



January 2023

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Michael William Mills

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GRADUATES' PERCEPTIONS OF HORIZONTAL MISMATCH: A CASE STUDY OF A
MARKETING PROGRAM AT A REGIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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A Dissertation in Practice

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education (EDD) Educational Practice and Leadership

Specialization Higher Education

Grand Forks, North Dakota

August
2023

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This dissertation, submitted by Michael William Mills in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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Michael William Mills
August 4, 2023

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This doctoral program has been a long journey and I have learned a lot. Completing this program and dissertation has been a goal of mine for a long time. As a child who was diagnosed with learning disabilities in the 1980s, my parents were told that if I were put on an IEP, it would be difficult for me to go to college. I can tell you determination and motivation go a long way in making up for other areas of deficiencies.

I chose the higher education track of this doctoral program because I believe in diversifying my skills. I have spent the past seventeen years teaching at the high school level and wanted to start pivoting my career trajectory toward higher education.

I am grateful for my adviser, Dr. Radomir Mitic who helped me through this process. Dr. Mitic was great to work with, setting high expectations while being supportive and providing excellent feedback while working on this project. I appreciate Dr. Mitic's approach of putting in more work upfront enabling the back end of the project to be a smoother one. I am also grateful to Dr. Mitic for his support as I went through the application process and ultimately accepting a position as an assistant professor.

I am grateful for my committee members, Dr. Zarrina Azizova, Dr. Brandon McAlexander, and Dr. Deborah Worley, who were also tough, but fair through this project. Thank you for your willingness to volunteer your time, especially during the summer and as some of you transitioned into new positions.

I am grateful to my parents, Roy and Jennifer, who have supported me through my various educational endeavors and never doubted my educational decisions.

I am grateful for family friend Tahna Smith who gave a fresh set of eyes for an edit of this paper.

I am grateful to my children, Mason, Kennady, and Dallin, for your patience with me during the past three years and having to repetitively hear about horizontal mismatch. I hope each of you can find a career where you enjoy going to work most days and can support your families.

For your endless support and confidence in me, I am eternally grateful for my wife, who is undoubtedly my better half. Earning this degree and finishing this project would not have been possible without her continual love and support.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study utilizes the human capital theory to examine the influence of high impact career exploration and career-focused practices in a public, regional four-year institution. Literature shows that graduates who enter well-matched careers earn approximately 30 percent more than graduates who are not closely matched. In addition, well-matched employees lower recruitment and training costs for employers. The guiding notion of the paper is that students should not only be well-rounded but also be prepared to enter a career that is related to their field of study. Most students attend college to advance their career and economic outlook. This paper found that some participants did not know that most entry-level marketing positions are typically sales positions. This study found that a variety of high impact practices were being utilized in the marketing program. In addition, this study found that participants prefer assignments and projects that have real-life connections to industry. Horizontal mismatch is the main focus; however, vertical mismatch was examined, as the two types of mismatch correlate with one another. The use of high impact practices such as internships and externships, first-year seminars, as well as linking students to careers related to their fields of study will be examined.

Keywords: career-focused education, human capital theory, internship and externship, work-integrated learning

INTRODUCTION

At a time when the value of higher education is being questioned due to the high cost of attendance, institutions face the need to evolve. In particular, institutions need to shift away from the broad “well-rounded experiences” approach to include greater career linkages through exploration and graduates’ preparation for the realistic expectations and the world of work (Bol et al., 2019). Rios-Avila & Saavedra-Caballero (2019) state that workers who are in career fields that are well-matched to their college major earn approximately 30 percent more than those who are not well-matched. McMahon (2009) suggests that universities need to take a proactive approach and step up to meet the demands of students, as trends suggest new intervention is essential. Postsecondary education’s ultimate goal should be to create a well-rounded individual with the skills necessary to obtain employment in a career that closely matches their field of study. To that end, Rios-Avila & Saavedra-Caballero (2019) state, “One of the main reasons to obtain a higher education degree is to use it to find a good job in the future” (p. 2). The majority of employers surveyed in one study indicated “that colleges and universities need to make improvements to ensure that their graduates possess the skills and knowledge needed for workplace success at the entry level, and especially for advancement” (Hart Research Associates, 2018, p. 3). Well-matched employees will reduce the costs of recruitment and training that employers have to pay (McMahon, 2009). Kuh (2008) asks, “What do students need to know and be able to do?” (p. 2), indicating that graduates need to have skills so they can “do” when entering the career field. Halstead and Lare (2018) argue the following:

College success is measured, in part, on recent graduate employment attainment, and in fact salary after graduation is one of the assessment categories on the U.S. Department of Education's (2017) College Scorecard consumer website. This expectation of responsibility may stem from the financial investment an individual makes in attending college, often with significant debt upon graduation, which may cause students to frame a program with an eye to successful employment (p. 178).

In this three-artifact study, Artifact I will discuss the problem of practice, Artifact II the research findings, and Artifact III the implication of solution which is a course syllabus designed to introduce marketing students to different jobs and labor marketing conditions in the field of study.

Artifact I

Artifact I introduces and describes the problem of practice that was addressed in this dissertation. This artifact also includes the literature review conducted on this project and focuses on career-focused education, horizontal mismatch., and other related topics. This Artifact also includes the foundational theory that was used as a lens to work on this project. Also included in this section is the researcher's background that influenced the topic of study for this project.

Artifact II

Artifact II lays out the research methods that were used to collect, analyze, and synthesize the data, and delineate the findings collected through semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Artifact II also describes the selection process used to select and recruit former students of the academic program. This Artifact describes the other nongraduate participants who were selected and interviewed as well as the processes used for artifact analysis. This segment includes a

presentation of the findings, a discussion about what the findings indicate, implications for practice, and future research of this topic.

Artifact III

Artifact III includes a general solution to the problem of practice that could be applied at different institutions. The solution that is provided is a syllabus and course plan for an introductory course. This solution is based on the findings of the research as well as the literature review and aims to be a practical solution for the problem of practice. This Artifact addresses limitations this solution may have at some institutions and provides alternatives for implementing this course.

ARTIFACT I: PROBLEM OF PRACTICE DEFINED

Description of the Problem

The purpose of higher education has long been debated. There are two main ideas or purposes of higher education that stand out. The first being the liberal education or comprehensive approach, where students attend school for the purpose of learning and becoming more intellectual. The second being vocationalism, or the idea that students attend college for better career prospects, opportunities, and career satisfaction through becoming trained to obtain a career in a specific field (Albrecht et al., 1994; Grubb & Lazerson, 2005).

The idea of attending college to learn skills for a specific career is evident with higher education institutions being occupational- or professional-structured. This is common practice with institutions being made up of several occupational-specific colleges or schools (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005). Even though students may attend school for specific career prospects in a specialized field, they also learn many valuable skills through the variety of general education courses they are required to take. The liberal or comprehensive approach and vocationalism approaches are not mutually exclusive but the high costs of college have led to a stronger emphasis on career outcomes. This dissertation will focus on the vocationalism approach that students attend college to obtain better career possibilities.

Horizontal mismatch is when graduates do not work in a job closely related to their field of study. Vertical mismatch is when a graduate is hired into a job that requires less education than they have. When a graduate is both horizontally and vertically mismatched, this is referred to as full mismatch (Banerjee et al., 2018; Valentina, 2017). The literature does not speak to

whom the determining party is in identifying if a worker is mismatched in their job. Therefore, his study will be using the participants' perception to whether they feel they are horizontally mismatched. Horizontal mismatch may be a matter to a degree of mismatch meaning that a worker maybe misaligned in their job but still aligned in their career, or vice versa. One person maybe more severely horizontally mismatched than another person.

The problem we see is that many students who earn a four-year degree and never spend a day working in the field they went to school for face many employment and economic challenges. Selingo & Sigelman (2021) suggest that graduates who entered mismatched careers, and were still mismatched five years after graduation, were likely to still be mismatched and underemployed ten years after graduation. Another report, using data from the National Survey of College Graduates, found that approximately 50 percent of workers were identified as mismatched in their current jobs (Robst, 2007). Students entering a mismatched career can be an issue, since "people invest in education to obtain skills and knowledge that are valuable [in] the labor market" (Werfhorst, 2002, p. 288). Cotner et al. (2021) indicate that employers desire colleges to make changes to train students with skills that employers need new hires to possess. McMahon (2004) mentions that community colleges are better at aligning to the local needs of business and industry.

Why is mismatch negative? A mismatch can have negative repercussions for both the worker and the employer. A mismatch can affect a worker's future career mobility, earnings, job satisfaction, and unemployment rate (Choi & Hur, 2020; Dunn & Kalleberg, 2017; Machlup, 2014; Verhaest et al., 2017). It is critical that graduates enter a job that is well-matched to their field of study as soon as possible, as a graduate's entry into the labor force is significant to their career trajectory. Selingo & Sigelman (2021) state that graduates who do not begin their career

well-matched will tend to stay mismatched throughout their careers. Credentials that are more technical based have a shorter life span than degrees that are more general in nature, which provide skills that can be used in a wide array of career fields (Merriam, 2014; Robst, 2007). Degrees such as engineering are superannuated in less than two years from graduation and degrees in information technology have an even shorter life before becoming outdated (Merriam, 2014).

The cost of education has skyrocketed over the past fifteen to twenty years. With the high investment cost, students need to leave college with adequate knowledge and skills. In a 2006 Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) survey, 63 percent of employers said that graduates do not have the skills to be successful (Kuh, 2008).

Within four-year institutions, we typically see two kinds of degree majors: those that offer courses where students gain specific skills that can apply to a specific career field—and those that and those that provide general skills that are easily transferable to other fields. In this study we will be looking specifically at marketing majors, as marketing programs tend to fall into both categories by offering the graduate both general skills as well as specific skills. During college, marketing students gain general skills such as people skills, communication, problem-solving, and creativity. Marketing students also gain specific skills like planning, organizing, sales, and analysis (Cobb-Walgren et al., 2017).

A study from Georgetown University found that 3 percent of all college graduates earn a degree in marketing and marketing research, and 12 percent of all business degrees are in marketing and marketing research (Carnavale et al., 2011). According to the Classification of Instructional Programs (2020), a marketing program is:

A program that generally prepares individuals to undertake and manage the process of developing consumer audiences and moving products from producers to consumers. [It] includes instruction in buyer behavior and dynamics, principle of marketing research, demand analysis, cost-volume and profit relationships, pricing theory, marketing campaign and strategic planning, market segments, advertising methods, sales operations and management, consumer relations, retailing, and applications to specific products and markets (CIP Code 52.1401).

This research will take a deeper look at the marketing program and examine student participation in career exploration activities, work-integrated learning activities, authentic assessment, professional organizations, the time when students declare majors, utilization of the Career Services Department, and the operation of academic advice.

Audience

This study is intended to inform advisers, faculty, chairs, deans, career services, government officials, and policymakers on a career-focused approach and if it is making a difference for students once they graduate. This research could also benefit potential and current students in their decisions in choosing a major that will guide them to a viable career after graduation.

Key Concepts, Words, or Phrases

A variety of concepts, words, or phrases will be used throughout this: authentic assessment, business and industry connections or linkages, career development, career exploration, career-focused education, career guidance, career pathways, career planning, career services, gainful employment, human capital theory, job shadowing, labor market's statistics/outcomes, mismatched career, school-to-work transitions, and work-integrated learning.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to explore the marketing program at a regional research institution with an examination of activities that are career focused and leads students toward well-matched employment. Career-focused programs needs to be studied, as students attend higher education partly in order to pursue a particular career path.

Research Questions

I have identified two questions I addressed through this study. They are:

1. How is the selected program facilitating entrance into careers?
2. What are graduates perceptions of college's role in career preparation?

Literature Review

The reviewed literature helps lay a foundation of career-focused education and how it can impact mismatch at the collegiate level. Many terms were identified during the review stage, with most of the identified terms and concepts being linked together as part of the major-to-career congruence and the career exploration process, which would make programs career focused. All the literature is critical in building an understanding of what is happening in higher education.

Horizontal Mismatch

Horizontal mismatch has a few different terms in which it can be known by, such as major-to-career congruence and skill mismatch. As mentioned previously, horizontal mismatch is when a graduate works in a career field that is not closely related to their college major or field of study (Velciu, 2017). Horizontal mismatch may occur for many reasons, most of which are not positive for workers, employers, or society. Boudarbat & Chernoff (2012) suggest that if

higher education's purpose is to prepare students for future employment, then a mismatch would be an ineffective use of capital for the student and the public.

Verhaest et al. (2017) found that people with technology-based degrees have lower rates of mismatch than those who have degrees in the arts and humanities. Rokst (2005), Data from 2001 National Center for Education Statistics, shows that "less than 60 percent of engineering and computer science graduates are employed in their fields of study three years after college graduation" (p. 225). That indicates these students may start in a well-matched career, but Rokst's (2005) findings show that three years after graduation, 40 percent of engineering and computer science graduates are still working in their field. If students in other fields knew that the likelihood of working in their field three years after graduation was so low, would they still pursue that field of study?

The employee drawbacks of horizontal mismatch are lower wages, lower job satisfaction, and higher rates of involuntary and voluntary turnover (Banerjee et al., 2018; Boudarbat & Chernoff, 2012; Velciu, 2017). One study indicates that workers who are well-matched earn approximately 30 percent more than workers who are not closely matched (Rios-Avila & Saavedra-Caballero, 2019). Bachelors' degrees holders who work in careers closely related to their field of study earn 11–27 percent more than someone who is not well-matched (Wolniak & Engberg, 2019). Another study showed that men who are horizontally mismatched can earn up to 19.5 percent less than well-matched workers. The study also showed that women's and men's mismatch earnings' penalties are at different rates. Men who are mismatched have wage penalties as high as 19.5 percent, while women's wage penalties are as low as 8.2 percent for working in a mismatched career (Rios-Avila & Saavedra-Caballero, 2019).

Allen & Van der Velden (2001) report that workers who are horizontally mismatched are more likely to be unsatisfied with work, especially if their skills are being underutilized. Employees who feel their skills are not being fully utilized are more likely to be searching for new employment opportunities. Horizontal mismatch can have a negative effect on the graduates' perspectives of their major field of study and cause workers to have program regret (Kucel & Vilalta-Bufi, 2013; Mora, 2010; Nilsen et al., 2020). Kucel & Vilalta-Bufi (2013) suggest that regret might not be caused by mismatch, but mismatch is a result of educational regret.

Some of the negative results from horizontal mismatch of workers for employers are that these horizontally mismatched employees may require more on-the-job training to acquire adequate skills to perform the job for which they were hired (Rios-Avila & Saavedra-Caballero, 2019). Workers who are well-matched lower recruitment and training costs for firms (McMahon, 2009).

Becker (2009) states, "Unemployment rates tend to be inversely related to the level of skill" (p. 30). The more skills a worker has, the less likely they are to be unemployed during their career, and the fewer the skills a worker has, the higher the chances of them being unemployed during their career.

Vertical Mismatch

As mentioned previously, vertical mismatch is when a worker is overeducated or undereducated for the job they have. Vertical mismatch and horizontal mismatch are both related to education and career and are closely related to one another (Allen & Van der Velden, 2001; Velciu, 2017). The ideal situation would be that workers have adequate education for their job. This means that the worker is neither overeducated nor undereducated but has the ideal amount

of education for the job (Robst, 1995). Banerjee et al. (2018) found that around 30 percent of workers globally are overeducated for their jobs. Of the various mismatches, I found that vertical mismatch has been studied the most and has the most search returns of articles relating to mismatch (Schweri et al., 2020; Verhaest et al., 2017).

Vertical mismatch, especially overeducation, may seem harmless, but there is evidence that it has a negative effect on workers. Valentina's (2017) study indicates that if workers stay in vertically mismatched positions too long, it can have a scarring effect that can negatively follow the worker for the rest of their career, in relation to promotions and on-the-job training. In addition, when a worker is overeducated, it can affect their transition to other careers. Overeducation can imply to future employers that the employee does not have desirable skills, since they have been mismatched for so long. Overeducation was found to be detrimental, especially when the worker is also horizontally mismatched (Bol et al., 2019; Valentina, 2017).

Vertical mismatch is not only negative for the employee, but it can also have a negative effect on the labor market. Overeducated workers may be filling lower-level jobs, causing lower-level workers not to be able to get those jobs that they would be matched with. This is referred to as occupational displacement (Valentina, 2017). Overeducation of workers can cause what Valentina (2017) describes as credential inflation, meaning that as employers fill lower-level jobs with workers who have higher levels of education, it causes firms to raise their qualifications for future hires, since they have previously had workers with bachelors' degrees fill the position. Overeducation can also have an effect on workers' productivity, thus hurting the employer's potential earnings (Kampelmann & Rycx, 2012; McGuinness, 2006).

Ultimately, overeducation can affect society and the economy as a whole, as portions of society taxes collected go to help fund public institutions, and that funding is wasted on students

who are obtaining too much education for their jobs (McGuinness, 2006). Workers who are overeducated tend to be less satisfied with their jobs and are more at risk of leaving the company (McGuinness, 2006). With greater turnover, the employer must spend more time and money training new employees more frequently, and this has a negative effect on productivity and the firm's bottom line (McGuinness, 2006).

Mismatch Causes

There are many causes of mismatch; one of the causes that was a recurring theme in the research was the idea that graduates may have geographic limitations or are not willing to migrate for work, which connotes that graduates are willing to be mismatched if they do not have to relocate or travel for their career (Kucel & Vilalta-Bufi, 2019; Machlup, 2014; McGuinness, 2006). If graduates are not willing to relocate to where the jobs are, they limit the opportunity to work in a well-matched career.

