


2018

# A Program Evaluation of Performing Arts Instruction Used to Improve Soft Skills

Robert Lawrence Edwards  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Robert Lawrence Edwards

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

A Program Evaluation of Performing Arts Instruction Used  
to Improve Soft Skills

by

Robert Lawrence Edwards

MA, Norfolk State University, 2005

BS, Norfolk State University, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Walden University

October 2018

## Abstract

Evidence derived from the 2012 and 2015 College Senior Surveys (CSS) noted showed that college seniors, at a historically Black university, graduated with little to average soft skills. Soft skills, such as personal characteristics and relations with others, are needed for students to succeed in postgraduate careers. The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which performing arts instruction (PAI) courses developed college-level students' soft skills. Kolb's experiential learning theory, which defines the learning process as knowledge and skills developed through experiences, and Stufflebeam's evaluation model, which uses context, input, process, and product, were used to guide this study. A case study design was used to discern students' perceptions of PAI to help develop their soft skills and meet employers' expectations. Maximum variation sampling was used to select 15 participants who met the criteria of being a senior performing arts student at the target site. All 15 participants were interviewed. In addition, the collected data were coded, organized into themes, and then I triangulated the participants' responses with the CSS summary report. Findings indicated that while PAI helped students meet employers' hiring expectations in areas of soft skills, it was also revealed that there is a need for soft skills development to be embedded in other programs of study at the target site. Both a 3-day student and a 1-day faculty professional development session were developed to instruct both groups on the use of soft skills. Implications for positive social change are that a campus-wide model to improve students' soft skills across all academic disciplines may result in improved employment opportunities, thus contributing to the global economy.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Elsie Edwards, Norman Edwards and all other family members, along with my close friends Holisha Alexander, Dr. Rixon O. Campbell, Jaime Jamison, Dr. Joseph I. Jefferson, Trineene Hall, Charles McPhatter, and Malyisha McPhatter along with my others that stood by and motivated me while completing this doctoral study. Most importantly, I would like to thank all my band students at Johnson C. Smith University and Shaw University that helped motivate me to focus on this research topic. If it was not for my students, this research would not have a purpose. Likewise, I am also grateful for my band staff members, colleagues, and the Johnson C. Smith University Community for their continues support.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Colleges and universities are institutions that help prepare students for the workforce through training, instruction, and learning. Many graduating seniors enter the workforce with mastery of their hard skills and limited competencies of their soft skills (Adam, 2016; Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010). Malone (2013), Raiola (2011), and Rouse (2011) all specified the importance of both skills by saying that hard skills would qualify students for jobs whereas soft skills would allow them to keep their jobs with a possible promotion in the future. Doyon (2014) further added that college students and entry-level workers lack the soft skills desired by educators and hiring managers after graduating from college. Cleary (2014) also stated that students' employment options challenged in an increasingly globalized workplace due to their lack of relevant knowledge and soft skills desired by employers.

Academic courses in universities train students through teaching and instructional methods to compete in the globalized workplace by developing their hard and soft skills. According to Williams (2015), sufficient time is being spent on developing students' hard skills, while less time dedicated to developing the necessary social and behavioral skills needed for success after graduation. Dean (2017) and Calcavecchi (2018) asserted that academic knowledge is only part of the time needed for student success after graduation; their soft skills applications are complementary to hard skills. Strauss (2013) stated that

businesses have turned to performing arts instructions to help bridge the gap between students' soft and hard skills (McCracken, 2010). Phillips (2012) believed that the performing arts have certain components that help develop students' soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, creativity, and leadership skills, to name a few. Talbot (2013) reiterated this by stating that participants in the performing arts and instruction are more likely to gain knowledge and experiences that will develop their soft skills.

### **Definition of the Problem**

Students that graduated from a local private historically Black college and university (HBCU) during the academic years of 2012 and 2015 had little to average soft skills as established by survey results from the College Senior Survey (CSS) administered to graduating seniors (Higher Education Research Institute, 2012; Higher Education Research Institute, 2015a). Surveys were administered to college seniors to assess whether their university met the goals and objectives mentioned in its mission statement. This study was designed to help the university understand graduating students' perceptions of meeting the needs and demands of employers. As noted by Omar, Bakar, and Rashid, (2012) and Robles (2012), employers indicated that they value soft skills because of its ability to ensure the successful transactions of day-to-day business operations (Leak & Reid, 2010; Munro, 2017; Sethi, 2016; Stewart, Wall, & Marciniec, 2016).

Keller, Parker, and Chan (2011) defined employability skills as different skills such as knowledge, soft skills, and attributes that are appropriate for the workplace. As

noted by Jungsun, Erdem, Byun, and Jeong (2011), soft skills are skills that employees should have to communicate customers' concerns, including but not limited to; responsibility, ethical standards, professional liaison, and tolerance of customers' stressful situations. According to the 2012 and 2015 reports, graduating seniors from the participating HBCU soft skills lagged behind students from other nonsectarian 4-year colleges and religious 4-year colleges. The deficit related to the specific emphasis on the extent to which HBCU students felt about the influence of sense of academic and social integration on campus (sense of belonging) when correlated to building character skillsets from soft skills development (Higher Education Research Institute, 2012; Higher Education Research Institute, 2015a). Research by Cappelli (2015), and Stewart (2017) provided an extensive depth of soft skills problems faced by employers throughout different US collegial settings. Ellis, Kisling, and Hackworth (2014) concluded by stating this issue is found in the broader educational situation in North America.

### **Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which performing arts instruction (PAI) courses develop college-level students' soft skills. The usefulness of the local HBCU's goals and objectives gauged with the mission statement's intent to develop students' soft skills for employment after graduation (Hotson, 2011; Jaschik, 2015; Merkl, 2012). In part, the university mission states:

“... The University endeavors to produce graduates who are able to communicate effectively, think critically, learn independently as well as

collaboratively, and demonstrate competence in their chosen fields.

Further, it provides an environment in which students can fulfill their physical, social, cultural, spiritual, and other personal needs and in which they can develop a compelling sense of social and civic responsibility for leadership and service in a dynamic, multicultural society. ...”

This university’s mission statement indirectly stated its aim to develop students’ soft skills for their careers through all degree concentrations offered. The Southern Association of Colleges requires the participating HBCU and Schools (SACS) to ensure that all academic courses taught are aligned with the university’s mission statement (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2012). The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students’ soft skills. Similarly, using performing arts courses and instructional methods for teaching and learning have been known to develop students’ soft skills and promote positive social change (Chen, 2011; Corporate Life, 2015; Deepa & Seth, 2013; Flynn, 2015; Hale, 2006; Karthikeyan & Baskaran, 2011; Kyllonen, 2013; St. Jean, (2017). This discovery inspired my research on PIA soft skills development and students and faculty project study design.

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

The 2012 and 2015, CSS reports on students’ underrepresentation of soft skills competencies for successful employment compared to other seniors nationally can be validated by extant literature (Cherry, 2015; Tomlin, Mocombe, & Wright, 2013). The



results of the 2012 and 2015 CSS reports revealed that graduating seniors from the participant HBCU academic institution had fewer than average soft skills compared to students from other colleges and universities nationally (Ovink & Veazey, 2011; Strayhorn, 2008). The surveys focused on an array of seniors' outcomes and post-college goals, such as academic achievement and engagement, student-faculty interaction, critical thinking, and leadership (soft skills), student goals and values, satisfaction with the college experience, degree aspirations and career plans, and post-college plans (Hargis, 2011; Higher Education Research Institute [HERI], 2012; [HERI], 2015a; [HERI], 2015b).

The CSS compared the HBCU academic community's seniors' responses with two comparison groups: Comparison group (Comp) 1 (private academic institutions and nonsectarian 4-year academic institutions) and Comparison group 2 (Comp) (nonsectarian Catholic and other religious affinities 4-year academic institutions; Higher Education Research Institute, 2015a). Both the 2012 and 2015 CSS reported results revealed through an arithmetic mean, statistical significance, and standard deviation variables. This data came from 20,747 seniors' participants from a 2012 CSS report, and 23,525 senior participants from a 2015 CSS report studied across the United States. The participating HBCU academic community surveyed a total of 113 graduating seniors in 2012 (compared to 20,636 seniors nationally comp 1 and 2) and 107 graduating seniors in 2015 (compared to 23,418 seniors nationally comparison groups 1 and 2; HERI, 2015a; 2015b).

Ninety-eight private and public colleges and universities used the CSS report to measure students' college experiences and satisfaction in 2012 (HERI, 2012). In contrast, a total of 95 private and public colleges and universities used the CSS report to measure students' college experiences and satisfaction in 2015 (HERI, 2015a; HERI, 2015b). Although the CSS is a representation of each participating college and university senior group, each university's senior population sample varied in size, thus causing limitations to comparison results. Additionally, other seniors elected to not take part in the survey for both years. A review of the results from the 2012 and 2015 HBCU academic community revealed several insights.

Evidence from Table 1 suggests that mean scores Overall Satisfaction (OS), Sense of Belonging (SOB), and Positive Cross-Racial Interaction (PCRI) soft skills constructs recorded numbers below the 50-arithmetic mean score threshold (47.8; 49.4; and 48.9 respectively). Mean scores from Comp 1 and Comp 2 were all above the 50-arithmetic mean score threshold. Based on the facts retrieved from these findings, there is a need for this investigative research. The 50-mean score threshold failed to meet other students' experiences, as this could mean that students were not satisfied with their college experiences to provide them with the necessary needs to succeed after college and possibly regret enrolling at the college to explain low OS scores. It could also mean that students did not feel a sense of academic and social integration on campus to prompt them to recommend the college as admission sites to others to explain low SOB scores. Thirdly, the scores are lower than the benchmarked 50-mean score, and an indication that

formative evaluation is needed to assess the how the PAI courses are developing soft skills.

Additional evidence from Table 1 shows that effect size comparisons revealed both positive and negative scores after computing for arithmetic means. As a rule, an effect size of .2 is small, .5 medium, and .8 large. A positive sign implies that the participating HBCU institution's mean is over the mean of the comparison groups. By contrast, a negative sign indicates that the participating HBCU institution's mean is below the mean of the comparison group. However, an adverse effect size, this more favored (e.g., an adverse effect size of Academic Disengagement (AD) means that participating HBCU student scores were lower than comparison schools; suggesting that inconsistent student engagement and behaviors were higher than inconsistent student engagement and behaviors of comparison groups). The effect sizes of the three soft skills constructs of OS, SOB, and PCRI all recorded negative scores. Comparing participating HBCU's soft skills Effect Size (*ES*) scores to Comp 1 and Comp 2 discovered a unique pattern of uniformity between an SOB and PCRI scores; both recorded small *ES*. However, comparing OS scores unveiled a medium *ES*, suggesting a medium practical significance of a mean difference between the participating HBCU institution and the comparison groups.

Table 1 contains mean scores of 2012 CIRP soft skills constructs by graduating seniors within the participating HBCU academic institution.

Table 1

*2012 CIRP College Senior Survey Constructs Mean Reports: Soft Skills of Graduating HBCU Seniors*

CIRP Constructs of Soft Skills <sup>a</sup>	Participating HBCU		Sig. <sup>c</sup>		ES <sup>e</sup>	
	M	SD	Comp 1 <sup>b</sup>	Comp 2 <sup>d</sup>	Comp 1	Comp 2
HOM	54.2	13.66			0.05	0.13
AD	53.4	7.12	***	***	0.35	0.32
FIM	55.5	8.44	***	***	0.35	0.32
SWC	50.1	9.80	*	**	-0.22	-0.25
OS	47.8	8.32	***	***	-0.51	-0.52
SOB	49.4	8.49			-0.12	-0.12
ASC	51.4	9.73			0.13	0.14
SSC	56.1	8.30	***	***	0.43	0.41
PO	51.6	9.76			0.07	0.11
PCRI	48.9	8.83	***	***	-0.49	-0.37
NCRI	54.8	8.51	***	***	0.47	0.43
SA	58.8	9.85	***	***	0.64	0.61
CA	53.6	7.46	*	*	0.23	0.22
LDR	55.4	7.14	*		0.19	0.16
CE	55.5	8.18	***	***	0.52	0.52

*Note.* Source: Higher Education Research Institute [HERI] (2012). *College senior survey-CIRP longitudinal construct reports*. UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. Los Angeles, CA: Cooperation Institutional Research Program. Significance \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . (n) = Total population sample. HBCU(n)= 111-113; Comp 1(n)=5,531-5,567; Comp 2(n)=14,790-14,853

Table 2 displays a full description of summative variables of an arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores that specifically addressed essential soft skills rankings of participating HBCU graduating seniors and comparable rankings with two comparison groups (HERI, 2012).

Table 2

*2012 CIRP College Senior Survey Constructs Mean Reports: Inter-Institutional Constructs Comparison of Soft Skills of Graduating Seniors*

Participating HBCU				Comp 1 <sup>d</sup>				Comp 2 <sup>e</sup>			
Rank <sup>a</sup>	CIRP Constructs of Soft Skills <sup>b</sup>	<i>M</i> <sup>c</sup>	<i>SD</i>	Rank	CIRP Constructs of Soft Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Rank	CIRP Constructs of Soft Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	SA	58.8	9.85	1	LDR	53.8	8.31	1	LDR	54.1	7.99
2	SSC	56.1	8.30	2	HOM	53.6	12.66	2	SA	53.0	9.59
3	CE	55.5	8.18	3	PCRI	52.9	8.22	3	FIM	52.8	8.53
4	FIM	55.5	8.44	4	FIM	52.5	8.41	4	SSC	52.6	8.57
5	LDR	55.4	7.14	5	SA	52.5	9.87	5	HOM	52.5	12.85
6	NCRI	54.8	8.51	6	SSC	52.3	8.79	6	SWC	52.4	9.03
7	HOM	54.2	13.66	7	SWC	52.1	9.10	7	PCRI	52.1	8.36
8	CA	53.6	7.46	8	OS	51.9	8.05	8	OS	52.0	8.00
9	AD	53.4	7.12	9	CA	51.6	8.92	9	CA	51.6	8.81
10	PO	51.6	9.76	10	NCRI	51.3	7.61	10	NCRI	51.5	7.70
11	ASC	51.4	9.73	11	CE	51.1	8.66	11	CE	51.1	8.51
12	SWC	50.1	9.80	12	PO	51.0	8.28	12	AD	50.9	7.67
13	SOB	49.4	8.49	13	AD	50.7	7.67	13	PO	50.6	8.35
14	PCRI	48.9	8.83	14	SOB	50.5	9.34	14	SOB	50.5	9.14
15	OS	47.8	8.32	15	ASC	50.1	9.28	15	ASC	50.1	9.19

*Note.* Source: Higher Education Research Institute [HERI] (2012). *College senior survey-CIRP longitudinal construct reports*. UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. Los Angeles, CA: Cooperation Institutional Research Program. Participating HBCU = A local private Historically Black Colleges and University institution located at southeastern US state where 2012 study was conducted. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation. (n) = Total population sample: HBCU(n) = 111-113; Comp 1(n) = 5,531-5,567; Comp 2(n) = 14,790-14,853.

Evidence from Table 2 alludes to the fact that the 2012 CSS reports showed a common soft skills thread in the three bottom-ranked soft skills constructs. All three construct groups presented students' SOB: participating HBCU institution, Comp 1, and Comp 2. Thus, this is important, as it confirms that overall sense of belonging among students is a contemporary issue (Branand, Mashek, Wray-Lake, & Coffey, 2015; Harper & Yeung, 2013; Prodanovic, 2014).

The data from the survey revealed that the HBCU academic community's student

career preparation was average compared to other colleges and universities across the United States. More significantly, the senior population during the 2012 and 2015 academic years was smaller than other academic institutions. The evidence showed that the senior population did not use soft skills to compete with other graduates seeking employment. The results from the CSS reports indicated that the HBCU academic community's mission to develop soft skills failed to meet the desired goals and objectives. Cleary's (2014) assertion reinforces the significance of learned soft skills experiences of graduates by employers before employment.

#### **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

According to Cleary (2014), Rolle (2018), Klimplová (2012), Massey (2011), Shuayto (2013), and Yow (2010), employers have concluded that college students are not graduating with the necessary soft skills, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills needed on the job after graduation. As suggested by Arroyo (2010), Bakare (2014), Beazley (2013), Fogle (2012), Hotson (2011), McEachern (2011), and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (2013) that this problem is prevalent among students that graduate from HBCUs. Researchers have established that students' preparation in college should be focused on soft skills required upon graduation and also employers' task flexibility being that job retraining is becoming commonplace in the workforce (Duranzyk, Franko, Osifuy et al., 2015; Small, 2017; Ward, 2016)

Likewise, Achieve (2011) and Little (2017) disclosed that in order to connect HBCUs and business employers, a solution is required to develop students' soft skills.

Athreya, Neelakantan, and Romers (2014), McCoy and Guerrier (2012), and North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards (2014) suggested that employers and educational institutions should come together to develop a curriculum for the development of student's soft skills.

Students' participation in performing arts courses can help college students develop soft skills that are required by employers (Cordell, 2011; Dennis, 2014; Elias, 2014; Havar-Simonovich, 2012; Jacobson, 2013; Koenig, 2011; Phillips, 2012; Strauss, 2013; Weinberger, 2014). Likewise, the performing arts can prepare students for their careers by developing student's soft skills (Dalton, 2013; Goebig, 2013; Henry, 2011; Lamb, 2015; Morey, 2014; Semos, 2013). Moreover, Morey (2014), Northouse (2013), Hayes (2018) Raiola (2014), Stange (2012), Strnad (2013), and Stybe (2015) added soft skills play a significant part in students' success after graduation and will help students to become acceptable employees in the workplace.

As noted, leadership skills, creativity, integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, interpersonal skills, professionalism, positive attitude, teamwork skills, flexibility, and work ethic are all necessary soft skills that students should have before entering the workforce (Cortez, 2014; Kim, 2015; Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010; Mueller, 2014; Robles, 2012; Scott-Bracey, 2011). Grieve (2013), Holmes (2014), and Lavy and Yadin (2013) added employers find these soft skills to be essential and student should have these aptitudes preceding graduation. Seetha (2014) also asserted that these soft skills can enhance value to the workplace and contributes productivity to in a

workplace.

According to Briggeman and Norwood (2011), a lack of soft skills negatively impacts the U.S. workforce. Selingo (2015), and Westeraus-Renfrow (2018) indicated employers seek college graduates that possess soft skills in addition to hard skills to help their company grow and to compete in the local, national, and international job markets. Furthermore, Doyon (2014), Samuelson (2012), and The Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy (2010) reinforced this notion by suggesting that universities must develop students' soft skills in order for them to be successful on the job after graduation. The discussion of performing arts courses used as a way to develop college students' soft skills for success after graduation has been frequent among business leaders and educators. Ghanbari (2014), O'Dell (2014), Schawbel (2013), and Seifter and Nissley (2010) acknowledged the contributions of performing arts courses on developing students' soft skills and career readiness. Cook (2012) suggested that performing arts courses and instructional methods can help students gain the required soft skills needed to be successful in their careers.

There is evidence that demonstrates the importance of soft skills in students' future success (Alssid, 2014; Cortez, 2014; Jaskchik, 2015; Mirza, Jaffri, & Hashmi, 2014; Olson, 2013); however, there is a limited amount of research that focuses on the interpretation of soft skills development in the arts and the teaching of these skills among students who attend a minority-serving institution. Data from this study could provide means to close the gap between this private HBCU's ability to develop students' soft



skills within the context of social change, and as a result, lead universities to meet the needs of future employers.

### **Definitions**

*Habits of Mind (HOM):* A unified measure of the behaviors and traits associated with academic success. These soft skills learning behaviors are the foundation for lifelong learning (HERI, 2012). They include such things as overall satisfaction and sense of belonging.

*Hard Skills:* Hard skills are teachable abilities or skills used in a career. Hard skills include but are not limited to: proficiency in a foreign language, the performing arts (i.e., music, dance, or theater), a degree in an academic discipline, or machine operation (Alshare & Sewailem, 2018; Doyle, 2014).

*Historically Black College and University (HBCU):* Institutions of higher learning whose purpose is to educate and teach social skills to African American students (Fogle, 2012)

*Performing Arts (PA):* A collection of disciplines such as dance, theater/drama, music (e.g., choir/vocal and instrumental band studies) and drama/theater; these arts require public performance in front of an audience and taught at public and private institutions and independent studios (Realista, 2013; Stroud Stasel, 2010).

*Program Evaluation:* A program evaluation is the application of systematic methods to address questions about program operation, outcomes, and results (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer 2010). Program evaluation in this study refers to the effort to

measure the effectiveness of instructional methods used at an HBCU (Franklin, 2014).

*Soft Skills:* Soft skills cover different personal characteristics and relational abilities that are important in the workplace, education, or everyday life (Doyon, 2014). Soft skills are defined as but not limited to, leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, creativity, work ethics, and professionalism (McMahon, 2013; Rippard, 2014). For this study, the CIRP constructs in the 2012 CIRP Construct Reports document represents the soft skills discussed. Several examples include Habits of Mind; Sense of Belonging and Leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 2012).

*Visual Performing Communication and Arts (VPCA):* VPCA areas taught in educational and private arts businesses and institutions include but are not limited to: dance, music (instrumental, general, and vocal), theatre, media, music business and technology, sound art, and visual art (Childress-Evans, 2011 & Johnson C. Smith University, n.d.). This area also includes the reading and evaluation of poetry, drama, reading, and multi-media productions (Clay, 2010).

### **Significance**

Data from the North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards and Labor and Economic Analysis Division (North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards and Labor and Economic Analysis Division [NCAWDB], 2014) provided evidence concerning the problem of lack of soft skills from recent college graduates at the local level. The association supplied important data on employer demands and drafted relevant policies and strategies to address the skills gap issue. From

a broader perspective, the NCAWDB conducted an employer and employee study in 2012 on North Carolina's employees' skill gap from select employers from each county in the state of North Carolina.

The NCAWDB study investigated the common issues related to employers hiring snags (North Carolina Business Services Representatives [NCBSR], 2012). The local issue in this study coexisted to the results of the NCAWDB study. The researchers found that students that graduated from colleges and universities across North Carolina sought employment in their local area after graduation (MacKain, Tedeschi, Durham, & Goldman, 2002; Obstacles to the Effectiveness of Performance Funding, 2013).

Researchers of the NCAWDB study indicated that skill gaps among college graduate job seekers in North Carolina persisted across all hiring models (NCBSR, 2012). Researchers from the NCBSR (2012) study described the soft skills gap issues facing leading business sector employers in North Carolina. The researchers found that employers noted (a) almost 60% of applicants in the study needed communication and/or interpersonal skills, (b) almost 46.8% of applicants need critical and analytical thinking, (c) almost 42% of applicants need soft skills, and (d) just over 30% (34.4%) of applicants need improved customer service and leadership and/or managerial soft skills respectively.

The health and community services industry presented a weightier need with 64% expressing communication/interpersonal skills as being essential soft skills gap during hiring attempts (NCBSR, 2012). Likewise, the lack of customer service soft skills (56.6%) was categorized as a critical challenge for the retail sales industry, validating the

real and present challenge of finding workers with adequate soft skills competencies (Venugopal & Priya, 2015). Alssid (2014), Floyd (2014) and Hurrell (2016) noted that these soft skills gap could hurt the growth and progress of businesses achieving their business goals.

Bakare (2014), Cohen (2014), Jones and Schmitt (2014), and Kim (2011) supported the data relating to this local problem by asserting that students need strong soft skills to compete in today's job market. As an incentive to improve employees' soft skills, businesses began to use creative training techniques (including PAI) to develop employees' soft skills (Claxton, Costa, & Kallick, 2016; Hurrell, 2016; Miller, 2016; Phillips, 2012). Instructional training techniques allow for employees to use the critical thinking competencies to manage subtle and implicit challenges creatively faced at work (Kivunja, 2015; Lyle, 2013).

As referenced by Alssid (2014), Jaskchik (2015), Mirza et al. (2014), and Olson (2013), business and educational leaders believe soft skills development is essential for businesses to survive and to compete with other businesses. Doyon (2014), McMahon (2013) and Rippard (2014) further acknowledged that soft skills are needed by graduates to succeed in the workplace. These researchers identified the following as vital soft skills: leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, creativity, workplace ethics, and professionalism. Thus, this study assessed the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills.

