (1-5 scale; 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)	**Sam Houston State University Mean and S.D.**	**U.S. Medium Sized University Mean and S.D.**
1	The community engagement in this course helped me to apply the subject matter in a "real world" situation.	4.33; 0.837	4.51; 0.660
2	The community engagement I did in this course helped me to develop problem solving and critical thinking skills.	3.86; 0.942	4.36; 0.707
3	The community engagement in this course helped me to improve workplace skills (e.g., teamwork, preparation) I will need in the future.	4.08; 0.931	4.40; 0.662
4	The community engagement in this course helped me to develop organizational skills.	3.8; 1.023	4.22; 0.826
5	The community engagement in this course showed me how to integrate the material and connect theory with practice.	3.86; 1.027	4.32; 0.828
6	This course made me aware of the differences (i.e., cultural, racial, economic, gender, age, education, etc.) that exist in our community.	4.06; 1.020	3.60; 1.078
7	This course made me aware of my responsibility to engage with the community and develop my citizenship skills.	4.08; 0.914	3.99; 0.876
8	This course helped me understand that I can make a difference in my community.	4.25; 0.922	3.99; 0.904
9	The community engagement requirement of this course showed me how I can become more involved in my community.	4.14; 0.926	4.04; 0.830
10	The community engagement I did through this course benefited the community.	4.23; 0.912	3.79; 0.868
11	The community engagement requirement of this course helped me to become more aware of the needs in my community.	4.02; 0.993	3.94; 0.976
12	Working in the community helped me to define my personal strengths and weaknesses.	3.92; 0.972	3.94; 0.929
13	The community engagement in this course assisted me in defining the type of work I want to do in the future.	3.83; 1.177	3.66; 1.119
14	Engaging in the community helped enhance my leadership skills.	4.00; 0.906	4.04; 0.868
15	Engaging in the community helped enhance my communication skills.	4.07; 0.930	4.32; 0.717
16	The community engagement in this course has made me more employable.	4.06; 0.999	4.42; 0.755
17	After this course is completed, I will probably continue to serve the community.	4.17; 0.982	3.65; 1.039
18	I would recommend a community engagement course to others.	4.22; 1.065	4.20; 0.830
	Aggregate Scale Means and Standard Deviations	M = 4.06 SD = .155	M = 4.08 SD = .860
	T-test results: no significant differences between aggregate means t(142) =.278, p =0.781		

Table 5. BACE Scale Factor Analysis Results

BACE Scale Item	Factor Loading	
Factor 1: Social Responsibility		
Q7 Citizenship Skills	.683	
Q9 More Involved	.651	
Q17 Continue to Serve	.647	
Q8 Make a Difference	.646	
Q10 Benefits Community	.644	
Q11 Aware of Needs	.613	
Q18 Recommend*	.581	.427
Q12 Personal SWOT	.558	
Q6 Cultural Differences	.549	
Q13 Type of Work	.446	
Factor 2: Personal Skills Development		
Q1 Real World		.767
Q3 Workplace Skills		.764
Q15 Communication Skills		.707
Q2 Critical Thinking		.639
Q16 Employable		.638
Q14 Leadership Skills		.568
Q4 Organizational Skills		.518
Q5 Theory and Practice*	.431	.480

Note: * Denotes items removed from the analysis due to cross-loading on multiple factors

Building on these factors, multiple regression analysis was performed with the measure of student satisfaction employed as a dependent variable and the two factors described above as the independent variables along with eight demographic variables. An analysis of variance was calculated to determine the fit of this model, and the results indicated a significant overall fit ($F(10, 93) = 5.794$. $p = .000$, with an R^2 of .384. Further analysis indicated that both factors identified above had a statistically significant impact on student satisfaction. They were Social Responsibility, $\beta = .34$, $t(103) = 3.03$, $p = .003$, as noted in Table 6 below. The Personal Skills Development factor's impact on student satisfaction scores was also significant ($\beta = .23$, $t(103) = 2.06$, $p = .043$.