Another cause of mismatch is that students did not understand what the labor market demands were. Valentina (2017) indicates that mismatch occurs because of a flawed knowledge of what firms are looking for when hiring graduates and cites that poor connections to industry can be a cause of the asymmetries. When students' educations are not linked to careers, it can cause graduates to regret their educational experiences (Kucel & Vilalta-Bufi, 2013). Kuh (2008) notes, "If students leave college without the preparation they need for this complex and volatile world, the long-term cost to them—and to our society—will be cumulative and ultimately devastating" (p. 8).

Vocationalism

The idea of vocationalism started to evolve in the mid-1800s with the passing of the Morrill Act of 1862. The Morrill Act increased the momentum of colleges providing occupational or professional education (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005). Even though occupational and professional schools started appearing in the mid-1800s, schools that focused on business education can be traced as far back as the middle of the 1600s. These early business schools were vocational and focused on basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as the technical skills of bookkeeping and communication. Just after the passing of the Morrill Act, it was estimated that there were approximately 160 commercial and business colleges in the United States. The modern business schools that focus on professional education, and which can be found at the majority of universities, did not start becoming mainstream until the early- to mid-twentieth century. The first doctoral degree in business was not issued until the late 1920s. Prior to this time, business professors were distinguished businessmen with experience in the career field (Rosett, 1982).

Gainful Employment

The idea of mismatch and tracking graduates' work experiences is not a new concept. There was an initiative that emerged in the 2000s called Gainful Employment, or GE for short, that is a federal government concept designed as a check for institutions whose students receive federal financial aid (Riegg & Turner, 2019). GE was supposed to help get students into jobs that not only relate to their field of study but also land them a job in a recognized occupation. The GE rule also has guidelines that the occupation needs to provide enough income that students will be able to repay their student loans (Federal Student Aid, n.d.). The federal Gainful Employment rules have been eliminated as of 2019 (Program Integrity: Gainful Employment (Rule), 2019).

Institutions who were more greatly affected argued that the Gainful Employment rule singled out specific types of students and institutions and was not applied equally to all types of institutions (Adams, 2010).

Institution-Level Initiatives

Work-Integrated Learning. Work-integrated learning (WIL) is sometimes referred to as work-based learning and is the idea of mixing some type of work-related training into the academic environment (Kramer & Usher, 2012; Stirling et al., 2016). These are “employment experiences that are usually organized by their institution, related to their field of study, and geared toward making connections between classroom learning and on-the-job experiences” (Kramer & Usher, 2012, p. 2). WIL includes, but is not limited to, career development, experiential learning, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, field experiences, and cooperative education (Kramer & Usher, 2012). WIL first appeared around the same time as the Morrill Act of 1862 but did not really gain traction until the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which provided funding for cooperative education programs (Linn et al., 2004).

Career Exploration/Career Development. Career exploration is used to help students develop skills that can be used not only to determine a major but also determine a career they want to enter (Cheung & Arnold, 2014). Career exploration is critical, as most students enter college unsure of what they want to major in (Komarraju et al., 2014). It is evident that not all students have explored their desired field of study prior to declaring a major, with approximately 75 percent of students changing majors at some point in their college experience (Lynch & Lungrin, 2018). Bridgstock et al. (2019) suggest that when students learn in an occupational environment, the students will naturally build their career development skills through their experiences. Career exploration activities will help to foster students’ career self-efficacy and

make them better prepared to make career-related decisions in the future (Komarraju et al., 2014).

Career Exploration Activities. There are many different types of career exploration activities that would be considered high impact practices that institutions can offer students, such as informational interviews, job shadows as homework assignments, courses on career exploration, career mentoring, summer internships, community service, and any other activity that may promote examining career choices (Bridgstock et al., 2019; Cheung & Arnold, 2014; Wolniak & Engberg, 2019). Career exploration activities can be cocurricular, but career development is more effective when it is integrated into the curriculum by engaging students early in their education (Bridgstock et al., 2019; Helens-Hart, 2019). Kuh (2008) suggests that most students do not get to engage in high impact practices during their college experience.

Off-campus experiences (OCE) is a term that Patterson (2007) uses to describe learning opportunities that take place outside the traditional classroom and typically off institutional campuses. These activities would include practices like job shadows, internships, externships, and service learning. These OCEs or high impact practices give the students some type of work experience related to their major and are typically work-based learning or field learning experiences (Wolniak & Engberg, 2019). In Wolniak & Engberg's (2019) writings they lump internships, co-ops, and field/teaching/clinical experiences into one category.

Internships are an important career exploration activity that provide students with real work experiences and can also foster business and industry connections that can help with students' transitions to work after graduation (Galbraith & Mondal, 2020). A survey of "more than 800 college presidents found that few felt their schools [were] successfully teaching critical-thinking skills and connecting students with internship opportunities during school" (Korn, 2014,

para. 6). One report indicated that 45 percent of students who participated in an internship found the internship position posted on a firm's webpage. The same report found that 33 percent of interns were offered a position at the company by the end of the internship experience (Galbraith & Mondal, 2020). Another study of recent graduates from three Pennsylvania institutions found that 40 percent of students who participated in internships indicated that the work-based learning experience helped confirm their choice of field of study and career path (Halstead & Lare, 2018). Galbraith & Mondal (2020) indicate that future career accomplishment can be attributed to a successful completion of an internship.

Internships are more performance based and include performing tasks that someone in a job field might actually do; the tasks are typically overseen, but the student would perform the tasks on their own. Internships require much more time than a job shadow experience or externship. Internships can be either unpaid or paid depending on the industry standard and company policy (Eller College of Management, n.d.). Internships also differ in that they are not an assigned part of another university class but are stand-alone activities and may include things like student teaching. Participating in career exploration through work-based learning can help students stand out and be top candidates for future positions. Although, experiences like internships do not always guarantee students will be offered employment through their experience and connections (Galbraith & Mondal, 2020).

Job shadowing or an externship is a concept where students go out and spend time following and watching people who work in the field in which the student plans to study (UC Berkeley, n.d.). Job shadowing is important, as "many undergraduate students arrive in the senior year of college with little experience in careers related to their major area of study" (McCarthy & McCarthy, 2006, p. 202). Job shadowing is observation based; students do not do any actual

tasks (Herr & Watts, 1988). The job shadow experience would be short-term, less than 10 hours total with the assigned professional. The job shadowing experience would also be an assignment activity for a college-level class (Eller College of Management, n.d.).

Many of these high impact practices help the students become self-learners and take a more active role in their education, rather than sitting back and being passive in their learning (Kuh, 2008; McCarthy & McCarthy, 2006). These practices also give the students the skills needed to start navigating the business world (Nilsen et al., 2020; Patterson, 2007). The purpose of career exploration is to engage with businesses and professionals, career adaptability, student career construction, increased career decision-making, better school-to-work transitions, skilling/instrumentation, or knowing what will be expected in specific careers. The benefits of career exploration are not just for the student, but the institution can also benefit from career exploration, as students who explore careers have a higher retention rate (Cheung & Arnold, 2014; Fouad et al., 2016). McMahon (2009) suggests that a major factor in future career productivity can be credited to certain types of extracurricular activities.

Career-Focused Education. Goodwin University defines career-focused education as an education “that allows students, through academic programs, to pinpoint their professional path and focus on one particular career field” (para. 2). The literature suggests that career-focused educational experiences had positive impacts on students both during and after graduation. Students who had higher job congruence or more closely matched careers to their college major not only had more financial stability but also showed higher rates of satisfaction with their careers, were more productive, and were less likely to leave their jobs (Choi & Hur, 2020; Ge, 2020; Xu, 2013). Nontraditional students, or students who are older than the new high school graduate, tend to have a higher job congruence rate than inexperienced younger peers (Xu,

2013). Dunn and Kalleberg (2017) report that about one-third of the unemployment rate is due to a mismatch of education to what the labor market needs, and it was also estimated that all mid-level jobs require some form of postsecondary schooling to be considered for the positions. Having courses that are career focused will give the students guidance and direction and a more successful academic career (Lynch & Lungrin, 2018). Students who are in career-focused programs, such as those of nursing, teaching, and engineering, tend to have a higher career trajectory than those who study liberal arts programs. The high rate of longevity in the career-focused majors is evident in career-focused education, as one study reports that most career changes happen within the first twelve years after graduation (Roksa & Levey, 2010).

Career Pathways. Career pathway is a term that is typically used at the technical or community college level, as career pathways require institutions to consider industry needs when designing pathways (Cotner et al., 2021). Career pathways could also be applicable in a university setting as institutions work to align students to specific careers, and these pathways have been implemented up through the doctoral levels of education (Mathur et al., 2018). Jenkins & Spence (2006) define career pathways as:

A series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector (p. 2).

A career path would be laid out with specific coursework, training, and experiences needed for graduation and with a specific career goal in mind. Additional coursework could also be included that might be needed for any additional certifications. The career path would show avenues related to graduate school if needed and would showcase stackable credentials along the path

toward the career (Cotner et al., 2021). Career pathways can be helpful to the student as more of their educational choices are laid out for them by selecting a pathway (Cotner et al., 2021; Roksa, 2006). The pathway also helps the students have a better career trajectory, as they are typically focused on being qualified for the jobs in that one pathway (Xu, 2013). Career pathways focus on careers that local businesses and industries need (Jenkins & Spence, 2006).

Labor Market Linkages. The business and industry connection to education is vital and can help students build relationships with potential employers. Neumark (2007) found that if labor market linkages are happening at postsecondary institutions, it is happening in an informal, unstructured setting. A study of 41 occupational-focused department chairs found that career services departments were typically the ones who made contact with businesses and industries, and the contact that was made was generally only done out of contractual obligation (Neumark, 2007). When it comes to linking education to the labor market, Brewer & Gray (1997) state, “Institutional features such as location, governance, and resources will play an important role in explaining why some faculty undertake linking activities and some do not” (p. 12).

Typically, when a program has a strong connection to a business, it is usually due to an instructor taking the initiative to connect with that specific business. Faculty-employer linkages can help bring labor market information into the classroom. When it comes to businesses and industries reaching out to connect with programs and students, some businesses have reported that they would rather deal directly with the specific college or program, rather than work with the institution’s career services department (Neumark, 2007). Business and industry connections or relations are not typically a requirement for faculty at most four-year institutions. Ultimately, however, in some majors, faculty relationships to business are an important part of keeping content relevant and help students obtain jobs through faculty connections. Students who make

job connections through instructors' connections typically earn more money than they would if they were to find jobs on their own. In most situations, college departments or programs have a single person who is responsible for making connections with each business and industry.

Oftentimes the burden is placed on the person who oversees the work-based learning opportunities; although, students reported having more confidence in themselves and in their major when faculty has built relationships with business partners (Neumark, 2007).

Neumark (2007) found that about 46 percent of community college instructors integrate high levels of linkages into their content, and one-third of instructors minimally integrated linkage activities. Programs that require students to participate in work-based learning activities tend to have higher labor market linkages (Brewer & Gray, 1997).

Authentic Assessment. Another way students can become better prepared for their careers is through courses utilizing authentic assessment. Authentic assessment uses real-world scenarios to assess what the students have learned through the course. This type of practical assessment allows the students to apply what they have learned in an interactive manner, which not only tests what they have learned but also helps increase workplace skills like communication. Authentic assessment also more accurately assesses the students' knowledge, as increased academic integrity is a result of authentic assessment. Academic integrity increases as students are required to interact during the assessment, and this makes it difficult to cheat during the assessments (Sotiriadou et al., 2020).

Labor Market Statistics/Labor Market Trends. Labor market information can help students identify specific occupations that they may aim for. When students examine labor market information, it will help them have a better understanding of what to expect in specific careers, such as job demand, wages, benefits, and types of promotions typically available

(Cotner, 2021). When students are deciding on careers, they should use labor market data to help them understand what jobs within their field of study are in high demand (Metz et al., 2009). Knowing what the labor market demands are will help students select fields of study that will lead to jobs after school (Cotner, 2021). Metz et al. (2009) suggest that there are two times the number of students pursuing investigative, artistic, and social occupations than there are actual jobs in these fields.

Labor market statistics or labor market outcomes is information for students to know what kinds of employment opportunities are available in their field of study, including how many positions are open in the state or region and the specific location of typical positions. Labor market trends also include information about starting pay, such as entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level salary information. All this information will prepare students for what to expect after graduation as well as knowing what jobs they may be qualified for upon graduating. Labor market trends are also going to help illustrate the types of returns the students can expect from the investment in their education (Xu, 2013). Velciu (2017) states, “[Labor] market information [is] among [the] potential preventive measures to reduce the risks of skills mismatch” (p. 2). Velciu (2017) also states, “Job mismatching is a lack of matching between job vacancies and job seekers” (p. 1).

School-to-Work Transitions. School-to-work transition is not one defined point of time. Halstead & Lare (2018) state, “The college-to-work transition begins with college choice” (p. 177). The transition continues after the graduate starts employment, and many obstacles may not be recognized until work in the field has begun (Halstead & Lare, 2018). During an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* about his new book, *Aspiring Adults Adrift* (Arum & Roksa, 2015), Richard Arum stated that colleges need to do a better job to “facilitate school-to-work transitions

in terms of internships, apprenticeships, [and] job placement programs” (Korn, 2014, para. 18). Halstead & Lare (2018) find that more recently there has been a consensus in which institutions have a responsibility to guide students to make the school-to-work transition smoother.

One study found that students who entered college at an older age had more experiences to guide their decision-making in their declared major, helping with the transition after graduation. Career exploration activities would also increase students’ experiences and foster better school-to-work transitions (Halstead & Lare, 2018). Wolniak & Engberg (2019) reported that when students participate in high impact practices, it provides positive influences on their goals after graduation. Halstead & Lare (2018) find that unrealistic expectations about work and the cultural differences between college and the work environment add to the transition challenge (p. 178). One study’s participant said, “It is kind of ridiculous that we expect eighteen-year-old kids to pick a career path. . . . You have to find yourself first and find out what you really want to do” (Halstead & Lare, 2018, p. 187).

Before we can even think about horizontal mismatch, we need to have students making it to the finish line. Komarraju et al. (2014) state “that increased career decision self-efficacy is a significant predictor of self-determined motivation, satisfaction with the course, and satisfaction with the major” (p. 428). As students’ confidence builds in their career and academia, so will a “positive relationship between satisfaction and overall performance variables such as grade point average and retention” (Aitken, 1982; Allen & Robbins, 2010; Bean & Bradley, 1986; Tracey & Robbins, 2006; as cited in Komarraju et al., 2014, p. 430).

After students have made it to graduation, they then need to transition from school to the workforce. If students have not participated in programs that were career focused and had career linkages, it may impact the students’ perceptions of what work should be like. Students’

unrealistic expectations may hinder their ability to find well-matched employment and keep it (Halstead & Lare, 2018). Galbraith & Mondal (2020) found that students who participated in internships indicated that the internship helped them understand time management and job requirements that helped make a smooth transition from work to school. One group who has easier transitions are older students, they not only have higher congruence but also tend to have a smoother transition from education to the workforce (Halstead & Lare, 2018; Bol et al., 2019; Xu, 2013).

Career Services. Another positive experience for students trying to align to a specific career is to use the institution's career services office. Literature revealed that many students do not engage with career services until late in their college career if at all during their schooling. (Lynch & Lungrin, 2018; Selingo & Sigelman, 2021).

Academic Advising. An important part of navigating any postsecondary institution is to meet with an academic adviser. Some institutions require all students to meet with an adviser, while some schools leave it up to the student if they want to meet with an adviser. There can be some drawbacks to faculty advising in which some students may be timid to approach faculty outside the classroom (Hart-Baldrige, 2020). Faculty appear to be the better option for academic advising, as "faculty are in an advantageous position to advise students by helping them relate coursework and out-of-class experiences to future career goals" (Lynch & Lungrin, 2018, p. 74). Students who had advisers who connected with them showed higher satisfaction with schooling. Mass advising of students could happen when students are placed in career learning communities. This ensures that all the students in a particular group have the same career goals or are on the same career path (Lee & Patel, 2019).

Student-Level Initiatives

Selecting a Major. Erickson & Summers' (as cited by Cuseo, 2022) work indicates that “less than 10 [percent of] first-year students who enter college with a major in mind...feel they know a great deal about their intended major” (p. 5). There are a couple of different approaches to when students should declare their major. Most institutions have a place to declare your major right on the entry application; others will have the students wait until after their freshman year to declare a major. Many schools want students to declare a major early on in hopes that it will keep them engaged in school and increase retention rates. Spight (2020) indicates that “undeclared students are not at a higher risk of dropping out than declared students” (p. 103). By delaying a major, students have more time to explore different content areas. When students do not explore career options before determining a major, Lynch and Laugrin (2018) say “there are possible implications that could occur as a result of deciding on a major before engaging in meaningful exploration” (p.1). Spight (2020) argues, “Rather than requiring or expecting students to make a premature, uninformed decision, institutional policy and practice should permit and encourage students to explore their options” (p. 105) prior to making a commitment that will affect them the rest of their life. Advising students to choose fields of study that align with careers that are in high demand can be helpful in reducing mismatch (Verhaest et al., 2017). There are those who think they have an idea of what they want to study, but they do not really have an understanding of what it means to get that degree in a specific field. This is evident with about three-fourths of students changing their major at some point during their college career (Theophilides et al., 1984; Cuseo, 2022).

We know that many students do not make it to graduation. If we look at the University of North Dakota, for example, with a student body population of about 13,722 and a six-year

graduation rate of only 58 percent, that means 42 percent—or 5,763 students of the 13,722—will never make it to the finish line (About UND, n.d.; Best Colleges Rankings, 2021).

Theory

Human capital theory provides an appropriate lens to explore horizontal mismatch. Becker (2009) defines human capital theory as investments of resources that improve skills, knowledge, or health, which in turn produces human capital that impacts future income and intrinsic rewards by increasing the resources in people. As it relates to education, people sacrifice and invest both time and money into schooling in hopes of a return on their investment of a better future. The term “human capital” is used to signify that capital is not a tangible object but is one that is ingrained within the human mind and can translate to skills or knowledge. The capital or knowledge cannot be taken out or separated from the human. Individuals invest in human capital with the sacrifice of time and effort of schooling (Becker, 2009).

