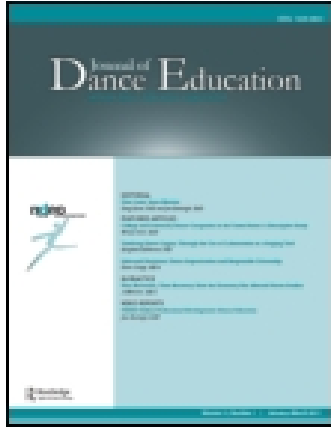


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Research, Design, and Implementation of an Internship Course in Dance: Turning Student Knowledge into Professional Know-How

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Research, Design, and Implementation of an Internship Course in Dance

Turning Student Knowledge into Professional Know-How

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ABSTRACT A successful internship experience can provide invaluable learning experiences connecting students' classroom knowledge to professional "know-how" in the field. Over the past three decades, post-secondary internship programs have flourished, generating considerable research literature from a variety of disciplinary perspectives; however, little is known about internships in dance. The purpose of this article was to describe the research, design, and implementation of an internship program as part of a required web-based course within an undergraduate BS program in dance professions. This curriculum research study presents the 1) development process and methodology; 2) literature review; 3) key internship elements; and 4) prototype internship manual. The author concludes with a discussion of challenges incorporating preliminary recommendations for the field.

Since the late 1980s, curricular initiatives in postsecondary education in the United States have increased hands-on learning experiences that heighten student understanding of theory and practice, often in real-world situations and contexts (Verner 1993; Katula and Threnhauser 1999; Bulger 2006; Severance and Starr 2011). These initiatives, frequently beyond the confines of the traditional classroom, have produced innovative pedagogical approaches including field work, clinical experience, cooperative education, study abroad, service learning, practicum, and internship. At the core of these approaches is the shift toward an "expanded classroom, usually referred to as 'experiential education,' intended to bring the concrete experience into the learning model, providing students with a way to apply classroom concepts and complete the learning process" (Katula and Threnhauser 1999, 238).

A successful internship experience can provide invaluable learning experiences for the student who desires connecting classroom knowledge gained (theory) to professional "know-how" developed in the field (practice)—often a missing link in undergraduate education (Sweitzer and King 2014). Janice Hanson (1984) articulated this learning gap over three decades ago: "Internships give students a chance to see what realities await them before they find themselves competing for jobs in areas in which they have little or no practical understanding or experience" (54). More recently, Theresa Severance and Pamela Starr (2011) noted that internship experiences:

provide students the opportunity to reflect on the knowledge gained from their studies and see it come to life as they apply course concepts and theories to their work in the community. Participation in internships can provide many benefits for students, such as enhancing understanding of how organizations operate and determining career choices (Parilla and Hesser 2005; Stichman and Farkas 2005), improving job satisfaction and increasing opportunities for related careers upon graduation (Briel and Getzel 2005; Parilla and Hesser 2005), and earning valuable experience in an increasingly competitive job market. (200)

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Whereas the value of internship experiences in postsecondary dance curricula has received some attention (Verner 1993; Cohen 2002; Matt 2003; Côté and Street 2007; Koff and Mistry 2012), little to no research has documented the design, implementation, and pedagogical approach for developing meaningful and effective internship programs or course work in dance. Remedying this gap is the primary aim of the curriculum research presented here. This article presents the following elements leading to a required undergraduate internship course: (1) development process and methodology, (2) literature review, (3) key internship elements, (4) a prototype internship manual, and (5) outcomes. A discussion of challenges incorporates preliminary recommendations for the field.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The process of researching, designing, and implementing a required internship course for dance majors at the undergraduate level was part of a larger curriculum revision process of the liberal arts bachelor of science (BS) degree program at Wayne State University (Risner 2013). This BS program was conceived outside traditional bachelor of fine arts (BFA) models and seeks to embrace current trends in higher education including online course work, alternative modes of course delivery and learning experiences, diverse ways of satisfying degree requirements, accelerated degree completion, and accessible and relevant content for today's liberal arts student interested in dance professions beyond performance goals. Within this curriculum revision, dance faculty sought to root the development of the revised BS program in a triangulation of "(a) departmental strengths and resources; (b) prospective students' expertise, aptitudes, and career interests; and (c) community resources and opportunities in the Detroit metropolitan area" (Risner 2013, 58), as part of the revised degree mission statement:

The Bachelor of Science in Dance offers an integrative program in the study of dance, culture and community and provides students multiple opportunities to enhance technical skill, to investigate shifting social and global concerns, and to cultivate innovative approaches to dance in diverse contexts and professions. The BS in Dance provides multicareer preparation through its unique blend of inquiry, practice, pedagogy, and technology, preparing students to be imaginative and innovative leaders for improving people's lives and social circumstances through dance and related professions. (Risner 2013, 58)

The translation of these aims into instructional delivery goals for student flexibility, accessibility, and time to degree completion meant prioritizing the development of online and hybrid core course work and capitalizing on numerous community resources and professional development opportunities for the required curriculum.

