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Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we present the full papers and abstracts of the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) National Conference 2016 held at Sydney, NSW.

These proceedings represent a substantial contribution to the scholarship and research of Work Integrated Learning (WIL), and provide a collection of national and world leading innovation, practice and research in this area. The National Conference, with its vision of WIL 2020, focusses on pushing the boundaries of how we plan, practice, theorise and strategise WIL.

The conference sub-themes were judicially developed to represent both current and even contentious WIL issues. As such, the themes represent a snapshot of WIL today as well as aspirations and visions for the growth and development of WIL. The conference sub-themes were:

1. Strengthening connections: Students, higher education, industry and community
2. Employability and WIL 2020
3. Learning through WIL: Pushing the boundaries of curriculum and practice
4. Analytics, evaluation and research of WIL: Towards 2020 and beyond
5. Developing leadership capacity through WIL
7. Pushing the boundaries: Contemporary issues in WIL

Each of the contributions to the proceedings showcase current thinking, practice and recommendations for this important work. Overall, these proceedings support work integrated learning to develop a community of scholars and body of knowledge within the broader framework of scholarship in higher education.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions made by members of the conference program sub-committee: Sonia Ferns (Curtin), Michael Whelan (SCU), Franziska Trede (CSU), Damien Thomson (Monash) and Wayne Fallon (WSU). Each generously enabled the success of this ACEN conference program by contributing their expertise through providing critical and scholarly leadership of the review process. Sincere thanks are also expressed to Michele Day for editing papers, completing final drafts and compiling the conference proceedings. The program committee, together with the many reviewers, have approached their tasks with professional integrity and scholarship around WIL, demonstrating the widespread commitment across the sector to WIL.

We hope these proceedings continue to provide support for the WIL community of scholars and practitioners. These proceedings are offered as a resource that documents contemporary, often ‘cutting-edge’ practice and research. An aim of these proceedings is that their publication can stimulate ongoing discussion and serve to inspire new research endeavours in the role and contribution of WIL to higher education.

Dr Marina Harvey and Dr Anna Rowe
ACEN 2016 National Conference Program Chairs
Proceedings Editors

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The 2016 ACEN Conference Best Paper Award

Full refereed papers were considered and needed to be either empirical studies or theoretical reviews. These papers provided a detailed description of appropriate literature, methodologies and analytical methods, demonstrating a thorough and rigorous analysis of current issues in work integrated learning, leading to well-argued conclusions.

All papers underwent a double blind peer review process and an additional review process for best paper using the following criteria:

- Alignment with a conference sub-theme
- Originality of the research
- Quality/rigour (e.g. research method and/or literature review)
- Contribution to the scholarship of cooperative education and WIL
- Overall innovation and creativity

The winner of the best paper was:

**Senior managers’ and recent graduates’ perceptions of employability skills for health services management**

Diana Messum, Lesley Wilkes, Kath Peters, *Western Sydney University* and Debra Jackson, *Oxford Brookes University*
Senior managers’ and recent graduates’ perceptions of employability skills for health services management

Diana Messum
Lesley Wilkes
Kath Peters
Western Sydney University
Debra Jackson
Oxford Brookes University

If work integrated learning (WIL) is intended by universities to meet the demand for work-ready graduates, identification of skill requirements is a necessary first step. Health services management specific employability skills (ES) perceived to be important by managers and recent graduates working in the field, and their perceptions of skills they need to improve, are not readily available in the literature. This research acknowledges the context-specific nature of ES. Senior managers and recent graduates working in health services management were identified from a placement data base used at a NSW university. Comparison of ratings for importance and skills observed is reported for 44 ES items. There was strong agreement between the two groups on important ES, and the top seven items on which they agreed were all generic in nature. Skill gaps were also revealed, many of which recent graduates did not appear to recognise. Recent graduates and their managers can provide valuable feedback to universities about ES required for health services management positions. Agreement of the two stakeholder groups lends weight to the findings. Closer engagement of universities and employers in designing curriculum and in particular WIL could enrich work readiness of the graduates.

Keywords: Employability skills, generic skills, health management, WIL in higher education

Background

For higher education to embed the development of employability capabilities in curriculum to ensure work-ready graduates, consistent with the recent National WIL Strategy, requirements of industry must first be clarified. While industry generally appears satisfied with the discipline-specific skills of graduates, there is some evidence that employability skills (ES) are under-developed (Precision Consultancy, 2007). Also the contextual nature of ES has long been recognised (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012), which means that industry-specific ES should be identified. Employer preferences for graduates who “hit the ground running” have been reported (Ferns & Lilly, 2015; Semeijn, Veldon, Heijke, Vlueten & Boshuizen, 2006; Ridoutt, Selby Smith, Hummel & Cheang, 2005). Expectations for work-readiness are typically defined in terms of generic rather than discipline-specific skills. Communication skills have consistently emerged as the most important ES, but deficiencies in written and oral skills have been lamented (Graduate Careers Australia (GCA), 2015, CBI, 2013; Archer & Davison, 2008). Problems with integrity, teamwork, problem solving, literacy, numeracy, critical analysis skills, planning, organising and self-management have also been revealed (Hinchliffe & Jolly 2014). Furthermore, generic ES seem more useful than job-specific skills for coping with rapidly changing and complex work environments such as in the health field (Liang, Short & Brown, 2006). The aim of this paper is to make generic skill needs more visible and explicit for the field of health services management (HSM).

The Australian Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training (2002, p. 143) definition of ES was used in this research encompassing skills “not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise.” This included technical or discipline-specific skills, knowledge, capabilities and personal attributes. More recently, the Australian Employability Skills Framework (2012) acknowledged ES as skills and knowledge that enable employees to perform effectively in the workforce and apply technical or discipline-specific skills. Furthermore, ES were acknowledged as context dependent. While industry generally appears satisfied with discipline-specific skills, Graduate Careers Australia 2014 reported that ES are under-developed. To ascertain
requirements, typically the views of employers (GCA, 2015) or students are sought (Jackson, 2011; Nilsson 2010). A few studies have also surveyed views of recent graduates and academics (Oliver, Whelan, Hunt & Hammer 2011; Godye, Fender& Chalkey, 2004; Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick & Cragnotini, 2004). Other sources of information include professional colleges which publish capability lists (ACHSM, 2014). Analysing essential skills as given in vacancy advertisements is another source (Varje, Turttianen & Vaananen 2013). However, skills to gain a job may well be different to those required once a job is secured (Semeijn, Veldon, Heijke & Vlueten, 2006).

There is limited research exploring context-specific ES requirements in the health arena (Messum, Wilkes & Jackson, 2011). Only two common items emerged comparing the top ten essential skills advertised in HSM graduate positions with senior health managers’ requirements, namely interpersonal skills and teamwork (Messum, Wilkes & Jackson, 2015). Furthermore, the most important ES for which skill gaps were identified were all generic rather than discipline-specific.

It has been argued that recent graduates are well placed to identify skills important in the real world, based on insight from current employment experience (Ainsworth & Motley, 1995). The value in comparing their perceptions with senior managers is that it can add weight to recommendations for curriculum renewal. Expectations of work integrated learning (WIL) experiences can also be clarified. Failure of newly-appointed graduates to recognise the importance of particular ES as perceived by their supervising managers, may be useful feedback for employers as well as higher education institutions (HEIs).

If WIL is intended by universities to meet the demand for work-ready graduates (Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Webb, Fletcher & Pretto, 2008), identification of discipline-specific skill requirements is a necessary first step. Findings can raise student awareness about skills required on the job. Also accuracy of self-assessment of ES developed through WIL can be improved (Mackaway, Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, 2012).

Research aims and intent

The broad aim of this paper was to illicit views of recent graduates and senior managers about skills needed to work in HSM. More specifically the research questions asked:

- Is there a difference in perceptions of skills most important for HSM, whether job-specific or generic, for recent graduates and senior managers?
- Is there a difference in self-ratings of skill levels by recent graduates compared with supervising senior managers’ observations?

This research was undertaken with ethics approval (number H9344, 9 July 2013), from the University of Western Sydney.

