

# Classroom Focused Experiential Education Evidence of Benefits

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# Objectives

- Evidence of effectiveness and benefits of EE
- Examples of EE activities, particularly in large classes
- “Large picture” of EE in the Faculty of Health
- Department-specific planning

# Experiential Education

Experiential education (EE) is a pedagogical approach that blends **theory** and **coursework** with practical, **concrete experience**.

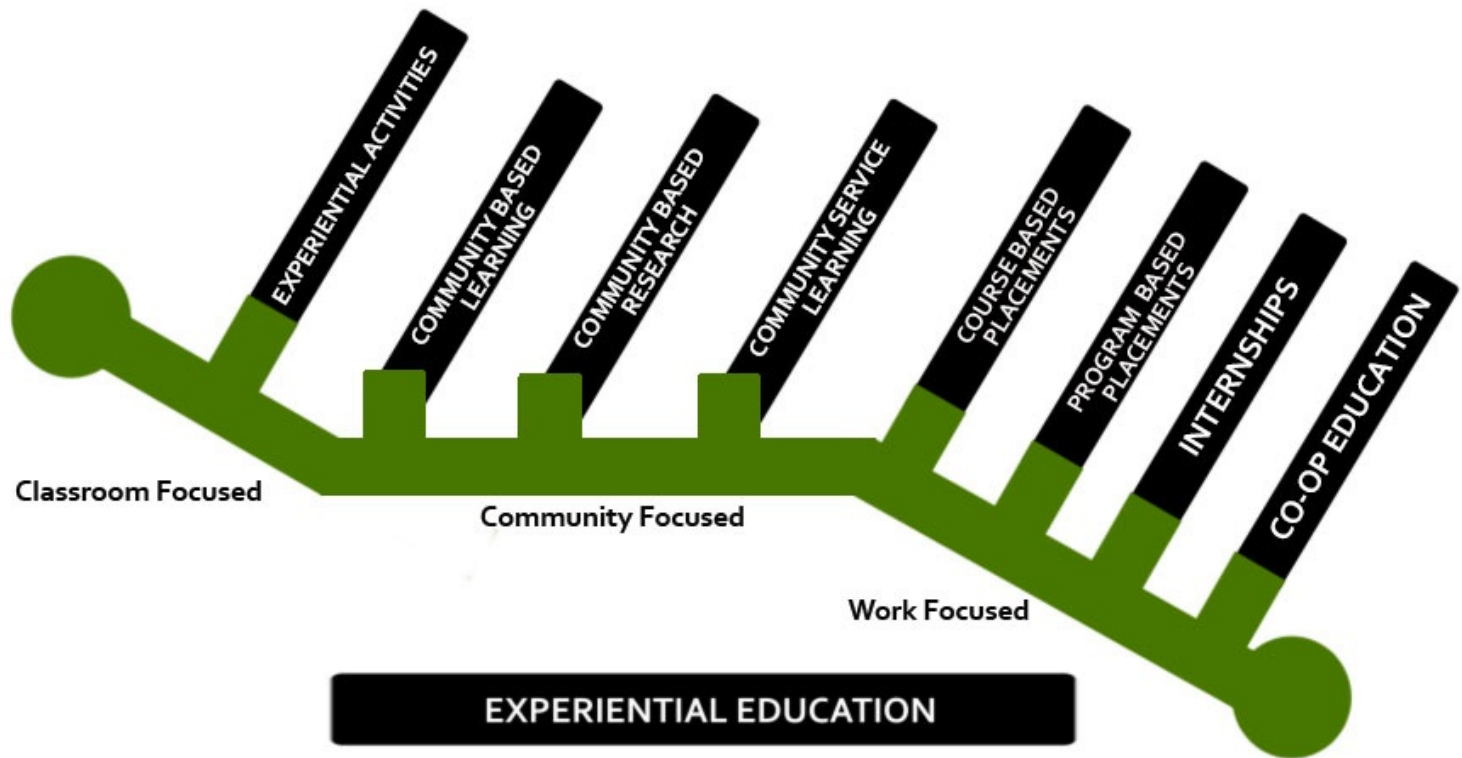
Within the context of the learning outcomes of a course or a program, EE allows students to acquire real life experience and **reflect** upon this experience such that they **deepen their understanding** of theory.