Furthermore, researchers have indicated that a lack of soft skills is rife both

among students attending minority-and majority-serving institutions (Sambolt & Blumenthal, 2013). These soft skills are crucial for graduates' success in both higher education and the workforce (Cossey-Simpson, 2014; Floyd, 2014; Kozachyn, 2013; Willian, 2014; Yamauchi, 2014). Moreover, PAI can help bridge this gap to develop students' soft skills for career readiness (Havar-Simonovich, 2012; Kowarski, 2013;). Adecco Staff (2013), Alssid (2014), Fogle (2012), and Slade (2014) shared the adverse effect of this skill gap, which is college graduates are having difficulty finding employment in their profession after graduation.

The results will inform educational administrators, stakeholders, and business leaders of the essence of soft skills to be used to contribute toward improving students' soft skills to result in career readiness at this university. The results from the study will provide much-needed insight toward PAI and its contributions toward developing students' soft skills. Insights from the study will aid university administrators and stakeholders in understanding possible solutions related to the issues of students graduating with fewer to average soft skills.

Duncan and Donifon (2012) and Greenstein (2012) noted that a solution is needed to improve soft skills challenge and that business leaders are looking to hire employees with skills that can improve employers productivity. Elswick (2014) and Williams (2015) stated that soft skills development among students had become a force for social change over the past decade. By integrating soft skills development into academic learning; students may become more successful on the job after graduation; as a result, social

change may come through economic growth (Hurrell, 2016; Olson, 2013).

### **Guiding/Research Questions**

Graduating seniors from colleges and universities with below average soft skills competencies fail to meet employers work expectations. Soft skills capabilities are the bedrock to sustaining business relationships, organizational relevance as well as achieving profitability and desired outcomes. The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills.

There are two research questions which guided this study. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the research questions are designed to guide this study and give insight into employers' soft skills concerns regarding requirements for college students. The questions are as follows:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): After taking PAI courses at this HBCU, in what way do students' soft skills align with their employer's expectations?

### **Review of the Literature**

Existing literature about PAI course development for college-level students to attain soft skills is extensive and includes the assimilation of theoretical and experiential data. The literature reviewed in this section is heavily dependent on peer-reviewed academic journals about the topics related to the purpose of the study. Similarly, the literature review relates to assessing the level to which PAI courses develop college-level

students' soft skills and includes a review of the conceptual framework. In the literature review, I will discuss related topics surrounding the following main topics: (a) gaps in the literature to specifically address soft skills needs valued by employers from students, (b) discussions on historically African American college education and employer needs, (c) the influence of Kolb's experiential learning theory on behavioral learning and skills development, (d) performing arts instruction and soft skills needs, and (e) implications of soft skills needs for organizational performance.

I examined, scrutinized, and annotated three categories of literature sources pertinent to the study: printed books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and sound scholarly web publications. I used various subject vital terms in various combinations to categorize the primary literature pool to focus on the search for relevant findings. These key phrases included: *program evaluation, instructional methods, soft skills, career readiness, job training, workforce, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, professionalism, positive attitude, teamwork skills, soft skills, employer needs, historically black college education, behavioral learning, skills development, performing arts instruction, and organizational performance.*

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of my topic, I typed the following key phrases into the Internet-based search engines and databases, such as HBCU online database; Central Piedmont Community College; University of North Carolina, Charlotte; and Walden University printed texts. The database search engines that I used were: ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, JSTOR, Grout, JMTE, ProQuest ABI/INFORM

Complete New Platform, eScholarship, Sage Premier, Emerald Management Plus, Google Scholar, and a local library reputable for housing web publications published or accessible online. I gathered data from over 100 sources and published articles within the past five years, were initially found to bear significant relevance to this topic.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Kolb's experiential learning theory of student development was the conceptual framework for the formative study. Kolb (1984) defined learning as a process whereby knowledge and skills developed through experiences. Kolb's theory focuses on "learning styles, the relationship between learning and development, and implications of learning styles for higher education" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). According to Simpson (2014) and Kolb (1984), the holistic and teaching approach seeks to develop students' learning skills for career readiness.

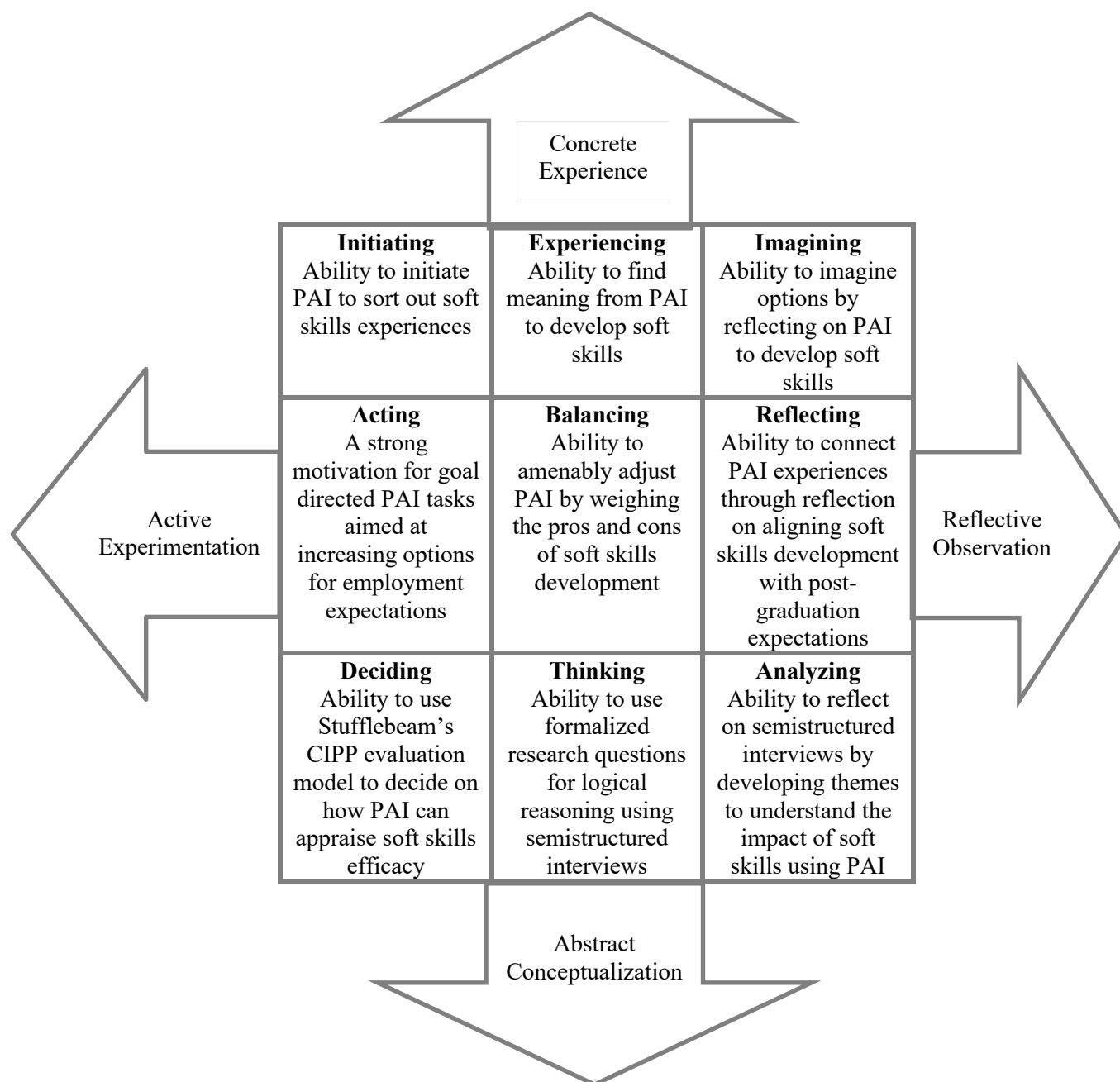
As stated earlier, Kolb's (1984) experiential theory of student learning development was used to frame this study's research questions. Kolb's theory also guided this study; it was used to help address this study's problem. This theory provided direction, which in return offered insight on how students think and feel about fulfilling the skills gap between soft skills. Fewster-Thuente and Batterson (2018) stated that Kolb's theory includes a combination of learning and application needed to enhance professional development among students, faculty, and contributions toward promoting positive social change at HBCUs.

According to Finch et al. (2015), Konak, Clark, and Nasereddin (2014) Paterson



and Chapman (2013), Kolb's experiential learning is a structure that offers critical insights into the phenomenon. Therefore, I used the experiential learning theory to help me understand PAI's ability to develop students' soft skills for success after graduation. On the other hand, Kolb's experiential learning provides a holistic learning and teaching approach to endure the intricacies of learning soft skills modules and promote soft skills development. Various higher education institutions use this theory to develop students' skills while helping students meet employers' expectations for employment (Abel, Deitz, & Su, 2014; Britton, 2013).

According to Sattler (2018) and DelBusso (2018), the typological analysis used with Kolb's theory is an appropriate approach to create interview questions. I used both the typological analysis and Kolb's experiential theory to construct my interview questions. Figure 1 illustrates distinct ways college seniors can use PAI instruction to develop soft skills through a learning cycle based on four different learning modes: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AO) (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012).



*Figure 1.* Typological analysis of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory: understanding performing arts instruction (PAI) characteristics to improve soft skills Learning Source: Passarelli, A. M. & Kolb, D. A. (2012). Using experiential learning theory to promote student learning and development in programs of education abroad. In M. V. Berg, M. Paige, & K. H. Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad. What our students are learning, what they are not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 137-161). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

The four quadrants reflect multiple perspectives and experiences of college seniors' perceptions of PAI and soft skills development, patterned in nine learning styles (initiating, experiencing, imagining, acting, balancing, reflecting, deciding, thinking, analyzing). According to Kolb, Boyartis and Mainemelis (2001), four learning styles represent two learning modes: imaging (CE and RO), analyzing (RO and AC), deciding (AC and AE), and initiating (AE and CE). The prominent learning style (balancing) embraces all four learning modes (CE, RO, AC, and AE). Balancing considers the ability to flexibly adapt PAI models by assessing the benefits and challenges of soft skills development. Given the background of the conceptual framework, an understanding of PAI characteristics can be inferred to improve soft skills learning (Finch, Peacock, Lazdowski, & Hwang, 2015).

### **HBCUs Background and Mission Statement**

**HBCUs.** Several HBCU institutions were built before 1964 to provide a formal education for African Americans (Cooke, 2014; Higher Education Act of 2013; Lea & Reid, 2010; Lott-Dunn, 2013). According to Featherstone (2011), an HBCU is a college or university established initially to educate students of African American descent denied access to predominantly White institutions before the American Civil War. Likewise, northern White missionary societies, African American religious organizations, wealthy donors, and corporate foundations all helped to establish HBCUs during the Reconstruction Era (Denton, 1993; Schuckman, 2013; Slack, 2012).

**HBCU Mission Statements.** Traditionally, one of the roles of HBCUs was to develop African American students' social skills through teaching and learning (Featherstone, 2011). Merkl (2012) noted that today's HBCUs are more diverse, using mission statements to help identify core values about diversity, educational practices, tradition, and the development of students' social skills. Mission statements also help internal and external stakeholders, educational administrators, and business leaders to understand the institution's core values according to its university's president and lead administrators (Lafavore, 2012). Dilworth (2012) supported this notion by stating mission statements outline the core purpose, vision, and focus of educational institutions.

Burnette (2010), Ihedigbo (2012), and Lacey-Nevitt (2012) reiterated this by stating HBCUs' mission statements are vital in helping faculty members and other stakeholders understand the core values used to help prepare students for their careers after graduation. Likewise, the mission statement gives business leaders and stakeholders a clear understanding of these colleges' and universities' focus on how these students will contribute to social change (Chang, 2014 & Dunn, 2013).

Turner (2013) stated that it is through colleges and university mission statements that faculty members can design curriculums and syllabi to help students master their hard skills and develop core soft skills for careers after graduation (Expeditionary Learning, 2011; Veysey, 1965). Lafavore (2012) asserted that students concentrate less on the significance of mission statements during employment seeking. Instead, students focus more on the possibility of acquiring learning opportunities from future employers.

Mastering the capacities of mission and vision statements require an ability for students to use soft skills to choose optimal employers that the employment market can offer (Desmidt, Prinzie, & Heene, 2008).

### **African American College Education and Employer Needs**

According to Doyon (2014), soft skills became a focus in universities due to concerns from business leaders that students were graduating with little mastery of these skills (Andreotti Hirsch, 2017). Taylor (2011) and Knott (2010) added colleges and universities began incorporating social or soft skills as part of their mission statement core values. Due to mission statements being altered to fit these needs, Dalton (2013) stated that college administrators and faculty searched for other alternatives through teaching and learning that prepared students for the workforce. Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010) believed that if colleges and universities incorporate soft skill development into curriculums and syllabi, these skills will transfer into students' careers and employers would become satisfied. According to Davis (2015), certain HBCU administrators believed performing arts courses could help develop students' soft skills. Realista (2013) also noted performing arts courses, and instruction has the potential to develop the soft skills that employers require from graduates before employment.

### **Soft Skills and Employment**

Employers believed in order for companies to compete with other businesses employees needed strong, soft skills (Azim et al., 2010; Calcavecchi, 2018; Dean, 2017; Hashmi, 2014; HEA, 2013; HRA, 2013; Williams, 2015). Stybe (2015) noted that soft

skills are just as important as hard skills; the execution of soft skills and the knowledge of hard skills work together in order to ensure graduates' success.

Williams (2015) added colleges and universities should graduate students with the required soft skills in order to succeed in the workforce. Similarly, researchers indicated that employers' growing demand for employees to have strong soft skills before being hired contributed this learning approach in higher education (Maxwell, Scott, Macfarlane, & Williamson, 2010; Rao, Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Ejaz, UL-Haq, & Raza, 2011).

Furthermore, Williams (2015) asserted that not all employees would take the responsibility to train employees once hired. Due to the uncertainty that employers will overlook graduates' soft skills deficiency, educators are beginning to implement soft skills development into their curriculums and syllabi (Ejaz, UL-Haq, & Raza, 2011; Williams, 2015). Heimler (2010) went on to state that because of this demand from employers, several graduates believed additional soft skills training were needed to ensure their work success.

According to Parker (2011), soft skills varied depending on various occupations and applied to different situations that may occur on that job. Malone (2013) and Calcavecchi (2018) reinforced the premise that employers' value soft skills taught in the performing arts. Performing arts instruction has been proven to develop students' soft skills. Researchers have asserted that companies have turned to PAI in hopes to develop employees' soft skills (Havar-Simonovich, 2012). Talbot (2013) expressed a similar idea that performing arts instruction is vital in developing students' soft skills for personal and

professional success. Table 3 presents the top five industries and the soft skills that these industries reported to be valued.

Table 3

*Soft Skills Selected Across Industry Groupings (Select Industries)*

Business & Finance	Natural & Applied Sciences	Health, Education & Government	Sales & Service	Trades & Manufacturing
Communication	Communication	Communication	Professionalism	Communication
Professionalism	Teamwork	Professionalism	Communication	Technological aptitude
Teamwork	Technological aptitude	Critical thinking	Teamwork	Teamwork
Strategic thinking	Critical thinking	Collaboration	Strategic thinking Self-awareness	Collaboration
Critical thinking	Decision-making & action Professionalism	Teamwork	Leadership Goal setting Prioritization	Professionalism

*Note.* Source: Elias, K. (2014). *Employer perceptions of co-curricular engagement and the co-curricular record in the hiring process* (Doctoral dissertation).

Elias (2014) findings revealed the top soft skills valued by employers:

communication, professionalism, and teamwork. On the other hand, Dalton's (2013) research added to the soft skills list valued by employers: communication skills, decision-making, problem-solving skills, experience, teamwork skills, professionalism, work ethics, and leadership skills. The researchers' findings support the fact that soft skills valued by employers differ according to industry needs (Hurrell, 2016; Ting Su, 2015).

Soft skills are an essential factor in today's workforce. Baker (2014) stated that soft skills are essential for businesses to grow, develop, and compete in the global job

market. Dalton (2013) and Elias's (2014) research emphasized the critical value soft skills offer employers to communicate, problem solving, work in team settings collaboratively, as well as make judgment calls using a moral compass.

**Communication.** Communication is an essential skill required by the employer, yet one that various college graduates lack (Clipper, 2015; Heimler, 2010; Kelly, 2015; Parasuraman & Prasad, 2015; Tewari, & Sharma, 2016). Communication has served as a leading deliverable in deciphering important information necessary for business actions (Bedwell, Fiore, & Salas, 2014; Five Soft Skills, 2015; Kahlon, 2013; Robles, 2012; Singh, 2013). Cleary (2014) asserted that communication builds trust among employers and employees, allows a consistent exchange of importation, and ensures a positive work environment. Ceri-Booms (2010), Dalton (2013) and Minter (2010) stated that communication provides clarity and accuracy through verbal, written, and non-verbally in messages, collaborations among colleagues, and listening. Employers value this skill due to its ability to promote productivity, consistency, and to ensure the proper practice of soft skills in the work environment (Raiola, 2014).

Performing arts instruction is a significant contributor to building communication skills (Meenan, 2013). Dance, theater, and music use different methods of verbal and nonverbal instructions to communicate and develop students' hard and soft skills. According to Miller (2011), performing arts instruction supports student skill development in listening and training students to apply their communication skills in different situations teaches students to develop listening skills and train students to apply



their communication skills in different situations.

Barshi and Healy (2011) linked verbal instructions to soft skills as similar to the ability to follow directions in different situations. Likewise, the communication approach is essential when teaching discipline in order for students to gain mastery of their craft (Miller, 2011). As a result, the essence of communication serves as an impetus for students seeking soft skills to navigate their professional competencies.

**Creativity and innovation.** Creativity is the use of new and useful ideas for personal or professional purposes (e.g., the arts, business, education, or everyday life) (Ferizovic, 2015). According to Cipper (2015), creativity and innovation allow an individual to apply original and critical thinking techniques. Cheung (2011) added that creativity in careers facilitates original ideas for products, processes, services, or procedures. Ferizovic (2015) noted that creativity is the driving force for innovation, which promotes new ideas. Jung (2012) further added that creativity and innovation have a close connection. Jung also noted that innovation is the practice of introducing new and improved concepts in order to stand out from competitors. Ferizovic (2015) stated that all employees do not require creativity and innovation. However, these skills are useful to have in the current global economy (Cipper, 2015).

**Problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making.** Problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making are all driving factors that helped employees recognize and define problems, identify, and implement solutions, and evaluate results (Heimler, 2010). Brenner (2010) noted that a student's mastery of these skills helped

them become well-rounded employees. By this same token, O'Dell (2013) asserted that music could aid students in mastering soft skills is positively correlated to developing their listening and reading comprehension, pronunciation, writing, and vocabulary, which in turn helped students become critical thinkers, improved problem solvers, and decision makers. Semos (2013) supported this finding by suggesting that student involvement in performing arts courses helped them become problem solvers and decision makers.

Ghanbari (2014) and Dalton (2013) further added that problem solving and decision making abets students' ability to identify and analyze problems, make sound decisions, promote creative and innovative solutions, and think abstractly about problems on the job. Problem solving is essential for understanding issues relevant for success. Critical thinking propels the ingenuities of such issues to counter the necessary skills.

**Teamwork and collaboration.** Semos (2013) investigated links between the performing arts, career readiness, teamwork, and collaboration. This researcher also noted these skills developmental process takes place when students work with each other while carrying out a task in performing arts coursework. Furthermore, Phillips (2012) noted that students' mastery of teamwork and collaboration develop when preparing for events and other performances. Dalton (2013) stated that employers encourage educators to place mastery of teamwork and collaboration as being a priority when preparing students for the workforce. Yow (2010) asserted that these skills are essential due to employees having to work in diverse environments. For this reason, teamwork and collaboration are both required for businesses to accomplish goals. They also ensure that

employees can work together, handle multiple projects, have a sensitivity toward diversity, and maintain accountability to teams (Dalton, 2013; Gardner, n.d.a.; Gardner, n.d.b.; Grasgreen, 2014)

**Professionalism.** According to Dalton (2013), professionalism is important for several reasons. Among other salient responsibilities, employers want employees to establish productive relationships with customers, other businesses, and the public. Havar-Simonovich (2012) noted that employees with pleasant and professional attitudes alleviate businesses to improve sales, build professional relationships, and improve other business matters. Furthermore, Dalton (2013) asserted that professionalism nurtured the integrity of an employee, cultivated employee's ability to understand work protocol, supported employee's ability to set realistic career expectations and boosted employee's ability to handle conflict on the job.

Atoofi (2011) stated that PAI instructors could hold students to a professional standard. During instructional time and performances, students are required to exhibit professional conduct and proper etiquette at all times. Students are required to adhere to strict dress codes, punctuality, communication, display proper body language, and other standards that exemplify professionalism (Crotty, 2011; Suzanne, 2015). Havar-Simonovich (2012) stated PAI develop students' professionalism which in return applied to other areas of their lives.

### **Understanding performing arts instruction and Related Characteristics**

Bray (2014), Doyle (2013), and Lapin (2013) defined *performing arts courses* as a

discipline of study that included the following concentrations: music (choir /vocal study, sound art, music business and technology, and instrumental band study); dance; and theater (UoWGB, n.d.). Johnson (2017) further noted performing arts courses offered at colleges and universities provide many learning options for student success. These options include career choices within the arts industry, selecting PAI as electives to broaden student horizons in mastering soft skills development, as well as the opportunity to seek institutional funding supports for academic purposes (Argirova, 2012; Austin, 2010; Dawn, 2013; Johnson, 2017).

Downey (2013) and Seider (2012) also noted that the performing arts encouraged the development of intellectual character, a specified function of PAI, among students. Ritchhart (2002) defined *intellectual character* as a cognitive disposition such as curiosity, skepticism, and open mindedness. Dawn (2013) stated that intellectual character has a connection with defining soft skills and valued in performing arts pedagogies for student instruction. Likewise, drama, music, and dance are all significant in influencing the honing of soft skills (Ogunnaike, 2015). For example, as illustrated in Table 4, children may show their creative visual arts skills by wearing different colorful costumes as a means of demonstrating cultural awareness and pride (Crowder, 2007).

Lapin (2013) suggested that PAIs provide students with the opportunity to master soft skills competencies. As noted by Stefanic (2014), creativity in the PAIs helped students to identify and present original ideas through movement, singing, and playing instruments. The ability to master soft skills competencies, according to Webster (2013)

includes a critical analysis of four skills that promote creativity: aptitude, conceptual understanding, craftsmanship, and aesthetic sensitivity. Goebig (2013) and Stefanci (2014) also noted that when students gain instructions on how to become more creative in the performing arts, they become motivated, self-determined, and self-affiant, thereby making the process of learning and developing original ideas leisurely. Havar-Simonovich (2012) asserted that these skills are applied to dance, music, and theater and transferred to other areas of life as well.

Table 4

*Componential Analysis: Dimensions of Contrast*

Cultural domain	Visual arts	Drama	Music	Dance
Ways children demonstrate learning	story illustration	Plays	writing lyrics	poses
	comic strips	Monologues	Recording	creating dances
	Masks	Commercials	Singing	movement
	Costumes	Slogans	Musicals	rhythm
	Projects	Skits	pattern recognition	pattern recognition

*Note.* Source: Baker, D. (2013). Art integration and cognitive development. *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 9(1), 1-17.

Ferizovic (2015) defined componential analysis, as a related characteristic of PAI and creative skills of an individual impacted by their cultural characteristics and domains. Such cultural features promote respect within cultural communities aimed at collective communal gains (Leah & Iuditm, 2016). Teachers use this analysis on several occasions within the classroom.

Keeling and Richard (2011) clarified two ambiguous terms commonly used in PAI. First, they reinforced the premise that intellectual character is the accentuation of a

network of controlled and acceptable habits used in professional and personal environments to positively execute the intent of actions. Second, they stated that transferable skills such as communication skills, creativity and innovation, creativity analysis, and creativity problem-solving are useful tools for a scholarly character.

Elias (2014) and Opatrny, McCord, and Michaelsen (2014) supported the notion through their research that transferable skills have a connection to all personal and professional endeavors. Collins (2011) asserted that employees that exhibit savvy use of transferable skills are more likely to succeed in the workplace than those that do not. Additionally, music as a performing arts instruction genre can develop transferable skills (Bassett, 2013; Hille & Schupp, 2015). Perry (2014) confirmed that PAI teaching methods provide the necessary training needed to develop students' soft skills. According to Kettler (2012), students became proficient in their disciplinary majors and subsequent careers after graduation, when educators focused on implementing the development of soft skills within the PAI instructional curriculum and syllabus.

