Note: This short paper initiates a new series at CERI that tries to provoke discussion about merging issues in transitioning young adults from college to the workplace. Admittedly, there are holes in the thinking and several implications are left unaddressed. Hopefully, professionals can advance the ideas presented here in a thoughtful and energetic manner.

In our recent paper on the emerging skills and abilities gap (see Hanneman and Gardner, 2010), we illustrated what appeared to be a shift in the role of the internship as a bridge between the academic learning environment and the world of work. With the traditional starting job for new college graduates disappearing, replaced by positions that require skills and abilities that were recently associated with positions a young professional would engage in their seventh to tenth year in the workplace, employers are grappling with a workforce poised to retire. To accommodate this demographic shift, evidence suggests that the internship now replaces the starting job as the place where college students actually begin their journey into the workplace. Thus, having the right type of internship experience is critical to being extended a meaningful and well-paid position upon graduation. In other words the internship has become a high stakes event for college students – they have to make a good choice when selecting their internships which will strongly influence their employment opportunities upon graduation.

The internship also is a high stakes event for a company. With knowledge management a critical concern in most companies, simply hiring new college graduates without any experience with the company opens the company to significant risk. Delong (2004) contends " while learning complex jobs on-the-fly has become common in many organizations, this kind of discontinuous transition carries significant risks of increased mistakes, reduced efficiency, and missed opportunities" (p. 109). The internship serves as one of the strategic tools an organization has to manage their workforce in knowledge-intensive work. An internship program, directed at preparing inexperienced replacement personnel, carries with it the connotation as a high stakes event. A company has to get it right!

This thought piece describes the characteristics associated with high stakes events. By understanding these characteristics, faculty and advisors can assist students make an informed choice when selecting an internship as well as monitor their actual experiences. Human resource staff charged with workforce planning and managers concerned about knowledge management can gain insights to constructing programs that can effectively bridge the gap from college to work within their organizations. Monitoring young adults through the internship with active reflection will aid in incorporating the skills and abilities they need to develop and mature into their professional demeanor.

Before proceeding, I hope you will indulge in my use of the word internship. In this paper I am using the term "internship" as shorthand for any type of professional experience that prepares an upper class college student for a successful transition into the workplace. Thus internship serves as a proxy for cooperative education experiences, internships, practicum, clinics, student teaching, and paid employment with a career/professional focus; all experiences where the student is applying their academic knowledge in the workplace, gaining insight into how an organization operates, and obtaining practice to develop important skills and abilities (often referred to as people, soft, or boundary spanning skills and abilities). We are not including in this definition, exploratory internships or co-ops, job shadows, or other work engagements where the student may be exploring future options, testing

interests, or just obtaining a resume filler experience. A high stake event is not a practice exercise; it is a choice that potentially has long term implications for the participant.

High Stakes Events: A Working Definition

Google "high stakes events" and the results draw in sites pertaining to all kinds of activities. Professional football players who have practiced, endured injuries, and negotiated team membership to be on a winner have only one shot at winning the Super Bowl and make football history – hence the headlines "Super Bowl High Stake Event." Another listing was for a national cheerleading competition; again emphasizing all the practice, dedication, and resources that go into one shot at the national championship. Many of the sites, however, focused on the wide spread use of high stakes testing in K-12 education, especially for seniors who must pass a standardized test in order to receive their high school diploma. Concerns were raised over teaching to the test, endless practice exams, and designing curriculum in response to test questions.

While these types of events are certainly high stakes, most high stakes events present themselves suddenly, often with conflicting or little information, and do not allow for practice before making a choice. Consider the 50 year old executive who was just diagnosed with prostate cancer. He had not practiced making a decision on treatment in anticipation of having cancer; he has information now pouring in to make various treatment decisions. He becomes overwhelmed; the choice that he will make will have long term consequences. Many of my colleagues have recently had to wrestle with parents who had to make choices with the Medicare prescription drug plan. Thaler and Sunstein (2008) discuss how poorly designed the choice structure was in this program which resulted in high levels of frustration and poor selection of a drug program by senior citizens. Because of the time pressure, seniors had to make decision without much experience and scant useable information. The results for some were voided prescriptions, higher costs, and threat to health.