Students will have many *experiences* throughout their time at the institution, but EE is a pedagogical approach to creating an ***experiential*** opportunity for deeper learning and personal/professional growth.

# Levels of Reflection

Level	Purpose
Reporting & Responding	Students are taught to notice aspects of their experience, form opinions, and identify an initial emotional response to an issue or incident
Relating	Students make connections between the experience or issue with their skills, knowledge, and/or own prior experiences
Reasoning	Students' responses move from a personal to more intellectually rigorous response; Refer to and connect with relevant theories and/or literature
Reconstructing	Students make a plan for action; How will they use these new insights and/or ideas in future experiences?

# Common Language for EE



# Classroom-Focused EE

- This experiential education strategy allows students to **apply theory and course content to concrete experiences** that encourage reflection and conceptualization.
- These experiences not only encourage **active learning** but also include **structured reflection**, encouraging the student to refer back to the experience in an effort to make sense of it by considering relevant course material.
- These concrete experiences could take place **within the classroom or outside the classroom** through observation, reflection and practical applications.
- Classroom experiential education activities prioritize student learning, contributing to the achievement of the course's **student learning outcomes**

# Literature Review

- The focus of this presentation:
  - Evidence of the benefits or effectiveness of EE
  - Examples of EE in large classrooms
  - Psychology-based examples

Overview of Article/Study	Findings
<p><b>1. Introduction to Psychology course</b></p> <p>Impact of active learning (in-class activities, demonstrations, mastery quizzes, software, peer mentors, online discussion) <b>vs.</b> a traditional lecture.</p> <p>(Karafantis, D.M.&amp; Lapadula, M., 2011)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Performance on tests and exams</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Students in the active learning section performed better.</p> <p>No differences in how students rated the performance of the instructor.</p>
<p><b>2. Cognitive Psychology course</b></p> <p>Impact of a small group assignment: developing a plan for a Public Service Announcement (PSA) related to environmental sustainability.</p> <p>(Hager, L., 2011)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Quantitative and qualitative answers to scales</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Behavioral and attitudinal shifts that point to increased awareness of environmental sustainability.</p>
<p><b>3. Large Introduction to Psychology course</b></p> <p>Impact of lecture and seven small online assignments related to stages of the research process <b>vs.</b> a traditional lecture</p> <p>(LaCosse, J. et al., 2017)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Performance on quizzes</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Students in the intervention section scored significantly higher on quizzes.</p>



Overview of Article/Study	Findings
<p><b>4. Psychology of Women course</b></p> <p>Impact of course content covered using active learning techniques (group discussions, simulations, demonstrations, video and discussion*) <b>vs.</b> only traditional lecture (with some aides).</p> <p>(Yoder, J.D., &amp; Hochevar, C.M.. (2005)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Performance on test</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Students scored higher on items testing materials presented using active learning.</p>
<p><b>5. Cognitive Psychology course</b></p> <p>Impact of using lecture and 30 minute computer demonstration (outside of class time) <b>vs.</b> only lecture.</p> <p>(Copeland, D.E., Scott, J.R., &amp; Houska, J., 2010)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Performance on essay, quiz, exam</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Students who participated in the demonstration reported higher enjoyment of their learning experience (hands on; fun; learned more), but did not necessarily perform better</p>
<p><b>6. Psychology course</b></p> <p>Impact of using traditional lecture and active learning (worksheets, board games, discussions) <b>vs.</b> only lecture.</p> <p>(Richmond, A.S. &amp; Hagan Kindelberger, L. , 2011)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Performance on test (higher level thinking)</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Participants who engaged in active learning scored significantly higher on the higher level test questions, but there was no difference on in the lower level thinking questions</p>