How horizontal mismatch ties to human capital theory is that students who are not working in their field of study tend to make less money, have lower job satisfaction, and have higher turnover rates (Banerjee et al., 2018; Boudarbat & Chernoff, 2012; Rios-Avila & Saavedra-Caballero, 2019). Although the knowledge someone obtains cannot be taken from them, human capital can decrease over time when people are not working in their field of study. This decrease comes from advances in the career field that happen after one’s training as well as people losing information over time through mental capacity or from not using the skills that one has (Machlup, 2014). Merriam (2014) indicates that degrees can become obsolete in as little as a year and a half. With this information, the longer period of time a worker is not working in their field of study, the greater the depreciation of their degree or field-specific knowledge (Machlup, 2014). McMahon (2009) states, “Obsolescence of human capital occurs as the knowledge within

each field changes over time” (p. 259). Workers who work in careers not closely related to the field of study may have regrets about their educational choices and investments (Kucel & Vilalta-Bufi, 2013; Mora, 2010; Nilsen et al., 2020).

The reviewed literature that was relevant to this case study was also used in the writing of the related and relevant terms and phrases section of this case study. The literature alluded to the idea that if indicators show that majors are career orientated, then there should be higher rates of graduates placed into closely matched career fields. A high horizontal mismatch rate would indicate that majors are not providing clear career pathways and linkages.

Summary

Through the literature review it is evident that horizontal mismatch is a phenomenon that is occurring with higher education graduates. What is not as easy to narrow down is in which specific programs mismatch is most prevalent. We know that, by nature, liberal arts programs are going to have fewer specific skills, which may cause mismatch to occur more frequently. As to which specific majors mismatch is occurring in the United States is unclear as there is a lack of data as graduates are not typically followed very well after graduation.

With the high cost of education and students’ expectations that college will provide them with access to better careers, higher education institutions need to incorporate high impact, career-focused practices to help students better prepare for the world of work. This dissertation will contribute to the literature that was examined in this section. This study will specifically examine horizontal mismatch and how career-focused educations impact graduates.

ARTIFACT 2: INQUIRY APPROACH

Research Questions

I have identified two questions I addressed through this study. They are:

1. How is the selected program facilitating entrance into careers?
2. What are graduates perceptions of college's role in career preparation?

Description of the Case

This project used a research university located in the upper Midwest as the location for the case study. According to IPEDS, the university has approximately 10,000 undergraduate students enrolled, and 77 percent of the student body is identified as Caucasian. The institution's Carnegie Classification is Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity.

This study looked at the College of Business, one of nine colleges at the institution. Specifically, this project examined the marketing program, which is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, or AACSB. (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, n.d.). The College of Business completes the AACSB accreditation process every five years to ensure the highest standards are being met (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, n.d.).

Research Approach Narrative

For this qualitative case study, I used Stake's approach for this project, as it is a broad approach (Yazan, 2015). This approach generated interview data and artifact analysis data to address the Two research questions. This section describes the sampling, data collection,

analysis, ethical considerations, limitations, and the case site: a public research university located in the upper Midwest.

Sampling and Sample Size

I interviewed ten graduates and two faculty members from the university's marketing program. I conducted interviews until the point of saturation, or to the point where I did not see any new trends or ideas arise from the participants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2020). I sampled graduates who entered the workforce after graduation. For this study, I excluded graduates who enrolled in graduate school immediately after undergraduate graduation.

I selected participants who have graduated in the last two to five years. The reason two years out from graduation was selected for the low end of the range was because it takes some time for graduates to transition to work and settle into a career (Margolis & Simonnet, 2003). The reason five years was selected as the top of the range was because I wanted to look at workers at earlier stages of their careers before they have the opportunity to move into management, enroll in graduate school, or before their career interests changed. Purposive sampling was used to select each of the participants for the study.

Part of the data collection included syllabus (artifact) analysis of marketing courses at the university. After artifact analysis was complete, I then conducted two interviews with marketing faculty members for the study. During the faculty interviews, the marketing faculty suggested a few businesses who typically hire graduates that I could try to contact to set up an interview for this study. I analyzed the business information the faculty gave, and I selected a business that I thought hired the largest amount of marketing graduates per year. I made contact with one in upper management at the company and they put me in touch with someone from the human resource office to identify a potential subject to interview for this study.

Recruitment Procedures

I sent an email to four full-time marketing faculty, asking if they would be willing to participate in my study by allowing me to interview them. A second email was sent to the marketing faculty where I asked if they were aware of any graduates who met my requirements and if they could forward my recruitment script to these students (Appendix A). I did not want the faculty to send me students' names and contact information as to not violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Through this process I was able to conduct an interview with one student. The rest of the participants were directly identified and contacted by me. Through an internet search I was able to find archived graduation programs from the university. The commencement bulletins were broken down by program major, so I was able to go through graduation booklets for the fall, winter, and summer commencements and find the names of all students who graduated with a marketing degree. After identifying marketing graduates, I turned to LinkedIn to identify which of the graduates met my study's requirements; if I could not find the graduate on LinkedIn, I then searched Facebook to find them; if I could not find them in either social media platform, I did a Google search for the graduate.

After going through LinkedIn for each of the graduates, I created a list with information found on LinkedIn: graduate's name, current position, and direct link to the graduate's LinkedIn profile. I employed a few different methods to reach out to them. I started by requesting to connect with some of them. Once we were connected, I was able to send direct messaging to them through LinkedIn. I also subscribed as a LinkedIn Premium member so I could send messages to a few people I was not connected with. This option was limited, as LinkedIn only allows five InMail messages a month unless you upgrade to a higher level of membership.

I then began to go through and take a closer look at the graduates' listed places of employment on LinkedIn. I visited the websites of the listed companies and try to find the graduates' email addresses. If I could not locate the graduates' email addresses through the companies' websites, I started searching for the email address format that the businesses use. I then sent an email with an email script (Appendix A) directly to each graduate through the identified business email address format. This method was the most effective in making contact with participants who no longer used LinkedIn after graduation.

There were a few businesses that were identified by faculty as hiring marketing graduates, but none of the businesses stood out as hiring large numbers of marketing graduates. I ended up contacting the business that tends to hire one graduate per year, per Faculty 2's interview. The others that were identified typically hired one graduate every couple of years, as noted by the faculty.

Data Collection Procedures

Once participants were contacted and indicated they were willing to participate, I scheduled a virtual semi-structured interview with each individual. I used the Zoom platform and recorded the interviews. I recorded both audio and video for the purpose of reviewing,

transcribing, and coding. The interviews took approximately between thirty and sixty minutes. I asked seven to thirteen semi-structured questions. (See Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D for the list of questions).

After the interview was complete, I reviewed notes and the recording and created a summary of the interview. I sent a copy of the summary to the participant to make sure that I interpreted their answers correctly as a form of member checking (Birt et al., 2016). All graduates responded to the summaries I sent for review. There were two summaries where graduates asked to change a few minor details. Graduate 8 asked that I make mention that they are looking for a new life direction and are currently considering enlisting in the air force. Graduate 8 also asked that I edit their summary to include that students should not just seek real-world experiences in college but also seek out faculty who can help mentor and support students prior to graduation.

Graduate 5 also requested a few edits to the transcribed summary. They wanted to make note that they were okay working outside the marketing field because they have interest in other business-related fields, such as banking, economics, and finance. Graduate 5 also wanted me to make a change to how the graduate felt as they worked in a sales-related role. They wanted me to clarify that they did not feel they were in a sales-related field, but their current position utilized some of the same tasks and skills that a sales position would utilize. I made changes to the summaries and sent the summary back a second time, seeking approval. Again, I had approval from all interviewees except one. The one that I did not have approval from was not because of disapproval. Graduate 3 never responded to my email, with the summary attached, that specifically asked, "Please reply back either way and let me know if this is okay or not."

Another method of data collection I used was artifact analysis. Specifically, I looked at course syllabi from different classes offered in the marketing program. Course syllabi were obtained by emailing the marketing department's assistant. I was able to locate their contact information from the university's website. The department assistant was able to send me all of the syllabi I requested. The syllabi were the most current versions that the department office had on file.

I analyzed the syllabi looking for evidence of the use of work-integrated learning experience activities and assignments (Morgan, 2022). A table was then created that lists the course name, course level, instructor, and the high impact activities (work-integrated learning experiences) listed in each of the syllabi (Appendix E) to help with organization of syllabi data. I created a second table (Appendix F) that lists the course name, course level, instructor, career-related course readings, activities, experiments, and exercises that were found in the syllabi (e.g., guest speakers, tours, interviews) to help with organization of syllabi data. The university's website and directory were utilized to identify faculty from the marketing department and the syllabi analysis form was used (Appendix G) to analyze each of the reviewed courses' syllabi.

After reviewing the courses' syllabi, I contacted the faculty through email and asked if I could interview them to better understand their backgrounds, assignments, and projects. During the faculty interviews, I asked thirteen semi-structured questions about their courses, students, connections, experiences, and perceptions (Appendix D).

Consent

After I made contact with participants, and they agreed to participate, I shared with them my intent to record the interview. When the Zoom session started, I read the verbal consent script that was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB); I asked the interviewee

to consent to participate in the study (Appendix H). I started recording the interview right away so that reading of the verbal consent was captured on the video.

Analytical Strategy

All field notes and recorded interview data were transcribed. After the Zoom interview was complete, I used Word in Office 365 to transcribe the video file of each interview. During the interviews I had a paper and pencil to take field notes, such as answers to questions and any additional questions that were prompted during the interview. These handwritten field notes were transcribed to be used for data analysis. I reviewed and edited the live transcription of each interview to eliminate errors. I used inductive coding methods by looking for key words, phrases, or codes that showed up in the results of each interview. I used these key words, phrases, and codes to identify trends or categories in the data, identifying what is happening amongst all the participants (Saldaña, 2021). All the data was secured on a OneDrive account that is password protected to secure the confidentiality of the participants. I uploaded the recordings' interviews, transcripts, and summaries, as well as the course syllabus and all other data, into the North Dakota University System OneDrive folder that is password protected.

Trustworthiness

I employed several methods to establish trustworthiness. I member-checked my work by sending a summary of the transcript to the participant to ensure I captured the correct context of their answers. This member-checking is critical to ensure I have creditable and accurate data (Birt et al., 2016; Saldaña, 2021).

As stated previously, I used purposive sampling and I included detailed information about each participant and how they relate to the study, ensuring transferability can potentially be established in the project. I selected participants who were traditional college students, or who

entered college at a traditional age (entered college in the eighteen- to twenty-two-year-old range). By selecting traditional-aged college students, the study will be relevant, and findings can potentially be transferable to other business colleges at four-year institutions because a large number of students at the majority of universities fall into this traditional age range.

Data triangulation improved the creditability of the findings. I triangulated data by not only interviewing graduates but also by conducting an interview with a business official from a company in the university's community who has a reputation of employing graduates from the marketing program. In addition, I conducted artifact analysis of course syllabi to determine if what the interviewees said matched what was found in the course syllabi. Lastly, I interviewed two faculty members from the marketing program (Naidoo et al., 2021; Statistics Solutions, n.d.). Having used four different sources, it will triangulate the data and help establish trustworthiness for this project.

Ethics Considered

I ensured confidentiality of the participants in the study by use of pseudonyms by which the participant was known as throughout the project. I asked each individual at the beginning of the interview what pseudonym or code name by which they would like to be known by. If they did not have a preference, I assigned them the name "Graduate" and whichever interview number they were. Prior to engaging in data collection, I obtained Institutional Review Board approval from the University of North Dakota. The IRB Protocol ID for this study is IRB0005364.

Researcher Positionality

This fall I will make the transition to post-secondary education to begin teaching technology education at a four-year university. My background is in career and technical

education (CTE) and I just completed my seventeenth school year of teaching high school woodworking. I began my teaching career in the fall of 2006 teaching industrial technology woodworking classes. The state of South Dakota made the transition from vocational classes to career and technical education classes; my courses were part of that transition. The courses I teach are called Beginning Finish Carpentry and Advanced Finish Carpentry.

In South Dakota, CTE takes a very exploratory role for students, meaning that I only teach students for two semesters total, versus some states where students essentially major in a career and technical field and take several classes focused on that one trade throughout their high school experiences.

I received a Bachelor of Science degree in technology education in December 2005 from a comprehensive liberal arts university in Utah. I finished my degree with a student teaching internship, which I completed at Uintah Basin Applied Technology College in the field of cabinetry.

Because of my CTE background I chose to examine career exploration and/or high impact practices; these result in students forming better connections to occupations.

Limitations

There are a few limitations that occurred while doing this project. I believe data on mismatch is not tracked well, and that may have limited my ability to find participants through the institution for the study. Another limitation that may have occurred during interviewing participants was social desirability bias. Former students may have answered with personal stories of their college and career experiences. The participants may have attempted to exaggerate the stories used to answer interview questions in a way that makes their alma mater look favorable (Grimm, 2010).

One limitation I did find was in the recruitment of participants. As I contacted most participants through LinkedIn messaging or email, I felt like I did not have many people contacting me back; my messages may have been treated like spam since they did not know who the sender was. Selection bias was another limitation in this project and could have been present in a few different ways. One was this study only looked at graduates who are currently working in a horizontal mismatch career. This study did not select participants who were in well-matched careers. Well-matched graduates may have provided a different perspective on their experiences in the marketing program. Another case where selection bias likely occurred was that only graduates who were unhappy in, or even embarrassed about, their current jobs were not willing to participate in my study.

Another limitation I found during this study was the division of participants. There were those who were interested in the creative side of marketing and there were those who were not as interested in the creative side. This was a limitation developed during the interviews as two different types of marketing students started to appear. With participants falling into one of the two groups, this study could have been broken into two separate research projects, one focusing on students who wanted to pursue the creative side of marketing and the other for students who did not want to pursue the creative side of marketing.

The final limitation of this study centers on the transferability of these findings to other institutions. The case study institution, which is a public regional four-year research institution, has an expansive mission of teaching, research, and service. For instance, some of the faculty have extensive research portfolios whereas others have a more applied teaching focus. The findings may not, for example, transfer well to a more vocationally-oriented program at a

community or technical college that has a marketing program where the faculty do not conduct research and have an even more applied vocational approach to teaching.

Participants

Graduates

There were ten participants that were interviewed. They were all listed as marketing graduates in their respective university graduation programs. The participants graduated between 2017 and 2020. Only two of the graduates interviewed currently worked in a marketing related field. Graduate 6 was a financial advisor at a family firm, and about 10 percent of their time was spent doing marketing for the firm. The other, Graduate 8, is a small-business owner in the restaurant industry, but their business is only open on the weekends, so they are seeking other employment opportunities to provide a steady income.

The other eight graduates worked in a field that was not directly related to marketing. (See Table 1 for their specific titles.) Some of these eight graduates worked in the marketing field briefly before moving on to a job outside the field.

Table 1

Graduate Information: Pseudonym, Job Title, Completed Internship, Time Major Declared, and When Graduates Realized They Would Start in Sales

Pseudonyms	Current Title	Internship	Declared Major	Sales
Graduate 1	Senior Human Resources Operations Center Specialist	N/A	Junior Year	Final year
Graduate 2	Transportation Customer Service	N/A	Before Starting	Final Year
Graduate 3	Product Manager	Financial Institution	End of Sophomore Year	While enrolled
Graduate 4	Insurance Customer Service Rep.	Sports Training Program	Junior Year	Pre-enrollment
Graduate 5	Senior Loan Processor	N/A	End of Sophomore Year	Pre-enrollment
Graduate 6	Financial Advisor 90%/Marketing 10%	(State) Small Business Development Centers	End of Sophomore Year	While enrolled
Graduate 7	Technology Consultant	Insurance Company	Before Starting	Final Year
Graduate 8	Small Business Owner/Realtor	Real Estate	End of Sophomore Year	While enrolled
Graduate 9	Project Coordinator—Service Desk Coordinator	N/A	Junior Year	While enrolled
Graduate 10	Consultant—Investment Management and Real Estate	Manufacturing	Before Starting	Pre-enrollment

The ten participants were working in a variety of different backgrounds and career fields. Table 1 lists all ten participants, current job title, industry they completed an internship with, the point at which they declared marketing as a major, and at what point the participants knew that they would likely need to start a marketing career in sales.

The participants' current title is significant to the study as it shows which career field the participants are currently employed in. This information is effective in helping to illustrate the graduates' perception of current job relationship to the major. Participants may have been using their job title to determine their perceptions of being horizontally mismatched.

The business or field the participant completed their internship in is also important to the study because internships are a form of high impact work-integrated learning that allows students

to participate in career exploration in the field of study. The internship and other forms of WIL will help students visualize career paths and trajectories (Bridgstock et al., 2019).

The point at which the participants declared their major has slight significance in the study. Students who declared their major later in their college experience would have had less time and opportunity to participate in an internship during college. The opposite is also true that the earlier a student declared their major, the more time they would have to complete an internship during college.

The final information in Table 1 is the point at which students were aware that most entry-level marketing jobs would be sales. During my first interview for data collection, I found this information to be intriguing and asked each of the participants when they realized that a sales position would likely be their first job. I found this data interesting, as my first interview was with a graduate who did not have a desire to enter sales but did have a passion for the creative side of the marketing field. This becomes significant when looking at students' career expectations and goals.

Business

The business that I contacted to set up an interview with was one that was identified by the university's marketing faculty as a business that tends to hire one graduate per year. The business is headquartered in the same community as the university, and the business is an agriculturally based business. The business grows its own crops, sells the crops, and transports the crops to the customer. The business has a signature crop it produces, but it does also produce some other crops on its farms. The business has twelve locations across the country and operates in ten different states. The business has about 145 full-time, year-round employees but has about two thousand employees during peak times. Most of the seasonal workers are on the agricultural

side of the business, meaning they work at the farm locations with the growing, harvesting, and transportation of the crops. The regular year-round employees make up executives, management, sales, office assistants, accounting, and human-resources-type employees.