The research methodology for developing the required internship component and online course in which students

complete the internship included (1) literature search and review (EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Dance Education Literature and Research Descriptive Index [DELRdi], Taylor & Francis Online, National Association of Schools of Dance [NASD] Standards and Handbook); (2) Internet search of internship programs and courses offered by dance departments and programs in the United States; (3) call for internship information and materials on the Higher Education Forum of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO); (4) informal survey of potential internship host sites in the Detroit metropolitan area; and (5) pilot program of the internship component and associated online course including student feedback and recommendations for course improvement. Ongoing effectiveness of the internship course was measured and reviewed using the student intern's final report and site evaluation, and the on-site host supervisors' midterm and final evaluations of the student intern's overall work, challenges, and achievements. Based on these findings, course revisions and enhancements have been implemented each year.

BACKGROUND

At the outset, some distinctions warrant clarification in terms of internship literature, the elective nature of current internship opportunities within dance programs, and differences between postsecondary internships and externships. First, most of the cogent literature reviewed here was gathered from publications outside those in dance and dance education because little dance research exists on the topic. Therefore, reviewing literature from other disciplines was critical to this process. Second, the vast majority of current internship opportunities in dance are voluntary and elective. That is, undergraduate students might have the option to receive academic credit for completing an approved internship. The thrust of this curriculum research is the design and implementation of an internship program within a required course for BS degree students, although readers might find this information helpful for developing optional, elective internships for liberal arts and professional degree programs as well.

Third, the scope and duration of a typical postsecondary internship is normally defined as a period of intensive experiential learning that ranges from two or three months to one semester and could be paid (as a stipend) or unpaid (Sweitzer and King 2014). In some respects, an internship is analogous to an apprenticeship in trade, vocational, and performing arts careers. In contrast, an externship is usually much shorter in duration—from a few days to a couple weeks—primarily providing students with exploratory experiences like job shadowing and observation (University of California, Berkeley 2009). Because externships are far less intensive, they are rarely paid and receive no academic credit. Although these distinctions in scope and duration are clear, some postsecondary institutions use the terms internship and externship interchangeably.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The dearth of applied and theoretical research on internship programs in dance required a comprehensive review of literatures from disciplines actively engaged in developing experiential learning experiences. One of the many benefits of a concise and rigorous literature review is the meaningful contextualization it provides for the field and its practitioners. To these ends, this review summarizes the internship literature organized by the following developments: (1) early history; (2) experiential learning influences; and (3) research in dance, dance education, and arts education. A review of best practice literature is integrated later in the internship design discussion.

Early History

Originating in European trade guilds during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, today's internship finds its earliest roots in the professional apprenticeship of the medieval period (Perlin 2012). In the master-apprentice model, highly skilled craftsmen "took in young learners and gave them menial tasks" (Spradlin 2009, 61) "to learn alongside a master who would teach him a skill like printmaking" (Haire and Oloffson 2009, 22). Beginning in his teens, the apprentice served one master craftsman (e.g., a stone mason, carpenter, scribe) whom he depended on for food, clothes, and living quarters. The late 1700's transition from skilled labor to new manufacturing methods during the Industrial Revolution brought about a slow end to the master-apprentice model, which was replaced by vocational training (Haire and Oloffson 2009; Perlin 2012). In his book, *Boy Labour and Apprenticeship*, Reginald Bray (1911) summarized the apprenticeship system's primary goals as apprentice direction and training, as well as the identification of qualified workers, which J. Isaac Spradlin (2009) noted, "sounds a lot like today's internships" (61). Addressing the gendered nature of early apprenticeships, Bonnie Orkow (2007) suggested, "Women might not have served as apprentices outside their parents' home, but they certainly learned at their mother's knee how to sew, weave, mend and cook; their internship/apprenticeship prepared them for their place in society as wives and mothers" (1).

Tracing the early history of internships in the United States, Morris Keeton and Pamela Tate (1978) reported that experiential learning in U.S. higher education had its beginnings in the 1830s at a time "when scepticism and serious debate preceded the introduction of laboratory sciences at Yale University" (Verner 1993, 41). Academic tensions developed as the guild system gradually faded away and the new global industrialization gave rise to formal professional education (Spradlin 2009). It was not until after the Civil War (1865–c. 1870) that applied studies became "an accepted part of the curriculum in land-grant institutions" (Verner 1993, 41). As early as the 1870s, the field of medicine "began to adapt the practical experience of apprenticeship into training even as that training became more

scientific and lecture-based" (Spradlin 2009, 61). At Johns Hopkins University, "medical students began to engage in clinical experiences by visiting hospital wards as part of their training" (Verner 1993, 42).