These types of events help us frame a working definition of a high stakes event. According to Howard Kunreuther et al (1978, 2002), a high stakes event "poses a formidable challenge" because the decision-maker is often naïve, swayed by peer pressure and other biases, and uninformed about potential outcomes which could result in a poor choice. The consequences of poor choice are "large and difficult to reverse" (2002, p.260). An individual cannot easily undo the choice and attempt another option. According to Kunreuther a high stakes decision event embodies two properties: (1) potential significant financial and or emotional losses; and (2) costs associated with reversing a decision and making another choice are very high.

When this logic is applied to internships, a student who makes an uninformed, poor choice for an internship could result in forfeiting job opportunities, receiving lower starting salary, or altering an early career path. The emotional impact of a bad experience can derail career dreams and introduce anxiety about their future. The cost of attempting another internship may incur additional tuition payments as graduation is extended or delayed entry into full-time employment if the internship is pursued after graduation (a very common occurrence by the way).

For a company a poorly structured internship experience which fails to map the skills and abilities in the organization (instead focusing on tasks) runs the risk of preparing potential young professionals for the wrong types of assignments, attracting the wrong type of student to apply for these experiences, selecting the wrong person from the internship pool for full-time employment, or failing to meet internship to full-time conversion goals. An internship program that has to recruit continually for students to meet full-time hiring targets will result in spiraling recruiting costs and soon flagging support for these types of programs by upper management.

Before examining specific issues for both students and employers in regards to high stakes internships, let's first look at some of the key characteristics or dimensions of these type of events. By understanding the context surrounding high stakes events, interventions, programmatic efforts and simple nudges (a favorite term of Thaler and Sunstein) can be designed to assist both students and employers.

Characteristics of a High Stakes Internship Event

1. *Knowing Interests and Self*

In order to understand the impact of the internship selection, students need to have invested time in gaining a sense of who they are, their career interests, and what issues they want to commit their time and energy. For students who plan ahead and gain exploratory experiences through internships, volunteer activities, and self-reflection, the selection process can be relatively painless as they know where they want to target their energies. Many students arrive at the end of their junior year only just beginning to contemplate any aspect of their transition and have little time to prepare before securing an internship. Without knowing who they are and having a reasonable sense of the direction they want to move their career towards, they fall prey to several errors in simplified thinking, according to Kunreuther et.al (2002).

- **A failure to differentiate among the possible internships available to them and the outcomes associated with each internship option minimizes the chances of an optimum experience.** All internships look alike – so just pick one. By assigning a low probability of loss to their decisions, individuals ignore the information available to them or are selective in the information they choose in their decisions. Students tend to focus on the tasks of the internship rather than the skills and competencies that would be developed and utilized. Tasks are easier to understand and judge if one has the abilities to perform. Lack of differentiating between possible internships on factors with longer term implications implies that the losses associated with the outcomes are considered small and consistent regardless of choice.
- **Their focus is on the short term "because they can only see the short term consequences of their actions"** (Kunreuther, et.al., 2002, p.262). Upon entering college students are handed a check list of things that they need to do before graduating with internship near the top of the list. The message is clear: Get an internship to complete your resume! Internship needed for on-campus interview! Very few lists articulate or pose the longer term outcomes of finding a good fit between your career aspirations, interests and talents and an

organization and the position they have for you. Young adults have difficulty seeing the long-term consequences of their internship selections. They are aware of the Bureau of Labor Statistics anecdote that they will have 15 jobs before they are 39. Hardly makes the first job seem that important. In difficult and unsettling times as these, even if one is going to have multiple jobs during their early career, random job hopping is very different than a conscientious strategy for career engagement through effective job progression (even if it is quick). Young adults tend to undervalue the need for introspection and self awareness until it is almost too late.

