

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BUCKETFEET IN THE CLASSROOM

Kate Schaefer
Columbia College Chicago
kschaefer@colum.edu

ABSTRACT

Experiential learning theory defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning creates an active learning environment where students are engaged by doing as opposed to passive participants in the learning process; these experiences play a central role in learning and development (Kolb, 1984). Therefore, experiential learning scholars believe that “to improve learning in higher education, the primary focus should be on engaging students...” (Kolb, A. & Kolb, D. 2009). This paper addresses how experiential learning is incorporated in higher education to better prepare graduating students as they transition from college to their career. During the Fall 2013 semester, students worked on an experiential client-based project to provide strategic solutions to emerging sneaker brand Bucketfeet’s identified business challenges. “While there is some debate over the linkage between experiential learning and authentic learning, it is clear that students learn through real life experiences...to shape future experiences (Buriak, McNurlen & Harper, 1996).