EXAMINING INTERNSHIPS AS A HIGH-IMPACT EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

by

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B.S., Pittsburg State University, 1988
M.S., Indiana State University, 1990

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs
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Abstract

Colleges and universities across the United States seek new, creative, and impactful ways to enhance student engagement. The study of student engagement has led to the identification of several "high-impact" educational practices that appear to generate higher levels of student performance, learning, and development than the traditional classroom experience (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Internships – when done well – are among the recommended high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008).

This qualitative study investigated internships to address the following research questions: What is the essence of internships that are done well? What are the student learning outcomes of internships that are done well? Utilizing interviews and a phenomenological approach, this study reconstructed internship experiences of 19 undergraduate students. For the triangulation of data collection, 5 faculty members and 5 employer representatives were also interviewed about their observations regarding student internships.

After open coding and analyzing interview transcripts, four essence themes and four outcome themes emerged from the data. According to study participants, internships that are done well require commitment, connect the classroom to career, facilitate good communication, and provide a sense of community. In regards to resulting outcomes, internships that are done well develop the competencies of students, produce career-related crystallization, build self-confidence, and generate capital. The results suggest that when internships are done well, they can embody Kuh's (2008) six elements of high impact practices as they are effortful, include feedback, apply learning, prompt reflection, build relationships, and engage across differences.

The findings of this study have the potential to assist the campus community – faculty, advisors, and career development professionals – as they help students fulfill their learning and

career development goals (O'Neill, 2010). First, this study's findings essentially point to the

need for students to demonstrate initiative and fundamental skills during internships. Second,

employers must continue to be informed about what constitutes a meaningful internship

experience for students. Third, universities should "scale up" high-impact educational practices

like internships (Brownell & Swaner, 2010) by creating a developmental approach for program

implementation. Furthermore, everyone in the campus community must work together to

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to those who are on the journey…

Some journeys are direct, and some are circuitous; some are heroic, and some are fearful and muddled. But every journey, honestly undertaken, stands a chance of taking us toward the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need. (Palmer, 2000, p. 36)

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Internships are a valuable commodity within higher education. Internships enable college students to apply their academic knowledge in the workplace, explore occupational options, meet others who are in their career fields of interest, gain marketable experience, and practice their job search skills (Gardner & Motschenbacher, 1997; Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010; Hurst & Good, 2010; O'Neill, 2010; Taylor, 1988; Zhao & Liden, 2010). Employers value internships for previewing prospective full-time employees, introducing diverse talent to their organizations, accessing the latest industry innovations, and building relationships with universities (Coco, 2000; Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Thiel & Hartley, 1997). In turn, universities value student internships for enhancing their community as well as corporate partnerships (Cook, Parker, & Pettijohn, 2004; Weible, 2010). Even more importantly, internships potentially provide students with high-impact educational experiences that – when done well – result in many desirable learning and personal development outcomes (Kuh, 2008).

This introductory chapter will describe the current interest in high-impact educational practices and present an overview of the reasons internships have been identified as one of the high-impact experiences recommended for college students. The chapter will address some of the problems associated with implementing effective internships, describe the purpose of the current study, present the questions addressed by this research, and identify the significance of this study for higher education and the student learning experience. The chapter will conclude with the definitions of relevant terms used in this study.

High-Impact Educational Practices

Colleges and universities across the United States are seeking new, creative, and impactful ways to enhance student engagement. Enhancing student engagement is highly prized because research has demonstrated that it is related to a number of desired college education outcomes such as cognitive development, ethical development, psychosocial development, and persistence (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The study of student engagement has led to the identification of several "high-impact" practices that appear to generate higher levels of student performance, learning, and development than the traditional classroom experience (Brownell & Swaner, 2010).

Six elements are characteristic of high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008; O'Neill, 2010). High-impact educational practices:

1. are effortful,

2. help students build substantive relationships,

3. help students engage across differences,

4. provide students with rich feedback,

5. help students apply and test what they are learning in new situations, and

6. provide opportunities for students to reflect on the people they are becoming.

The strong positive effects associated with high-impact activities cluster around learning and personal development outcomes, and in engaging deep approaches to learning (Kuh, 2008). Deep approaches to learning typically include strategies such as reading widely, combining resources, discussing ideas with others, reflecting on how individual information relates to larger constructs, and applying knowledge in real world situations (Nelson Laird, Shoup, Kuh, & Schwarz, 2008). Deep approaches to learning are important because students who use these

approaches tend to earn higher grades and retain, integrate, and transfer information at higher rates (Kuh, 2008). Internships – along with learning communities, service-learning, research with a faculty member, study abroad, and culminating senior experiences – are acknowledged as one of the recommended high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008).

According to Gore and Carter (2011), career education and interventions such as internships are increasingly viewed as the responsibility of everyone in a university who is attempting to facilitate learning, growth, and development among college students. Because of the potential for positively impacting student engagement and learning, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2007) has called for campuses to be more intentional about integrating experiential learning (e.g., internships) into the academic curriculum.

Overview of Internships

Existing as apprenticeships for centuries, today's college student internships are defined in numerous ways and called by various names. "Internship" and "cooperative education" are the two labels most often used in the United States to describe career field experiences (Gault et al., 2010). Other internship-related terms that are used frequently in the university setting include experiential learning, experience-based learning, applied learning, practicum, and work-integrated learning (Freudenberg et al., 2010).

Cooperative education – or co-op as it is also known – was first developed at the University of Cincinnati in 1906 (Howard, 2004). Many universities use the terms co-op and internship interchangeably but co-op programs are typically concentrated in engineering and other manufacturing-oriented or technical fields whereas internships generally refer to a wider variety of academic disciplines and organizational settings (Gault et al., 2010).

Internships help students move beyond the classroom to interactively develop skills, perspective, understanding, knowledge, and savvy for the workplace (D'Abate, 2010). Current estimates suggest that about three out of four students complete internships before college graduation which, when compared with 1 in 36 students in 1980, represents a major shift in how students are preparing for the world of work (Coco, 2000; D'Abate, 2010). This rapid expansion prompted the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2006) to articulate the following:

> What distinguishes internships from other forms of active learning is that there is a degree of supervision and self-study that allows students to "learn by doing" and to reflect upon that learning in a way that achieves certain learning goals and objectives. Feedback for improvement and the development or refinement of learning goals is also essential. What distinguishes an intern from a volunteer is the deliberative form of learning that takes place. There must be a balance between learning and contributing, and the student, the student's institution, and the internship placement site must share in the responsibility to ensure that the balance is appropriate and that the learning is of sufficiently high quality to warrant the effort, which might include academic credit. (p. 1)

> Essentially, internships are "structured and career relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program" (Taylor, 1988, p. 393). Fundamentally, internships emphasize education rather than employment (Weible, 2010). However, significant discussion and debate exists around the concept, purpose, structure, and function of internships (NACE, 2011b).

With a vested interest in a well-prepared workforce, employers increasingly rely on internship programs as a source of knowledgeable workers, a valuable recruiting tool, and a way

to preview the skill sets of potential future employees (Hurst & Good, 2010). Because of the perceived value associated with such programs, data collected by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2010) suggest that a majority of employers active in college recruiting have formal internship/co-op programs. Over 80% of surveyed employers readily admit that the purpose of their internship programs is to supply their full-time hiring program (NACE, 2010). From the employer perspective, internships are a prudent option for attracting potential candidates and for evaluating applicant qualifications without long-term obligations (Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000). Zhao and Liden (2010) also suggested that internships provide organizations and prospective applicants with a more natural setting for getting to know and impress each other. The natural setting of internships provides increased psychological fidelity that is highly valued within the function of employee training (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

Additionally, employers find that internship experience enhances the organizational commitment of new employees (D'Abate, 2010) and creates a pipeline to more mature, potential employees (Hurst & Good, 2010). Internship programs also create valuable networks to colleges thus providing access to top students and potential employees (Coco, 2000). Pragmatically, internships provide employers with quality part-time workers and help companies fulfill their social responsibilities (Coco, 2000; Divine, Miller, Wilson, & Linrud, 2008; Gault et al., 2000). However, while internship programs have many potentially positive outcomes for employers, the needs and objectives of students must be satisfied for internship programs to persist (Hurst & Good, 2010).

The benefits of participating in internships are widely documented and promoted among college students. The perceived value of internships from both the employers' and students' point of view is illustrated by the significant growth in student/employer involvement over the

past decade (Hurst & Good, 2010). In part, the popularity and recognition of internships among college students can be attributed to the way that internships serve different purposes for different students (O'Neill, 2010). The varying purposes can lead to varying outcomes. Students, parents, and the general public are most aware of the instrumental outcomes associated with internships. Instrumental outcomes result from viewing education as a "thing" that people can "get" (Keeling, 2004). Instrumental outcomes related to internships "provide an edge" in post-graduation employment for students by producing stronger resumes, enhancing employment opportunities, leading to faster promotions, prompting higher starting salaries, providing access to a professional network, being more satisfied with one's job, and enhancing one's overall employment marketability (Coco, 2000; D'Abate, 2010; Gault et al., 2000; O'Neill, 2010). While the completion of an internship or some other form of pre-professional experience ranks high on the list of criteria used by recruiters in the hiring of new graduates (Pedro, 1984), the learning outcomes of internships can be less evident.

Statement of the Problem

Faculty and career services practitioners need a better understanding about the variation among and within educational practices such as internships (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). In general, internships have a higher degree of variability in terms of their actual learning potential than many other educational practices (O'Neill, 2010). This variability leads to different effects as students engage in internships (Kuh, 2008). As Taylor's (1988) research suggested, internship learning outcomes may be moderated by the work tasks performed, the amount of autonomy experienced, and the nature of the supervision received during the internship. The specific variables that are most likely to produce positive learning outcomes need to be identified and better understood in order to consistently ensure quality internship experiences for students.

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Formal research examining the components of internship experiences that – when done well – facilitate learning is insufficient. Moreover, prior to this study, internships had not been examined as a high-impact educational practice.

Internships as an educational practice should facilitate learning both academically and developmentally. Upon re-examining widely accepted ideas about conventional teaching and learning, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) both endorsed a definition of learning as a "comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development" (ACPA & NASPA, 2004, p. 2). As suggested by King and Baxter Magolda (1996), "a successful educational experience simultaneously increases cognitive understanding and a sense of personal maturity and interpersonal effectiveness" (pp. 163-164).

Internships appear to facilitate learning among college students in a number of skill, cognitive, and affective areas. From a skills perspective, internship experiences help students enhance some of their most valued capabilities such as communication, creative thinking, and time management (Freudenburg et al., 2010; Garavan & Murphy, 2001; Hurst & Good, 2010; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Pedro, 1984). Karns (2005) suggested that internships are perceived by students to have contributed significantly to their learning – evidently as a result of their high commitment to and preference for an active, experiential, and real-world experience. Like deep learning in the student engagement literature (Nelson Laird et al., 2008), internships can help students cognitively organize and integrate workplace experiences into their existing knowledge and skill frameworks established through classroom learning.

In addition to testing their knowledge and skills in new settings, internships help students developmentally explore their career interests and clarify their values (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008;

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O'Neill, 2010; Pedro, 1984). Taylor's (1988) research is frequently cited in this area as it explored how internships contribute to the crystallization of one's vocational self-concept and work values. Pedro (1984) also found that students changed their self-perceptions and some of their values based on their internship experience. Other researchers studying self-concept crystallization have expanded the inquiry to include additional constructs such as career decision-making self-efficacy (Neapolitan, 1992), career locus of control (DeLorenzo, 2000), and vocational commitment (Brooks, Cornelius, Greenfield, & Joseph, 1995). The results of research examining these developmental constructs have been mixed – some researchers found that internships appear to enhance career development (DeLorenzo, 2000) while others found evidence lacking (Brooks et al., 1995).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the essence and learning outcomes of internships when they are done well. Higher education institutions envision that internships will not only equip students with necessary skills, but also contribute to student engagement (Freudenberg et al., 2010). While internships are valued for their student engagement potential, Kuh (2008) has suggested that significant variability exists among internships as an educational practice within and among higher education institutions. Brownell and Swaner (2010) suggested that the variability of high-impact practices needs to be better understood not only across practices, but also between versions of the same practice. Moreover, virtually no one heeded Taylor's (1988) call to investigate moderators of the internship effect.

Pascarella (2006) noted that one of the problems with college impact research is that there is frequently an absence of information about why an intervention or program has the effect that it does. Guided by Patton's (1980) design framework, this qualitative study has the potential

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to help career services staff, faculty, and decision makers understand more about how internships function, why they function as they do, and the ways in which student impacts and outcomes flow from internship activities.

A qualitative framework also provided the opportunity to examine effective - or when done well - internship practices so that program structure, content, and delivery methods could be considered more thoroughly (Hurst & Good, 2010). To create quality learning experiences and scale up programs that make a difference, researchers should move toward understanding what, why, and how elements of certain educational practices benefit students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Educators can implement internship programs with greater integrity, depth, and intensity (Clayton-Pedersen & Finley, 2010). Ideally, as universities connect goals and practices, they can construct purposeful pathways (Leskes & Miller, 2006) for students and become more intentional institutions (Schneider, 2008) in which all work together to help students achieve the outcomes they need and deserve as a result of their college experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What is the essence of internships that are done well?

2. What are the student learning outcomes of internships that are done well?

Significance of the Study

The selection of a career, search for a job, and establishment in a profession are developmental tasks that contribute to a sense of purpose for college students (Keup, 2011). Internships can serve as impactful interventions to stimulate career development and student success (Gore, 2011). Understanding more about quality internships is critical for effectively expanding and enhancing internship programs on college campuses. Universities may use this

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study's findings to decide whether their internship programs deserve recognition as "high-impact educational practices" and are worthy of scaling up with resources, staffing, and other support (Kuh, 2008).

Moreover, understanding the circumstances under which internships thrive as high-impact educational experiences is critical if universities are to fulfill their potential of better serving historically underserved students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Students who are lacking in the advantages and privileges of the majority population may not benefit – or may even be negatively affected by – poorly implemented internship programs. This study will provide more information to universities, employers, and students regarding the essential elements of internship experiences that – when done well – result in meaningful outcomes for participants. Ultimately, the findings help the campus community – faculty, advisors, and career development professionals – help students fulfill their learning and career development goals (O'Neill, 2010).

Researcher's Interest in the Topic

As a college student, internships had a profound impact on my career development, application of classroom knowledge to the workplace, and personal growth. As an academic advisor, career counselor, and career services director for over twenty years, I have consistently encouraged students to pursue internships. I have worked closely with faculty, employers, and career services staff to promote and manage internships. As a result, I believe that – when done well – internships can influence key student learning outcomes. I want to help create meaningful learning experiences for students – that is the basis of my passion for this particular research study.

Definitions of Terms

Internship: A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting (NACE, 2011b). For this study examining internships as an educational practice, undergraduate students must complete their internships in conjunction with an academic course during a fall, spring, or summer semester.

Internship when done well: An internship experience that produces a positive impact on the student as observed by a faculty member. The positive impact may be related to the student's personal growth, career development, application of knowledge, an employment advantage, or other positive outcome resulting from the internship experience.

High-impact educational practice: Programs and activities that engage participants in ways that elevate their performance across multiple engagement and outcome measures. Activities include first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad and other experiences with diversity, internships, and capstone courses or projects (Kuh, 2008).

Learning outcomes: Learning is a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development (ACPA & NASPA, 2004). Learning outcomes related to internships include enhanced career development, personal growth, and the application of knowledge (Fletcher, 1989).

Student engagement: Results achieved by combining students' time and effort with the institutions' resource allocation and organization of learning opportunities (Kuh et al., 2005). Antecedents include student time on task, quality of effort, and involvement (Kuh, 2009a).

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Summary

While many high-impact activities are appealing, they must be done well to effectively engage students at significant levels (Kuh, 2008). To create quality learning experiences and scale up programs that can potentially make a difference, researchers should move toward understanding what, why, and how elements of certain educational practices have greater benefits for students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). In addition, if different program structures or processes enhance or inhibit valuable outcomes for students, then research to identify those conditions has important practical implications for program design (Fletcher, 1989). Moreover, moderating variables that are associated with the student, like career identity or intellectual development, need to be better identified to understand how they influence the benefits that students gain from internships (Fletcher, 1989).

To gather valuable data about educational experiences like internships, there must be greater understanding about the process of learning, reflection on it, and reorganization of the learning to make students aware of what they have actually learned and how it connects with previous learning and discipline theory (Qualters, 2010). There should be clear connections between intended learning outcomes and specific high-impact practices. As goals are connected with practices, more "purposeful pathways" and "intentional institutions" are created for students in which all work together to ensure that all students achieve the outcomes they need and deserve (Schneider, 2008).

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a literature review of internships as an educational practice within the college and university setting. The chapter includes an overview of the history of internships and other forms of experiential learning, current internship conceptualizations, and an examination of the stakeholders most influenced by internships including employers, universities, and students. The literature review examines potential student outcomes of internship experiences in considerable detail. The chapter concludes with the theoretical framework and research related to high-impact educational practices so that the focus of this study –internships – can be better understood for their influence on student learning.

History of Internships

Experience-based learning like that associated with modern-day internships has been valued as an educational practice for centuries. Since the dawn of humanity, individuals have experienced their chosen work before formally entering it as skills have been passed on to the next generation by persons teaching others through demonstrated and jointly participated experiences (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). During the Middle Ages, transmitting the knowledge of doing and making was controlled by guilds of craftsmen who banded together with others engaged in their trade (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Women also established their participation in such guilds thus demonstrating even during a very early period how internships can be a means of empowerment and independence for those less advantaged (Sides & Mrvica, 2007).

In colonial America, experiences similar to today's internships were a foundation of industrial education (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Apprenticeships matched protégé and teacher for years in the skilled trades. Unfortunately, early American apprenticeships and internships

focused on manual skills and could not meet the growing needs for technological knowledge and skills that were developing during the Industrial Revolution (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Thus a new approach to internships was needed at the turn of the century.

Within formal higher education during the 1900s, experience-based learning or experiential learning as it is also known, gained greater recognition and expanded as an educational practice with the creation of cooperative education. Developed at the University of Cincinnati in 1906 by Dean Herman Schneider, cooperative education – also known as co-op – is an educational experience in which periods of classroom instruction typically alternate with periods of paid, discipline-related work (Cates & Cedercreutz, 2008).

During the 1960s, cooperative education expanded dramatically when the federal government provided funds for new co-op programs. Enacted in 1965, Title VIII of the Higher Education Act set aside funds for co-op programs and many colleges used this money to establish new programs (Howard, 2004). As a result, co-op programs grew rapidly and increased from 60 programs in 1956 to 225 in 1971 to over 1,000 by 1986 (Howard, 2004). Soon after co-op's peak, federal funding was reduced and then eliminated by 1996. The elimination of federal funding contributed to an equally dramatic decline of nearly 400 programs. Thus, as higher education institutions entered the twenty-first century, they again began to take on a new approach to experiential learning.

During the last two decades, internships have been redefined and have taken on new meaning in a consumer-driven higher education marketplace, both from the perspective of students and employers as "customers" of post-secondary education. Internships and cooperative education are once again attracting the attention of colleges and universities eager to better prepare students for employment and their future careers (Howard, 2004). Internships can help

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students prepare for professional roles and meet the tangible expectations that both they and employers have for one of the "products" of education – that graduates will be fully prepared to enter the workplace (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Unfortunately, the current emphasis on workforce preparation has created internships that frequently function more like employment than learning experiences. Due to concerns about the potential for organizations to circumvent fair-wage laws by calling unpaid workers "interns," the U.S. Department of Labor recently clarified the government's position on what constitutes an unpaid internship (Westerberg & Wickersham, 2010). Since the April 2010 departmental memo, the criteria set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) have been a hot topic among colleges and employers. In particular, it is important to recognize that most interns are technically considered "trainees." While certain types of trainees are excluded from the FLSA, the requirements for complete exclusion are very stringent (Hurst & Good, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2010), the six FLSA requirements guiding whether an intern should be paid or unpaid are:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training that would be given in an educational environment;

2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;

3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;

4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;

5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and

6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship. ("Test for Unpaid Interns," para. 2)

If the internship meets all of these requirements, then an employment relationship does not exist under FLSA. Overall, to be compliant with the FLSA, the focus of the internship should be on introducing interns to real-world experiences and mentoring, rather than the work produced by the intern (Hurst & Good, 2010). Moreover, the discourse over determining whether an internship should be paid or not has provided an opportunity for colleges to clarify the key differences between academic internships and employment (Westerberg & Wickersham, 2010).

