Scaffolding Work Integrated Learning
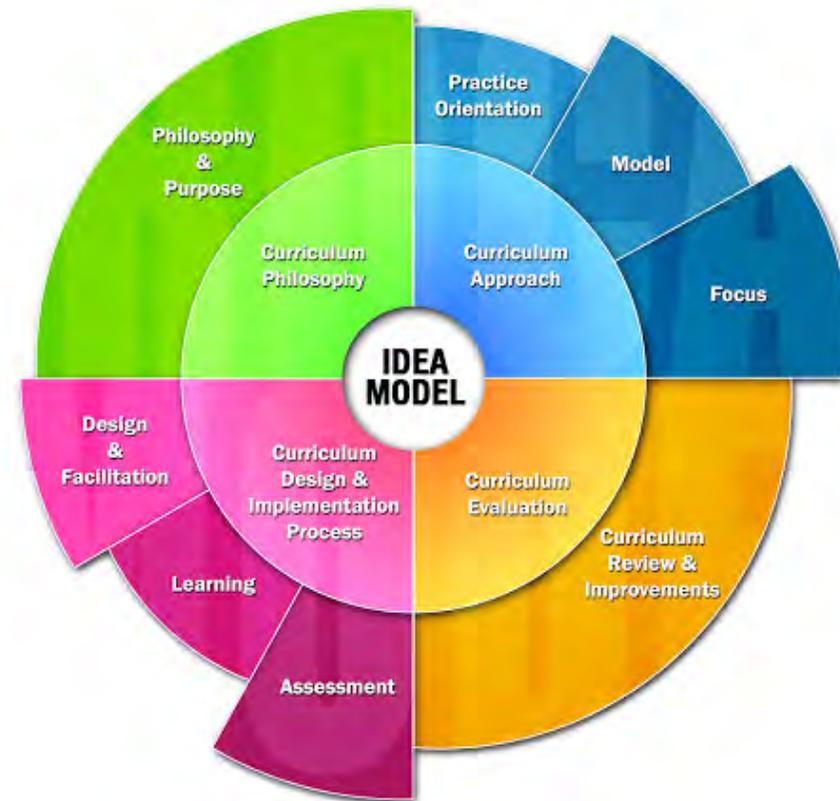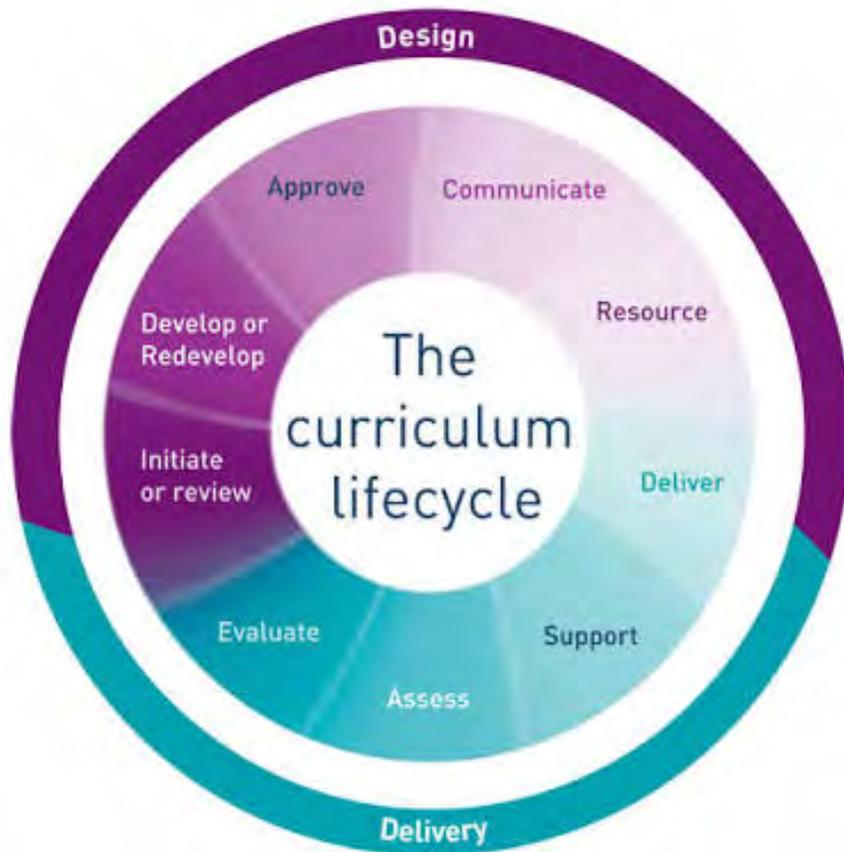
Leoni Russell – Office of Dean, Learning & Teaching RMIT
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Curriculum Design – we all have a process

