Integrating learning and work: Using a critical reflective approach to enhance learning and teaching capacity

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The integration of learning and work presents many possibilities and challenges for educators in higher education. Core to these challenges is how to foster preparation for professional practice and particularly how to capture and assess the degree to which the WIL experience prepares students for their future lives and work. With the demand for work ready graduates increasing, the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in the process of continuous learning is vital to equipping students for futures unknown. This paper seeks to contribute to knowledge of how fostering reflective practice enables the integration of learning and work. This paper presents a case study of a Work Integrated Learning curriculum intervention within the discipline of Project Management. The authors examine how an industry mentoring approach to WIL was developed and implemented, and focus on critically exploring students’ reflections and learning outcomes. In doing so, the authors explore WIL from the teacher and student perspective, and seek to contribute to knowledge of how to foster WIL through reflective practice to support the development of Graduate Attributes which equip students for an ever changing workforce.

Keywords: work integrated learning, reflective practice, project management, graduate outcomes, work readiness