

EL@NMC Newsletter

December 2021

The ELI's Leadership Team

The NMC Experiential Learning Leadership Team consists of:
Amy Burns-Bailey (Internships & Employment Readiness)
Kari Kahler (Co-Curricular/Extra-Curricular)
Jim Bensley (International Services & Service Learning)
Stephen Sicillano, Tracy Welch, Brandon Everest and
Kristy McDonald.



Growth and organization! If you've been keeping up with us you already know we're in the process of growing ELO (experiential learning opportunities) for our learners, and also creating systems around them to assess their impact and learn where they exist. As we look to the future of the ELI we are excited to have this team leading the different areas of EL as this will help us to serve our mission of spreading EL at NMC.

Experiential learning engages learners in direct experiences (do) and focused reflection (reflect) in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop their capacity to contribute to their communities (apply).

Read more about their areas below.
~ Kristy and Brandon ELI Co-Directors

EL Champion Spotlight: Costanza Hazelwood, GLWSI Education & Outreach Coordinator (2021 EL Fellow)



“Engaging in conversations about teaching and learning is an opportunity that may easily fall by the wayside during the course of busy semesters in action. But summertime lended itself to a well-paced series of meetings in EL 101 where joined colleagues from all over the college in great discussions and thoughtful reflection about teaching practice. I liked how this course helped me connect the comprehensive foundations of experiential learning with the activities I program for my students in very different courses: Spanish and Freshwater Studies.”

President's Message

Reflecting on the Value of Experiential Learning

Our Experiential Learning Institute's Co-Directors Kristy McDonald and Brandon Everest asked me to reflect and share my perspective with you – *why I believe that experiential learning is valuable*. To state it simply, my belief in it is so strong, it's one of the reasons I chose NMC.

Previously in my career, I served in a Dean role at Cincinnati State, with responsibility over the Business Division. Cincinnati State is one of the country's largest and most renowned cooperative education programs. In fact, Cincinnati State was the first two-year college in the U.S. to create a mandatory co-op program. Cincinnati State boasts relationships with more than 500 employers in the Cincinnati area and nationwide, and 1,500 student co-op placements annually, with \$3 million in student earnings/year. I was privileged to play a leadership role for such a renowned experiential learning program. The experience profoundly shaped my understanding and belief in the power of experiential education in general, and cooperative education specifically. I got to bear witness to how such learning benefitted students (e.g., affording them the opportunity to apply classroom learning in a real-world setting; gain on-the-job training and skills; make connections with potential future employers; earn a paycheck to help offset educational costs; and, clarify career choices and learn about opportunities in their chosen career field). Similarly, I was able to see the benefits to the community's businesses (e.g., affording cooperative education placements in their businesses allowed businesses a cost-effective way to fill temporary and long-term staffing needs; an opportunity to evaluate potential future employees; and, a way to fill entry-level professional positions with qualified candidates).

When I learned of NMC's commitment to Experiential Learning, I knew I wanted to blend the work the college was already undertaking with my own vision. That we will continue to extend classroom learning into the workplace so our students can earn real-world job experience – and a paycheck. The Cincinnati State example of work-focused experiential education is just one type of experiential education that NMC's instructors and learners engage with. For example, work-focused experiential education can be co-op education, internships, and placements. There's also course-focused experiential education. These are specific courses where NMC instructors provide learners with real world, hands-on opportunities. And, there is also community-focused experiential education. For example, Kristy McDonald's service learning-focused business communications class handing out Thanksgiving meals (after a whole semester of planning and organizing), affording our community's food insecure an opportunity to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. Through this class, they learn something about business communications and much more!

In my view, experiential learning creates an intersectional space, connecting the college with our community and the community's businesses - serving ongoing community/business needs while preparing learners for future employment, and providing deep and meaningful learning experiences. In fact, that's our mission: *transforming student lives and enriching our community!*

Experiential learning is critical to our future, and it's central to the college's new strategic plan. There's a goal in the plan - that *every student pursuing a credential at NMC will have an experiential learning opportunity (ELO)* whether through an experiential learning designated course or co-curricular learning. That's a goal that communicates the importance of experiential learning to defining the NMC experience. NMC is committed to expanding this kind of learning opportunity, and so am I.