Method

Survey instrument

The survey included four Likert scales for interpersonal and communication skills, self-management skills, job-specific skills and critical analysis skills. Respondents rated items for importance and skill level on a five-point scale ranging from no skills, i.e. requiring training and development, rated zero, to excellent, rated five. Further details can be seen in previous publications (Messum et al., 2015; Messum et al., 2016). Each item was rated in turn for importance then skill-level to promote understanding that comparisons were being made. Internal consistency was good with Chronbach's alpha coefficient ranging from 0.89 to 0.93.

Survey sample

For senior managers, a response rate of 95% was obtained (n=38), with equal numbers of males and females. Of the 50 HSM graduates emailed, 42 responded, a response rate of 84%, of whom two thirds were female.

Data collection and analysis

Convenience samples of senior HSM managers defined as Chief Executive Service or Senior Executive Service level employees or their equivalent, who supervised graduates and recent graduates from the last three years were obtained from placement data held for a large metropolitan university, NSW Australia. They were emailed surveys over a three month period in 2013. Independent two tailed t tests were performed to test for differences
in mean scores for importance ratings and observed versus self-reported skills. A mean score below 2.5 suggests skill levels could be improved.

**Results and discussion**

Mean scores for importance ratings from senior managers and recent graduates for the four scales follow. Findings for interpersonal and communication skills (IPC) are depicted in Table 1 and also the mean scores for skill levels observed compared with self-assessed levels. For importance ratings, mean scores were significantly different for two items only: networking and leadership, both of which were more important to graduates than managers. Networking skills have been found instrumental in securing ongoing employment and career advancement (Kuijpers, Schyns & Scheerens, 2006, Gibson & Hardy, 2014, Sowon, 2013). This may also apply to leadership skills, but recent graduates’ understanding of ‘leadership’ was not explored. Many held contract positions and may have felt that showing initiative as an example of leadership skills was important to secure ongoing employment. This should be further investigated.

On all skill ratings for IPC, graduates’ mean scores were significantly higher than managers, except for verbal communication skills, on which they agreed. Skill gaps were apparent for written communication, teamwork, collaboration, negotiation, cultural awareness and leadership. However, this was not the view of recent graduates: none of their mean scores in this scale achieved less than 3.2. WIL needs to focus on raising awareness of these ES and improving accuracy of self-assessment (Mackaway, Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, 2012). The trend for over-rating of skill levels is consistent with previous research (Oliver et al., 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ES</th>
<th>Importance Managers</th>
<th>Importance Graduates</th>
<th>Skill ratings Managers</th>
<th>Skill ratings Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.98*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative skills</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.61*</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation skills</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural awareness</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.90*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.24*</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.64*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates significant difference at p<0.01 between mean scores for managers and recent graduates.

Importance and observed/self-ratings of self-management ES, are shown in Table 2. Time management, organisational skills, working independently and experience in management were significantly more important to recent graduates than managers, which may reflect interest in demonstrating they are useful employees. However, managers were more interested in their self-awareness, flexibility and open mindedness. Strong agreement on the importance of integrity and ethical conduct was found, the item which achieved the highest importance rating of any item in the survey for both groups.

Mean scores for self-management item skill levels were not significantly different for tertiary qualifications, being calm under pressure, also integrity and ethical conduct, suggesting similar views. No skill gaps appeared with mean scores above 2.5, suggesting levels were satisfactory. Skill gaps existed for ability to work independently, self-awareness and career planning. These are generic skills with results similar to previous findings (Hinchliffe & Jolley, 2014). Recent graduates however, did not appear to appreciate their skill gaps, with self-ratings much higher than senior managers’ observations. The skill gap for experience may be explained by recency of employment, and could be used in argument for longer student placements/internships. The other items could be addressed by WIL activities.
Table 2: Self-management- managers and recent graduates rating of importance and skill levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ES</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Skill level</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity &amp; ethical conduct</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible and open minded</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-long learning</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational skills</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.71*</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm under pressure</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.78*</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability work independently</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.73*</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in management</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.76*</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary qualifications</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning skills</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates significant difference at p<0.01 between mean scores for managers and recent graduates.

Table 3 shows no statistically significant differences in mean scores for importance of critical thinking skills. Managers and recent graduates exhibited almost identical rank ordering of priority setting, planning skills and independent thinking the top three, all rated as important to very important. In retrospect these could be seen as self-management skills, which with a large enough sample to permit factor analysis, could be confirmed in future studies.

This table also shows that on all critical thinking items, recent graduates rated their skills significantly higher than managers, except ability to analyse the environment. They only agreed on the level of research skills, which both rated the most highly in this scale. An important finding not revealed in previous research about HSM, is that skill gaps exist for priority setting, independent thinking, planning skills, ability to analyse the environment, conceptual thinking, creativity and innovation and strategic thinking, with mean scores under 2.5. These could be skills developed at university.

Table 3: Critical thinking- managers and recent graduates rating of importance and skill levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ES</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Skill levels</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority setting</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning skills</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent thinking</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to analyse environment</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic thinking</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual skills</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity and innovation</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research skills</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates significant difference at p<0.01 between mean scores for managers and recent graduates.

Table 4 compares the importance of job-specific skills for the two groups. Mean score differences were statistically significant for computing and software skills, project and risk management, quality and performance management, which recent graduates rated more important than managers and for budget/financial management skills which managers rated more important. The high score for performance management for recent graduates is difficult to interpret but recent graduates may have taken this to reflect individual performance appraisal rather than health care system evaluation. Clarifying what commonly used terms actually mean to different stakeholders is required. Both groups of respondents agreed that computer and software skills were the most
important ES in this scale. However, senior managers rated budget/financial management and change management as the next most important ES compared with project and quality management for graduates.

Table 4: Job specific ES - managers and recent graduates rating of importance and skill levels

| ES                                      | Importance | Importance | Skill levels |
|                                         | Managers   | Graduates  | Observed      | Graduates Self-rating |
| Computer & software skills              | 3.33       | 3.59**     | 3.11          | 3.12                  |
| Change management                       | 3.29       | 2.94       | 1.87          | 2.31                  |
| Budget/financial management             | 3.19       | 2.81**     | 1.82          | 2.36*                 |
| Administration skills                   | 3.14       | 3.33       | 2.66          | 3.17*                 |
| Project management                      | 3.11       | 3.55*      | 2.21          | 2.79*                 |
| Legislation, standards, policy          | 3.00       | 3.15       | 2.06          | 2.51*                 |
| Operational management                  | 2.87       | 3.12       | 1.95          | 2.31                  |
| Risk management                         | 2.87       | 3.32*      | 1.94          | 2.61*                 |
| Quality management                      | 2.84       | 3.38*      | 2.00          | 2.71*                 |
| Experience in health field              | 2.84       | 3.00       | 1.97          | 2.44*                 |
| Performance management                  | 2.79       | 3.33       | 1.89          | 2.54                  |
| HRM                                     | 2.71       | 2.85       | 1.68          | 2.31                  |
| Advocacy skills                         | 2.71       | 2.93       | 1.83          | 2.49                  |
| Knowledge of local population           | 2.39       | 2.63       | 1.64          | 2.27                  |
| Accreditation skills                    | 2.37       | 2.59       | 1.84          | 2.02                  |

* Indicates significant difference at p<0.01 and ** at p<0.05 between mean scores for managers and recent graduates.

This table also shows that for nearly all items, recent graduates’ self-ratings for job-specific skills were significantly higher than the rating given by managers. However, all these items were rated less than 2.5 by managers, except administration and computer/software skills, suggesting many skill gaps, including budget and financial management and project management. Accomplishment of younger graduates in technology has previously been recognised (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2015). Large scale Australian studies (Precision Consulting, 2007; GCA, 2014) have suggested employers are well satisfied with discipline or job-specific skills, but this does not appear to be the case in HSM. Findings highlight skills that could be addressed by both universities and WIL to improve graduate work-readiness.

