The objective of this proposal was to create a set of innovative, experiential, and interdisciplinary team projects that could help initiate the networked curriculum. The projects were intended to provide students with an opportunity to experience projects that might be housed in one area, but networked to others. Although faculty members often execute projects in the areas in which they teach, usually students must do the integration on their own. The tasks involved in the teaching innovation consisted of the development of the set of interconnected team projects and assessment mechanisms.

The main student objective was to improve the richness of experiential learning through multidisciplinary, networked projects. For faculty, it was to organically create a set of team projects that can be executed by collaboration amongst multiple courses. A repository of project descriptions and assignments for MBA students was developed that require students to research and present a topic based upon information technology, most often with a real-world, hands-on component, and to make the connection to other functional areas. The projects were also intended to provide an opportunity for students to understand the creative capabilities that contemporary information technology offers business and society. Student delivery has been in-class team presentations and entrepreneurial-type pitches, although other formats that encourage student engagement could easily be adapted.

A joint project on web analytics with a class in information technology (IT) and a marketing social media class was initiated. The project was undertaken with Make-A-Wish Georgia as a real world client. There were two parts. Each class (IT and Marketing) organized the students into six teams, which were paired across the two classes. Part I: the IT MBA students performed YouTube data analysis. Part II: the IT MBA students performed Facebook data analytics. In both cases, the IT students provided the results by “throwing them over the virtual fence” to their Marketing team counterparts. The marketing teams performed the strategic analysis and presented the results to the client. Additional projects have been developed and executed on the following topics: IT and Innovation (propose an innovation and pitch the idea to a panel of judges); social media creation (gain firsthand experience in developing a social media application); societal impact of IT (analyze emerging technologies); sourcing in the online global marketplace (manage a globally sourced project); Google (conduct broad analysis of a prominent technology company); and data analytics (perform data mining).

The benefits of the innovation were achieved through the completion of the assignments by the students. The assessments were carried out by: peer evaluation; instructor verbal and written assessment (grade to students); and, occasionally, by business community members. A question on the final exam explicitly required the students to make the interdisciplinary connections.

All project descriptions are available to any faculty member who wishes to adapt them. They can be reworked so the department where the faculty member is housed has a larger component.