Cooperative education, focused on intensive, technically oriented programs, emerged in the early 1900s. Unlike apprenticeships, these formal experiential learning programs required detailed contractual agreements between the university and outside agency and were "designed to strengthen classroom learning with periods of study-related employment" (Katula and Threnhauser 1999, 244). In co-op education programs, as Meaghan Haire and Kristi Oloffson (2009) explained:

Students would work at a company for an extended period . . . co-ops allowed students to earn money in addition to getting real-world experience. Northeastern University launched the first in the U.S. in 1909. Students worked for companies they were interested in and tried out careers they weren't sure about and earned money to help cover tuition. (22)

Following World War I (c. 1919), the word *intern* came into use in the fields of medicine and political science (Perlin 2012). In the medical profession at this time, an intern described a licensed physician in training, "when medical school was no longer seen as preparation enough for practice" (Haire and Oloffson 2009, 22). Shortly thereafter, the use of *intern* became commonplace in political science. Buttressed by the then recent founding of the American Political Science Association and its aim for "training for careers in public service" (Frantzich and Mann 1997, 193), political scientists used the word as an alternative to *apprentice* for students interested in observing government at work and gaining direct experiences at government sites (Orkow 2007).

Scholars struggle to identify when internships, as we know them today, were first offered in postsecondary curricula (Katula and Threnhauser 1999; Orkow 2007; Perlin 2012). Based on this literature review, however, it seems likely that academic internships were first developed and offered at select, often private and elite, colleges that prioritized early placement of graduates with prestigious employers (Orkow 2007). Referencing internship developments in the early to mid-twentieth century, Richard Battistoni and William Hudson (1997) indicated that "political scientists pride themselves on being among the first to contribute to the development of a discipline-based internship program" (1). The National Association of Colleges and Employers was established in 1956, a nonprofit partnership of postsecondary institutions and business providing leadership, resources, research, and advocacy for internships and employment of college students and graduates. In 1964, the association founded the *Journal of Cooperative Education*.¹ Most research indicates that internships in academia began gaining traction in the 1960s and have increased consistently over the past 45 years.

Experiential Learning Influences

Today's academic internship relies significantly on the principles of experiential learning in which students are "in direct contact with the realities being studied, not only observing the phenomenon but actually doing something with it" (Millenbah, Campa, and Winterstein 2000, 41). The origins of experiential learning can be traced clearly to Deweyan educational philosophy (Katula and Threnhauser 1999; Quintanilla and Wahl 2005; Perlin 2012). John Dewey called for an educational experience that centered on cultivating students' ability to apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations and contexts—a pragmatic education linking knowing and doing. Dewey (1938) wrote, "I take it that the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (7).

During the 1960s, social, political, and educational developments propelled the experiential learning agenda forward, especially in the postsecondary education realm. Richard Katula and Elizabeth Threnhauser (1999) noted:

The presidency of John F. Kennedy brought with it an expansive view of education, one that sought to train "citizens of the world," who could work in the world through venues such as the Peace Corps and VISTA. Institutions of higher education responded to this call with study abroad programs and with loan-forgiveness programs for Peace Corps work or for teaching in oppressed urban areas. (242)

Developments in higher education continued throughout the 1970s as institutions grappled with meeting the needs of students in challenging economic times and workforce changes. In the book *On Higher Education*, David Riesman (1980) articulated the necessity for alternative approaches and programs that address contemporary demands and recommended the creation of course work and programs that give "credit for off-campus involvement" (71). Janice Hanson (1984) stated, "Even the popular media have recently begun to suggest internships as a way for students to gain practical first-hand knowledge about certain fields, while gaining a competitive edge over other graduates" (53).

By the late 1980s, experiential education was equally commonplace in the curricula of community colleges, colleges, and universities for both traditional and nontraditional students (Katula and Threnhauser 1999). In his highly influential study of undergraduate education in the United States, Ernest Boyer (1987) concluded:

The trend is clear. In just a generation, assumptions about time and location of learning that historically have guided undergraduate education have been turned on end. Undergraduate education is beginning to break loose from traditional classroom encounters and even from the notion that all learning must be completed under the formal guidance of a teacher. The nation's colleges are discovering that the campus is as much a state of

mind as a place. It exists, or at least can exist, wherever a student happens to be. (232)

Although internships are only one of numerous experiential learning forms (e.g., study abroad, cooperative education, field research and experiences, and service learning), it was during the 1990s that internship opportunities became more widely available in postsecondary programs. These developments were likely due in part to the growing work of cognitive researchers (Resnick and Klopfer 1989) who demonstrated that "effective learning requires that we spend more time having students actively use knowledge to solve problems . . . and spend less time simply reading about introductory facts and concepts" (Bransford and Vye 1989, 195). Although not without academic tension, many faculty and administrators embraced the correlation between learning activity in the classroom and effective learning beyond the campus (Holdaway, Johnson, Ratsoy, and Friesen 1994). Moving into the twenty-first century, Katula and Threnhauser (1999) summarized experiential learning and the status of the academic internship:

In its briefest terms, then, experiential education seeks to make "knowledge" into "know-how." Experiential education is usually a voluntary part of the curriculum; although for some programs and some colleges (as we will see) it can be a mandatory, credit-bearing course of study. (240)

