

Title: The FTS Framework: Designing Laddered Experiential Curriculum Pathways Across Business and Technology Programs

Track 6: Laddering and Curriculum Pathways

Abstract:

Experiential learning is widely used to prepare students for complex, technology-enabled workplaces; however, in many degree-granting institutions these experiences remain fragmented within individual courses, limiting cumulative skill development across a program. This paper presents a tested, program-level approach for structuring experiential learning so that student knowledge and capabilities develop progressively rather than in isolation. It introduces the FTS (Foundations–Technologies–Skills) Framework, a transferable curriculum architecture designed to support laddered experiential learning pathways across undergraduate Management Information Systems programs. The framework organizes learning progression into three stages: Foundations, where students develop conceptual, ethical, and analytical grounding; Technologies, where learners engage with tools, platforms, and applied methods; and Skills, where students demonstrate integrated, transferable capabilities through authentic, performance-based tasks. Rather than prescribing specific pedagogies or technologies, FTS provides a structural model for sequencing learning outcomes, assessments, and experiential activities across courses and program levels. Using a design-based curriculum implementation approach, the framework was developed and applied across multiple undergraduate MIS courses spanning lower- and upper-division levels over several academic terms. Implementation focused on curriculum mapping, scaffolded signature assignments, and coordinated assessment design aligned with program learning outcomes. Evidence informing the analysis includes curriculum documentation, structured assignment designs, and program-level observations of student work and faculty coordination. Across implementations, the FTS Framework supported clearer progression of learning expectations, reduced redundancy across courses, and more coherent student portfolios aligned with industry-relevant competencies. The paper concludes by discussing how the framework can support cross-cutting priorities such as AI literacy, authentic assessment, and employability while remaining adaptable to diverse institutional contexts seeking scalable, resource-conscious approaches to laddering experiential learning.