PAI has been documented to stimulate cognitive development and brain function to aid skills training, thereby is another essential characteristic of understanding the effectiveness of PAI (Cabane, Hille, & Lechner, 2016). McCutcheon and Seller-Young (2013) suggested that PAI elicits high levels of neuroplasticity in the brain. Researchers have observed that the ability of the brain to reorganize itself to adapt to new learning functions is a significant contributor toward students' ability to use soft skills to other professions (Collins, 2014; Hodges, 2010; Knowland & Thomas, 2014; White, Hutka,

Williams, & Moreno, 2013).

According to Havar-Simonovich (2012) and Crosbie (2005), learning soft skills take time. Additionally, the findings from both studies provided clarity on which soft skills employers believe are transferable and perceived to add value to business practices. Williams (2015) stated that employers believe soft skills contribute to change in the workplace, client engagement, and employee success.

**Music instruction.** Childress-Evans (2011) asserted that music instruction, whether singing, playing an instrument, creating music, or conducting, involved individuals to focus on the mastery of soft skills in order to be successful. Figure 2 illustrates how performing arts training are linked to the development of soft skills, showing shared views of human concepts as they relate to the development of soft skills for the workplace (Crosbie, 2005; Off, 2017).

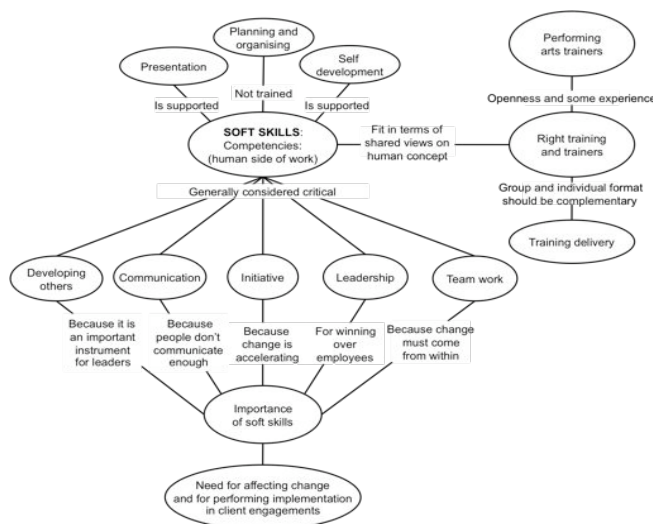


Figure 2. Display of performing arts training to developing soft skills. Source: Havar-Simonovich, T. (2012).

Researchers have provided a vast database of empirical information on components of music, which play a role in inculcating soft skills (Chambers & McDonald, 2013; Eng, 2015; Hille & Schupp, 2015; Pandey & Pandey, 2015; Rahim, 2014; Succi, 2015). Livingston's (2010) findings added that music instruction required students to focus on perfecting their talents while developing soft skills. Lapin (2013) asserted that students from different non-music disciplines benefitted from music instruction with an aim to develop students' talent and soft skills.

Schwarz (2014) agreed to the powerful influence of music as a soft skill factor and stated that music instruction could help students develop the necessary soft skills to become well-rounded citizens in society. Johansson (2012) and Eng (2015) referenced soft skills development learned in music as a way to help students adjust to life after graduation. Cose-Giallella (2010) revealed through collected data that students trained in music are more in tune with their soft skills and can function in professional environments outside of music. Vanada (2010) asserted that soft skills are developed through music when students perfect playing right notes, as well as identify musical themes and color. As a result of attaining skills, students can demonstrate strong decision-making skills, communication skills, autonomy, and self-direction.

**Dance instruction.** The role of dance as an instrument for skills development has been well documented (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013; Russell-Bowie, 2013; Torrents Martín, Ric, & Hristovski, 2015). Davis (2012) acknowledged that mastery of dance through dance instruction developed and improved students' soft skills. Gerena (2015)



identified dance instruction as a major contributor to developing students' soft skills. Students that participate in dance activities develop strong, soft skills through dance instruction (Wats & Wats, 2009). In line with the same notion, Cashmore (2010) added that dance instruction developed skills that students can apply in other professions.

Havar-Simonovich (2012) asserted that dance instruction effectiveness is due to the verbal and non-verbal approach used by instructors. Kuijper (2010) indicated that verbal instruction in dance helped students develop critical thinking and self-worth among students. The use of the non-verbal approach in dance instruction enhanced students' self-esteem and self-efficacy (Cashmore, 2010).

Bassett (2013) investigated possible links to dance instruction and the required training needed for students to adapt in the 21st century job market. Lanfredi (2013) and Gerena (2015) acknowledged that dance instruction promoted critical thinking when people worked together as a team. Likewise, Meenan (2013) stated the best approach to teach dance skills are through verbal and nonverbal instructional approach. Drost and Todorovich (2013) also suggested that students with dance training can be successful in today's job market if teachers infuse dance instructional methods that are effective in developing students' hard and soft skills.

**Theater instruction.** According to Cowart (2013) and Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission (CDSMC) (2004), theater instruction has been useful because it teaches students how to interact with others and to become capable of controlling their thoughts. Kayaoglu (2011) added that theatre provided a means for

students to learn communication and social skills needed for environments outside theater studies. Likewise, through theater instruction, students gained a more profound understanding of how to work with others (Kayaoglu, 2011). In comparison to other performing arts courses, soft skills taught through theater instruction has been defined as being transferable skills; these skills are applied to students' personal and professional pursuits (University of Wisconsin Green Bay, n.d.).

Moore's (2011) research provided evidence that theatre instruction can develop students' soft skills and prepare them for careers outside the theater. Gaylor (2011) findings gave insight towards various businesses use of theater training to help develop employees' soft skills. Gaylor (2011) insinuated that due to graduates entering into the workforce with little mastery of their soft skills, employers used methods from theater instruction to help to develop employees' soft skills. According to Jones (2014) *process drama*, a form of drama therapy is an approach favored by theater teachers and employers to develop critical thinking among students. Stasel (2012) suggested that alternative educational approaches have proven to be useful in developing students' soft skills.

The Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competencies in Education (DICE Consortium, 2010) investigated soft skills inquiries from theater students for the DICE study. The investigation yielded a total of 22 competencies, nine of which showed the following characteristics related to drama activities:

1. students were more confident in reading and understanding tasks

2. students were more confident in communication
3. students were more likely to feel that they are creative
4. students became stronger problem solving
5. students improved in coping with stress
6. students were more tolerant toward diversity
7. students were more empathic, thus they have concern for others
8. students were more able to change their perspective
9. students were more innovative and entrepreneurial (DICE Consortium, 2010 pp. 6-7)

### **Relevance of Literature**

For this study, I gathered relevant literature that indicated a connection between soft skills required in the performing arts and soft skills used in the workforce. I also gathered literature that presented information concerning HBCU's mission statements and performing arts instruction used to develop students' soft skills through teaching and learning. Likewise, my findings suggested that PAI is a means to help students develop soft skills for success in the workforce.

### **Implications**

The implications of this study imply that performing arts instructors need assistance to develop college-level students' soft skills. The study focused on college graduates at a local private HBCU, as well as employer soft skills needs. Thus, Cappelli (2015), Hale (2006), Weiss, Frost, and Chopp (2013) noted that the literature review

emphasizes the implication of a study. This study's focus is on the following, (a) to discuss gaps in the literature that purposely addressed soft skills requirements, which highly regarded by employers from college graduates, (b) to review the local HBCU instructional practices with the aim of attuning its institutional mission for teaching and learning, (c) to examine the requirements for graduation college seniors' success by employers, (d) to examine the effect of Kolb's learning theory on communicative learning and skills enhancement, (e) to look at the relevance of performing arts instruction and employer soft skills needs, and (f) to discuss the implications of soft skills for organizational functioning.

After conducting my study, I observed several implications for research and practice. The significance of my findings will present how performing arts instruction at an HBCU institution located at the southeastern U. S. state develop its students' soft skills. In general, I uncovered important realities about the complexities related to HBCU institutional governance; mission statement intentions; soft skills relevance for work; as well as post-graduation employment requirements.

### **Summary**

Upon the completion of this study, I obtained multiple college seniors' perspectives of performing arts courses ability to develop soft skills and soft skills applicability for successful employment expectations; and post-graduation employment requisites, using a qualitative case study analysis. Moreover, skills that college seniors perceived to be employers' soft skills need. Furthermore, Feffer (2016), Johnson (2016),

Matteson, Anderson, and Boyden (2016), Rao (2016), Staub, Kaynak, and Gok (2016) noted college graduates are not meeting employers' soft skills expectations and alternative solutions are needed to ensure employers' needs. I discovered through my literature review findings that this is imperative due to its significance towards organizational improvement. The current study will assess the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills.

Additionally, I will share my study findings and results with stakeholders. My study results will give focus on how to close students' soft skills gap and to address alternative soft skills teaching methods for academic curriculum development and decision making. The results may also be used to assist employers looking for graduates that possess soft skills to function in the workplace. Thus, in the literature review, I focused on concerns about employers' soft skills requirements. Furthermore, I examined the conceptual framework on Kolb's experiential learning theory of student development to develop and address my research questions. Each research question was used to guide the methodology section and analysis and interpretation of data.

The results from the project study may help to inform university faculty members, administrators, stakeholders, and hiring managers about the influence of performing arts instruction to develop students' soft skills. Additionally, I shared recommendations on what was perceived to be ineffective performing arts instruction. Lastly, my recommendations provided faculty in higher education insight on the importance of focusing on developing students' soft skills during PAI.

In Section 2 of the project study, I will discuss the specific methodology used to answer the central research questions and subquestions as discussed in Section 1. Likewise, I will describe the sampling procedures, data collection, and data analysis procedures proposed to answer the research questions identified in Section 1. Also, this process will allow me to explore further the social gap in practice and local problem identified in my study. Within Section 3 of this study, I will discuss the aspects of the project study after gaining insight into the possible answers to the central and subquestions discussed in Section 1. Also, I will discuss the description and goals, rationale, review of literature, implementation, and project evaluation of the potential project based on the data collected and analyzed within Section 2. Apart from this, I will discuss the implications including social change. Within Section 4 of the project study, I will discuss the project's strengths in addressing the lack of literacy skills in Surfside School District. Similarly, I will recommend remediation of the limitations to determine alternatives in addressing the problem. In conclusion of this study, I will reflect and self-analyze on what I learned about the scholarship, project development, and leadership and change.

## Section 2: Methodology

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which performing arts instruction (PAI) courses develop college-level students' soft skills. Branham (2014), Lachcik (2016), and Nutting (2013) documented the phenomenon of limited soft skills competencies of graduating seniors extensively. The essential soft skills proficiencies serve as one of several relevant characteristics needed to compete professionally at the workplace for optimal organizational performance (Cappelli, 2015; Robles, 2012).

To explore employers' soft skills apprehensions about requirements for graduating seniors, I focused on two central questions in this study:

1. How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills?
2. After taking PAI courses at the participating historically black college and university (HBCU), in what way do students' soft skills align with their employer's expectations?

In this section, I will discuss the methodology used to apply and establish the findings to the central questions determined in Section 1. I used a collective case study method that contains information and a single case analysis of graduate seniors' familiarities with, among other deliverables, the bearing of employer needs on graduates' professional achievements, the influence of theory on communicative learning and skills improvement, and the application of performing arts instruction to determine employer

soft skills needs.

### **Research Design and Approach**

The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills. I conducted this qualitative study by using the formative program evaluation design. I used the qualitative research design to determine if performing arts courses are effective as designed to achieve the objectives of the study. Creswell (2012) mentioned the qualitative design best suits a program evaluation to gain a better understanding of the researched topic. Hence, I used the qualitative design for assessing PAI and its contributions to developing students' soft skills at a local HBCU. I used the formative program evaluation for this study. This assessment procedure helped to determine whether or not PAI courses soft skills development efforts aligned with this HBCU's mission statement. Moreover, Creswell (2003) also stated that this type of evaluation would allow research problems to be viewed holistically and answer research questions.

Creswell (2003) stated that the qualitative design explains behavior and attitudes; this may display variables, constructs, and hypotheses. Creswell continued by saying that a qualitative case study requires the involvement of participants. During this process, my goal was to build rapport and credibility with individuals. Creswell (2014) and Miles and Huberman (1994) defined qualitative research as being fundamentally interpretive. Creswell further described three crucial components in qualitative research, which are the interpretation of data, analyzing and organizing data, and concluding personal and



theoretical interpretations. These three components helped me to interpret and draw conclusions through personal and theoretical interpreted data. Thus, I was able to make an accurate evaluation and interpretation of the social phenomena; as a result, I was able to view this study holistically.

### **Program Evaluation**

The qualitative formative program evaluation was used to enhance the understanding of participants' experiences and their environment through a detailed investigation (Coombs, 2017; Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010). As part of the significant research on soft skills development and employer needs, I used the program evaluation method at the participating HBCU academic community to explore the research questions. According to Rathy, n.d., Royse, Thyer, and Padgett, 2010, Mertens and Wilson (2012), the program evaluation differs from other research designs to provide researchers with absolute control of all areas under their jurisdiction (e.g., management, communicator, and evaluator).

Stufflebeam (2003) noted an application for the program evaluation in research is the context, input, process, and product (CIPP) evaluation. As stated by Stufflebeam (1971), CIPP is an acronym developed from the first letters of the four components of the model: the context of the program, input into the program, a process within the program, and product of the program. Likewise, Burke-Sinclair (2012) stated the CIPP model is used to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses in the strategy used to promote improvement in an organization's programs. The CIPP model aided in answering my

research questions. This model helped to build a coherent justification for coding and themes (Creswell, 2003; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Furthermore, I used this model to gather data from participating performing arts students regarding their prescription on whether or not PAI contributed to the development of soft skills.

Figure 3 provides a framework for program evaluation by assessing four evaluation types (content, input, process, and outcome) and measuring their deliverables against three operations (delineate, obtain, provide). Also, the four evaluation types use decision-making and accountability to depict the relevance of the model.

Framework for Program Evaluation Types Stufflebeam's CIPP					
Evaluation Model					
Operations	Delineate	Context System variables and values	Input Problem specifications Design criteria Constraints	Process Process decision points Milestones Barriers	Product/Outcome Effectiveness criteria
	Obtain	Performance and judgment data	Identification and analysis of strategies	Monitoring of procedures	Primary, secondary, and tertiary effects
	Provide	Profile of needs, opportunities, and problems	Strategies by problems matrix	Progress reports Exception reports	Description and explanation of project attainments and impact
	Chart 1: Operational definitions for the four types of evaluation				

Evaluation Types					
Uses	Decision making	Context VPCAD program – • Educational objectives • Beneficiaries • Needs • Resources • Background • Environment	Input Evaluation of VPCAD resources • Strategic plan • Stakeholders • Curriculum development • Learning outcomes • Knowledge of instructors • Skills of instructors • Learning equipment	Process • Implementation of teaching and learning process • Use of facilities • Use of equipment	Product/Outcome • Mastery of knowledge • PAI instruction • Soft skills development
	Accountability	VPCAD Program learning outcomes	• Execute support when lack of resources • Adoption of budget and personnel when lack of resources	• Soft skills activities • Soft skills monitoring • Soft skills • Implementation • Feedback and development	• Employment expectations • Impact • Sustainability • Adjustment • Scalability • effectiveness
	Chart 2: Relevance of the CIPP Model to decision making and accountability				

	INTENDED	ACTUAL
ENDS	PLANNING DECISIONS supported by CONTEXT EVALUATION	Recycling DECISIONS supported by PROCESS EVALUATION
MEANS	STRUCTURING DECISIONS supported by INPUT EVALUATION	IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS supported by PROCESS EVALUATION
Chart 3: Evaluation and decision types		

Figure 3. Framework for program evaluation of HBCU's use of PAI to improve soft skills using Stufflebeam's CIPP Evaluation Model. Source: Stufflebeam, D. L. (1971). *The relevance of using the CIPP evaluation model for educational accountability*. Ohio State University, Columbus, OH: Evaluation Center.

I specifically highlighted the decision-making and accountability used component for program evaluation for the current study. In detail, the context evaluation type can aid the Visual, Performing Arts, Communication Arts Department (VPCAD) in making decisions regarding strategic educational objectives, evaluate beneficiaries' input. Thus, this department would be able to make future decisions regarding soft skills, assess the relevant needs and resources necessary to validate the strategic decisions, as well as measure the overall background and academic environment's influence on soft skills decisions and uses.

The input evaluation type can consider an evaluation of VPCAD resources, curricula, instructor skills development and learning equipment in making decisions and uses that directly affect PAI instruction and soft skills development. The process evaluation type can, for example, be designed to reflect on how to implement the optimal teaching and learning processes of PAI instruction and soft skills development. Finally, the outcome evaluation type can help staff in considering indicators that show mastery of knowledge, PAI instruction, and soft skills development.

In order to account for the success of the program, I reviewed the process evaluation type by checking the number and amount of soft skills activities, monitoring, implementation, and feedback that VPCAD provided. This same process allowed me to review their impact regarding post-graduation employment expectations, program future sustainability and effectiveness (Moffett, Sorensen, & Ifill, 2015).

### **Justification for Qualitative Design**

To ensure that a qualitative formative program evaluation design and the CIPP model best fit for this formative research study. I considered the qualitative designs into consideration. According to Creswell (2004), this design investigates a culture group in its natural setting over an extended period through collecting primary interview data. I also considered the phenomenological design, which is a methodology used to describe the life experiences as told by participants in a study (Riessman, 2008). This approach was not an appropriate design because my goal was to seek students' perceptions of how PAI is used to develop students' soft skills at an HBCU.

I also considered the narrative design; this design is used in research to study the life of participants and to report their personal experience (Creswell, 2014; McConnell, 2018; Riessman, 2008). The researcher's goal in narrative design is to retell the participants' story in a chronological narrative (Clandinin & Connely, 2000). This design was not appropriate because I designed this study to gather students' perception of being a part of PAI courses. As my purpose was to assess the level to which PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills, this design was not appropriate to serve that function.

Brenner (2010) and Meeks (2017) stated that a case study is an intensive analysis of a group or community that offer a perception toward developing issues in an environment. I found the case study design was best suited for my study due to its ability

to justify my use of the qualitative design methodology. Likewise, I gave attention to the development of soft skills in PAI courses for college seniors.

This formative qualitative case study allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of performing arts instructors' ability to develop students' soft skills. I selected the case study as the optimal approach for the study. As noted by Cooper and Schindler (2014) and Neuman (2011) the case study design is used by researchers to fully utilize interviews and analysis to address "how" and "why problems exist. Furthermore, qualitative case studies are useful in interpreting behaviors and actions associated with investigated problems with hopes of finding a potential solution (Creswell, 2014; Given, 2008). The qualitative approach used in program evaluations in order to review programs holistically and also to give a voice to participants' experiences (Vaterlaus & Higginbotham, 2011). This approach was best for my study because responses from participants offered practical and in-depth information needed for program improvement.

Koh and Owen (2000) suggested that this approach is best for answering the descriptive research questions in this study. I used the qualitative case study design to conduct this program evaluation. This design allowed me to answer my research questions through qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis, qualitative evaluation, and challenges and considerations in qualitative evaluation. This design aided in the data collection process and to summarize students' perceptions of soft skills development through PAI as well as post-graduation employment necessities and the alignment of the university's mission statement with its PAI.

**Use of the CIPP Model.** I used the CIPP evaluation model for the program evaluation design for assessing the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills. Likewise, the CIPP model answered four kinds of questions associated with this type of evaluation. This evaluation model helped me to conduct the interview protocol questions. I used the first interview question to inquire about the different kinds of actions taken. The second interview question allowed me to explore how to fulfill my objectives. I used the third interview question to investigate whether the procedures aligned with my goals. Finally, Stufflebeam (1971) model supported my reason design my fourth interview question evaluated whether the actions carried out had positive or negative outcomes.

I used this model due to its ability to evaluate this participating HBCU academic community's usage of performing arts courses to develop students' soft skills according to its mission statement. Moreover, Stufflebeam (2003) and To (2017) noted the CIPP model emphasizes the comprehensive evaluation of instructional methods used by faculty members within a broader framework of organizational accomplishments. Likewise, Hanchell (2014), Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) stated the input evaluation used in the CIPP model assesses available input strategies and designs for implementing the strategies that will help to improve decision making in teaching and learning.

Quinn (2015) and Zhang et al.'s (2011) findings offered reasons for using Stufflebeam's CIPP model, which aligned with my research goals. Both studies used the CIPP model to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies. Angelo (2014) noted

these designs were used to improve teaching and learning among students in the school setting.

The relevance of the CIPP model shown in the Framework for Program Evaluation Type Figure 2 which was developed to display the four kinds of evaluation. Displayed in Figure 2 are also three different charts, which are: operational definitions for the four types of evaluation; the relevance of the CIPP Model to decision making and accountability, and evaluation and decision types (Stufflebeam, 1971). This rubric was developed to help illustrate the program evaluation of the participating HBCU's use of PAI to improve soft skills as shown in Figure 2.

## **Participants**

### **Population and Sampling Procedures**

The research site for this formative study was a private HBCU community located in the southeastern part of the U.S. This HBCU is held accountable for meeting standard put into place by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in order to obtain and maintain accreditation. SACS standards are as follows, to ensuring that an appropriate mission is in place, has appropriate recourses, programs, and services that sustain that mission, to ensure that this institution maintains specified educational objectives according to its mission and degrees offered, and lastly to determine if the institution is achieving its stated objectives (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges [SACS], 2012).

The students selected for the project study consisted of performing arts and non-



performing arts graduating seniors participating in performing arts courses such as band, choir, dance, theater, and sound art. These courses are all offered in the Visual Performing and Communication Arts Department (VPCAD) at the participating research site. The study focused on college seniors' perceptions of whether PAI cultivates students' soft skills.

At the time of conducting this study, this research site population consists of approximately 1,402 students. The student population is approximately 79% African American, 4.8% Hispanic/Latino, 4% white, 3.6% Non-Resident Alien, 3% American Indian/Alaska Native, 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1% Asian, and 11.7% Ethnicity Unknown (College Factual, n.d.e). There are 262 academic programs available from which students can engage in as their area of study.

As noted in its 2015-2016 course catalog, PAI courses offered are as follows: University Choir, University Marching Band, Introduction to Music Literature, and Jazz Band. Courses offered, but not limited to Sound Art students are Introduction to Sound and Music Technologies, and Electro-Acoustic Music Ensemble. Courses offered, but not limited to dance students, are Concert Dance I, II, and III, African Dance, and Intermediate Ballet. Courses offered to but not limited to Theater students are Acting, Technical Theatre I and II, Drama Workshop, Modern Drama, Directing, and Theatre Practicum.

Sampling procedures were used to consider the appropriate criterion for the selection of participants, the number of participants to be interviewed, the procedures for

accessing participants, the methods of establishing a working relationship between researcher and participants, and the methods for ethical protection of participants. Creswell (2012) indicated that in qualitative research studies only a small number of participants are needed. Choosing no more than 15 participants helped me to collect comprehensive data for turning codes into emerging themes about each participant and site (Creswell, 2012). Higginbottom (2004), Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbin, (2015) stated the maximum variation sampling technique for recruiting research participants. This approach allowed me to ensure that student participants met this study's requirements.

### **Criterion and Justification for Selection of Participants**

The setting for this study is a Visual, Performing and Communication Arts Department (VPCAD) at the research site. This VPCAD has a total population of 156 students, with a total of 218 students participating in the performing arts courses offered as a major and elective. There were 15 performing arts students in the sample for this project study. Each participant in this formative study was a senior in the VPCAD with similar interests in performing arts courses. I used maximum variation sampling as a qualitative sampling strategy (Patton, 2001). According to Jupp (2006) and Shen (2018), maximum variation sampling is used to gain insight into research problems that seek to implement a strategy for activities.

Furthermore, this sampling technique helped to identify common themes that are evident in this project study (Lund Research Ltd, 2012). The sampling of this qualitative

case study design consisted of college seniors from different academic disciplines. Some student participants participated in more than one performing arts course. The primary criteria for selecting the participants included students assigned to the VPCAD department (Moffett, Sorensen, & Ifill, 2015). Table 5 summarized the demographic breakdown of student participants.

Table 5  
*Summary of Basic Demographics of the Participants*

	Band	Theater	Choir	Dance
Ethnicity				
African American	9	4	3	4
White	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	0	0
Gender				
Male	5	1	1	1
Female	4	1	2	3
Age				
18-25	8	2	3	4
26-30	1	0	0	0
PA Major	2	1	3	4
PA Non-Major	7	1	0	0

### **Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants**

To secure approval for research data collection, I completed the necessary

Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation process and forwarded them to the IRB of the participating research site and Walden University's IRB. After approval of the IRB application for both the participating HBCU research site and Walden University was granted, I completed the following: first, I identified potential risks and benefits to minimize any risk toward participating participants. Second, I ensured that the confidentiality and integrity of each participant and related private documents were protected using a password protected laptop and USB drive.