Literature in Dance and Arts Education

The internship literature in dance and dance education is highly limited. The following review gives a brief summary in chronological order. For physical education, recreation, and dance majors, and for students pursuing nonteacher education careers, M. Elizabeth Verner (1993) stated that internships often serve as capstone experiences or the culminating activity of the student's undergraduate study. "Internships," she explained, "are the experiential learning counterparts to student teaching for teacher education majors" (41). Patricia Cohen (2002) conducted a qualitative research project investigating partnerships between private dance schools and dance programs in higher education in which two of the study's participants ($n = 17$) coordinated internship programs (1) for university dance minors with a local ballet school in which the intern assisted during the school's residencies in public schools, and (2) for student teaching interns in two local dance studios. In summarizing a dance science teaching methodology for undergraduate students, Pamela Matt (2003) suggested:

Internships with experienced dance science practitioners can foster further development in the metacognitive domain. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with a more experienced thinker as real-life situations unfold is critically important; the deliberate blurring of the lines separating student and teacher facilitates metacognitive learning. (129)

In 2006, the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) amended its *2005–2006 NASD Handbook* to include “internships” as an accepted form of instruction, requirements, and electives, alongside “lecture courses; labs; private, independent, or small group study; ensembles; internships; and so forth” (19). Côté and Street (2007) used the word *internship* to describe and document a six-day teacher preparation intensive in dance for 25 participants enrolled in a physical education teacher preparation degree program in Hong Kong. The classes consisted primarily of technique (jazz, hip-hop, and Chinese folk dance), supplemented with lectures and observation of classes in choreography and advanced technique.

In research on graduate dance programs in the United States, Karen Bond’s (2010) study reports, “At least a third of 40 MFA programs offer professional internship experiences, and many allow students to focus on teaching, research and scholarship, artistic research, choreography, or performance” (128). In a qualitative study of professionalism in graduate dance education, Susan Koff and Gianna Mistry (2012) described the asymmetries between student teaching internships and other professional development internships:

For those training to be licensed school teachers, the practice of professional education for teachers has created a formal internship (student teaching), which carefully crafts the professional. However, there are other types of professional careers available to the dance educator. Training to be an educator in less formal settings (after school programs or higher education, for example) is not structured with the same type of formal internship as in formal teacher licensure. (86–7)

They argued that a formal internship is “an important step toward professionalism” for graduate dance education professional degree programs (93).

Arts education literature that discusses internship inclusion often focuses on advocacy rather than on research, design, implementation, or effectiveness (Myers 2005; Burton and Greher 2007). A review of this literature also indicates that arts education researchers frequently use the word *internship* to mean student teaching as part of teacher certification (Eros 2011; Haston and Russell 2012), which is not the specific purpose of this research.

INTERNSHIP DESIGN

This section details the process of designing an internship program and creating the accompanying required course in which the internship is completed. Stages of development included key internship elements, course aims and design, and the internship manual. Although stages often overlapped, the curriculum development process is presented in linear fashion. Descriptions of each stage reference best practices research when applicable. Readers interested in developing new or enhancing current internship programs are strongly encouraged to consult these literatures. Additionally, it is important to recognize the wide variety

and diversity of approaches to internships in U.S. dance programs today. Therefore, the internship design presented here is only one of many options and should be interpreted as such.

Internship Program Elements

The development process spanned a nine-month period and included literature review, Internet search of internship programs, call for internship information and materials on the NDEO Higher Education Forum, and informal survey of potential internship host sites. In the following, key elements are described, accompanied by discussion of pertinent literature.

Structure

Internship structure refers to the system in which the intern’s experiential learning and supervision occurs. Defining the structure requires that faculty carefully balance the internship program’s objectives, expected learning outcomes, and student needs with internship possibilities and resources available to the program and students. Key structural questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Will students be required to complete the internship as part of their degree program? Or will the internship serve as an elective option?
- Will students receive academic credit for the internship? If so, how will credit be determined?
- Will the internship function as part of a course taught by the supervising faculty member? Or will the internship be treated as an independent or directed study?
- Will students be required to select from a departmentally approved list of internships? Or will students have some autonomy in the selection process?
- Will students have the ability to complete the internship during the summer? Or will the internship be offered during a specific term in the academic year?
- Will both paid and unpaid internships be acceptable and treated equally?

Research indicates that an academic internship’s structure significantly influences both student and sponsor or host experiences in a number of ways (Moorman 2004; Williams 2004; Bulger, Lindauer, and Jacobson 2007). Williams (2004) explained:

Employers who are concerned with finding quality interns must consider whether students are required to complete an internship as a part of their program and whether they receive credit for the experience. Both scenarios work well with committed interns, but agency supervisors often find that students who receive credit for their internship are more reliable and serious about their work. On the other hand, required internships

also can present problems because students may not fully appreciate the opportunity and are simply seeking to complete a requirement. (32)

Since the early 2000s, researchers have addressed the academic rigor and curricular aspects of internship programs (Somerrick 2001; Ross and Elechi 2002; Kelley 2004). Anita Moorman (2004) noted, “Many have concluded that more substantive assignments and increased curricular requirements are necessary in order to provide an internship experience with consistent standards and outcomes” (19). Arguing for enhanced course work, Dennie Kelley (2004) stated, “Ideally, the internship should offer students a capstone learning experience that provides them with time to reflect and discuss their experience with other interns” (28). Making the case for a formal internship course, Darlene Young and Robert Baker (2004) conceived a portfolio-centered class based on academic aims to:

(1) integrate students’ prior knowledge with their internship by providing them with opportunities to reflect on their preprofessional roles, to test their skills, to recognize their accomplishments, and to identify their needs; (2) provide faculty members with a basis by which to determine an intern’s success in applying classroom knowledge to practical situations; and (3) maintain the institution’s academic mission within these practical learning opportunities. (22)

In terms of student autonomy in selecting an internship opportunity, best practice research supports student choice and input (Kelley 2004; Young and Baker 2004; Bulger 2006). From a legal perspective, Moorman (2004) offered this advice:

The search for an internship should pose few legal concerns for the university so long as it does not exercise significant control over the selection process and force its students to accept specific internship placements. However, in a typical internship, the internship coordinator’s role should be to approve the internship’s substance and appropriateness from a curricular standpoint rather than to mandate that students accept specific placements. (21)

Supervision

The quality of student interns’ experiential learning relies heavily on the quality of supervision interns receive (Stratta 2004; Young and Baker 2004; Bulger, Lindauer, and Jacobson 2007). In most cases, internship supervision is a joint effort, normally shared by the on-site supervisor and the department or program supervisor, often a faculty member (Verner 2004). Titles for these positions vary by discipline and academic institution; joint supervisory responsibilities also differ depending on program norms and internship structures (Bulger 2006). For internships offered as independent (or directed) study, the on-site supervisor frequently holds greater responsibility. When a specifically

designed course houses the internship experience, responsibilities of the on-site supervisor and department supervisor (in this case, the course instructor) are usually equivalent. Institutions or departments with large internship programs often include a third supervisory position (e.g., “program administrator” or “university coordinator”) responsible for administration, management, and advising (Kelley 2004; Bulger 2006).

A review of the literature suggests that the wide diversity of internship structures and approaches mitigates clearly defining separate supervisory responsibilities for the on-site supervisor, department supervisor, and when applicable, the third position of “program administrator.” However, Kelley (2004) summarized overall supervision needs:

In order to ensure that all objectives are met and that interns have a quality experience, the on-site internship supervisors and the program administrator must assume the responsibility for distribution of internships, internship standards and accountability, assurance that the needs of students are met, appropriateness of interns’ work responsibilities, and the evaluation of interns by academic and on-site supervisors. (28)

In practice, on-site supervisors normally instruct and direct the intern’s daily work, provide timely feedback and mentoring, and evaluate the intern’s work on a regular basis. Department supervisors typically guide the intern’s overall experience beginning with internship selection and placement, extending through evaluations, internship completion, and debriefing. However, supervision personnel and responsibilities vary from program to program.

Within these shifting lines of responsibility, the question of load credit for faculty immersed in internship programs (e.g., student engagement and selection, host cultivation and relations, management, advising, supervision, and evaluation) surfaces as an important consideration. In developing an internship program, Moorman (2004) asked:

Will the director of the internship program be a full-time faculty member who supervises interns as part of his or her regular workload? If not, the university must evaluate whether the administration and supervision of the internship program should be divided among multiple faculty members or assigned to a part-time instructor or adjunct faculty member. (23)

Anecdotally, because little research exists, it is commonplace for postsecondary institutions in the United States to consider faculty supervision of internships as departmental service—expected but without load credit, partial course reduction, or compensation. Although integration of the internship has increasingly become part of undergraduate professionalization, its academic worthiness and the value of faculty supervision remain under debate at the upper administrative level (Young and Baker 2004; Schwartz 2010). Deans and department chairs might question “internships under the supervision of practicing professionals who do not hold scholarly credentials and may not embrace such academic

values as inquiry, reflection, risk taking, collaboration, and intellectual growth” (Young and Baker 2004, 22).

Some scholars have addressed the academic worth of internships by developing models centered on curriculum integration and heightened faculty participation. Robert Schwartz (2010) noted, “Even many of the good programs that provide real substantive on-the-job work experiences for the intern lack an integration of the internship into their undergraduate major or program”(3). Sean Bulger (2006) advocated an alternative approach by offering the internship experience within an online academic course in which “faculty members invest as much effort as they do more traditional lecture and lab courses” (121). Focused on curriculum integration within a dedicated internship course taught by faculty (department supervisor), these models move beyond contentious issues of faculty load credit and strengthen the internship’s academic integrity (Bulger 2006; Schwartz 2010).

Evaluation

What distinguishes an internship from other work or service is the careful monitoring of the intern’s intentional learning goals in which active reflection, self-assessment, and evaluation drive the entire experience (Sweitzer and King 2014). Together, the on-site supervisor, department supervisor, and intern form “a check and balance system for all three stakeholders regarding internship evaluation” (Schwartz 2010, 49). High-quality formative and summative assessments cultivate an internship environment of intentional improvement, reflective practice, and aspirational professionalism. This brief review focuses on best practice research about student and on-site evaluation.