When I reached out to a senior member of the business, they put me in touch with the human resources director (HR director). The HR director told me that they could not specifically tell me how many of the university's graduates they had working for them or what their positions were. The HR director said the human resources software they use to track employees does not indicate where degrees were earned or even the types of degrees the employees have. The HR Director said that they imagined that the business employs some marketing graduates in their marketing arm of the company or in their sales department. The HR Director said that the business is always looking to hire people who have any type of business-related degree to fill sales, marketing, or transportation positions.

The HR Director said the business interacts with the university in a variety of ways. The business attends a few different career fairs that the university hosts. The business has participated the past few years in the citywide job shadow that is administered through the Economic Development Corporation and career service. The business also supports the institution by participating in a local festival that is held in conjunction with the university and the agricultural community. When asked, the business sends employees to university classes to talk with students on specific topics, and in years past, the business has had an employee serve as a liaison for student organizations.

The HR Director said that one of the main reasons they like hiring college graduates from the university is due to the convenience. They said that the university's graduates tend to already have housing lined up and have connections to town. The HR Director stated they have hired

graduates from other regional universities and even graduates who went to a different university which is located about an hour away. Graduates from other institutions have been more difficult to work with in regards to finding housing. They do not want to leave the community they know along with their connections to begin somewhere new. The company has found that graduates who graduated from the local university are “well prepared in technology, communication, and have an eagerness to work” (HR Director). They also find that the local university’s graduates do not necessarily have skills that their other employees do not have, but college graduates tend to bring new perspectives and more technology experience.

Faculty

I interviewed two marketing faculty members from the university. The faculty members were from various academic ranks and experiences. One thing that they had in common was they had both worked in the marketing field and had real-world experiences in the career field prior to teaching. One faculty member still had their own business and worked various side jobs in their spare time. Both faculty members felt that students were exposed to the idea that sales would likely be an entry-level job early in the marketing program. Both shared some of the high impact practices they used in their courses, and again, these varied. Faculty 1 used more research and writing-intensive assignments, and Faculty 2 used more role-play and various applications and artificial intelligence (AI) software to help students apply their learning. Both faculty members mentioned they utilized guest speakers. Typically, the guest speakers were former students who were out working in a marketing-related field. Faculty 2 worked with the internship class and estimated that about 33 percent of marketing students complete an internship. Faculty 2 said that this year the program had thirty-seven interns, and typically, the program graduates one hundred students per year.

Syllabi Analysis

I analyzed the syllabi of eleven courses in the marketing program. Initially, there were ten syllabi that I planned to analyze, but after reviewing the Field Experience in Marketing (MKT 381) syllabus, I decided to also look at Internship in Marketing (MKT 492) to determine the differences between the two courses Field Experience syllabus and the Internship in Marketing (MKT 492) syllabus.

I attempted to select a variety of courses listed on the university's website. A mix of courses were selected to analyze course syllabi for required courses as well as electives. Table 2 shows the specific course number, course name, and whether the course was required or an elective for those selected for document analysis.

Table 2

List of Marketing Courses That Were Analyzed

Course Number	Course Name	Required or Elective
MKT 300	Marketing Foundations	Required
MKT 305	Consumer Behavior	Required
MKT 306	Professional Selling	Elective
MKT 310	Retail Management	Elective
MKT 322	Digital Marketing	Elective
MKT 325	Marketing Research	Required
MKT 342	Social Media	Elective
MKT 381	Field Experience in Marketing	Elective
MKT 406	Sales Management	Elective
MKT 445	Marketing Management	Required
MKT 492	Internship in Marketing	Elective

Syllabi Analysis Results

Through the analysis of the marketing syllabi, I found three instances where work-integrated learning was identified; these can be found in Appendix E. In these instances, the course objectives were where it stated that work-integrated learning was present. In two of the three courses that were identified, the type of work-integrated learning was present in the course

title. The three specific courses are Social Media (MKT 342), Field Experience in Marketing (MKT 381), and Internship in Marketing (MKT 492). The Field Experience course appears to be similar to an internship, with the exception that the Field Experience in Marketing course is open to underclassmen and the internship is limited to upperclassmen who have met the prerequisites.

In addition to these three courses that utilize work-integrated learning, there were some courses that listed activities where students were able to practice skills they might see in the workplace (Appendix F). These activities included: making a sales pitch to a member of the university's sales team; role-play; creating a retail plan for a proposed retailer; a semester-long project that involved analyzing quantitative data as well as actual live data; guest speakers/webinars; a HubSpot Sales Management certification; a group project that gave students hands-on experience in building a marketing plan for a real company (but a fictitious product); a presentation of a marketing plan; a final paper that would be similar to a portfolio where you show your work; and a PitchVantage application to improve verbal presentation skills.

Having spoken with some of the faculty during their interviews, it appears that some of the high impact practices may not have been listed in the courses' syllabi. Faculty 1 even mentioned that the definition they have seen of high impact practices was different than the list I provided, which was "informational interviews, job shadows as homework assignments, courses on career exploration, career mentoring, summer internships, community service, and any other activity that may promote examining career choices" (Bridgstock et al., 2019; Cheung & Arnold, 2014; Wolniak & Engberg, 2019). Faculty 1 said that they utilized writing-intensive projects that, from the definition they have seen, qualified as high impact practices.

Overall, it was beneficial to perform the document analysis of the course syllabi, but the syllabi did not paint a full picture of the details of specific assignments. The majority of the high impact, career-focused nature of the courses was listed in the courses' objectives rather than under specific assignments listed in the syllabi.

Findings

Throughout encoding and decoding the interview transcripts, four themes developed through analyzing the data (Saldaña, 2021). Each of the themes are broken down further into categories, and each category contains several code words that were identified through data analysis. The themes that were identified are: the graduates wished they had better preparation to find quality internships; the graduates had the necessary skills to transition to careers outside the marketing field; some skills obtained during school may be transferred to other fields; and graduates who were seeking creative marketing jobs could not find sustainable creative marketing positions. Each of the themes, categories, and codes words can be found in the codebook (Appendix I). Each theme has several categories, and the themes are organized by research questions.

Graduates Had the Necessary Skills to Transition to Careers Outside the Marketing Field

There are two categories which make up this theme, the faculty who integrated high impact, career-focused experiences had positive impacts on students; and the marketing courses provided transferable skills to other fields. This theme and its categories are critical in indicating that marketing graduates have necessary skills that can be transferred to other career fields.

Faculty Who Integrated High impact, Career-Focused Experiences Had Positive Impacts on Students

This study found that there were many different high impact activities that marketing students could participate in. Some high impact practice activities were more career focused than others, and different faculty integrated high impact practices in a variety of ways. There was one faculty member who was mentioned specifically by nearly all the participants. This faculty member left a lasting impression on the graduates. Students also found this faculty member impressive because they were also a small-business owner.

Faculty 4, whom I was not able to interview, was mentioned during nearly all the interviews. Faculty 4 was either mentioned by name or students referred to the specific courses they taught. Faculty 4 taught the Social Media class, which students indicated was a project-based course in which they could work with real businesses in the community and run their social media marketing for the semester. When reflecting on the interview question of “Tell me about your experiences with experiential learning, or learning through career-related experiences, during your time in college?” (Appendix B), Graduate 1 said, “I’m gonna touch back on Faculty 4’s class because that was a great experience.” Graduate 1 went on in specific detail about the project their group did during the Social Media course.

I was in charge of the [social media], like solely in charge of the [it]... The business was [an agriculture product business]. . . I was like, “Okay, I’m gonna cook. I’m going to use the products. I’m going to show all this stuff. . . We made salads with the balsamic because we were doing an “product of the week” thing. We would announce it on Monday [and] we would say what to pair it with, then on Saturday I would cook and post it to [social media]. I ended up having a [post] that . . . had like 10,000 impressions, or

something like that. It was on National Spinach Day, and I tweeted something like #HappyNationalSpinachDay. Do you think it's a coincidence that the most famous consumer of spinach was in love with someone named Olive Oyl? [the owners] were like, "Oh my God. That Olive or Popeye's [post]—that was so cute." My mom, who was following the [social media] posts, texted and said she really liked the Popeye and Olive Oyl [post]. This made me know that I am learning because that's the target demographic for [the product] that we were trying to hit at; it was like the moms. So, the fact that they are just like, "This is so cute. I loved it"—it was awesome.

We can see from this hands-on HIPs experience that Graduate 1 was able to apply what they were learning in class and make it translate to a real-world experience. Graduate 1 was able to see that they were successful by the reactions from both the business owners as well as their own mother, all of which were in the demographics of who they were trying to reach in this social media post. This experience not only provided real-world experience, but also provided feedback that the student was able to reflect on.

Another graduate mentioned that it was the projects and experiences in Faculty 4's classes that helped link content to real-life experiences and specifically says, "What I remember the most was Faculty 4's classes because they were more experienced and [had] less tasks like reading and analyzing information. That's already out there because we can all do that on our own time" (Graduate 3). Graduate 3 also indicated the positive impact that Faculty 4 had on their choice of college major. Graduate 3 specifically said:

One of my introductory business courses was Intro to Marketing. That was one of the first ones, and I think I had Faculty 4 and I liked [them] and the way [they] taught.

Because I was kind of undecided and I knew business gave me a lot of options after college, I picked marketing . . . because of that class and Faculty 4's teaching.

With Graduate 3's response about instructors using HIPs and how it drew them to the program, we can see through both Graduate 1 and Graduate 3's stories that students prefer these meaningful and engaging career exploration experiences.

The Social Media class (MKT 347) that three of the students raved about, other students found the class very helpful in establishing career goals. Graduate 7 said the projects in the Social Media course helped them figure out areas within marketing that they did not want to pursue. Faculty 4's use of high impact practices helped students explore the marketing field and figure out different avenues they may or may not want to take a deeper dive into. Specifically, Graduate 7 said this about their experience with the Social Media course.

There was another class where we did social media marketing. We ran [food services businesses'] social medias for a little bit, made the posts, [and] we got photos. The experience I learned from that is I don't really like social media marketing.

Even though Graduate 7 completed the HIPs experiences, they discovered they did not enjoy this aspect of the marketing field. This does not mean that the HIPs were not successful or not effective in teaching the student as we can see that Graduate 7 found the HIPs a benefit in helping them determine which area of marketing they liked or disliked.

Even though not all students enjoyed their experience with the Social Media class, nearly all the graduates had influential, career-related experiences from taking the course. Faculty 4 was able to provide project-based coursework that engaged the students, which helped them experience what they may do daily working in social media marketing. Courses like the Social

Media class allow students to explore various areas of marketing and find an area they may want to pursue in the future.

Marketing Courses Provided Transferable Skills to Other Fields

Having spoken with two of the faculty during their interviews, it appears that some of the high impact practices may not have been listed in the courses' syllabi. In their interview Faculty 1 indicated that they use high impact practices as defined by Kuh (2008) and the AAC&U.

Faculty 1 said:

We have a lot of guest speakers, so that would be examining career choices as far as this definition of high impact practices [goes]. I've also seen that high impact practices can be like writing-intensive or course-long group projects. We do have those, but as far as ones that have to do with job shadows and things like that, we do not. I, especially in the intro class, try to bring in a lot of guest speakers [who] are former marketing majors [and who] are now working in marketing so that they can kind of see what all types of things people do with a marketing major.

Faculty 1 explains that they incorporate guest speakers into their courses as a way to connect students with business and industry. Guest speakers not only provide students with HIPs, but also incorporate career focused experiences as well. Faculty 1 mentions that they use writing intensive projects, which are another form of HIPs, but they do not necessarily have a career focused element like the guest speakers have. The writing intensive projects help build general or transferable skills that can be used in a variety of career fields.

One the sales side of the marketing major there seemed to be more integration of coursework that focused on what students may do in the sales field. Faculty 2 mentioned some of the high impact practices they use in their sales courses.

I am one of the leaders on campus with Riipen [“a work-based learning platform helping educators, organizations, and learners collaborate on real industry projects to bridge the gap between higher education and employment” (riipen.com)], which links students with companies that have projects. We’ve done probably about twenty projects in the last couple of years for companies around the world, using the Riipen platform. I also do a lot of work with artificial intelligence on the sales side. I have students do sales pitches to AI bots so that they can get experience and improve their pitching skills. . . . I [also] do a lot of project-based [assignments that students] work with if they’re not working through Riipen. . . . Right now, we’re doing a big case study in the sales class; in the negotiations class, the students are doing two mock negotiations: one is an apparel company in Canada trying to get their line expanded into the [US market]; the other exercise is a [logistics] firm [that] has twenty-five routes. They’re trying to buy sixty tractors from Freightliner. With that one, I’ve got the students working with the broker and the actual company.

Faculty 2 has the opportunity to teach more sales focused courses, which appear to have an easier time connecting with career-focused HIPs. Faculty 2 described many of the projects they use in class and many of them were not only technical skills, but also incorporated business and industry connections. Faculty 2 described that students are not only working on real-world problems, but also connecting with business personnel from across the country to help provide solutions to their problems. This helps students to connect to the career field beyond the local and regional experiences. Having the opportunity to work with national business can help students to better understand the labor markets in other parts of the country.

These project-based class activities and assignments help students better assimilate what they may be expected to do in the world of work. These projects not only help students build better connections to the class's content but also provide students with some foundational experience in completing sales-specific tasks. During the interview, Faculty 2 mentioned that students love the real-life connections and experience they make with the content during project-based learning.

Graduates Who Were Seeking Creative Marketing Jobs Could Not Find Sustainable Creative Marketing Positions

During the interviews, there seemed to be a division of students. There were those who liked the creative side of marketing and that was the area they wanted to work in. Then there were those who did not like the creative side of marketing, and they were the ones who had a better grasp on the sales side of marketing. During Faculty 2's interview, they said that they tell the students in a lower-level course, "If you want to be on the creative side [of marketing], like you want to be on the creative side of social media . . . you should be over in communications because that's what they teach you."

Those who had more interest in the creative side of marketing were the ones who indicated that they did not realize until after they started looking for employment at the end of their schooling that they would likely enter the marketing career field in sales. One creative graduate came to the realization during job hunting: "If I stick with marketing, it's not going to be like ad creation; it's going to be sales for at least the first couple of years" (Graduate 1).

Reflecting on their experience of trying to find a job in the marketing field after graduation, Graduate 1 was trying to process this unexpected idea that if they were going to work in the marketing field, it was not going to be on the creative side like they anticipated. The

realized they would be required to continue working on the sales side of the field before they would be able to transition into a creative role.

Graduate 1 was not the only one who experienced issues like this; another graduate recalled that it was during their “job searching [where they] start[ed] to realize that [they were] not qualified for a lot of jobs other than sales jobs or very entry-level marketing positions that didn’t pay very well” (Graduate 7).

As Graduate 7 experienced similar issues and explained, some entry-level positions wanted applicants to have specific skills with certain applications. Graduate 7 mentioned that this made it difficult to find entry-level marketing jobs without actually having any prior work experience in marketing. Both Graduate 1 and Graduate 7 were students hoping to find positions on the creative side of the marketing field, and both Graduate 1 and Graduate 7 mentioned the low wages that they came across during the job hunt.

Difficult During College to be Proficient in the Many Skills of the Marketing Field

Both the faculty and graduates recognized that the marketing field is a broad topic. Faculty 1 said, “Marketing is extremely varied, and so that’s one of the things I like—you can be super analytical and there’s positions for you, or you can be super creative and there’s positions for you.” Even though the graduates agreed that the major was broad, one graduate said, “I took marketing because it’s a general major and I can do anything with it; I didn’t choose it because [I] specifically wanted to do marketing” (Graduate 6). Other graduates did not feel as enthusiastic about the broad major and indicated that the vastness of the field was a turnoff. Graduate 6 reflected on the broad field and said, “There’s no way to really prepare you in the marketing field because there’s so many different areas.”

Other graduates felt that their lack of previous work experience in any avenue of marketing was an issue when searching for jobs. Graduate 7 reflected on how they felt about the field of marketing being a broad major and how it impacted their job search.

A lot of marketing jobs are either sales or some of them are advertising or some of them are data analytics. I just felt really unprepared to go after any of those roles initially out of college without building a few years of real-world work experience.

This is another reason why experiential learning can be a benefit to a student's educational experience. Experiential learning can help students to develop a deep understanding of the content and help them build confidence to be prepared to apply for positions in the marketing field.

Graduates' Transitions to Careers Seemed to be Challenging

Four of the participants interviewed said that if they could go back, they would completely change their major, or at least double major. One graduate who would have selected a different field of study says, "I probably would [not] have done marketing. Just 'cause in my opinion, marketing [is] too broad" (Graduate 7). A few of the participants initially said they chose marketing because it was a general business-type degree, but on the back end, the major was so broad, it was hard to focus and refine skills in just one area. Graduate 6 says, "I felt like I learned more in my first year in the real world than I did all through school. Just on the personal relationships with businesses."

Only two of the ten participants interviewed said they checked job boards on a regular basis. The other eight all appeared happy in their current positions and planned on staying on their current career trajectory. A couple of participants mentioned that someday they may try to get back into some type of job that is related to the marketing field and hoped that their time

working in a different career field would not hinder them from possibly coming back to marketing.

Addressing Real-World Problems

Another theme that emerged through the interviews was the use of real experience, or real-life applications, in the coursework. Faculty 2 said through teaching they have found that “students love the real problems.” Real problems can help the students build skills that will be applicable to what they might see in the career field. Real problems will also help build general skills like problem-solving, networking, and communication. The graduates interviewed also indicated that they liked these experiences. Graduate 3 said they appreciated the courses that used projects, “specifically the ones where [they] got to go do something in the real world.”