Conclusion

While this study is limited by the convenience sample, the results show strong agreement of recent graduates and senior managers working in HSM about important generic skills needed on the job. This is useful feedback for academics and students to identify HSM context-dependent skills and experience for emphasis while on placement. However, recent graduates did not appear to recognise many of the skill gaps identified by managers. Although the situational nature of WIL is acknowledged and experiences on placement will vary, this problem might be addressed by raising awareness of required ES including discipline-specific skills prior to placement, practising reflection skills and embedding trigger questions about skills in placement journal entries to link theoretical learning and practical experiences. This scaffolding with reflection prior, during and after placements is consistent with recommendations of Harvey et al., 2016, to promote stronger connections between theory and practice. Student placement experiences could also be improved if placement supervisors assessed students’ ES and identified areas for further development together. Furthermore, use of authentic assessments undertaken while involved in WIL, could improve work-readiness of graduates. This requires ongoing and close collaboration of university academics and employers. The role of WIL will be increasingly important to supplement development of generic ES in online learning environments - a challenge for the future.

References


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Enhancing graduate employability and the need for university-enterprise collaboration

Thi Tuyet Tran
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Over the last few decades there was a strong debate over the central mission of higher education; and the resistance to the employability agenda seemed to be strong. However, with the changing context of both higher education and the labour market, together with the neoliberal pressure, enhancing graduate employability has become one of the central focuses in many universities worldwide.

This article will review the relevant literature to somehow resonate the reason why graduate employability has been popularly presented in many university practices. It will also look closely at the notion of graduate employability and argue that without the input from and collaboration of industry, universities themselves are hardly able to strengthen their vocational mission of equipping their students for the labour market.

Keywords: Graduate employability, higher education, labour market, university-enterprise collaboration

Introduction

Higher education (HE) has been increasingly tied to the needs of the economy and the society, and enhancing graduate employability has become one of the central focuses in many universities worldwide. Collaboration between universities and enterprises in different ways has been reported as valuable to ‘bring the labour market’ into the classroom.

This article will review the relevant literature to somehow resonate the reason why graduate employability - an ‘add-on’ mission for some academics and the ‘subset’ of mission for the others (Harvey, 2000, p. 4; Speight, Lackovic, & Cooker, 2012), has been popularly presented in many university practices. It will also look closely at the notion of graduate employability and argue that without the input from and collaboration with industry, universities themselves are hardly able to strengthen their vocational mission of equipping their students for the labour market.

The changing context of HE and the need to enhance graduate employability

It has been argued that HE has always met its social and economic obligation and this is tacitly made through the academics’ professional understanding of social and economic needs (Boden & Nedeva, 2010). However, there has been an increasingly neoliberal pressure on HE to make explicit the task of preparing students with skills and knowledge required by the contemporary labour market. Several developments have led to this situation.

First, mass HE creates many internal changes within HESs. On the one hand, gaining access to HE is no more privileged or difficult; on the other hand, as the government funding for HE decreases, students increasingly have to pay for their study and evidence suggests that employability is increasingly important in student choice of institutions (Artess, Forbes, & Ripmeester, 2011). Global mass HE has created a crowded labour market (Tomlinson, 2012). This challenges the traditional mission of HE as to ‘prepare the elite to govern the nation’, to ‘provide an institutional basis for research into all forms of knowledge’ (Jarvis, 2002, p. 43), and to facilitate access to desired forms of employment (Scott, 2005). HE credentials are no more a sufficient condition for obtaining employment, let alone a desired form of employment. HEIs are beginning to recognise that there are concerns around accommodating employability for their graduates, and have gradually taken up the challenge (Rosenberg, Heinle, & Morote, 2012).

This is coupled with the changes in the labour market in recent decades. The spread of globalisation and of neoliberal policies has urged restructuring the economy around competition and efficiency, resulting in downsizing, delayering and restructuring of organisations. The new world of work requires skills such as negotiating, networking, problem solving, and skills to manage processes rather than functional skills (Evans,
2008); it is also increasingly expecting multi-skilled and multi-tasking employees (Foss & Laursen, 2005). This was not the traditional focus of HE. Thus, HE is urged to be responsive towards the new needs of the economy, to provide ample opportunities for their students to develop skills, knowledge and nurture their capability for life-long learning (Harvey, 2000).

Universities are under pressure to take on-board employability, not only as a ‘pragmatic response’ (Clarke, 2008) to the competition among universities and to the requirements of society. In most cases, they also need to satisfy the requirements and the expectations of neoliberal governments. Policy-makers tend to tie them to the needs of the economy and the society (European Commission, 2003, 2005, 2011). In the UK, for example, the government has increasingly exerted pressures on the HE system to enhance outputs, enhance quality and the overall market responsiveness (Department for Education, 2010). There is an explicit expectation from the government that HEIs are able to provide graduates who can readily adapt to their working environment and are adaptable within it (Cable, 2010).

Similarly, in the USA, an employability skills agenda has been developed with the direct involvement from the government and the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers), the one in charge of publishing detailed professional standards for college and university career services. In Europe, the Bologna Process\(^2\), which prioritises employability among other HE objectives, has created pressure as well as opportunities for HE to shift its identity towards an economic rationale (Tomusk, 2004). Up until recently, 47 countries with more than 4000 HE institutions have adapted their HE systems, following the Bologna process.

Not only are universities in the developed world under pressure to take on-board employability, universities in much less developed countries in South East Asia are also struggling to adapt themselves to the new requirements and expectations from their governments. Recently, 30 universities from 10 countries (i.e. Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, The Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand) have become members of ASEAN University network (ANU) and followed the ANU quality assurance framework (QA) (ASEAN university network, 2015\(^3\)). The framework requires universities to work closely with employers, from developing curriculum and revising the syllabus, to employment process of students. The focus on outcome (such as the ratio of graduates gaining employment after graduation) also drives universities to take into account the demand of employers in their academic practices.

Clearly, both internal and external contexts have placed graduate employability high in policy agenda in most HESs worldwide. The argument over the one(s) who should take responsibility to develop graduate employability (Tran Thi Tuyet, 2015) does not seem to be crucial as the focus of the discussion is now on how to best enhance graduate employability.

What is graduate employability?

Although employability has become in vogue in the HE context, there is no common definition of it in the literature. Different definitions have been in use. Some focus more on individual student ability to get and retain a job after graduation, for example:

Employability is
- the capacity to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain employment if required (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 2)
- ability of graduates to find and retain a graduate-level job and also the ability to move between jobs if required (Yorke, 2010).

Nonetheless, the majority of the other most popular definitions do not mention the stakeholders who need to be in charge of developing graduate employability, rather, employability is defined as a type of skills, knowledge, attributes, understandings… for example:

Employability is:
- *a set of achievement - skills, understandings and personal attributes* – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (The Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team - ESECT (Yorke, 2006, p. 8)

\(^2\) The Bologna Process is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of HE qualifications.

\(^3\) http://www.aunsec.org/aunmemberuniversities.php
- *a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes* that makes an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupations to the benefits of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Moreland, 2006).

- *skills* required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one’s potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002).

- *the skills* almost everyone needs to do almost every job. They are the skills that must be present to enable an individual to use more specific knowledge and technical skills that their particular workplaces will require (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2009).

Artess, Forbes and Ripmeester (2011) suggest that while the term ‘employability’ may not always be used, there is an underlying consensus as to what employability comprises - a range of specific, employment-related skills or attributes (hard and soft skills) relevant to acquiring and succeeding in employment.

Although different in wordings, these definitions all refer to employability as *a set of skills and/or attributes that are necessary for any graduate to move into the employment market, to find and retain jobs and to develop his/her career.*

The question is what are those skills/attributes, apart from the knowledge (hard skills) that were traditionally provided by the universities? Again, one can find different concepts of skills used in the literature which are all claimed to be necessary for graduates in order for them to develop for the employment market, including: generic skills, soft skills, transferable skills, cross-disciplinary skills, graduate attributes, core skills, key skills, basic skills, cross-curricular skills, common skills, essential skills, enterprise skills and employability skills (Caballero, Walker, & Fuller-Tyszkiewich, 2011; Cabellero & Walker, 2010; Hager & Holland, 2006; Lowden, Hall, Elliot, & Lewin, 2011; Rust & Froud, 2011). The word ‘skills’ appears in almost all articles discussing the quality outcome of the HES. Professional knowledge is sometimes also considered a type of skill, called technical skills (AC Nielsen Research Services, 2000; World Bank, 2011). Nonetheless, the professional knowledge or students’ technical skills are differentiated from generic skills. While technical skills are often referred to as discipline-based skills and capacity, generic skills (and its equivalent terms), are described by Andrew and Higson (2008), to cover such areas as coping with uncertainty, working under pressure, planning and strategic thinking, reliability, communications and interpersonal interactions, teamwork and networking, writing and speaking, information technology skills, creativity and self-confidence, self-management and time-management, willingness to learn and acceptance of responsibility. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and the Industry & Business Council of Australia (2002) identify generic/employability skills more ‘simply’ to include communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organisation, self-management, learning and technology.