Bulger (2006) described the close relationship between learning activities and assessment:

A large assortment of instructional strategies have been recommended for promoting and assessing student learning during experiential education placements (e.g., learning contracts, journals entries, portfolios, reading and writing assignments). While strategies depend on the specific instructional context, the activities should strongly encourage engaged students [who are] both self-directed and self-reflective regarding their own learning. (115)

The intern’s learning goals, often articulated in a contract, comprise an individual learning plan (Sweitzer and King 2014) that is “negotiated by the university internship coordinator, site supervisor, and student intern and serves as an important basis for performance assessment” (Bulger 2006, 116). Summarizing best practice research, Kelley (2004) stated:

Each intern should be given the opportunity to evaluate the internship site and the overall internship experience, including the on-site supervisor and academic supervisor. The intern should evaluate the experience in relation to whether his or her needs and expectations were met. (29)

By virtue of their central role, on-site supervisors provide extensive and critical assessment (Verner 1993, 2004; Sweitzer and King 2014), especially through regular conferences and meetings with interns and “ongoing evaluation of the intern’s performance, which allows for relating classroom theory to practical applications” (Schwartz 2010, 49). On-site supervisor assessment could also present unique, professional perspectives, often uncommon for postsecondary programs. As Schwartz described, the on-site supervisor:

- As a practicing professional, often [has] a more pragmatic perspective than college professors. As a result, practitioners’ assessment of interns’ strengths and weaknesses may provide additional insight into the interns’ potential for that particular career. (24)
- Provides an evaluation of an intern’s potential [that] is more valuable when based on how the student performed on the job, rather than the evaluator’s perception of how that student may function on the job. (24)
- Helps interns develop attitudes and behaviors necessary for success in their careers. Many insights about success can be made, when interns learn from the mistakes and successes of those who have preceded them. (25)
- Notifies the college of barriers to learning, such as gaps in knowledge content or other student deficiencies, strengths and competencies. (32)

Internship Course Design

Based on best practice research (Young and Baker 2004; Bulger 2006), the internship experience was specifically designed as a central component within a required course in the BS degree curriculum, DNC 5910: Professions Seminar (3 credits). As part of the larger curriculum revision aims discussed earlier, it was critical that students complete an immersive internship beyond the campus for which they would obtain academic credit within a required class rather than an elective (Kelley 2004). Equally crucial was that students receive regular and timely support from the course instructor and classmates engaged concurrently in internships throughout the entire semester (Bulger 2006; Schwartz 2010). The course description from the syllabus states:

Advanced inquiry and study in the dance professions within an approved internship (or apprenticeship or fieldwork) immersion experience; research in applied settings. Serves as pre-Capstone experience; online course with arranged meetings. Dance Majors Only (Fall, Senior YR)

An extended course description, as recommended by the university, also appears in the syllabus:

This course is intended to develop and expand students’ applied experiences in specific dance professions as identified by the student as central to her/his career path. The primary focus of the class is the development and successful completion of an internship, apprenticeship, or fieldwork experience. Potential

settings include, but are not limited to: dance administration, management and advocacy; dance production and technology; K12 dance education; private dance studios; commercial dance entertainment; dance science and somatic education; dance philanthropy and fundraising; dance in higher education; dance writing, journalism and criticism; dance therapy; and dance in community and alternative settings. As such, internship data provide for analysis and investigation during the student's Capstone semester. The fieldwork option requires the design and implementation of a research study.

The syllabus contains concise descriptions of course objectives, student learning outcomes, and teaching strategies (see Table 1).

Students are initially introduced to the internship requirement as part of their first BS cohort course, DNC 1810: Introduction to Dance Professions in the sophomore year—a comprehensive survey of multiple dance professions

in which they carefully reflect on, research, and identify an individual career path including potential internship opportunities (Risner 2013). During the ensuing years leading to the student's internship, required BS core courses include dance history in cultural perspective, social foundations of dance pedagogy (Barr and Risner 2014; Risner and Barr 2015), and dance in community.² In keeping with instructional delivery goals for accessible and flexible course work completion, the internship course is offered fully online via Blackboard Learn 9.1.

The 15-week course is organized into eight individual modules that guide students throughout their 100-hour, 10-week internship experience including assignments, short readings, instructor and peer support, reports, projects, and instructor feedback. The duration of most modules is two weeks; however, students are required to document and post their progress weekly, prompted by the following instructions:

TABLE 1 DANCE 5910: Professions Seminar, Key Syllabus Elements

Elements	Description
Course objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify, confirm, and successfully complete a meaningful internship experience tied to the student's identified career path. ● Design and implement research of the specific dance profession/career directly connected to the internship. ● Examine and develop an informed understanding of the needs, objectives, and challenges of the specific dance profession and its practitioners. ● Gather multiple forms of data for analysis during the BS Capstone course in the following semester.
Student learning outcomes	<p>Upon completion of this course, the student will evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A comprehensive understanding of the specific dance profession/career path under examination. ● Enhanced research study skills in the dance professions. ● An increased understanding of the specific profession's needs in terms of necessary academic preparation, skill sets, qualifications, aptitudes, and real-life experiences. ● Heightened awareness and sensitivity to social, cultural, economic, and political issues embedded in this particular dance profession. ● An informed refinement of career path based on the student's research study, applied experiences, and contemporary needs of the particular profession. ● Greater self-reflection on the student's comprehensive undergraduate dance profession preparation.
Teaching strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internship activities and experiences. ● Regular on-site supervisor–student intern meetings. ● Assigned readings with concise writing assignments. ● Research projects and experiences. ● Discussion board (Blackboard) posts to chronicle and document progress and to dialogue with classmates. ● Work sample internship archive (Blackboard). ● Progress reports. ● Formal self-evaluation and evaluation of site (completed by student intern). ● On-site supervisor evaluations of intern (midterm and final). ● Individual instructor–student conferences.

In your Blackboard posting, please describe the following elements that have transpired during the past week of your internship:

- An overview of your internship activities and experiences
- Assignments and tasks you have been assigned by your on-site supervisor
- People you met, worked with, or interacted with
- Places you visited as part of your internship
- Meetings you attended; trainings you received
- Tasks or projects you completed
- Internship projects in process
- Challenges or problems you encountered (and how you handled them)

At least one posting is required each week; however, you are encouraged to post as frequently as you like. Doing so will insure that you have a full archive of your internship experience. Minimum post length to receive credit is 350 words. Be detailed and use the list above as your guide. Respond to at least two of your classmates' posts.

A biweekly assignment, similar in approach, is used for documenting and archiving work produced. Assembling work samples importantly documents quality and quantity of work, illustrates improved skills in the profession, and serves as a comprehensive work archive of the internship. Additional course assignments focus on career-related research, professional development, reflection, self-assessment, and reports.

In summary, each module is designed to systematically steer students through their internship in supportive and constructive ways as a collective community (peers, instructor, and on-site supervisor). Due to the often isolating nature of off-campus internships for undergraduate students (Mayer 2002; Bulger 2006), developing and maintaining engaged interaction via this web-based course seeks to enhance student learning and achievement. Assessment is based on course work (55%), on-site supervisor evaluations (40%), and peer support (5%).

Internship Manual

With key internship elements identified, course aims, objectives, and online design tentatively in place, attention turned to the development of policies and procedures. In addition to information gathered in the literature review, methods included Internet search of internship handbooks and manuals, NDEO Higher Education Forum call for information and materials, and consultation with faculty responsible for internship programs at the author's university.

There is widespread consensus that successful internships emerge from clear policies, procedures, and agreements (Sweitzer and King 2014) often assembled into a manual or handbook. Moorman (2004) stated:

It is advisable for the university and academic program to develop formal policies and structured intern programs. In order to do this, the academic program must identify the specific goals of the internship program and the amount of control that it wishes to exercise over student choices. (23)

Formalized agreements, detailing the roles and responsibilities of the intern, department supervisor, on-site supervisor, and sponsoring organization, are emphasized (Orkow 2007; Schwartz 2010; Baird 2013). The intern's negotiated learning goals, as described early, should be part of the formalized agreement (Verner 2004; Bulger 2006). Moorman (2004) suggested, "It is wise to use an internship agreement that incorporates the use of a student intern handbook" (22).

Development of the internship manual for this project did not benefit from a formal university policy; however, many individual programs publish their own policies and procedures on department websites, which assisted in determining norms and standards across the university. Table 2 presents the resultant internship manual in the form of an annotated table of contents.

OUTCOMES

The internship course was piloted in fall 2011; it has been offered every fall term since that time. Because only two semesters of evaluation data are available (2012, 2013), a reliable assessment of outcomes at this time would be imprudent. However, some tentative results provide an initial snapshot of outcomes. The majority of students completed internships in administration and management (dance companies, independent dance artists, arts organizations and presenters, and private dance studios) and in teaching (K-12, dance company outreach, and community dance). Students also interned in higher education, liturgical dance, and with a dance management agency. Of the 20 students who have completed the course, over a third continued to do part-time work for their sponsor organizations. Anecdotally, although most students' final reports indicated positive learning experiences, and supportive and knowledgeable on-site supervisors, some also felt overwhelmed at times, struggling to balance intern responsibilities, other course work, and obligations. One unforeseen outcome is worth mentioning: because the internship program was designed to capitalize on numerous community resources and professional development opportunities in the Detroit metropolitan area, the department's relationships with professionals who served as on-site supervisors have grown and deepened.

