Much Learning Does Not Teach Understanding:
Classroom Knowledge Isn’t Enough
By Mardy Ashe

We learn by example and by direct experience...
– Malcolm Gladwell

Two years ago, Cooperative Education celebrated its 100th birthday. It was in 1906 that Herman Schneider of the University of Cincinnati observed that several of his more successful students had “worked” to earn money before graduation. Through the years, his idea of working while learning caught fire, and by 1962 one hundred and fifty schools were on board with co-op. Programs were now relating academic preparation to the work experience. This factor seemed to enhance the experience for both the student and the employer. From one program in 1906 to now hundreds nationally and internationally, co-ops and internships are recognized as ways to improve the learning experience and better prepare the student for career and life.

In 1977, Western Carolina University began its co-op program. This began as a semester or alternating semester-long program where students could “learn while they earned.” The alternating semester is still an option today; however, most students elect to do one semester, usually in the summer. Through the years, the departmental internships (initially unpaid experiences) and co-ops have come to more closely resemble one another. Both are semester-long programs offering

1 “Much Learning Does Not Teach Understanding.” - Herophilus, Greek philosopher

Faculty Comments on Internships & Co-ops
By Brandy Kiger

There are great ways to get more than just an education at Western Carolina University. Through co-op and internship programs, you can also gain experience for your future career. These programs allow students to work with an approved organization and gain college course credit simultaneously. Some of these experiential learning experiences are even paid, but we’ll get to that later.

Co-ops and internships are a fantastic resource for students, giving them the opportunity to explore opportunities in their chosen field. They provide a direct link between what is learned in the classroom to what is happening in the job market. They also offer a valuable way to network and get your feet on the ground when it comes to looking for jobs after you graduate.

Having an internship or co-op also

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Career Services Programs for Success
Students and Alumni: Take advantage the many services we offer!

**JobCat, MonsterTRAK, and Localjobs.com**
Internet-based recruiting systems on our website that include jobs as well as opportunities to post a resume and sign up for interviews.

**Career Testing**
If you are having difficulty making a decision about a major or a career, we offer career testing and interpretation.

**Career Counseling**
If you have a career concern that you would like to discuss, call for an appointment with a career counselor.

**Cooperative Education**
Co-op is a program that allows you to work in your career or major field and receive directly related experience and credit WHILE you are still in school.

**Career Days and Recruitment Events**
Career Services offers 18-20 recruitment events every year, including the Career and Graduate School Expo, the Allied Health and Nurses’ Career Day, Spring Job Fest, Summer Job Fair, Engineering, Math, and CS Fair, Construction Management Fair, Education Recruitment Day and multiple etiquette-development events.

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Want to get on the career path?

**Use JobCat.**

1. Log into JobCat at careers.wcu.edu  
2. Complete a personal profile  
3. Upload a resume  
4. Submit your online application by the deadline.

JobCat is updated with new jobs almost every day, so check for updates regularly!

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**Publisher:** Michael Despeaux  
**Editor:** Brandy Kiger
academic credit for a structured job experience, and in many situations, both are paid. All three experiential programs at WCU, cooperative education, departmental internships and service learning provide students with meaningful, major-related experiences created to ease the transition from school to work. The WCU Co-Op Program is centralized, offered through the Career Services/Cooperative Education Office, whereas, internships are primarily departmentally-based.

This fall 2008, Western will take the initial steps towards implementation of the Quality Enhancement Program. Co-ops and internships are an integral piece of this plan — moving students towards synthesis, or integrating knowledge from different areas into an original whole. As students begin their college career, choose a major, and take classes in that major, the co-op/internship presents an opportunity to apply this knowledge in a meaningful way and in a real world setting. As a requirement of the co-op/internship, students write reflective journals and papers documenting their learning experiences and feelings. It is a reality check, as students "see" their major at work, how their classes may or may not apply and, in many cases, learn what they need to learn when they come back to school. By-products of this experience may include: refinement of self or major/minor, a renewed motivation towards learning, enhanced employability and vocational maturity.

learned just as much in the last three or four months from on the job experiences.
-WCU co-op student, Summer 2006

For the students and the employers who hire them, the co-op/internship experience is a win-win situation. Employers report that recruiting entry-level talent is the primary focus of these programs and that career fairs and faculty were the most effective means for recruiting. These jobs are created to immerse students in actual company projects such as: writing, managing, building, designing. The co-op/internship student is considered a real employee of the company.