Regardless of compensation, there is still much philosophical debate about what is regarded as an internship in today's higher education environment. Overall, the latest concerns provide another key opportunity to clarify and re-define what constitutes an internship, especially as an educational practice that facilitates student learning. Sides and Mrvica (2007) stated:

> Internships without academic preparation, we fear will tend to divide society into knowers and doers, intensifying a growing educational and economic stratification. Despite our complete conviction in the value of internships as methods of learning, as ways of entering into communities of practice, and of developing and utilizing collective intelligence, this is a trend we are least sanguine about as we foresee the future of higher education. It relegates the learning available through internships to discipline-specific training rather than to the nourishment of the complete self, mentoring your would-be professionals into reflective, self-aware thinkers who not only can be competent in the expectations of their discipline but who can continuously contemplate improvements in that discipline and improvements in the society that utilizes it. (pp. 116-117)

Internship Characteristics

One might think that internships could simply be described as learning by doing. However, given the history of experiential learning and its place in higher education, there have been many terms used to convey learning by doing. There are also subtle – and not so subtle – differences among types of internships, especially as they are understood by academic disciplines, higher education institutions, employers, and other stakeholders.

Within the United States, cooperative education (also known as co-op) and internship are the terms still used most often to describe career field experience opportunities with co-op heavily concentrated in engineering, manufacturing, and technical fields while internships generally include a wider variety of academic disciplines (Gault et al., 2010). Therefore, while co-ops share some common elements with internships, internships rarely share the same distinct structure as cooperative education. Other terms associated with internships in the research literature include work-integrated learning, experiential learning, practicum, field experience, fieldwork, and temporary anticipatory socialization assignments (Callanan & Benzing, 2004).

Although referred to by various names, an intern is generally someone working in a temporary position with an emphasis on education rather than employment (Weible, 2010). Frequently cited in the existing research, Taylor (1988) defined internships as "structured and career-relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program" (p. 393).

Internships are facilitated in a variety of ways on today's college campuses – for credit, not-for-credit, full-time, part-time, paid, unpaid, with faculty supervision, and without any university involvement. Thus, it is evident that internships have a high degree of "variability" given the criteria used to define an internship within and beyond institutions of higher education.

As O'Neill (2010) stated, "internships can easily vary even before a student takes a step to become involved in one" (p. 6).

To guide the administration of cross-disciplinary internships programs of individual institutions, several professional associations have published their own definitions and standards for internships. As a consortium of over 30 professional associations, the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2006) stated:

> Whether integrated into a course, completed as an independent study, or designed for co-curricular learning or personal development, internships should encourage practical application of knowledge and theory, development of skills and interests, and exploration of career options in a professional setting. (p. 278)

Both CAS (2006) and the National Association for Experiential Education (NAEE) emphasize the importance of learning goals and supervision by both academic and internship host personnel (Inkster & Ross, 1995). Moreover, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2007) suggest that when internships are intentionally integrated into the curriculum, students should experience in-depth questioning from faculty, staff, and other mentors. Students should receive guidance and feedback as they explore internship-related issues and test their insights against both theory and the experiences of others (AAC&U, 2007).

Significant discussion continues today around the concept, purpose, structure, and function of internships (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2011b). To promote uniformity in the use and application of the term internship, NACE (2011) established the following definition:

> An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a

professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. ("Definition of Internship," para. 3)

Moreover, to ensure that an internship experience is educational, NACE (2011b) suggests that the following criteria must be met:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.

2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.

3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.

4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.

5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.

6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.

7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals. ("Criteria for an Experience," para. 2)

When intentionally framed and developed as a learning activity, internships will typically involve a three-way partnership of student, host organization/employer, and the academic

institution (Inkster & Ross, 1995). These internship partners each have their own interests, benefits, and other desired outcomes that drive their participation and expectations.

Employer Benefits and Outcomes

As demonstrated by the significant growth in their involvement over the past decade, both students and employers highly value internships (Hurst & Good, 2010). According to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2010), over 85% of the employer respondents indicated that they have formal internship/co-op programs. The primary reason cited for internship programs was to support employers' full-time hiring programs (NACE, 2010).

Researchers in the field frequently cite the value of internships as a recruiting tool (Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000; Hurst & Good, 2010). Internships offer businesses an opportunity to preview the skill sets of potential employees and to recruit future employees who have proven themselves as interns (Coco, 2000; Hurst & Good, 2010; Rothman & Lampe, 2010). Employer benefits also include having first choice among the best students, making better hiring decisions, fulfilling social responsibilities, receiving part-time help, and creating a network to colleges (Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Taylor 1988; Thiel & Hartley, 1997; Weible, 2010). In addition, it costs less to hire an intern compared to an experienced external recruit (Hurst & Good, 2010) making internships an economical recruiting tool as well.

Many employers value internship programs for their capability to access new ideas, skills, and training for their organization and to gain more knowledge about what is being taught in academic programs (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Interns often possess content knowledge and technical skills that seasoned employee may not (Hurst & Good, 2010). Hosting interns also

allows organizations to develop supervisory skills of current employees and to play a role in coaching and influencing the next generation in their professions (Sides & Mrvica, 2007).

Internships provide organizations and prospective applicants with ample opportunities to get to know and to impress each other in a more natural setting (Zhao & Liden, 2010). Interns are positively viewed for the new approach they may bring to the work setting (Hurst & Good, 2010). Internships also allow a similar impression management interaction between host organizations and academic institutions. As noted by Gault et al. (2000), internship programs can leverage this impression management to potentially improve the relationship between the business community and the university.

University Benefits and Outcomes

Utilizing internships programs to develop and strengthen connections between external organizations, especially corporate partners, is highly valued by higher education institutions. This value has both tangible and intangible outcomes. Tangibly, training and other business partnerships forged between universities and employers through internship programs may serve as a catalyst for garnering new sources of external funding (Gault et al., 2000).

Universities also benefit from the intangible public relations value of internship programs. When an intern performs well at an internship site, the university program gains credibility (Cook et al., 2004). Moreover, Harvey (2001) suggests that a higher education institution's employability potential is best assessed not by its graduate employment rate, but rather by the quality of the employability offered to its graduates. Furthermore, the results of Taylor's (1988) study suggests the that time and effort invested in internships can be promoted as a cost effective alternative to earlier completion of a degree since internship experience is viewed favorably by employers.

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As a result of the perceived employability potential, universities may use internship programs to attract prospective students and families. They can leverage their internship programs to enhance the school reputation and visibly assist in economic development outreach (Weible, 2010). Thus universities with internship programs may benefit from improved student recruiting, public/private support for scholarships and other forms of funding, networking within the local community, external curriculum assessment, and practitioner input (Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Thiel & Hartley, 1997; Weible, 2010).

There is also some evidence that value-added learning activities like internships not only enhance student learning but may also increase students' satisfaction with their instructors and courses (Karns, 2005). In addition, students involved with experiential pedagogies perceive internships, class discussions, and case analyses as activities that contributed most to their learning and described their experience as enjoyable and challenging (Karns, 2005).

Overall, universities regard internship programs as an important addition to undergraduate education and as fundamental to preparing students for their future careers (Hurst & Good, 2010). They provide the university with a competitive advantage, positive identity, and an enhanced goodwill within the community (Weible, 2010). Realizing the potential benefits, universities have expanded their internship programs. Coco's (2000) study of collegiate business schools found that over 90% of the schools offered internship programs. Increasingly, there is evidence that internship programs not only provide universities with a vehicle to help students acquire "real life" work experience in their chosen field (Bastedo, Batkhuyag, Prates, & Prytula, 2009), but they can also contribute to overall student engagement by providing a rich, active, and contextualized learning experience (Freudenberg, Brimble, & Cameron, 2010).

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Student Benefits and Outcomes

Although internship programs serve many purposes and have potentially positive outcomes for both universities and employers, the needs and objectives of student interns must be satisfied for such programs to persist (Hurst & Good, 2010). The contextualized experience of an internship lends itself well to a number of outcomes that benefit participating students. As noted by D'Abate (2010), there continues to be a need for experience-based learning opportunities that mirror the workplace – ones in which students can move beyond the classroom to interactively develop skills, perspective, understanding, knowledge, and savvy for the realities of the world of work. Similarly, Hurst and Good (2010) suggest that students must develop a core of marketable skills, such as communication, time management, self-confidence, and self-motivation, to meet the requirements of industry. Furthermore, Coco (2000) suggests that internships not only help students refine their skills and competencies, but internships also help promote awareness of the need for adaptability in a changing world.

As researchers have attempted to gather empirical evidence regarding the outcomes of internship participation by students, there are some broad categories that have been used for examining the research literature. In calling for more research about student outcomes associated with cooperative education, Fletcher (1989) clustered outcomes into the categories of career progress, career development, and personal growth. Given this study's focus on the learning associated with internships, the outcomes of internships related to employment advantages, career development, personal growth, and knowledge transfer are examined next.

Employment advantages. Fletcher (1989) utilized the term career progress to describe the benefits – or employment advantages as described in this study – that students may accrue upon the completion of internships and employment in their chosen careers. Based on existing

research, these employment advantages include higher starting salaries, quicker job offers, more job offers, better job networking, better job interviewing, stronger resumes, and more money earned for students who participated in internships versus those who do not participate (Coco, 2000; Gardner & Motschenbacher, 1997; Gault et al., 2000; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Rothman & Lampe, 2010; Taylor, 1988; Thiel & Hartley, 1997). Once employed, research has also tied participation in internships to faster promotions, more job satisfaction, and greater organizational commitment (D'Abate, 2010).

In today's higher education environment, students perceive that internships will give them an advantage in searching for and securing post-graduation employment (Cannon & Arnold, 1998; Cook et al., 2004; Rothman & Lampe, 2010), especially during tough job markets. Not surprisingly, Coco (2000) suggests that three out of four students complete internships before graduation – up from one out of 36 students as interns in 1980. Furthermore, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2010) research bears out some of the employment advantages of internships. Results of recent student surveys by NACE (2010) suggest that having an internship experience improved students' chances of getting employment offers. The value of internships for employment marketability was also confirmed by Gault et al. (2010).

While there appear to be many employment advantages associated with internship participation, the antecedents and processes that contribute to these employment outcomes are less clear. Some employment advantages may be a result of opportunities for students to gain direct access to job sources and to impress potential employers (Hurst & Good, 2010). This kind of impression management may also have been a factor in a 1988 study by Taylor that had employers rate students based on whether they have evidence of internship experience or not.

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Those students with internship experience on their resumes were rated as being more qualified than students who did not have evidence of internship experience on their resumes. However, researchers have also found that internship experiences influence career development.

Career development. Fletcher (1989) described student outcomes research related to career development as that which emphasizes the potential of co-ops and internships to influence a student's career choice and the development of a realistic career identity. For those students just beginning to determine their choice of major and career interests, an internship can help them to become aware of the many different kinds of organizations comprising the world of work and sometimes discover what they do not want to do (O'Neill, 2010). The importance – and complexity – of career choice, decision-making, and identity are well-documented in the career development literature (Brown, Brooks, & Associates, 1984; Sharf, 2006).

Fundamentally, Super (1984) suggested that the process of career development is composed of developing and implementing self-concepts. Super noted that reality testing and the opportunity to play various roles – both of which are hallmarks of internship experiences – influence the development of self-concept. Examining how internships contribute to the formation of crystallization of one's vocational self-concept has been explored by a number of researchers. Taylor (1988) hypothesized that internships would assist students in the crystallization of their vocational self-concept by facilitating the identification of relevant abilities, interests, and values and by performing job tasks relevant to the chosen vocational field. Results suggested that internships helped participants with career crystallization. Brooks, Cornelius, Greenfield, and Joseph (1995) also found that internship experiences were related to higher levels of self-concept crystallization. Likewise, research by Callanan and Benzing (2004) explored how internship experiences could help students develop a more accurate self-concept

and – much like developing a realistic career identity – test for a fit between their own individual characteristics and the demands of the real-world work environment. Internships may also contribute to career maturity. In his early work, Super (1974) used career maturity to mean readiness to make educational and vocational decisions, especially during adolescence. Later, Super (1984) advocated for career adaptability and a broader readiness by adults to cope with changing work and work conditions. In either case, internship experiences can result in an increased awareness and understanding of how to work with others in the "real world" and offer a maturing experience (Cook et al., 2004; Hurst & Good, 2010). Internships can also create satisfying experiences that motivate students to continue along a career path, create realistic expectations about the world of work, and help clarify students' career intentions (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Internships also facilitate adaptability as they provide a unique form of a realistic job preview (Knouse, Tanner, & Harris, 1999). Theoretically, realistic job previews – also known as RJPs – help create realistic expectations about what a job will entail which has been shown to increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover. Garavan and Murphy (2001) also suggested that, like employers, students benefit from the realistic job preview of internships. As a trait related to career maturity, Weston (1986) also examined the influence of experiential learning on the formation of career identity. However, Weston did not find a significant difference between co-op and non-co-op students in terms of career certainty.

Researchers have also specifically explored how internships seem to influence career decision-making. Theoretically, internship experiences should help students explore their career choices, personally focus their work values, and decrease their career search-related anxiety (Knouse et al., 1999). DeLorenzo (2000) found that co-op students had significantly higher career decision-making scores than non-co-op students. An earlier study by Neapolitan (1992)

also suggests that internships enhance career decision-making via clarification of career choice, particularly by providing useful career information. However, while Brooks et al. (1995) found that internships were related to higher levels of self-concept crystallization, they did not find significant relationships between internships and career decision-making and career self-efficacy. This mixed review could be related to the challenge of distinguishing specific tasks from generalized student development, especially as researchers have attempted to explore related but distinct constructs like self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, and other personal growth outcomes.

Personal growth. Outcomes of internships related to personal growth are difficult to define and measure because there are varying approaches to operationalize constructs like a sense of self (Fletcher, 1998). Many of these personal growth constructs also blend into the career development constructs. However, Cook et al. (2004) provided evidence that students perceive the most important benefits of internships as those related to developing interpersonal skills and getting along with others in a work situation. Their results point to the powerful combination that classroom and internship experiences provide for creating a more fully developed and well-rounded student.

In order to contend for a post-college employment opportunity, students must develop a core set of marketable skills, self-confidence, and self-motivation (Hurst & Good, 2010). Internships may facilitate personal growth by creating potentially powerful opportunities for enhancing one's self-efficacy as related to vocational interests, career exploration, the job search, academic persistence, management of stress, and college success (Gainor, 2006). Based on Bandura's (1977; 1986) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a person's confidence in his or her ability to engage successfully in a specific behavior. Development of self-efficacy is

possible via four types of experiences: personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological/emotional states (Bandura, 1986; Betz, 2004). Examples of how internship and co-op experiences may facilitate the development of self-efficacy include the following:

1. Performance accomplishments: Student interns are presented with opportunities to experience success in performing particular workplace behaviors and tasks. Internship conditions related to goal setting, acceptance, and feedback can also enhance mastery experience (Fletcher, 1990).

2. Vicarious learning: Student interns typically interact with people who are in the students' career field of interest (Feldman & Weitz, 1990) and who can serve as role models (Bandura, 1986; Pedro, 1984).

3. Social persuasion: Ideally, students will benefit from encouragement and support from others during their internship. This can include the student's internship supervisor, faculty supervisor, other interns, or others who encourage the student intern. Emotional support such as advice and guidance can help students clarify their goals, increase their self-awareness, and enhance their self-confidence (D'Abate, 2010).

4. Emotional arousal: Student interns may lessen their anxiety about their career of interest by testing options out temporarily and with less worry about a long-term commitment (Knouse et al., 1999).

A number of studies have examined how internships and co-ops contribute to constructs of the self such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Theoretically, measures of self-efficacy should have a focus on behavioral competencies whereas self-esteem has a more

affective focus (Betz & Klein, 1996). Freudenberg, Brimble, and Cameron (2010) found that work-integrated learning during internships increased levels of task-specific and generalized self-efficacy. DeLorenzo (2000) discovered that co-op work experience contributes to increased self-confidence. In addition, Pedro (1984) conducted a study in which student interns increased their self-efficacy expectations and changed their self-perceptions. Examining pre-service teachers, Braswell (2000) found an increase in self-efficacy following their internships. Focusing on affective outcomes, Fletcher (1990) proposed that as internships prompt active participation from students they can lead to enhanced self-esteem and competent, valued, and accepting self-perceptions.

As demonstrated by the range of career-related and personal growth outcomes, internships can be fundamentally developmental in nature (D'Abate, Youndt, & Wenzel, 2009). Moreover, when internships provide the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities, they can also help students transition from the classroom to the workplace by building their skills and knowledge.

Knowledge transfer. Ideally, internships should help students apply knowledge gained in the classroom to what they are learning in real world settings (O'Neill, 2010). Internships provide students – and faculty – with a means of bridging the gap between traditional classroom expectations and the reality of post-graduation employment (Cook et al., 2004; D'Abate et al., 2009; Eyler, 2009; Gault et al., 2010). For faculty, internships can also be a useful tool for improving curriculum and assessing student learning outcomes (Williams, 2010). Within professional programs, there is a rich tradition of including field experiences to build practitioner skills and facilitate the move from theory to practice (Eyler, 2009). From an industry perspective, more than 80 percent of employers (AAC&U, 2009) believe that internships are the

kinds of hands-on experiences that can help prepare college students for success in today's workplace. At a minimum, students perceive that internships provide them with a valuable learning experience that supplements their coursework (Hite & Bellizzi, 1986). Moreover, research has found that students perceive internships as the top contributor to their college-related learning (Karns, 2005). Not surprisingly, given the emphasis on student learning rather than teaching, educators on college campuses are utilizing a wider set of learning activities, including an increased emphasis on active and experiential learning (Karns, 2005).

With a long-standing "learning by doing" philosophy influenced by John Dewey (1967), internships appear to be valued by both students and faculty for their skill-building and knowledge-transfer capacities. While theory regarding student learning abounds, Kolb's model of experiential learning is one of the most often cited theories in the internship and cooperative education literature (Cates & Jones, 1999; Fletcher, 1989; Inkster & Ross, 1995; Linn, 2004; Moore, 2010; Rubin, 2000). Kolb (1984) defined learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). Kolb's (1984) four-step interaction between learning and experience includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Ideally, learners seek experiences related to their goals and interpret those experiences in consideration of their goals thus forming concepts and testing implications of the newly formed concepts (Cates & Jones, 1999).

Based on Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, Fletcher (1989) suggests that internships and cooperative education potentially bridge the gap between two discrete learning processes: concrete experience and abstract cognition. Likewise, Cross (1999) noted that learning is about making connections and can include seeing the connection between an abstraction and a concrete application. She suggested that experiential opportunities potentially

improve learning as well as performance. Similarly, Raelin (2010) proposes that work-based learning can help students understand the intersection of explicit and tacit forms of knowing. Work-based learning theoretically helps students move from the declarative knowledge processes of "knowing what" to procedural knowledge processes that facilitate "knowing how" (Raelin, 2010, p. 40).

Nonetheless, the research on how internships facilitate transfer of knowledge via experiential learning does not appear to be as well-known as how internships influence employment, career development, and personal growth outcomes. Eyler (1992) suggested that the lack of clear evidence of internships' impact on learning has contributed to the marginalization of internship programs among some academic programs and faculty. Surveying over 50 professionals and administrators in cooperative education, Stull, Crow, and Braunstein (1997) found that research focused on student learning outcomes was identified as the most critical research topic.

Among those who have examined knowledge and skill development, Knouse et al. (1999) found that internships offer a variety of benefits to students for improving academic performance while in college. According to their research, internships appear to help students develop immediate skills that can improve classroom performance such as better time management and communication skills. In 2000, Gault et al. explored how internship experience developed career-related skills. Based on self-reported measures, their results were mixed as student responses attributed internship preparation as better than class preparation for computer applications, creative thinking, job acquisition skills, and some interpersonal skills.

In an attempt to understand how inert knowledge is transitioned to knowledge-in-use, Eyler (1993) created a study to identify cognitive changes during internships. She found that

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students with opportunities for guided analysis and reflection grew in their ability to apply core curricular concepts to the internship experiences. Students who had less systematic experience in applying core concepts during their internship, showed relatively little transfer of knowledge (Eyler, 1993). Narayanan, Olk, and Fukami (2010) attempted to explore the transfer of knowledge between academia and industry as students participated in internships. They found that student learning through internships is related to student motivation to learn. In addition, they found that faculty mentoring was relatively important for student satisfaction regarding their internship experience.

The research related to knowledge transfer and application provides further support for the impact of circumstances like student motivation and faculty support on the overall changes and growth that are possible as a result of internships as learning experiences. In particular, Gagne (1977) suggested that there are two general conditions necessary for learning to occur – those conditions internal to the learner and those external to the learner. Internal conditions are the capabilities possessed by the learner. External conditions are manipulations of the environment that result in learning. Overall, internships provide an engaging learning environment that is not easily achieved in the traditional classroom (Lee, McGuiggan, & Holland, 2010). There are rich opportunities for student interns to develop tacit knowledge and apply their skills to specific situations (Lee et al., 2010). Internships provide a deeper understanding of subject matter, a greater capacity for critical thinking, the application of knowledge in complex or ambiguous situations, and expanded abilities for engaging in lifelong learning (Eyler, 2009). Moreover, the research results regarding the application and transfer of knowledge suggest that some of the key principles of high-impact educational practices are applicable to creating quality internship experiences.