Two demographic variables were also found to have a significant impact on student satisfaction scores, Gender ($\beta = -.28$, $t(103) = -3.29$, $p = .001$ (with the mean satisfaction score for males equaling 7.99 versus females of 7.39); and Ethnicity ($\beta = -.21$, $t(103) = -2.55$, $p = .012$), with the mean satisfaction scores for Hispanic and Asian students equaling 10.00 and 8.57 respectively, versus $M = 7.79$ for White students and $M = 6.79$ for Black students. It must be noted, however, that the sample segment size was small for both Hispanic ($n = 4$) and Asian ($n = 7$) students. No significant impact on student satisfaction scores was found for any of the remaining six demographic variables (please see Table 6).

DISCUSSION

This study addresses the call from Miller et al. (2018) to expand the geographic application of their instrument and illustrates that this affordable open-source, valid and reliable instrument can be easily and affordably replicated.

The most interesting findings were the relationships between EL and student satisfaction. The key relationships were the two significant ones between the Personal Skills Development and Social Responsibility factors, suggesting that the students in the study gained the most satisfaction from their EL experiences when they had the opportunity to develop their own personal skills, as well as recognizing and developing skills related to serving their community as citizens as noted earlier by Gerholz, Liszt and Klingseick (2018) and Blair (2016). These relationships are also notable because they support the beliefs of

Table 6. BACE Scale Factor Regression Analysis Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	116.094	10	11.609	5.794	.000
Residual	186.346	93	2.004		
Total	302.440	103			

	Coefficients				
	Unstandardized	Standardized	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.766	2.502		1.505	.136
Social Responsibility factor	.961	.317	.337	3.034	.003
Personal Skills Dev. factor	.771	.375	.237	2.055	.043
C1 Gender	-.987	.300	-.284	-3.293	.001
C2 Age	-.064	.099	-.059	-.652	.516
C3 Ethnicity	-.470	.184	-.213	-2.548	.012
C4 Credit Load	.014	.008	.146	1.178	.087
C5 GPA	-.058	.058	-.083	-1.000	.320
C6 Class Level	.045	.315	.013	.144	.886
C7 Work Hours	.017	.012	.123	1.438	.154
C8 Living Location	-.060	.231	-.022	-.261	.795

Note: Extraction method was Principal Component Analysis
Rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Dewey (1938), Kolb (1984), Morris (2020) and others that EL approaches can not only enhance student learning beyond traditional teaching methods such as lectures, readings and tests, but also lead to greater student satisfaction. This result also validates the work of Miller et al. (2018) and their work in developing the BACE scale because the satisfaction scores reported by students in this study (M = 7.76; SD = 1.69) were very similar to those found in the SMSU sample (M = 8.41; SD =1.78). These positive attitude scores are encouraging because they suggest that EL provides students with the opportunity suggested by Butin (2006) to connect theory with practice, link cognitive and affective learning, and foster cultural connections between colleges and communities—all the while resulting in a positive learning experience for the student. This study's findings indicate that EL experiences measured in the context of this sample (as well as the SMSU sample), do indeed seem to deliver some of the outcomes hypothesized by Kolb (1984), Morris (2020) and others, but in such a way that students seem to enjoy. The second interesting finding was the difference in EL's impact on certain demographic groups, specifically on male versus female students. Mean satisfaction scores for both male and female students were both very positive (M for males = 7.99 versus M = 7.39 for females), but the difference in the scores was significant. There is some precedent for this result with Hawtrey (2007) finding a gap in the overall importance placed on EL, with men (64 percent) rating it higher than women (54 percent). However, these findings are not supported by other studies, including Tzafilkou, Protogeros, and Chouliara (2020) who found no gender differences in EL effects, and Mainemelis, Boyatzis, and Kolb (2002), who found the opposite gender effect with results indicating that women were more oriented toward learning styles that emphasized experiencing while men were more oriented toward learning styles that emphasized conceptualizing. This suggests an opportunity for future research, which is discussed below.