- **Attention often over emphasizes affectual and emotional influences in the decision rather than informed choice**. Kunreuther contends that "Decisions requiring difficult trade-offs between attributes or entailing ambiguity as to what would constitute a 'right' answer, often lead individuals to resolve choices by focusing on the cues that send the strongest affective signal" (2002, p.262). Internships poorly mapped to their outcomes cause students to struggle when comparing available opportunities. It might mean having to collect more information and ask lots of questions. Some will and many won't. Ambiguity is always present. Internships with small employers, for example, where there is no track record among their peers or with campus advisors can inject ambiguity to any thoughtful decision. The factors that end-up influencing the decision are more likely revolve around proximity to a significant other or family members, location (think fun), or the presence of friends!
- **Stress filters information and cues resulting in poorer decisions**. Kunreuther lists several studies that indicate that as stress increases in the decision process individuals tend to filter down to fewer pieces of information on which to base their choice. The more limiting the information the higher probability of making a poor choice.

In summary a key element of making a good internship choice is for the student to have a good understanding of their career interests, the kind of work environment they want to join, the possible early job progression they would like to pursue. This level of awareness does not come in several hours of cramming before applying for an internship. It takes several years of self-reflection and engagement to understand one's self. I often see students in my class try to put all the pieces together quickly, thinking they are running out of time. Awareness won't be gained from a class (it may be assisted) but requires all actors in an individual's educational journey to stimulate inquiry, to offer guidance through reflection, to respond to ideas, to set higher expectations, and to test for readiness.

Employers also fall prey to poorly crafted internship positions. Employers frame intern positions based on the role or value the intern brings to the organization. Too often the intern is simply a replacement for an employee on vacation or is needed to assist with on-going projects. In organizations where the intern program is viewed as an integral part of workforce succession planning, the intern engages in a higher level of assignments. The critical dimension is the mentor or supervisor assigned to guide the intern. Organizations that carefully select and prepare intern mentors provide the most rewarding experiences to students. By not carefully considering the long-range goal of the internship in building a sustainable workforce, the emphasis shifts to tasks and to supervisory staff who have a current urgent

work assignments to complete. The lack of forethought in structuring an organization's internship program is a recipe for failure.

2. *Frequency*

Remember when you were learning to play T-ball or any sport you loved? Or when you picked up the guitar or plunked the first key on a piano? How about the first time behind the wheel of the car in Driver's Education class? Anything you have done really well usually has required practice. Hard tasks become easier with practice. However, there are really important events we have to make where we cannot practice. It would be nice if a high school senior could spend time living on each of the colleges they wish to attend (two to three weeks maybe). Or participate in a year of service to gain maturity and insight into career possibilities. But the transition to college does not happen that way. As Thaler and Sunstein emphasize, "the higher the stakes, the less likely we are able to practice" (p.74). How do you practice for something that you only have one shot at? The internship is not like the high school exit examination where the student has taken hours of pretests and had courses directed toward the tests' content. Obtaining a high stakes internship will require students to practice somewhere to gain the skills, especially those beyond their academic content, necessary to be invited to the internship interview.

So where does a student get practice? To begin developing the skills and abilities required to obtain an internship (assuming students are learning the content knowledge in class), students need to begin to participate early in the wide range of co-curricular activities available to them on campus. Their involvement with student organizations, community service, study abroad, service learning, undergraduate research, exploratory work experiences and other programs can serve as vehicles to gain competency in teamwork, communication, understanding working with diverse individuals, and other transferable or boundary spanning skills and competencies. Students can find guidance from faculty, advisors and peers through reflection on their skill development. Practice opportunities abound but each student has to take the initiative to pursue them.

Co-curricular experiences as practice opportunities mean that all co-curricular experiences are not created equal. Not long ago, an advisor could counsel an undergraduate who might not be able to plan for an internship to engage in several co-curricular activities, gaining the same skills as in an internship. In a high stakes event situation, these co-curricular experiences are no longer equivalent to an internship and cannot be substituted directly for the internship experience. They will always add value to any student as they approach the workplace, but can no longer solely develop skills and competencies employers now expect. Required skills and competencies have to be demonstrated in the workplace at a level that will satisfy employers that mastery is being acquired.