These skills are increasingly viewed as important, not only for graduates and not only in an employment context. They are viewed as increasingly important in the changing context of contemporary life. Nonetheless, these skills are crucially essential in the employment context and are considered important to make graduates ‘prepared’ or ‘ready’ for success in today’s rapidly-changing work environment’ (Cabellero & Walker, 2010, p. 16).

**The need for university-enterprise collaboration**

Paradoxically, not all of these skills can be developed solely in the HE context. Initiative and enterprise skills, planning and strategic thinking and working under pressure, are some examples. Moreover, different stakeholders (i. e. employers, academics and students) may view these skills differently, and different research has reported about the skills perception mismatches among these stakeholders (Handel, 2003; Sala, 2011; Tran Thi Tuyet, 2012). Nonetheless, when these skills are viewed necessary for graduates to get and retain jobs, the employers’ voice becomes the most powerful. Interestingly, while universities are where to develop students’ graduate employability, the results of that development can only be seen in enterprises. Moreover the skills helping graduates to retain jobs and to develop in their career will mainly be developed in the working context. Evidence suggests that employers value innovation, adaptability, resilience, flexibility, enterprise skills, an enterprising mind-set and business awareness, which are mainly the outcome of enterprise learning (Owens & Tibby, 2014; Weligamage, 2009). Clearly, if HE wants/has to take on-board employability, input and collaboration from industry is essential.
There is another reason urging universities and enterprises to collaborate to enhance graduate employability; that is the need from the industry for prospective employees to be work-ready in specific disciplines. Enterprises are now under pressure to increase productivity in a competitive global market. Moreover, with an exuberant pool of skilled workers (as a result of mass HE), employers become more selective in their choice and their requirements of working experience often appear unreasonable for recent graduates (Tran Thi Tuyet, 2014). Getting familiar with the working culture, gaining practical knowledge in the workplace, knowing how to apply what has been learnt to practise are some of the HE practices helping students satisfy this requirement of the employers, however, these practices all require the input from and cooperation with enterprises. It is not surprising when the literature on graduate employability has overwhelmingly focused on different forms of cooperation between universities and enterprises (UEC) and highlighted that employers, students, graduates and HEIs value work-based learning and work integrated learning, as particularly effective approaches to promote the employability of graduates (Etzkowitz, 2004; Lowden et al., 2011, p. VI; World Bank, 2012).

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Challenges implementing WIL in human resource management

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The examination of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs in the undergraduate Human Resource Management (HRM) curriculum is an area underrepresented in the Australian literature. This paper identifies the challenges faced in implementing WIL into the HRM undergraduate curriculum. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders. The results show that a lack of resources, a clash of agendas, legal and ethical issues, expectations, the HRM profession and academic perspectives of WIL are impacting on how WIL programs in HRM are being developed. Recommendations are made for the future development of WIL in HRM.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, human resource management, challenges

Introduction

WIL program literature exists for the disciplines of sport, engineering, nursing, midwifery, law, medicine and education (McLennan & Keating, 2008; Trigwell & Reid, 1998). An increased interest and demand from government and industry for work-ready graduates has meant that the development of WIL programs has broadened to other discipline areas. A literature review of WIL programs in the Australian literature reveals that there has been some research into the range of WIL programs in the business discipline, however a lack of research into the range of WIL programs in undergraduate HRM degrees (Rook, 2015). This paper presents the challenges impacting WIL development in the undergraduate HRM curriculum across nine Australian universities. Future papers will address other aspects of the findings of this research.

Background

A range of WIL programs

The literature on WIL is replete with detailed descriptions of the range of WIL programs being developed within universities across the Australian higher education sector. McLennan and Keating (2008) have reviewed how WIL is being framed in a small sample of Australian universities. The examples describe WIL as a “range of experiential learning activities” (Swinbourne), “training and practical experience in a location physically different from the university” (Murdoch), and “meaningful application of theoretical learning to the workplace” (Griffith) (McLennan & Keating, 2008:6). The recent national WIL strategy for WIL supports the inclusive definition of WIL provided by Patrick et al., (2008:iv) as an “umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum” (Universities Australia & Australian Collaborative Education Network, 2015).

Challenges for the implementation of WIL programs

A reoccurring challenge identified in the literature is that of a lack of available resources (Lawson, Fallshaw, Papadopoulos, Taylor, & Zanko, 2011; McLennan & Keating, 2008; Patrick et al., 2008). Another issue noted was the way in which WIL was viewed by the institution. According to Lawson et al., (2011) WIL was often viewed as low priority and lacking academic rigour. This is further supported by research that suggests the undervaluing of WIL when compared to other academic roles, such as research and classroom-based teaching, has led to decreased resources available (Emslie, 2011). It has also been stated that there are challenges with managing expectations and competing demands of stakeholders (Patrick et al., 2008), in understanding the role of each stakeholder in the process of WIL (Rowe, Mackaway, & Winchester-Seeto, 2012) and in fostering partnerships between the university and host organisation, including fitting in with industry needs (Berman, 2008; Choy & Delahaye, 2011; Lawson et al., 2011; McLennan & Keating, 2008).

Keywords: Work integrated learning, human resource management, challenges
Research methods

The aim of this study was to explore why there is a range of WIL programs in undergraduate HRM and the impact of a range of programs on the teaching and employability of undergraduate HRM students. This research followed a qualitative approach where semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from four relevant stakeholder groups (academics, careers advisors, professionals and students). Stakeholders were selected for their role in the development or participation in WIL programs in HRM. A total of 38 participants were interviewed, 12 academics, 8 careers advisors, 10 professionals and 8 students.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. First, the transcripts were entered into Nvivo and thematically categorised. The second phase of analysis involved categorising the transcripts into themes under the principles of complexity framework provided by Mitleton- Kelly (2003). This paper presents the thematic results communicated by the participants about the challenges of implementing WIL in HRM. Future papers will present the complexity analysis of the findings.

Results

Challenges implementing WIL in HRM

A lack of resources
All stakeholder groups stated that a lack of resources, including a lack of host organisations for student curriculum-based placements, was having an effect on WIL program development in the HRM undergraduate curriculum. A lack of resources was found to be increasing academics’ workload as they struggle to find time and money to teach and organise students in WIL programs. This finding provides support in the literature (Lawson et al., 2011; McLennan & Keating, 2008; Patrick et al., 2008) focussing on challenges in WIL.

Professional stakeholders stated that the biggest challenge they faced with WIL is the time that is required to manage a student. One professional participant states:

Yes the challenges are that it is time consuming and it takes about 3 months to get them where they need to be and then they leave after 3 months, so that is a bit of a problem with the current model we have with the university.

Legal and ethical concerns
Academics and careers advisors expressed concerns over the legal and ethical issues that are associated with implementing WIL placements. Academics are also concerned over the potential inequities with a selection process for student placements. An academic participant stated:

We were very conscious of equity and how do we equitably select people... a lot of our students work but also if it’s done on credits and credit average, like GPA, is that the best way to do it?

Clash of agendas
The professional and student stakeholder groups identified that personal benefits were determining factors for participating in WIL subjects. On the other hand academic and careers participants identified external forces to the university driving WIL development. This presents a clash of agendas. For example, an academic participant stated:

If we want to get to the crux of the issue lifting the cap on uni [sic] places is why everybody’s rushing towards Work Integrated Learning. It’s a strategy. Global financial crisis, young people and their parents are shaking in their boots...

In comparison, a professional stakeholder participant stated that:

We realised there was an awful lot of value in having them [students] there. They really achieved a lot more than we thought they might...I’d say certainly the skill shortage might have been the first prompter.