High-Impact Educational Practices

Because of their positive effects on student learning, engagement, and retention, some undergraduate opportunities have been deemed high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008). According to Kuh (2008), such high-impact educational practices within the university setting include:

- First year seminars and experiences: The highest-quality practices in this area emphasize critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills to enhance intellectual as well as practical competencies.

- Common intellectual experiences: Based on historic notions of a "core" curriculum, today's version may include a set of required common courses or include integrative studies and/or learning community participation.

- Learning communities: Key goals for learning communities include integration of learning across courses and involve students with "big questions" that go beyond the classroom.

- Writing intensive courses: These courses emphasize writing at all instructional levels and across the curriculum.

- Collaborative assignments: As a practice, this may include study groups within a course, team-based assignments, and cooperative projects and research.

- Undergraduate research: Most prominently used in the sciences, research experiences can be provided for students across all disciplines.

- Diversity/global learning: These courses and programs help students encounter other cultures, life experiences, and worldviews.

- Capstone courses: As culminating experiences, these courses require students to integrate and apply what they have learned.

- Service learning, community-based learning: These programs provide field-based experiential-learning with community partners.

- Internships: As another form of experiential learning, internships provide students with experience in a work setting.

The strong positive effects associated with high-impact activities cluster around learning and personal development outcomes, and in engaging in deep approaches to learning (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008). In contrast to surface-level learning, deep-level processing emphasizes both acquiring information and understanding the underlying meaning of the information. Deep approaches to learning are important because students who use these approaches tend to earn higher grades and retain, integrate, and transfer information at higher rates (Kuh, 2008). Based on Brownell and Swaner's (2010) review of the research related to high-impact practices, the most common outcomes described for student participants include higher grades, higher persistence rates, intellectual gains, greater civic engagement, increased tolerance for and engagement in diversity, and increased interaction with faculty and peers. To better understand what contributes to these high-impact educational practice outcomes, it is necessary to examine student involvement and student engagement.

Student involvement. Conditions that are found – or not found – in the college environment can impact students' growth and development (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Alexander Astin (1984) proposed that students need to actively engage in their environment in order for student learning and growth to take place.

Astin's (1993) I-E-O model for studying college student development has been based on examining inputs (I) which are the characteristics of the student; environment (E) which refers to the programs, policies, faculty, peers, and educational experiences to which the student is

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exposed; and outcomes (O) which refers to the student's characteristics after exposure to the environment. Involvement theory is based on five premises (Astin, 1984, 1999):

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The "objects" may be highly generalized or highly specific such as in the case of an internship experience.

2. Involvement occurs along a continuum. Students have differing degrees of involvement given different activities and at different times.

3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student's involvement with an internship can be measured quantitatively (e.g., hours spent at site) and qualitatively (e.g., whether students actively apply their knowledge or just go through the motions of internship duties).

4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quantity and quality of student involvement with that program.

5. The effectiveness of any educational practice is directly related to the capacity of that practice to increase student involvement.

The theory of student involvement suggests that a particular curriculum or program must prompt a sufficient level of student effort and investment of energy to bring about the desired learning and intended development (Astin, 1984, 1999). Exploring and identifying effective educational practices that enhance student involvement are essential elements of student engagement.

Student engagement. Student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to

induce students to participate in those activities (Kuh, 2009b). In addition to student involvement, the construct of engagement is also based on work related to time on task, quality of effort, social and academic integration, college outcomes, good practices in undergraduate education, and student engagement (Kuh, 2009a).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) compiled a number of research studies that explored different features of student engagement (e.g., time on task, quality of effort, involvement) and their relationship to overall student persistence as well as specific desired outcomes of college such as cognitive, psychosocial, and moral development. The empirical research suggests that the greatest impact on learning and personal development during college seems to be a function of institutional policies and practices that prompt higher levels of engagement across various kinds of in-class and out-of-class educationally purposeful activities (Kuh 2009a; Kuh et al., 2005). These educationally purposeful and "effective educational practices" encompass concepts such as deep approaches to learning as well as active and collaborative learning, academic challenge, and student-faculty interaction (Kuh, 2009a) as evidenced from much of the research on college teaching and learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These effective educational practices are also recognized in the literature as "high-impact practices" (Kuh, 2008).

While included as a high-impact educational practice, internships are not one of the practices that have been examined closely in the high-impact research literature. However, as a close experiential learning relative, service-learning has been thoroughly reviewed for its high-impact potential. Because both practices are considered forms of experiential learning, an examination of service-learning as a high-impact practice may provide valuable insights about the phenomena of internships as a high-impact practice.

Service-learning as a high-impact practice. Jacoby (1995) described service-learning as a form of experiential education that engages students in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. In most service-learning practices, students are generally involved in service through unpaid work in a community setting. Common examples of service-learning settings include homeless shelters, immigrant centers, health clinics, legal aid agencies, and other community organizations (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). While students perform a range of duties in these settings, Eyler and Giles (1999) suggest that – like internships – the more relevant the service is to students' coursework, the more meaningful the learning experience.

Research suggests that service-learning has a positive effect on many aspects of academic achievement and students' learning (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Sharing some common outcomes with internship experiences, results of student involvement with service-learning can generally be categorized into academic achievement, civic engagement, and person growth outcomes (Roldan, Strage, & David, 2004).

Astin and Sax (1998) found that participation in service was associated with high grade point averages, greater retention, degree persistence, and more interactions with faculty, along with gains in academic knowledge. Similar to the application of knowledge outcomes related to internships, service-learning also appears to help students apply knowledge, experience a deeper understanding of subject matter, and apply classroom learning to real problems (Eyler & Giles, 1999). In addition, Eyler and Giles (1999) found that service-learning participants had an effect on students' perceptions about social problems, value for social justice, and personal desire to effect political change.

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Service-learning participation appears to influence personal growth in leadership skills, self-knowledge, spiritual growth, and satisfaction with helping others (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Like internships, service learning also seems to enhance personal efficacy and career choices, especially considering careers that involve service to others (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Vogelsang & Astin, 2000).

Much of the literature points to structured opportunities for reflection, such as journal writing and group discussion, as the hallmarks of the service-learning pedagogy (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Reflection allows students to step back and be thoughtful about experience and to make connections between their classroom learning and their service experience (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

As Eyler (2000) noted, there is support for the power of real-world experience, but little guidance on how to increase the ability of students to learn from experience. Just as Feldman and Weitz (1990) suggested that student outcomes might differ according to the structure and design of internships, the quality of the service-learning experience can be moderated by a variety of variables such as onsite supervision, quality of instruction, number of service hours and use of reflection (Mabry, 1998; Roldan et al., 2004). Similar to other high-impact practices like learning communities and study abroad, internships can take many different forms in terms of their timing, duration, and structure (Kuh, 2009b). There is a need to learn how various features of high-impact educational practices, especially popular yet scarcely researched practices like internships, affect aspects of student engagement and outcomes (Kuh, 2009b; Swaner & Brownell, 2009).

Internships as a High-Impact Educational Practice

Although engagement, achievement, satisfaction, and persistence are positively linked, the strength of these relationships varies as demonstrated by a variety of the research related to high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2009b). Some of the ambiguous findings may be due to differences in learning productivity by students but another possible explanation is the implementation of an educational practice such as internships. Internships as a high-impact educational practice are ideally characterized by the following six essential elements (Kuh, 2008; O'Neill, 2010):

1. They are effortful. High-impact practices demand that students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks. Internships as a high-impact educational practice should require decisions that deepen students' investment in their internship learning experience as well as their commitment to their academic program.

2. They help students build substantive relationships. High-impact practices demand that students interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters over extended periods of time. Internships as a high-impact educational practice should help students develop a meaningful relationship with another person – a faculty or staff member, student, coworker, or supervisor – and put students in the company of mentors and advisers who are committed to seeing students succeed.

3. They help students engage across differences. Internships as a high-impact educational practice should help students experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves and challenge students to develop new ways of thinking.

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4. They provide students with rich feedback. High-impact practices offer students frequent feedback about their performance. Internships as a high-impact educational practice should include having one's performance evaluated by the internship supervisor and create opportunities for other formal and informal feedback.

5. They help students apply and test what they are learning in new situations. High-impact practices provide opportunities for students to see how what they are learning works in different settings. Internships as a high-impact educational practice should help students integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge for a deep, meaningful learning experience.

6. They provide opportunities for students to reflect on the people they are becoming. High-impact practices deepen learning and bring values and beliefs into awareness. Internships as a high-impact educational practice should help students better understand themselves in relation to others and the larger world.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, engaging in a variety of educationally productive activities builds the foundational skills and dispositions students need to live productive lives after college (Kuh, 2009a). As presented throughout the literature review, there are a number of theoretical propositions that help explain the factors, features, and potential outcomes of educational practices such as internships. However, some educational activities are apparently more effective than others in prompting positive learning outcomes and fostering student engagement (Kuh, 2009a). Kuh (2009a) further acknowledged that much is left to discover and better understand about the effects of student engagement. Kuh (2009b) challenged researchers to delve deeper into "the key factors and features of student participation in different activities that

lead to differential outcomes" (p. 694). Therefore, the essence and outcomes of effective internships were specifically examined in this study within the framework of Kuh's (2005, 2008, 2009a) student engagement theory and the elements of high-impact practices. Furthermore, interpretations of "when done well" internships were framed by the application of Kuh's (2008) six elements of high-impact educational practices.

Summary

Internships provide a unique "win-win-win opportunity" for universities, employers, and students (Gault et al., 2000, p. 51). Moreover, for many college students, an internship appears to be a crucial element of their higher education experience (Moore, 2010). As noted by Moore (2010):

> Structured effectively and processed rigorously, [internships] can add a great deal of value to students' learning and to the educational strength of the university. In fact, they have the potential to transform higher education, to broaden and deepen the nature of knowledge and learning that goes on in the college, and to alter the relationship between student and teacher and between university and community. (p. 11)

Transformative internship experiences are not easily achieved without careful planning and execution by the student, employer, and university. However, "when done well" internship experiences can theoretically lead to higher levels of student performance, learning, and development than traditional classroom experiences (Kuh, 2008). Likewise, internships as experiential learning opportunities can also ensure that student learning outcomes accrue in an intentional rather than arbitrary fashion so that all students achieve the maximum benefit from their experiences (Fletcher, 1991).

Unfortunately, at too many institutions, only small numbers of students take part in high-impact activities and even fewer students from historically underrepresented groups participate. Research on internships as a high-impact educational practice should help student affairs, academic administrators, and faculty to work together to prompt student participation in effective educational activities and find ways to scale them up to create enough opportunities so that every student has a realistic chance to participate (Kuh, 2009b, p. 698). As called for previously (Fletcher, 1991; Kuh, 2009b; Swaner & Brownell, 2009), research that provides more understanding about the conditions, processes, and key elements of experiential learning – and more specifically the essence and outcomes of "when done well" internships – was the focus of this study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The primary purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of students in internships that are done well and to identify the learning outcomes associated with such internships. A qualitative research approach and phenomenological design was a good match for the needs of this study for a number of reasons as illustrated in this chapter. This chapter includes a description of the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis strategies. The role of the researcher and the study limitations for the study are also addressed in this chapter.

Study Design

While quantitative methods can establish the existence of potential causal relationships, qualitative inquiry has greater power to explain the why of causal relationships – especially for identifying the influential nuances of student experiences during college (Pascarella, 2006). Moreover, qualitative research methods can be used when a complex, detailed understanding of an issue is needed (Creswell, 2007). One of the strengths of qualitative methodology is its capacity for describing the experiences of people in depth and displaying phenomena as experienced by the study population, in great detail, and in the study participants' own terms (Patton, 1980; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Qualitative inquiry offers the researcher a chance to "unpack" issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected to them (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This opportunity to dig into details is helpful for examining a college experience like internships. Pascarella (2006) noted that one of the problems with college impact research is that there is frequently an absence of information about why an intervention or program has the effect that it does. Results of a

qualitative study may help career services staff, faculty, and decision makers understand more about how internships function, why they function as they do, and the ways in which the student impacts and outcomes flow from internship activities (Patton, 1980).

A qualitative research approach is a meaningful way to better understand variations in program implementation and outcomes (Patton, 1980). High-impact educational practices have been explored through research involving service-learning, first-year experience programs, learning communities, undergraduate research, and capstone experiences. However, until this study, internships had not been examined in terms of their potential role as a high-impact practice. The inductive process of a qualitative approach allowed the researcher in this study to gather detailed, descriptive information about what students experienced and gained from their internships.

Inductive approaches of naturalistic inquiry are concerned with understanding human behavior from the person's own frame of reference (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1980). Qualitative inquiry focuses on obtaining descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews (Moustakas, 1994). This kind of qualitative focus was appropriate for a study involving career-related experiences of individuals given the emerging emphasis on the constructivist approach in the career development field (Savickas, 2011). Career theory models that are referred to as storied or narrative are increasingly common in the career counseling and development literature (Chope, 2008; Hartung, 2010; Stead & Bakker, 2010). Subsequently, research that uses a constructivist and qualitative approach appears to be growing in the professional literature (Amundson, Borgen, Iaquinta, Butterfield, & Koert, 2010; Chope, 2005; Gerber & Saiki, 2010; Gibbons, Woodside, Hannon, Sweeney, & Davison, 2011; Rehfuss, Cosio, & Corso, 2011).

Researchers using qualitative methods strive to understand phenomena and situations as a whole rather than focusing solely on its parts (Moustakas, 1994). A holistic approach to research design is open to gathering data on any number of aspects of the setting under study in order to put together a complete picture of the social dynamic of a particular situation or program (Patton, 1980). This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying many factors involved in a situation, and sketching the larger picture that emerges (Creswell, 2007). In addition, qualitative research is as interested in inner states as outer expressions of human activity (Hatch, 2002) and views experience and behavior as an integrated and inseparable relationship (Moustakas, 1994). This holistic approach was a good match for exploring the learning outcomes of internships that this study sought to understand more thoroughly.

Since internships had not been empirically examined as a high-impact educational practice, understanding the phenomena of internships when done well made this study a good match for the specific qualitative methodology of phenomenology. A phenomenological study describes what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon and seeks to describe the universal essence of the experience (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). More specifically, the empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis to portray the essence of an experience (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological approach provides the opportunity to examine students who have experienced an internship so that these research questions were able to be explored:

1. What is the essence of internships that have been done well?

2. What are student learning outcomes of internships that have been done well?

Participants

In a phenomenological study, the researcher collects data from persons who have experienced a particular phenomenon and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all the individuals (Creswell et al., 2007). Additionally, decisions about study participants, sample size, and sampling strategies depend on decisions made about the study's unit of analysis (Patton, 1980). Since individual variation is an issue of interest, this study focused on individual students as the participant unit of analysis in order to best explore and describe what was happening to students in internships that had been done well.

While random sampling is the standard in quantitative research, purposeful sampling is viewed as a credible option for qualitative research. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select people or sites that can best help one understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2002). Participants for this study were identified via purposeful sampling. A phenomenological study is conducted with participants who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and who can articulate their lived experience (Creswell, 2007). Since this study sought to understand the internship as an educational practice, this study focused on undergraduate students who had each completed an internship in conjunction with an academic course during a fall, spring, or summer semester. Given the variability of internship courses across academic departments, student participants were enrolled in a pre- or post-internship course or a course that was taught concurrently during the internship.

Given their experience and expertise, university faculty who instruct internship-related academic classes for undergraduate students were asked to identify a purposeful sample of study participants. Soliciting suggestions from faculty resulted in an "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p. 169) sample of participants. Faculty were asked to identify potential study participants who

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completed internships between January to December 2011 and who appeared to benefit from their internship experience. They may have benefitted from the internship in terms of an employment advantage, their career development, personal growth, application of knowledge, or other positive outcome as a result of their experience (see Appendix A).

Polkinghorne (1989) recommended a sample of 5 to 25 individuals to develop the possibilities of experiences. For a phenomenological study, the process of collecting information may involve as many as 10 individuals (Creswell, 2007). Based on these recommendations, a minimum sample of 10 student intern participants was established for this study. To increase gender diversity, the minimum sample size was surpassed and 19 students were interviewed during the data collection process. Table 3.1 displays the student participants' pseudonyms, their majors, their second majors or minors, student participants' gender, compensation received during their internships, the geographical proximity of their internships to the university, and the sectors affiliated with their internship hosts.

Table 3.1 Student Participants

Student	Major	Minor/2nd Major	Gender	Comp	Proximity	Sector
Josie	Political science	Leadership	Female	Unpaid	Within state	Nonprofit
Ashley	Sociology	Leadership	Female	Paid	Within state	Nonprofit
Chris	Mass communications	Political science	Male	Paid	Within state	Corporate
Hannah	Modern languages	Leadership	Female	Unpaid	Outside country	Nonprofit
Colleen	Graphic design	Spanish	Female	Unpaid	Outside state	Corporate
Leigh	Anthropology	Animal science	Female	Paid	Outside state	Government
Thomas	Horticulture	NA	Male	Paid	Local city	Corporate
Bella	Apparel design	Marketing	Female	Paid	Within state	Corporate
Phylicia	Animal science	Pre-vet	Female	Paid	Outside state	Government
Leslie	Animal science	Agronomy	Female	Paid	Outside state	Corporate
Nichole	Public relations	Leadership	Female	Unpaid	Outside state	Nonprofit
Sue	Hotel restaurant	Business	Female	Unpaid	Outside country	Corporate
Talia	Apparel marketing	Communications	Female	Unpaid	Outside state	Corporate
Elaine	Hotel restaurant	Business	Female	Paid	Outside state	Nonprofit
Anne	Political science	Communications	Female	Unpaid	Local city	Nonprofit
Rose	Interior design	NA	Female	Unpaid	Outside state	Nonprofit
Lanny	Political science	History	Male	Paid	Within state	Government
Alan	Horticulture	Business	Male	Paid	Outside state	Corporate
Robert	Technology Management	Business	Male	Unpaid	Within state	Government

As a way of triangulating the data, interviews were also conducted with five faculty members who instruct internship-related classes. The addition of faculty participants provided valuable insights as they form part of the environment that contributes to students' internship experiences. Faculty participants for this study were identified based on recommendations from career services staff at the university who work with both faculty and students involved with internships that have been done well. Table 3.2 displays the faculty participants' pseudonyms, academic departments, and genders.

Table 3.2 Faculty Participants

Faculty	Title	Academic Department	Gender
Wayne	Professor	Horticulture forestry recreation	Male
Walter	Director	Hotel restaurant management	Male
Jean	Instructor	Social work	Female
Beth	Assistant professor	Journalism & mass communication	Female
Sheila	Assistant professor	Apparel textiles & interior design	Female

Further triangulation of the data was achieved by interviewing five employer representatives who have hosted student interns. Internship sites are also key contributors to the environment shaping students' internship experiences. Employer participants for this study were referred by career services staff at the university who work with both employers and students involved with internships that have been done well. Table 3.3 displays the employer participants' pseudonyms, their genders, the compensation typically provided for interns, the location of the employer, and the organization's sector.

Table 3.3 Employer Participants

Employer	Organization	Gender	Comp	Location	Sector
Judy	Engineering consulting firm	Female	Paid	Local City	Education
Peter	Aviation systems	Male	Paid	Local City	Corporate
Danica	Child advocacy	Female	Unpaid	Local City	Nonprofit
Barbara	Community learning center	Female	Unpaid	Local City	Nonprofit
Meryl	Educational outreach	Female	Paid	Local City	Education

Data Collection

Qualitative designs begin with specific observations and build toward general patterns. They include direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts (Patton, 1980). To collect quotations and other qualitative data, this study utilized a formal interview data collection process.

Individual interviews are probably the most widely used method in qualitative research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Interviews helped to uncover the "meaning structure" (Hatch, 2002, p. 91) that participants in this study used to organize their internship experiences.   Interviewing was also a preferred mode of data collection for the researcher given her professional experience in career counseling and advising that has typically been based on interpersonal interactions.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify five outcomes of interviewing:

1. Here and now constructions – participant explanations of events, activities, feelings, motivations, concerns;

2. Reconstructions – explanations of past events and experiences;

3. Projections – explanations of anticipated experiences;

4. Triangulation – verification or extension of information from other sources; and

5. Member checking – verification of information developed by the researcher. (p. 268)

This study focused on reconstructions of students' internship experiences during interviews. It included triangulation of data collection as faculty and employers were also interviewed about their observations about the essence and outcomes of internships that have been done well. Since the qualitative researcher sought to learn from participants and gather as much as information as possible for detailed accounts (Creswell, 2002), specific protocols were proposed for gathering and recording data via interviews. Protocols, outlines, or checklists help keep the interviewer focused on the topic and main themes of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This study used a formal interview approach that was semi-structured with guiding questions (Hatch, 2002).