Projects and assignments are not the only connections students can get to the real world of work. Real-world experiences that others share with the students can also have a positive impact on them. Three of the graduates interviewed said that the marketing professors had previous experiences in industry, and they saw this as a benefit to their education. “Having professors [who] were in the marketing field that one time was really beneficial just to kind of see the trajectory. I will say that their experiences are dated compared to what marketing is now” (Graduate 4). One graduate appreciated the specific career-related experiences and backgrounds that faculty brought to the classroom. Graduate 10 also found professors’ previous experience in the field beneficial; they said, “Having a professor of that caliber [who] actually has experience within an industry is extremely helpful, especially when you’re [in] your junior [or] senior year and you’re trying to figure out the next step after college.”

Throughout the interviews, graduates mentioned how competitive and difficult it is to transition into a career field after graduation. All the graduates noted, in one way or another, that

gaining more experiences in college would help build a resume and possibly make that transition easier. Graduate 8 had a suggestion for students: “I would really want to encourage students to get more experience hands-on as a student . . . just going to class is not enough. . . . Don’t wait [until] the fourth year to go get that experience; go get it whenever you can.”

Skills Graduates Were Lacking for Current Jobs

Students who entered the marketing major and were interested in the creative side of marketing did not recall having taken sales courses. Graduate 1 specifically recalled that they did not take any sales courses as part of their course selection; they said, “Unfortunately, the sales side of things . . . was actually an elective.” The graduates who were more open to the sales side of marketing were the participants who indicated they did take specific sales courses. Graduate 6 said even though they took sales courses, these did not really help them enter a sales job. Graduate 6 reflected on their experiences and said they took one sales class, but “it wasn’t realistic because a majority of sales isn’t about how you’re selling; that’s just a small portion. It’s actually having the drive to go out and meet people, go out and call people, go out and find people, because most people aren’t willing to make one hundred cold calls a day.” This is important to note: being successful in sales is, in part, just having drive and ambition.

Some students found that through their college experience, the world of work looked different than they were prepared for. Graduate 3 recalled when they first entered their current role that some of the skills they learned in college, like time management and organization, now were not adequate for the business world:

My biggest struggle was staying organized in multiple different initiatives [and] that the priority could shift at any given time because if something comes up, you have to immediately redirect. Then also staying organized when those events happen and

[knowing] how to get back on track after there's been kind of chaos. Especially because reflecting back on college, it was kind of like semesters would ramp up and you [would] get to finals and you [would], like, cram. Then as soon as you finish your final, you're done and you move on. That was my biggest struggle with this job is you're never really done, and if you don't solve it well enough, then you're just creating more issues.

Graduate 3 found that deadlines and project timelines in the workplace did not match that which they saw in college. In college your workload would ramp up towards the end of the semester and when the ramp up was over everything was dropped and then pivoted to the next semester's course work. This is very different from what Graduate 3 sees in their work environment where one project maybe ramped up, and then another issue occurs, and they have to change focus from one project to another. Unlike in college a project may appear to be completed, but other issues may arise, and one would need to be able to pick up where that project left off last time and continue to work to make the project better.

In addition to the general transferable skills that marketing students obtain during college, some students found that they were deficient in some of the technical or specific skills that were directly related to the marketing field. Graduate 5 recalled their transition into the workforce, and the jobs that were posted as entry-level jobs wanted applicants to have specific previous experiences:

I'm not sure if just the degree is oversaturated, but it does seem like a lot of entry-level marketing positions that you see job postings for online do ask for some very specific experience with a particular program. I feel it is a lot to ask of people just getting done with college, and . . . I'm sure that's a reflection of the sheer amount of people who have

marketing degrees. Maybe that just means that it is simply oversaturated. I'm not entirely certain.

Graduate 5's quote mentions oversaturation of graduates in the marketing field. This may be a phenomenon that is causing graduates looking for jobs in a specific area of marketing to not be able to find or secure jobs in their desired area of the career field. Graduate 5 mentions that entry level jobs want applicants to already have experience using position specific application or programs. What Graduate 5 alludes to is that because there are so many applicants with marketing degrees applying for the open positions, companies are using technology requirements to wean out less qualified applicants.

Graduates Wished They Had Better Preparation to Find Quality Internships

Another theme that appeared during this project was the idea that graduates wished they had better preparations during college to find quality internship experiences. This theme was present in a variety of forms, and one was students wished they would have completed an internship during college, and others wished they had more ability to complete a better-quality internship. One student who had internship regret reflected on what an internship could have helped with during their transition to the career field:

I didn't do an internship in college . . . that's something I would have pushed for because getting out of college with no real work experience is very challenging. If you go through and you look at every job post for an entry-level job for a marketing major, nobody's asking for somebody with no experience. It says one to three years for every job. When you get out, you feel like you're at the bottom, and I imagine people [who] worked a real job, completed an internship, or participated in certain clubs, those would have given them real-world experience that would have put them on top. (Graduate 9)

Graduate 9's quote indicates that they did not fully understand the benefits of completing an internship during college. Reflecting back Graduate 9 can see how an internship may have provided them some previous experience to list on their resume and application. An internship may not give years of experience, but it would give more experience than other applicants who did not complete an internship.

When it comes to internships, it is not just about if a graduate completed one during college or not. There were two of the ten graduates who completed their internship experience outside the field of marketing. As the internship course was not a general type of course but was one that was specifically in the marketing department. One would think that this would indicate that the internship would need to be in a field related to the major. One of the graduates who perceived themselves as mismatched for their internship recalls this:

I did an internship junior year in a completely different industry—within manufacturing. I interned at a direct-mail printing company. I found getting an internship was actually quite tough. I sent out like two hundred applications and really only heard from three . . . realistically, I would have wanted to have interned somewhere else. I just don't think I had the right support at the time to get an internship [in a business field]. (Graduate 10)

Graduate 10 appeared to do their due diligence with applying for a large number of internships. Through this graduate interview they seemed to have done their due diligence when applying for their internship. The mismatch in Graduate 10's internship did not appear to be caused by a lack of trying. Completing an internship outside of a direct marketing role had this participant feeling as though they were not yielding all of the benefits of a marketing internship. The fear here is that a mismatched internship could lead to a future mismatched career.

Another graduate was unsure of how the internship could affect their future employment. Graduate 5 did not want the internship to lock them into a specific career track when they were not sure which areas they wanted to pursue after graduation. Graduate 5 said this about why they did not pursue an internship in college:

My interests were so broad, and I felt, at the time, that interning in something was possibly going to pigeonhole me into that kind of career. Of course, that's not correct.

But as a young person [who] is not the most familiar with life outside of education, at the time, I felt that it was kind of pigeonholing me. So that was one reason why I didn't explore any internships.

Graduate 5 mentioned that they were unaware of how things worked outside of academics. This makes sense, as most traditional students go from high school to college without much time spent understanding how the real world actually works once they leave college. This tracks back to how the transition from college to career starts before graduates enter college and the need for institutions to help students start the transition to work early on.

Coursework in the Marketing Program Provided Some Connections to Businesses and Professionals

Both Faculty 1 and Faculty 2 said they utilized guest speakers in their courses. Both faculty indicated that they typically bring in former students who work in the marketing field in larger companies as well as small-business owners from the community. The graduates confirmed what the two faculty members said about most of the guest speakers being former students talking about their current positions in the marketing field. Graduate 5 recalled having guest speakers in classes, indicating that guest speakers “happened pretty frequently within marketing [courses]. They did have previous graduates step in and say what they're doing

nowadays.” During the interviews, it came across that the former students who were guest speakers came on campus to talk with current students. Graduate 7 recalled that not only former students working in marketing were brought in as guest speakers, but they remember that small-business owners would also be brought on campus. Graduate 7 specifically said this about the guest speakers who were small-business owners:

One of them owned . . . a small business, a fairly successful business. But in my opinion, those don't really prep you for what you're going to be doing because unless you're going to start your own company, they're pretty far removed from it.

Graduate 7's perspective of the small business owners who were guest speakers provided an unrealistic perspective on marketing careers. Graduate 7 went on to mention that small businesses owners gave perspectives of the marketing field from an entrepreneurial point of view. Graduate 7 indicated that being a small business owner was not something they had an interest in at the time. Guest speakers who are small business owners may provide a unique perspective into the marketing career field, but this type of guest speaker may need to be few and far between as students are looking to enter work after graduation and not necessarily start a business.

Guest speakers were not the only way that students built connections to industry personnel. There was an array of student clubs on campus that students could join and learn more about the business world. Only one of the participants interviewed participated in a cocurricular club related to marketing. Graduate 10 recalled having participated in the marketing club. There were a few students who were part of some student groups that were not listed by the two marketing faculty members who were interviewed. Graduate 4 recalled being part of a sports business group that provided interaction with business and industry: “We went on some trips—

went to Minneapolis and toured the Twins's facility [and] the Timberwolves's facility.” Two other students mentioned being part of a social fraternity called Alpha Kappa Psi; Graduate 8 described it as a “‘business fraternity’ where students learn how to be more professional.”

Four of the graduates interviewed who did not participate in any club, group, or business fraternity expressed that if they had to do it all over again, they would join clubs and organizations during college. Reflecting back, Graduate 2 said, “I would have joined more clubs and organizations because . . . now that I think about it, I think it would be a good idea for me to join them because they're really good for networking.” Graduate 2 went on to say that they see graduates on LinkedIn who were in the clubs during college, and they seem to have a large network of connections.

Faculty's Influence on Students' Perspectives on Sales

One theme that emerged early on was when graduates knew that they were likely to start in a sales position when entering the marketing field. Both faculty indicated that students were introduced early on to the idea that entry-level marketing jobs were going to be sales related. Faculty 1 covered sales as a unit from the course textbook in a lower-level marketing course. Faculty 2 said in one of their entry-level marketing courses, they have a class discussion on entry-level jobs aligning with sales positions.

Even though both faculty said they introduce this notion early in the program coursework, a couple of graduates indicated that it was not until they started applying for jobs in the marketing field that they realized they would have to start in sales. Graduate 1 recalled, “[It was] about halfway through that last semester when I was like, ‘Okay, everything that I’m getting a call back on is in regard to sales.’” Another graduate recalled a similar situation and

said it was “pretty early on when [they] started into the job market. It was either sales or very entry-level marketing jobs” (Graduate 4).

A few other graduates seemed to have a grasp earlier on that sales positions would be required. This seemed to be correlated with students who were not as interested in the creative side of marketing. Graduate 6 said they knew early on in their education but said, “Most marketing students don’t understand. If you want to make any money in marketing, you have to go into sales.”

Graduates Wished They Would Have Networked More with Business Professionals

After graduating, one of the biggest benefits for finding a job is who you know or who you have come in contact with through your experiences. There is the old catchphrase of “It’s who you know, not what you know” that drives home the idea that networking is a critical part of transitioning from college to the career field. Building a network with businesses and people who work in the industry can potentially help students during and after college. During the interviews, there seemed to be a trend of students having a desire to have more networking opportunities during college. One graduate reflected on their desire to have a better network:

I have thought about if joining the business fraternity would have helped with networking or connections. I really didn’t do that until the end of my last year, and that’s why I did a last-ditch effort for an internship that I hated. I actually look back and try to think about how I could have redone college that would have helped me. (Graduate 3)

Graduate 3’s quote addresses the students desire to have connection to business and industry especially as they begin the job search. Graduate 3 acknowledge that there was more they could have done on their end by participating in the clubs and business fraternities on campus. Graduate 3 did not realize that they should be more involved in the co-curricular clubs

until it was late in their education which did not provide much time to take advantage of these opportunities.

During the interviews, students seemed to connect networking and internships; this is evident in what Graduate 3 stated above and how they believed that not having a strong network may have contributed to their internship experience. Another graduate reflected on internship and networking and said, “I definitely would have tried to network more and definitely would have tried to pursue better internships earlier on. I think that is a big part of getting a good start in your career” (Graduate 7).

Skills Obtained During School That May be Transferred to Other Fields

The majority of the graduates interviewed indicated that college helped them develop their soft skills, such as time management, teamwork, strategic and critical thinking, and communication. These skills are ones that are necessary to have for many different career fields. One graduate mentioned this about some general skills gained in college:

So, time management, you know how to professionally interact with people; for instance, if you do a new group project in school, you know how to be productive in a meeting, how to get people together. (Graduate 9)

These soft skills are skills that do not just apply to the marketing field but are skills that could be applied in any career field and help build a foundation for lifelong learning. The students who were not working in a marketing-related field said that they had to use lifelong learning skills to gain the technical skills they were lacking for their current job.

Graduate 3 and Graduate 9 specifically cited using Google and YouTube to try and problem-solve and learn what they did not know how to do. In addition, these same two

graduates also cited peer learning or seeking out help from individuals from within the company to build their skills. One graduate reflected on learning technical skills for their job and said this:

When I got put where I direct technical projects and where I need to know about [the technical projects], I was more or less lost and spent a lot of time on Google and YouTube. It was self-learning. It was a lot of finding the smart guy [who] works in the company and asking him questions when I have his time. (Graduate 9)

Graduate 9 found themselves using self-learning techniques to learn technical skills needed for their job outside the marketing career field. Being willing to learn on our own and knowing how to find quality information is an important aspect of being a life-long learner and are skills that can be transferred to a wide range of career fields.

Other graduates used various techniques to gain the needed skills for their current positions. One graduate used a technique called “Fake it till you make it” so as not to appear incompetent at their job. Graduate 3 said, “I am the [master] of ‘Fake it till you make it.’ I just smile and say yes whenever anyone asks me something and I figure it out later.”

General Skills are What Graduates Indicate are Most Transferable

One skill that graduates seemed to have refined during their college experience was the skill needed to be a lifelong learner or self-learner. Most of the participants found themselves working outside the marketing field, which required them to acquire additional skills after graduation. This ability to continue to learn after formal education may be a critical transferable skill for marketing graduates. I took marketing because it’s a general major and I can do anything with it” (Graduate 6). Graduate 6 went on to say, “I knew that I’d be doing a majority of on-the-job learning.” This attitude Graduate 6 has toward knowing that they will likely have to learn more once they get on the job is critical to being a lifelong learner. This attitude allows one

to be open enough to be teachable, which can be desirable for employers. In addition to on-the-job training, several graduates found themselves learning new skills needed for the job on their own. One graduate enrolled in a training program, two sought peer-learning opportunities, and others used the internet to learn new skills. Graduate 9 reflected on their lifelong learning skills. They said this about entering a career outside the marketing field:

[At work] we do a lot of stuff with running ethernet cable, so I actually went out and I bought some of the tools I needed to do that stuff myself, and I ran an ethernet cable in my house just to see how it worked. I guess coming into the job was the hardest thing because I didn't actually have the knowledge or skills. (Graduate 9)

Being a lifelong learner was not the only transferable skill that marketing graduates gained during college, as was mentioned previously. Faculty 1 mentioned that they use high impact practices in their courses, specifically assignments and projects that are writing intensive, which help build communication skills. Graduate 5 reflected on their communication skills that they gained during college and said this:

One thing that I really improved upon going through [my] marketing education was my communication skills. I think I wasn't a terrible writer by any means going into college, but I do think that it really allowed me to excel in that. That was one big takeaway because I think that that is a skill that's leverage in most, if not all, careers. Additionally, I think that I was very good at presenting professionally during college and after college and communicating with people face to face. I'm not even talking about specific marketing skills; I guess I'm just talking about the general skills that you'll learn in a lot of different disciplines of writing and presenting professionally.

Graduate 5's quote helps to show how the writing intensive project that Faculty 1 uses in their course fosters the general skills that are transferable to many different career fields. Being a good communicator through both oral and written communication is a benefit in any job.

Hard/Technical Skills

There were skills that graduates wished they had been able to cultivate more during college. There were two graduates who specifically mentioned that they wished they would have had more classwork and training in the use of Excel. They noted that they had some basic coursework in OfficeSuite applications, but when they got on the job, they were lacking specifically with analyzing data using Excel. In addition to specific technical applications like Excel, Graduate 3 indicated they struggled with the procedural skills of interacting with different departments inside a corporation. Graduate 3 said this about their experience:

Another thing that I really struggled with right away was knowing how to work with finance, security, or like those [departments]. It's a corporate job; it's not business strategy thinking, so I didn't know how to take what I knew and converse with other parts that were equally responsible for projects.

Graduate 3's quote indicates that they struggled to know how to work with other business field departments once they entered the career field. This was not a communication deficiency, but a disconnect in knowing how different areas of business operate and knowing the terminology that is different from the marketing field.

One graduate reflected on their experience of seeking a job working for a large high-end corporation with their marketing degree and the struggles and lack of skills they had. Graduate 10 indicated that their desire to work in corporate business was hindered by the transition to career process. Graduate 10 indicated that some of their struggles of getting hired at a top-tier

company may have been due to the institution They attended and the marketing program not having the national recognition that other business schools in the country have. From the literature review, we know that the transition to work starts as early as applying for college, and what Graduate 10 said about their experience solidifies what the literature says:

A lot of those kids [who] I'm working with are from Ivy League schools, right, like Yale or HBCU's Morehouse [College]. You find that's what these bigger companies are looking for. If [the university] is trying to position themselves to have future leaders . . . there's a lot of different things that [the university] does well, but if it's prepping kids for their dream jobs, I'm not sure if you're getting the skills that you really need to have a real shot at a Goldman Sachs or a Black Rock of the world for those kids [who] do want those opportunities.

Graduate 10 may have had bigger aspirations than what this marketing program could provide them. Graduate 10 mentions in their quote that many of the other employees at their company have degrees from top-tier business schools. I would imagine that it would be difficult for most marketing graduates to compete with other applicants who graduated from top level business schools. This may be an issue where a student attended college in the Midwest but had goals of working for a big firm in New York City. The education institution and career goals do not align.