Internships & Employment Readiness

Apprentice of the Year: Samuel Grant

NMC Apprentice of the Year:

I have Sam in three classes, his performance in each has been outstanding. I am very proud to support him for the apprentice of the year award, as his work ethic and performance reflects greatly on himself, his employer, and the College. Nominated by Mike O'Connor.

- A model student. Punctual, prepared, engaged in learning. Courteous and willing to help others.
- Truly interested in learning & improving himself. Sam has come to me many times with questions beyond the scope of the class, to obtain a better understanding of the subject and how he could apply it in his job.
- Embodies the Community College model. On the job training combined with classroom instruction resulting in a development of skill sets that improves his job performance & upward mobility in his organization. Sam's apprentice sponsor will not be disappointed with their return on the investment in him.



Manufacturing Day: February 4th

This year's Manufacturing Day will be held on February 4th. There is an opportunity to visit up to three local manufacturers, get tours of their facilities, and learn more about the opportunities and jobs available in the region. More information will be available as the day approaches!

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates debut at NMC

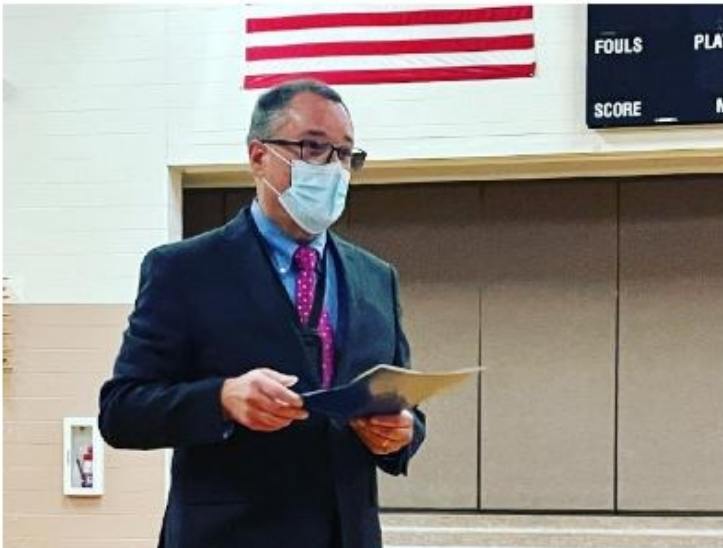
This month, NMC became the first college in Michigan and the fifth in the nation to offer students the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program (JMG), a partnership with Northwest Michigan Works! and Networks Northwest.

Under [JMG](#), NMC students between ages 16–24 are eligible to connect with Employment Readiness Specialist Lisa Baldyga to match with student mentors in their field, get paid work experience or job shadowing opportunities and internships and other beneficial career opportunities. These services are over and above the resume and cover letter review and interview skills that NMC Career Services already offers.

The program helps set up students for initial career success. Financial assistance with job equipment such as tools or work boots, uniforms, bus passes or gas cards for transportation to work is also available.... [see more.](#)

Co-Curricular & Extra-Curricular

Blair Elementary School Mentor Project Update



President Nissley sharing his story with the Blair 3rd – 5th graders.

A Facebook post in mid-September requesting supplies for a local elementary school classroom is changing lives both at Blair Elementary School and Northwestern Michigan College. Kari Kahler spotted a post by Emily Witte (NMC alum Hannah Witte's mom) requesting supplies. Emily works at Blair Elementary School as the Reading Intervention Specialist. Kari recalled a MCCSSA conference where Dr. William Serrata of El Paso Community College shared his college adopts local elementary schools where most of the children are potential first generation college students. Through Hannah, Kari reached out to Emily to see how NMC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) could help. Now 50 NMC students have applied to be mentors for a fifth grade student at Blair.

On Monday, November 22nd, President Nissley and five of the mentors went to Blair Elementary. Nick shared his story of growing up in a messy family situation and inspired the 3rd – 5th graders to look towards their future, introduced them to the power of writing their future story through education and that NMC is their community college. The five mentors shared their NMC stories and presented each classroom (kdg -5th grades) with a t-shirt for every child. The Future Hawk Owl shirt was designed by Hannah Witte.