Finally, we know that any work experience is valuable. The co-op/internship is believed to be more so because of its relationship to the major field of study. It is important to know that studies show that those students who choose work experiences that are 100% related to their major and to what they want to do are more satisfied with that experience and are more likely to be working in that field after graduation. For those of us who assist our students with the choosing of these experiences, let us ensure that they are as directly related to the major and the student’s goals as possible. This is integrated learning working towards synthesis at its best.

The co-op/internship opportunity for students is an excellent synthesis activity....

As students participate in a job or activity directly related to their major, they have a focused opportunity to draw on their university experiences and apply these to the field.

-WCU’s QEP: Career Services

This co-op experience was one of the best experiences I have had in my college career. Professors can only teach you so much in the classroom setting. Over the two years I have spent at Western Carolina University, I have learned a lot of things in the classroom, but in my personal opinion I have

I hear......I forget
I see........I remember
I do.......I understand

-Ancient Chinese proverb
helps answer that all-important interview question: “What experience will you bring to our company?” and gives you a concrete example from which to draw. This gives you “a foot up in the marketplace” when interviewing for jobs, according to Dr. Mark Holliday, head of the Math and Computer Science Department. Having an internship “looks good on your résumé and says to employers, ‘this person has done something in the real world.’”

Co-ops don’t just teach you more about your program; they also address what are known as “soft skills.” Dr. Holliday says that students who participate in co-ops and internships come away with better communication, teamwork, report and presentation skills. These are skills that employers value, along with meeting deadlines and being on time, all of which can be acquired through an internship.

Dr. Brad Sims of the Construction Management (CM) Department values the internship/co-op experience so highly that he wishes that his students could start their internships their freshman year. “Students come back from their internships as better students. They are more motivated and ready to apply what they’ve seen in the classroom.” His students find that their classes make more sense after interning. Dr. Sims encourages students to take more than one co-op, and really explore their career options. “Internships help students narrow their focus and find what market sector they want to work in.”

For programs like Nutrition and Dietetics, where internships are a required part of the curriculum, many of the same benefits are reaped. The internships provide supervised practice that allows students to really become adept at what they’ve chosen to do. “Internships are eye-opening for students, they really learn a lot about their environment. Most importantly, they get an education,” Dr. Wayne Billon says.

On the humanities side of things, students with majors such as English, Art, Biology, History and Anthropology (among others) also have the opportunity to participate in co-ops and internships. Among a huge array of other things, these internships often involve research and working directly with the public, or preparing a project.

When asked how the internship/co-op program fits in with Western’s QEP, Drs. Billon, Holliday, Philyaw, and Sims said it was right on the money.

Although the internships vary from field to field, Dr. Scott Philyaw, Director of the Mountain Heritage Center and Associate Professor of History, says the benefits are universal. “There are multiple benefits to taking an internship. Students have a “real-world” application of

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**Perfect Interview**

By Mike Despeaux

For the last three years, you may have been aware of a terrific way to prepare for interviews and hone your skills — the Perfect Interview program in our office. In the past, students would make an appointment, receive an orientation, and sit before a webcam in Career Services while participating in a virtual interview.

Now, we’re excited to offer Perfect Interview online, usable from anywhere students can access our website! With their own webcam or in our office, students can still use the film-yourself version — but the online site will allow users to observe an actor (the interviewer) on screen, hear the questions, type a thorough response, and listen to tips and alternative responses on-screen. Because the first step in interview preparation is to anticipate questions and think about how to best represent experience, skills and personal qualities in a response, this process is superior to using a camera the first time around. Better yet, students can opt to e-mail the entire text of their interview to a career counselor or professor for feedback, or possibly even credit!

Take advantage of Perfect Interview online at [http://careers.wcu.edu/](http://careers.wcu.edu/).
what they’ve learned in the classroom, they get experience to include on their résumé, gain professional contacts and have the opportunity to acquire letters of reference.”