Third, I received approval from both the research site and Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (05-17-0052466), valid through April 5, 2018, before gathering any information from participants. Finally, I received authorization from the participating HBCU IRB to access students' email addresses and to contact the 15 interview participants that qualified for the interviews. In order to determine if each student qualified for this study, I sent out an email to each performing arts instructor asking them to identify students enrolled in their performing arts course that meets my research participant's requirements. After receiving these names, I sent emails out an invitation inviting each participant to participate in my project study. In the event these 15 students did not respond to the initial research invitation email, I resent a second invitation email.

The invitation email contained an invite to participate letter, an informed consent form, and a demographic survey. Participants that received an invitation had a period of 14 days to sign and return their consent forms to me via email. The consent form is being

used to protect each participant. Consent forms were disseminated to participants before I conducted student participants interviews. After offering and going over the consent form, I offered each participant an option to opt out of the interview at any given time.

Furthermore, I gained permission from the participating research site's IRB to access student records. After being granted access, I identified and reached out to each potential student research participant by following the guidelines and protocol of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 2015; FRBA, 2013). I worked closely with the research site's IRB Department and performing arts academic community to determine which student qualified for this study.

This process was established by communicating with performing arts faculty members via the University's Jenzabar email portal. I included the student participants' invitation to participate letter in the introduction letter. Lastly, once participants agreed to participate, I scheduled a time and date to conduct each interview.

I emailed an invitation to participate and informed consent form to all selected participants after gaining permission from both the participating research site and Walden University to conduct this research. The invitation to participate and informed consent form clarified the following: role of the study participants, purpose of the study, topic of focus, duration of interview, data collection processes, the voluntary nature of the formative study, all risks and benefits for participating in this study, confidentiality and risk pertaining to participating in this study. Furthermore, I included information about the doctoral degree program and Walden University, how this project study will

contribute to teaching and learning, and information informing each participant that their participation in this study is not mandatory and that participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

Student participants gave consent notification through the completion of the semistructured demographic survey before the interview process. Information obtained from the semistructured interview document included eligibility requirements that probe participant's current student status, employment status and nature of citizenship; consent to participate, student status, employment status, concentration focus, gender, ethnicity, and age range. Fifteen out of the 18 students invited to participants in the project study responded. After each participants' response, I then scheduled each participant interview date, time, and location to conduct face-to-face interviews.

To conform with the Walden University IRB guidelines, I will submit my findings to ProQuest as part of the doctoral completion process. I stored all data collected from this study in a data file located on a personal external hard drive and a password-protected laptop. The external hard drive is password protected and used as a backup on my personal laptop. I will store this study's hard copy data in a locked file cabinet while not in use. This research material will in not be solicited for profit-making purposes. However, after the maximum five-year period required per Walden University, all research data and interview records will be deleted. Finally, after the five-year period, I will delete all data from my external hard drive and laptop hard drive. All hard copies will be shredded and disposed of in the trash.

**Researcher-participant relationship.** I created a researcher-participant relationship to protect the study participants with the intention to make them feel at ease to disclose their opinions and attitudes with me before, during, and after each interview. I played a fundamental role in the researcher-participant relationship as I served as an instrument in this formative study. According to Matteson et al., 2016 and Staub et al., 2016 this will allow the researcher the ability to maintain contributory changes to enlighten university teaching body, administrators, stakeholders, and employers about the influence of assessing the level to which courses developed college-level students' soft skills.

I fostered a researcher-participant relationship by getting approval to collect data from the participating research site's IRB and Walden University IRB, along with informed consent from prospective study participants. Furthermore, I attained a researcher-participant relationship by making sure that the study participants knew their obligations should they decide to become study participants for this project study. Additionally, during each interview, I provided participants with a nameless print copy of the consent form with relevant information about the study, such as background information, procedures, voluntary nature of the study, risks, benefits, privacy, contact information, and interview questions pertaining to their involvement in this study.

During each interview, I established a respectful and cordial relationship through general introductory conversations for participants to feel at ease throughout the interview process. During this process, I explained the purpose of the study, the research

procedures, and methods to protect confidentiality. I notified participants of how information will be preserved confidentially to protect and promote honest responses. I reminded participants that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time, without penalties.

**Protection of participants.** As a prerequisite to beginning the research process, I completed the required National Institute of Health Office of Extramural Research training in order to ensure the ethical protection of the participants of this study. During this process, I discovered that this study had a low-risk level to study participants. Likewise, I completed the application for the Walden University's IRB for Ethical Standards in Research to ensure the protections of this study participants. For the record, there were only a few student participants enrolled in my performing arts course; I communicated that their responses would be viewed objectively and not taken personally.

Furthermore, I stated that their responses would help improve teaching and learning. Each participant that worked under me was comfortable in participating in this study once I communicated this information. Additionally, although I am employed at this participating HBCU, I hold no position of influence that caused a potential conflict of interest; each student participant participation was voluntary. During each interview, I restated that the voluntary nature of the study, discussed the purpose of the study, and address any questions or concerns raised by the participants.

Overall, the protection, well-being, and confidentiality of each participant were significant throughout this study. Aliases were used to protect participants' identities



when reporting the findings within this project study. Also, the electronic data collected from each participant is kept secure by being stored in password-protected files on my home computer, and the non-electronic data is being stored securely on my home desk. I will store these data for five-years, per Walden University protocol.

I took the following specific precautions to protect the confidentiality of study participants and processing interview data. In order to establish trust through open communication, I conducted each interview in a private located at the participating HBCU. I post a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door during interview sessions.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **Introduction**

The qualitative case study was the design used for this study. I cautiously weighed the data collection procedures, which are vital in assessing the level to which PAI courses develop college-level students’ soft skills. The documents for the formative study consisted of individual interviews, the review of theory, and program evaluation. During the informed consent process, the study participants were instructed to complete a demographic survey. If a potential participant decided not to participate, then he or she was instructed to select. No, I do not consent to participate.

Kolb’s (1984) theory was used to construct the research questions found in Section 1 of this study. I used the individual interview document to collect data (see Appendix B). Stufflebeam’s CIPP evaluation model was used to determine the efficacy of the evaluation and decision tool in the attempt to answer the research questions associated

with this study.

This study's interview questions can be found in Appendix B. Participants' responses were recorded and then later analyzed for coding and themes after each interview. During the semistructured interview, I followed a set of patterned questions to gain relevant responses from participants to address research problems and questions. Individual interviews offered participants the opportunity to give their perceptions regarding research questions (Dabney, 2012; Waller 2015).

Permission was granted from the participating research to use archived data for this formative program evaluation. This data was collected from the participating HBCU's Office of Institutional Research. Upon the completion of this study the participating HBCU's IRB department will store all records of collected data concerning student interviews and other documents in its office.

### **Interviews**

Data collected through semistructured interviews presented a critical foundation for gathering information (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2014). Creswell (2012) also stated that a benefit of performing interviews allows a researcher to manage and organize collected information. On the other hand, a disadvantage of conducting interviews is that information could circulate with a possible bias through the viewpoint of the researcher alone, which can lead to issues of reliability of official responses (Creswell, 2012).

Once responses from research participants were collected via email confirming their interest in the study, I arranged an interview date based on participant availability. I

developed an organized step-by-step interview protocol list to ensure that interview processes conformed to research guidelines. This protocol list also allowed me to ensure consistency throughout each interview. Each interview took place in a classroom at the research site that offered an appropriate ambiance, conducive for a research study.

I was able to effectively evaluate, clarify, and assess the level to which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills by using data collected from semistructured interviews for each student. Thus, semistructured interviews allowed me to probe students' responses through open-ended questions. This process allowed me to seek specific responses that addressed the purpose of the project study along with answering my research questions. Kwasnicka, Dombrowski, White, and Sniehotta (2015) noted data prompted interviews to make it possible for participants to recall salient memories and expressively assess in order to help me analyze and identify data patterns.

Having multiple respondents increases the precision of the research study as a result of retrieving information from multiple individuals (Hampshire, Iqbal, Blell, & Simpson, 2014; Yin, 2014). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Fletcher, MacPhee, and Dickson (2015) suggested that there is no doubt about the complexities of using multiple case studies to conduct research. However, the authors also suggested that evaluating replicated processes of case studies is desired for optimal reliability.

I used a speech recognition software called Transcription Puppy software to record and transcribe each interview. Upon the completion of the interview process, I transcribed and exported interviewee responses to a word processing document. Each

interview lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. As noted by Creswell (2012) and Kwasnicka et al. (2015) semistructured interviews created allow study participants to respond to a series of open-ended questions. By taking this approach, interviewees had the opportunity to freely choose a yes/no only responses. Participants were asked to solicit their perceptions and experiences concerning their PAI course(s) ability to develop soft skills and how student's soft skills align with employer's expectations as stated in the research questions.

A list of questions was used to probe participants using unbiased processes to stimulate additional information relevant to my study, permitting the participants to generate their responses (Creswell, 2012). Responses recorded were reviewed to ensure that the participants' responses were accurate. Each participant received an identification code of participant written as (P)1, P2 P3, and so on for tracking purposes. I was also able to transcribe interviews, and after the completion of transcribing each interview, I then placed each transcribed interview into a folder with the participants assigned codes to promote confidentiality.

Interviews were numbered sequentially to ensure that the students' identities remain confidential. I audio recorded each interview using an audio recording app from my cell phone classifying each recording only with an associated number of each study participant. After recording each interview, I then emailed each audio recording to my email before deleting them from the app. I used an interview protocol as suggested by Creswell (2012) and Yin (2014). Copies of the interview protocol were used as a printed

script as it appeared on the protocol document. I used a list of probes on the interview protocol as needed to gather detailed information from the participant's response.

Interview questions had space for comments so that I could write participant responses and field notes as needed.

According to Yin (2014), it is essential to organize interview data for a research study for convenient coding, analysis, and storage. With this in mind, I used the audio recording Transcriptions Puppy software to support my interview process to reduce any predictable ethical issues including risks, confidentiality, and informed consent that might affect the participants. Likewise, I used this method to organize my data being that it was an effective and efficient way of tracking, coding, and analyzing data.

### **Documents**

Archival data were requested from the study site administrators to provide me with additional sources of information. For this study, I used the participating University's 2012 and 2015 CSS archival document reports to assist in triangulating and validating data collected for the interview process (Creswell, 2012 and Yin, 2014). Even though archival data did not offer a direct view of performing arts perceptions of their PAI course involvement, these documents allowed me to gain a clear understanding of the research site's local program and helped in my analysis of these data regarding the RQs.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I gained relevant permission from the research site IRB department to use their

instruments to collect and process data. The interview questions (Appendix B) served as barometers to explore the two research questions for the current study (Brady, 2015; Garrett, 2014; Given, 2008; Jolivette, 2013). Each interview question was based on the experiential theory, as it focused on learning through replication of individuals' experiences and the way they learn (Kolb, 1984). I gathered additional information for this process once I received approval from the IRB documents both the research site and Walden University.

As stated by Given (2008) and Houareau (2017), semistructured individual interviews best suited this project study to ensure openness of participants' responses. Semistructured individual interviews ensured that each participant was true to his or her response. Interview questions are semistructured and were used to determine if PAI met the core values of this HBCU's mission statement to develop students' soft skills. Each interview question reflects Kolb's (1984) experiential theory of student development.

Kolb's (1984) experiential theory of student development focuses on the knowledge and experiences of individuals in the learning environment. Descriptive questions asked respondents to describe their perceptions of subject matter areas that might not have considered. Structural questions allowed me to understand relationships between subject matter areas for categorization purposes. Contrast questions aided to clarify the meaning of subject matter terms raised by respondents.

I also administered interview protocols for an optimal structuring of the interview. I ensured that interview questions voided problem questions, so that information gathered

was optimally clarified and prioritized. To counter problemed questions, I made sure that questions did not repeat, appear to be deceptive, have double negatives, use unfamiliar terminology, unclear, taps into sentiments of respondents, nor framed beyond the respondents' ability to answer (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Likewise, archived data from 2012 and 2015 CSS reports were used to identify soft skills that students felt they developed while attending the participating HBCU. I only reported data about seniors for this study.

I did not publish any study participants' names and addresses on interview materials; however, student participants names were placed by their assigned code on a spreadsheet key chart. This chart was created to track each student participant if I needed to ask additional questions for future reference. I gave each interview participant an identification code to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of each participant. Interview participants were assigned codes such as P1, P2, P3, P4, and so on. In order to keep all private interview documents confidential, I stored them in a protected filing cabinet at my home. I also placed the interviewee key chart on a separate document in order to help keep my data organized. I will be the sole individual that will have access to the data. The investigator used a research log to document themes and codes as they emerged during the data analysis process. By this same token, I used the Dedoose Data Analysis software to code, help organize, and catalog my findings.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I have been employed by or hold a professional relationship with the HBCU

academic institution. As a result, I intend to curb experiences and biases that I might bring to the project study that are related to the topic. Researchers are not immune to an emotional connection to their research work (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Assuming the role of a researcher, I made an effort to curtail the impacts of my experiences and biases by documenting them in a personal research journal. Corbin and Strauss (2015) argued that a personal research journal is helpful for researchers to acknowledge biases they may have preceding, during, and post data collection.

I was also cautious of potential physical stimuli, such as facial communications, tone, and body expression. While I may have a predisposition to be physically communicative, I tried to reduce the influences of this data collection process being bias by keeping my body language as bias neutral as possible, while maintaining eye contact with study participants. Additionally, I lessened any biases by paying attention to participant responses without interposing my personality in the interview process. I maintained a congenial yet impartial facial appearance, which did not imply endorsement or disapproval of any response provided by study participants. I also used a natural conversational character to present questions and probes without bias and stressing any key terms or notions.

Being that I am a current employee of the participating HBCU academic institution I had to ensure that there was no conflict of interest issues and keep in mind all conflict of interest while conducting my research. I had to first see if there was a conflict of interest I requested written permission from the Dean of Arts and Letter, VPCAD Department



chair, and participating University's IRB Department. Gaining permission from the participating University's IRB department allowed me to gain access to this study's resources (including study participants). This process also determined if there was a conflict of interest by conducting this study at my place of employment.

By this same token, the "Program Evaluation Limitations and Delimitations" section of the study, I discussed limitations and delimitations. This section allowed me to address any bias content. Lastly, I was attentive to biases when administering the interview process. In the attempt to fashion a secure environment, I emphasized constructing a relationship with each interviewed participant before asking the interview questions.

### **Data Analysis**

Harrell and Bradley (2009) stated research questions are analyzed through descriptive, structural, and contrast topical question formats. This process allowed me to emphasize consistency, which in return allowed me to align all interview responses with the two research questions through coding and themes. A set of 10 questions was analyzed for reliability and validity using the requirements of Creswell (2014) interview protocol. In order to keep track of the data during data analysis, the Dedoose research analyzing software was used to organize information using subthemes along with each participants' identification codes.

To analyze and validate the qualitative data collected from the structured interviews, I followed the following protocol: (a) transcribe the recorded interview

responses, (b) organize the collected data using terms presented by the interviewees, and (c) conduct member checking or respondent validation to ensure that data collected is accurate and gives the best representation of each participant. Maxwell (2009), added respondent validation and triangulation is useful in ensuring that the validity and reliability of a study. I also checked for patterns throughout the interview responses to tie them to the two research questions. Garrett (2014) and Waller (2015) asserted that collecting data using the same interview protocol to guide the interview questions allows for increased reliability and validity.

Furthermore, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the organization and interpretation of data collected from the transcribed interviews, I collected and analyzed the data from each interview through coding and themes. Coding and themes during the data collection and analysis process systematized responses collected during interviews with students (Creswell, 2014). Following Lofland and Lofland's (1995) assessments, I used the coding processes to identify themes for the current study. Yin (2014) noted that the data collection and analysis process would help bring clarity to research and interview responses. Data triangulation was used to combine the 2012 and 2015 CSS archived data, Kolb's (1984) theory, research methods, and empirical materials to determine whether data from the participants' interview responses will be valid (Gyawali, 2012). Guion (2002) supported this finding by stating that data triangulation in research checks and establishes the validity requirements within studies.

As noted by Creswell (2014), triangulation is used to compare and analyze

archived data found. I used the triangulation process to analyze the 2012 and 2015 CSS summary reports archived data, as well as the responses gathered from participants' interviews. Triangulation is necessary to understand research questions and problems (Guion, 2002; Neuman, 2011). Coding and themes were used to label, and group data collected after recording and transcribing the interview questions.

The data collection and analysis process will provide evidence concerning contemporary institutional, academic, and management issues that exist. Both the data collection and analysis process played a significant role in addressing and identifying the research problem during this study. This process was triangulated individually through interviews, archived results from the 2012 and 2015 CSS, and Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory.

Archived data located in the 2012 and the 2015 CSS summary reports and responses gathered from participants' interviews aided with the triangulation process. The triangulation process enabled me to consider interview responses on post collegiate goals, leadership (soft skills), degree aspirations and post-college career plans. Triangulation was used in this study to look at different forms of data and retrieve accurate and rich data for validation of the proposed phenomenon of PAI instruction and soft skills development (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Guion, 2002; Gyawali, 2012).

### **Data Analysis Results**

The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which performing arts

instruction (PAI) courses develop college-level students' soft skills. The qualitative data analysis consisted of reading interview transcripts in order to identify patterns for themes upon the completion of the interview process. The interviews and archival review were organized by creating themes and codes while using the Dedoose Data Analysis software. I used the archival documents to help create themes in the Dedoose software.

The coding and themes in the current study emerged from CSS reports, research questions, and transcribed interview questions. The possible codes were (a) PAI, (b) soft skills, (c) creativity and innovation, (d) music, (d) dance, (d) theater, (f) mission statement, (g) critical and analytical thinking, (h) communication, (i) teaching and learning, and (j) HBCU. Furthermore, the possible themes discovered were: (a) gaps in the literature to specifically address soft skills needs valued by employers from students, (b) discussions on HBCU education and employer needs, (c) the influence of Kolb's experiential learning theory on behavioral learning and skills development, (d) students' perception of performing arts instruction in developing soft skills needs, (e) students' perception of implications of soft skills needs for organizational performance, and (f) students' perception of the alignment of performing arts instruction with the HBCU's mission statement. After coding and applying themes to the interview results, I was able to align each research question with the codes and themes.

Ayres and Knafl (2008), Ayres, Kavanaugh, and Knafl (2003), DelBusso (2018), and Hatch's (2002) mentioned that the typological analysis procedure is best for

analyzing data from interviews. After using the typological analysis, I then placed the interview data into predefined categories and groups. The research questions, interview questions, and results from the archived CSS summary report were categorized using the typological analysis procedure. As suggested by Hatch (2002), while analyzing the data, I marked entries related to typologies based on similarity of experiences, differences in experiences, the frequency of experiences, sequences of experiences, and correspondence of activities and experiences with each interviewee.

After the analysis of data was collected for this study, I then able to present the findings in the analysis results collectively. Furthermore, this study involved evaluation of PAI ability to develop students' soft skills per the University's mission statement. The evaluation focused on gathering students' perceptions of PAI effectiveness to develop soft skills.

### **Program Evaluation Limitations and Delimitations**

The current qualitative study proposed a range of limitations. First, there was a lack of prior research studies on the unique combination of constructs related to the study (Hale, 2006). Second, the current study was not generalized to (a) related issue that this HBCU faced or similar HBCU institutions, (b) related issues beyond the senior graduate population from which the sample was acquired, and (c) related issues of students enrolled in performing arts courses within VPCAD at the participating HBCU academic institution. Third, I assume that the study participants answered interview questions truthfully, with no fear of repercussions. Fourth, as a result of the third limitation, the

results may not accurately depict the views of the whole class graduating from the academic institute. Fifth, the challenge of interviewing at a single location can be compromised by self-reported data and independent verification issues. Sixth, of the 264-degree programs offered at the participating HBCU academic institution, only one academic degree program participated in this study, which was the performing arts program.

For delimitations, however, I limited the study population to college seniors participating in performing arts courses exclusively and not the entire student population. A second delimitation is that I restrained the location to an HBCU academic community, located in the southeastern United States, making the study not generalizable to other settings. A third delimitation is to control assembled data, semistructured interview questionnaire and related inquiry materials were only use non-Likert-scale-like multiple-choice items and included open-ended response items.

Based on the analyzed data, the interview responses of the participants and the two research questions were coded and categorized into a total of two major and seven minor themes. The findings derived from the data collected from interviews transcripts gave a proof that participants soft skills developed because of PAI. My two research questions guided this study, which entailed (a) How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills? (b) After taking PAI courses at this HBCU, in what way do students' soft skills align with their employers' expectations? Through my data analysis process, I was able to identify patterns in which two major

themes and seven minor themes emerged. The first major theme emerged from both research questions. The first major theme that emerged from RQ1 was, PAI courses soft skills development and the second theme emerged from RQ2 was, employers' expectations.

The four minor themes that emerged from the first major theme were (a) PAI preparing students for careers (b) students' perception of PAI and soft skills collaboration (c) soft skills that students believe developed (d) soft skills that students believe did not improve. The three minor themes that emerged from the second major theme were (a) students' perception of soft skills requirements (b) students' perception of how their HBCU and local community students' soft skills development (c) students' perception that soft skills that align with employers' expectations. I organized a summary of the findings in Table 6 which will include both research questions, major themes, and minor themes relationship along with the occurrences based on my findings.

Table 6  
*Summary of the Major and Minor Themes Derived from the Research Questions and Subquestions*

Research Questions	Major Themes	Minor Themes	Occurrences
RQ1 How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills?	PAI courses soft skills development	PAI preparing students for careers	9
		Students' perception of PAI and soft skills collaboration	6
		Soft skills that students believe developed	11
		Soft skills that students believe did not improve	4
			30
RQ2 After taking PAI courses at this HBCU, in what way do students' soft skills align with their employers' expectations?	Employers soft skills expectations	Students' perception of soft skills requirement	4
		Students' perception of how their HBCU and local community soft skills development efforts	7
		Students' soft skills that align with employers' expectation	7
			18
			18



**Major theme 1: PAI courses soft skills development.** The first major theme PAI courses soft skills development emerged from (RQ1): How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills? The major theme derived from students' perceptions of PAI courses ability to develop soft skills. The finding from this major theme is categorized as four minor themes. The first minor theme, PAI effectiveness in preparing students for careers, includes an indication that 9 out of the 15 performing arts seniors found that PAI was effective in preparing students for careers. The second minor theme, Students' perception of how PAI courses and soft skills work together indicated that 6 out of 15 participants believe that PAI courses and soft skills work together in developing soft skills. The third minor theme, Soft skills that students believe developed as a result of participating in PAI courses stated the soft skills that they felt developed as a result of participating in PAI courses. The fourth minor theme, Soft skills that students believe did not improve as a result of participating in their PAI course stated the soft skills that they believe did not develop as a result of their participation in PAI courses.

**Minor theme 1: PAI preparing student for careers.** This minor theme focused on students' perception of PAI effectiveness in preparing students for current and future careers. During the interview process, 9 out of the 15 participants believed that PAI did help prepare them for their careers. However, the other participants had a different view of PAI instructions ability to prepare them for their careers. During the interviews, Participant 1 stated, "It's definitely given me a better idea of what it takes to be a leader

and how to lead a group of people who may be older and a little bit more experienced in whatever I may be venturing into. It has given me an objective view as to what it is going to be like working with a team on a different level.” Participant 3 stated, “The audition process that required in my dance class has helped to prepare me for my career. There have been several audition opportunities through dance clinics; as well as going to dance conferences. We also had a series of projects in front of the department to prepare us for professional engagement.” Participant 4 stated, “...with regarding my career after college, PAI has broadened my horizons regarding my field of study. Well, I could say my degree.” Participant 5 stated, “Definitely, PAI has helped prepare me for my career by showing me how to choose my battles. Knowing when to communicate, when to speak, and when not to speak. Being able to take constructive criticism and always being open to what I can do better or what more I can do.” Participant 6 stated, “I believe PAI has helped me to prepare for my career. It has shown me how to operate as far as the business part of music and how to be professional. It has also shown me how to network and connect with others; as far as being able to connect with other artists and stuff like that.” Participant 7 stated, “I think that leadership skills apply to my career. I’m sure that whatever profession I end up going into, I know that I will be a leader and this skill is needed.” Participant 12 stated, “I believe that dance applies to my career, this is essentially what I want to do. So, using a lot of the soft skill; a lot of the information that I’ve learned for my career. I also think that theater will help with my career after college along with dance, theater and dance requires you have to know how to convey emotions.”