Guiding questions for studies using interviewing as the primary data source require researchers to develop questions based on their research purposes, knowledge of their informants, and hunches about the phenomena they are studying (Hatch, 2002). Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest that the researcher can ask about contributing causes to an outcome or parts of a concept. In addition, phenomenological interview questions should help build a textual description and a structural description of a phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994):

What has been experienced in terms of…..? (textual)

What contexts or situations influenced experiences with……? (structural)

As stated previously, the main research questions proposed for this phenomenological study focused on the essence and outcomes of internships that are done well. The interview questions for this study were therefore informed by a phenomenological approach that elicited a description of what it means for a student to experience an internship when it has been done well (Moustakas, 1994). Interview questions were guided by the meaning-making approach of Baxter Magolda's (1992) self-authorship interviews. Interviews begin with broad opening questions and then ask participants to describe their learning experiences as a way to invite them to frame the conversations (Baxter Magolda & King, 2007).

The researcher contacted potential student, faculty, and employer participants via email and invited them to take part in the study. Interviews using the established interview guides (Appendices A, B, and C) were conducted via one-on-one in-person meetings with all participants with the exception of one. To interview a student from another campus location of the university, one interview was conducted over the phone. In-person meetings were conducted in the university's career services office with all student participants except for one off-site interview as requested by the student. Interviews with faculty and employer participants were conducted in either the career services office or as requested in employer or faculty offices. Study participants were presented with a consent form (Appendix D) that described the purpose of the study and how confidentiality was handled. Student interviews averaged 27 minutes with the shortest interview at 12 minutes and the longest interview at 47 minutes. Several students expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for being interviewed. Faculty interviews averaged 36 minutes, and employer interviews also averaged 36 minutes.

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Interviews were audio-recorded by the researcher. Audio-recording was recommended so that the researcher could devote full attention to listening to the interviewee and probing in-depth (Hatch, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Audio-recording also provided an accurate, verbatim record of the interview which is critical for the data analysis process.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis involves analyzing the collected data, reducing the information to significant statements or quotes, and combining the statements into themes (Creswell et al., 2007). Essentially, data are gathered and organized by the investigator into a sequence that tells the story of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Typically, in order to tell the story of individuals as well as their overall journey, qualitative data analysis moves from particulars to general levels of abstraction (Creswell, 2007). To qualitatively analyze data, Creswell (2007) suggested moving in analytic circles rather than a fixed linear approach.

Data management began the process of data analysis (Creswell, 2007). The researcher organized the data into file folders and computer files. The researcher also converted the data into appropriate text units for analysis by hand and computer. All audio recordings were converted to written transcripts by a paid transcriptionist. The written transcripts were then reviewed with the audio recordings by the researcher to verify the accuracy of the written translation.

All written transcripts were uploaded into NVivo qualitative analysis software. NVivo was suggested by other experienced researchers within the researcher's university community. In addition to convenient coding tools, NVivo allows qualitative researchers to organize, code, and analyze data in complex ways (QSR International, 2011). The software helps researchers ask

questions and find patterns based on coding. NVivo also provides tools for checking the consistency of coding.

Next, the researcher tried to get a sense of the whole database by reading the complete transcripts prior to breaking them into parts (Creswell, 2007). Using NVivo, the researcher went through the interview transcripts and highlighted statements, sentences, or quotes that provided an understanding of internships that have been done well. According to Moustakas (1994), the resulting list of "significant statements" is called horizontalization of the data. As suggested, themes and memos (short phases, ideas, or key concepts) were noted as the data were analyzed (Creswell, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Themes, concepts, and ideas that the research was trying to explore in each interview were considered upon re-reading transcripts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

After reading and noting transcripts, the researcher moved into describing, classifying, and interpreting (Creswell, 2007). The significant statements were grouped into larger units called "meaning units" or themes (Moustakas, 1994). Themes can be found where a participant uses the word "because" or other close synonyms (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The researcher developed the themes through a classification system and interpreted the data in light of professional perspectives in the literature. Analysis of the data at this stage resulted in 183 meaning units. The researcher noted details that provided insights about the context of the setting of the people, places, and activities involved with internships done well (Creswell, 2007).

During the phase of describing, classifying, and interpreting, the researcher developed codes or categories and sorted text into these categories (Creswell, 2007). As new coding categories were designated, the researcher went back through the data and marked the newest categories (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Creswell (2007) recommends developing no more than 25-

30 categories of information and works toward reducing and combining categories into 5-7 general themes to use in the end to write the research narrative. As a result of data analysis at this stage, the researcher identified 24 coding categories. Further analysis led to the development of 4 essence themes and 4 outcomes themes which are described in the study's findings.

Code labels can emerge from words used by participants, words drawn from the literature, or from names the researcher creates that seem to best describe the information (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), code segments can represent information that the researcher expects to find before the study, surprising information the researcher did not expect to find, and information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers, participants, and audiences. To recognize concepts for coding, Rubin and Rubin (2005) also suggest looking for specialized vocabulary, customization of common words, vividness of vocabulary, nouns or noun phrases that are repeated frequently, and concepts by looking for pairs, the mate or the opposite of the concept.

After text with the same codes were re-grouped and analyzed within and across categories, the researcher then organized the data and packaged what was found in text, table, or and figure forms (Creswell, 2007). A goal of presenting the data was to find themes that both explain the research arena and fit together in a way that a reader can understand (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Excerpts from interviews present data in a fresh and convincing way while drawing the reader along to the conclusions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

To share results, the researcher wrote a textual description of the "what" participants experienced when internships were done well. The researcher also prepared verbatim examples and structural descriptions of "how" (the conditions, situations, or context) internship experiences happened (Creswell et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher also wrote a

composite describing the essence of internships that are done well. Creswell (2007) refers to this composite as the essential invariant structure which focuses on the common experiences of participants. The essential invariant structure of internships done well is presented in the final chapter of this study. In addition, this study's findings include the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, an extension of the literature, and a call to action for students, employers, and universities that are striving for quality internship learning experiences (Creswell, 2007).

Trustworthiness

Just as quantitative researchers must show evidence of their methodological rigor, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that their studies are credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Trustworthiness of qualitative research functions as the counterpart to quantitative research rigor criteria. To establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, concepts such as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are used as naturalistic equivalents to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Creswell (2007) uses the term validation over trustworthiness. Creswell and Miller (2000) defined qualitative validity as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them" (pp. 124-125). Regardless of the terminology, validation and trustworthiness can be achieved by qualitative researchers by using triangulation, member checking, thick descriptions, peer reviews, and external audits (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation is a procedure to increase the trustworthiness of a study where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or

categories in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This study incorporated triangulation of the data by interviewing students, faculty, and employers who were involved with undergraduate internships.

As a common validation strategy in qualitative research, member checking shifts validity procedures from the researchers to the participants in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe member checks as a critical technique for establishing credibility. Member checking consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The researcher can ask participants if the themes or categories make sense, are developed with good evidence, and seem realistic and accurate (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This study utilized member checking by asking student, faculty, and employer participants to review their written transcripts and to provide feedback on identified themes (Appendix E). Over half of the participants (17/29) provided responses to the member-checking. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the preliminary codes. Only minor edits were suggested by the participants.

Another procedure for establishing credibility is to describe the setting, the participants, and the themes of a qualitative study in rich detail. A "thick description" creates the feeling that the reader could have experienced the events being described in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The process of writing using thick description is to provide as much detail as possible. It may involve describing a snapshot of an interaction, experience, or action; locating individuals in specific situation; or bringing a relationship or an interaction alive between two or more persons (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This study incorporated thick descriptions as it described the essence and outcomes of internships that have been done well.

A peer review or debriefing is the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A peer reviewer provides support, plays devil's advocate, challenges the researcher's assumptions, pushes the researcher to the next step methodologically, and asks questions about methods and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study involved a peer reviewer who is a retired faculty member with experience teaching an internship course. All transcripts from all 29 participants were examined by the peer reviewer. Using the preliminary codes created by the researcher, the peer reviewer blindly coded the transcripts. Overall, the researcher and peer reviewer agreed in most instances of the data coding. The primary differences in coding of the data centered on the peer reviewer's interpretation about the role of faculty in the facilitation of internships. For example, upon a review of faculty member Wayne's transcript, the peer reviewer coded several statements differently than the researcher. The peer reviewer identified statements suggesting that the faculty member encouraged exploration and provided support to the student. Based on limited teaching experience, the researcher attributed that effort to the student rather than to the teacher. Despite these minor differences in perspective, there remained strong inter-rater agreement between the researcher and peer reviewer.

In addition to a peer review, the credibility of a study can also be established by involving individuals who are situated external to the project, such as auditors or readers, who examine the narrative account and attest to its credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To establish an audit trail, the researcher documents significant research decisions and activities. The audit trail for this study involved creating memos in NVivo, keeping a log of interview activities, developing a data collection chronology, and recording data analysis procedures clearly (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This study also involved a faculty advisor experienced in

qualitative research who examined the data collection process, the data analysis, and the results of the researcher's findings.

Regardless of all efforts taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, it must be acknowledged that data are presented "partly based on participants' perspectives and partly based on our own interpretations, never clearly escaping our own personal stamp on a story" (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). Researchers use reflexivity – self-disclosure of assumption, beliefs, and biases – as another validity procedure for qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000). It is important for researchers to acknowledge and describe their entering beliefs and biases early in the research process to allow readers to understand their positions, and then to suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Role of Researcher

In a phenomenological study, the research question grows out of an intense interest in a particular problem or topic. The researcher's excitement and curiosity inspire the search. Personal history brings the core of the problem into focus. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 104)

Qualitative researchers recognize that their background shapes their study interpretation and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own person, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2007). In order for investigators to take a fresh perspective on their phenomenological research, they attempt to set aside their experiences. An attempt at transparency – or "epoche" as Moustakas (1994) termed it – is revealed below.

As the researcher in this study, my interest in the topic of internships is both personally and professionally related. During my own experience as a college student, my internship experiences had an impact on my career development, application of my discipline-related

knowledge, and my personal growth. As a result of my first college internship on the psychiatric ward of a hospital, I added a second major to broaden my future career possibilities. After that internship, I re-examined my career identity and questioned whether I wanted to work with individuals in mental health emergencies. I went on to have internship experiences with a freshman orientation class and an adult education center that helped to crystallize my decision-making about a career in university career services.

My internship experiences were integrated with my undergraduate coursework in social work and psychology. Reflecting on my own experience as a college student, my undergraduate internships appeared to have several high-impact elements. They were effortful by the amount of time devoted and by the quality of tasks completed during my internships. They helped me build substantive relationships, including the opportunity to be mentored by the Dean of Students at my university – one of the first women administrators in that kind of role. I had the opportunity to engage across differences, especially during my adult education internship as I encountered individuals who have been historically under-represented in higher education by their socio-economic status, family circumstances, and background. My internship experiences provided many opportunities for feedback from my site supervisors, faculty, and peers. My internships helped me apply and test what I was learning in new situations. Interestingly, I have evidence of this as I uncovered a journal that I kept during one of my internships. It was specifically structured for recording my daily activities, observations, and feelings associated with my internship experience. Lastly, my internship experiences were powerful opportunities for me to reflect on who I was becoming as a young woman, future professional, and person.

Based on my personal experience and on my student development knowledge, I have professionally advocated for internships throughout my career in university career services.

During my twenty-plus years as an academic advisor, career counselor, and career services director, I have encouraged countless students to engage in internships and other forms of experiential learning. I have served as an advisor of practicum students. I have consulted with dozens of employers who want to hire the "best and brightest" for their internship programs. I have promoted and managed an institution-wide internship program within a large research university that was initially supported by federal funding for cooperative education and then re-designed when funding was discontinued. I have facilitated focus groups and discussions among faculty and career services staff to determine additional changes to the university's internship approach.

As a result of my personal and professional experience, I strongly believe that – when done well – internships can influence key student learning outcomes. However, over the course of my higher education career, I have also seen what happens when internships are not "done well" and are more transactional than educational. These transactional internships – less likely to be connected with the student's academic discipline and more focused on the employment advantages for the employer and potential employee – are less likely to be high-impact educational experiences for students. I want to help create meaningful learning experiences for students – that is the basis of my passion for this particular research study.

Limitations of Study Design

The focus of phenomenological research is to increase understanding through a rich, local description of experiences rather than to generalize to others (Amundson et al., 2010). The findings of this study are limited in their generalizability to other student internship experiences. This study also only includes findings from students at a single university site.

Interviews are a limited source of data because participants can only report their perceptions of and perspectives on what has happened (Patton, 1980). Perspectives and perceptions are subject to distortion due to personal bias, emotion, and simple lack of awareness. Interview data are also subject to recall error and self-serving responses (Patton, 1980).

Data triangulation is the use of variety of data sources in a study whereas methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program (Patton, 1980). Triangulation is ideal but can be expensive in terms of finances and researcher time (Patton, 1980). This study included adequate data triangulation but has limited methodological triangulation that might have otherwise been achieved through direct observations or participant diaries.

Summary

Utilizing a phenomenological study approach, this study attempted to examine the essence and outcomes of internships done well by interviewing students, faculty, and employers. Purposeful sampling resulted in 19 student participants, 5 faculty participants, and 5 employer participants for a total of 29 participant interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition to data triangulation, the researcher employed member checking, thick descriptions, peer review, external auditing, and the use of reflexivity to enhance the trustworthiness of this study. After the data collection, the process of data analysis was facilitated through the use of NVivo software and a series of qualitative analysis techniques. The results of the data analysis are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Findings

The findings of this phenomenological study are presented in this chapter. As a result of the data analysis, four themes emerged about the essence of internships that are done well. Four additional themes surfaced about the student learning outcomes of internships that are done well. The participants' own stories are used to provide descriptions of textually "what has been experienced" and structurally "what contexts or situations influenced" internships that are done well (Creswell et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

Essence of Internships Done Well

Four themes emerged from the data that provide insights about what it means for a student to experience an internship when it has been done well. Statements from student, employer, and faculty participants suggested that when internships were done well, they required commitment, facilitated good communication, and connected the classroom to the context of career. Most surprisingly to the researcher, participants also indicated that internships done well offered a sense of community for student interns.

Commitment. As a faculty member, Walt observed that a "great experience" during an internship is a result of an employer that is "committed to having interns." Sheila (faculty) also stated it is essential "that both the employer and student are committed to" internships when done well. While the term "commitment" is applied to leadership, teams, and organizations in a variety of ways (Muchinsky, 2006), commitment as a theme of this study describes the initiative, time, and effort devoted by students, employers, and faculty for internships to be done well. . As observed by Sheila (faculty), commitment meant that students not only showed initiative but that they also were motivated and sought "opportunities to contribute." It meant that students did

not wait to be approached but instead said "I have this great idea. It is something that I think will work well." Commitment by students also meant that they demonstrated an eagerness to learn. Nichole (student) "put 110 percent into" her internship and treated it as more "than just something to do over the summer" which made her "a more valuable intern" making "the internship more valuable" for her because she "got more out of it." Students' willingness to learn new things was noted by employers like Danica who suggested that "it is essential" for students to approach their internships with "a willingness to try new things." Danica suggested that students might think "I am not going to want to do all these things. I haven't had the experience before" but they "need to learn." Alan was one of several students who recognized that a willingness to learn was important:

> You have to be out there all day if you want to get something out of it. My boss said "What are you going to learn when you are sitting at home after 2:30?" There is stuff going on at the golf course that you don't know about. So when you are here you see what is happening. You know what is going on…but if you are not willing to learn while you are out there on the course then you are not going to learn.

As another illustration of commitment, students spoke about the importance of a strong work ethic. Thomas utilized his work ethic during his internship and "didn't ever really slack off." He got to work on time and stayed after to go "that extra mile" at the golf course where he was an intern. Leslie also applied her work ethic during her internship on a cattle ranch. She "always tried to be doing something" because she did not "like to waste people's time and money." She thought it was "important to be working and doing something because there is always something that needs to be done - especially on a ranch - whether it's cleaning out stalls or just anything." Students who demonstrated a work ethic like Leslie's meant that managers

"weren't always having to find little projects" for them to do. Leslie could "do that on my own - pick up on stuff."

In addition, being self-directed often accompanied a strong work ethic. Employers felt they could be better supervisors if students were self-directed. Barbara preferred a "back and forth kind of dialogue about how [things] need to get done." Otherwise, she said, "I struggle when I feel like I have to line out every single aspect of a task" and it "feels like more of a drain than a benefit to both of us." As a student, Bella quickly realized that she would need to be self-directed during her internship:

> My first day there I met my boss and he immediately just gave me one of our competitor's catalogs and said ok I want you to make a chart, make a spreadsheet with all their styles, all their fabric washes and cuts, and then do the same for this year - so last year and this year so we can compare the two - and see what is successful and what isn't, what has been dropped. I had worked with Excel but it's really elementary and so I didn't know what I was doing, but I did the best that I could and he was really happy with it in the end. So that was just right from the get go. I knew they were going to ask me things and I would not have time to ask them a million questions - I just had to do it.

In addition to the commitment of students, the participants of this study indicated that it was equally important that employers demonstrated their commitment to internships that were done well. As a faculty member, Sheila has observed the need for a mutual commitment of both the intern host and the student intern. She has "seen instances on the employer side when they haven't been overly enthused about having an intern." Sometimes students "end up doing the same thing every day or they end up really being unsupervised so that mentoring relationship doesn't really exist. Or they are just sort of given really menial tasks." As a result, students

risked not be involved with experiences "that allowed for a lot of growth." Leigh (student) also "heard so many horror stories" about the kind of employer "that doesn't know what to do with you." She stated her belief that "you won't get anything out of" that kind of internship situation. She interned with "a program that has been happening for years and years. They have guidelines and handbooks. They had training. They had all these things for us - ready for us. We knew exactly what we were getting into."

Commitment of an employer could be signified by its top-down support of internships as observed by Walt, a faculty member who has been involved for years with internships. He has observed that a "good internship" has "support from the top." When that happens, "everybody steps in line." High-level support within an organization appeared to pave the way for better funding and resource support of internship programs. Ashley (student) interned for an organization that was able to host multiple interns because "the board set aside extra money from the budget to beef up the program." Alan (student) worked with a golf course that was "very, very good to their employees." In addition to special activities and meals for the interns, they also offered scholarships to their employees. "They took care of me really well," he stated. Employers also showed their commitment to interns by offering assistance with housing. As a faculty member, Walt has noticed the difference that help with housing can make for student interns:

> If you say I am looking for an intern but housing is on your own you are going to have to give them a little support here. Maybe not give them the housing but say yes there is reasonable housing in the area but just to wash your hands of that whole thing - say that you are on your own - you are not going to get a lot of students to apply…They've got to live so that is another indicator of if they are willing to work with them. Provide them

meals, reduced meals, help with the housing or at least give them some ideas of what the housing would be and just try to do the little things that are important.

Lastly, the university's commitment was demonstrated by the involvement of faculty with internships. Faculty like Walt often contributed substantial effort to coordinate academic credit-based internship coursework. As he said, "It is a lot of work." He will bring "the student in and go over all the reports. Ask them questions. 'What about this? What about that? I didn't understand that.' Just because they did all these documents doesn't mean they get an A." As acknowledged by Jean, faculty members commit considerable time and effort to hold students as well as employers accountable for quality internship experiences:

If I use an agency and [students] don't get to do meaningful tasks, I will step in there and try to make a change in that. If that doesn't change then I won't use that agency again because they are not out there to do filing and that sort of thing. I tell [students] you should expect to do essentially what other social workers in the agency do. So if they do filing then you should do filing [but] there is a balance between doing that kind of stuff and doing the meaningful work of the agency.

Overall, commitment in an internship done well meant that students and employers were mutually committed to quality internship experiences. Students committed their initiative, eagerness to learn, work ethic, motivation, and passion. Employers committed the supervisors' time, provided orientation, and supported internships with resources and funding. Faculty supported commitment by providing accountability and coordinating credit.