The data that has been presented provides detailed reporting of the participants' perceptions. In efforts to make the data easier to examine I created a table that lists the various themes and the data for each specific participant. This presentation of the data can be found in Table 3.

Table 3*Findings*

Themes	Participants										
	Grad 1	Grad 2	Grad 3	Grad 4	Grad 5	Grad 6	Grad 7	Grad 8	Grad 9	Grad 10	
Graduates Had the Necessary Skills to Transition to Careers Outside the Marketing Field	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Some Graduates Found the Transition From College To Work a Difficult Experience	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
Graduates Wish They Had Better Preparation to Find Quality Internships.	X		X		X				X	X	
Graduates Who Were Seeking Creative Marketing Jobs Could Not Find Sustainable Creative Marketing Positions	X	X	X				X				

Discussion

This section will discuss the findings of the research within the context of literature and professional practice. There are a few items that came up during the interviews that will specifically be reflected on and analyzed in this section. Those items will be analyzed with respect to the themes identified in the literature review. This section is organized based on previously identified research questions. I will also be discussing the research through the lens of career development. Career development is critical during college, and Graduate 3 noted that they did not start working on career development until their last year of college.

How is the selected program facilitating entrance into careers?

Sales. During interviews for this project, the topic of sales jobs being many marketing professionals' first jobs as they enter the career field kept coming up. With participants and faculty mentioning how many entry-level positions are sales positions, the topic of sales courses during college came up. One participant noted that they perceived sales specific courses within the marketing program tend to be upper-level elective courses. When courses specifically designed around sales are elective courses, this may add to the graduates' false expectations of career expectations and career trajectories of marketing majors. Students who perceive the creative side of marketing is where they want to end up will likely not enroll in sales courses if the courses are electives. Looking through the university's website and examining the marketing degree requirements, I was able to confirm that the sales courses in the program are elective courses. It also appears that the sales-related courses are 300 and 400 level courses, implying that these are courses that are taken toward the end of the degree's program. From the interviews, I noticed that the participants who wanted to pursue the creative side of marketing were not prepared for the reality that they would likely have to start in a sales position when entering the

marketing field. Because many entry-level jobs in marketing involve sales, those students who do not take the elective sales courses will experience a disconnect between what college has prepared graduates for and what graduates are seeing in the labor market. Students who think sales is not the direction they want to take in their career may find the transition to work frustrating as all they find are sales-related positions. This frustration would have the greatest effect on graduates who did not take the elective sales courses and is another factor that may lead to horizontal mismatch in marketing graduates. Cummins et al. (2015) indicate, “Sales is still the most common first job for marketing students, employing 32 percent of new graduates” (p. 25).

Faculty 1 said that the marketing program now has a few different sales options that students can choose to minor in. They said that the marketing department decided to add some different sales minors, as students perceive that marketing and sales were two different fields. This faculty member clarified this by saying, “Marketing is the larger umbrella, and sales is a part of marketing.” These sales minors are relatively new and have been in the course catalog for about two years, according to what was indicated during this interview. The two-year time frame, unfortunately, falls outside the selection of the graduates interviewed for this study.

Labor Market Conditions. Graduates 1, 3, 7, 9, and 10 noted how competitive and difficult it is to transition into a career field after graduation. Comments like this from the participants show a disconnect between students’ thoughts, what students are experiencing in courses, and what trends in the labor market indicate. Marketing students could benefit from the incorporation of labor market statistics or labor market trends into their coursework. Graduates who have a better grasp on current labor market trends within marketing may have a smoother transition from college to career. Graduates who better understand the labor market during college could have focused or pinpointed specific skills that would have better positioned them

to be more competitive when applying for marketing positions. Students being exposed to labor market conditions is a critical aspect of career development, and from the literature review, Komarraju et al. (2014) suggest that career development and exploration will contribute to students and graduates making better decisions about their careers. As we saw in this study, not many students participated in the clubs and organizations, which helps confirm what was found through Bridgstock et al. (2019) and Helens-Hart (2019), who suggest that career exploration works best when it is incorporated into a curriculum. This makes the exploration required rather than an optional or elective-type experience.

Jobs on the creative side of marketing labor market may be especially important for students to explore during the related courses. A reason that applicants who desire to work on the creative side of marketing should explore labor markets is to identify if certain areas of the field may have over saturation of candidates applying for those positions making obtaining a creative job competitive. If a student can identify labor market trends in the area they want to pursue early in their education, they can better position themselves through course work and experience for the creative marketing jobs when they become available, or maybe students will choose to pivot and pursue a different area of the marketing field to focus on.

High impact Practices. High impact practices (HIPs) are an effective way to engage students with the curriculum. Through the literature review, we know that Kuh (2008) suggests that more students could benefit from more integration of high impact practices into a curriculum, as most students do not get enough high impact educational experiences. One thing that came up during the faculty interviews was defining high impact practices, and Faculty 1 mentioned they use different high impact practices than what was on the list I provided during the interview questions (Appendix D). I went out to the resource that Faculty 1 provided at the

American Association of Colleges and Universities (n.d.). The AAC&U does list writing-intensive courses as high impact practices along with a few other activities that are not as career intensive as the HIPs examples I used for interviewing the participants. The AAC&U (n.d.) said this about writing intensive courses: “Repeated practice ‘across the curriculum’ has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry” (writing-intensive courses). The AAC&U (n.d.) does a good job of illustrating how writing-intensive courses can impact students’ experiences and foster general transferable-type skills.

One type of high impact, career-focused practice that was utilized by the marketing program was the use of guest speakers. The specific guest speakers [who] are used in the marketing classes may be limiting, as students only gain perspectives from hearing from students who went through the same program they did and then after graduation stayed and worked in close proximity to the campus. If guest speakers are coming to campus to speak to classes, this would imply that these speakers are within driving distance of campus and may only share experiences of students who work in one type of setting such as rural or urban, depending on the physical location of the campus. This location-bound issue may skew current students’ ideas of the type of jobs in marketing if they are trying to find jobs in large top-tier companies. In addition, using marketing graduates as the guest speakers may give a limited point of view as a marketing professional who came up through the same academic program that current students are in.

What are graduates' perceptions of college's role in career preparation?

Internship. Internships are an essential part of career exploration as indicated by the Halstead & Lare (2018) study. Internships help students better navigate the career field, and the Galbraith & Mondal (2020) study indicates that career performance can be credited to completing an appropriate internship. In this study there were participants who found themselves completing an internship in an unrelated field or with a company they did not care for. Through the interviews, there was a general perception that the internship, or lack of one, may have played a role in students finding a position in a well-matched job. Graduate 10 found themselves completing an internship outside of marketing, and not for the lack of applying for other opportunities. Some graduates may not think an internship is for them and may put off completing one. Graduate 3 found themselves in an internship they did not like because they did not put in much effort to secure an experience earlier on.

Students should be preparing for an internship during all stages of their education. If students are reminded often about their roles in having a successful internship, students may take the process more seriously. I do not know the specifics about how internship experiences are presented to students, but I also know that students often tune out information that is not relevant at the moment. If students get hints and details about internships throughout their lower-level classes, when they reach upper-level status, they may be better prepared for securing the experience. In this marketing program an internship is not required like it is in other programs such as education, but what if it were pushed on students like it was required? With assignments and projects including an aspect of connection to an internship? If the idea of doing an internship was present in all things, this may make students more aware of their part in securing a quality internship.

Advising.

Student advising, both academic and career, is done in a central student services department in the business college. We saw in the literature review that the Lynch & Lungrin (2018) article found, “Faculty are in an advantageous position to advise students by helping them relate coursework and out-of-class experiences to future career goals” (p. 74). With the faculty not actively participating in student advising, it may cause a disconnect because faculty would know both the student and career field best. Faculty’s perspectives on course suggestions for students may differ from what professional advisors’ recommendations would be for course selections to prepare the students to be competitive in the labor market. Career advisors working with marketing students do not necessarily have real-world experience working in the field. This can be problematic as students might not get the entire picture when working with the career advisors. This disconnect can add to students’ and graduates’ unrealistic expectations when it comes to landing a job in the marketing field.

Salespersonship.

Some skills that marketing students need to possess to be successful in any career field are more character and personality skills, rather than a skill that one would learn through traditional classroom work. It was mentioned that one aspect marketing graduates may not be prepared for is in the sales area of marketing—the endless soliciting and trying to attract new customers. The only way to prepare graduates to excel in the skills of soliciting new customers would be to have students practice this skill repeatedly. It is necessary for students to practice in order to become proficient in the skills needed to be successful in sales. Faculty 2 does well to incorporate practicing these skills in class through a variety of assignments, such as sales role-

play and various applications and Artificial Intelligence (AI) software, to help students practice and apply their learning.

Difficult to Focus on a Specific Area of Marketing.

Graduate 6 was not the only one to mention that marketing is a broad field. With graduates' and faculty's perspectives of the marketing field including a wide range of job possibilities, graduates may find themselves not feeling qualified for marketing positions because their coursework covered a vast array of marketing topics and did not provide in-depth training in one particular sector of marketing. Pathways could help students explore and identify a particular area in the marketing field that they want to pursue. We know from what was indicated in the literature review and the Mathur et al. (2018) article that pathways are used at the all levels of post-secondary education. Career exploration or career development activities like job shadows or field experiences could help students make a confident decision about a marketing pathway or tracks they choose. Having a broad field of study aligned with a broad career field can cause uncertainty and negatively affect students' and graduates' career self-efficacy.

The participants in this study all seemed content with their current positions which they perceived to be outside marketing. There were one or two participants who said they still actively check job boards. One was looking for marketing jobs, and the other was open to jobs in marketing, finance, or accounting. Overall, the group as a whole was happy with their current jobs and career trajectories. The most negative perception I picked up was that most of the mismatched graduates felt like there was only one or two classes in their major that helped them in their current job. I think if graduates could go through their college courses and experiences with a fine-tooth comb, they would find that there was more coursework to help them in their

current jobs. Many of those experiences that may be overlooked are ones that lead to general or transferable skills.

Future Research

This dissertation project was informative but had its limitations. One limitation in this project was connecting with students. Because I was only able to secure one graduate to contact me with a professor's help, I had to make contact with the other nine through social media and email. I believe most graduates were hesitant to respond to my social media and email messaging as it could be perceived as a scam- or phishing-type message. I know that graduates whom I contacted through LinkedIn were getting my messages as LinkedIn indicates when users are online. I sent many messages to graduates who LinkedIn said were online at the time I sent the message, but I never received a response from them. The graduates should have had a message notification pop up when they were on the social media platform. Again, there was no real way for the graduates I messaged to know I was a legitimate person contacting them seeking their information. I believe if I were a faculty member rather than a graduate student conducting this research, that may have had a greater influence on graduates' perception of the study, and I may have had better luck with recruiting participants.

Another limitation that appeared during the study was the division of participants in the marketing field. There was a division of those who wanted to work on the creative side of marketing and those who did not want to work on the creative side; rather they wanted to work more on the sales side of the marketing field. This was a limitation as the participants upon graduation were looking for different types of jobs even though they both fall into the marketing career field. The sales or non-creative type jobs appeared to be much more prevalent as participants transitioned from college to career.

Reflecting on what has been done in this project, future research of marketing graduates should include studying programs that offer sales minors and what impact that has on graduates who are mismatched. I would suspect that a sales minor is still an elective, and those students who are more focused on the creative side of marketing may still opt not to minor in sales. Future research should include studying marketing programs that offer pathways or tracks and examine if the pathways or tracks help to better align graduates' fields of study to their jobs. I would suspect that offering students pathways in the marketing field would have increased congruence as students would have more intense training and career preparation in that one area of marketing.

Implications for Practice

Through the process of this study, I developed four recommendations I would like to propose for marketing programs to consider. These recommendations would help create congruence between marketing students' fields of study and the world of work. These recommendations are not major overhauls to the program but would require time for planning and budgeting that would need to be considered.

Proposal one is to utilize field experience as job-shadow-type course assignments or encourage more students to enroll in the field experience course that is already an elective course in this marketing program. I would recommend that students complete this course as early in their schooling as they can. This could also help prepare students to be more prepared when it comes to the internship course. Field experiences would help students get out and see what marketing professionals do at work in a typical day. The field experience will also help students network with business professionals more during their college experience. There was evidence in the data collected that those participants (Graduates 1, 2, 9) who did not do an internship, if they

could go back, would have completed one. Proposal one get students early on in the education to start working through the ideas of completing an internship. Getting the students early in their schooling to start processing the idea of completing an internship may also help students to be prepared to secure higher quality internships in the field of study. We saw in the data collected that Graduate 3 and Graduate 10 both desired to have better quality of internship experiences related directly to the marketing field.

Proposal two is to have a required sales course that all marketing students must take. It would be wise not only to require students to take a sales course but make it a lower-level sales course so students are exposed to sales much earlier in their studies. This lower-level sales course could explore all different areas of sales and help students refine what area of sales they would like to pursue in upper-level courses. This will help to reinforce sales as a part of marketing and will hopefully help catch students less off guard when they start applying for jobs after graduation.

Proposal two was developed from what was found in the data of this study. With some participants struggling to know that they would be required to work in sales when entering the marketing career field, and participants like Graduate 1 who never took a sales course because they were upper-level elective courses. Proposal two requires all marketing students to take a sales course during their program of study.

Proposal three is to help students start to build a network with various professionals. Creating a LinkedIn account during one course is not enough to help the students build industry connections. One option to increase students encountering more marketing professionals could be through the increased use of guest speakers. Guest speakers could be used in more areas of the course content to provide relevant connections between theory and practice. Using more guest

speakers would also provide students with a broader spectrum of what marketing professionals do on a daily basis. Another option to achieve more connections with marketing professionals could be to assign students a mentor whom they could work with throughout college and their transition to career. One way to do this is to connect marketing alumni to current marketing students to mentor and work one-on-one with them. Over the years the mentors could be cycled through as new graduates are entering the labor force each year.

In the data collected, participants indicated wish they had a stronger or larger network of business professionals. Proposal three offers a few solutions to participants' desires to building a professional network during college. The data indicated that the participants perceived that having a better network with business and industry personnel may have helped them when entering the career field.

Proposal four is to help students explore the labor market more in depth through class assignments, projects, and an increased use of guest speakers. Each course in the program could strive to incorporate one or two assignments that have students analyze the current job market in course-related marketing fields. Students could use this analysis to help them better identify an area of marketing they would like to focus on. Students could then better align themselves during college with specific marketing-related jobs they have identified. This may allow students to take coursework focusing on a specific field they would like to work in, and it could prepare them during college to get the necessary experiences and trainings in specific software for jobs in that sector of marketing. From the literature review, the Cotner (2021) study indicates the, students who study the labor market have a better grasp on what they can expect after graduation with regard to wages, benefits, and job demand.

The data collected for this study indicated that participants did not have a good grasp on what the marketing labor market looked like for the area of the field they wanted to work in. By having students study and search the job market early in their education it may help them have better expectations of what they can expect to find in the labor market after graduation.

This study examined participants' perceptions of their experiences in college. With studying the perspectives of graduates the data may be skewed to reflect what graduates recall about their experiences and may not capture the full picture of what was taught in the courses. As with most things in life, to retain knowledge must be willing to accept and apply what is being taught. Students may hear or learn something, but if they do not apply it or find a way to connect with what was taught the knowledge may be lost or fade quickly.

Conclusion

In this section I introduced the case that was used during this study. I laid out specifications for recruiting participants. I reported on the ten graduates who were working in mismatched jobs that I was able to recruit for this study. I laid out my research methodology and conducted one-on-one interviews using semi-structured questions to collect data. I analyzed and synthesized the data and developed four themes and categories that represented the data collected. I described the findings and categorized them based on the research questions. I discussed the findings of the study and what the findings indicated. I laid out implications for practice, which gave four recommendations that marketing programs could do to help prevent mismatch. In Artifact III, I will introduce a solution for marketing programs to utilize to help increase major-to-job congruence.

ARTIFACT III: IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE

Artifact III of this project is the creation of a solution for issues found during this project. Artifact III is a course syllabus for a one-credit introductory course in marketing. The idea of this course is that it would be a required course for all students and would be taken as soon as possible (the next semester) after students declare marketing as their major. This course would cover different careers in the marketing profession and would use guest speakers for the main content of the course. The course would use discussion boards and have a class project where students would complete a job shadow experience.

Audience

This course syllabus is designed for departments and faculty to use and adapt to meet the specific needs of their institution. This introductory course could be implemented at any institution offering a marketing program. The type and size of institution would affect who teaches the course and how the course is taught. With the exception of someone to teach the course, there is little cost associated with offering this course.

Considerations

There could be potential limitations implementing a course like this for some university programs. Not all marketing programs have the same resources and options for implementing a course like the one presented. This section will address some of the potential limitations and attempt to provide alternative options offering a course like this one.

One option would be to utilize graduate students to teach this introductory-level marketing course. One limitation with this option is that not all institutions offer specific

graduate programs in marketing. At some institutions, the only related graduate program that is offered may be a Master of Business Administration (MBA). An MBA graduate student may not have a background in marketing and potentially could only have one or two courses in their MBA program that focus on marketing. Although a traditional MBA graduate student could be used to teach this course, it may depend on the graduate student. It could also give the MBA student some insight to the academic world and encourage them to pursue doctorate level education. The option of having graduate students teach this course may work for any institution who has a graduate marketing or MBA program.

One potential issue that arose was that some universities have a smaller marketing department and may not have any extra faculty to take on this teaching load. For smaller institutions where there are no extra faculty to teach this course, one option could be to use adjunct faculty for this role. Using adjunct faculty could allow for alumni to give back to the program and impact future marketing professionals by picking up an adjunct position. Using adjunct faculty to teach this course could provide opportunities for marketing professionals who are thinking about a career in academic experiences and actual teach before committing to an academic career path.