In general, careers advisor participants state that when organising a work placement finding the correct match between a student and employer is just as challenging. A careers advisor stated:
Probably the most difficult thing is making the correct match or link between the student and the employer…

Expectations
The ability to manage expectations was the second most significant challenge faced by professional stakeholder participants. For example, one professional participant stated that:

… You have to make sure that managers don’t expect too much because the student is still at university and still learning… I guess managing interns’ expectations would be the other side of that so you know making sure the student knows that we expect them to look and behave a certain way and we expect you to know when you are operating outside your level of competence or authority and where to draw the line.

HRM profession
Half of all participants indicated that there is a lack of, or less prevalent presence of, HRM placements being offered in both the context of the curriculum and external to the curriculum. One academic participant stated that:

… we’ve just found that when we’ve thought about it or tried to do it for our [HRM discipline] numbers, our size, our cohorts, the resources available to us that we’ve had to design and also what we’ve wanted to achieve academically. We are a new profession. We are a new area…

This perception of the HRM profession held by the stakeholder groups has influenced the development of WIL program models that are alternatives to the curriculum-based placement model.

WIL threatens role of Higher Education
Academic participants stated that they question the role of WIL in higher education. More specifically, they question the practical component of WIL (curriculum-based placements). For example, one academic expresses concerns over the identity of the university institution below:

I think universities have lost the reason that we were here for, we are here to be at the cutting edge of technology change or of innovations, well actually we are catching up if we are using the community to serve us, and I think that that’s the role of TAFE…

Discussion
A lack of resources, a clash of agendas, and the management of expectations were identified by the participants of this study as challenging the implementation of WIL in HRM. Additionally, it was stated that WIL in the undergraduate curriculum is limited by industry-specific characteristics. The large cohorts enrolled in HRM, along with the varying needs for HRM in practice, and not having a cultural history of providing placements, have all impacted on the type of WIL programs being developed in HRM. Systems to support WIL development in this area are also not yet available. These limiting factors, combined with academic negative discourse of WIL in higher education, have meant a range of WIL programs with a range of different outcomes are being offered, presenting many challenges when implementing WIL in HRM.

A significant finding to highlight is that academic participants’ statements about WIL were negatively framed around what WIL does not provide, including questioning the role of WIL in higher education. Academics are the individuals that have direct contact with all stakeholders involved in the WIL process; therefore their perspective becomes imperative to the sustainability of WIL. This negative discourse of academics is concerning, and will likely have a strong impact on how WIL may be viewed in the future.

Literature supports the need for change in how WIL is viewed (Emslie, 2011; Lawson et al., 2011; McLennan & Keating, 2008). WIL, and its link to employability skill-development, offers universities a way of providing a product that students now expect as a payoff for their investment in education (Abeysekera, 2006). One way of lessening the negative impact, is for academics to view WIL more positively so as to ensure WIL continues into the future. This could be achieved by academics searching the external environment for opportunities, and being open to utilising the already-available resources for WIL development, particularly in the HRM profession where WIL placements in practice have been limited. It is about moving around the available resources rather than pushing for more. Academics should be using available resources to integrate theory with the practice of
work within the curriculum to enable students to make connections between education and the workplace throughout their whole degree rather than viewing subjects as siloed learning experiences.

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Fitting together the pieces: Using the jigsaw classroom to facilitate paramedic WIL

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Clinical health disciplines require students to undertake work integrated learning placements to develop skills and knowledge that cannot be adequately experienced in a classroom or simulated environment. With an increasing number of disciplines moving from vocational to higher education over the years the clinical placement arena has become more crowded requiring innovation to provide students with cohesive, worthwhile learning experiences. Western Sydney University paramedicine program adapted the jigsaw pedagogy to overcome this issue. Students each undertake an equivalent, yet different clinical placement in one of three health settings and then return to teach their peers and vicariously learn of their experiences. In developing this, the program has provided students with diverse and valuable placements, modelled the inherent nature of interprofessionalism through the collaborative learning and overcome the placement shortage affecting so many disciplines.

Keywords: Clinical health, jigsaw pedagogy, vicarious clinical experience, collaborative clinical learning

Introduction

Work integrated learning (WIL) is an essential component of higher education programs, providing opportunity for students to connect theory with practice in a contextualised work-place environment (Knight & Yorke, 2004). Undergraduate paramedicine programs, as with most clinical health science disciplines, aim to incorporate substantial periods of WIL into their curricula so as to expose students to the unique and demanding environment in which paramedics operate.

Background

Within the clinical health disciplines, there appears to be diminishing capacity within private and public health services for student clinical placements (Health Workforce Australia, 2014). Australia’s health workforce is ageing, providing fewer staff willing to mentor new graduates and the large graduate numbers place an undue strain on those remaining staff. This combines with increasing cohort sizes and number of universities offering undergraduate programs, and rapid expansion of disciplines such as paramedicine, to result in voracious consumption of what little placement capacity remains in the strained health system training infrastructure. While the more established clinical health programs face constant challenges in providing students with the requisite number of clinical placement hours, newer disciplines face even more substantial hurdles in the establishment of their curricula. Securing clinical placements in a health system where few vacancies exist is a major barrier to the success of new higher education programs based around emerging health professions. These challenges and barriers call for innovative solutions that challenge existing hegemony and have implications for educational pedagogy that are bigger than any single clinical health discipline.

Paramedicine as a higher education discipline

Paramedicine represents a unique example of an emerging clinical discipline in the higher education sector that faces substantial challenges in establishing a sustainable clinical placement capacity capable of providing quality WIL (Hou, Rego, & Service, 2013). Paramedicine is not new to the higher education sector, university-based paramedicine programs emerged just over twenty years ago in Australia, but they remained uncommon until a proliferation in the early years of the 2000s and as such their presence was not widely known by many other health professionals (Lord, 2003). Initially, these programs were considered elective from an industry perspective, and the average enrollee was a vocationally qualified paramedic looking to increase their education independent of the requirements of their, predominantly state-based ambulance service, employer. Because the early students were already employed full time by ambulance services, higher education providers did not face
the challenges of establishing sustainable WIL capacity; hence paramedicine remained relatively invisible on the clinical education training landscape. The more recent move by Australasian ambulance services to graduate employment models led to a rapid expansion in the number of universities offering undergraduate paramedicine, and with it, a substantial need for WIL opportunities in an already crowded clinical education arena (Council of Ambulance Authorities, 2010). Concurrent to this has been a major change in paramedicine models of care, with most services evolving from solely being providers of emergency, life-saving care, to providers of ‘mobile healthcare’ with an increasing focus on lower-acuity, non-life threatening case mix (Chilton, 2004). To match the changing nature of contemporary paramedic practice, higher education programs have begun to constructively align WIL with these newer models of care – this has come through the emergence of ‘non-traditional’, or ‘non-ambulance’ WIL (O’Brien, Moore, Dawson, & Hartley, 2014). While once the clinical placement capacity for paramedicine existed entirely within state-based ambulance services, contemporary courses espouse new pedagogy that promotes paramedicine WIL occurring in areas of health previously dominated by the more mature health disciplines. The ‘generalist’ nature of the contemporary paramedic demands WIL exposure across the diverse areas of healthcare, commensurate to the multi-faceted role they fulfil and the diverse case mix they are confronted with (Thyer & Simpson, 2014). Emerging evidence suggests that these non-traditional interprofessional placements may have meaningful impact on student attitudes and perceptions towards particular populations of patients (Stratton et al., 2015) and facilitate greater autonomy and more patient-centred care (Ruston & Tavabie, 2011).

Using jigsaw classroom pedagogy to facilitate placements

It is in this context, that Western Sydney University Paramedicine (WSUP) has sought innovative solutions to overcome challenges it has been faced with relating to WIL. As one of the newest paramedicine programs in the higher education sector, WSUP has adapted Aronson’s classic jigsaw classroom (Aronson, 1978) to create a WIL strategy aimed at establishing a sustainable non-ambulance interprofessional placement program. Aronson’s ‘jigsaw classroom’ is an educational strategy whereby a group of students learn cooperatively about a desired outcome, with each student, or group of students, holding a piece of the ‘jigsaw’ that is the final learning product (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997). Each group undertakes work and creates a piece of the learning jigsaw, respectively putting that work forward to the rest of the class who learn about that specific piece without having studied it directly. Not every student experiences every piece of the learning experience themselves, but by learning from their peers, they piece it all together and each student achieves the overall learning goal.