Communication. Providing feedback, articulating expectations, and expressing curiosity were among the key communication components of internships that were done well. While the communication theme (Appendix F) contained fewer unique codes than other themes, all 29

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participants still made one or more statements related to communication. For both students and employers, asking questions was vital to a quality internship experience. Employers expected students to ask questions even though according to Danica, "A lot of them are very leery about talking to other agencies or approaching somebody else to ask a question." She has observed that students are concerned about showing "that they don't know something." Danica maintained that "to do a job well you are going to have to ask lots of questions." She expects students to say "I don't understand this. Help me learn how to do this better." Good communication skills and asking questions also helped students set themselves apart from others as described by Colleen:

> I think just being vocal about what I wanted out of it…Guys in another department would take me out to lunch quite a bit. This place is pretty much male-dominated there are only two women who work there and about 20 some men. So I asked "Do you guys get very many female interns here?" They made the comment that a while ago they had two female interns at the same time but neither of them ever talked. They both looked really similar and they kind of thought they were almost the same person. They didn't show up very often. They didn't talk much. They said you have done a really good job about just putting yourself out there and showing interest in things.

Over half of the study's participants commented on the importance of communication by the employer about their internship expectations. Students wanted employers to clearly communicate expectations. Leslie (student) noticed that "communication was really good" at her internship site. She has worked elsewhere when "it has been really hard to understand what is going on and making sure everyone is on the same page." For her, "if the communication isn't there then for me it hasn't been a good experience." Employers like Peter also recognized that

communication about expectations is critical so they try to be as "upfront as possible on projects…so that they are not going into things blind." That way they don't "put the students in a position where they could possibly fail." Faculty members like Wayne have observed how important it is for students to be "communicating what they want to do." It may be easy for students to "go to the big name places with a lot of people who work there and they just get pigeon holed into one responsibility." He suggested that students "air those things out" from the start.

In addition to communicating clear expectations, students valued supervisors who generously shared their knowledge as part of the internship learning experience. A number of students commented on supervisors who took interns under their "wing" and showed students like Bella "how to do everything and how everything works." Bella's supervisor also served a critical role by translating lingo because, as she said, "when I first got there I didn't know what anyone was talking about because they would use all these words and slang and codes and I didn't get it." Supervisors took time to show and tell students about specialized information whether it was Bella's supervisor who taught her about fabric standards that included "thousands and thousands of every single shade and texture and wash" or Leslie's supervisor who helped with her horsemanship skills. If she "didn't know how to do something quite like they did," then her supervisor, as Leslie said, "would tell me and then he would just let me go on my own."

Beyond the communication provided by direct supervisors, students also appreciated when their co-workers and others at the host site were open to questions and shared their advice, knowledge, and insider tips. Hannah (student) noted that her co-workers were able offer a lot of additional knowledge and different world views. She stated, "They were able to grasp the propositional analysis a lot quicker or the theological interlinear study a lot more quickly."

When she had questions, they would "take the time to explain it" to her. Colleen (student) also worked closely with another co-worker who "was the one that was in contact with the clients who I would be doing stuff for so I would send things to her." Her co-workers were close by so that Colleen could "ask them how to do things." She found it "easy to communicate."

The university was involved with communication as faculty mediated issues and relayed information between employers and students. Walt has often found himself serving as the liaison between students and employers, especially when students have not had a timely response from employers. He said he contacts recruiters and they "email me back and say we are working on it." He tells the student to "just hang in there" taking his role as "the communicator...pretty seriously." Sheila has read weekly logs from students and pays "particular attention to what was challenging in this week." Sheila and other faculty have seen "things start to creep in" for students during internship experiences like this one:

> Her immediate supervisor…quit her job. So my student was left without a supervisor for two or three weeks of the program. The first week she just casually mentioned it and the second week it was getting hard…I see my role honestly as being a person that can step in if I see that there is a problem on either side…I am there to encourage and make sure that nothing terrible is happening.

In general, the university was cited by participants most frequently for its role in communicating and promoting internship opportunities among students. Students like Sue have heard frequently from faculty who "sends out emails daily to our program" with listings of internship opportunities. Her faculty advisor has a "big board of opportunities" and "has so many connections." Employers like Peter have relied on faculty to promote their opportunities and let students know that they "need to go out and get this experience. Here is what you can do.

Here is [career services]. Here are the opportunities available. You guys really need to do this." Promotion of opportunities is one of the "biggest things [the university] can do."

Overall, communication during internships done well meant that internship supervisors and co-workers were open to questions, shared knowledge, communicated expectations, and provided feedback. The student intern asked questions and sought feedback. The university promoted internship opportunities. Faculty also communicated coursework expectations, solicited feedback, and served as problem-solvers when issues arose during internships.

Classroom to Career. As suggested by prominent internship definitions (NACE, 2011b), participants in this study cited many opportunities for applying knowledge gained in the classroom during their internships. All 29 participants shared examples of connecting classroom learning to the context of future careers. In particular, students described a number of ways in which their internship experiences created a better understanding of how their classroom learning could be applied in the workplace and to their career interests. Many students were passionate about their career choices. Chris (student) knew that "writing was definitely something" he enjoyed. He said he was interested in getting "a taste of the field I am interested in" and "what I am studying to do." His internship helped him realize that "it is not just a job" and that he could utilize his "talents" in "the field where they belong." Nichole was also excited about getting the chance to learn more "not just as interns but as people who wanted to learn more about the non-profit industry in general." The opportunity to learn more broadly about the field was what made it "such a learning experience."

Internships connected the classroom to career by providing students with opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways to their host organizations. Students were able to sit down with their supervisors and discuss projects like Sue's "Christmas launch event" that not only

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benefitted her internship experience but also provided her hotel host with "something beneficial from her being here." Like a number of employers who hosted participants in this study, Danica understood why it is critical to involve interns with meaningful activities for an internship to be done well:

> Understand that they will contribute to your agency. You are contributing to their education as well. That is an important piece. They are not just here to be worker bees…I don't want to offer an internship if I think they are going to come and leave not having learned anything. As a supervisor, what you want them to come away with is you have taught them something. Not just giving them a place to come and work but that what they have learned while they were here is just as important. What you get out of it is great but what they get out of it should be just as important.

Internships connected the classroom to career by providing students with real-world experience and variety to enhance the learning experience. As an employer, Judy's organization provided a realistic setting to let students "apply the things that they are learning in the classroom." As an internship host, Judy's organization involves interns with "real projects for clients" and puts them "into situations where they may have meetings with the client." Given his observations as a faculty member, Wayne described a unique real-world situation for interns in his field:

> We have had some that turn the course over to the student for a week as the golf course superintendent. Then they are essentially the superintendent. The superintendent is an employee and won't answer questions. A lot of times they have to make a decision and it is the student who meets with the general manager every day…a great experience.

As a faculty member, Beth described employers who let students rotate through several departments so they could "go with the sales people" and then "go with the media reps for a week." Employers who successfully connect the classroom to career work with students "until they have found something that they actually have a passion for." As a student, Rose experienced variety when she worked at a second location that was "[the architect's] home studio." Her supervisor "went back and forth between two locations" so she "went back and forth with her." That gave her "more insight into how projects were running" and gave her "an idea of what everyone else was doing" even if she was not "directly involved."

Participants in this study also described the need for an appropriate mix of challenge and support for bridging the classroom to career gap. Sheila (faculty) suggested that when an internship is done well, "it needs to stretch the student" and "push them to do something that they haven't done." Students need "a place to apply things that they are learning in school but also to see things that we don't necessarily get to teach them." As an employer, Meryl has struggled with providing the right mix of challenge and support noting that post-internship students have told her they "could have done more." Yet, Meryl recalled an "intern that we had a number of years ago that was given a project that was so big and so nebulous that it really wasn't completed. So how do you help?" When employers can get it right, students appeared to thrive with challenge during their internships as described by Alan:

> [My boss] would walk up with 4 or 5 different weeds in his hand. He goes "I have never seen these before. What are they?" I am looking at them and I have to identify them for him because he was quizzing me about heat, grub or insect. He would find a disease out in the field or something like that. He would ask me what that was and I would have to

on-the-spot answer. It really pushed us hard in the sense of working and thinking at the same time which was really good.

To decrease the distance between classroom to career, students acknowledged that their curricular as well as co-curricular experiences had provided them with fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities prior to their internships. Hannah was one of the students who realized during her internship "that the classes that they have you take really prepare you for doing something like this." Robert (student) drew on co-curricular experiences such as student government that "prepared [him] on parliamentary procedures and how to interact with people." As a student, Ashley's travel abroad in Mexico and experience with leading conversations at the university were helpful for her internship. She noted that "with some international experiences it doesn't hit home on how useful those skills can be until you actually do it."

While students brought a host of fundamental skills to their internship experiences, communication and interpersonal skills were at the top of the list. Leigh (student) put her interpersonal and writing skills to good use "dealing with [the state's constituents] every single day who are concerned, angry, and upset." She said she was able to help them understand "this is what we are dealing with" and "make sure they feel comforted." In a different setting, Josie was able to use her interpersonal skills to "meet with high school principals or high school counselors." She could "communicate effectively what I am trying to do and what I think the mutual benefit would be." Similarly, Anne indicated that she was "pretty easy to work with" and "a good writer." She could "read and comprehend and write things fast" for her internship in the agriculture industry. Other intern skills that contributed to quality internship experiences were leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and research skills.

In addition to traditional knowledge and skills, students offered other attributes that helped them successfully make classroom to career connections. Among those attributes were flexibility, creativity, and open-mindedness. Phylicia's openness to new experiences provided her with unlimited opportunities to apply her classroom learning:

"Do you want to go watch a necropsy of these pigs?" I was like "Yeah I do." So I could just leave my thing and go watch that. There were so many extra things we got to do and I got to help ultrasound ovaries. My scientist would be like "They are doing this in this lab today. Do you want to go watch that?" I was like "Yeah I would like to do that." Just having an open mind and participating in a lot more activities than just the one thing I was doing was really beneficial.

Faculty members were acknowledged for their role in helping students apply their classroom experience and connect theory to practice. Hannah noted that "all the faculty are extremely supportive" and they "prepare you for things like… this guy over here. He is yelling and he is angry. Why is he really angry?" Many students including Bella acknowledged that faculty prompted them to get out of their "comfort zone" by "asking questions and getting information." Josie noted that her internship coursework helped her think about what she has learned. Like other students, she said she would not use her "own time [to] really sit and reflect on specific areas but we have to in the course which is good." Jean (faculty) could "bridge the field and the classroom" because sometimes internship supervisors "have been out of the classroom long enough that they think they don't know anything anymore." Faculty helped students "talk about what they are learning in the field and how that relates back to what they have learned in the classroom."

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Lastly, faculty and career services connected the classroom to career by preparing students for their internship search as well as future job search. A number of students in this study were required to complete pre-requisites before embarking on their internships. As a faculty member, Beth acknowledged that they want their students "to have certain skills - basic skills classes - before they go out and do [internships] for credit. For instance, journalism and digital media students need to take the advanced news writing class beforehand." Talia (student) mentioned the "professional development" class that she took before they "even started applying for internships." Her "teacher was really beneficial because the whole class was just going over the interview process, resumes, and how to make contacts." Rose also noted her "professional practice class" which addressed "how to get an internship, how to go through the interview process, and also brought up ideas if you are going to be moving somewhere." Peter (employer) mentioned the impact of career services in terms of its "workshops and different things that help students" and went on to note:

> As an employer, if we have to deal with those types of things, it is time taken away from us to be able to gain from what the student can provide. Also it is time taken away from the student to be able to grow and contribute. So if some of the baseline things of professionalism and understanding how to work on a team, how to work in a team environment, understanding how to communicate with others can be covered then they have so much to contribute.

Overall, the classroom to career connections during internships done well meant that students had fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities and connected classroom learning to the workplace setting. Employers created internships that were realistic job previews with meaningful opportunities for organizations to contribute to intern experience and for interns to

contribute to their organizations. The university helped students with professional development and connecting theory to practice.

Community. Overwhelmingly, responses from all 29 participants indicated that when internships were done well, they instilled a sense of community and provided frequent interaction with not only supervisors but also with co-workers, peers, and others. According to the participants, students felt a sense of belonging from their involvement with people at the host organization. Like a number of students, Colleen said, "the people that were there" were "the biggest aspect" of having a quality internship experience. She had heard about "other experiences from different people who have had internships and how they are locked away in a cubical or not really given very exciting projects." At her internship site, Colleen "could just lean over" and ask "can you help me with this?" Her co-workers were "always like hey, come along" to lunch and more. Sue also felt a sense of belonging at her overseas internship host site. During meetings, "they would go around and talk about what is important for you today." She said responses could be work or personal "and they would ask me too. I am just the intern…so that kind of made me feel validated in a way. They really did care what was going on."

As indicated above, it was important to students that they not simply be labeled as "the interns." Experiencing a sense of community meant that students felt valued and that other "staff looked at the interns as equals and really cared" about them as experienced by Nichole. In particular, Nichole said, "They treated us like real people not like the copy-making, coffee-getting intern that you would see on TV." Interns were not "treated any differently whether that meant sitting with us at lunch or chatting or stopping by or seeing if we wanted anything from (the local convenience store)." Many students indicated that it was the "little things (that) made us feel like a valued part of the organization." Employers like Barbara also acknowledged that

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they were intentional about making interns "feel like they are just as much a part of our staff as everybody that has been around for 10 years."

A positive internship setting also contributed to a sense of community. Employers like Peter have tried to have "different little events, potlucks, outings whatever the case may be in trying to make it enjoyable environment" because when everyone is "happy they are obviously more successful then when everyone is kind of stressed and on edge." Hannah acknowledged that her co-workers tried to make "it a very positive experience" in another country. As the student interns, they tried not to be "afraid to look strange" and that "if it was just us separately, we would have never been able to do that." As many students experienced, friendly co-workers contributed to a positive environment. Anne found that "everyone was really friendly" at her internship site and "they all made sure I had what I needed and gave me different jobs and things to do." Elaine also felt that she "had the best group of people to work with" which contributed to a "really good learning experience." Co-workers like Elaine's made an important impression on students and were "a huge part of making an internship experience good or bad."

Students got a lot out of working with others whether it took place in "the city" for Bella with a trend manager and "crazy high fashion," in the lab for Phylicia with other scientists and the autopsy of a pig, in an aquarium for Nichole as she asked for help to find paperclips and locate the shark tank, or out on the open spaces of the prairie as a co-worker told Leslie about the history of the original ranch where she worked. Sometimes others shared broader life lessons with students like the following as described by Talia:

> There was one lady who would have been the main [designer] representative and she was
> an older lady. She had been there for years and she was a really awesome person. It was
> just me and her when we were there. She was just very inspiring and she was just kind of

in your face - you know growing up in New York. She just wasn't afraid to say what it was, say it how it was I guess. She just taught me a lot about like going out and getting what you want and not being afraid to voice your opinion…She taught me more about life I think than anything else.

Employers recognized that developing a sense of community and involving interns with everyone across the organization provided a rich experience for the student. Barbara built in "a fair amount of time just sitting down with every single staff person and talking through what you do here." That seemed to help with "getting to know one another and finding out what all of our staff does and how it all fits together." Meryl also noted that her organization's "administrative team spends about an hour and a half with the interns when they are here for their orientation." When she has asked the interns what they like about the orientation, "they mention it was nice to have that conversation."

As faculty members, both Sheila and Jean noted that involving others provided a positive learning experience for interns. In the retail environment, Sheila has observed that "everybody has to be on board" and recognize that "the intern isn't there to ring up customer orders on the check out all day." Everybody has to buy into making it a "valuable experience" for the intern. Likewise, Jean has observed that all those "other people on-site" at a social service agency are the ones "who are teaching the students - negatively or positively - by example." Jean has told students that they need to "learn from everybody there." For instance, she said the "receptionist is a very important person in your life and you better get to know all of them and be very nice to them" because whether "they are social workers or not they are doing the work of the agency and it all fits together."

Nonetheless, guidance from good supervisors was vital for interns to feel a sense of community. Students valued supervisors who were approachable yet still set boundaries for work relationships. Josie's supervisor "took what she does very seriously, but she does not take herself seriously." Phylicia's supervisor "was especially inviting." Phylicia found that "she became more of a friend than a mentor but when we were in the lab she still had that authority kind of thing but after hours we were like really good friends." Alan said his supervisor "was someone that we could sit there and talk and just hang out." At times, "he was like more of a friend first then a boss second." Sometimes interns and supervisors experienced a bit of role reversal as described by Ashley:

> With my direct supervisor, I was like "I feel there is a lot of wisdom that you could be sharing but you are so quick to listen. I want to hear you talk. It's good that you listen to me but I want to hear you talk because I know you have a lot of good things to say and teach me." He takes feedback really well so that was good. He took that feedback and he just kicked it into high gear and gave me advice. That is when the relationship got a lot better.

A sense of community was built when supervisors went out of their way to meet students' needs and surpass their expectations. Robert (student) got to accompany their supervisors to "many different committee meetings" and "many different events." Of his supervisor, Robert said he "took me under his wings and just made me feel like I was welcome." Lanny (student) explained that his supervisor took the time to "find money" to pay him and "always tried to find out what I wanted to do." As a result, Lanny had some unique experiences during his internship:

I have never been electro shocking cause it's not legal to do unless you are department employee. It is when they put like electrodes into the water and it stuns the fish and they do it for like sampling and biological stuff. I mentioned that I wanted to do that just in passing. So one day he told me to call this number and I ended up going electro shocking. He was just very proactive about getting me what I wanted to do.

Only one out of 19 student participants in this study made statements suggesting a less than ideal supervisor. Elaine said her supervisor "was just kind of all over the place. He didn't seem to be able to focus on one thing. So with all my evaluations, projects and stuff I had to keep on top of him." Still, it "was definitely a learning experience."

Based on their observations, faculty also noted the importance of the supervisor's role. As Walt suggested, "sometimes supervisors make it or break it." Sometimes students have gotten in situations where "their supervisor could have limited college experience or no college experience and could be intimidated by the student." However, in most cases, the supervisors mentioned by participants in this study were good at creating a sense of community and served as important role models and mentors for students. As Jean noted from a faculty perspective:

Supervisors are everything. They can provide the structure and the experience. If they have the time and desire to do that, it really helps the student come in and feel comfortable. Sometimes they can become a very important mentor and sometimes a lifelong mentor or friend…They can be that person who is there to help students work through their professional growth issues. Things that they might be bringing with them. Difficulties that they might have once they get into the field and say, "Well this was different reading about this in a book or hearing about it in a case study than seeing it in person." Helping students learn about themselves and learn about the field.

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In addition to an ease with mentoring, good supervisors facilitated community when they effectively delegated and avoided micro-managing interns. As a faculty member, Wayne has seen times when students experienced "more of a dictatorship" and "micromanaging." Instead, Wayne shared that "pretty good managers may be those who have been in that seat at one point and can help the student." Beth was another faculty member who suggested that supervisors should "let the students take the initiative" and not "nitpick over every little detail." She said, "Give them a project and let them run with it." Students also commented on their supervisors' ability to delegate and to instill trust. The editor with whom Chris worked would "just let us work," he said. He said that the editor would go over the status of projects and "when he needed to say something he would say it. There was a lot to learn from him." Leslie was also able to do her "own thing." She said her supervisor "trusted" her enough and felt that she "was responsible enough" to go out on her own." She said it made her "feel really confident in myself. I knew that they could trust me and that was a really good feeling."

In addition to supervisors and co-workers, a sense of community was created by students' interaction with peers at host organizations. Hannah's organization had a training approach that she said was "great because they made a really strong effort to bond the different intern groups together." Nichole's organization also provided "a group of other interns to identify with" and facilitated weekly gatherings "whether it was resume building" or "social events like going to the taste of Chicago for lunch." Sometimes students became better acquainted with other interns from their own university who were also working at the host organization. Phylicia said she interned "with four people from [the same university] and since then we have come back" and "had something in common." Interactions with peers also happened through interns' housing arrangements as indicated by Leigh:

I lived with eight people and they were all in DC. Three of them worked in the same office I did, but the other five were from all over the country doing various things…It was just a great experience. Friends for life.

Involvement with peers and their faculty through their internship coursework also created a sense of community – and a safety net – for students. As a faculty member, Danica has seen the benefits of students "being able to share their experiences with others during the time they are doing their internship." She said they could share experiences and "learn from their peers…it's not just you in a bubble doing an internship." Walt viewed each of those rare occasions when an "intern was let go because it was the wrong fit or did something terribly wrong," as a "learning experience" for the student:

> When a student loses that internship or they have been dismissed from the property, I tell them "Ok now you have another opportunity. Who was your second interview with? Maybe you need to stop what you are doing and see if you can finish this out with another internship this summer…Learn from this last experience and what you did to get dismissed from the property. You don't need to be doing that again." So I usually don't give them an F but give them the opportunity to fix it.

Lastly, involving supervisors, co-workers, peers, faculty, and others exposed students to many "different" people and "different" circumstances that led to another means of experiencing community. For example, Hannah (student) acknowledged noticing and seeking out differences during their internships:

> I think the fact that we were **different** and we had **different** backgrounds was really good because it created some clashes sometimes. You can't live with random people for weeks without having **different** clashes…so being able to experience those **different** world

views and having somebody **different** support you in what you are doing was really

great.