Organizations with internship programs attempt to align their internship development strategy with their workforce secession plans. Over time with practice and program assessment the internship program seamlessly inducts novices into the full-time employment stream. But this is not always the case, as some companies only hire interns as an afterthought. The intern hiring coordinator often has to

seek out a supervisor or worker who needs an intern or is willing to mentor one before a commitment to a student is made. A good example comes from finding mentor teachers for student teachers. Not all veteran K-12 teachers want to mentor and develop a budding teacher. It is not uncommon that the teachers who accept student teachers in their classroom may not be the best teacher to train a new teacher. This situation also happens frequently in other workplaces. Finding the right mentors takes practice; plus it takes time to develop these mentors into effective trainers/leaders of new employees.

3. *Difficulty*

The Olympic skating events are always my favorite, as well as the extreme winter sports. In these events the athlete's final score is based on the degree of difficulty of the elements attempted during his or her performance. The higher the degree of difficulty selected for the program the higher potential score that can be earned. The same is true for an internship. Unfortunately, all too often internships are not well structured, resulting in low levels of difficulty (tasks like filing papers, answering the telephone, making coffee) that serve no useful purpose. Students need to take the initiative to ask for challenging assignments to insure they are prepared to succeed in their future career. Likewise, organizations have a responsibility to offer challenging assignments to their interns to properly prepare them for full-time employment. Having a challenging internship assignment is the major reason that interns accept a full-time position with their host organization (Gardner, Chao and Hearst, 2009).

Informed Choice: Selecting the Best Option

We often assume that when faced with a decision individuals make rational choices. But this just is not true. When ambiguity exists between the options and the outcomes, decision-makers often make hasty choices based on limited information or make little effort to explore the options in detail. Mapping from what the internship has to offer to the outcomes (skills and competencies) being developed can lead to more informed choice and hopefully the selection of the best option for the individual student. Thaler and Sunstein refer to choice architecture as a means to improve choice through better use of information. As advisors and human resource managers, we become choice architects who are responsible for structuring the choice process so that students make better selections in their internships and organizations can make a better fit between potential employees and organizational culture. This means closing off "paths of least resistance" (Thaler and Sunstein, pg.83), providing detailed maps for each internship experience, and offering multiple opportunities for reflection.

1. *Path of Least Resistance*

Students are no different than many adults when faced with making a choice – they will pursue the option that requires the least amount of effort. As Thaler and Sunstein point out, individuals who chose to delay their choice to the last minute or fail to take any option usually are left with a very poor choice. In our case, students who rush at the last minute to obtain an internship or fail to pursue one until after they graduate (if at all), will find a very limited pool of employment opportunities. Paths of least resistance have to be plugged and default options have to be put in places that nudge students to

begin to make choices earlier. The default option as Thaler and Sunstein argue can be a very powerful device to position students for a successful transition.

Default options can be controversial. Mandatory internships (see below) as a graduation requirement may seem like an obvious answer. However, this option may be more self-serving than beneficial if the students treat it as another item to check off their graduation check list and fail to integrate the experience into their development as a learner and a professional. Rather, nudges can be put in place that pushes students to take certain types of actions at particular points during their academic program. Near the end of a student's first year, the student may be nudged to the career center if their career interests have not coalesced by their advisor before being allowed to enroll for their sophomore classes. In the sophomore year similar nudges can determine if students are gaining the experiences and skills necessary to obtain a high stakes internship. Finally, at the beginning of the junior year, a nudge directing them to their internships advisors (or career advisors) will get them prepared to finding an appropriate internship.

Required choice (requiring a mandatory internship) can be fine as Thaler and Sunstein state if those individuals implementing the requirement remember that students faced with a required choice may find it more of a nuisance. The result may be still an undesirable choice of an internship.

2. *Mapping Options*

Thaler and Sunstein offer choosing the flavor of ice cream as an easy choice. They probably have not visited East Lansing (or any land grant school) where the campus dairy store and the four creameries in the main campus business district serve up about several hundred flavor options. Not an easy choice. But in relation to selecting a good high stakes internship, picking a flavor for one's ice cream cone is relatively painless. How do we improve the choice process? By providing internship maps that lay out the tasks that will be undertaken during the internships and, more importantly, the skills and abilities that will be developed during the time with the organization. David Delong (2004) recommends that companies map out the skills, abilities and knowledge associated with the positions that they will need to fill in the future so that they know the type of people to recruit and retain. Unfortunately, only a few internships come with very clear maps. A position announcement usually contains a set of tasks to be preformed and possibly a list of skills that will be required to be qualified for the position. Hardly any internship position announcement contains information on potential outcomes.