Scaffolding

WIL @ RMIT

WIL activities in programs must:

- include student preparation, supervision and monitoring of progress and reflective practice/debriefing

- involve authentic engagement with partner organisations (including WIL in simulated workplace environments) and include industry feedback

- be assessed in line with the University's assessment policy

- comply with relevant government legislation and regulations, university policies, procedures and instructions

- be scaffolded throughout the program so as to enable students to achieve course and program learning outcomes, Graduate Attributes and vocational education Employability Skills

- integrate theoretical learning with practical application in professional contexts which engage students in meaningful and consequential learning activities

- where applicable, be aligned to the requirements of professional registration and accrediting bodies

- be negotiated with partner organisations (where relevant) and designed to be accessible, equitable and mutually beneficial for stakeholders

- not unnecessarily create undue hardship for students or partner organisations.

WIL in Curriculum @ RMIT

Types of WIL
(f2f, online, combination/blended)

Placement

- Internships, practicum, co-operative education, clinical placement

Project

- Real projects with industry and community partners, on or off campus, face to face or online

WIL in simulated workplace environments

- Environments that simulate real workplaces in their function, equipment and mode of operation

Stages of all WIL activities

Preparation

- Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders

- Induction, preparation for learning in a different context

During

- Supervision, monitoring progress, feedback, ongoing reflection, communication

Post

- Debrief, reflection, evaluation, continuous improvement

What does research and good practice tell us about scaffolding WIL?

- Quality WIL in simulated workplace environments is great preparation for placement WIL

- Partners need to be involved in designing WIL

- The needs of the learner must be considered

- Academic standards and expectations of level of performance must shape WIL activities

- Constructive alignment and meeting stated learning outcomes is paramount

What is needed to embed WIL in the curriculum?

Scaffolding across the curriculum

Constructive alignment

Engagement with partners

Curtin University

Quality WIL dimensions in curriculum design

- **Authenticity** of the WIL experience eg real work that is engaged with industry and community, with real meaning and real consequences

- **Activities and assessment focused on integration –** applying discipline knowledge in the workplace context

- **Preparation and induction** – preparing students for the work and learning in a different context – manage expectations

- **Quality of Supervision** – access to quality supervision from uni and industry partner, monitoring progress, ongoing feedback

- **Debrief and reflection – both students and industry partner** (review and continuous improvement)

"The impact of work integrated learning on student work-readiness", Sonia Ferns, Calvin Smith, Leoni Russell, OLT, 2014.