In fact, "different" and its derivatives were among the words used most frequently – 278 times –

during participant interviews for this study. These "different" excerpts below represent a

snapshot of the dozens of times that participants referred to "different" people and situations as

they described their internships.

- gives me a little bit **different** perspective then most supervisors because…

- **different** students come in with **different** backgrounds, **different** skills so they…

- kind of a **different** type of communication is one…

- things may be completely **different** just because that is how…

- gained a lot - just a **different** vision and a different mindset…

- just having to talk to **different** ages of people - that helps…

- there are **different** relationships depending on the intern…

- a boss that is a **different** sex. I'm like dang it…

- of leadership talks about the **different** cultural issues that you might…

- fun because we have **different** ways that we see I…

- are **different** levels of expectations, **different** levels of accountability…

- been very **different** experiences with **different** types of interns…

"People" was another word used frequently - over 350 times – and one of only a few that

surpassed the use of "different."   As students like Robert pointed out, involvement with

"different people" enriched his overall internship experience:

Every day was completely **different**…it was so cool being able to interact with so many **different** people and so many **different** lifestyles, **different** personalities, and just everything as a whole **different** array of people. That was definitely the best.

Overall, community as a component of internships done well meant that employers created environments that were welcoming to intern and provided frequent interaction with supervisors, co-workers, peers, and others. Intern supervisors were approachable and created positive working relationship. In turn, students felt a sense of belonging and that their needs were met. Faculty provided support, facilitated relationship-building with others, and connected students to resources within the university and professional community.

Outcomes of Internships Done Well

While the instrumental outcomes of internships have been adequately investigated (Coco, 2000; D'Abate, 2010; Gault et al., 2000; O'Neill, 2010), the student learning outcomes of internships have rarely been the focus of prior research (Fletcher, 1989). Therefore, in addition to identifying the essence of internships done well, this study also attempted to examine the student learning outcomes of internships. Four themes emerged as a result of the data analysis. Internships that were done well developed the competencies of students, produced career-related crystallization, generated capital, and built confidence.

Competencies. All 29 participants made one or more statements about the development of competencies as an outcome of internships done well. As an outcome in this study, the competencies theme was created to include a wide range of capabilities, abilities, skills, aptitudes, proficiencies, experiences, and knowledge. Clearly, students gained experience in their fields as a result of their internships. Chris "only had one class" in design so that was one of his "weakest points" and "something that (he) needed more experience on." Colleen "learned

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so much" whether it was small like a "shortcut on the computer…all the way to how a meeting with a client goes." Students also gained experience and skills that were specific to their career areas. Nichole learned more about event planning and how to "talk to lighting companies who are not good at communicating" and how to "work with really prissy chefs that think they are the only one that are important at this event." Phylicia "gained a lot of lab techniques" and "learned about many of the veterinarian techniques that I want to use when I become a vet - how they go from the lab to practical use."

In addition, students developed skills that were transferable to other areas of work. Sue gained "good basic office skills like answering the phone and customer service and trying to learn quickly on computer programs." It helped her understand "office things that are different from a classroom setting." Rose also "gained a lot of knowledge about business structure and about the inner workings of an office." Students also experienced a mix of industry-specific and transferable skills. Elaine "learned how hotels run" and "that customer services is very important when dealing with guests when they have been traveling for a long time." She also learned "that the housekeeping staff are some of the most important people that are in a hotel because if they don't have the rooms done, the guests are angry, and then we're on the hot seat." Talia "learned a lot of visual merchandising" and also that" being a team player" is "important in the future with any job that you take." Robert offered the following comments on the growth of his interpersonal skills over the course of his internship:

> I would definitely say I have changed quite a bit as far as being able to feel comfortable around people. I would probably say that I wasn't the most outgoing person especially back in high school and the beginning of college. So being able to get involved here in student government and moving towards the internship and seeing it on a professional

level. That is where I needed to venture out of my little comfort zone so that definitely allowed me to be able to do that and feel comfortable with myself and being able to interact with professional people.

Employers observed the new and improved skills that students developed through their internships. Peter pointed out an important contrast between their work environment and students' school setting. According to Peter, sometimes in a work situation their interns "have to communicate through email and phone conversations with engineers that they have never seen in our home location." He said unlike school where "you could go to your professor" in person, their internship creates "a scenario where you have to really learn to communicate and put problems in such a way that the person you are communicating with can understand them and actually assist you." Danica's organization has also offered real-world situations for students and tried "to have an intern write at least one grant" so that they can "take that away" and say at their next job "I got a grant funded. They did this. It was a big deal." As an employer, Danica realized that they are helping students "master" and "participate in things" that will help each of them "be a better employee in the future." Barbara (employer) also saw more immediate benefits for students too:

> One gal in particular that interned with us a couple of summers ago was extremely quiet and almost would not speak. It got to a point that we really had to have a pretty honest conversation with her and said "You are going to have to talk to people in order to be successful." I have never worked with a student that was as quiet and withdrawn. She was very capable. You could tell that when you could get her to open up a little bit. So we talked to her about this. We deliberately put her in situations where she had to speak up a little bit more than she had and prepped her for that. We really worked hard with the

student to not put her in a situation where she was uncomfortable but just talked about "You are going to have to talk to people in your professional life." I saw significant growth in that particular student over the course of the time she was with us…By the end of the semester, she was not the most outgoing student ever but I could definitely see there was progress by the end of the experience. That was kind of exciting.

Overall, the competencies outcome theme included knowledge, skills, abilities, and other capabilities that were developed or strengthened when internships were done well. Students gained relevant and marketable experience. Competencies were applicable to specific industries and transferable to many career fields.

Crystallization. As a result of new experiences through internships, students grew in their awareness of self and career options. Using the terminology of Super's career exploration stage that is characterized by finding opportunities to do desired work (Brown et al., 1984), crystallization emerged as an outcome theme. Nearly all participants (28/29), made one or more statements related to the crystallization theme as an outcome of internships done well. Students cited numerous examples of how their internship broadened their awareness of opportunities, industries, and organizations of interest. As a result of her internship, Hannah discovered "a lot more of what is out there now….What people are doing." Robert "really never understood lobbyists." He had always heard "about it on the news" but when he was able "to see the interaction between your politician and then the lobbyists," it "opens your eyes a little bit." Students grew more aware of atypical opportunities in their fields of interest as described by Nichole:

One of the things sometimes that is hard with the non-profits and even with public relations is it's like with public relations you have to go do public relations at a firm or a

public relations agency - and with non-profit if is like you have to work with kids - you have to work with an orphanage - not that those are not wonderful amazing things you are helping people - but the non-profit industry is so much more.

In addition, employers acknowledged their observations that students grew in awareness of their career fields. Danica has seen students gain "a better understanding of the child welfare system" and "to understand better about child abuse and neglect." She said they "understand better how the court system worked and all the players work together." Students understood industries in more depth. Peter's organization does "systems type work and testing type work" and students have gotten to see how that "intertwines into a whole product." Students have learned how their individual contributions "fit" and how they are "part of the whole product development life cycle." Anne was able to learn about different opportunities within law as she learned that her organization had "two lawyers that are just basically counsel for their members." Rather than "practicing law," she said they would "research issues" and then advise members how to "go about" resolving an issue and "how the legislature works." Nichole was able to learn about a niche within her field:

> I learned about the cultural institution industry. That was something I had never worked with before. I think museums, zoos, and aquariums and even like arts councils, ballets, theaters...they need all these people as well and I think people don't look at them as opportunities. Why not work for something you love?

Being able utilize their passion, students experienced awareness and confirmation of their interests. As an employer, Danica said she has seen "a number of our interns who have come to us and not really thought this was the field that they wanted to go into." However, some then

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realized "I am passionate about this. I want to work in this field." As a faculty member, Beth also has gotten to observe how interests crystallize for students and she noted:

I get comments back from some of the other faculty members about how excited [students] were about their internship…when I visit with them after their internship that helps me see that they have really lit a spark in them. I can think of a lot of them that came back and were so excited about their internships. They now know that is what they really want to do.

On the other hand, greater awareness had also led students to realize what they do not like. Although it has not happened often to her as an employer, Meryl has worked with students who "learned through doing an internship that this was not the right choice for them." As a faculty member, Wayne has also seen students "decide whether they really want to do this or not." He said an internship provides "a time to mature" and "in some cases it might be, I need to change my major." Beth is another faculty member who has had interns come back and say, "You know it was good. I learned a lot but I know I don't really want to do that." Sometimes students better understand both their likes and dislikes. Rose has had multiple internships and has "found out through the experiences what I do like and what I don't like in the workplace and the work setting." She said internships have provided her with an opportunity to "visualize what work setting I want to be in" and "to see what else is out there." Talia described a similar experience with her internship:

Having a real job is kind of what it felt like and that was the first time that it felt real. I saw so many different aspects to the industry that I hadn't really been exposed to. So I think it gave me a better idea of what I want to do and what I wouldn't want to do in terms of working out of college. Also companies that I would want to work for. I am still

not specific on what I want to do but it definitely gave me a better idea of what I wouldn't want to do and what maybe I could see myself doing.

In additional to clarification of their interests, students grew more aware of their strengths and values. Josie "gained affirmation of my skills and what I am good at and what I enjoy." Ashley said she "gained more knowledge" of what she is "good at." Hannah said, "I discovered more about what I can do and who I am." Nichole grew more aware of her workplace values:

I also learned about the atmosphere of where you work and the attitude - the personality - of the staff as a whole. They were so positive and all encompassing and inclusive....Everyone wanted the [organization] to succeed and had the mission of the [organization] on their mind but at the same time the [organization] as a whole cared about individual development....Now I know that I have that to compare to when I am looking for a job.

Students also discovered values that went beyond the workplace. Elaine said that in addition to "learning more about the people that I would want to work with and within the kind of job I would want to do," she said she realized that she "would want to work in a bigger town because we were about an hour away from anything that had like a grocery store or a [large retail store]." Rose also got to experience a different location "living in a large city and being around tons on people all the time and great architecture." As a faculty member, Sheila has also seen the internship location make an impression on students:

I think they just gain an entirely new perspective on how the industry is – especially the ones who leave [the area] or even the ones who leave [the state]. The students that get to go to LA or New York are the ones who probably benefit the most. They see where all of

the decisions are made. They see what a showroom looks like. They have that actual experience of what we have been telling them in a textbook and that is very valuable.

In summary, as an outcome theme of this study, crystallization is a stage of career exploration in which students clarify what they want to do or not do through playing various roles and completing internship responsibilities. As eloquently described by Leslie, her internship experience summed up some ideals of crystallization:

It made me feel...closer to who I really am. I now really know that I can work in that environment away from being home because that's my first ranch job away from working at the family ranch. I know that no matter what ranch I am on I am always going to feel that that particular job is what I need to be doing. I don't feel I belong in any other job…I know that ranching is where I belong and that's the lifestyle that's meant for me. I know it is not ideal for most but I just reassured myself that that's where I belong and that is what I need to be doing with my life.

Capital. Several of this study's participants made comments about the instrumental outcomes that students "get" when internships are done well (Keeling, 2004). Statements from participants about financial, networking, and other rewards of internships were grouped as the outcome theme of capital. Over half of the participants (17/29) made one or more statements related to capital as an outcome of internships done well. While a majority of the student participants were in paid internships, only two participants mentioned the financial rewards of internships done well. As an employer, Meryl has observed that "students are looking first of all for money but secondly for that opportunity to connect what they have learned in the classroom with what happens in the field." As a student, Sue said she understood that "some people get

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paid - not me - but I guess some people get paid." However, she noted that "doing an internship is the best experience - you can get connections, you can get experience and it's fun."

As suggested above, students were more likely to comment on the value of connections rather than direct economic gains from their internship experiences. Leigh went into her internship with the idea that "I am going to make connections" and could "go back to DC and I have a million contacts." Colleen noted that she made "good connections" during her internship and said "if I was looking for other jobs in [the area] or even there, I would have a good standing with their company, and the people who work there." Colleen also stated:

> In this business, people move around a lot....They are always switching and jumping around so someone I might have met at [this firm] - like one of the animators wants to work for [a big studio] - who knows – he could have a connection to [a big studio].

As a faculty member, Wayne has seen connections work both in favor and against students as he described this scenario:

> From a good experience, they have the connections to go on in employment. They have us as resource. I think they underestimate that sometimes because they don't know how many things from employers might come back to us. They don't see that link and it's not just necessarily what they do on the job but other things that they might do….We had a situation just last year with a student… Ended up running carts through bunkers and maybe they were drinking a little too much or whatever. They don't think those things come back but they do.

In addition to contacts among faculty and employers, students improved their networking capabilities. Leigh "was always really nervous about networking and talking to people" but as a result of her internship she has learned to "exchange names, business cards and talk about what

you want to do because they might have a connection." As an employer, Danica has seen "a lot of [students] who are very leery about talking to other agencies or approaching somebody else to ask a question." Fortunately, she has observed students gaining "much better skills at networking" as a result of their internships.

Beyond professional connections, students also commented on the growth of social connections and friendships during their internship experiences. Ashley commented on the strong connections that developed with "the people that I left with." Her friendships have carried on and "it's really exciting to have gotten that experience from that internship…it's not something that has really ended. Robert said he valued "the people" and "the friendships that I have made with everybody." He found that "you never knew who you were going to meet and who you were going to talk to that day." Connections among others also led to fun during their internships. Bella got to work on "developing a new line for [a department store]" with a friend from her university "which was fun."

Internships done well provided students with capital in the form of valuable documentation for their future job search. Alan acknowledged that as a student "it builds our resume but it also helps you market yourself to different areas and get your name out there." As a faculty member, Beth has seen the value that internships provide for students to "show [employers] samples of their work and tell (them) what their role was in producing those samples." Jean (faculty) has seen interns "go out there and get a job." Internships have helped them "know what they are doing." Unfortunately, some employers have encountered students who only seem motivated by getting something on their resumes. Judy shared this experience:

I felt like she was just here. She just had this internship on her resume. Then she became

frustrated because I couldn't find an area that I could be confident about her work. So I

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am frustrated because I am trying to find different areas that she could excel at and she is frustrated because she is not getting to do what she wants or she is thinking her work is a lot better than I am thinking it is.

Overall, the capital outcome of internships done well includes connections, networking, friendship, fun, income, and valuable job search documentation. However, internships generate invaluable outcomes that go way beyond the "competitive advantage" acknowledged by employers like Judy. Bella and other students found that their internships gave them:

Comfort for the future because now I know that, even though the future seems daunting after you graduate, I have experienced it a little bit and I see that it's not terrifying. I can actually hold my own out there….I think it's priceless doing that as a college student.

Confidence. Internships done well led to growth in maturity, professionalism, resilience, and responsibility thus creating the final outcome theme of this study, confidence. With comments by 17 participants, confidence was the most frequently coded statement among all outcome statements. Combining similar codes, nearly all participants (27/29) made one or more statements related to the confidence theme.

Students recognized growth in their confidence as a result of their internships. Josie felt she "gained confidence" in the skills that she has by "reaching out to people" who she said were "technically higher than me in their roles in schools and community organizations." Chris said he was "not too sure of myself" when he started out interviewing people during his internship. After a while, he felt he was able to "make a good impression." Leslie and Sue both commented on ways that confidence helped them manage times when they were nervous and stressed. Leslie said that when she was "backing the truck up to a trailer," she would "get so nervous" and "choke." By the end of her internship, she "could just back up instantly no matter

whether people are around me or not." Sue also "gained a lot of self confidence." After her internship, Sue's mother noticed that she was not calling as much and saying "I am stressed about a test or a class" or "this is bothering me." Sue felt she learned "to believe in myself a little bit more - to hold on to a heavier load basically." She believed her internship "made some kind of difference if my mom can tell."

Employers also noted that both parents and students were able to recognize growth in confidence from internships done well. Peter has seen students "profit as an individual because they have contributed to an improvement and that has given them confidence." Danica has also seen students "come to us with very little self-confidence" because "they have learned in class but they haven't had a chance to apply it." After the internship, she said student "leave here with much more self-confidence." Barbara has seen students grow more confident in their ability to interact with others in a professional manner." Although it can be difficult to "describe seeing them grow," Judy said she could "see it in their work." She went on to say, "You see a good progression. Their work is just getting stronger." She was not sure "how you would describe how you see someone's confidence increase," she suspects students, "are more sure of themselves." Then displaying emotion, Judy shared the following story about her interaction as an employer with an intern's parents:

> I have had several that were really good interns over the years. One that I am thinking about - I just went to his wedding last weekend….I really saw him grow during the time he was here. His parents saw it as well. It touched me because I went to his graduation party and met his parents. They were just so thankful and they were like "Thank you so much for everything you have done for [our son] because you have increased his confidence dramatically." That meant a lot to me.

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Faculty members have also observed students' growth in confidence. Although Wayne acknowledged that "we don't know what their level of knowledge was before they went out," he has seen that "when they come back they sound pretty confident about the things that they did" during their internships. Sheila has seen that an internship "gives a lot of [students] some confidence." Students realized that they "have actually learned something in the last four years" and "have valuable things to contribute." Sheila has seen "students coming back in their senior year and they just seem more mature." It seems like there "is a definite shift in their perspective in how they approach classes." Jean has also observed students "at the beginning of the practicum" when they "can't believe you are putting me out here to work with real people." Their attitude "fades pretty quickly" and "by the end they are confident and they feel like they are doing the work of the agency."

Sometimes students got feedback from other external constituents that apparently contributed to their confidence. Chris received "emails from those people who I wrote about or interviewed. They would read my article and tell me how much they loved it." It was "definitely fulfilling." Thomas felt that "extra responsibilities kind of made his maturity step up just a little bit. He couldn't "slack off like some of the other workers do sometimes" and instead he had "to be that one to motivate them instead of the one being motivated."

Like Thomas, some students grew in maturity from temporarily adapting to the workplace structure and environment that is quite different from the college environment. Nichole felt she "developed and matured" by "living in the big city on my own." She found that "getting up and going to a job everyday" is not like class "you can't skip it" so "having that 9-to-5 work experience was huge." Sue thought she might "not be able to work the 9 to 5." She "figured I am either going to get bored or I am going to get tired - it was just going to be so

different from going to classes." She was "really worried that I wouldn't be able to balance it all" but "did really, really well." She went on to say, "I almost kind of miss the 9 to 5 schedule…so that was really something surprising that I got out of it." Alan also said, "Working long hours and long days…caused me to grow up for sure." He "felt old there for a while – like this is the real world." As Talia said, "It was a big adjustment and I definitely had to mature and be more independent" but "it taught me more about myself and life lessons than anything - which I wasn't really expecting to gain that."

Lastly, students developed their professionalism as another form of confidence. Leigh found that she had "a better understanding of what is professional and what is not." She said she learned "how to present myself, what should be said and what shouldn't be said and how to dress in the workplace." Bella also said she learned "to socialize with people but not too much because you are in a work environment. You have to stay professional and not joke and talk too much and gossip at all" and "you learn to establish a presence with people." Similarly, Anne "learned a lot more about how to work" and "grew a lot more in a professional atmosphere."

Overall, confidence as an outcome of internships done well meant that students experienced growth in their ability to engage in internship behaviors. Confidence appeared as maturity, resilience, responsibility, professionalism, and a sense of self-confidence. Students experienced growth that seemed to extend beyond the temporary experience of the internship and it was something they would carry forward with them as described by Bella:

> It is a really different kind of scenario to be in than being in college where you go to class and whatever but there it's just like that's a job. That is what you are doing. So it is really different - but I liked it and it makes me excited for the future.

Summary

Based on the findings of this study, internships done well essentially required commitment, facilitated good communication, connected the classroom to career, and created community. As a result, internships done well developed the competencies of students, produced career-related crystallization, generated capital, and built confidence.

Chapter 5 - Discussion and Implications

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings of the current study in relation to the current literature on internships and high-impact educational practices. This chapter also addresses the implications for future research. The chapter concludes with a number of recommendations for students, employers, universities, and their collective involvement with internships as a high-impact educational practice.

Discussion of Findings

Along with heeding Taylor's (1988) long-standing call to further investigate the internship effect, this study examined what it means for internships to "be done well" (Kuh, 2008, p. 20). While the essence and outcomes of internships "done well" were solicited from participants without regard to Kuh's six elements of high-impact educational practices, the findings of this study suggest that when internship are done well, they share a number of similarities to other well-known educational practices that effectively facilitate student engagement. Moreover, this study provides rich illustrations of the transformative integration of learning and development (ACPA & NASPA, 2004) generated by internships and insights about these research questions:

1. What is the essence of internships that are done well?

2. What are the student learning outcomes of internships that are done well?

Based on the findings of this study, internships done well require commitment and are effortful. They facilitate good communication and include feedback. They connect the classroom to career and help students apply what they are learning. In addition, when internships are done well, they create community by building relationships and engaging across

differences. As a result, internships that are done well develop the competencies of students. They produce career-related crystallization helping students better understand who they are becoming. Also, when internships are done well, they generate capital and build confidence.