CHALLENGES AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this article was to describe the research, design, and implementation of an internship program as part of a required web-based course within an undergraduate BS program in dance. Given the unexplored territory of dance

TABLE 2 Internship Manual, Annotated Table of Contents

Section (Scope)	Content and Descriptors
Introduction (overview)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship mission and objectives • Student eligibility and requirements • Student intern responsibilities • Professionalism statement • Criteria for on-site supervisor and sponsor • Approvals required
Roles and responsibilities (detailed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department supervisor (course instructor) • Student intern • On-site supervisor and sponsoring organization
Internship agreement (official document)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders' full contact information • Internship period and work schedule • Experiences provided by sponsoring organization • Responsibilities assigned to student intern • Unpaid, or paid internship and amount • Official signatures of all stakeholders • Must be completed and approved before internship begins
Learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives of intentional learning • Learning goals contract (form) • Developed by the intern and on-site supervisor; approved by the department supervisor • Must be completed by the end of the first work week
Student reports and evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines, expectations, and calendar • Progress report and format (midpoint) • Final report and format (conclusion) • Student's evaluation of sponsor organization and format (conclusion)
On-site supervisor evaluations (Likert scale and qualitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm evaluation of intern (form) • Final evaluation of intern (form) • On-site supervisor–intern debriefing and career counseling meeting
Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University policies: student code of conduct, honor code, students with disabilities, academic misconduct/ethical violations, and religious observances • Department policies: academic progress, off-campus professionalism, attendance, and rehearsal and performance obligations

internship research and design examined here, a discussion of challenges, accompanied by preliminary recommendations serves as a tentative conclusion. Challenges in research, design, and practical implementation are highlighted.

Research Challenges

A continuing challenge for researchers in relatively new academic fields, like dance education, is the comparative dearth of disciplinary research itself. As reviewed earlier, internship research in dance education is scant. The experiential learning and internship literature presented here and used for this curriculum development research was derived from bodies of literature in educational evaluation, political

science, curriculum and supervision, sports management, communication education, sociology, and public relations—because that's where current best practice research *is*. To move our own dance education research agendas forward, we must be willing to find and learn from research in other disciplines—what has been uncovered, documented, and learned. The comprehensive literature review, sometimes passé in graduate schools today, deserves renewed attention.

Design Challenges

One of the primary curriculum design difficulties encountered—one that continues to be addressed—is

the lack of student engagement in preinternship research, identification, and selection. Although backward design principles are employed in the core course sequence leading to the internship (beginning with the first cohort class), some students do not engage in preinternship planning until it is too late to make well-researched and informed choices. Although the internship completion rate is over 95 percent, concerns remain that students are “simply seeking to complete a requirement” (Williams 2004, 32). Therefore, beginning with the 2013–2014 academic year, the initial cohort course (previously taught in the freshman year) has been moved to the sophomore year—shortening the time and cognitive distance to the senior year internship. In addition, the department’s academic advisor provides preinternship counseling during the junior year. Readers responsible for internship programs, or those initiating programs, are encouraged to develop strategies for preinternship engagement appropriate to their curriculum, requirements, and student culture.

Practical Implementation Challenges

As a new course in an extensively revised degree program, the internship course produced a number of implementation challenges—some anticipated, some not. Three problematic areas are described although some might not hold relevance for all readers. One anticipated challenge revolved around situations in which an intern should be terminated; the internship manual includes all applicable university and department policies (see Table 2) and procedures for termination. In practice, unfortunately, events leading to termination often surface subtly, go unreported, and unintentionally harm others in the process. In short, a policy published is a policy ignored. Internship stakeholders should be sensitized to inappropriate conduct and behavior and reminded to report any instance of such to the department supervisor (faculty instructor).

Two additional implementation challenges are linked to both course design and the context of a large, urban, research-intensive university.³ Although the internship program was specifically designed to take advantage of numerous arts organizations and institutions, as well as community resources, programs, and professionals in Detroit and the metropolitan area, a few students with limited financial means struggle with transportation (to and from their sponsor site), Internet access (Blackboard course, web research, and e-mail) while off campus, and reduced employment (working less at their job to accommodate internship obligations). Over time these intern challenges can become increasingly frustrating to on-site supervisors. In response, an alternative research-based option for completing the course was developed. Readers are encouraged to contemplate alternative options that address their particular student population, context, and location.

Conversely, some students show little interest in local internships and focus on highly competitive national and international opportunities in their preinternship research

and selection. Although these preferences illustrate strong aspirations, they also run counter to the course being offered in the fall semester of the senior year; many national internships occur during the summer months. In these cases, students are permitted to complete the internship in the summer after their junior year; however, they do not benefit from the supportive and collegial environment normally experienced in the regular fall course. Additionally, the instructor receives no compensation for teaching the course in summer.

As with most recommendations offered here, carefully considering the range of student choices, challenges, and completion possibilities is critical for a successful internship program that seeks to meet student interests and support their transition to meaningful careers. In closing, Bulger (2006) reminded us:

In addition to the usual academic and social pressures of college, seniors are suddenly confronted by a multitude of new possibilities and challenges related to their own continued personal and professional development. In the interest of supporting students during this potentially difficult time and establishing meaningful relationships with graduating seniors, universities should assist students in completing a successful transition to post-college life. (114)

NOTES

1. The publication was renamed the *Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships* in 2003.
2. In addition to BS core courses (12 credits), students complete required dance courses in technique and performance (18 credits), dance studies (12 credits), cognates (6 credits), and capstone (3 credits).
3. Many Wayne State University students hold part-time jobs. Some undergraduates do not own or have access to a vehicle and have computer and Internet access only on campus.

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