WIL curriculum in action
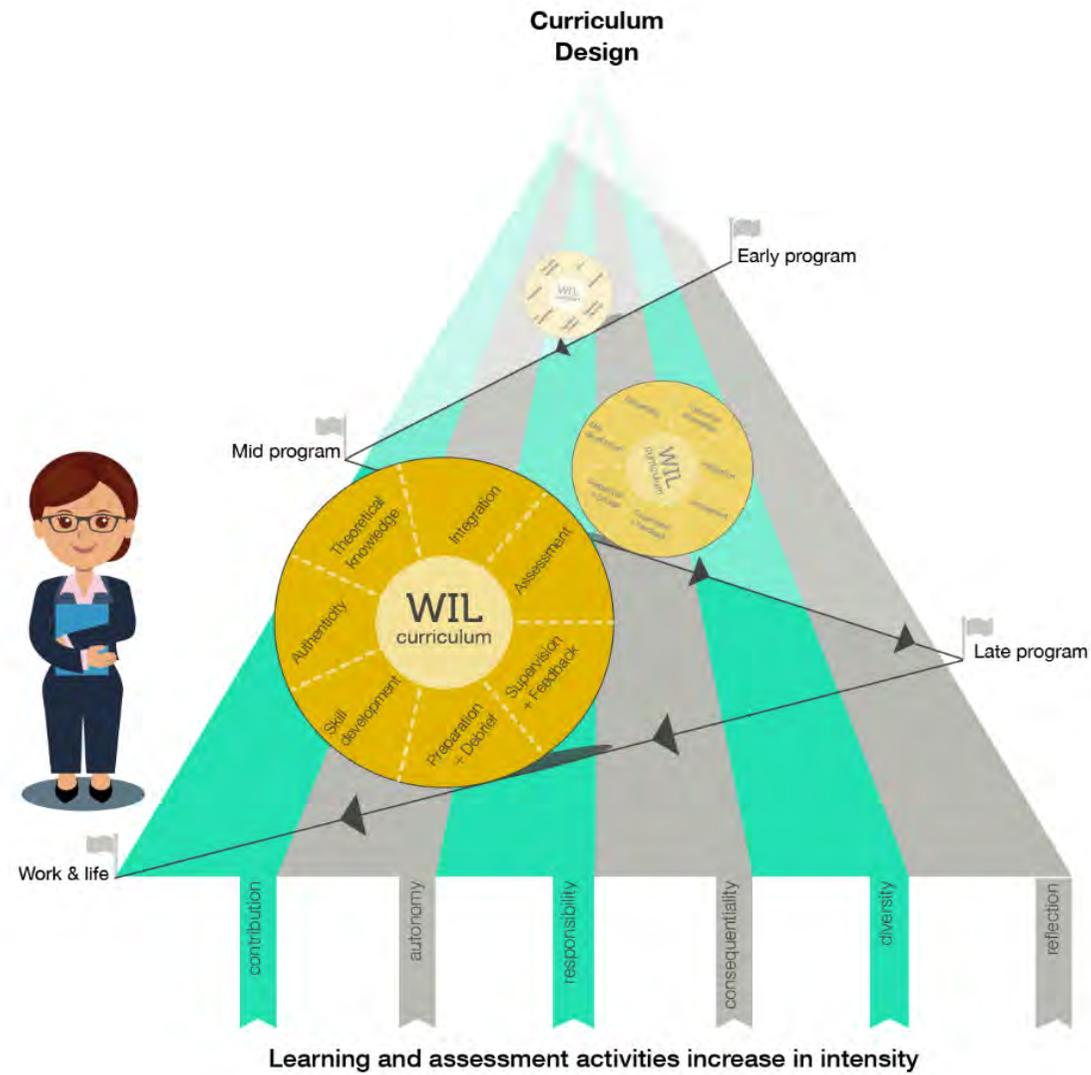
Employability Focus – it's more than just WIL ....

- Employability is not just about graduates securing a 'job'. It includes "a set of achievements-skills, understanding and personal attributes - that makes graduates more likely to gain unemployment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006).

- Broadening the WIL dimensions to explicitly integrate Career Development Learning (CDL)

- Career development learning is about giving students opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their employability and "to navigate a successful and satisfying life/career" (McMahon, Patton & Tatham, 2003).