Commitment. This study found that when done well, internships require the commitment of both students and employers. For students, this means showing initiative and being eager to learn. Within an internship role, Narayan et al. (2010) described students' identification with and willingness to exert considerable effort as "internship commitment" (p. 67). Likewise, for internship programs to be successful, employers must be committed to creating challenging, meaningful, and relevant work assignments for interns (Hurst & Good, 2010). As a theme of this study, commitment essentially crosswalks with the first element of high-impact educational practices in that they are effortful (Kuh, 2008). This notion of effort harkens back to Astin's (1984, 1999) theory of involvement suggesting that a particular educational program must prompt a sufficient level of student effort and investment of energy to bring about learning and development.

With time on task and quality of effort as two key features of student engagement (Kuh, 2009b), effort and time are also contributed by host organizations when internships are done well. Students see effort and time as signs of an employer's value for and commitment to their internship programs. Employers also demonstrate their effort by preparation, structure, and clear expectations so that their internships can be done well by students.

Communication. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2011b) and Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2006) criteria, interns should receive routine feedback for improvement. The findings of this study suggest that when internships are done well, they are facilitated by good communication.

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This communication theme clearly shares key similarities to another element of high-impact educational practices in that they include feedback (Kuh, 2008).

Recognizing the positive learning outcomes associated with active participation by students (Fletcher, 1990), those from the educational community particularly emphasize providing feedback during internships that are done well. Faculty members suggest that feedback needs to be frequent and ongoing during internships. As Beth said, supervisors need to let interns know "These are the things that I see you excelling in and these are the things you need to improve."

As suggested by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2007), when internships are intentionally integrated into the curriculum, students should receive guidance and feedback as they explore internship-related issues and test their insights against both theory and the experiences of others. Communication skills such as journal writing and group discussion are critical for facilitating self-reflection – a hallmark of experiential learning pedagogy (Kolb, 1984). By recording thoughts and feelings about their internship experiences, students realize what they gained from the experience and how it relates to what they may want to do in the future. Students appreciate a structured learning opportunity for sharing their internship experiences and for questions from others that helped them reflect on their learning and development.

Articulating questions and verbally conveying their curiosity are other important communication indicators of internships that are done well. In addition to feedback from others, AAC&U (2007) recommends that students foster habits of mind that enable them to continue their learning, engage new questions, and reach informed judgments. Communication, analytical abilities, and critical-thinking skills are also valued by employers as indicated in the AAC&U

report (2007). When done well, internships provide many opportunities for actively engaging skills that are valued by employers.

Classroom to Career Competencies. As an educational experience, internships are characterized as a learning opportunity for applying knowledge and as an extension of the classroom (NACE, 2011b). This knowledge transfer happens when internships are done well and, like other high-impact educational practices, students can then apply and test what they are learning in new situations (Kuh, 2008). In particular, learning happens when students make the connection between an abstract concept and a concrete application (Cross, 1999). During internships that are done well, students experience many connections between the abstract in the classroom and the concrete in the workplace. Like employers across the nation, internship hosts in this study want students to apply their skills "in the context of progressively more challenging problems" (AAC&U, 2007, p. 12) and play a key role in the process of classroom to career knowledge transfer.

By experiencing a realistic job preview (Knouse, Tanner, & Harris, 1999), students in internships done well can be immersed in the industry and learn a lot. The work-based learning of internships also helps student move from "knowing what" declarative knowledge to "knowing how" procedural knowledge (Raelin, 2010, p. 40). As a faculty member, Wayne said he has observed students' movement from "I didn't know how to spray" declarative knowledge to "and then I was taught how to do it" procedural knowledge which eventually becomes "second nature" to experienced students. Internships provide many fulfilling opportunities for students to realistically connect classroom theory with practice in their field.

The findings of this study also suggest that in addition to traditional knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), internships done well also help students apply and develop other (KSAOs)

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important characteristics such as personal attributes and capacities that are also key to successfully performing a job and internship (Muchinsky, 2006). Sometimes acknowledged as soft skills, attributes like professionalism are increasingly important for adapting to the rapid change and complexity of today's workplace (The Conference Board, 2006).

Crystallization. Based on Super's (1984) self-concept work, Taylor's (1988) research suggested that internships assist students with the crystallization of their vocational self-concept. Like earlier self-concept research, this study also found that – when done well – internships provide students with reality testing and the opportunity to play various roles that shapes one's career identity. Conceptualized in this study as crystallization, this theme also shares important similarities with another element of high-impact educational practices – they help students better understand who they are becoming (Kuh, 2008).

Like Knouse and Fontenot (2008), this study found that internships create realistic expectations about the world of work and motivate students to continue – or not continue – along particular career paths. Students get to have hands-on experience within their field. Through experience, sometimes students realize their career choice is not what they thought it was going to be and decide to explore other options. Other students experience affirmation of their career paths. As an important component of fulfilling learning and career development goals (O'Neill, 2010), career crystallization is a very meaningful outcome when internships are done well.

Community. Practitioners in the field (NACE, 2011b) recognize the importance of a strong internship supervisor. In early America, apprenticeships matched protégé and experienced teacher (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). In modern day America, interns should be supervised by professionals with expertise and/or experience in their fields (NACE, 2011b). What seems to have been lost over the years is an emphasis on a "community of practice" that

extends far beyond the individual supervisor. Within many twenty-first century industries, knowledge is socially constructed and therefore interns naturally become part of a work-based community of practice (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). This study found that when internships are done well, they create community involving many people – supervisors, co-workers, peers, clients, and more – from the workplace and educational community. This theme of community relates to at least two elements of high-impact educational practices as they build relationships and help students engage across differences (Kuh, 2008). Numerous student participants in this study expressed the need to feel like they were valued, had a sense of belonging, and were more than just "the intern." Students involved with internships done well actively build relationships within their host organizations.

Creating "communities of practice" through which individuals and groups can learn, internships can be viewed as a dynamic interrelationship of social, cultural, technological, and linguistic practices (Vygotsky, 1978). Individual people still develop skills and knowledge but a situated-learning perspective suggests that it happens through a collective process. Internships create zones of proximal development with physical and cultural tools – as well as other people (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). These resources then help individual students develop their social identity, learn new forms of practice, and become knowledgeable within a discipline. Practical applications for creating internship zones of proximal development will be addressed in the recommendations presented later in this chapter.

On a related note, but still most surprising to the researcher, internships that are done well appear to help students recognize and engage across differences. As described in the findings, "different" was a word with one of the highest frequencies of use by all participants. Theoretically, as students come in contact with people who are different from themselves with

different values, styles, backgrounds, perspectives, and more, they will be challenged to develop new ways of thinking about and responding to novel circumstances as they work side by side with others (Kuh, 2008). This kind of experience with diversity is well-documented with other types of high-impact educational practices like learning communities, service-learning, and study abroad (Brownell & Swaner, 2010), but it was surprising to find it so prevalent among internships that are done well.

Capital. Human capital theory as applied to higher education includes a focus on the rewards of education as benefits to the individual (Leslie & Brinkman, 1988). Given the controversy generated about paid versus unpaid internships (Westerberg & Wickersham, 2010), it is interesting to note that when students where asked "What did you gain from your internship?" not one student directly commented on the monetary benefits of their internship. While Meryl, an employer, did suggest that students "are looking first of all for money," none of the student participants mentioned the financial rewards of their internship. However, at least three interns brought up how they benefitted from the financial support of a special scholarship for completing their unpaid internships in the nonprofit sector. Over half of the student participants were in paid internships. It is not clear from this study how crucial paid wages – or economic capital – are for internships to be done well. However, it is apparent that students also gained other valuable commodities such networking connections – also known as social capital – as a result of their internships done well.

The social ties associated with social capital can be used for a variety of purposes but they have frequently been found to influence career success and help individuals find employment (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Described by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) as the resources that accrue to an individual or group through a network of relationships, social capital

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can be mobilized to action for student job-seekers and employer talent-seekers alike. As a result of their internships, numerous students in this study commented on the value of connections and networking for the future careers. Social capital also came in the form of making friends during internships done well. With the rise in social networking use among today's college students (Higher Education Research Institute, 2012), it is interesting to see social capital surfacing as an outcome of internships done well.

As recognized previously in the literature (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010), internships done well provided students with valuable documentation for their future job search. Having internships on their resumes provide students with another form of capital - symbolic capital. Symbolic capital infers prestige, respect, and/or authority within a given field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As noted by several participants, internships help students convey their experience and skills on their resumes to future employers. On the other hand, students who just want internships symbolically on their resumes were not viewed very favorably by some of the employers in this study. Whether symbolic, social, or economic, capital gained from experiential learning is another important outcome of internships done well.

Confidence. When students are engaged in learning rather than just going through the motions of an internship, they are likely to experience one of the most significant benefits of internships done well – changes in self-efficacy (DeLorenzo, 2000; Fletcher, 1998; Pedro, 1984). During interviews, students frequently described gains in their confidence which led to its identification as a student learning outcome theme of this study. More importantly, students cited confidence in their abilities to engage successfully in specific internship behaviors. Many of the student examples were also described in the context of conditions that are cited frequently in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986). When internships are done well, students

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appear to increase their self-efficacy through performance accomplishments (mastery experiences), vicarious learning (observations of role-models), and exposure to social persuasion – otherwise known as encouragement (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Management of one's physiological state was cited less frequently but a couple of students did mention they overcame being anxious and nervous about performing various internships tasks.

Summary of Findings. Overall, the findings of this study provide legitimate evidence that internships have a place among high-impact educational practices (Appendix G). Just like other high-impact educational practices, internships done well are effortful and require commitment. They involve feedback and facilitate good communication. Internships done well prompt students to apply what they are learning in the classroom to the context of their future careers. In addition, when internships are done well, they are like other high-impact educational practices that help students build relationships and engage across differences creating a sense of community. As a result of internships done well, students better understand who they are becoming and benefit from career-related crystallization. Students develop valuable competencies. Also, internships done well result in priceless forms of capital and build the confidence of students. While suggesting many answers, the findings of this study also lead to more questions and the need for additional research examining the internship as a high-impact educational practice.

Limitations of the Current Study

The findings of this study may be limited to the institution where this research was conducted and could reflect the unique characteristics of its student body. While the university annually enrolls over 20,000 undergraduates, the self-described culture of the university is a "friendly environment where faculty and staff truly care about student success" (Voluntary

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System of Accountability, 2012). Given the values and location of the university, some of the statements gathered from students, faculty, and employers affiliated with this university may reflect its institutional culture.

In addition, since the purposeful sample was limited to students enrolled in credit-bearing internship coursework, some of the most prominent disciplines in the internship and cooperative education fields – namely business and engineering – are under-represented by the participants selected for this study. Students were solicited from business but suggested participants had already graduated and did not reply to the researcher's inquiries. Engineering students were not included in the purposeful sample since credit-bearing coursework is not administered by engineering faculty at the university where the research was conducted.

Also, the findings of this study are limited by minimal racial and ethnic diversity among the participants. The institution where the research was conducted is a predominately white campus and the purposeful sample reflects that lack of diversity. However, while not part of the purposeful sampling, university records indicate that at least 6 of the 19 student participants were first generation college students. It would be interesting to analyze the responses of first generation student participants compared to other student participants in a follow-up of this study, especially in light of Brownell and Swaner's (2010) call for utilizing high-impact educational practices as a way to better serve historically underserved students.

Recommendations for Research

While differences run deep in their value for many of the benefits and outcomes of internships, universities and employers share a common concern in at least one area – retention. Employers value internships for their potential to increase the retention of individuals who are future employees of their organizations. Results from the National Association of Colleges and

Employers Internship and Co-op Survey (NACE, 2011a) indicate that hires drawn from an employer's own internship program were retained at a rate of 75.8 percent compared to 60.7 percent of hires without internship experience. Internships help employers recruit future employees who have already proven themselves as interns (Coco, 2000; Hurst & Good, 2010; Rothman & Lampe, 2010). Consequently, many employers strive to convert effective interns into successful employees who will make valuable contributions to their organizations.

Likewise, universities value internships for their potential to increase the retention of students who are future graduates of their institutions. When internships are done well and function as a high-impact educational practice, they should enhance student engagement and generate higher levels of student performance, learning, and development than traditional classroom experience (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). If this is the case, internships that are done well theoretically should lead to high GPAs, greater retention, and increased degree persistence just as has been empirically found with other high-impact practices like service-learning (Astin & Sax, 1998). Moreover, Gainor (2006) suggested that self-efficacy growth through internships creates opportunities for enhancing academic persistence, the management of stress, and college success. Bean and Eaton's (2001) research also suggests the influence of psychological constructs like self-efficacy on college student retention. Future research might attempt to quantitatively examine gains in self-efficacy as a result of internship experience and longitudinally track academic performance, degree persistence, and post-graduation success obtaining employment.

The findings of this study also beg another question. Can an internship without academic credit and involvement from the university serve as a high-impact educational practice? While examples of support from faculty and the university community were cited as contributing

factors for an internship done well, those examples were rarely cited when students were asked what was essential for internships to be done well.   Also, given the influence of the work environment on creating a community of practice, it seems possible that high-impact internships can occur without academic credit and/or facilitation from the university. It would be interesting to interview a purposeful sample of students whom employers – rather than faculty – have observed in internships done well and examine the elements of internships that are done well outside the confines of the university's learning environment (credit-bearing coursework). Does learning occur? Is there a sense of community? What might the employer have to "make up" for in the absence of support from the university?

Lastly, there is continuing discourse about paid versus unpaid internships (Davidson, 2012). The findings of this study confirm that meaningful contributions to the internship host are a key element of an internship done well. According to criteria established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010), an internship is for the benefit of the intern as opposed to the employer. As industries that rarely offer internship compensation and are at risk with FLSA violations by offering unpaid internships that typically benefit the employer, fields like fashion, communications, and others may offer fewer internship opportunities. Thus, some students lose out on important opportunities for enhancing their social capital. More research should be conducted and the findings from this study should be analyzed more in-depth to consider themes of internships with and without monetary compensation.

Recommendations for Practice

Given the insightful responses of participants, the findings of this study suggest a number of recommendations for students, employers, and universities involved with the practice of internships. Overall, the results of this study suggest that the essence of internships done well

means that **students** show initiative, are inquisitive, are eager to learn, communicate effectively, and work well with others. It means that **employers** facilitate community by connecting the student intern with different people such as co-workers and peers, express clear expectations, involve approachable supervisors, and identify meaningful duties for internships done well. It also means that **universities** provide accountability, offer support, promote opportunities, facilitate feedback, and prepare students with fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities so that internships are done well.

Essentially, the findings of this study point to the need for students to demonstrate their initiative and self-directedness during internships. Those capabilities are similar to the primary internal factors cited by Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, and Lenz (2004) that contribute to readiness for career choice and decision-making. Sampson et al. (2004) described this type of career readiness as a combination of the capabilities of an individual to make appropriate career choices along with external factors that influence career development. Internal capabilities influencing career readiness include motivation, commitment, personal responsibility, and capacity for problem solving (Sampson et al., 2004). Developmentally, this suggests that only students with a certain level of "readiness" may have the appropriate internal capabilities (Sampson et al., 2004) to effectively perform an internship early in their college career. Confidence is also viewed as a critical internal capability for career readiness and effective career decision-making (Sampson et al., 2004). While findings from this study suggest that internships can increase confidence, this study does not clarify what kind of minimal confidence may be needed for an internship done well. Prior to pursuing internships, students should assess their readiness in regards to their confidence and other capabilities by consulting with their faculty, academic advisors, career advisors, and other student affairs professionals. Those

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students who are not as "ready" should complement their classroom experience with part-time employment, student organization involvement, volunteer opportunities, and other experiential activities to develop their initiative, confidence, and internal capabilities before pursuing internships.

In addition, the findings of this study suggest that employers have an essential role in identifying meaningful ways for the student intern to contribute to the organization, establishing clear expectations for the internship, and creating an active "community of practice" within the organization (Vygotsky, 1978). An employer signals its commitment to a quality internship experience by creating a detailed internship description, clarifying the roles of those involved with the internship, and making sure that everyone involved from the organization can carve out the time and effort needed for an internship to be done well. While this kind of commitment does not always have an immediate return on investment for the employer, "the result of this mutually supportive environment is that the confidence levels of interns may increase the reserves from which the future professional may have to draw" (Sides & Mrvica, 2007, p. 43). Since many employers convert interns into full-time hires (NACE, 2011a), there is potentially a substantial long-term return on investment for employers when they make this kind of commitment to an internship experience.

Also, an "increasingly turbulent, rapidly shifting environment requires contemporary organizations to learn better and faster just to survive" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 27). Likewise, college graduates "need to be intellectually resilient, cross-culturally and scientifically literate, technologically adept, ethically anchored, and fully prepared for a future of continuous and cross-disciplinary learning" (AAC&U, 2007, p. 15). Given this emphasis on learning for both the future employer and the employee, developing a "community of practice" is a type of

learning that can benefit both the internship host and student intern. According to Sides and Mrvica (2007), sharing expectations for internships among students, faculty, and professionals can be among the best ways for a student to become a lifelong learner, enter successfully into a learning organization, and then contribute meaningfully to that organization as well as profession.

Finally, these findings have a number of practical applications for the role of the university in facilitating internships that are done well. Given the strong potential for enhancing student retention and persistence, universities should "scale up" high-impact educational practices like internships (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). However, universities must also make sure that programs are fully resourced and staffed so that internships can be "done well" for the benefit of students and employers, especially when internships increasingly involve those in the business community who are important financial partners of the university. Based on the findings of this study, one way to effectively and realistically scale up high-impact educational practices is to create a developmental approach to their implementation within the university setting. A developmental approach for implementing high-impact educational practices might target student participation within:

- College Years 1-2: First-year seminars, writing-intensive courses, learning communities, and service-learning programs.

- College Years 2-4: Common intellectual experiences, undergraduate research, and diversity/global learning experiences.

- College Years 3-6: Collaborative projects, capstone courses, and internships.

Also, before college year three, universities should intentionally create initiatives to prepare students for internships. These initiatives could be woven into other high-impact

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practices like first-year seminars and undergraduate research or delivered through stand-alone

coursework that would teach strategies for being self-directed and strengthening skills in critical

thinking, communication, and interpersonal relations. These initiatives could also intentionally

develop the "psychological capital" of students (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007).

Like other forms of capital, psychological capital – also known as PsyCap – is a valuable

asset before, during, and after the internship experience. PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007) is an

individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by:

1. Having confidence (self-efficacy);

2. Making a positive attribution (optimism);

3. Persevering toward goals (hope); and

4. Sustaining and bouncing back (resiliency).

The development of this kind of capital is valuable for both the individual student and the

future internship host/employer. PsyCap cultivates the self-management needed to help

individuals maintain skills and competencies that meet employer needs (Luthans et al., 2007).

Given the complexities of today's marketplace, strong PsyCap among employees as well as

interns can potentially increase performance, morale, and engagement with the employer.

Likewise for students, the development of PsyCap can be leveraged much like student

engagement and high-impact practices to tap "who you are" and "who you are becoming"

(Luthans et al., 2007, p. 20) and to potentially increase learning and performance throughout the

internship.

There is a great opportunity for the university – faculty as well as career services – to

serve as an essential partner with employers in creating effective work-based and situated-

learning workplace environments. Not all employers are experienced with effective training

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techniques or have the resources to initiate a community of practice within their organization. With extensive expertise for creating effective learning environments, universities can help employers create internships in which experienced members guide novices' activities to help them enter the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Some employers with strong human resource units will be familiar this scaffolding technique if they use it as an instructional approach within their own training initiatives. Small businesses, new organizations, and under-resourced employers simply might not know how they can create a program structure, content, and delivery method (Hurst & Good, 2010) that will potentially lead to internships that are done well.

Overall, the findings of this study strongly suggest that – just as it takes a village to raise a child (African Proverb) – it takes a community to develop a student. It is essential for employers, faculty, career services, student affairs, and university administration to work together to effectively facilitate internships and other high-impact educational practices within the campus community.

Summary

The stories and voices of participants in this study offer inspiring examples of transformational internship experiences. The findings provide evidence of the employment advantages, knowledge transfer, career development, and personal growth that are possible when internships are done well. Guided by theories of student involvement and engagement (Astin, 1984, 1999; Kuh, 2008, 2009a, 2009b), it is apparent that internships done well require commitment, facilitate good communication, connect the classroom to career, and provide a sense of community. When those internship conditions are present, students gain valuable competencies, career crystallization, capital, and confidence.