An internship map would present the key modules for each of the essential skills and competencies required by the organization (content specific skills, teamwork, quantitative literacy, written communication, oral and visual communication, problem solving, information handling, research, learning to learn, critical thinking, as examples). Each component of the competency cluster will be assessed on:

- Whether the skill is **Required** or **Optional** to obtain the internship
- **Level of Ability** Necessary at Outset of Internship
- **Opportunity to Develop** During Internship
- **Assessed or Evaluated** at End of Internship

The following is an example of a map for one module of an internship. Many organizations already have skill maps for their full-time positions (DeLong, 2004) that can be modified to serve their internship programs.

	Position		Skill Level			Opportunity to Develop			Assessed upon Completion
Information Technology Cluster	Required	Optional	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	None	Some	Ample	Y/N
Create, open, delete, rename, back up and store files and virus check									
Access information from a number of electronic sources including library catalogues, databases and the World Wide Web and use online search facilities									
Use e-mail to send and receive messages and files									
Produce electronic documents including reports, forms and presentation slides in appropriate formats									
Input data, perform basic calculations and create appropriate charts using statistical or spreadsheet software									

The internship map allows each experience to be better understood by providing information in a consistent way so that options can be compared and translated into actual outcomes for each opportunity. There are problems associated with any mapping endeavor from deciding on a common language (with definitions) for the skills and abilities associated with the internships and presenting the language into concepts that can be understood by students.

Mapping will be the responsibility of the company offering the internship. Many companies may not see a benefit in incurring the cost of preparing the maps, even if the future payoff is a much better prepared

recruit who can step right into high performance positions. The colleges are responsible for requiring that internship announcements posted on-campus provide maps and be willing to assist companies develop maps. College faculty and advisors can also assist students who are seeking internships outside of the institutions career service system (from on-line providers or direct application to a company) construct and evaluate maps of the opportunities they have before them.

2. *Feedback*

Reflection offers the best strategy to assist students improve their performance. Too often reflection exercises are not taken seriously (yes, even I have fudged reflections). But well-designed reflective practice can guide students to understand what they are doing well, what skills and abilities they are developing, and how the various experiences weave together to provide depth to their sill usage and development. Typically an internship reflection takes place after the student returns to campus and may complete a paper (if receiving credit) about the experience. These exercises are often superficial unless the supervising faculty provides serious feedback.

A much better scenario would have a preparation session (sometimes a class) that sets expectations for the internship experience, coaches students on how to behave in the work place, establishes protocols for contact with faculty during the experience, and discusses how to work effectively with one's supervisor. Models for reflective session can be found associated with most active learning programs. Mike True at Messiah College, a leading expert in the internship experience, has developed an interactive software program to assist students before, during and after their internship. The University of Toronto's College of Engineering provides various levels of reflection for their Professional Year Experience program.

Reflection is also needed while in the experience. Feedback sessions, easily handled through on-line devices, can allow internship advisors, faculty, and mentors/supervisors to provide assistance when something has gone wrong or head-off a situation before it goes wrong. Reflection sessions during the internship need to be strategic. Frequent requirements to log into chat rooms for discussions can be a nuisance and good advice can be ignored. (A review of the Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships, as one source, will find articles that address issues of on-line reflective practice.)

Reflection after the experience is critical to develop a young adult as a learner and a professional. Most of the situations I am familiar with, the after experience reflection is a one-time event. The paper is written and feedback is provided then the student returns to class. An internship program at Butler University's business program, for example, provides multiple post-internship reflections, including a public presentation. There well may be a lag effect before the internship experience and academic learning begin to interweave. The connections that a student makes can come at anytime. Thus, it is important that students be presented multiple opportunities to reflect and integrate their experiences with learning after returning to campus.

The most important agent in the reflection process is the intern's supervisor; the person the student works with everyday. The supervisor has been identified as the lynchpin for a successful internship

experience (see Gardner, Chao and Hearst, 2009). Supervisor's feedback, not only on tasks and assignments, includes help with developing transferable or boundary crossing skills and abilities.