Participant 14 stated, “I feel that it has helped me prepare for my career by developing my teamwork skills; meaning helping me be able to work with others.”

Participant 15 stated, “PAI taught me that I am skilled enough to work in the field of education, I plan to be an educator. I now know how to work with people and how to lead people.”

### **Minor theme 2: Students’ perception of PAI courses and soft skills**

**collaboration.** This minor theme focused on students’ perception of PAI courses and soft skills collaboration. The following student participants believed that PAI does have a collaboration. In turn, participants believe that PAI courses can develop students’ soft skills based on their experiences. During the interviews, 6 out of 15 study participants offered their perceptions and experiences while participating in PAI course. Participants PAI experiences had a connection with developing soft skills. Study participants believed that PAI and soft skills had a connection and they understood how PAI developed their soft skills. However, 9 out of the 15 participants did not see the connection between the two and needed a clear understanding of how the two connected. During the interviews, Participant 3 stated, “I feel that my soft skills and PAI coursework together. PAI has helped to develop my soft skills. By being a part of the performing arts program, I have been placed in different situations that required me to use my soft skills. PAI helped me to understand the importance of professionalism. Being a part of the choir, we go out into the community and have performances; we are instructed to dress in a certain way and to behave properly, this is needed in a professional setting.” Participant 4 stated, “I perceive

it as a valid relationship. That makes sense considering if you are taking these PAI courses. My PAI course helped me to enhance my soft skills further. PAI taught me that you do not not actually focus only on your hard skills alone or just acquiring the knowledge in order to be a good performer. But you need to communicate effectively, and work on your time management. These are the soft skills that are essential for the real world regarding any career.” Participant 5 stated, “It connects due to the fact that you are required to work with people; especially when having to work with people you may not necessarily like. You may not like their personality, how they talk to you, or what they say to you, but it is always just a learning experience and as a result being able to move forward and improve yourself as a person.” Participant 9 stated, “They both work together. Without one, you cannot do the other. Like for example, communication. You cannot talk about your work unless you learn how to communicate so it makes it difficult to explain your creativity. They both work hand in hand.” Participant 14 stated, “I would say they have to go hand-in-hand because in order for you to get through the PAI course you would need some type of leadership, communication, teamwork, creativity, professionalism, and even work ethics.” Participant 15 stated, “The correlation between PAI courses and acquiring soft skills is they both utilize all soft skills in PAI courses and the real world.”

**Minor Theme 3: Soft skills that students believe developed.** This minor theme focused on soft skills that students believe developed as a result of participating in PAI courses. During the interview, 11 out of the 15 participants shared that they gained a

deeper understanding of soft skills as a result of their PAI course. Likewise, student participants all stated that even though their soft skills developed, there is still a need for alternative methods beyond performing arts courses needed in order for them to meet future employers' soft skills needs. The following student participants discussed the soft skills that they felt developed while participating in their PAI course. The finding from the analysis data process exhibited participants believed that their PAI courses do develop soft skills. Participants stated that professionalism, communication skills, time management, creativity, teamwork, leadership skills, and work ethics improved as a result of participating in PAI courses.

During the interviews, Participant 2 stated, "PAI did developed and enhanced my soft skills. The reason why I say this is, there is a person to person engagement with my professor. With that being said, I had to learn a certain decor of my professionalism to speak to my professor and with my fellow peers." Participant 3 stated, "Well, I was hired by Teach for America, my PAI course developed my communication skills. I learned that if there is not a good line of communication, then I am not doing my job properly, and I am not able to fulfill my purpose. Participant 4 Stated, ... the performing arts course focuses primarily on your professionalism, time management, creativity, and your ability to communicate with other individuals." Participant 5 stated, "So I would say my teamwork has improved and my work ethics improved through the roof." Participant 6 stated, "Yes, I do believe my performing arts courses helped to develop my soft skills. I believe my leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, and work ethics has

developed.”

Participant 8 stated, “Okay, well definitely my leadership, creativity and work ethics and professional skills developed.” Participant 9 stated, “I would say my professionalism because that one pretty much sum up all of the other soft skills. You have to speak to other professionals as well as be able to work with others while using all the other soft skills; this also involves teamwork.” Participant 10 stated, “I want to say my communication skills and creativity had improved a lot before I became a part of the performing arts program, my leadership skills developed also.” Participant 11 stated, “My soft skills improved while being in this program; I also learned a lot about time management.” Participant 13 stated, “Well, my teamwork skills improved.” Participant 15 stated, “Yes, I do believe that my soft skills improved by being involved in my performing arts course. My PAI course allowed me the opportunity to perfect my leadership skills.”

**Minor Theme 4: Soft skills that students believe did not improve.** This minor theme focused on soft skills that students believe did not improve as a result of participating in PAI courses. The following student participants believed that specific soft skills did not develop while participating in their PAI course. In turn, 5 out of the 15 participants believed that some of their soft skills such as communication skills, teamwork, and professionalism did not improve as a result of PAI. However, these same study participants believed that other soft skills did improve as noted in the minor theme 3.

During the interviews, Participant 4 stated, “I would have to say my communication skills did not improve.” Participant 8 stated, “But as far as teamwork, I am still learning that I cannot work with everyone, so out of all those the least soft skills I would have to be my teamwork need more development.” Participant 10 stated, “My professionalism could be a lot better. My work ethic needs work. It is a little shaky.” Participant 13 stated, “I would say, as far as anything else, I feel like my professionalism did not improve that much.”

**Major Theme 2: Employers’ soft skills expectations.** The second major theme Employers’ soft skills expectations emerged from (RQ2): After taking PAI courses at this HBCU, in what way do students’ soft skills align with their employer’s expectations? The second major theme derived from participants perceptions of PAI courses ability to help students’ soft skills aligning with their employers’ expectations. The finding from this major theme categorized as three minor themes.

The first minor theme, Students perceptions of soft skills requirements, includes an indication that 4 out of the 15 participants believe that there are specific soft skills that employers’ value. The second minor theme, students’ perception of their HBCU and local community soft skills development efforts presented 7 out of 15 participants agreed that there is a need for a partnership between their HBCU and community business leaders in order to understand employers’ soft skills needs. The third minor theme, Students’ soft skills that align with employers’ expectations identified the soft skills that students felt developed as a result of participating in PAI courses. Furthermore, 7 out of 15

participants felt that there are specific soft skills that employers expect employees to have upon employment. Moreover, these themes derived from students' responses that indicated their PAI experience did offer more profound comprehension of employers' soft skills expectations.

**Minor Theme 5: Students' perception of soft skills requirement.** This minor theme focused on students' perception of the soft skills that students felt is required preceding employment. The following student participants believed that soft skills such as leadership skills, work ethics, and professionalism are all required soft skills. During this data analysis process, 4 out of 15 study participants believe that there are certain soft skills that employers require being hired. These four study participants favored certain soft skills over other soft skills that they believe employers require before graduating from college.

During the interviews, Participant 4 stated, "...it wouldn't be leadership skills, but it would be professionalism, specifically. You have to be prepared for constructive criticism." Participant 6 stated, "To satisfy employer needs, we should become more active in the community and do more events in the community." Participant 9 stated, "For that, I would say my work ethic because it goes with determination. I have great work ethics. I believe my work ethics will help meet employers' expectations and get the job." Participant 11 stated, "I would have to say each soft skill because in order to find a decent job. Especially in my career, you are going to need every one of those soft skills."

**Minor Theme 6: Students' perception of how their HBCU and local**



**community can help students meet employers' soft skills needs.** The study participants all indicated that there is a lack of involvement with community leaders to know what soft skills the employer requires. During this data analysis process, 7 out of 15 study participants felt that their HBCU and local community leaders should unite in order to help students understand employers' soft skills needs. Interview participants also believed that local community leaders should try to connect with the local HBCU in order to provide master classes, workshops, and local career fairs. Participants believed that these efforts could help students understand future employers' soft skills needs. In addition, local community business leaders could provide more on campus interactions that offer networking opportunities. The other eight study participants offered similar views.

During the interviews, Participant 1 stated, "The school can provide more network-based activities. We have career fairs, but many times it is a very selective businesses group that take part in them. A lot of these people invited to our school are not local. It would help if the school invited our surrounding community." Participant 2 stated, "Specifically, I think the best thing that would help is if the school would unite the students and the community business leaders to our campus in order to discuss matters about education and employer needs. This could be established through master classes. These master classes could include local community business leaders that are willing to share their professional expertise." Participant 3 stated, "The community can get involved with our school through symposiums and panels. Professional leadership panel

discussions helped me, actually hearing professionals, you know, those professionals that I would like to be.” Participant 4 stated, “if the community began integrating into the school’s activities...this is an opportunity for individuals to come out and express their business needs.” Participant 6 stated, “I think local business leaders from the community should all work on creating certain events where they could promote themselves at our HBCU and show what they need from us.” Participant 9 stated, “By visiting the school and participating in our community career activities that the school provide, this will allow us to ask questions.” Participant 15 stated, “Our local community can get involved by reaching out to the different HBCUs and offer opportunities to students from historically black colleges.”

**Minor Theme 7: Students’ soft skills that align with employers’ expectations.**

The study participant gave their perceptions of employers’ soft skills expectations. Participants believe that there are certain soft skills that employer value over other soft skills. During the data analysis process, 7 out of 15 study participants felt that certain soft skills are needed to meet employers’ expectations and these soft skills will improve students hiring changes. Furthermore, study participants believe that work ethics, creativity, professionalism, communication skills, and teamwork are soft skills that meet employers’ soft skills expectations. On the other hand, 8 out of the 15 study participants had different views that did not connect with the research questions.

During the interview, Participant 1 stated, “Work ethics can improve your employment seeking chances, we have to show our work ethic in order to be promoted to

the next in your career. That applies directly to employers' expectations." Participant 2 stated, "I would say creativity definitely can improve your employment seeking chances because creativity is an expectation of most managers. This will allow you to meet employer's expectations and getting employed." Participant 3 stated, "Professionalism will also help employers see that you can run their business smoothly and not lose customers. Also, employers are not going to hire you if a person seeking a job is not professional. They are not going to hire someone that they cannot trust with their business." Participant 6 stated, "PAI showed me how to be more professional. It gave me a lot of leadership skills and communication skills. I think it gave me an advantage when it comes to preparing for interviews and trying to get a job." Participant 9 stated, "Teamwork. I guess that is a soft skill that can improve your job seeking opportunities. When you are going for or seeking employment, you will have to work with a team and employers need to see that you can do this." Participant 13 stated, "All the soft skills that were mentioned above it is essential for a professional job. Employers need every single one of those skills." Participant 14 stated, "I would say leadership and communication skills have an impact on employment seeking goals. Leadership and communication skills are important. I mean every employer wants a leader that can communicate."

### **Procedures for Dealing with Discrepant Cases**

Among others, the value of this case study, which served to provide formative program evaluation data, was that participants' perceptions and experiences of whether PAI develops students' soft skills were obtained. The typological analysis was used to

document interview data for unexpected patterns (Hatch, 2002). Furthermore, non-examples in the data analysis were excluded from this study; however, discrepant cases were discussed in the findings to determine accuracy and completeness (Maxwell, 2005). This approach identified and analyzed discrepant data for validity threats (Miles & Huberman, 1984). I categorized the patterns that emerge in the analysis with confidence to learn their relationships and seek explanations (Hatch, 2002).

### **Evidence of Quality**

The conceptual framework and research questions in the data collection and analysis phase provided credible descriptions of research findings. This process ensured the quality and integrity of the data collection and data analysis processes. As stated by Harvey (2015) and Simpson and Quigley's (2016), the member checking processes is used to express a more collaborative, ethical approach to address participant's responses to interview data and interpretation. This process was used to ensure the quality and integrity of this study. They utilize a specific contractedness in both the design and the data generated for the formative study to clearly define underlying themes. This process provided each participant with the opportunity to include their experiences during the study (Creswell, 2014). Participants will also be able to read the information presented in the study; this will, in turn, allow participants to agree or disagree with the interpretations.

Likewise, as noted by Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, Alba, Blythe, and Neville (2014), triangulation strengthens the reliability and validity from results gathered from research

participants' experiences. Thus, triangulation gave a deeper understanding of the research questions and problems through the findings from the convergence of each participant's perspectives (Gyawali, 2012). The information summarized in this section will offer suggestions for new practices and program improvement.

**Accuracy and credibility.** Member checking was the desired strategy to validate the accuracy of my research findings. As Carlson (2010) and Harvey (2015) and Yin (2014) suggested, I provided an initial report on findings for study participants to assess to establish the accuracy of data and validate themes and inferences among the data. My goal, as supported by Creswell (2012), was to confirm my explanations of the participants' individual opinions. It is imperative that participants authenticate the data and revise data as needed to counter any misunderstandings of responses (Mayer, 2015; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Therefore, each participant was emailed an initial report of my conclusions within 30 days after their interview to examine and offer opinions about my analysis of their responses during the interview process.

Also, Creswell (2012) and Merriam (2009) indicated that data gathered in qualitative investigations are triangulated to increase the credibility and validity of the research study. In this formative study, I triangulated the data collected from student interviews and archival documents. Data triangulation methods included inductive reasoning and link interview, and archival documents to validate the data collected (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Data triangulation permitted me to test interview data against relevant archival documents to the central phenomenon of assessing the level to

which the PAI courses develop college-level students' soft skills (Merriam, 2009). By triangulating the data, I increased the general credibility and validity of the study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

I anticipate the findings from this qualitative formative program evaluation will do the following: (a) bridge gaps in the literature that directly address soft skills needs valued by employers from students, (b) shed new insights of perceptions of college seniors on historically African American college education and how to offer employer needs, (c) use Kolb's experiential learning theory to learn behavioral skills and development, (d) assess postgraduate student perceptions of performing arts instruction and soft skills, and (e) explore the importance of soft skills for organizational performance. Section 3 will discuss a training workshop for developing college seniors' soft skills as well as a professional development workshop for performing arts faculty members focusing on developing performing arts majors and nonperforming arts majors' soft skills.

Section 3 will detail the creation of the 3-day performing arts soft skills development workshop and a 1-day performing arts faculty professional development workshop. The chapter will also include a literature review that gives insight to the project study, which will be in the form of a white paper report. The review will include goals, rationale, supporting literature, implementation, evaluation, and implications for social change.

## **Summary of Results**

My justification for using the program evaluation was due to the problem that emerged at the participating private HBCU. The university's 2012 and 2015 College Senior Surveys results indicated seniors displayed little to average soft skills compare to other colleges and universities. The literature review offered information that referenced the importance of soft skills and soft skills that employers believe college seniors should have before graduation. The current study focused on a small sample of senior at the participating University's overall senior population. Student participants enrolled in performing arts courses were selected.

This study was guided by Kold's experimental learning theory which defined the learning process as knowledge and skills developed through experiences (Mazo, 2017). Likewise, Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation played a vital role in the program evaluation process. The research questions provoked thoughts about students' perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills and in what way do students' soft skills align with employers' expectations.

Research question 1 attempted to gather information from student participants perceptions of PAI developing soft skills. Results of interviews indicated that do in fact help develop soft skills. Participants strongly believed that their personal experiences in performing arts courses developed most of their soft skills. However, there are still other soft skills that need further development.

Research Question 2 aim was to gather information regarding student

participants' perceptions of soft skills that aligned with employers' soft skills expectations. Results from each interviewee indicated that most participants had general knowledge of soft skills. Participants also believed that most of their soft skills did align with employers' expectations; whereas a few participants believe that their PAI experiences could have helped them better meet employers' expectations.

Student participants interview responses helped to structure both the student and Performing Arts faculty members soft skills professional development workshop project. The soft skills workshops will offer additional tools and resources to aid an extended soft skills development for students and to offer faculty member tools to help develop students' soft skills. This study will offer an alternate method to develop students' soft skills campus wide. Moreover, this study can promote positive social change by helping students meet employers' soft skills expectations, and to promote economic growth.



### Section 3: The Project

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to assess the level to which Performing Arts Instruction (PAI) courses develop college-level students' soft skills. The findings from Section 2 of this study prompted me to propose a two-part project study involving both college seniors that participated in performing arts courses and performing art faculty members. This project consists of two parts: (a) a 3-day student workshop and (b) a performing arts faculty 1-day professional development workshop. The first part consists of developing a soft skill training workshop for developing college seniors' soft skills while providing networking opportunities before graduation at the participating historically Black college and university (HBCU). The second part involves conducting a professional development workshop for performing arts faculty members focusing on developing performing arts majors and nonperforming arts majors' soft skills. Likewise, at the end of the workshops, I will provide a summative evaluation report for the participating HBCU faculty members and stakeholders.

As noted in Section 2, 15 graduating performing arts seniors participated in semistructured and individual interviews for the study; each student discussed their involvement in PAI at the participating HBCU. During the interview process, each interviewee also gave their perception of how PAI contributed toward developing soft skills to meet current and future employers' soft skill needs. Likewise, during these interviews, participants indicated that there is a need for alternative methods to develop

their soft skills and community business leaders to interact more with the university to establish a dialog with students.

### **Evaluation Report**

For this project, I will use four standards as the criterion to ensure quality results in the summative evaluation report: (a) questioning, (b) self and peer assessment, and (c) record keeping. I will create clear expectations to ensure achievement of goals and objectives for the project. I expect that students and faculty participants recognize their roles in the project, the importance of their input in the project and that they trust the project as an active process to meet their learning expectations. As Meeks (2017) noted, the questioning criterion is designed to collect information from research participants for instructional planning. This project's evidence will be chronicled and used as opinions of college seniors about their workshop learning experience as well as anecdotal data shared with them during semistructured interview sessions.

The questioning criterion will provide me with valuable insights into the degree and depth of understanding of this project's information, which will help develop students' soft skills to meet employer expectations. The questioning criterion will also provide me with important insights into the degree and depth of understanding performing arts faculty member perceptions of applying soft skills development in teaching and learning. Performing arts faculty members' feedback will ensure improved future results after developing performing arts students' soft skills. Overall, questioning will encourage performing arts faculty members to engage in constructive dialogue that

both unearths and increase learning.

Primarily, the self- and peer-assessment criterion will generate a communal learning opportunity where students can show their metacognitive thinking processes in PAI learning. With peer evaluation, students will crosscheck their perceived views and measure them against previously established criteria. The record keeping criteria aids students to measure their PAI learning as evidenced by the documentation of their experiences through semistructured and individual interviews. This process of keeping records fosters students' participation and allows them to recognize their results and progress toward their learning goals.

#### **Evaluation Report: Major Outcomes of Summative Evaluation**

The topics of the project will be relevant and essential for offering the summative evaluation report outcomes. These outcomes may give faculty members, administrators, and stakeholders a way to navigate the different conditions that affect PAI ability to develop soft skills. This project may have a positive impact on participants offering an array of soft skills resources, creative models for teaching and learning, and new information about employment expectations. Based on observed behavior and students' assessments in Section 2, students will be engaged and excited by the self and peer-assessment activities.

Moodie-Reid (2016), Muir (2017), and Off (2017) suggested that participants will enjoy their learning experiences being that they are participating in an activity of interest. Furthermore, participants will demonstrate expressed enthusiasm towards their learning

experience which will lead to a positive summative evaluation report result outcome (Morey, 2014; Nutting, 2013; Muir, 2017). Through answering semistructured interview questions, students will objectively be able to discuss their participation in this project positively. As a result, I will note participants responses in the summative evaluation report. The results should show that students' soft skills; (i.e., communication, networking, work ethics, creativity and innovation, community involvement, leadership skills, teamwork, and professionalism) improved.

### **Evaluation Report: Addressing Local Needs of the Summative Evaluation**

Swan (2017) noted the lack of soft skills preparations to meet employers' needs by graduating seniors' is a concern by various educators and business leaders. The project will attempt to explore distinctions regarding future approaches to address these needs to develop students' soft skills through this project using the BBC model. The data presented in Section 2 helped drive the creation of this project and made clear the following:

- 1) The need to offer clear connections between perceptions of PAI in developing soft skills and soft skills experiences after taking PAI courses that align with employment seeking expectations, in various settings, is necessary to encourage synthesis;
- 2) The need to provide more community organized career activities that the graduating seniors can utilize to facilitate a discussion of soft skills within hiring community and mitigation measures;

- 3) The need to consider pairing soft skills topics to non-PAI courses for faculty to assess student learning;
- 4) The need to consider offering professional development credits to graduating seniors to attend career training and provide a modified curriculum so the project can be scaled and sustained within the HBCU school;
- 5) The need to consider the development of a web-based resource center on campus so that graduating seniors can gain access to the current and new PAI curricula and database, both as a model for resourceful, objective-based curriculum and as ready-made, tested resource for soft skills development issues.

### **Rationale**

The research data collected from archived data documents 2012 and 2015 CSS reports indicated that the college seniors from the participating HBCU are graduating with little to average soft skills compared to other colleges and universities. Similarly, data collected in Section 2 also indicated that students graduating from college with little to average soft skills fail to meet employers' soft skills needs after graduation. Section 2 also included an outline of the following as being those focused soft skills that employers highly valued and the skills that many colleges senior lack: poor communication, networking, work ethics, creativity and innovation, community involvement, leadership skills, teamwork, and professionalism.

The genre for this project will be a summative evaluation; the summative evaluation will be used as an assessment tool of students' and performing arts faculty

participants learning outcomes. After the completion of each performing arts workshop both students and faculty members will receive workshop comment cards to assess each presenter. Workshop participants will also receive a 10-question survey that will ask questions relating to their overall workshop experience. The survey results will offer the summative evaluation report providing data, which will allow faculty and administrators and stakeholders to review the project's outcome for discussion.

Luce and Kirnan (2016) confirmed that using summative evaluation provides the optimal assessment of participants when the focus is on the outcome of a project. Likewise, Nelson (2014) stated, a summative evaluation is a preferred project method to assess and conclude whether implementation of a project is necessary upon its completion. As further noted, Mertens and Wilson, (2012) evaluations are different from other research designs that give researchers complete control of their focused research areas. The *Use of Performing Arts Instruction to Improve Soft Skills* summative evaluation report will address the outcomes and findings of the program evaluation qualitative research noted in Section 1 and 2 of the study. Research questions were as follows:

1. How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills?
2. After taking PAI courses at this HBCU, in what way do students' soft skills align with their employer's expectations?

## Review of the Literature

To find relevant information of current literature for this project study, I used the following terms: *program evaluation, workshops, performing arts instructions, performing arts course, soft skills, soft skills training, soft skills training in education, the CIPP evaluation model, executive evaluation report, project study, leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, creativity, work ethics, and professionalism*. I used the following search engines to aid in the relevance of data connected with the findings and recommendations of my project: the Google Scholar, Education Research Complete, SAGE, ERIC, and ProQuest databases in the Walden University Library search engine. My search covered five years of current peer-reviewed sources as a result of limited peer-reviewed sources available related to this project study.

### Conceptual Framework

Kolb's experiential learning theory serves as the conceptual framework for this study. Kolb's theory is best for this study being that it explains how students' skills develop through learning experiences (Kolb, 1984). As described by Mazo (2017), Kolb's experiential learning theory could promote professional development and training among students and faculty members. My project study will use Kolb's experiential learning theory to aid participating students and faculty members to achieve their soft skills development goals. Baker et al. (2002), Cossey Simpson (2014), and Joseph (2017) also noted that learning experiences are successful in helping students and educators gather a deeper understanding of the content presented for teaching and learning. Riess

(2018) added that Kolb's theory is appropriate to address the problem associated with the study and to bring focus to the summative evaluation report for the project.

Likewise, this theory is best for the using the Building Blocks Competency Model (BBCM) in further developing students' soft skills. This theory addresses the instructional practice and relationship between performing arts students and faculty members. As noted by Kolb (2015), experiential learning is a learning process by which student and educator outcomes become significant and memorable. Likewise, Dewey (1938), Kolb (2015), Muir (2017), Bukasa (2017), and Kolb and Passarelli (2012) stated that knowledge and learning results from alternative methods of inquiries and social interactions. This focus best supports the project study and its goal to offer alternative methods for developing students' soft skills.