The origins of the jigsaw classroom lie in the 1970s in the United States – the technique was designed to defuse racial and cultural divides within the class room, by ‘de-segregating’ a class and creating smaller cooperative learning groups in which collaborative relationships could be fostered. Its evolution since has seen it used in a broader educational context without specific goals of managing cultural or racial divides; rather, it serves to engage all students in the learning process and give all students an active voice, both as student and teacher. With increasing numbers of graduate paramedics being forced into mentoring roles very early in their career, this experience provides the dual advantages of interprofessional knowledge and mentoring practice. It further serves to illustrate the importance of peer collaboration and engagement, which mimics principles that underpin interprofessional collaboration in a clinical healthcare context. This is another reason why this pedagogy fits the WSUP interprofessional placement program so neatly, as establishing a true understanding of the collaborative and collegiate nature of effective interprofessional healthcare is a core aim of the placement initiative.

At WSUP, the program aimed to provide all students with interprofessional WIL in non-traditional areas of healthcare that had relevance to contemporary paramedic practice. The three selected areas were primary and community healthcare, community-based mental healthcare, and community-based disability services. Each of these areas presented potentially valuable WIL opportunities that would not be available through traditional ambulance service clinical placement experiences.

During the development phase of the placement program, it quickly became evident that the desired goal of providing each student with placement time in each of the three targeted areas was infeasible. These areas were already accommodating substantial WIL capacity from existing clinical disciplines such as medicine, podiatry, occupation therapy and nursing, leaving minimal availability for paramedicine students. Seldom were potential partners unwilling to accommodate, but commonly capacity was simply unavailable.

Rather than abandon the interprofessional placement strategy that the program so legitimately needed, a teaching and learning pedagogy was sought that had the potential to allow implementation of an effective clinical placement experience for students within the modest WIL capacity that was available.
The jigsaw model of student paramedic interprofessional placements

The interprofessional jigsaw placement model at WSUP involves each student undertaking WIL in one of the aforementioned three areas (primary healthcare, community mental healthcare, or community disability services). Each placement type affords students the opportunity to interact with and learn from experienced health professional about the specific service, and to experience high frequency interactions with specific patient populations of interest. For example, community disability service placements provide paramedic students with a concentrated exposure to people with intellectual or physical disabilities, often in an environment full of challenging and frequently unpredictable behaviours. Primary healthcare provides students with a greater understanding of primary healthcare capacity and infrastructure, an insight of increasing value given the evolution of integrated care across health services and the non-transport, referral-based models of care being implemented by ambulance services to better manage lower acuity patient presentations (NSW Health, 2014).

Each student, upon completing their interprofessional placement, therefore holds a piece of the interprofessional WIL jigsaw. While each placement setting provides opportunities to achieve similar broad placement learning outcomes, the road travelled to reach those outcomes varies substantially. Students maintain a reflective diary during their placement, chronicling their experiences and activities. Following completion of the placement period, students reconvene at the university where they each provide an oral presentation detailing their placement to their fellow students. This is the critical component of the jigsaw methodology; the opportunity for students to come together and engage in peer-to-peer learning, effectively working together to complete the interprofessional placement jigsaw. Under this format, students who for example undertook a primary healthcare placement, have the opportunity to learn vicariously about community mental health and disability services through the lens of their fellow students who experienced those placements directly; they simultaneously have the opportunity to unpack their own specific clinical placement experience through delivering their own presentation to their peers.

Is the initiative effective?

A review of the literature has identified no research describing adaption of Aronson’s jigsaw classroom to facilitate clinical placement experiences in the higher education sector, in clinical health disciplines or otherwise.

A 360° evaluation of the jigsaw placement model is ongoing, so the effectiveness of the initiative in unknown at present. Qualitative methodology is being used to investigate the quality of the learning experience amongst the initial cohort of paramedicine students at Western Sydney. Data is being collected via focus group and interviews from students, placement facilitators, and academic stakeholders.

A clear outcome already identifiable is the creation of WIL capacity where little capacity exists. Without the implementation of this model of placement, the interprofessional WIL aspirations of the WSUP would have been consigned to being infeasible. The model has allowed the program to optimise placement capacity in an increasingly crowded health service landscape, providing student paramedics with a constructively-aligned WIL experience that illustrates the innovative and adaptive approaches to teaching and learning occurring within WSUP. Furthermore it has enabled interprofessional learning at a provider level, many of whom were previously unaware of the broad scope of paramedic practice, applicability to other health providers or the extent of paramedic educational training.

Conclusion

The proposed model described herein facilitates the innovative adaption of established education pedagogy to create WIL capacity within a new undergraduate paramedicine program. The proposed model has applicability beyond the discipline of paramedicine, and could be implemented in many other clinical health programs, most of which are experiencing pressure in sourcing sustainable WIL placements. In addition to optimising placement availability, it exposes students to a collaborative and cooperative learning environment that mirrors the ethos that underpins effective interprofessional healthcare.
References


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Employability: Not just a buzzword

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In an era of rapid expansion of higher education, qualifications no longer guarantee employment. It is important to understand what employers look for when recruiting graduates. This study aimed to examine workplace supervisor satisfaction with their student intern’s work performances during an internship program undertaken with a Business School in a large regional Australian university. The research was undertaken across three consecutive semesters between July 2013 and November 2014. Student interns were final year business students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, who had achieved a grade point average of minimum 5.5 on a 7-point scale. Qualitative data from a workplace supervisor post-internship survey were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings signalled the importance of the workplace supervisor to student employability and what skills, abilities and attributes are necessary for graduates to succeed. New knowledge gained may increase graduate employment rates and career success.

Keywords: Employability, work integrated learning, project-based internships, workplace supervisors

Introduction

University graduates are finding that higher education qualifications do not guarantee employment and these qualifications are not the main focus of employers (Clarke, 2008). In an era of rapid expansion of higher education that brings with it: 1) higher numbers of university graduates seeking to enter the workforce than ever before (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2013); 2) graduate underemployment (a disparity between education and employment of individuals whose careers commence in work that does not require a degree) (Okay-Somerville & Scholatios, 2014); and 3) stakeholder concerns over acceptable employability outcomes and acceptable professional outcomes for university graduates (Coates, 2015; Green, Hammer, & Star, 2009; C. Smith, Ferns, Russell, & Cretchely, 2014), employability has become a key focus for universities worldwide (Council of Ontario Universities, 2014; European Commission, 2014; Griffith University, 2013).

Verhaar and Smulders (1999, p. 268) referred to employability as “the latest buzzword”, because consultants were using that “new speak” whenever possible to make a lot of money. Within the theme of modern innovative work arrangements and new psychological contracts, Baruch (2001, p. 543) referred to employability as “a new buzzword”. However, that was nearly two decades ago. This paper will therefore argue that employability is not just a buzzword. Significant emphasis needs to be placed on identifying skills, attributes and other factors that make graduate employability achievable in an ever-changing labour market.

Background

Gazier (2001) completed a historical study of employability as a concept and identified seven different versions across the twentieth century. The first version identified was termed “dichotomic employability” (Gazier, 2001, p. 6). It rose to prominence in the early 1900s and in essence differentiated people who could and would work from those who could not; the latter category being the aged, disabled or those engaged in child rearing responsibilities (Gazier, 2001). Versions two to five that follow were: “socio-medical employability”; “manpower policy employability”; “flow employability”; and “labour market performance employability” (Gazier, 2001, pp. 7-9). The sixth version termed ‘initiative employability’ focuses on the individual and their ability to market their collective skills. The seventh version, termed ‘interactive employability’ connects an individual’s personal characteristics and traits with circumstances and trends in the current labour market (Gazier, 2001, p. 9). These latter versions operate today and signify how gaining employment in the labour market has changed in the past 100 years.