We met with Big Brothers/Big Sisters staff to discuss training; Bigs shared their training manual and it has been revamped for our partnership with Blair. Mark DeLonge got on board and conducted training for our mentors who will meet their student before the holiday break. They have committed to meeting with their student once a week for 30 – 45 minutes either at Blair or via Google Meets until the end of the school year. Plans to bring the 5th graders to see NMC campuses later this spring are in the works and the PTK officers have committed to teaching leadership skills at Blair to prepare them for their transition to middle school this coming fall.



Blair Elementary 5th graders, with President Nissley and five of NMC Mentors. Nick is holding the shirt designed by NMC alum, Hannah Witte. The shirts were given to every Blair Elementary student (Kindergarten – 5th grade).

International Services & Service Learning

African Drum Circle

Each semester, Jim Bensley invites a local musician and science teacher, Marc Alderman to visit his class and teach a session on the cultural aspects of West African drumming. Marc studied ethnomusicology in college and spend time in Ghana learning the craft. [Click here to view the video!](#)



Passport Event - Uganda with Shakirah Liefers



Reflection:

“After visiting Shakirah's presentation, I got a picture about Uganda (history, political component, local traditions, clothes, cuisine, humor). I think this is a good chance to get to know the culture from its direct representative. In addition, such meetings broaden the view of the world and can provide direction in future adventures.”

~Olesya Nikolaeva

Student Connect ~ International Tea Time



The next Student Connect International Tea Time will be held on Wednesday, January 26 at 9:15am. Faculty, staff and students are welcome to come for tea and great discussions around various topics.



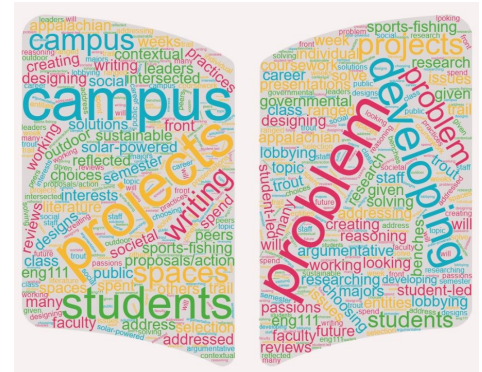
Community Space in Osterlin

Students are welcome to use the space outside of the International Studies offices in Osterlin (formerly the library). This cozy space can be used for studying in groups or individually, a quiet place to meditate or relax, or meet up with a classmate or friend. It is open whenever Osterlin is open to students. This is where the International Tea discussion events are held (pictured above)

Faculty Features

Cathy Warner's ENG 111

Students in ENG111 spent the semester working on solving or addressing a campus or societal problem of their choosing. These projects reflected students individual passions and interests. Many projects intersected with other coursework in their majors or future career choices. Students spend 14 weeks researching [research writing and literature reviews] the topic and contextual issues, looking at others solutions or designs to address the problem, and developing their own reasoning of why the problem should be addressed [argumentative writing] and developing proposals/action projects to solve the problem.



Student-led projects ranged from creating more sustainable practices for Trout sports-fishing [lobbying governmental entities], designing solar-powered benches for campus, the Appalachian Trail, & public spaces, developing outdoor social spaces on campus, and more. Presentations will be given in week 15 in front of class peers and a selection of campus leaders, faculty, & staff.

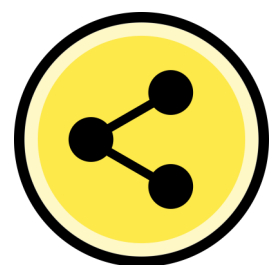
Marguerite Cotto & Constanza Hazelwood's Introduction to Freshwater Studies

We are directing the focus of an Intro to Freshwater Studies course towards the role students may play in water-related fields, rather than the content they need to learn. During the semester, students select placements with water-related organizations to explore the roles of freshwater researchers, managers and communicators. Students rotate to experience each role every three weeks while placed with a local organization to complete a task under guidance of a water professional. With this student-centered curriculum approach, students are engaged in experiential opportunities that help them shine as learners and connect to the knowledge, skills and dispositions they will need as professionals in water-careers.