The third interesting finding was the frequency of the positive sentiments of "real" "world" and "experience" open-ended responses voiced by respondents in the study. This result could be seen as a validation of the beliefs of Kolb (1984) and Morris (2020), noted above, that EL experiences are characterized by hands-on, concrete, real-world experiences. Conversely, the most common negative

open-ended sentiments voiced by respondents were “time- consuming,” “communication”, and “work.” These negative reactions could be viewed, alternatively, as a form of exasperation over the extended nature of mental processing that Morris believes is necessary for students to encounter EL experiences, experiment with them, process them, and ultimately to form them into their own personal takeaways (Morris, 2020). It is encouraging to note that these findings do indeed reflect the intensive EL-focused pedagogy that is central to the capstone course measured in this study. The use of the BACE scale in this case yielded measures suggesting that students believed that they were indeed experiencing some of the hypothesized outcomes that should result from the integration of EL activities in a course.

A final interesting finding was the small and statistically insignificant differences in the aggregate BACE Scale mean scores between the two universities being studied. This comparison indicates that student attitudes toward their EL experiences at these two institutions are similar in courses with a significant EL-focused pedagogy and that these perceived experiences are consistent with the hypothesized outcomes that should result from the integration of EL in a course, which were explored in the literature review above.

LIMITATIONS/OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The primary objective of this study was to address the question raised above: what would an EL-based measure of student satisfaction look like at a diverse sample of colleges? While this study takes a step in that direction, an obvious major limitation is that this extension is very limited geographically to the university described in this article. Hopefully, this article will serve as a catalyst toward realizing the opportunity to expand the use of the BACE scale in different contexts by encouraging its adoption by researchers in different settings throughout the U.S and international locations by increasing awareness of the BACE scale and how it can be affordably adopted in a wide range of institutions.

A second limitation is that comparisons of results between the original sample of students at SMSU and the university in this study should be viewed with caution because the former sample consisted of students from a range of academic disciplines including Marketing, but also including Management, Mass Communications, Education, Sociology, Library Science and Agriculture, while the latter sample consisted entirely of students majoring in Marketing. The opportunity here is for the medium sized university in this study and other future adopters of the BACE scale to expand the adoption of the instrument to courses beyond the Marketing capstone course into a diverse mix of courses in other disciplines like SMSU.

A third limitation is related to the second—there are significant differences between the student body sample of the SMSU study versus the university in this study, this time in regard to demographics. This is particularly true with gender, age and race. This study’s gender distribution was more balanced with a 59% female/41% male ratio versus a 76% female/24% male ratio in the SMSU sample. The SMSU sample’s age was higher with a mean of 23.6 versus this study’s 21.7. Racially, SMSU’s sample was more balanced with a 70% White/14% Black/14% Hispanic ratio versus this study’s ratio of 87% White/5% Black/3% Hispanic respondents. The opportunity here is related to the first one noted above: to encourage the adoption of the BACE instrument by institutions in different settings with a broader range of student demographic profiles to see if the findings are consistent across different demographic settings.

A fourth limitation is related to the gender differences observed in satisfaction levels. Currently, the BACE Scale questionnaire instrument’s primary demographic questions are limited to gender, age, and ethnic origin (in addition to academic-oriented items). Future research could expand the demographic questions to include more options that explore different learning styles, perhaps employing aspects of the scales employed by Mainemelis, Boyatzis, and Kolb (2002). Such an enhancement to the BACE Scale methodology could yield interesting new insights that could be applied to the practical application of EL pedagogy in individual situations where students might be struggling with traditional learning approaches. For example, if future research suggests women (or, conversely, men) benefit more from an experiential approach, courses featuring this type of pedagogy could be recommended to them during the academic advising process.

A final limitation is that this study measured only students enrolled in the capstone Marketing course which did indeed have a significant EL component built into its pedagogy, so this result was not surprising. An opportunity for future research would be to expand the administration of the BACE instrument beyond this capstone course to other courses in the Marketing curriculum and beyond. The results could be interesting in two ways. First, if other BACE scale mean scores in courses which objectively do not have EL at the center of their pedagogy are lower than the capstone course in this study, the results could serve to bolster the validity of the BACE instrument in measuring different levels of EL. Second, if such differences

in BACE-measured EL outcomes were noted between different courses, this could serve as a diagnostic tool for instructors and administrators to identify courses which could benefit from the introduction of a more EL-based pedagogy.

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For further information contact:
John M. McGrath, Ph.D.
Department of Management and Marketing School of Business
College of Charleston
323 Beatty Center
5 Liberty St.
Charleston, SC 29401
(843) 953-6565
mcgrathjm@cofc.edu