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Determinants of employability

Studies undertaken to understand what employers are looking for found that today, employers seek a wide assortment of attributes and other accomplishments from potential employees, especially when recruiting higher education graduates (Archer & Davidson, 2008; Arnott & Carroll, 2013; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Kaiser, 2013; Lindsay, 2014). Common themes reported include interpersonal skills, teamwork skills, communication skills, fitting in, willingness to work hard and know-how. Hogan et al. (2013, p. 12) call this the “Employer’s Attribution”. Figure 1 presents Hogan et al.’s (2013) qualities, skills and attributes that determine a potential employee’s employability and career success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate's Profile</th>
<th>Employer’s Perception</th>
<th>Employer’s Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social/Interpersonal compatibility</td>
<td>Rewarding to deal with</td>
<td>EMPLOYABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abilities, expertise, know-how</td>
<td>Able to do the job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition, work ethic, drive</td>
<td>Willing to work hard</td>
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Figure 1: Determinants of Employability (Hogan et al., 2013, p. 12)

To assist students to become work-ready and therefore enhance their employability and career success, universities have invested significantly in resources that provide educational services and experiences that contribute to a student’s career development learning (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2013; Freudenberg, Cameron, & Brimble, 2010; Jackson, 2015). Referred to as work integrated learning, these include simulated or real life work experiences (C. Smith et al., 2014; M. Smith et al., 2009). More recently, project-based business internships for final year business students have gained prominence largely because the intention of an internship is to offer similar breadth, depth and scope to that of real workplace experiences (Johari & Bradshaw, 2008). Staff in a real workplace take on the role of the student workplace supervisor (Martin, Rees, & Edwards, 2011). The workplace supervisor, who may also act as a potential graduate recruiter, is well-placed at the completion of an internship, to determine the employability of business students who will soon seek employment.

Overview of Methods Approach and Strategy

Overview

This paper reports one outcome of a pilot study about the influence of project-based internships on the employability of final year business students. That outcome relates to the role of the workplace supervisor regarding these students’ employability. That study examined student intern workplace supervisor perceptions concerning: 1) student strengths; 2) how students could improve their performances; and 3) satisfaction with their student intern’s performance. The research was conducted in a large regional university in Australia. The research included student interns, both undergraduate and postgraduate, and workplace supervisors employed by industry partners participating in the university business internship program. Once the career-aligned internship projects were arranged by the university and appropriate students assigned to them, student interns were responsible for their projects and had to achieve verifiable outcomes, either as part of a workplace team or providing input to their workplace team. Each reported to a workplace supervisor. The survey was developed based on the Exit Interview Form, which is an assessment tool provided by the Internship Program course convenor to workplace supervisors to contribute to the evaluation of a student’s performance as an intern.

Data Analysis

Data were collected across three consecutive semesters from July 2013 to November 2014. Text was analysed using manual coding, initially at the micro-analysis level. Only the qualitative data from the workplace supervisor post-internship survey about satisfaction with student intern performance are reported. Upon examination, those responses were mapped to Hogan et al.’s (2013) Determinants of Employability model as the authors deemed this model the most suitable for reporting purposes.
Sample

Student participants comprised both purposeful and convenience samples (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). All students had completed, at a minimum, two thirds of their business degree and attained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 5.5 on a 7-point scale. Of the 77 students who completed the internship program, 57 of their workplace supervisors responded to the survey achieving a response rate of 74 per cent. More than two thirds of the students were female and more than half were domestic. Most students were aged 20-24 with the majority having 13 months or more, typically part-time, non-career-aligned prior work experience. The workplace supervisors were both male and female, working in middle to senior management roles and employed by local, state and federal government, and private and not-for-profit organisations.

Findings

The dominant theme that emerged was that workplace supervisors reported students as ‘highly impressive’ relative to their individual skillsets, abilities and attributes. Perhaps surprisingly, all responses were positive. Selected responses are in Table 1.

Table 1: Workplace supervisor satisfaction responses to student intern performance, mapped to Figure 1. Determinants of Employability model (Hogan et al., 2013, p. 12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Intern</th>
<th>Workplace Supervisor Satisfaction Response</th>
<th>Candidate (Student Intern) Profile</th>
<th>Employer Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student commenced the placement and was immediately helpful in undertaking tasks with little direction. He was able to work independently and then come back for feedback. The student suits a team environment and was very competent in the task he was given.</td>
<td>Social/Interpersonal compatibility, Know-how, Expertise, Social/Interpersonal compatibility, Abilities</td>
<td>Rewarding to deal with, Able to do the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Each and every day the student was working with the organisation she produced first class work. She took on tasks and added her own skills bases and was able to show initiative. The student was a pleasure to work with and a very dedicated young lady.</td>
<td>Abilities, know-how, Expertise, Drive, Social/Interpersonal compatibility, work ethic</td>
<td>Able to do the job, Willing to work hard, Rewarding to deal with, Willing to work hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The student had a combination of skill and enthusiasm for her internship, achieving everything she needed to during her time with the organisation. Coupled with her outgoing nature, the student fit in, was not nervous – this helped enormously.</td>
<td>Abilities, Drive, Ambition, work ethic, Social/Interpersonal compatibility</td>
<td>Able to do the job, Willing to work hard, Rewarding to deal with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>The student worked extremely well with all the staff and quickly became one of the team. Having to also work in an interim environment without complaining and doing his work efficiently.</td>
<td>Social/Interpersonal compatibility, Abilities, expertise, know-how</td>
<td>Rewarding to deal with, Willing to work hard, Able to do the job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The student demonstrated a **keen interest** in the topic, **worked conscientiously** toward achieving the **set project**... the student had **knowledge of some legislation** and showed a **kenness to learn** both the frameworks and their application in a work setting. What the student may have lacked in experience was more than made up in her **drive and willingness to work and learn**... She certainly has the aptitude and attitude, which is important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambition</th>
<th>Work ethic</th>
<th>Willing to work hard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know-how</td>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Ambition, work ethic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abilities, Social/Interpersonal compatibility</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work ethic</th>
<th>Ambition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abilities, Social/Interpersonal compatibility</td>
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</table>

The student was extremely **reliable and enthusiastic**, and **contributed positively** to a range of projects. She was both **capable and a great attitude and friendly personality**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Interpersonal compatibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambition, drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abilities, expertise, know-how</td>
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<td>Work ethic</td>
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</table>

The student has a **good capacity to work effectively with people from different backgrounds**. She is a **self-motivated, results oriented** person and has demonstrated a **high level of commitment** and a strong work ethic.

<table>
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The student worked with the business and **took complete ownership** of her role. She was **100% focused, able to work to tight deadlines and worked at an extremely fast pace whilst never compromising quality of her outcomes**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambition, Work ethic, Drive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abilities, expertise, know-how</td>
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**Discussion and conclusion**

The contribution of the workplace supervisors in this study supported Hogan et al.’s (2013) determinants of employability model. That is, the workplace supervisors expressed satisfaction with their student interns’ performances because: a) their social/interpersonal skills made them a good fit with the organisation, hence they were rewarding to deal with; b) they had certain abilities, expertise and know-how that allowed them to effectively complete their career-aligned projects and in some cases contribute above expectations to the industry partner organisation, hence they were able to do the job; and c) their attitudes, willingness to learn, commitment and dedication to the project and their team displayed their ambition, work ethic and drive, hence their willingness to work hard.

Gaining this knowledge is important because it signals to universities that the workplace supervisor is an important addition to student knowledge bases relating to keeping up with the needs of graduate employers and what is important to such employers. With this new knowledge, universities can work towards improving the overall learning experience of students which may lead to opportunities to enhance students’ employability, increase graduate employment rates and career success and meet the expectations of stakeholders. Further, graduate employers may be more satisfied with their new recruits. Consequently, it is argued that employability is not a buzzword but an important combination of skills, abilities and attributes that determine and enhances a graduate’s employability prospects.

**Limitations**

The findings were limited by purposeful sampling because they were based on selectivity of participants (Patton, 1999). Further, student participants had to meet a pre-requisite for admission to the course of a minimum grade point average of 5.5 on a 7-point scale, indicating high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in their business degree. Additionally, the research was a pilot study and conducted within a
single university, in a single state of Australia, and within a single internship program. As such, these factors limit the generalisability of the findings.

Further research
More research on a larger scale is needed to clarify the determinants of employability. This can be achieved by incorporating internship programs outside the business discipline and outside one university that are not restricted by grade point average or other barriers to participation.