Overview of Article/Study	Findings
<p><b>7. Psychology statistics course</b></p> <p>Impact of preferences for group work and level of anxiety about statistics in students engaging in group work (problem sets, conceptual questions)</p> <p>(Gorvine, B.J &amp; Smith, D.H., 2014)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Overall course grades; anxiety about group work</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Students performed better in the course if they indicated preferring group work and had lower levels of anxiety about statistics.</p>
<p><b>8. Politics of Development course</b></p> <p>Students engaged in a version of the entire research process from ethics, to conducting interviews, to presenting findings</p> <p>(Kenyon, K.H., 2017)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Instructor's observations</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>The assignment catalyzed deep understanding, helped students identify gaps in literature, and examine concepts of legitimacy and expertise.</p>
<p><b>9. Marketing course</b></p> <p>Traditional lecture and several classroom experiential activities <b>vs.</b> traditional lecture and only one experiential activity</p> <p>(Hamer, J., 2000)</p>	<p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Performance on an exam (definitional and non-definitional questions).</p> <p><b>Finding:</b></p> <p>Students who engaged in multiple activities performed better on the exam. This applied mostly to those who had low-moderate overall performance.</p>

# Challenges in Reviewing the Literature

- Measurement varied: performance on tests and assignments; self-reported learning; self-reported enjoyment; instructor's perceptions of impact
- Examples are not always applicable to York, particularly around class size
- Classroom-focused EE as defined by York is best captured by examples of active learning
- Reflection activities were not always mentioned directly, but group and class discussions were referenced frequently

# Reflection for Learning

***“It is through careful reflection that ... any form of experiential education—generates meaningful learning”***

(Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005, p. 50)

- Reflection emphasizes the **‘whole student’** or **‘holistic learning’**
  - Students reflect on their feelings, values, and attitudes toward the experience as well as their more cognitive or intellectual reactions (Baird, Fenshman, Gunstone, & White, 1991).
  - More rigorous reflection as a teaching strategy and/or student learning activity supports **better learning**; better academic outcomes, deeper understanding and better application of material, enhanced problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Eyler and Giles, 1999)
  - Critically examining and critiquing established theories and/or course information helps students achieve **higher order academic outcomes** (e.g. higher-order reasoning and critical thinking) (Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005)

# Reflection as Formative Assessment

Formative assessment **scaffolds the learning experience**, allowing students to demonstrate growth and development, instead of being only evaluated using a final, summative test or project.

- Reflection can enhance assessment practice, supporting both the assessment itself as well as promoting deeper reflection through qualitative data (e.g. student & assessor perceptions, evidence, or lack thereof, of learning) (Yorke, 2003)
  - A rigorous course-embedded assessment process can help to frame and support reflection, in turn producing stronger learning outcomes (Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005)
- Creates opportunity for **student-teacher dialogue** around the learning experience, and can help ensure that feedback being provided is effective (Laurillard, 2002)
- Students can develop **self-assessment skills** that support self-regulation and identifying strengths & weaknesses in their learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006)

# Reflection in Large Classes

Active or participatory learning, like reflection, helps students organize information in meaningful ways, which can support better/deeper learning & motivation for learning (Butler, Phillmann, & Smart, 2001)

To engage large(r) classes, consider pedagogical strategies that emphasize:

- Asking critical, open-ended questions (Freedman, 1994)
- Soliciting 'on the spot' feedback (Michaelson, 1992)
- Problem-Based Learning (Pastirik, 2006)
  - Appreciating multiple perspectives, communication skills, transferring knowledge from the classroom to a practical (clinical) setting
- **Cognitive engagement:** Students' psychological investment in and effort directed towards their learning (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992)

Cognitive engagement strategies range from surface (e.g. memorization) to self-regulated strategies for deeper learning (e.g. metacognitive self-assessment) (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004)

# Discussion

- To what extent did we meet the objectives?
  - Evidence of effectiveness and benefits of EE
  - Examples of EE activities, particularly in large classes
- Which type of evidence did you find most/least effective and/or relevant? What would you like to see more/less of?
- What are our next steps?
  - “Large picture” of EE in the Faculty of Health
  - Department-specific planning