- CDL pre and post WIL – eg focus on individual (eg career goals/plans) and knowing about the industry/community sectors

- Co-curricular CDL and WIL activities are equally important and impact graduate employability

Dacre Pool & Sewell (2007)
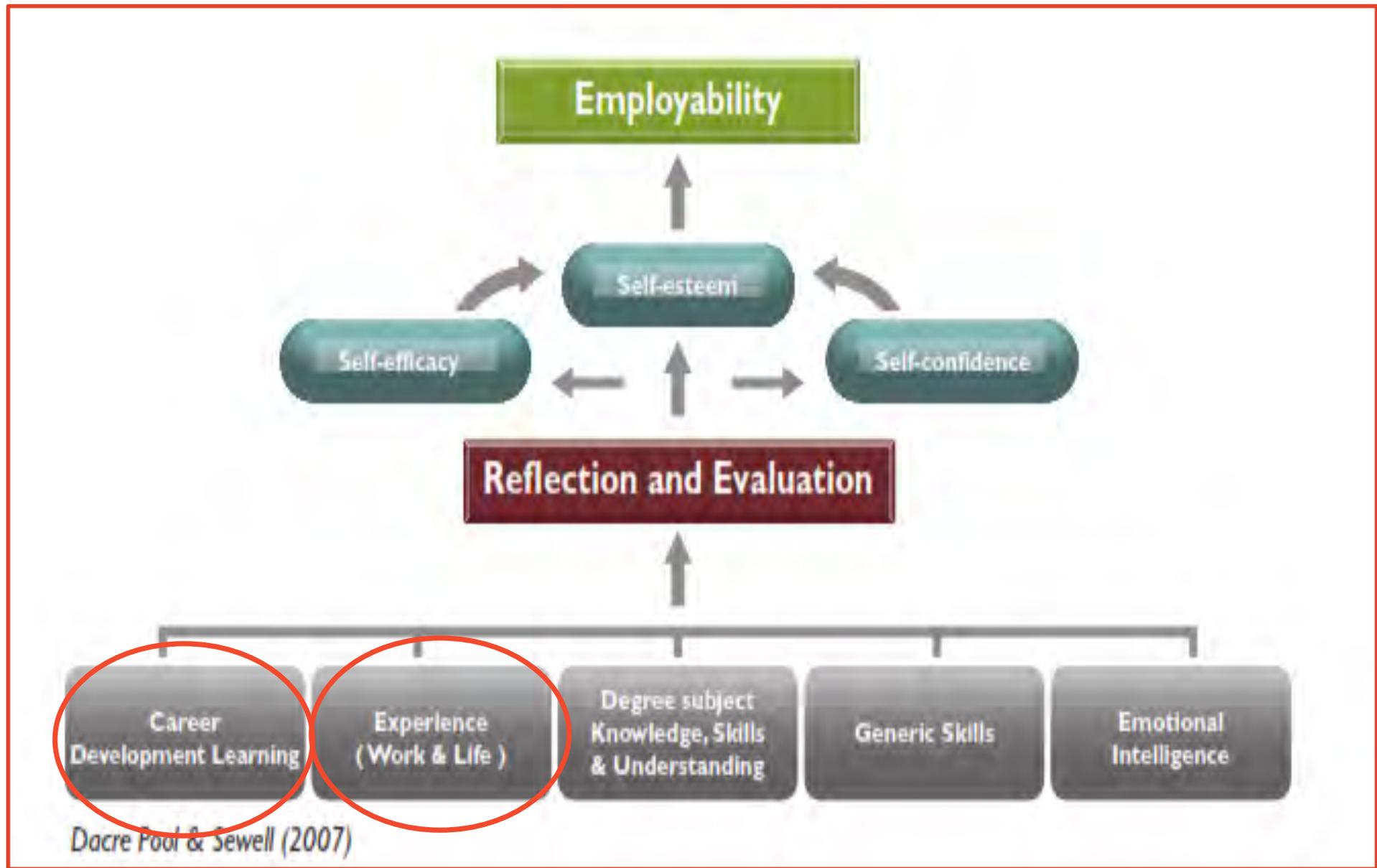
Activity – chat to the person next to you

How might work integrated learning be incorporated into your own teaching?

- What opportunities do you see for incorporating WIL into your curriculum?

- What are some of the major challenges you envisage?