The challenge for universities is to effectively connect their student learning outcome goals with appropriate high-impact educational practices like internships – and to scale them up enough so that each student has a chance to benefit professionally and personally from an internship that is done well. The whole campus community will see the difference it makes. As Jean, a faculty member of the university who has seen the impact of internships done well, stated:

> Someone looked around the room and mentioned, "My gosh you all look so different." The students looked at us like what? Are you crazy? It's like they cross a threshold….I think they have seen that they can get out there and what they have worked their entire college career toward is in their grasp. They have found out they can do it.

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Appendix A - Faculty Participant Guide

Part 1 – Student Participant Recommendations

Email

Hi _____ ,

While serving as director of career and employment services at K-State, I have been working on the completion of my doctorate in student affairs in higher education. I am currently conducting my dissertation research and investigating what is essential to creating effective internship experiences for students. My data collection will involve conducting interviews with a small sample of K-State students. I would like to include students from your academic program who have participated in internships.

As you know, internships are increasingly popular among students and employers. Researcher George Kuh suggests that internships – when done well – appear to have a positive effect on a number of student learning and personal development outcomes. The goal of my study is to better understand what it means for internships to be "done well" and to have a positive impact on students. For the purposes of this study, I am using the definition of an internship recently recommended by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2011b):

> An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.

Because I am seeking a "purposeful" sample for my qualitative study, student participants should have:

1. Completed their internships over the equivalent of a fall, spring or summer term as an undergraduate student within the last 12 months;

2. Been enrolled in an academic credit class in conjunction with their internships; and

3. Been positively impacted by their internship experience based on your assessment as a faculty member. The positive impact may be related to the student's personal growth, career development, application of knowledge, an employment advantage or other positive outcome resulting from the internship experience.

Please click on the link below and take 10 minutes to share your student recommendations. The online form also includes an opportunity for you to participate further in the study if interested and to request an executive summary of the final report.

As required, this study has been approved by K-State's Institutional Review Board and will be supervised by College of Education faculty member, Dr. Christy Craft. If you have any questions, please contact me at 785-532-1691 or kdkeller@ksu.edu. Thank you for your support.

Kerri Day Keller

AXIO SURVEY

Internships as a High-Impact Educational Practice

Opening Instructions

Thank you for your willingness to recommend potential student participants in my research study, "Internships as a High-Impact Educational Practice." The goal of my study is to better understand what it means for internships to be "done well" both from the student and the faculty perspective.

If you already have potential student participants in mind, the following survey should not take more than 5-10 minutes of your time. Also, as in previous correspondence, my study has received full IRB approval.

You will have an opportunity to request an executive summary of my research upon its completion if interested. Please contact me at kdkeller@ksu.edu or via Career and Employment Services at 785-532-1691 if you have any questions. Thank you for your support!

Kerri Day Keller

PhD Candidate, Student Affairs in Higher Education

Page 1

Question 1 ** required **

To create a purposeful criterion-based sample for my study, potential student participants should have:

- Completed their internships between July 1, 2010 and September 1, 2011;
- Enrolled in an academic credit class in conjunction with their internships;
- Been positively impacted by their internship experience based on your assessment as a faculty member.

What is the name of recommended student intern #1?

Part 2 – Faculty Interview

In-person Introduction

Hello, ___. Thanks for your willingness to participate in my research about college student experiences in internships. This study will be the focus of my dissertation as I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education through K-State's College of Education. Hopefully, this study will be helpful to university career services professionals and faculty members who assist students in identifying, arranging, and completing internships.

Thanks also for your recommendations of student participants. I am following up and arranging individual interviews with students who have been recommended by faculty. Being able to interview both students and faculty enhances the validity of my study. Information that faculty and students share for this study is considered confidential. For my research, your name and any other names of related persons will be changed. Do you have any questions about the "informed consent form" you have been provided?

I will be audio-recording our interview so that I can give you my full attention during the interview and make sure that I capture every word of your responses to my questions. At a later point, I will also provide you with a chance to review the interview transcript to help verify the information collected today.

During our interview, I am going to be asking you questions about your observations of student internship experiences. Please take your time in responding to all questions. The most important goal of this interview is to benefit from your first-hand familiarity with and interpretations about students' internship experiences.

At the end of our interview, you are welcome to ask me any questions you have about today's session or my research. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. First, I'm interested in an overview of your role in facilitating internship experiences.

   a. Describe your involvement with student internships?

   b. What are some of the organizations that serve as internship hosts to your students?

2. Think of a student whose internship was done well. From what you know about that experience…

   a. What was essential for his/her internship to be done well?

      i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

      ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

   b. Describe what the student contributed to the internship experience so that it was done well.

      i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

      ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

   c. Describe what you contributed to the student's internship experience so that it was done well.

      i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

      ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

   d. Describe what the internship site host contributed to the student's internship experience so that is was done well.

      i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

      ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

e. Describe what others at the university (career services, academic advisor, etc.) or internship site (co-workers, human resources, etc.) contributed to the student's internship experience.

    i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

    ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

f. What did the student gain as a result of his/her internship learning experience?

    i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

    ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

3. Describe another experience with a student whose internship was done well….

a. Repeat questions a-h.

4. As we wrap-up, do you have any additional comments or any questions for me?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me today. As I mentioned earlier, the information you have provided will be handled confidentially. I will be back in touch to offer you an opportunity to review your interview transcript and/or receive a summary of my final report. Is your university email the best way to get back in touch with you?

Thank you again for your input and participation.

Appendix B - Student Participant Guide

In-person Introduction

Hello, ___. Thanks for your willingness to participate in my research about college student experiences in internships. This study will be the focus of my dissertation as I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education through K-State's College of Education. Hopefully, this study will be helpful to university career services professionals and faculty members who assist students in identifying, arranging, and completing internships.

As I explained earlier in our email correspondence, you were recommended by _____ as a student whom I should interview for this study. I want to make sure you are clear that the information you share for this study is considered confidential. For my research, your name, the name of your internship site and any other names of related persons will be changed. Do you have any questions about the "informed consent form" you have been provided?

I will be audio-recording our interview so that I can give you my full attention during the interview and make sure that I capture every word of your responses to my questions. At a later point, I will also provide you with a chance to review the interview transcript to help verify the information collected today.

During our interview, I am going to be asking you questions about your internship experience that you completed in conjunction with ___'s course. Many of my questions will ask you to recall specific experiences or share examples of how your internship contributed to your learning and personal development. I want you to feel comfortable pausing and taking time to think about your response to any question. The most important goal of this interview is to

benefit from your first-hand familiarity with and interpretations about your internship experience.

At the end of our interview, you are welcome to ask me any questions you have about today's session or my research. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. First, I'm interested in an overview of your internship experience.

    a. Tell me about the organization that served as your internship host.

    b. How did you find out about your internship opportunity?

    c. Tell me about your internship position and duties.

    d. Were you paid or unpaid during your internship?

    e. What were the weekly or total hours you completed for your internship?

    f. When did you complete your internship (e.g. May-August)?

2. Describe what was essential for making your internship a positive experience.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

3. Describe what you contributed to your internship to make it a positive experience.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

4. Describe what your internship class instructor contributed to your internship that resulted in it being a positive experience.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

5. Describe what your internship supervisor contributed to your internship that resulted in it being a positive experience.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

6. Describe what others at your internship site contributed to your internship experience that made it a positive one.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

7. Describe what any others at your internship site, class or university contributed to your internship experience that made it a positive one.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

8. Describe what you gained as a result of your internship learning experience.

    a. Probe: Can you share an example that helps me understand what made it a positive experience? Tell me more about that….

9. As we wrap-up, do you have any additional comments or any questions for me?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me today. As I mentioned earlier, the information you have provided will be handled confidentially. I will be back in touch to offer you an opportunity to review your interview transcript and/or receive a summary of my final report. Is your university email the best way to get back in touch with you?

Thank you again for your input and participation.

Appendix C - Employer Participant Guide

In-person Introduction

Hello, ___. Thanks for your willingness to participate in my research about college student experiences in internships. This study will be the focus of my dissertation as I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education through K-State's College of Education. Hopefully, this study will be helpful to university career services professionals, faculty members, and employers who assist students in identifying, arranging, and completing internships.

Being able to interview students, faculty, and employers enhances the validity of my study. Information that you share for this study is considered confidential. For my research, your name and any other names of related persons will be changed. Your company name will not be specifically mentioned and referenced only by your industry sector. Do you have any questions about the "informed consent form" you have been provided?

I will be audio-recording our interview so that I can give you my full attention during the interview and make sure that I capture every word of your responses to my questions. At a later point, I will also provide you with a chance to review the interview transcript to help verify the information collected today.

During our interview, I am going to be asking you questions about your involvement with and observations of student internship experiences. Please take your time in responding to all questions. The most important goal of this interview is to benefit from your first-hand familiarity with and interpretations about students' internship experiences.

At the end of our interview, you are welcome to ask me any questions you have about today's session or my research. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. First, I'm interested in an overview of your role in facilitating internship experiences.

    a. Describe your involvement with student internships at your company/organization?

    b. What are some of the internship opportunities with your organization?

2. Think of a student whose internship was done well. From what you know about that experience…

    a. What was essential for his/her internship to be done well?

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

    b. Describe what the student contributed to the internship.

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

    c. Describe what you contributed to the student's internship experience so that it was done well.

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

    d. Describe how others with your organization contributed to the student's internship experience so that it was done well.

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

    e.   Describe what the university faculty contributed to the student's internship

        experience so that it was done well.

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

    f.   Describe how others at the university contributed to the student's

        internship experience so that it was done well.

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

    g. What did the student gain as a result of his/her internship learning

        experience?

        i. Probe: Tell me more about that….

        ii. Probe: Help me understand why you think…

3. Describe another experience with a student whose internship was done well…

    a. Repeat questions a-h.

4. As we wrap-up, do you have any additional comments or any questions for me?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me today. As I mentioned earlier, the information you have provided will be handled confidentially. I will be back in touch to offer you an opportunity to review your interview transcript and/or receive a summary of my final report. Is your university email the best way to get back in touch with you?

Thank you again for your input and participation.

Appendix D - Informed Consent Form

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY - INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: The Essence and Outcomes of Effective Internship Learning Experiences

APPROVAL DATE: October 20, 2011   **EXPIRATION DATE:** October 20, 2012

INVESTIGATORS: Kerri Day Keller, kdkeller@ksu.edu, 785-532-1692

Dr. Christy Craft, ccraft@ksu.edu, 785-532-5940

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:

- Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224.

- Dr. Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of students in internships that are done well and to identify the learning outcomes associated with such internships. The study is being conducted to help inform university career services and faculty who assist students with internships.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: Participants in this study will include students and faculty from Kansas State University. Volunteer participants will be interviewed for approximately one hour in length at an agreed upon campus location. All interviews will be audio-recorded.

LENGTH OF STUDY: Interviews will be conducted from October to December 2011. Participants will be invited to review transcripts until approximately January 2012.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: There are no foreseeable risks of participation in this project.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: Participants will benefit indirectly from providing input that can improve and enhance student experiences during internships.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Only the investigators in this study will know participant identities. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the final written report. Individual names will not be associated with responses.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:

I understand this project is research and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness to Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E - Member-Checking

Email Correspondence

Thank you again for your participation in my research about college student experiences in internships. Upon the completion of my data collection last fall, I had interviewed 29 students, faculty members and employers. That exceeded my goal of at least 25 interviews!

I am currently analyzing and interpreting the data. To establish the trustworthiness of my data collection process, I am returning to you now for a member check of the data. Member checking consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Will you please review the attached transcript and verify its accuracy?

I have conducted several rounds of editing already but please note that your transcript is not in final draft form. It's not necessary to provide editing feedback unless you see something that is incorrect in its context.

Will you also review the attached list of coding themes (Table E.1)?

The enclosed themes were developed from a review of all 29 transcripts. You should see themes that reflect the main ideas of your responses. If you have any concerns, please let me know.

Lastly, do you have a pseudonym that you prefer for my final report?

As mentioned previously, your information will continue to be handled confidentially. Your name and organization will not be revealed in the final report. If you do not have a preferred alias, I will pick one at random for reference with any quotes used in my final report.

Please reply via this email at your earliest opportunity. I will be presenting preliminary results of my research during the K-State Research Forum on March 8. In addition, I am pressing forward with the defense of my dissertation in early April. Once I have been approved for the publication of my research, I will be glad to share it with you upon request.

Thanks again for your participation. I'm hopeful that the results of this study will provide evidence of recognized best practices as well as new insights about what creates effective internship experiences. Please contact me via email or phone 556-2029 if you have any other questions or feedback.

With much gratitude -- Kerri

Kerri Day Keller, PhD Candidate

Table E.1 List of Preliminary Codes

Career services--	Employer interaction--
Career services coordination	Internship connected different people
Career services facilitates professionalism	Internship involves coworkers
Career services promotes opportunities	Internship involves peers
Curriculum prepares student	**Employer logistics support--**
Faculty--	Employer accommodated schedule
Faculty bridges theory and practice	Employer assists housing
Faculty coordinates credit	Internship facilities and resources
Faculty encourages exploration	Internship location
Faculty facilitates job search prep	**Employer management--**
Faculty facilitates professionalism	Internship participant orientation
Faculty facilitates self-reflection	Internship structure
Faculty facilitates skill-building	Supervisor adaptability
Faculty facilitates connections	Supervisor doesn't micromanage
Faculty gathers feedback	Supervisor instilled trust
Faculty mediates issues	Supervisor open-minded
Faculty promotes opportunities	Supervisor poor example
Faculty prompts career decision-making	Supervisor time
Faculty provides accountability	**Employer internship attributes--**
Faculty provides support	Internship challenge
Employer approachability--	Internship contributes to learning
Co-workers approachable	Internship fit
Supervisor approachable	Internship fulfilling
Employer commitment--	Internship opportunities to contribute
Employer commitment	Internship real-world experience
Internship program funding	Internship variety
Internship well established	**Employer support--**
Supervisor commitment	Co-worker support
	Mentor support
	Supervisor support

Employer communication--	**Intern adaptability**
Co-worker communication	**Intern awareness--**
Internship clear expectations	Awareness of community
Co-workers open to questions	Awareness of industry
Recruiter communication	Awareness of opportunities
Supervisor communication	Awareness of organization
Supervisor feedback	**Intern career decision-making--**
Supervisor shared knowledge	Confirms interests passion
Employer culture--	Confirms mismatch
Internship setting positive	Confirms strengths
Co-workers friendly	**Intern networking--**
Employer gains potential employees	Connections
Intern commitment	Networks
Intern connects classroom to workplace	**Intern open-minded**
Intern contributes to organization	**Intern passionate**
Intern creativity	**Intern positive attitude**
Intern diligence	**Intern professionalism**
Intern exceeds expectations	Positive attitude
Intern experience--	Positive representation of university
Marketable experience	Professional competencies
Relevant experience	Professional
Valuable experience	**Intern resilience**
Intern felt welcome--	**Intern responsibility**
Intern felt belonging	**Intern self--**
Intern felt equal	Self-confidence
Intern felt like family	Self-directed
Intern felt needs met	Self-identity
Intern felt valued	Self-improvement
Intern flexibility	**Intern sense of accomplishment**
Intern focus on learning--	**Intern shows potential**
Intern eager to learn	**Intern uses professional resources**
Intern willing to learn	**Intern values for future workplace**
Intern had fun	**Intern work ethic--**
Intern income	Intern willing to work

Intern initiative	University--
Intern inquisitive	University community support
Intern job search documentation	University extracurricular involvement
Intern knowledge skills abilities--	University no others mentioned
Intern communication	
Intern customer service	
Intern fundamental knowledge	
Intern interpersonal skills	
Intern leadership	
Intern organization	
Intern problem-solving	
Intern public speaking	
Intern specialized skills	
Intern teamwork	
Intern technological skills	
Intern writing	
Intern learning	
Intern maturity	
Intern motivation	

Appendix F - Connections Map

Figure F.1 Connections map example
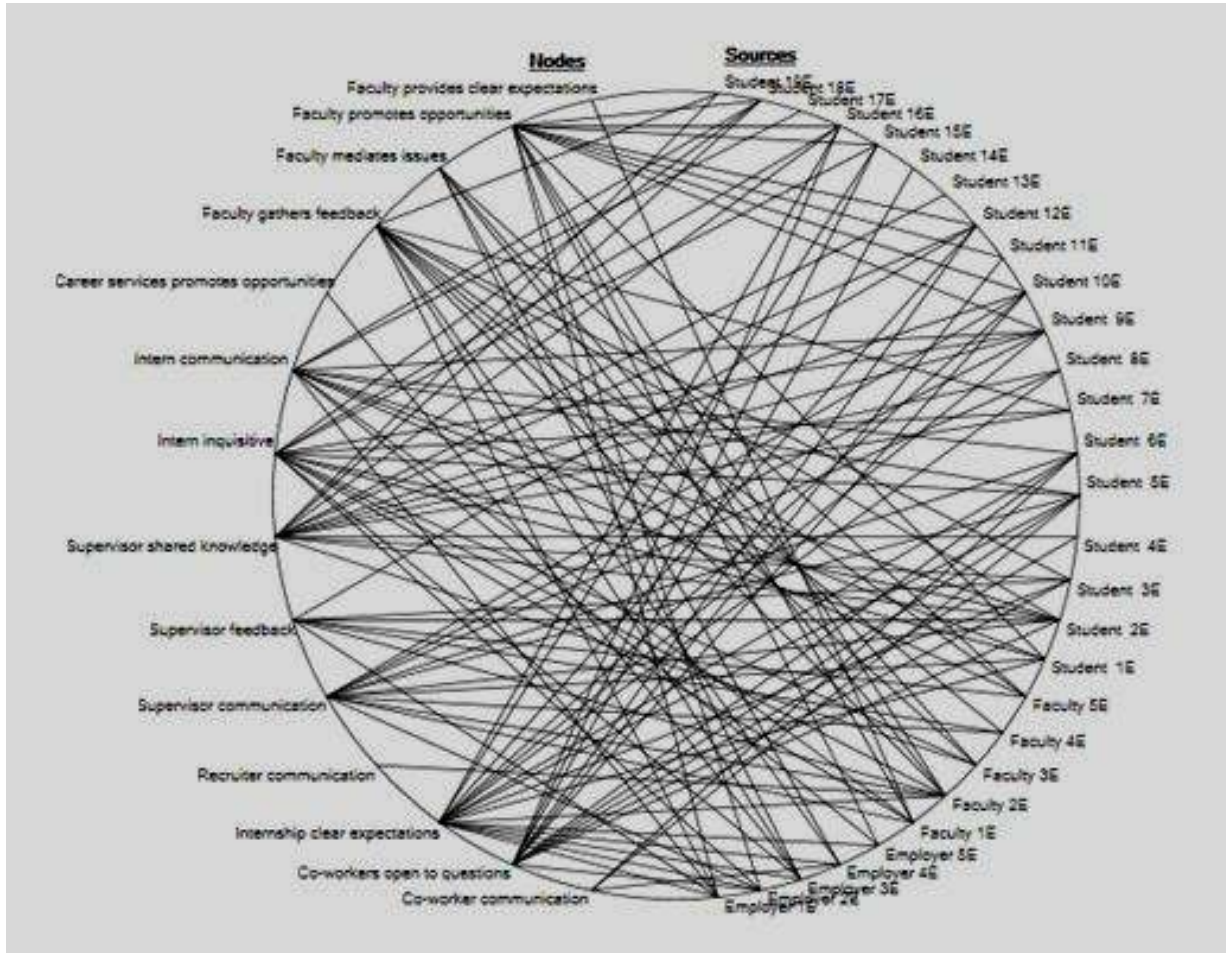
Figure F.1. Illustration of how statements related to the communication theme were made by all 29 participants (sources on the right half of circle) and correspondingly coded (nodes on the left half of circle).

Appendix G - Internships as a High-Impact Practice

Table G.1 Comparison of high-impact practices and internships when done well

High-impact practices (Kuh, 2008)	Internships when done well	Examples of data obtained from student participants
1. Are effortful	Require commitment	• took initiative • made the effort • fulfilled expectations • was self-directed • had positive attitude • showed work ethic
2. Include feedback	Facilitate communication	• asked questions • explained things • got feedback • discussed advice • was vocal • communicated expectations
3. Apply learning	Connect classroom to career	• got real-world experience • bridged theory and practice • gained practical skills • knew from class • applied it • acted professional
4. Prompt reflection	Produce crystallization	• understood the field • learned about myself • saw aspects of the industry • would not want to do • learned about opportunities • where I want to work
5. Build relationships 6. Engage across differences	Provide community	• felt welcome • met interesting people • had different backgrounds • liked my supervisor • made good friends • was a positive environment