Challenges

The elevation of the internship to a high stakes event will not come easily on many campuses. Even though internships are recognized as a necessary element in a student's graduation portfolio, a high stakes internship calls for more involvement from faculty and advisors both pre- and post-experience, requires more involvement from the intern supervisors at the organizations, and mandates that the experience be a quality experience. These simple conditions present a range of challenges. Several will be mentioned briefly in this section.

Mandatory internships, on the surface, appears to be the easy option to insure that each student obtains an internship before they graduate. Many colleges and universities, or at least some of their departments, are requiring internships for graduation. Unfortunately, the mandatory option may be the wrong approach because it sets up students to make bad choices. The internship becomes another requirement to check off a graduation list. Often not much thought is put into the decision. One program well known to the author requires an internship (or equivalent experience) to graduate; however, the internship can be completed the summer after they graduate with the submission of a final paper. There is little reflection and certainly no integration of the experience into the learning process or their career considerations. In trying to structure choices so that students make more conscientious decisions the choice architects need to have nudges (Thaler &Sunstein) that push students in the right direction to make an informed choice. For those who opt not to make or fail to make a choice, they have to be positioned so that they obtain an experience that will allow them to transition successfully into the workplace. We want to avoid students dashing out near the end of college experience to find any old internship to complete a graduation requirement.

For credit internships are positive in that credit insures an academic learning component if the internship is designed correctly. However, some departments look at internship credit as a gold mine; a constant revenue stream that supports faculty who are not even involved in assisting students during their internship. Credits for internships have to be carefully thought through so that we are doing what is right for students. Too often students tell me that they have to work a second job because the earnings from the internship go to cover expenses and current credits and they do not have the funds for their next academic term. There is also a cautionary tale for departments who depend on internship credit funds to support faculty if enrollments decline (as happened with one department I worked with) or because graduates are not succeeding in workplace, thus sinking their academic brand.

Financial incentive is the most discussed topic currently on campus, stemming from the recent brouhaha over unpaid internships. It is rather cavalier to state that all internships should be paid. While we might want that to happen, the reality is that non-profit organizations, small for-profit business, and some government agencies, particularly at the state and local level, can only offer internships if unpaid. A healthy, not emotional, discussion of unpaid internships needs to take place where alternative arrangements can be examined to support students in unpaid situations. Believe it or not, Federal Work

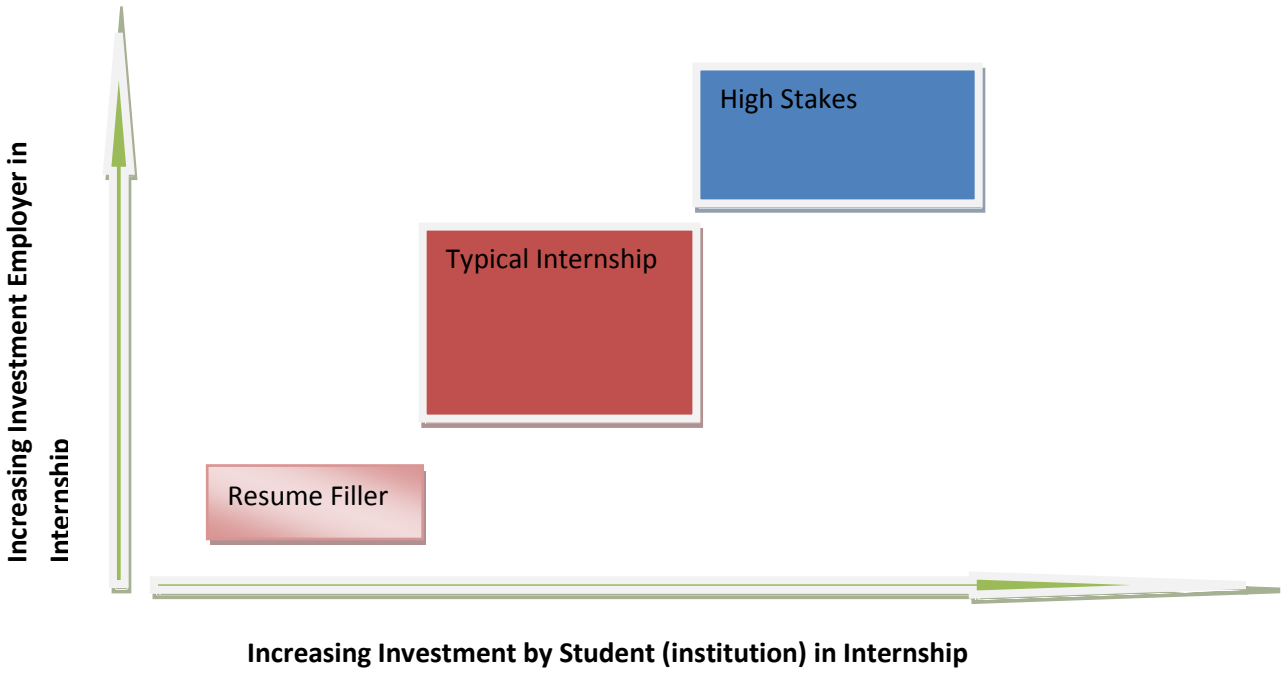
Study funds can be used with non-profits (25% of allocation) and with for-profits (25% of allocation) if the work is related to the student's career objectives. Other options include stipends, grants, or government funds in a program similar to Federal Work Study. It is troubling to know that as many as 75% of students in unpaid internships have to work multiple jobs (taken from data on internships that **InternBridge.com** and CERI are currently analyzing); and the majority of these students are from low-income families.

