Developing the ICT workforce for the future: Breaking down disciplinary silos to create an authentic work integrated learning experience

KATJA FLEISCHMANN
LINDSAY WARD
James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia

Work Integrated Learning activities including industry placements are supported both by the requirements of professional societies and by the drive of Universities to ensure that their programs have practical relevance. However, this may not be feasible for Information Communication and Technology (ICT) programs in a regional area where local industry is unable to provide sufficient student placements. To overcome this limitation and facilitate the development of work-ready skills, James Cook University ICT students take on work-like roles in multidisciplinary collaborative teams to develop website projects for an industry client. Students receive guidance and feedback from the client and an industry expert to direct their learning towards workplace requirements. A two-year study was conducted using surveys of 53 ICT students to analyse their perceptions of this authentic learning environment. Results show that this approach is well received and contributes effectively to students’ development of work-ready skills required in the ICT industry.

Keywords: Work integrated learning (WIL), professional skills, multidisciplinary collaboration, industry feedback, authentic learning, Information Communication and Technology ICT