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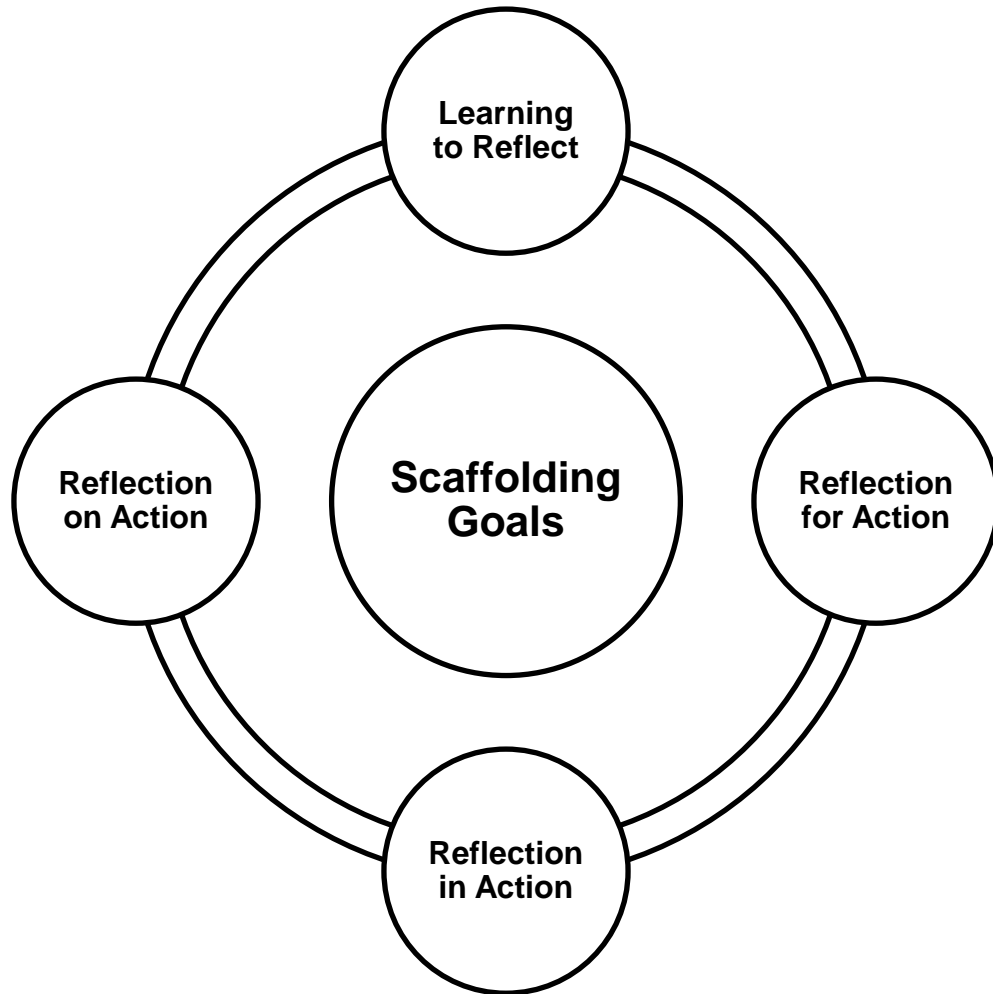
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# Reflection

Reflection is an innate process but not an intuitive skill (Ryan, 2013)

Reflection supports students in making meaningful connections to and between what they are learning in the classroom (Boud, 2013)

Goal-directed, critical, facilitated reflection helps students to critically examine the learning experience, make connections to course material, and identify areas for improvement and/or further exploration (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2013)



# Community Focused

- ***In-Course Community Based Learning (CBL)*** is a form of in-course EE that is **interactive with the community**. Community partners are **invited into the classroom to present pre-defined problems, questions** or areas of research interest.
- ***Community-Based Research***: Students are given the opportunity to work on a research project that is part of a course and has been **co-created and developed through the collaboration between a community partner and a researcher** (e.g., course director).
- ***Community-Service Learning (CSL)***: This is a form of experiential education where “**students engage in activities that address community needs** together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote intentional learning goals” ([www.nsee.org](http://www.nsee.org)).