If the option of an adjunct faculty would not work at an institution, another option could be to have someone from the business college's career services department teach the course. Someone like the director of the career services department may have a graduate degree, which may qualify them to teach a university class. The career services employee may not be a marketing expert, but they are an expert in career counseling, and this course covers many aspects of the marketing career field. This option could be a conflict at some institutions because

some institutions do not allow staff members to teach as that would infringe on the faculty's roles.

Marketing 100 Course Syllabus

Marketing Expectations and Careers
Institution's Name
Term and Year: Fall 2022
1 credit

Delivery Method: Synchronous

Class Time: Meets in person one day a week.

Evaluation Week: December 14–December 20

Instructor Name:

Instructor Email:

Department Phone:

Office Phone:

Instructor's Office: Number, Building

Office Hours:

Please feel free to email me, or I am available, by appointment, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Mon.– Fri.) for virtual meetings (Teams or Zoom).

Email:

When emailing me, please include the course number MRKT 100 along with a descriptor in the subject line of the message.

Prerequisites: None

Materials—Texts and Readings:

No required textbook for this course, but supplemental readings will be posted on the learning management system.

Course Description:

This course should be taken in the first semester after declaring marketing as your major. This course should be one of the first marketing courses you take outside of the College of Business's required core marketing courses. This course will help students gain a general understanding of the many different areas within the marketing field.

In actively applying principles into practice, everyone will formulate a philosophy of workforce education based on personally held principles and demonstrated practices.

Course Requirements:

1. In person classes—Attend class each time it meets. If you need to be gone, make arrangements with the instructor in advance.
2. Online classes—Complete all electronic assignments.
3. Follow all class and course instructions for assignments, projects, and discussions.
4. The student will participate in all discussions, assignments, and activities and do so in a timely manner.
5. Review the syllabus and course schedule posted on Blackboard on a regular basis.
6. Complete a field experience in the marketing field.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will have gained experience in the following:

1. Analyzing the creative side of marketing (design, social media, advertising)
2. Analyzing the noncreative side of marketing (sales, analytics, psychology)
3. Analyzing entry-level marketing jobs in the current labor market
4. Constructing knowledge about real-world experiences
5. Analyzing student organizations in marketing
6. Identifying and connecting with businesses and industries

Content Outline:

1. Definition of Marketing and Different Areas Within (OB 1, 2)
 - a. Creative areas
 - b. Noncreative areas
2. Types of Marketing Jobs Available (OB 1, 2, 3)
 - a. Local job markets
 - b. Regional job markets
 - c. National job markets
3. Field Experience (Job Shadow) (OB 3, 4, 6)
 - a. Identify an area of marketing
 - b. Identify businesses in the community
 - c. Complete field experience in a marketing area
4. How to Gain Real-World Experience (OB 3, 4, 5, 6)
 - a. Field experience
 - b. Internship
 - c. Cocurricular opportunities
 - d. Clubs and organizations
 - e. Networking

Course Requirements:

Units of instruction may include discussion board posts and replies, quizzes, written assignments, video presentations, and field experiences as described in Blackboard.

Points:

Weekly Discussion Board Posts: 5 pts x 15	= 75 pts
Professional Follow-Up Letters: 2 pts x 12	= 24 pts
Field Experience Project	100 pts
Total Points	199 pts

Discussion Posts Assignments:

Discussion activities are a key component of this course. Discussion prompts and posts will be posted on Blackboard. In each unit, you will engage in critical discussions with other learners on topics raised in the unit. As the instructor, I will facilitate the discussions and read the posts but will not respond to every single post. In most cases, I might share a related idea, redirect if the discussion gets off track, or connect comments to help explore the topic more deeply.

As part of the discussion, you will review all postings and respond to a minimum of two postings of your peers. Your responses should be substantive, going beyond a statement like “I agree” or “Good job.” Respectfully challenge one another’s assumptions. Explain why you disagree, ask questions, and make suggestions for improvements. You may engage in as much discussion as you wish. In fact, you are encouraged to engage in extended discussions with multiple learners. An active discussion will enrich everyone’s learning.

When the discussion board prompt has you searching and reporting on something like job postings, the job posting you use for the discussion board post should be a current posting no more than thirty days old. Also, you should include the link to the posting in your original post.

You will be evaluated on both the substance of your response and the quality of your writing. Errors in spelling or in grammar detract from the quality of your message. Be sure to proofread your responses because you cannot edit them after posting (see the Discussion Board Grading Rubric below).

Discussion Board Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (2)	Good (1)	Fair (.5)	Poor (0)	
Relevance of Post	Posting thoroughly answers the discussion prompts and demonstrates understanding of material with well-developed ideas. Posting integrates assigned content and makes strong connections to practice.	Posting addresses most of the prompt(s) and demonstrates mild understanding of material with well-developed ideas. Posting references assigned content and may not make connections to practice.	Posting fails to address all components of the prompt. Makes short or irrelevant remarks. Posting lacks connection to practice.	No posting.	
Criteria	Excellent (1)	Good (.5)	Fair (.25)	Poor (0)	
Quality of Post	Appropriate comments are thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of other's postings.	Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to other's postings.	Responds but with minimum effort (e.g., "I agree with Bill").	No posting.	
Contribution to the Learning Community	Posts meaningful questions to the community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic.	Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely.	Minimum effort is made to participate in learning community as it develops.	No feedback provided to fellow student(s).	
Mechanics	Writing is free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing includes less than five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing includes four to five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing contains more than five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors, or no posting.	
		Total			5pts

Rubric Adapted from the University of Iowa

https://teach.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/sample_online_discussions_rubric.pdf

Professional Follow-Up Letter Assignments:

You will write a professional thank-you letter to each of the guest speakers we have in class. In the letter you should describe some of the things that interested you in this type of role or this area of marketing. You could include a question on something you were not able to ask the guest speaker in person. Thank the guest for their time. Send the letter digitally through email or social media, or through the USPS mail. (See the Professional Follow-Up Letter Assignment Rubric below.)

In the signature of your letter, you should include your first and last name as well as your email address (even if you write a physical letter) so the guest speaker can respond to your letter, if they wish.

Submission:

If the letter was sent digitally, you will submit a screenshot of the sent message written to the guest speaker. The screenshot should include the address the letter is sent to as well as the full letter.

If the letter was sent physically, you will submit a photo of the letter written to the guest speaker. The photo should include the outside of the envelope where the letter will be sent to as well as the full letter.

All screenshots or photos must be crisp and clear to read. Submissions should be cropped so the writing in the photos or screenshot can be as big and clear as possible.

Professional Follow-Up Letter Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (.50)	Good (.35)	Fair (.20)	Poor (0)
Professionally Written	Letter is professionally written; includes addressing the individual with a professional salutation and includes a complimentary closing with digital or physical signature.	Letter is professionally written. One of the following items are lacking appropriateness: addressing the individual with professional salutation or including a complimentary closing with digital or physical signature.	Letter is professionally written; two or more of the following items are lacking appropriateness: addressing the individual with professional salutation or including a complimentary closing with digital or physical signature.	No assignment was turned in or submission was unreadable or blurry.
Quality of Letter	Appropriate comments: thoughtful, reflective, and respectful with comments of the experience. Student relates aspects of the presentation to themselves.	Appropriate comments but does not personally make connections to presentation in the letter.	Comments are vague in detail and appear to be done with minimum effort.	No assignment was turned in or submission was unreadable or blurry.
Thank-You	The letter is excellent at thanking the individual for taking time out of their schedule to visit with the class.	The letter attempts to thank the individual but lacks detail. the letter is not concise or direct.	The letter attempts to thank the individual, but the thank-you does not come across professional or sincere.	No assignment was turned in or submission was unreadable or blurry.
Mechanics	Writing is free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing includes less than five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing includes four to five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	No assignment was turned in or submission was unreadable or blurry.
		Total		2pts

Job Shadow Project:

Job shadowing is one way that you can learn more about a career and see some of the daily tasks that the position would do. A job shadow is short term and allows you to experience different aspects of a job. For this to be a meaningful experience, students should shadow someone in their career of interest. This time should be used to observe and ask questions to determine how the job relates to your interests and goals. Do not expect to perform any job tasks, but if you are invited to participate, I would encourage you to take advantage of the real-world experience.

Securing a Job Shadow

- Student is responsible for lining up their own job shadow experience.
- Do not shadow a family member or family friend for this project.
- Contact the business directly.
 - Contact the human resources department.
- Contact an association in the field you want to shadow, and they may be able to put you in contact with a specific business or professional.
 - American Marketing Association
 - American Society of Association Executives—Gateway to Associations
 - CareerOneStop Professional Association Finder
 - Wikipedia: Professional Associations in the U.S.
- Call the worksite the day before the scheduled visit to confirm job shadow contact person you will meet, meeting time, and location.
- Call the worksite and reschedule if you are unable to attend the job shadow.
 - Make every effort to avoid this possibility. Job shadows should only be cancelled in emergency situations.

Job Shadow Requirements

- A minimum of eight hours of shadowing is required for this project.
 - You can do eight hours in one day or split it up into smaller chunks.
- Dress accordingly to the requirements of the worksite.
- Arrive at the worksite at the agreed upon date/time.
- Conduct yourself professionally at the worksite.
 - Remember, you are not only representing yourself but also the program and the school.
 - Greet people with a firm handshake and friendly greeting.
 - Be attentive—be alert and keep phone and other electronics turned off.
- Interview the person you are shadowing during the experience.
 - Sample questions to ask: <https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Examples-of-Questions-to-Ask-During-a-Job-Shadow.pdf>
- Provide the worksite with an up-to-date resume.

Business Personnel Requirement

- The business or person you job shadow will need to send an email to the course instructor confirming the dates you shadowed, the number of hours you shadowed, and any comments. This email should be sent from the business person directly to the course

instructor. If the email is sent to the student and the student forwards it to the instructor, the student will not receive credit. The student can be cc'd on the email but cannot be the sender.

Post-Shadow Assignments

1. Write a thank-you note to the supervisor/mentor within two days of completing shadow.
 - a. Include at least one or two specific things that were meaningful to you.
 - b. Submit a picture or screenshot of the thank-you letter.
2. Document your experience in a reflection paper:
 - a. 5–8 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman
 - b. Brief overview of the business and position you shadowed
 - c. Log of the date(s), hour(s), and person(s) you shadowed
 - d. Minimum of eight hours shadow time
 - e. What tasks did you observe during your shadow?
 - f. What did you like best about the job shadow?
 - g. What did you like least about the job shadow?
 - h. What surprised you the most about the job that you shadowed?
 - i. List two things you learned about this job that you didn't know before.
 - j. What do you think was the most important thing you learned from the job shadow?
 - k. Would you like to pursue this career. Why?
 - i. How has your career interest changed because of the job shadow?
 - ii. Personal pictures from your job shadow are welcomed but not required.
 - iii. Other thoughts?

Teacher Resources for This Project

LOSFA Field Outreach Division. (2019). *Student guide to job shadows*.

<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/StudentJobShadowGuide.pdf>

Nebraska Department of Education. (n.d.). *Job shadows*.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/workplace-experiences/job-shadows/#1534443404942-76c5352c-7a8f>

Northwestern College. (n.d.). *Job shadowing guide*.

<https://www.nwciowa.edu/uploads/files/pdf/compass-center/Job-Shadow-Guide.pdf>

References for the Job Shadow Project

The project details and grading rubric was adapted from a variety of sources. (See below.)

Career Vision. (n.d.). *Job shadowing sheds light on the world of work*.

<https://careervision.org/job-shadowing-sheds-light-world-work/>

Long Beach Unified School District. (n.d.). *Career shadow: Rubric for school site fair*.

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1656169798/lbusdk12caus/bsaukrqxxnweawgs3wu/h/6th-8th-Grade-Career-Shadow-Rubric.pdf>

LOSFA Field Outreach Division. (2019). *Student guide to job shadows*.

<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/StudentJobShadowGuide.pdf>

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services. (n.d.). *Job shadowing kit*.

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/detd/Transitions/VRBSJobShadowKit.pdf>

Nebraska Department of Education (n.d.). *Job shadows*.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/workplace-experiences/job-shadows/#1534443404942-76c5352c-7a8f>

West Salem High School. (2017, January). *Job shadowing: Student expectations*.

https://www.wsalem.k12.wi.us/uploads/content_files/files/students/Student%20Planning%20Sheet%20for%20Job%20Shadow.pdf

Job Shadow Project Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (10)	Good (6)	Fair (3)	Poor (0)
Time	The student completed and documented a minimum of eight hours of job shadowing.	The student completed and documented a minimum of five hours of job shadowing.	The student completed and documented a minimum of three hours of job shadowing.	Criteria not met.
Log	Detailed notes chronicling each hour of the job shadow give details that clearly describe the experience.	Notes chronicling each hour of the job shadow provide adequate detail to describe the experience.	Notes from the job shadow are incomplete or lack detail, or do not reflect completion of the required eight hours.	Criteria not met.
Thank-You Letter	Completed within two business days after job shadow and is in appropriate professional format with correct grammar and mechanics. Letter contains two or more meaningful connections.	Completed within three to four business days after job shadow and is in appropriate professional format with correct grammar and mechanics. Letter contains one meaningful connection.	Completed within five or more business days after job shadow and is in appropriate professional format with correct grammar and mechanics. Letter contains no meaningful connections.	Criteria not met.
Reflection	Reflection on the experience relates the job shadow and the occupation being observed. Reflection includes connections to student's temperament, talents, and future aspirations.	Reflection on the experience relates the job shadow in a general way to the student's own life.	Reflection on the experience merely retells events of the job shadow and makes vague or no reference to the student's life.	Criteria not met.
Mechanics	Writing is free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing includes less than five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing includes four to five grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Writing contains more than five grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors, or not submitted.
		Total		50pts

Course Schedule:

The course topics used in this schedule can be rearranged based on availability of guest speakers. Below are a few recourses that provided more topics and resources.

Resources of Topics—Teacher Use

O*Net OnLine. (2023a, May 23). *Education crosswalk search: Marketing*.
<https://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/CIP/?s=Marketing>

O*Net OnLine. (2023b, May 23). *Marketing*.
<https://www.onetonline.org/find/career?c=14&g=Go>

Date and Topic	Content	Assignment(s) Due
Week 1 January 10 Topic: Introduction to Course and Review Syllabus OB 4, 6	Read/review syllabus ~ Introduce the final project ~ Job Shadow Project	1. Introduction discussion board post in Blackboard. (Prompt: Introduce yourself, why you chose marketing as a major, and what you want to do with your marketing degree.)
Week 2 January 17 Topic: Student Organizations OB 5	Introduction to student organizations for marketing students ~ What clubs and organizations can do for you ~ Types of clubs ~ Student competitions	1. Discussion board post in Blackboard. (Prompt: What student organizations or clubs have you been involved with in the past? This may include experiences in high school.)
Week 3 January 24 Topic: Student Organizations OB 4, 5	Guest speaker from DECA Club (club president or faculty advisor) ~ Start planning for the job shadow project	1. Discussion board post in Blackboard. (Prompt: How could participating in a student club or organization progress your career?) 2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.

<p>Week 4 January 31</p> <p>Topic: Creativity in Marketing</p> <p>OB 1, 3, 4</p>	<p>Introduction to creative roles in marketing</p> <p>~ How students can be creative in marketing ~ Types of creative positions and what they do</p> <p>Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in a creative position</p> <p>~ By this week, you should have made contact with a business to complete the job shadow project.</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for a creative marketing job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Week 5 February 7</p> <p>Topic: Creativity in Marketing</p> <p>OB 1, 3, 4</p>	<p>Review creative roles in marketing</p> <p>Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in a different creative position</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for a creative marketing job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Week 6 February 14</p> <p>Topic: Noncreative Side of Marketing</p> <p>OB 2</p>	<p>Introduction to noncreative roles in marketing</p> <p>~ Types of creative positions and what they do ~ Sales ~ Analyst/strategist ~ Product management ~ Marketing manager ~ Etc.</p> <p>~ By this week, you should have a date and time set for your job shadow.</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: What noncreative position piques your interest, and why do you think you might like a job in that area of marketing? What skills would you need to develop further</p>

		to be skilled in that area?)
<p>Week 7 February 21</p> <p>Topic: Retail Sales</p> <p>OB 2</p>	<p>Review of noncreative roles in marketing</p> <p>Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in retail sales</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: A. What are two reasons that you would not want to work in retail? Explain why. B. What are two benefits or reasons that you would want to work in retail? Explain why.)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Week 8 February 28</p> <p>Topic: Business-to-Business</p> <p>OB 2, 3, 4</p>	<p>Review of noncreative roles in marketing</p> <p>Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in business-to-business (B2B) sales</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for a business-to-business job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Week 9 March 7</p> <p>Topic: Professional Networking</p> <p>OB 6</p>	<p>Introduction to creating a professional network</p> <p>Guest speaker—From the career development office to talk on importance of starting a professional network</p> <p>~ Create a LinkedIn account</p>	<p>1. Create a LinkedIn account and provide as much details about prior experience as possible.</p> <p>2. Post link to your profile in Blackboard's discussion board.</p>

Week 10 March 14	Spring Break—No Class	No assignments due this week.
Week 11 March 21 Topic: Real Estate Sales OB 2, 3	Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in real estate sales	1. Discussion board post in Blackboard. (Prompt: A. What are two reasons that you would not want to work in real estate sales? Explain why. B. What are two benefits or reasons why you would want to work in real estate sales? Explain why.) 2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.
Week 12 March 28 Topic: Fundraising Management OB 2, 3	Guest speaker – A marketing professional who works in fundraising management	1. Discussion board post in Blackboard. (Prompt: Find a job posting for a fundraising job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?) 2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.