Mentors (faculty and supervisor) are the key to a successful internship experience for the student and a successful conversion to full-time hires for the organizations. DeLong (2004) is concerned about the declining number of employees who are willing to mentor new workers in the work place. This spells trouble in trying to transfer knowledge and socialize new comers into the organization. Mentors, especially among faculty, are missing in many internship programs. Tenure priorities allocate few points to faculty taking time to work with interns before and after their experiences. A devoted cadre of advisors and non-academic staff attempt to plug the gap. However, the key element of these experiences is learning and how to develop oneself as a learner. To me, this is a prime responsibility of faculty which rarely is accepted by my colleagues.

Experience guarantee means that the internship needs to be worthwhile but we want to stay away from defining internships as "vocational " – a mill for turning out fodder for the workplace; rather these experiences can be a key ingredient in transforming a young person's life when woven into their academic endeavors. The role of college is to prepare learners to handle a variety of situations they will find themselves as globally connected citizens. Faculty members have to realize that work will consume most of their students' adult life – and not work in an academic environment. Thus the college needs to provide some guarantee that each student will have access to opportunities to position them for success in their chosen career. To say it is one thing, but to implement a program is another thing.

Final Thoughts

With the segmentation of the internship into high, medium and low stake events, we can visualize a hierarchy of experience based upon the level of investment that organizations put into their internship program and the level of investment students (with support from their faculty and advisors) put into preparing for and selecting their internships. A representation may look like this:



The lowest level of internship requires minimal effort by both parties. In some cases, these experiences may be exploratory but more likely the experiences can be termed "resume fillers." The middle range on the diagonal reflects a modest to strong effort by both parties to invest in the internship. Typically, this segment reflects the where most companies and students are today. The highest level requires a continuous, large invest of resources by both parties. Some companies already have their internship programs to this level and attract students who have invested time in preparing to obtain these positions. Into the future we can expect the highest which will expand and the middle segments to be the conduit into the workplace. Low level internships will not open doors to full-time employment.

The purpose of this thought piece was twofold. First intention was to present the internship as a high stakes event, describing the characteristics of such an event and implications for students, institutions and organizations. Second intention was to stoke the fires of a conversation on internships and how we meet the challenges of a high stakes internship. I certainly do not have answers to the challenges I listed. But I know that there are best practices and emerging solutions to enhance the level of internships that can be documented and presented to our colleagues. Hopefully, the ideas here will elevate the discussion. Also I hope it revitalizes research into internships; moving away from employment outcomes (did they get a job with good salary), skill development (though that is still critical), and program management to more thoughtful analysis of learning, adjustment to the workplace, and connections to the other co-curricular experiences available to students.

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