**Justifying why summative evaluation was used.** According to Young-Lyun (2011) and Corcoran (2017), a summative evaluation is necessary when the outcome of a project is paramount. While the tenets of formative evaluation focus on improving an ongoing project, summative evaluation concentrates on whether project outcome meets its desired goals (Clark, 2012; Carreiro, 2017). As noted by Corbin and Strauss (2015) and Patton (2015), outcomes from the summative evaluation and the semistructured interview usually compare. This process allowed me to transfer collected data to the qualitative data analysis software Dedoose. According to Mathus (2017) and Odongo (2018), key administrators, university faculty members, and stakeholders may use the evaluation report to apply recommendations for improvement.



**Explaining the overall summative evaluation of the project.** Nelson (2014) and Carreiro (2017) noted that the summative evaluation of a project study offers the outcomes of approaches directed to a studied matter. As a result, the listed outcomes will define the overall summative evaluation process of the project. In brief, this description will outline the summative evaluation's overall aim of the participants' involvement in my project study.

1. The summative evaluation will offer clear connections between perceptions of PAI in developing soft skills and soft skills experiences after taking PAI courses that align with employment seeking expectations, in various settings, is necessary to encourage synthesis;
2. The summative evaluation will provide more community organized career activities that the graduating seniors can utilize to facilitate a discussion of soft skills within hiring community and mitigation measures;
3. The need to consider pairing soft skills topics to non-PAI courses for faculty members to assess student learning;
4. The need to consider offering professional development credits to graduating seniors to attend career training and provide a modified curriculum so the project can be scaled and sustained within the HBCU school;
5. The need to consider the development of a web-based resource center on campus so that graduating seniors can gain access to the current and new PAI curricula and database, both as a model for resourceful, objective-based

curriculum and as ready-made, tested resource for soft skills development issues.

**Application to study and faculty soft skills workshops.** The guiding research questions created for this study identified two factors that helped to design this project for both college seniors and performing arts faculty members. The first driving factor focused on developing students' soft skills and networking needs. Major (2013) and Fields (2017) stated the need to focus on developing students' soft skills to meet future employers needs and to establish a means for students to network with local business leaders. Miller (2016) and Wilkinson (2018) supported faculty members' need for professional development. The faculty professional development workshop will give focus on addressing students' soft skills development practices in teaching and learning. Puente-Ervin (2017) further noted that professional development is needed to prepare educators for the current needs of students. Meadows (2017) added professional development would offer performing arts faculty members a deeper understanding on how to align their teaching methods with the University's mission statement.

According to Reckle (2014), educational workshops are appropriate for academic interventions. Mason (2017) further noted, academic interventions is essential for student and faculty development; usually, academic intervention is needed to close achievement gaps and to ensure the proper operation of organizations. Ovink and Veazey's (2011), Kelley (2018), and Coombs' (2017) findings add the academic achievement gap is a result of students not having enough resources or poor instructional practices. The

purpose of this project will offer performing arts seniors' resources to strengthen soft skills and to offer performing arts faculty members alternative methods for developing students' soft skills.

**Building Blocks Competency Model (BBCM).** This project will use the BBCM as a reference tool; the BBCM has multiple components that present the foundational knowledge and skills needed for students to be successful in today's job market ("Competency Model Clearing Hough," 2017). This model is designed to help employees to meet employers' needs. Calcavecchi (2018) added the Department of Education and the National Network of Business framework and the Industry Associations employees' soft skills expectations originated from the BBCM. Xu (2017) stated employers' expectations need to meet in order to be successful. Furthermore, Swan (2017) and Calcavecchi (2018) noted employers want employees that are reliable and committed to strong soft skills.

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) created the BBCM, according to ("Competency Model Clearing Hough," 2017) ETA worked with industrial and organizational psychology experts to create a model that works best for employers' needs. Swan (2017) added in order to improve employee's personal effectiveness and to help employees meet their employers' expectations the BBCM is helpful. Figure 4 displays the BBCM designed in the form of a pyramidal shape figure with five tiers. Tiers 1 through 3 is called the Foundation Competencies. ETA believes that this is what employers need when entering the workforce. Tiers 4 and 5 are called the Industry

Competencies (ASIS, 2017). These tiers focus on the industry sector and training. For this project, tiers 1 through 3 will be the focal point.

Tier 1 – Personal Effectiveness Competencies is the lowest tier being that it represents personal attributes or “soft skills” that may present some challenges to teach or assess among students. However, personal effectiveness competencies are essential for different roles in life, learned at home or in the community, reinforced at school, and lastly excited while in the workplace.

Tier 2 – Academic Competencies are critical competencies primarily learned in a school setting. Academic Competencies include cognitive functions and thinking styles that are likely to apply to different industries and occupations.

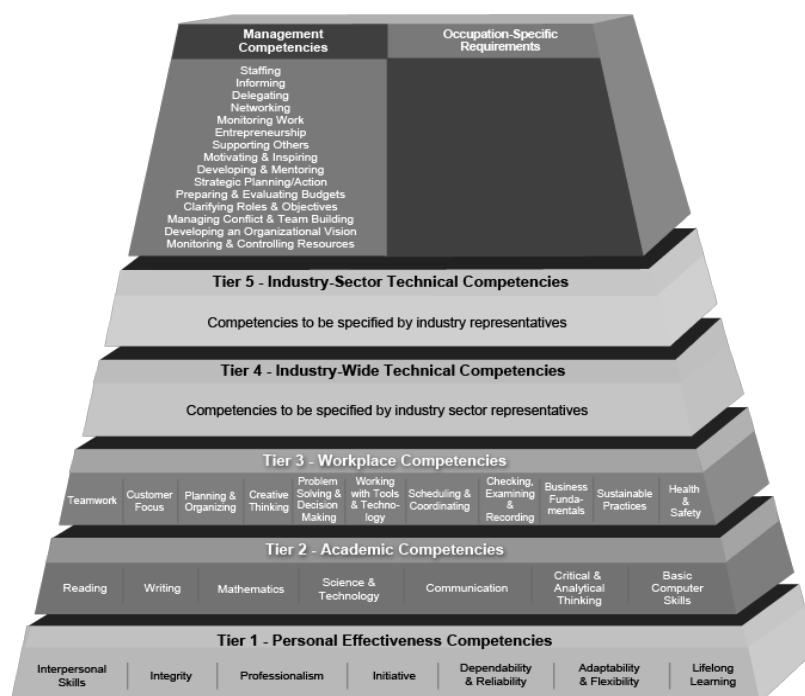


Figure 4. Enterprise Security Competency Model. Retrieved from <https://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/competency-models/Enterprise-Security.aspx>

Tier 3 – Workplace Competencies represent motives and traits, as well as interpersonal and self-management styles. This component applies to various occupations and industries. Tiers 4 and 5, called Industry Competencies, show competencies that are specific to the industry or industry sector. These cross-cutting industry-wide competencies demonstrate the viability of career lattices that allow workers to move smoothly across industry sub-sectors. Tier 4 – Industry-Wide Technical Competencies represent the knowledge and skills that are common across sectors within a broader industry. Tier 5 – Industry-Sector Technical Competencies represent a sub-set of industry technical competencies that are specific to an industry sector.

The BBCM best reflects the data collected in Section 1 and 2 and is best to aid this project study. Likewise, this model is suited to meet students' soft skills development needs. Smith (2017) argued that the needed for educators to develop students' soft skills before students graduating is important. As noted by Marshall (2017) employing employees with little to no mastery of soft skills results in employers having taken company time and money to develop employee's soft skills. This project will have the potential to have a positive impact on promoting social change for students and business leaders.

### **Project Description and Goals**

To provide an alternative method to strengthen students' soft skills I am proposing a project using a soft skills model based off the Building Blocks Competency

Model (BBCM) created by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Due to the BBCM's ability to reflect on the foundational knowledge and skills needed by employers this model was selected. According to ("Competency Model Clearing House," 2017), the BBCM focuses on the workforce needs and includes the Department of Educations' Employability Skills framework and the National Network of Business and Industry Associations' Common Employability Skills framework (USDoE, 2015).

This data would be used to construct the performing arts college seniors' and performing arts faculty members' workshops. Upon completion of the soft skills workshops, students would walk away with a deeper understanding of the soft skills that employers needed before graduation. By this same token, performing arts faculty member would have gained a clear understanding of student's soft skills needs and how to apply alternative teaching methods in the classroom and other learning environments. The goal of using the summative evaluation report is to assess students' and performing arts faculty members' participation in the proposed soft skills training workshops. Nelson (2014) gave a clear explanation of the summative evaluation, suggesting that the summative evaluation is outcome-focused. This generalization helps me to determine that this genre would best fit my project study.

To accurately present these workshops, I will first propose a 3-day workshop that offers student participants further soft skills training and networking opportunities. Secondly, a 1-day performing arts faculty members professional development workshop will bring awareness toward students' soft skills and to offer alternative methods for

implementing student soft skills development training into their instructional curriculum. The projected cost to conduct these workshops is \$10,000; this amount would cover the necessary recourses needed to ensure this workshops success (i.e., soft skills consultants, materials, meals, and other needed resources). I will apply for the Title III Part B, Strengthening HBCU Program discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Education (CFDA Number: 84.031B) to conduct this project. The U.S. Department of Education offers this grant for research projects that explore decision making nuances regarding future approaches to developing graduating seniors' soft skills preparations to meet employers' needs.

#### **Potential Barriers and Potential Solutions to Barriers**

There are several potential barriers when dealing with a project such as this. Time management may cause a barrier to have this soft skills workshop. The project will commence during the 2018 fall semester; there may not be enough time to offer the soft skills workshop during the 2018 fall semester. It may be a challenge to find an available date for the workshop due to the Universities events. The project results presentation take place during one of the participating HBCU University's monthly faculty meetings.

Another potential barrier is funding to conduct this workshop. The projected cost for this project is \$10,000 for materials, workshop presenters, soft skills consultant, and other resources needed to make this workshop a success. If I apply for a *Title III Part B, Strengthening HBCU Program* discretionary grant, it may not gain approval in time for my proposed workshop dates. Likewise, funds may not be available in time to conduct

these workshops during the 2018 spring semester. If this is the case, these workshop will take place during a later semester. If seeking funds from the participating HBCU there may not be enough money in the University's budget to fund this project. Furthermore, if key stakeholders do not take the time to review the data once distributed, the summative evaluation report may not have an impact on the learning community.

### **Implementation**

#### **Performing Arts Students 3-Day Workshop**

The performing arts student soft skills workshop will take place over three days. Each day will consist of five sessions lasting 55 minutes each with a 5-minute break in between each session and an hour lunch break. The last day will have a two-hour soft skills training completion ceremony. These workshops will be offered to graduate performing arts majors and non-performing arts course participants.

Day 1 will cover five soft skills topics. The workshop will start with a student registration from 8:00 am to 8:55 a.m. The first session will cover, Introduction to Soft Skills and will take place on a Monday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. This session will cover the meaning of soft skills and the importance of soft skills on the job. From 9:55 am to 10:00 a.m. students will have a 5-minute break. The second session will focus on *Communications in the Workplace* from 10:00 a.m. to 10:55 a.m. From 10:55 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. students will have a 5-minute break at the end of this session. From 11:00 a.m. to 11:55 p.m., *Teamwork* will be the focus. From 11:55 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. students will have a five-minute break. From 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. students will break for lunch.



The last session will convene from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., this will be a session where a business community leader will offer a presentation entitled *Employers soft skills expectations*.

Day 2 will begin at 9:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. covering the topic of *Problem Solving and Critical Thinking*. From 9:55 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. students will have a 5-minute break. From 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., will cover *Work Ethics in the workplace*. From 11:00 a.m. to 11:55 p.m., *Creativity and Innovation* will be the focal point. From 11:55 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. students will have a 5-minute break. From 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. students will break for lunch. The last session will convene from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., this will be a session where a second community business leader will offer a presentation entitled *Employers soft skills and Community Involvement*.

Day 3 and the final day will begin at 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. covering the topic of *Leadership Skills*. From 9:55 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. students will have a 5-minute break. From 10:00 a.m. to 10:55 a.m., participants will learn about *Professionalism in the Work Place*. From 10:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. students will have a 5-minute break. From 11:00 a.m. to 11:55 p.m., participants will learn about *How to Network*. From 11:55 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. students will have a 5-minute break. From 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. there will be a workshop reception and certificate of soft skills ceremony for student participants. At the end of the last session, participants will be offered a ten-question survey to assess what they learned while participating in the workshop.

### **Performing Arts Faculty Soft Skills Professional Development Workshops**

The performing arts faculty member will participate in a 1-day faculty development workshop. This 1-day professional development workshop will commence on a Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. each session will last for 55 minutes with a 5-minute break in between each session. The first session entitled *Introduction to student Soft Skills in the Performing Arts* will start at 1:00 p.m. to 1:55 p.m. the first session will discuss. This session will cover the meaning of soft skills and how essential soft skills are to student career success. There will be a 1:55 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. break. From 2:00 p.m. to 2:55 p.m. faculty members will cover the topic *How to develop Soft Skills in a classroom with performing arts and non-performing arts majors*. From 2:55 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. faculty member participants will have a 5-minute break at the end of this session. From 3:00 p.m. to 3:55 p.m., faculty members will cover the topic of *How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills*. From 3:55 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. faculty members will have a five-minute break. From 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. faculty members will have an open discussion to address students' soft skills needs based off the content presented during each workshop session and the data collected from student interviews during the study. At the end of the last session, participants will be offered a ten questions survey to assess what they learned while participating in the workshop.

### **Potential Resources Needed and Existing Resources**

The summative evaluation report will require extra resources to complete the

project. I plan to require the following needed and existing resources used for the project.

- Workshop attendance resources = \$3,000
- Workshop meeting location(s) = \$500
- Email Invitations for student and faculty participants = \$200
- Local business leaders workshop presenters = \$1,000
- Data from faculty members concerning major = \$100
- Data from student assessments from one on one interviews and 2012, 2015 and current CSS report data = \$200
- US Department of Education (CFDA Number: 84.031B) grant = \$10,000
- Expenses incurred in working with a team of consultants = \$2,000
- Expenses related to professional articles, books, web-based resources = \$200
- Expenses related to career fair = \$500
- Expenses related to project implementation = \$1,500
- Expenses for certificate of completion = \$300
- Expenses for participants reception = \$500

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

I plan to implement the project at the beginning of the spring 2018 school term; each participating student and faculty member will be invited to participate in this project during the fall 2017 school term. Three-days will be selected for each student participate; I plan to hold each student workshop on a Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The two-day faculty workshops will take place on a Thursday. I will select a location at the

participating HBCU to hold my workshops. Each workshop day will last for approximately five hours with 5-minute breaks in between each session. A consent form will be given to each participant before they are to attend the soft skills workshop.

Different soft skills topics will take place during the students three-day and faculty members one-day performing arts soft skills workshop. Each workshop will last for 45 minutes. After each session, a 1ten-question soft skills evaluation survey will be accessible to each participant; data from surveys will contribute to the summative evaluation report. Illes (2017) study favored the use of surveys to help determine if workshops met the goals and objectives of a project study. After the completion of the student and faculty workshop, there will be a soft skill workshop completion ceremony offering certificates of completion to each participant. This workshop completion ceremony will take place on the final day of the student and faculty workshops. Lastly, a summative evaluation report will be created then presented to University faculty members and stakeholders.

The protocol for this project will consist of the following:

- a) The beginning of Fall 2017 fall semester plan for Workshops
- b) Send out open workshop invitations to student and faculty
- c) Conduct a three-day faculty workshop
- d) Conduct one-day faculty workshop
- e) Offer certificate of completion
- f) Soft skills Training Completion reception

- g) Provide workshop participants with workshop exit surveys
- h) Offer a ten-question survey to each workshop/project participants
- i) Executive summary report completion, followed by a meeting to discuss study input, findings, and recommendations with Dean of Arts and Letters and VPCAD chair
- j) Meeting established to discuss findings with participating HBCU faculty
- k) Meeting established to discuss findings with the Board of Trustees
- l) Create a summative evaluation report after the completion of the workshop and the review of participants survey responses

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others Involved**

My role in the project will be the workshop facilitator and to find soft skills consultants, business leaders for student networking, and to locate relevant resources for each student and faculty workshop. I will establish a committee that will consist of faculty members and student team leaders for planning each workshop. I will also take the responsibility to provide copies of the summative evaluation report to administrators, faculty members and stakeholders upon completion. The date and time for my presentation of the project study's findings and recommendations will be at the discretion of the Deans of Arts and Letters. The venue of the interview will be the participating HBCU, Johnson C. Smith University.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

Developing the project using a summative evaluation report was essential to

address issues that helped stakeholders identify issues and solutions for improvement for teaching and learning. The project helped students gain a proper understanding of their soft skills as well as what employers' sort from employees. The soft skills workshop was not only developed for students to learn more about their soft skills but helped stakeholders understand students' soft skills needs. The project offered stakeholders an understanding of students' soft skills needs using the summative evaluation report. The summative evaluation report will offer the outcomes of this project for improved teaching and learning practices along with recommendations.

A program evaluation report was created to determine the project's effectiveness on the participants conducting the project study workshop. This plan will highlight an in-depth understanding of performing arts students' and faculty members' perception of the project. According to Spaulding (2014) and Wright (2018), an evaluation plan allows the researcher to gather information to improve future implementation of a program.

The overall goal of the evaluation report will determine the information needed for the summative evaluation report. At the end of this project participating performing arts students and faculty will receive an evaluation for feedback. Sauer (2017), noted that participants workshop evaluations would help to assess targeted goals and objectives. At the end of both workshops, the summative evaluation report will provide the project's findings. Afterward, stakeholders such as the Board of Directors, University faculty members, and administrators will receive a copy of this report.

As the project developer, I am confidently able to recommend the performing arts

soft skills workshop as a viable option for developing students' soft skills. I plan to present the summative report during a faculty meeting with faculty members and through email to other stakeholders. This process will help faculty members and stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions for future soft skills implementation in teaching and learning at this participating HBCU.

Moreover, to ensure that the students' 3-day workshop and faculty members' 1-day workshop met its goal to develop students' soft skills a summative evaluation report will be necessary. According to McNeeley (2016), Graddick (2018), and Nelson (2014), the summative evaluation is used to evaluate the results of evaluated participants and to determine if goals in the study are accurate. The summative evaluation report will offer stakeholder (University administrators, Deans, department chairs, and university faculty members) the ability to gather data from participants' project experiences. As stated by Graziano (2017) and Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2010), the summative evaluation program will be used to process the understanding of participants' perceptions of their environment through a detailed investigation. After submitting the evolution report to respective parties for review, I can only assume that this information was either reviewed or disregarded.

Likewise, the goal of the summative evaluation report will provide answers to the research questions: (a) How do students describe their perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills and (b) After taking PAI courses at this HBCU, in what way do students' soft skills align with their employer's expectations? The research questions will

provide analysis of the perceptions of 15 graduating seniors of the participating. Key administrators, faculty members, and stakeholders may use the evaluation report for academic assessments, decision-making, and to implement recommendations for improvement.

In conclusion, the summative report can encourage productive conversations about the status of students' soft achievement and make adequate decisions about how to strengthen students' soft skills among faculty members and University administrators. The results from the summative report should offer information in order to determine whether or not outcomes effective and efficient, likewise determining if PAI improve students' soft skills development efforts. If there is a successful outcome furtherer recommendation will be presented for a campus-wide soft skills workshops that will include other academic concentrations.

### **Overall Evaluation Goals**

This project will focus on eight prioritized soft skills topics (e.g., communication, networking, work ethics, creativity and innovation, community involvement, leadership skills, teamwork, and professionalism) that concerned the 15 graduating seniors at the participating HBCU. After the completion of the workshops, the summative evaluation report will be used to break down the project's three goals based on the study's research questions, which are listed below:

Goal 1: Increase understanding of HBCU college seniors' perceptions of PAI courses in developing soft skills to meet employer expectations.



Goal 2: Align HBCU college seniors' employment seeking expectations with improved soft skills experiences as noted in the University's mission statement.

Goal 3: To offer performing arts faculty awareness of students' soft skills needs.

### **Description of Key Stakeholders**

This project will have an impact on the key stakeholders which are the graduating seniors at the local HBCU. Likewise, other stakeholders that will contribute to the significance of this project is local business leaders, university's faculty members, department heads, the University President, and the Board of Trustees. I will only act as a project facilitator to ensure the proper implementation and flow of this project while being conducted. The local HBCU administration members and selected community business leaders are key stakeholders. These stakeholders will act as sponsors by providing the necessary resources, funding, and other information needed for this project to be a success. Additionally, business leaders will be able to give their insight toward the necessary soft skills that they believe is necessary for employees' success on the job.

### **Project Implications**

#### **Summary of Possible Social Change Implications**

The usage of PAI to develop students' soft skills and my project recommendation could have possible positive social change implications. This project could have a positive impact on the student and faculty community at the research site. This project could develop students' soft skills allowing students to gain employment after graduations. Students graduating with strong soft skills due to their participation in the

recommended soft skills workshop will offer future employers the necessary soft skills needed to run a successful business (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Kang & Ritzhaupt, 2015; Ngang, Hashim, & Yunus, 2015). Andreotti (2017) supported this idea by indicating that employers best favor employees to have soft skills to bring about growth and improved business operations. Jones et al. (2016) added that students have opportunities to gain promotions and promote customer satisfaction with the goal of bringing in additional business revenue when they improve their soft skills competencies.

The results present in the summative evaluation report will allow administrators, faculty, and other stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of students' soft skills strengths and weaknesses to determine whether students have the necessary soft skills needed to meet employers' needs upon graduation. Likewise, this project may result in positive social change, which in return could have a positive effect on the economy offering a higher employment rate. Furthermore, a positive social change could be a result of PAI and this project's ability to develop students' soft skills.

### **Importance of the Project in a Larger Context**

This project study is essential in a broader context due to its ability to provide data associated with PAI ability to develop performing arts major and non-performing arts students' soft skills. Collectively, these recommendations will offer this participating HBCU the opportunity to develop its students' soft skills. The executive summary will be used to help the university realign their course of studies in order for students to meet employers' soft skills needs. This project study will offer stakeholders and business

leaders information for meaningful discussion about student's soft skills strengths and weaknesses. This project will provide possible alternative approaches toward helping students meet employers' soft skills needs, adding to a body of knowledge to the literature.

### **Conclusion**

Section 3 included a brief introduction, summary of the rationale, review of the literature, project description, project evaluation plan, and project implications including social change. This summative evaluation report will inform administrators, faculty members, and stakeholders of this project's outcome. The social implications of the study covered the participating HBCU's learning community and employers' needs for developing soft skills. Likewise, the use of student and faculty workshops and meetings with employers will bring further understanding to the importance of the university's student soft skills development goals.

Section 4 will focus on the strengths and limitations of the project and recommendations for alternative approaches to the PAI student soft skills development issues and this project. A scholarly report will share my reflections, recommendations, and conclusions relating to this project's development, scholarship, teaching and learning approach, and the significance of this study. Section 4 will conclude with a narrative indicating implications, applications, and directions for future research.

## Section 4: Reflections and Recommendations of the Project

### **Introduction**

This section will provide my reflections and the conclusion of my project study. This section will also include insight into the strengths and weakness of my project. This section will also include my learning experiences as a practitioner in the scholarship, project development, leadership, and social change. Additionally, I will provide an in-depth discussion about the importance of the project's implications, applications, and direction for future research. Finally, I will offer a final reflection regarding the summative evaluation report of the project.

### **Project Strengths**

This project is significant due to its potential to develop and strengthen students' soft skills before they graduate in addition to offering faculty members alternative methods for teaching and learning in the performing arts. The contents of project workshops can offer ideas to students meeting future employer soft skills needs after graduation. This project study: (a) aided students to identify their soft skills, (b) emphasized which soft skills expectations employers sought from college graduates, (c) distinguished how Performing Arts Instruction (PAI) prepared performing arts majors and non-majors for career readiness, (d) increased students' and faculty members perceptions while participating in this project through a summative evaluation report, (e) and offered performing arts faculty members alternative methods for meeting to meet the University's mission statement standards and to develop students' soft skills. The planned

outcomes for implementing this project strengthened students and faculty in these five areas of focus.

### **Project Limitations**

There may be limitations relating to creating and conducting this project which will include time management, funding, number of student participants, and resources. Only a small sample of performing arts graduating seniors and performing arts faculty members will participate in the project study. This small sample is appropriate due to the of the performing arts population. The focus of this project will be on PAI students and faculty members, which will leave out other Visual Performing Arts and Communication Department (VPACD) faculty members and first-year students, sophomores, and juniors that participate in performing arts courses. The lack of performing arts students and performing arts faculty members' participation during workshops may be a major limitation to the success of this project. Also, due to time management barriers, there may not be enough time to properly plan for these workshops, to apply for grants, and to send out the workshop presenters' invitation.