<p>Week 13 April 4</p> <p>Topic: Buying and Purchasing</p> <p>OB 2, 3</p>	<p>Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in a job that is directly related to buying and purchasing</p>	<p>1. Discussion Board post in Black Board.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for a buying and purchasing job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Week 14 April 11</p> <p>Topic: Account Management</p> <p>OB 2, 3</p>	<p>Guest Speaker—A marketing professional who works in an account manager position</p> <p>~ By this week, you should have completed the job shadow and started on the writing portion of the project</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for an account manager job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>

<p>Week 15 April 18</p> <p>Topic: Inside Sales</p> <p>OB 2, 3</p>	<p>Guest speaker—A marketing professional who works in inside sales</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for an inside sales job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Week 16 April 25</p> <p>Topic: Outside Sales</p> <p>OB 2, 3</p>	<p>Guest Speaker—A marketing professional who works in outside sales</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for an outside sales job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>

<p>Week 17 May 2</p> <p>Topic: Personal Sales</p> <p>OB 2, 3</p>	<p>Guest Speaker—A marketing professional who works in an area of personal sales</p>	<p>1. Discussion board post in Blackboard.</p> <p>(Prompt: Find a job posting for a personal sales job in the region. Discuss the duties and expectations of the job. What would you need to do to be prepared for a job like this?)</p> <p>2. Write a professional thank-you letter to the guest speaker.</p>
<p>Finals Week: May 9</p> <p>OB</p>	<p>~ See the Job Shadow Grading Rubric in the course syllabus</p>	<p>1. Job Shadow Reflection paper due.</p>

Talking Points Handout for Guest Speaker

Adapted from Tri-Valley Pathways. (n.d.). *Guest speaker information*.

<https://www.tvrop.org/cms/lib/CA49000002/Centricity/Domain/26/WBLGuestSpeak.pdf>

This handout is intended to provide guest speakers presenting to the class with some talking points. This is a guide, and guest speakers are invited to add to this list when speaking to the class. This guide is designed to give you the information you need to plan an inspiring, fun, and successful career presentation. If you have any questions or need additional support, please don't hesitate to contact the course instructor.

Time: Forty-five minutes, including questions and answers

Guest speakers provide students with a true perspective of what it is like to work in the “real world.” As a guest speaker, you will share your personal experiences with students and support them in grasping the importance of planning for their future.

Your Role as a Guest Speaker:

- Describe what you do, what led you to enter this field, and what was your college major and minor was.
- Explain which school subjects/academic skills you utilize during a day in the life of your profession and what skills you learned in school that you use now. Think about how you can describe your profession in concrete, specific terms and use personal stories and anecdotes.
- Explain what type of education or hands-on experiences you obtained after high school (e.g., college, training, apprenticeship) to prepare you for your job.
- If you can, provide visuals (photographs, sample documents, etc.) as they can help students better understand your career. However, do not feel pressured to provide them.
- Identify a typical salary range for your career field (starting salary, highest potential salary, etc.)
- Be honest about difficulties you have faced. Students benefit from hearing from adults who have overcome challenges in school or work. The message we want students to hear is that anyone can succeed with hard work, effort, and time.
- Ask the students open-ended questions to engage them in the conversation.
- This is an introductory class and students may not have a deep understanding of terms and vocabulary related to the marketing field. You may need to explain in layman's terms or describe things with extra context.

How to Answer the “Tough Questions”

- What attracted you to the company you are currently working for?
Students are always curious about the decision-making process around selecting a job.
- Were you attracted to the company because of the culture, team members, mission, or was it simply a monetary decision?
- What is the most exciting and least favorite part of your career?

Students might be surprised to learn that even “dream jobs” have some aspects that are not interesting or exciting. Feel free to share your honest feedback. If you don’t have a “least favorite” aspect of your job, that’s okay too.

- How did you prepare for your career?

Feel free to share your major in college and additional training, apprenticeships and/or internships that prepared you for your career. If you are a career changer, feel free to share your experiences too. This helps students understand that the world of work is dynamic, and there are always opportunities to reinvent yourself and change directions in your career.

- How much money do you make?

You might be surprised to see this question, but our students love to know the specifics and are not afraid to ask. The best way to respond to this question is by sharing how much a typical employee can expect. Appropriate responses include, “Recent college graduates usually start at X” or “Salaries range from X–X.”

Sample Talking Points for Guest Speakers

1. Describe a typical day. What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
2. What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job?
3. How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?
 - a. What are some pros of the job?
 - b. What are some cons or drawbacks of the job?
4. What can you tell me about the employment outlook in your occupational field?
5. Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college? How well did your college experience prepare you for this job?
6. Describe the path you took to get to your current job.
7. What was your biggest challenge when entering the job or career field?
8. What could you have done differently to make the transition into this position easier?
9. What recommendations would you give to someone who would like to find themselves in a job like yours?
10. Who has/had the most significant influence on your career? (Do you have a professional mentor?)
11. What drives you? (Why do you do what you do?)
12. How do/can students connect with you if they have follow-up questions?

Tips for Success

- **BE HONEST!** Students really appreciate learning more about you and your career path.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** This is an introductory course and students may not be familiar with basic industry terminology. It’s best to explain ideas in layman’s terms.
- **STAY CURRENT.** Share information with students that is current and relevant. Instead of talking about programs that occurred in the “good old days,” talk about current opportunities that are available to students/graduates.

- **BE CONCISE.** Limit your responses to ninety seconds. This way students will stay engaged.
- **GIVE ADVICE.** Share anything that you wish someone would've told you or any other information such as "Get involved in extracurricular activities" or "Try to get an internship." Students appreciate your words of wisdom.
- **ENGAGE STUDENTS.** Feel free to ask questions to engage students, such as "How many of you know X" or "How many of you are thinking about majoring in X?"
- **STAY CONNECTED.** How do students connect with you? Feel free to share your email address or social media address or business card.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine horizontal mismatch among marketing graduates to determine if the lack of career focused high impact academic practices was a cause of horizontal mismatch. Graduates were interviewed to gain their perspectives on how the marketing program prepared them to enter the marketing labor market. Artifact I examines the literature related to horizontal mismatch and career focused education. Artifact I addresses many educational practices that help students to connect with content and apply what they have learned. There were a few research articles on horizontal mismatch, but the majority of mismatch articles address vertical mismatch rather than horizontal mismatch.

The problem of practice was identified as an issue with major to job congruence or students spending money to study a field in which after graduation, they never work in. I looked at this issue through a vocationalism lens in that many students attend college for the prospects of obtaining a better job and benefits. This study was grounded in Becker's Human Capital Theory.

Artifact II examines the case that will be studied which is a marketing program and a regional research institution in the upper Midwest. Artifact II also lays out the research methodology used for this study, as well as identifies participants, and artifact analysis to be used to collect data on horizontal mismatch. There is a section on the findings found through the one-on-one interviews, as well as a discussion section that describes what the findings indicate and the implications for practice which gave four recommendations that marketing programs could do to help prevent mismatch.

In Artifact III a solution for marketing programs to utilize to help increase major to job congruence was laid out. The solution was created to address issues that were found through the

data collected for this study. The solution being a syllabus for an introductory course that utilizes guest speakers and a job shadow or externship experience. This solution can be utilized at any institution that has a marketing program, but depending on the institution who teaches the class and how the class is offered may vary.

This study examined horizontal mismatch amongst graduates of the marketing program. Further research is needed in examining marketing departments efforts to prepare students to enter the labor market. Further research is also needed on studying horizontal mismatch amongst other fields of study. Studying horizontal mismatch is crucial as mismatch can have a negative effect on both the worker and the employer.

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Appendix A

Initial Email Script to Graduates

Hello,

My name is Michael Mills, and I am an educational doctoral (EDD) student in the Educational Practice and Leadership program at the University of North Dakota specializing in higher education. I am conducting research on the university's marketing graduates and their experiences during college and their transition from college to work.

I am hoping to conduct one-on-one interviews with eight to ten graduates from the university's CoBPA's Marketing program. I am looking for participants who have graduated in the past two to five years who have entered the workforce after graduation, looking specifically at workers in the earlier stages of their careers.

Interviews will be conducted via Zoom, consisting of six initial questions with the anticipation of the interview taking forty-five to sixty minutes. My research project has been approved by the University of North Dakota's Institutional Review Board (IRB) with an IRB number of IRB0005364. If you would be willing to participate in this study, please contact me at michael.w.mills@und.edu.

Thank you for consideration to participate in my study,

Mike

Appendix B

Graduate Interview Questions

This is a list of questions I asked during the interview process of the graduates.

1. Tell me about your college major, and what you remember best from college.
2. Tell the story of your transition from college to career.
3. Tell me how college prepared you for your first career or job in your field after graduation.
4. Tell me about your experiences with experiential learning, or learning through career related experiences, during your time in college (e.g., internships, job shadows, tours, guest speakers from businesses).
5. Can you tell me of a time when you did not feel you had the necessary skills to perform your job?
6. Looking back, what would you have changed about your college experience? (E.g., taken different classes, participated in more clubs and organizations, networked more, etc.)
7. Long term, what are your career plans?

Appendix C

Business Personnel Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your company?
2. Tell me how your company specifically recruits the university's graduates.
3. Tell me about the relationship your company has with the university.
4. Tell me about the connections your company has with individual faculty.
5. Tell me about the interactions your company has with the university's students.
6. Can you tell me what makes the university's business graduates desirable employees?
7. How do the university's business graduates excel above and beyond other employees?
8. What skills do the university's business graduates lack when starting a job at this company?
9. Can you tell me a story of how the university's business graduates use the skills learned during college to complete tasks at work?

Appendix D

Faculty Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about any projects you use in your courses that you consider to be high impact practices?
2. Can you tell me about any career-focused experiential learning opportunities you require your students to complete?
3. Can you tell me about how you help students make connections to business and industry personnel in your courses?
4. Can you tell me about your connections with business and industry?
5. Can you tell me about your perception of students' career expectations?
6. Can you tell me your role in career advising students?
7. Can you tell me about any experiences you have working in the marketing career field?
8. Can you tell me about your own undergraduate experiences with high impact, career-focused practices?
9. Tell me about the student organizations (clubs) available to marketing students.
10. Tell me, at what point is a student exposed to the idea that most entry-level marketing jobs are in sales?
11. Tell me about a business in the community that tends to hire marketing graduates.

Appendix E

(Syllabi) Analysis Template

Work-integrated learning experiences found in the syllabi.

Course Name	Course Number	Faculty	Name and Type of Experience, Lesson, Activity, Assignment
Social Media Marketing	MKT 342	Faculty 4	To develop measurable goals with a small local business and create content for a six-week takeover with the company
Field Experience in Marketing	MKT 381	Faculty 4	To provide marketing students early in their program the opportunity to work with businesses and organizations, profit and nonprofit, which will enable students to begin linking classroom learning to practical applications
Field Experience in Marketing	MKT 381	Faculty 4	Field experience

Appendix F

(Syllabi) Analysis

What course readings, activities, experiments, or exercises that are career related were found in the syllabi? (Example: guest speakers, tours, interviews, etc.)

Course Name	Course Number	Professor	Name and Type of Experience, Lesson, Activity, Assignment
Professional Selling	MKT 306	Faculty 2	PitchVantage—help you improve your verbal presentation skills
Professional Selling	MKT 306	Faculty 2	Make a sales pitch to a member of UND’s sales team
Professional Selling	MKT 306	Faculty 2	Role-play
Retail Management	MKT 310	Faculty 2	Retail plan for a proposed retailer
Marketing Research	MKT 325	Faculty 3	Semester-long project that involves analyzing quantitative data
Marketing Research	MKT 325	Faculty 3	This course is centered on a group project, which will give students hands-on experience with actual live data.
Field Experience in Marketing	MKT 381	Faculty 4	A final paper must be submitted at the end of the field experience period. This is similar to a portfolio where you will be showing your work. I am hoping it is something you can use later in a job interview.
Sales Management	MKT 406	Faculty 5	Guest speaker/webinar: Feb 14 & May 2
Sales Management	MKT 406	Faculty 5	HubSpot Sales Management certification
Marketing Management	MKT 445	Faculty 3	Group project will give students hands-on experience building a marketing plan for a real company (but a fictitious product)
Marketing Management	MKT 445	Faculty 3	Student presentation of marketing plan

Appendix G

(Syllabi) Analysis

Appendix G			
Document Analysis: Syllabi Analysis Form		Name of Analysis	Date
Course Name		Course Number	
Instructor's Name		Syllabus Date (last edit date)	
Listed course objectives: (copy and paste from syllabus)			
Marketing Course Type Required <input type="checkbox"/> Elective <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> <small style="margin-left: 100px;">Mark box with X</small>			
What Work Integrated Learning experiences were found in the syllabi?		What authentic assessments were found in the syllabi?	
What course readings, activities, experiments, exercises that are career related were found in the syllabi? (example: guest speakers, tours, interviews, etc.)			
What follow-up questions need to be asked of the course instructor?			
How does this syllabus help answer the research questions?			
Follow up with the course instructor is needed for clarification?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		<small>Mark box with X</small>	
Work Integrated Learning experience projects, assignments, and/or activities were found in this syllabus?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		<small>Mark box with X</small>	

Appendix H

Consent Script for All Interviews

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Career-Focused Education’s Impact on Horizontal Mismatch on Graduates from [redacted] College of Business [redacted] Marketing Program

Principal Investigator: Michael Mills
Phone/Email Address: michael.w.mills@und.edu
Department: EHBS—Education, Health, and Behavior Studies
Research Advisor: Radomir Mitic
Email: radomir.mitic@und.edu
Phone: 701-777-3452

What should I know about this research?

- Someone will explain this research to you.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary. Whether you take part is up to you.
- If you don’t take part, it won’t be held against you.
- You can take part now and later drop out, and it won’t be held against you.
- If you don’t understand, ask questions.
- Ask all the questions you want before you decide.

How long will I be in this research?

We expect that your taking part in this research will last forty-five to sixty minutes.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this research is to take a closer look at the university’s marketing program with an examination determining how the selected program is career focused and leads students toward well-matched employment. An exploration of the successful or deficient results in the career-focused programs needs to be studied as students attend higher education in order to study a field that they may never work in or only work in for a short time due to false expectations of the chosen career.

What happens to me if I agree to take part in this research?

If you decide to take part in this research study, you will be contacted to schedule a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator (Michael Mills), and we will establish a pseudonym or code name you will be known for in this study. The interview will take virtually via Zoom, and the interview will be recorded so a transcript and summary of the interview can be created. The interview will consist of eight to ten initial questions and will take about forty-five minutes to an hour. After the transcript and summary has been created, a copy of the summary will be emailed to you for a review. Make sure I captured your correct context of your answers. At this point, your participation in the study is complete.

Could being in this research hurt me?

There are no risks for participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

Will being in this research benefit me?

It is not expected that you will personally benefit from this research.

How many people will participate in this research?

Approximately eight to ten marketing graduates will take part in this study at the university. In addition, the university's marketing faculty and a representative from a business and industry employer in the university's community area will be interviewed.

What other choices do I have besides taking part in this research?

Instead of being in this research, your choice is not to participate.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

Who is funding this research?

The University of North Dakota and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study. No one on the research team will receive a direct payment or an increase in salary for conducting this study.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

Your private information may be shared with individuals and organizations that conduct or watch over this research, including:

- the Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviewed this research; or
- research advisor Radomir Mitic

We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential. We protect your information from disclosure to others to the extent required by law. We cannot promise complete secrecy.

Data or specimens collected in this research will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if identifiers are removed.

The researcher is a mandatory reporter. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child, or you pose a danger to yourself or someone else.

The interview (audio and video) recordings will be stored on a password-protected computer and OneDrive folder. You have the right to review the recordings. All digital recordings will be deleted when the transcription of the interview has been created and edited for errors.

What if I agree to be in the research and then change my mind?

If you decide to leave the study early, we ask that you contact the principal investigator (Michael Mills) by email michael.w.mills@und.edu. During the interview, if you decided to leave the study, you can verbally ask to stop the recording or stop the interview.

Who can answer my questions about this research?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think this research has hurt you or made you sick, talk to the research team at the phone number listed above on the first page.

This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent reviews of research studies. You may talk to them at 701-777-4279 or UND.irb@UND.edu if:

- you have questions, concerns, or complaints that are not being answered by the research team;
- you are not getting answers from the research team;
- you cannot reach the research team;
- you want to talk to someone else about the research; or
- you have questions about your rights as a research subject.

You may also visit the UND IRB website for more information about being a research subject: <http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.html>

Appendix I

Data Analysis Codebook

Definition	Code	Catagories	Themes
Real World Experiences	Real	Connections (Networking, Industry)	Graduates Wish They Had Better Preparation to Find Quality Internships.
Hands on Applied learning	Applied		
Networking	Net		
High impact Practices	High	Accidemics	Or Some Graduates Found the Transition From College To Work a Difficult Experience.
Braod Field	Broad		
Real World Experiences	Real		
Hands on Applied learning	Applied		
Bring Real World Experiences to Classes	Real	Faculty	
Disconnected or out of date experiences	Disconnect		
Broad Field - (too many skills to master)	Broad	Hard/Technical Skills	Graduates Had the Necessary Skills to Transition to Careers Outside the Marketing Field
One the Job Training	On		
Self Learning, Extra Training	Self		
Business Acumen	Acumen	General Skills	
Soft Skills, General Skills, Employability Skill	General		
Applications and Programs	Application		
Sales Jobs	Sales	Career Transition	Graduates Who Were Seeking Creative Marketing Jobs Could Not Find Sustainable Creative Marketing Positions
College Major Regret -	Regret		
Self Learning, Extra Training	Self		
One the Job Training	On		
Happy with Current Position	Happy		
Time Lines on Projects Vs. Work Timelines	Time	Skills Lacking	
Business connections	Business		
Mentor or Mentorship	Mentor		
Help prepare for employment, Post College	Employment		
Networking	Net		
Applications and Programs	Application		