Faculty: Share your EL Experiences and Activities

We are looking for faculty to share their Experiential Learning activities they are doing in their courses. Each month we will highlight different EL experiences happening here at NMC. To share your experiences, please contact the [Experiential Learning Institute](mailto:elinstitute@nmc.edu) at elinstitute@nmc.edu.



Reflections

Walk for Health and Housing

"What really shocked me the most probably was being at Safe Harbor and just seeing the line of people," said NMC student Alyssa Lichon. "Seeing it right there."

"I feel like homelessness can go unnoticed in a lot of areas and especially in Traverse City, a tourist town and especially in the middle of the town," said Student Emma Newman. "It's a very nice tight community and a lot of people forget that no matter where you're from, you're always going to have a homeless population."

[Click here to view the UpNorthLive full article and video.](#)



Food for Thought Thanks

"This semester I had the opportunity to learn in an experiential learning class, a process that allows me to learn while giving back to the community. My experience has taught me valuable lessons that I wouldn't find in a lecture class. I learned how to properly; communicate with businesses, learn marketing tactics, and provide service to

the community. This learning environment has allowed me to find a place of belonging in gaining education by helping others through the business and marketing world." NMC student Mahli Braak.

[Click here to view the NMC article.](#)



Experiential Learning Institute Team

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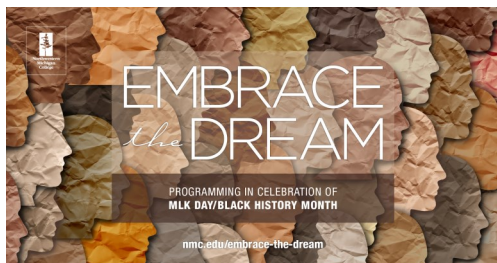
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Embrace the Dream Activities

Reflection is Key to Learning from Experience!

We are excited to share about Embrace the Dream (ETD) activities, starting with MLK Day on January 17, 2022.

For October PD Day, a group of teachers and staff came together to plan around our first MLK Day of Service and for other DEI related projects through the year. You can expect the team to provide ideas on how to incorporate inclusion and belonging into our coursework (in ways big and small).



For the effort, the teachers group developed a number of compelling, ready-made activities *that rely on shared experiences and reflection to build up awareness and provide opportunities to learn.*

As we know, reflecting is the way that we transform experiences into deep learning.

We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.

- John Dewey

To be successful as experiences, any worthwhile experiential learning opportunity (ELO) will incorporate opportunities to reflect on and apply to real-life matters. This establishes a personal connection to the experience and the content in it.

[The Domains of Reflection Worksheet](#) is a great resource to explore the different areas of our lives that can be strengthened by the power of reflection. Needless to say, MLK Events and Black History Month will build upon the personal, civic and professional domains.

[Here is a brief overview of forthcoming events.](#)

MLK-related documentaries:

We are pleased to have access to Kanopy, an incredible video resource available to the NMC community. There are a number of MLK-related videos available.

We will have a campus wide announcement for a live (and virtual) discussion of one of these documentaries during Black History Month. NMC faculty will present relevant expertise and experience with MLK's message and practice of nonviolence. The discussion will be open to the entire NMC community.

The Voices Project:

All courses teach about their history, contributors and the like at this time of the semester. *This is a timely and relevant way to engage with Embrace the Dream!*

The Voices Project will bring awareness to lesser-known contributors, or Voices, to the arts, sciences and occupations. The exhibit consists of poster-sized busts, providing information about the contributor and their contributions. Having broad representation of nearly all of our programs and areas, this exhibit will allow any program to participate. The posters will be placed in every academic building on our campuses and be ready for Martin Luther King Day (and Embrace the Dream) activities on January 17, 2022.

Reflection will surround the importance of hearing from these Voices (personal), the reasons for their relative absence (civic), and how other Voices can be centered in occupational, academic and professional spheres (professional).

NMC Service Opportunities:

Community service is upgraded to service learning with an intentional use of reflection around service opportunities and experiences. Contact the ELI to get support for community partnerships you might have, or to get involved with these opportunities. We can also help you develop a service learning project for your course!