Likewise, there may not be enough time to gather enough funds for resources, workshop presenters, and other items needed to conduct each workshop at the projected time. This issue may result in having to push the workshop to a later date until funds are available. Another limitation that may pose to be an issue is the Employment and Training Administration United States Department of Labor may not permit the use of their BBCM soft skills model to conduct this project. Also, it may take more time to gain

approval before the start date of the workshops. Lastly, University faculty members and stakeholders may not show interest in the summative report once presented and distributed for review.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

According to Kang and Ritzhaupt (2015) and Marshall (2017), due to college graduates not entering the workforce with developed soft skills required by employers' alternative approaches are necessary to develop student's soft skills. Jones et al. (2016) suggested offering students additional training to students via master classes throughout each semester, soft skills seminar courses, and additional soft skills training once a year for faculty members. Smith (2017) added offering soft skills training to students during their freshman year is beneficial. As stated by Wigner (2017), colleges and universities should provide workforce knowledge, skills, and competencies to students in the first year of college to ensure adequate post-collegiate preparation for employment and social responsibilities.

LaJeunesse (2017) further added that freshman seminar courses in soft skills development could best aid students in their high school to college transition. These alternative avenues discussed the importance and use of soft skills in the performing arts. Also, these alternatives are great ways to invite local employers and professionals in the performing arts to discuss and share soft skills experiences in the PAI and workforce to students.

Furthermore, PAI courses are all-inclusive and open to both PAI and non-PAI

majors. The participating historically Black college and university (HBCU) could offer soft skills workshops for students in other concentrations and departments across campus. Students would benefit from exposure to soft skills training workshops, allowing for employer and community leader input about soft skills needs for economic growth and positive social change.

Gardner (2017) suggested that offering soft skills development courses for seniors during their final semester would offer students a chance to meet employers' soft skill needs before graduation. As referenced by Maneen (2016) and Montchal (2017), this approach is helpful to satisfy needed graduate competency of soft skills in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century job market. Gonzales (2017) added that institutions should be more proactive to meet the needs of students and to prepare them for their employers' needs. According to Lawlor (2017), employers confirmed that rarely are college students prepared to utilize soft skills before they graduate from college. Roehrig (2017) added this issue is prevalent being that university's academic curricula and courses primarily focus on developing students' hard skills rather than soft skills.

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

This project improved my understanding of students' soft skills needs, their perception of being involved in performing arts courses, as well as my soft skills and scholarship viewpoint. Meadows (2017) defines scholarship is as a scope of knowledge, learning, academic study, research, and erudition. Through my data collection process, I gained knowledge of how students benefited from participating in performing arts

courses. Most students' participants believed that being a part of performing arts courses do help develop soft skills. The data collection process also revealed barriers that did not allow specific student soft skills to develop. The data collection process helped to design my project. Perez-Calhoun (2017) and Roberts (2013) stated that to conduct a project study is to identify the benefits and barriers of social and educational reform.

### **Scholarship**

The data analysis process allowed me to present information with the purpose to add to teaching and learning. Likewise, I learned that the term "scholarship" meant a high level of teaching and learning achieved through academic study. The doctoral study process provided me with opportunities to improve in my scholarly writing. Being required to evaluate and assess peer-reviewed literature according to Walden University's standards for a project challenged me to become more in tune with others views on education, business, and leadership.

This process enabled me to understand that scholarship entails the practice of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data that is reliable and credible. While conducting this study I have learned a great deal about myself and the research process for developing a project and research study. Furthermore, the findings for this project allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of leadership, social change, and students' input, and how these components shape the successful practice of teaching and learning.

My academic relations with my doctoral chair allowed me to gain a clear understanding of the direction of this project. Through this doctoral process I have



learned to examine other peer-reviewed dissertations and online articles related to soft skills, program evaluations, performing arts approach toward developing students' soft skills, and other topics, before conducting my project. The literature review provided adequate information regarding the correct method and approach to conducting a program evaluation using the qualitative methodology, which the guided genre of my project presented as an evaluation report.

This project study will offer me the opportunity to share the outcomes of my project with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders via the summative report. Moreover, the scholarship enabled me to become acquainted with the use of doctoral vocabulary in my area of study for this project study. Through research from Section 2, I extracted the necessary data needed for the literature review in Section 3, which provided insight towards the development of the project. Likewise, evidence from this study increased knowledge to the problem inquiry to answer the guiding research questions for the project study.

### **Reflections on the Importance of the Work**

While creating the project study other soft skills development approaches emerged in the data on PAI's ability to develop students' soft skills. Also, I reflected on PAI's ability to help students meet the 21st century workforce soft skills' needs. Through data gathered, I discovered that college graduates at the participating HBCU had little mastery of their soft skills when compared with students from other universities. Due to this discovery, I learned that there was a need for alternative methods to address this

dilemma to assist students to develop their soft skills and to meet employers' employment needs.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The implications of this project study are as follows: first, PAI educators have a responsibility to not only develop students' talent but to help students identify their soft skills strengths and weaknesses. Second, there is a need for a teaching approach that can develop students' soft skills. Third, students need networking opportunities that will help them to understand future employer's soft skill needs. Third, it is important for university faculty members to have discussions with their students, senior administrators, and community leaders to discuss students' employment needs. As a result, I can offer master classes, workshops, and other teaching platforms to discuss student soft skills needs at the participating university.

On the other hand, I can use the future application of this project study during future sessions at individual PAI educator's conferences to address the needs to develop students' soft skills and strategies for implementing soft skill development in performing arts courses and curricula. This project supports teaching and learning; it could also meet the needs for other programs and grants for program funding. An alternative to meet these needs can be by presenting reports of students' PAI progress and success.

Similarly, I used the qualitative study evaluated students' perceptions of PAI to develop soft skills according to the participating HBCU's mission statement. In contrast, my findings will provide information for other academic degree concentrations. In other

words, other educational organizations can use my study to help develop students' soft skills and to determine if its soft skills development efforts align the organization's mission statement. Broader research could be developed with other colleges and universities to test the effectiveness of performing arts on developing soft skills. Likewise, this data could help educators, policymakers, and stakeholders gain practical perceptions of PAI in other school systems and employer decision making to add value to the services they offer. In summary, I expected all participating students' and faculty perceptions to impact PAI and PAICs positively. As a researcher, my hope is for HBCU college faculty and administrators to implement more soft skills development practices to address employers' soft skills needs.

### **Leadership and Change**

As noted by Wagner and Mathison (2015), the practice of leadership and change are collaborative efforts that bring about positive social change in communities of learning. The findings of Pruitt and Silverman (2015) and Wren (2018) contributed to my learning experiences; they suggested that leadership is a component reflected from the vision and structure of a program that transferred from senior administrators to faculty, and to students. Strong leadership skills identified problems and found solutions for improvement.

Though the development process of this project study I have learned that faculty and administrators' leadership practices play a major role in leadership and change. Proper leadership practices in education are essential to helping students to achieve their

educational goals. Likewise, to ensure that students are meeting their educational goals, there is a need to include them in the decision-making and program reform process. I truly believed that the implementation of this project's student workshops and faculty members' professional development workshop could help promote leadership and positive social change at this participating HBCU. Through this project study, students will be able to gain future soft skills development and have the soft skills needed to compete in the job market, to meet employers' hiring expectations, and promote positive social change in their communities and the economy.

#### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

Soft skills are essential for people's social and economic functions. Over the duration of the project, I identified soft skills deficiencies I may lack and categorized alternative methods to improve them. Likewise, as an employee at the participating HBCU, I could sufficiently connect and relate with students after learning what students needed to become acceptable employees. Moreover, I learned that student soft skills development is essential. With the knowledge learned from this study, I identified performing arts students' soft skills needs and expectations for PAI courses. This study gave me a new perception of teaching and learning to become a stronger advocate for the performing arts field.

#### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

As a project developer, I learned that it is essential to gather the perceptions of students for an adequate understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. I also learned

that students are willing to participate in projects that make a difference in their learning community. I realized that students gained similar perceptions of the realities of soft skills competencies over time. Each of the participating seniors had similar thoughts about their professors' PAI methods. I was initially apprehensive about the voluntary participation of students in the study. My apprehensiveness falsely laid me to believe that students were going to resent taking part in this study and may have a negative perception of their university along with the PAI experiences. Hence, student participants' willingness to participate in this study was the complete opposite. They all welcomed the invitation to participate in this study.

Their willingness to participate in this project was contrary to my expectations. They were motivated and felt honored as seniors to give their perceptions toward their PAI experiences and participation. The project allowed students to have a platform to express their perceptions on the influence of PAI at this participating HBCU to develop soft skills as well as express the efficacy of PAI to the participating HBCU's mission statement. Furthermore, this project has the potential to be used as an exploratory study to build on future studies on PAI and soft skills development for other non-performing arts programs within HBCUs.

### **Potential Impact on Social Change**

According to the research cited by the National Association for Music Education (NAFME, 2016), May (2015), and Meadows, (2017), performing arts could develop students' soft skills and meet the needs of the 21st-century job market. Through the

findings and results of this project study, other educators and stakeholders would be able to gather a deeper understanding of PAI contributions toward developing students' soft skills. Likewise, PAI could prepare students for their careers in the performing arts and other non-performing arts careers. This study can impact social change and inform other PAI educators, practitioners, and stakeholders about the opinions of politics and policy to cut PAI programs and funding (CDSMC 2004; Dunstan, 2014; Heagy, 2018; Mulcahy, 2017). This study showed the importance of PAI and its impact on the social and professional attributes to the economy.

### **Conclusion**

This project provided me the opportunity to experience a more profound understanding of the contributions of PAI and its ability to prepare students for their careers after graduation. Due to lack of previous research on PAI's ability to develop soft skills, this study added to literature for practical and academic critique. An understanding of students' soft skills needs by taking PAI courses such as dance, theater, and music was revealed.

Lastly, this study could encourage future research to explore performing arts' ability to prepare PAI and non-PAI students for their careers after graduation. Consideration for the impact of social change toward the needs of PAI and soft skills could also be studied. Furthermore, this study will also give students an opportunity to share their perceptions on PAI and employer expectations. This study could provide educators and stakeholders with knowledge on alternative methods to develop students'

soft skills. Likewise, participants and stakeholders will gain a deeper understanding of students' soft skills needs and important soft skills that employers require from students upon graduation.

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Appendix A: PERFORMING ARTS STUDENT AND FACULTY PERFORMING  
ARTS SOFT SKILLS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

<b><i>Workshop Instructor Information</i></b>	
<b>Name</b>	Robert L. Edwards
<b>Organization/Affiliation</b>	Xxxxx University Visual Performing and Communication Arts Department (VPCAD) Performing Arts
<b>Phone</b>	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>Email</b>	rledwards@xxx.edu
<b>Facilitator's Background</b>	With over 15 years in music education, Mr. Edwards brings a background of performing arts in the areas of theater, vocal, instrumental, and dance. Throughout the years Mr. Edwards have offer leadership and soft skills development seminars and workshops to students and staff. He has offered this training at Johnson C. Smith University, Shaw University, ministry, and various high schools throughout the southern region.



<b><i>Workshop Information Overview</i></b>	
<b>Workshop Title</b>	Performing Arts Soft Skills Development Workshop
<b>Length</b>	3-day workshop for performing arts students 1-day workshop for performing faculty
<b>Proposed Date</b>	Student Workshop Dates: January 22 through January 24, 2018 Faculty Professional Development Workshop Date: January 25, 2018
<b>Workshop Description</b>	<p><b>Workshop Summary:</b> This workshop will consist of two parts: (1) a 3-day student workshop, offered to graduating senior performing arts majors and non-performing arts course participants (2) performing arts faculty members will participate in a 1-day professional development workshop offering alternative methods to develop students' soft skills. The first part consists of developing a soft skill training workshop for developing college seniors' soft skills while providing networking opportunities prior to graduation at the participating Historically Black College and University (HBCU). The second part will consist of a professional development workshop for performing arts faculty members focusing on developing performing arts majors and non-performing arts majors' soft skills. This professional development workshop will offer performing arts faculty members alternative methods to develop students' soft skills in performing arts courses. Likewise, at the</p>

	<p>end of the workshops, each participant will be offered a survey for feedback and to gather data in order to determine if each participant gain extended knowledge concern their soft skills.</p> <p><b>Workshop Focus:</b> This workshop’s primary goal is to provide an alternative method to strength student’s soft skills. This workshop will be based off the Building Blocks Competency Model (BBCM) created by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The BBCM was selected due to its ability to reflect on the foundational knowledge and skills needed by employers.</p> <p><b>Workshop Assessment Method:</b> A summative evaluation report will be developed based off each participants response via each survey. The summative evaluation report will be used to determine if this workshop was a success in achieving its goal to offer students a deeper understanding toward their soft skills and the soft skills needed to be successful on the job after graduation. Likewise, this report will present data relating to performing arts faculty members’ participating in this workshop. This Summative evaluation report will also be presented to the participating HBCU’s faculty members and stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Session Duration:</b> Each student workshop will consist of sessions lasting 45 minutes with a 5-minute break in between each session. The last day of the students’ workshop will have a 2-hour completion ceremony.</p>
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	<p>Each performing arts faculty member workshop will consist of sessions lasting 45 minutes with a 5-minute break in between each session. At the end of this 1-day professional development workshop each faculty member will participate in an open discussion to address students' soft skills needs and to reflect on the content presented during this workshop.</p> <p><b>Workshop Location and Participants:</b> Each workshop session will be conducted in a location at the participating HBCU that's conducive to the number of workshop participants. The number of anticipated number of student participants are 25 and the anticipated number of performing arts faculty members are eight.</p>
<p><b>Handouts, Materials, Supplies</b></p>	<p><b>Student and Faculty Session Materials provided:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student participant will receive both a paper (1) detailed handouts (copy of PowerPoint Slides) to be used during the lecture portions of each workshop session.</li> <li>• Workshop Notebook for students and faculty members to take notes.</li> <li>• Pens</li> <li>• Planner</li> <li>• Bag to carry times during workshop</li> </ul> <p><b>Performing Arts Faculty Session Materials provided:</b> (1) detailed handouts to be used during the lecture portions of each workshop session (2) descriptions of the soft skills teaching techniques that will be presented offering alternative methods</p>

	<p>for soft skills teaching and learning in the performing arts. (3) scenarios and questions will be used during open discussion portions of the professional development session</p> <p><b>Audio/Visual and Computer requirements:</b> Ideally, participants will have wireless internet access for iPad Mini usage in order to gain access to presentation notes, but the workshop could proceed without these as internet use will not be central to the workshop and iPad Mini usage will be used for alternative means for taking notes and to access presentation slides. We will also need a digital projector (for presenters) notebooks, and pens for taking notes.</p> <p><b>iPad Mini (Option) students only:</b> Each student participants will need their university iPad mini or a laptop</p> <p>Performing Arts Faculty members material needs: Each faculty members participants will be offered a pen and note pad along with a soft skills professional development .75 L water bottle.</p> <p><b>Space and Enrollment restrictions:</b> Enrollment must be limited to 25 student participants and 8 performing arts faculty member participants. The workshop will be offered in the science building lecture room at the participating HBCU.</p> <p><b>Student Soft Skills Completion Session:</b> Each student participant will be offered certificates of completions at the end of the 3-day workshop. These certificates will be offered to show their personal soft skills achievement and can be used work professional usage upon completion. During this time students will be offered lunch and the opportunity to reflect on their soft skills workshop experience. A business leader from the community will be invited to offer words of encouragement and to answer questions relating to employers' soft skills expectations from students upon graduation.</p> <p><b>Performing Faculty Member Open Discussion Session:</b></p> <p>During this session faculty members will be offered a dinner</p>
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	<p>will discussing their soft skills professional development experience and open discussion concerning students' performing arts soft skills development needs. After the completion of this soft skills professional development each performing arts faculty members will receive a certificate of completion.</p>
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<b><i>Detailed Workshop Plan</i></b>	
<b>Schedule</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student Soft Skills Workshop</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 1</b></p> <p><b>Student Workshop Registration</b></p> <p><b>8:00 am to 8:55 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will pick up their workshop package during the registration time which will be held from 8:00 am to 8:55 am. This package will consist of a pen, notebook for notes, and the 3-day workshop booklet which will consist of a print out of the PowerPoint slides and the workshop itinerary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Session I: Introduction to Soft Skills</b></p> <p><b>9:00 am to 9:55 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Welcome and Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student will receive an overview of the purpose of this 3-day workshops</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: <i>Soft Skills</i> Ice breaker</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student will take a few moments to take part in an ice breaker</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min: Start of presentation: <i>Introduction to Soft Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The presenter will present this presentation based off the</li> </ul>

	<p>PowerPoint slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will close the presentation with a discussion based off question presented on the last PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Session II: Communications in the Workplace</b></p> <p><b>10:00 am to 10:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speaker will give an introduction relating to the topic</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min: Start the presentation for <i>Communication in the Workplace</i></b></p> <p><i>Workplace</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present this presentation based off the PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close the presentation with a discussion based off question presented on the last PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: Communication Exercise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in a communication exercise that will require them to apply what they learned during this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Session III: Teamwork</b></p> <p><b>11:00 am to 11:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Teamwork</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speaker will give an introduction relating to the topic</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min: Start the presentation for <i>Teamwork</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present this presentation based off the PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close the presentation with a discussion based off question presented on the last PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: Teamwork Exercise</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in a teamwork exercise that will require them to apply what they learned during this and previous presentations.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to transition to the cafeteria for a lunch break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Break for Lunch 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>Session VI: Employers' Soft Skills Expectations</b></p> <p><b>1:00 pm to 2:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Employers' Soft Skills Expectations</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speaker will give an introduction relating to the topic</li> </ul> <p><b>35 min: Start the presentation for <i>Employers' Soft Skills Expectations</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Expectations</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: Soft Skills Exercise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will participate in a writing exercise based of the PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 2</b></p> <p><b>Session I: Problem Solving and Critical Thinking</b></p> <p><b>9:00 am to 9:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Problem Solving and Critical Thinking</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min: Start the presentation for <i>Problem Solving and Critical Thinking</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Thinking</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off</li> </ul>
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	<p>PowerPoint slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Exercise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will participate in a writing exercise based of the PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Session II: Work Ethics in the Workplace</b></p> <p><b>10:00 am to 10:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Work Ethics in the Workplace</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>40 min: Start the presentation for <i>Work Ethics in the Workplace</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Session III: Creativity and Innovation</b></p> <p><b>11:00 am to 11:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Creativity and Innovation</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min Start the presentation for <i>Teamwork</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>20 min: <i>Creativity and Innovation Discussion</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will participate in a discussion based of the PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to transition to the cafeteria for a lunch break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Break for Lunch 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>Session VI: Employers Soft Skills and Community Involvement</b></p> <p><b>1:00 pm to 2:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Soft Skills and Community Involvement</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>35 min: Start the presentation for <i>Soft Skills and Community Involvement</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Involvement</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: <i>Soft Skills and Community Involvement Exercise</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will participate in a writing exercise based of the PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 3</b></p> <p><b>Session I: Leadership Skills</b></p> <p><b>10:00 am to 10:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Leadership Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>40 min: Start the presentation for <i>Leadership Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open</li> </ul>
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	<p>discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation</p> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The students will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Session II: Professionalism in the Work Place</b></p> <p><b>11:00 am to 11:45 am</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Professionalism in the Work Place</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min: Start the presentation for <i>Professionalism in the Work Place</i></b></p> <p><i>Place</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: <i>Professionalism in the Work Pace Exercise</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each student will participate in a writing exercise based of the PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The students will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break</li> </ul> <p><b>Session III: Part I How to Network</b></p> <p><b>12:00 pm to 1:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to How to <i>Network</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>30 min: Start the presentation for How to <i>Network</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min: <i>Networking Exercise</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will participate in a writing exercise based of the PowerPoint slide</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take this time to transition to the cafeteria for a lunch and Certificate Reception</li> </ul> <p><b>Session III: Part II How to Network and Certificate Reception</b></p> <p><b>1:00 pm to 2:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions of Networking Speaker</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of Networking Keynote speaker</li> </ul> <p><b>30 min: Start the presentation for <i>Networking</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Keynote speaker will discuss the importance of networking will the students eat.</li> </ul> <p><b>20 min Certificate Ceremony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will receive certificates of soft skills workshop participation.</li> </ul> <p><b>10 min: Student Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will receive their 3-day workshop survey.</li> </ul>
	<hr/> <p><b>Performing Arts Faculty Professional Development</b></p> <p><b>Workshop</b></p> <p><b>Day 1</b></p> <p><b>Session I: Introduction to Student Soft Skills in The Performing Arts</b></p> <p><b>1:00 pm to 1:45 pm</b></p>

	<p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Intro to Student Soft Skills in Performing Arts</i></b></p> <p><i>Arts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>45 min: Start the presentation for <i>Intro to Student Soft Skills in Performing Arts</i></b></p> <p><i>Performing Arts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty members will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break</li> </ul> <p><b>Session II: Introduction to Developing Soft Skills among Performing Arts and Non-Performing Arts Majors</b></p> <p><b>2:00 pm to 2:45 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>Developing Soft Skills among Performing Arts and Non-Performing Arts Majors</i></b></p> <p><i>Arts and Non-Performing Arts Majors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>45 min: Start the presentation for <i>Developing Soft Skills among Performing Arts and Non-Performing Arts Majors</i></b></p> <p><i>Performing Arts and Non-Performing Arts Majors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: break</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty members will take this time to take a break light snacks and water will be provided in between each break</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Session III: How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills 3:00 pm to 3:45 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>45 min: Start the presentation for <i>How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>How to develop Soft Skills in a classroom with performing arts and non-performing arts majors</i></b></p> <p><b>Session VI: How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills 3:00 pm to 3:45 pm</b></p> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>45 min: Start the presentation for <i>How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills</i></b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• The presenter will close this presentation with an open discussion in order to ensure that the students gained a clear understanding of this presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5 min: Introductions to <i>How to develop Soft Skills in a classroom with performing arts and non-performing arts majors</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenter will present a presentation based off PowerPoint slides</li> </ul> <p><b>Session V: Faculty Student Soft Skills Development Open Discussion</b></p> <p><b>4:00 pm to 5:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>Faculty members will eat will having an open discussion concerning developing students' soft skills in performing arts courses.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty member will discuss what was presented during the workshop and will discuss how to move forward with a shared vision to develop students' soft skills in the performing arts.</li> </ul> <p><b>10 min: Faculty Workshop Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty members will receive a survey for feedback concerning this professional development workshop.</li> </ul>
<p><b>List of Handouts</b></p>	<p><b>Student handouts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper handouts for each soft skills workshop sessions</li> </ul> <p><b>Faculty Member handouts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper handouts for each soft skills workshop sessions</li> </ul>

<b>Full Workshop Presentation</b>	PowerPoint
<b>List of Supplies You (or Your Participants) Will Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overhead LCD projector for workshop sessions outline</li> <li>• Copies made of specified handouts</li> <li>• Laptops for web searching</li> <li>• iPad for student electronic handout which will be the same as the hardcopy</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Form</b>	<b>Survey for feedback and student faculty.</b>

**AGENDA**  
**January 22 through January 24, 2018**  
**Xxxx University**

**PERFORMING ARTS**  
**STUDENT**  
**WORKSHOP**

**Day 1**

**January 22, 2018**

**8:00 am to 8:55 am**

**Student Workshop Registration**

**9:00 am to 9:55 am**

**Session I: Introduction to Soft Skills**

- 5 min: Introductions
- 20 min: *Soft Skills* Ice breaker
- 30 min: Start the presentation for *Introduction to Soft Skills*

**9:55 am to 10:00 am**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**10:00 am to 10:55 am**

**Session II: Communications in the Workplace**

- 5 min Introductions
- 20 min Start the presentation for *Communication in the Workplace*
- 30 min Communication Exercise



**10:55 am to 11:00 am**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**11:00 am to 11:55 am****Session III: Teamwork**

- 5 min Introductions to *Teamwork*
- 30 min Start the presentation for *Teamwork*
- 20 min Teamwork Exercise

**Break for Lunch 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm****1:00 pm to 2:00 pm****Session VI: Employers' Soft Skills Expectations**

- 5 min Introductions to *Employers' Soft Skills Expectations*
- 35 min Start the presentation for *Employers' Soft Skills Expectations*
- 20 min Soft Skills Exercise

**January 23, 2018**  
**Day 2**  
**9:00 am to 9:55 am**

**Session I: Problem Solving and Critical Thinking**

- 5 min Introductions to *Problem Solving and Critical Thinking*
- 30 min Start the presentation for *Problem Solving and Critical Thinking*
- 20 min *Problem Solving and Critical Thinking* Exercise

