

“LEARNING THAT WORKS”  
Kentucky State University

With the critical consensus that the job landscape is in the process of changing dramatically due to the increased use of automation, Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) by businesses, companies and institutions are likely to employ current and future graduates of colleges and universities. One of the strategies that can ensure that graduates are able to compete and thrive in this environment is to focus their educational experiences on those skills that are immune to this increased use of ML/AI in the workplace—skills that are not currently available on a widespread basis. The aim of “Learning that Works” is to teach students skills that will aid them in career readiness and advancement. Students will learn Design Thinking and will acquire skills in problem-solving, teamwork, oral and written communication, and cultural agility.

“Learning That Works” uses as its theoretical framework Joseph E. Aoun’s forward-thinking study *Robot- Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (2017). Aoun argues that colleges and universities need to reconsider their focus to produce graduates with “robot-proof” skills to deal with the continued and increased use of automation and ML/AI in the workplace. “Learning that Works” has as its starting point the attempt to implement a practical “solution” to this automation/AI problem, which is only being predicted to intensify, so that Kentucky State University produces graduates with the skills needed in this workforce environment.

“Learning that Works,” taps into the burgeoning field of Design Thinking, which offers a framework by which students can acquire the skill of what Aoun calls Systems Thinking early in their coursework. Doing so reinforces essential secondary attributes that have been identified by Aoun and others, such as teamwork and cultural agility, while also making the most of KSU’s new highly structured University College system. As Kentucky State University is in the midst of revising and reforming its general education core, this QEP will begin the process of having these “robot-proof” skills pervade all of the courses taught as part of University College. As a starting point for future instructional transformation, the proposal calls for the creation of a three-course sequence, required of all students as part of the core, and culminating a general education capstone course that would assemble students into teams and, through applying creative and critical thinking processes like Design Thinking, tackle existing problems in communities, institutions, or businesses. By beginning the “robot-proofing” process with required, general-education classes, this QEP will eventually impact the education of the entire undergraduate student body.

“Learning that Works,” will create a “signature program” that will set Kentucky State University apart. This QEP is intended to have the students acquire skills that will make them competitive in the workplace while still allowing the advantages in career flexibility and advancement of a liberal studies education. This QEP addresses the University’s institutional priorities that deal with on improving recruitment, retention and graduation rate; the distinction brought by this QEP will allow us to recruit and maintain a student body that values innovative learning.

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