Typically (with some program-specific exceptions) co-ops are 150-200 hours unpaid, and 300-400 hours paid. Some co-ops and internships pay very well, with many of the CM students making around an average of $13 per hour. But, don’t let the fact that it’s an unpaid internship stop you from accepting it, because it’s just not all about the paycheck.

When asked how the internship/co-op program fits in with Western’s QEP, Drs. Billon, Holliday, Philyaw, and Sims said it was right on the money. With real world experience and engagement in a larger region, the internship/co-op program allows students to participate in the give-and-take relationship that the QEP stresses so highly. “Connecting classroom theory with real world application is at the heart of the QEP,” Dr. Philyaw says. Dr. Sims elaborates, “Students are gaining knowledge in the classroom and taking it back to the workplace, then bringing the skills from the workplace back into the classroom. They are able to connect with faculty” and really enhance their learning experience.

Co-ops are facilitated through the Career Services office, and each department handles internships differently (although some work through Career Services). Stop by your department office to find out what the expectations are for your internship, or drop by Career Services to set up an appointment with Michael Despeaux or Mardy Ashe. They will be happy to assist you in getting an internship or co-op and help you increase the quality of your educational and career goals.”

-WCU’s QEP: Career Services
Calendar of Events: Spring 2008

February

6
Construction Management Career Fair *
9:00 am - 12:00 pm, UC Grand Room
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Interviews
Meet with the experts in multiple segments of the construction and construction related industry. You do not have to pre-register to attend the career fair portion of the event. Interviews may be available with some attending organizations from 1pm - 5pm following the career fair.

19
Physical Therapy & SLP Career Fair *
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, UC Grand Room
The Physical Therapy Fair is a great opportunity for students and alumni seeking employment in these fields. See JobCat for a list of employers who will be coming to this event.

12
Etiquette Dinner *
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm, UC Grand Room
This event is intended to teach students the rules of proper dining and conversation in a formal setting. Attire is business casual. The event is $15.00 per person, cash, check or student meal ticket/CatCard is accepted. Tickets can be purchased at Career Services in Killian Annex.

26
Primp Your Resume
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm, UC Atrium
Does your resume need a facelift? Let the Career Services staff take a look at it and provide suggestions for revision.

March

11
Summer Jobs & Internships Fair *
11:00 am - 2:00 pm, UC Grand Room
Not graduating until August and/or looking for summer employment on or near the WCU campus? This is the event for you! Businesses, campus and University departments set up booths to recruit for summer jobs and internships. Students are not required to sign up for this event, but are encouraged to bring copies of their resumes.

12
Corporate, Non-Profit & Government Career Expo *
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, UC Grand Room
Employers in the Public Service, marketing, management, finance, accounting, computer programming, engineering and engineering technology fields will be present at this event. Please join us and meet experts in this field, receive information on careers and hiring advice. You do not need to pre-register for this event.

13
Teaching Opportunities for Non-Teaching Majors *
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm, UC Catamount Room
So, you have (or are getting) a degree and you don’t know what to do with it. Have you considered teaching? There are lots of ways to get into the system for non-education majors. Come check out the information and see what you might be missing out on!

11
Etiquette Reception *
5:30 pm - 7pm, UC Multipurpose Room A&B
Students are welcome to participate in this special reception where you can meet potential employers and learn how to network! This event is intended to teach students proper Networking at its best. If you are interested in participating, please contact Career Services at 828.227.7133.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Fair *
9:00 am - 12:00 pm, UC Grand Room
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Interviews
Employers in the fields of engineering, engineering technology and math and computer science will attend this fair. Meet experts in these fields and receive timely information on careers, occupational trends, hiring qualifications & job openings. It is not necessary to pre-register for this event.

April

8
Education Recruitment Day *
9:00 am - 12:00 pm, UC Grand Room
Education Recruitment Day is a great opportunity for students, alumni and general public interested in opportunities within schools and school systems.

*For all Expos and Career Days:

Business casual to professional attire is required. Students and alumni are encouraged to bring several copies of your latest resume. We also suggest uploading a resume into JobCat. If you need assistance with developing a resume, please visit Career Services (2nd floor, Killian Annex) or schedule an appointment with a career counselor 828.227.7133.

Lists of attending organizations will be available at http://careers.wcu.edu and on JobCat. Lists will be updated as registrations are received.