**9:55 am to 10:00 am**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**10:00 am to 10:55 am**

**Session II: Work Ethics in the Workplace**

- 5 min Introductions to *Work Ethics in the Workplace*
- 40 min Start the presentation for *Work Ethics in the Workplace Exercise*

**10:55 am to 11:00 am**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**11:00 am to 11:55 am**

**Session III: Creativity and Innovation**

- 5 min Introductions to *Creativity and Innovation*
- 30 min Start the presentation for *Creativity and Innovation*
- 20 min *Creativity and Innovation* Exercise

**11:55 am to 12:00 pm**

- 5 min break Transition to Cafeteria for Lunch

**12:00 pm to 1:00 pm**

- **Break for Lunch** 60 min

**1:00 pm to 2:00 pm**

**Session VI: Employers Soft Skills and Community Involvement**

- 5 min Introductions to *Soft Skills and Community Involvement*
- 35 min Start the presentation for *Soft Skills and Community Involvement*
- 20 min *Soft Skills and Community Involvement* Exercise

**January 25, 2018**

**Day 3**

**10:00 am to 10:55 am**

**Session I: Leadership Skills**

- 5 min Introductions to *Leadership Skills*
- 40 min Start the presentation for *Leadership Skills*

**10:55 am to 11:00 am**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**11:00 am to 11:55 am**

**Session II: Professionalism in the Work Place**

- 5 min Introductions to *Professionalism in the Work Place*
- 30 min Start the presentation for *Professionalism in the Work Place Exercise*
- 20 min *Professionalism in the Work Place Exercise*

**11:55 am to 12:00 pm**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**12:00 pm to 12:55 pm**

**Session III: Part I How to Network**

- 5 min Introductions to *How to Network*
- 30 min Start the presentation for *How to Network*
- 20 min *Networking Exercise*

**1:55 pm to 2:00 pm**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**1:55 pm to 2:00 pm**

**Session III: Part II How to Network and Certificate Reception 1**

- 5 min Introductions of Networking Speaker
- 30 min Start the presentation for *Networking*
- 20 min Certificate Ceremony
- 10 min Student Survey

**Agenda**  
**January 25, 2018**  
**Performing Arts Faculty Professional Development**  
**Workshop**

**Day 1**

**Session I**  
**1:00 pm to 1:55 pm**

**Introduction to Student Soft Skills in The Performing Arts**

- 5 min Introductions to *Intro to Student Soft Skills in Performing Arts*
- 45 min Start the presentation for *Intro to Student Soft Skills in Performing Arts*

**1:55 pm to 2:00 pm**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**Session II:**  
**2:00 pm to 2:55 pm**

**Introduction to How to develop Soft Skills in a classroom with performing**  
**arts and non-performing arts majors**

- 5 min Introductions to *How to develop Soft Skills in a classroom with performing arts and non-performing arts majors*
- 45 min Start the presentation for **How to develop Soft Skills in a classroom with performing arts and non-performing arts majors**

**2:55 pm to 3:00 pm**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**Session III:****3:00 pm to 3:55 pm****How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills**

- 5 min Introductions to *How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills*
- 45 min Start the presentation for *How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills*

**3:45 pm to 4:00 pm**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**Session VI:****3:00 pm to 3:55 pm****How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills**

- 5 min Introductions to *How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills*
- 45 min Start the presentation for *How to Align Instructional Practice to Meet the University's Mission Statement to Develop Soft Skills*

**3:55 pm to 4:00 pm**

- 5 min break and transition to next session

**Session V:****4:00 pm to 5:00 pm****Faculty Student Soft Skills Development Open Discussion**

- Faculty members will eat will having an open discussion concerning developing students' soft skills in performing arts courses.
- 10 min Faculty Workshop Survey

**PERFORMING ARTS  
STUDENT**

**Workshop Evaluation Form**

Your feedback is critical for this workshop to ensure we are meeting your educational needs. We would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to share your opinions with us so we can serve you better.

**Please return this form to the instructor or organizer at the end of the workshop. Thank you.**

Workshop Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  | <b>Strongly Agree</b>   | <b>Disagree</b> |   |  |  |
|--|---|-----------------|---|--|--|
| 1. The content was as described in publicity materials             | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 2. The workshop was applicable to my future career                 | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 3. I will I believe that the information presented is helpful      | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 4. The program was well paced within the allotted time             | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 5. The instructor was a good communicator                          | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 6. The material was presented in an organized manner               | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 7. The instructor was knowledgeable on the topic                   | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 8. I believe that other students can benefit from this information | 1 2   | 3 4             | 5 |  |  |
| 9. Given the topic, was this workshop:<br>Too long                 | <input type="checkbox"/> a. Too short <input type="checkbox"/> b. Right length <input type="checkbox"/> c.    |                 |   |  |  |
| 10. In your opinion, was this workshop:                            | <input type="checkbox"/> a. Introductory <input type="checkbox"/> b. Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> c. |                 |   |  |  |



Advanced

11. Please rate the following:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Acoustics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The program overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Your Background**

---

13. Are you a Performing Arts or non-major performing arts major?

- a. Performing Arts Major  
 b. Non-Performing Arts Major

14. Which session do you believe was most helpful?

---

15. Did you have prior knowledge of soft skills before attending this workshop?

- Yes  
 No

16. Do you believe this workshop helped you to gain a better understand of soft skills?

- Yes  
 No

17. Do you believe that this workshop helped to prepare you for your future career?

- Yes  
 No

**Please return this form to the instructor or coordinator once completed. Thank you.**

**PERFORMING ARTS  
STUDENT  
Workshop  
Survey**

## Workshop Evaluation Form

Your feedback is critical for this workshop to ensure we are meeting your educational needs. We would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to share your opinions with us so we can serve you better.

**Please return this form to the instructor or organizer at the end of the workshop. Thank**

**you.**

Workshop Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  | <b>Strongly</b> | <b>Disagree</b> |   |   |   |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---|---|---|
| 1. The content was as described in publicity materials   | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The workshop was applicable to my future career   | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I will I believe that the information presented is helpful  | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The program was well paced within the allotted time   | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The instructor was a good communicator  | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The material was presented in an organized manner   | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The instructor was knowledgeable on the topic   | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I believe that other students can benefit from this information   | 1               | 2               | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Given the topic, was this workshop: <input type="checkbox"/> a. Too short <input type="checkbox"/> b. Right length <input type="checkbox"/> c. Too long |                 |                 |   |   |   |

10. In your opinion, was this workshop:  a. Introductory  b. Intermediate

11.  c. Advanced

12. Please rate the following:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
f. Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Acoustics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. The program overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Which performing art course do you teach?  Instrumental Band (Music)

Vocal Choir (Music)

Dance

Theater

14. Which session do you believe was most helpful?

---

Did you have prior knowledge of soft skills before attending this workshop?

Yes

No

15. Do you believe this workshop helped you to gain a better understand of soft skills?

Yes

No

13. Do you believe will help you to better prepare you students for their career?

Yes

No

**Please return this form to the instructor or coordinator once completed. Thank you.**

**PERFORMING ARTS  
STUDENT  
Workshop  
STUDENT REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Major:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact number (optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your Classification?**

\_\_\_: Freshman      \_\_\_: Sophomore      \_\_\_: Junior      \_\_\_: Senior

**Please indicate your “paid” employment status (excluding school-related work e.g., work-study positions and paid practicum):**

\_\_\_: Employed full-time

\_\_\_: Employed part-time (i.e., at least 20 hours/week)

**If you answered No, please indicate one of the following below:**

\_\_\_: I am a person seeking employment authorization

\_\_\_: I am a person not seeking employment authorization

**Please indicate whether you are taking performing arts course as a concentration or an elective:**

\_\_\_: I am taking performing arts courses as a part of the performing arts concentration requirements

\_\_\_: I am taking performing arts course as an elective (e.g., non-performing arts requirements, scholarship, as a hobby, etc.)

**PERFORMING ARTS  
Faculty Members  
Professional Development**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Major:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact number (optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

**What performing arts course do you teach?**

\_\_\_\_\_




## PERFORMING ARTS STUDENTS

PERFORMING ARTS SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

2

### Soft Skills Definition



- Soft skills cover different personal characteristics and relational abilities that are important in the workplace, education, or everyday life (Doyon, 2014).

4



### Welcome and Introduction Soft Skills Ice Breaker



3

### Performing Arts and Soft Skills

How does the Performing Arts Develop Your Soft Skills?

- Dance, theater, and music (choir and band) use different methods of verbal and nonverbal instructions to communicate and develop students' hard and soft skills.
- Performing arts instruction has the ability to develop soft skills in many ways.
- Performing Arts instruction has the ability to help students apply their soft skills in different personal and job related situations.



5

### DAY 1

#### Session I: Introduction to Soft Skills

- Introduction
- What are soft skills?
  - Communication Skills
  - Teamwork
  - Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Skills
  - Work Ethics
  - Creativity and Innovation Skills
  - Leadership Skills
  - Professionalism
  - Networking
- Soft Skills are all important soft skills that students should have before entering the workforce



### Answer These Two Questions:

- Write down five soft skills that you believed was developed while participating in your performing arts course?
- Which two of these soft skills do you believe will be needed for your career?

6

### Session II: Communications in the Workplace

9

### Why is Communication in the Workplace Important?

- Communication provides clarity and accuracy through verbal, written, and non-verbally in messages, collaborations among colleagues, and listening.
- Employers value this skill due its ability to promote productivity, consistency, and to ensure that other soft skills are practiced in the work environment.
- Communication builds trust among employers and employees, allows a consistent exchange of information, and ensures a positive work environment.

7

### Introduction

- How important is communication in the work place?
- According to a study conducted by Yow (2010), employers have concluded that college students are not graduating with the necessary soft skills, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills to succeed in postgraduate careers.
- The health and community services industry presented a weightier need with 64% expressing communication/interpersonal skills as being the biggest soft skills gap during hiring attempts (NCBSR, 2012).

10

### Communication Exercise

- Pretend that you are in an office and your supervisor gives a task that must be cared out. (A task will be provided)
- One person will read a provided task and then he or she will communicate this task to the next person and the last person must act out this task as communicated from the previous person.
- The person that communicates this task can only say it once as it was communicate by the previous person.
- Once completed we will discuss whether or not the task was completed by the person that originally communicated the task.
- ANY VOLUNTEERS!

8

### Introduction

- How important is communication in the work place?
- According to a study conducted by Yow (2010), employers have concluded that college students are not graduating with the necessary soft skills, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills to succeed in postgraduate careers.
- The health and community services industry presented a weightier need with 64% expressing communication/interpersonal skills as being the biggest soft skills gap during hiring attempts (NCBSR, 2012).


11

### Session III: Teamwork

12

### Introduction

- There are possible links between the performing arts, career readiness, teamwork, and collaboration.
- Working with other members during performing arts coursework promoted teamwork and collaboration (Semos, 2013).
- Your mastery of teamwork and collaboration is developed through rehearsing together for events and other performances (Phillips, 2012).



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13

### Performance Arts Ability to Develop Teamwork for the Workplace

- Performing arts activities, in particular, provide students opportunities to develop skills needed to be successful both in life and at work. Music, theatre, and speech and debate activities are ideal for developing what has been called the Four Cs of 21st century skills:
  - critical thinking
  - communication
  - collaboration
  - creativity.

14

### Teamwork Exercise

- Break up into groups of 3
- Each group will be given a task, each person must work as a team to complete their task.
- The first group that completes there task will be declared the winner.

15

### Session VI: Employers' Soft Skills Expectations

Skills that qualify as soft skills

Communication Skills – Oral & Written	Problem Solving Skills	Leadership Skills
Interpersonal Skills	Time Management	Assertiveness
Personal Grooming	Analytical Thinking	Ability to work under pressure
Flexibility	Team work	Conflict Resolution
Risk Taking Skills	Self Awareness	Initiative
	Integrity	Creativity
	Work Ethics	Diplomacy
	Commitment	

15

### Introduction

- Soft skills are preferred by employers as transferable and add value to business practices.
- Soft Skills learned while participating in the performing arts can be transferred to business practices.
- Employers believe soft skills are needed in order to encourage change, client engagement, and employee success (Williams, 2015).

16

### 5 Soft Skills that Employers Seek From Employees

- Communication
- Leadership Skills
- Work Ethics
- Creativity
- Professionalism






17

Writing Exercise

- White down five soft skills that you believe are important to employers.
- Write down 3 of the 5 soft skills that you fill are needs improvement.



18


Day 2

Session I:  
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

19

Introduction  
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

- Problem solving and critical thinking are all driving factors that helped employees recognize and define problems, identify, and implement solutions, and evaluate results (Heimler, 2010).



20


Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

- Problem solving and Critical Thinking** abets students' ability to identify and analyze problems, make sound decisions, promote creative and innovative solutions, and think abstractly about problems on the job.
- Problem solving** is essential for understanding issues relevant for success.
- Critical Thinking** propels the ingenuities of such issues to counter the necessary skills (Ghanbari, 2014 and Dalton, 2013).

21


Problem Solving and Critical Thinking  
Exercise

- The Great Egg Drop**
- Teams must work together to build a container to protect an egg, which is dropped from a height. Before the egg drop, groups must deliver presentations on their solutions, how they arrived at them, and why they believe they will succeed.



22

Session II:  
Work Ethics in the Workplace




23

Introduction  
What are Work Ethics?

- A belief in work as a moral good :a set of values centered on the importance of doing work and reflected especially in a desire or determination to work hard (Hurrell, 2016; Ting Su, 2015).

26



CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

Session III:  
Creativity and Innovation

24

Examples of Work Ethics:

- Professionalism
- Respectfulness
- Dependability
- Dedication
- Determination
- Accountability
- Humility



27

Introduction

- **Creativity** is the use of new and useful ideas for personal or professional purposes (e.g. the arts, business, education, or everyday life) (Ferizovic, 2015).
- **Creativity and innovation** allows an individual to apply original and critical thinking techniques (Cipper, 2015).
- **Creativity** is the driving force for innovation, which promotes new ideas (Ferizovic, 2015).
- **Creativity** is doing something new.
- **Innovation** is doing something in an exciting and different way.
- **Creativity and Innovation** is a key component in the performing arts.

25

Code of Conduct and Business Ethics

- The case for training employees on **ethics in the workplace** grows every day. While many consider the need to regulatory compliance the limit of their corporate responsibility, companies that conduct business with integrity and ethics garner loyalty from their staff and consumers (workplaceanswers.com).

28

Creativity Work Place

- The demand for **creativity** from employees is rising in this age of rapid technological advancement and economic development.
- When an employers seeks to hire an employee they normally think about the following question:
- 1). What is something new that you can introduce to the workplace?
- 2). What talent do you have that the company don't already have that can make a positive change?

29

### Innovation in the Work Place

- **Innovation** is a hard to define quality that can lead to revolutionary breakthroughs that help individuals and organizations to make changes for the better. For that reason, it is a much sought after skill, and all businesses make efforts to encourage it. There are hundreds of great examples of innovation in workplaces of all shapes and sizes (illumine.co.uk).
- Different social media platforms are great examples of innovation, most do the same thing which is to connect people and to share information but each one offer different ways to connect people and to share information.
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - Twitter
  - Etc.

32

### Session VI: Soft Skills and Community Involvement



30

### Creativity and Innovation Open Discussion

- Think about a time when you had to apply creativity and innovation in your performing arts course.
- How can your creativity and innovation skills be use in your future career?



33

### Soft Skills and Community

- The health and community services industry presented a weightier need with 64% expressing communication/interpersonal skills as being the biggest soft skills gap during hiring attempts (NCBSR, 2012).

31

### Introduction Topics for discussion

- Applying your soft skills towards community out reach
- Soft Skills and positive social change in your community
- The importance of soft skills and community
- Ways to give back to the community using your soft skills




34

### How to use your soft skills to promote positive social change in the community?

- Leadership, time management, reliability, creativity, problem solving—you name the soft skill and you can practice it while mentoring. Whether that's working with students you teach or getting involved with an community organization such as the Boys and Girls Club, your local YMCA, and community centers.
- Mentoring gives you real world experience helping someone else work through problems (academic, performing arts, or otherwise).
- Volunteering your time for an on-campus organization that you will from volunteering in the community. This is a great place to practice your soft skills abilities by chairing a committee, planning an event or even leading the entire organization.
- This is a great way to use your soft skills to promote positive social change.

35



### Soft Skills and Community Exercise

Think of a community project that you can create using your soft skills in order to promote positive social change.

38

### The importance of leadership in the workplace

- How can you use your leadership skills on the job?
- How can you use your leadership skills to be successful on the job?
- How can you use your leadership skills learned in performing arts course in your career?

That leadership is a component reflected from the vision and structure of a program that is transferred from senior administrators to faculty, and to students. Strong leadership skills identified problems and found solutions for improvement Pruitt and Silverman (2015) .

36

### Day 3 Session I:

#### Leadership Skills



39

### Leadership Exercise

#### Exercise 1

- **Writing Exercise:** From what you have learned about soft skills thus far, write down 5 characteristics/soft skills that you believe a good lead have.

#### Exercise 2

- **Round Tables.** This activity requires four tables, each set up with a different task. The tasks have to have separate steps that can be delegated among participants.
- Select a team leader, your team leader must only communicate and delegate tasks. Each table is timed to see how long it takes to complete the task.



37

### Introduction

The practice of leadership is a collaborative efforts that bring about positive social change in communities of learning (Wagner and Mathison, 2015).



40

### Let's Talk About Our Leadership Exercise Experience

- This exercise was designed to help develop your leadership and delegation skills.
- Everyone must first understand even though their was one leader, everyone had to lead according to the assigned tasked.
- With the leadership skills that your wrote down during the first exercise, did could you identify any soft skills that your wrote down.
- Open Discussion

41



**Session II:**  
**Professionalism in the Work Place**

44

Explain how professionalism may play a role in your future career

According to Dalton (2013), professionalism is important for many reasons. Among other salient responsibilities, employers want employees to establish effective relationships with customers, other businesses, and the public.



42

Introduction

- According to Dalton (2013), professionalism nurtured the integrity of an employee, cultivated employee's ability to understand work protocol, supported employee's ability to set realistic career expectations, and boosted employee's ability to handle conflict on the job.

45



**Session III:**  
**Part I**  
**How to Network**

43

What is Professionalism in the Work Place?


- Professionalism is defined as an individual's conduct at work, professionalism can be defined as the following:
  - Trustworthy
  - Respectful
  - Integrity
  - Consideration
  - Dependable
  - Attire (dress code)



46

Introduction

- The need to focus on developing students' soft skills to meet future employers needs and to establish a means for students to network with local business leaders (Major, 2013 and Fields, 2017).



47

**Where to network**



- Conferences
- Social Events
- Community Events
- Social Groups such as
- Social Media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram)
- Political Events
- College Campus (peers)
- College Campus (special events)

48

**Ways to Network for Success**


- The best way to network you must follow these rules:
- Introduce yourself with a hand shake
- Began with a question: Discuss the event that you guys are attending
- Show interest and offer a compliment, be sincere
- Market yourself sale your personal story and brand the best way possible



49

**Networking Exercise**

- **Develop an evaluator speech:** a short 30 second story that you can use to market yourself, this story is your truth and what you have to offer.



50



**Session III: Part II**


**Networking Presentation and Certificate Reception**

51

**Performing Arts Faculty Professional Development Workshop**



52



**Session I:**

**Student Soft Skills in The Performing Arts**

53

### Introduction

- According to Talbot (2013) expressed a similar idea that performing arts instruction is vital in developing students' soft skills for personal and professional success.

56

### What does research have to say about performing arts and soft skills?

- According to Ghanbari (2014), O'Dell (2014), Schawbel (2013), and Seifter and Nissley (2010) the contributions of performing arts courses on developing students' soft skill and career readiness.
- Cook (2012) suggested that performing arts courses and instructional methods have the ability to help students gain the required soft skills needed to be successful in their careers.

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Soft Skills Selected Across Industry Groupings (Selected Industries)	Business & Finance	Health, Education & Government	Sales & Service	IT & Manufacturing
Communication	Communication	Communication	Communication	Communication
Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork
Strategic thinking	Strategic thinking	Strategic thinking	Strategic thinking	Strategic thinking
Critical thinking	Critical thinking	Critical thinking	Critical thinking	Critical thinking
Problem-solving & action	Problem-solving & action	Problem-solving & action	Problem-solving & action	Problem-solving & action
Professionalism	Professionalism	Professionalism	Professionalism	Professionalism

Note. Source: Elias, K. (2014). Employer perceptions of co-curricular engagement and the co-curricular record in the hiring process (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1650594021?accountid=14872>

Note. Source: Elias, K. (2014). Employer perceptions of co-curricular engagement and the co-curricular record in the hiring process (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1650594021?accountid=14872>

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## Session II:

### Developing Soft Skills in the Classroom among Performing Arts and Non-performing arts Majors



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### The influence of performing arts instruction on developing students' soft skills

- Band/Instrumental Instruction and Students' Soft Skills
- Choir/Vocal Instruction and Students' Soft Skills
- Dance Instruction and Students' Soft Skills
- Theater Instruction and Students' Soft Skills

Performing Arts Instruction has been documented to stimulate cognitive development and brain function to aid skills training, another important characteristic of understanding the effectiveness of PAI (Cabane, Hille, & Lechner, 2016).

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### Introduction

According to Kettler (2012), students became proficient in their disciplinary majors and subsequent careers after graduation, when educators focused on implementing the development on soft skills within the PAI instructional curriculum and syllabus.



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### Teaching Performing Arts Majors and Non-performing Arts Majors

How to develop performing arts majors' soft skills while prepare non-performing arts majors for their careers out side of a career in the performing arts.

According to Kettler (2012), students become proficient in their disciplinary majors and subsequent careers after graduation, when educators focused on implementing the development on soft skills within the PAI instructional curriculum and syllabus.

Lapin (2013) asserted that students from many non-music disciplines benefitted from music instruction with an aim to develop students' talent and soft skills.

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### What does the University's Mission Statement want you to do?

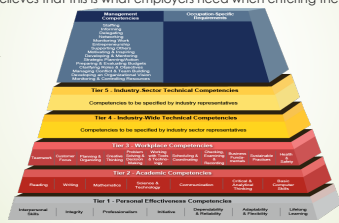
- "... The University endeavors to produce graduates who are able to communicate effectively, think critically, learn independently as well as collaboratively, and demonstrate competence in their chosen fields. Further, it provides an environment in which students can fulfill their physical, social, cultural, spiritual, and other personal needs and in which they can develop a compelling sense of social and civic responsibility for leadership and service in a dynamic, multicultural society. ..."
- This university's mission statement indirectly stated its aim to develop students' soft skills for their careers through all degree concentrations offered.



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### Building Blocks Competency Model (BBCM).

The BBCM is designed in the form of a pyramidal shape figure with five tiers. Tiers 1 through 3 is called the Foundation Competencies. ETA believes that this is what employers need when entering the workforce.



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### What dose the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools(SACS) say about aligning teaching and learning with the schools mission statement.

- The Southern Association of Colleges and schools (SACS) requires the participating HBCU and Schools to ensure that all academic courses taught are aligned with the university's mission statement (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2012).



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### Session III:

How to align your instructional methods in order to meet the University's Mission Statement to develop students' Soft Skills



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### Session V:

Faculty Student Soft Skills Development Open Discussion





## Appendix B: Interview

1. “Do you believe that your soft skills (e.g., leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, creativity, work ethics, and professionalism) improved as a result of you being involved in performing arts this course? Please explain why you believe that this is true or false.”
2. “When thinking about starting your career after college, in what way do you feel that your involvement in PAI has helped to prepare you for your career?”
3. “In relation to the PAI soft skills learned, which one(s) specifically is applicable to your career?”
4. “What do you perceive to be the relationship between PAI courses and acquiring soft skills?”
5. “So your soft skills (e.g., leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, creativity, work ethics, and professionalism) have or have not improved as a result of you being involved in PAI. Which soft skills improved? Which didn’t? Can you please give a practical example of any one of them?”
6. “How specifically can your local community get involved in discussing matters on historically black college education and employer needs?”
7. “Please give an example of how PAI instruction can assist in prioritizing your employment seeking decisions to position yourself to be hired after graduating from college?”
8. “What are the different ways by which your local community can be involved with your historically black college education to satisfy employer needs?”
9. “Please provide a specific kind of soft skills experience that can or cannot improve your employment seeking chances.”
10. “What specific soft skills experiences after taking PAI courses were impactful in your employment seeking decisions?”