References


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This paper presents a pilot study of students’ perceptions of the benefits to employability of a suite of courses that marry work integrated learning, with career development learning as an enhancement strategy. Field Project A and Field Project B are elective courses in the Bachelor of Exercise Science at Griffith University. These courses engage students in active and personalised learning experiences that have been designed utilising the principles of the SOAR model (Self-awareness, Opportunity awareness, Aspirations, Results). Four students who completed both courses participated in semi-structured interviews. Student responses were examined using thematic analysis. Results indicated employability was enhanced as students developed realistic aspirations based on sound information and WIL experiences which could help achieve their personal career goals as they transitioned into the workforce. The courses provide a practical model for university academics and career development practitioners to work collaboratively.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, career development learning, employability, SOAR model

Background

This paper focuses on the development of two courses that present an ideal model for universities interested in enhancing work integrated learning (WIL) through the inclusion of career development learning (CDL) in order to produce successful work-ready graduates. Career development is an essential part of tertiary education, especially in regard to generic degrees such as Exercise Science. Field Project B (FPB) has been a final year course in the Bachelor of Exercise Science program at Griffith University since 2000. The current course includes a work experience placement, in addition to weekly workshops which alternate with career development workshops and presentations by professionals and practising lecturers. Students in FPB regularly suggested that work experience in the second year of their program, rather than only in the final semester, would improve their employment prospects following graduation. As a result, Field Project A (FPA) was introduced in 2011 as a summer school course at the end of the second year of the program.

Personal research has recommended that university students should be exposed to a combination of CDL and WIL as part of their formal program of study to maximise their employment potential for optimal economic and social outcomes (Reddan & Rauchle, 2012). SOAR is a tool developed by Arti Kumar (2007) that assists teachers operationalise and contextualise the ideals of career development learning. This model was used as the basis for the development of FPA and stands for Self-awareness, Opportunity awareness, Aspirations and Results. As a result of the combined effects of WIL and CD, students develop realistic aspirations based on sound information that can help them achieve the outcomes they desire as they move into the workforce. The development of the new course has provided an ideal opportunity to engage students in the other three elements of SOAR (Self-awareness, Opportunity awareness and Aspirations) which successfully complements the activities in FPB that focus on the final element (Results). This model expresses SOAR elements as enabling ‘metaskills’ and has the potential to promote personal inquiry, the discovery of self and the building of students’ unique identity through engagement, with opportunities within and outside the curriculum (Kumar, 2007). Thus, the combination of FPA and FPB allows students to engage with SOAR elements to empower them to take control of, and deal constructively with, the variety of factors that influence their personal, educational and professional success in an age of ‘supercomplexity’ (Barnett, 1999).

FPA was organised with two days of workshops immediately after examinations in November and one day of presentations in February of the following year. Self-awareness activities included: a discussion of career theory; explanation of the SOAR model; the Personal Style Inventory (Champagne & Hogan, 1979); sensing dimensions; Lifeline exercise; identifying skills and abilities; work values; Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1987); influential external factors; and the Systems Theory framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Opportunity Awareness concepts consisted of: information gathering; gaining industry knowledge; informational interviews; the labour market and employment information. The activities related to Aspirations involved making decisions and setting career goals.

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The assessment tasks include: a personal profile essay and career action plan (20%); a personalised job study based on an informational interview (20%); work placement performance (40%); and an oral presentation of reflections before, during and after placement (20%). The course objectives, learning experiences and assessment items have been constructively aligned to ensure student engagement. FPB focuses on the Results element of the SOAR model, with an emphasis on the development of a resume, sourcing employment, writing applications, meeting selection criteria and mock interviews, as well as providing a 140 hour placement in an area of student choice.

**Aims**

This particular study explored students’ perceptions of the benefits to employability gained by students who completed both FPA and FPB. The results will be used to improve the outcomes for future students. The research included seven research questions:

1. What motivated students to enrol in both Field Project A and B?
2. Did students perceive they had made the correct decision to enrol in both courses?
3. What benefits did students consider they received from completing both courses, rather than Field Project A or B?
4. What were student perceptions as to the impact of completing both courses on their career decisions and their job readiness?
5. Which features of the courses did students consider to be most beneficial?
6. How did students perceive the completion of both courses affected their confidence?
7. In what ways did students consider the grading of the courses affected the benefits gained from completing the two courses?

**Methods**

The research was conducted using four third year Exercise Science students who completed both FPA and FPB. The students volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews after completion of the second course. Data were collected and analysed using thematic analysis of student responses.

**Results**

The research findings have been reported using the seven research questions as headings:

**What motivated students to enrol in both Field Project A and B?**

All four students indicated that the provision of a work experience placement with real-world experience in both courses was an important aspect in motivating them to enrol in FPA. Student D suggested that no other course in their program offered this opportunity. Other reasons provided were “to gain an edge over other students” and “to boost my grade point average”. Student A enrolled in FPB to “learn about the important information to get a job, particularly resumes and interviews”. Several students were motivated by the benefits of an additional placement when deciding to enrol in Field Project B. Student B suggested that “more work experience creates more connections and preparation for the real world” and indicated that FPB taught students how to tailor resumes and applications to specific positions.

**Did students perceive they had made the correct decision to enrol in both courses?**

All students were positive in their decision to enrol in both FPA and FPB. Student A indicated that both courses were beneficial, but in different ways. “They worked well together and provided a more rounded view on things. FPA focused on personal development, learning about self, values and expression of abilities. It enabled us to gain a positive aspect of ourselves and clarify a career direction that suits our personality. On the other hand, FPB concentrated on professional development that promoted our particular skills in a positive way”. She considered that the preparation and feedback provided during the mock interview process enabled students to gain a better understanding of their personality. Student C suggested enrolling in the two courses provided her with increased confidence and enabled her to experience two placements in industries related to Exercise Science.
What benefits did students consider they received from completing both courses, rather than Field Project A or B?

Several students indicated the complementary nature of the two courses provided significant benefits. Student B suggested that completing FPA facilitated the development of her resume and her ability to respond to selection criteria in FPB. “You became aware of your strengths and weaknesses, values and skills from FPA, whilst FPB prepared you for the work environment, which you don’t get in other courses”. Student D noted that FPA developed confidence in herself and her abilities, with the self-discovery activities useful in ensuring her values matched particular career options that were explored in more depth in FPB.

What were student perceptions as to the impact of completing both courses on their career decisions and their job readiness?

The students were in agreement that the completion of both courses strengthened their career decisions. The opportunity to experience two different placements in areas of their choice, in combination with presentations from professionals, enabled students to become more aware of their career options and develop alternative plans to reach their career goals. Furthermore, all students indicated a considerable improvement in their job readiness. Typical responses included:

- My resume is a much higher standard and I am better prepared for a professional interview.
- Increased confidence – I can see that I am an employable person.

Which features of the courses did students consider to be beneficial?

Several students suggested that the work experience placements were particularly useful as they provided their first opportunity to apply knowledge gained in other courses in a real-world setting. Greater awareness of a student’s strengths and weaknesses was perceived by Student D to be an important outcome of FPA. Student A indicated that the professional presentations in FPB “opened my eyes to other pathways I had not considered. I can now see so many different areas for future employment”. Students appreciated that each course provided different but complementary content and learning activities. “I liked all of it! There was no single non-benefit - no repetition between the courses” reported student C.

How did students perceive the completion of both courses affected their confidence?

All four students commented on improved confidence following the completion of both courses. Student A indicated that she had developed “an increased confidence in skills that I can promote. The two placements have allowed me to become more relaxed when communicating with other professionals. Previously I would have been intimidated in these situations”. Student C suggested she had become more proactive and better prepared for the workforce through improved abilities in communicating with a range of individuals in the workplace.

In what ways did students consider the grading of the courses affected the benefits gained from completing the two courses?

All students in the study reported the fact that the courses were graded, rather than non-graded, influenced the benefits they had gained. The opportunity to improve their GPA was a common response that also affected students’ motivation to increase their efforts during the courses. Student C suggested: “I am so glad the courses were graded. We were rewarded for being proactive. Placements were invaluable opportunities for us to achieve highly due to the practical setting”.

Conclusions

In summary, there were several important findings from this study:

- Students were motivated to enrol in both courses for a variety of reasons.
- The focus on self-development in FPA was complemented by an emphasis on professional skills in FPB.
- Students considered the completion of both courses, rather than FPA or FPB, significantly enhanced their career decisions and improved their job skills and work-readiness.
- The work experience placements, self-awareness activities, professional presentations, resume development, job applications and mock interviews were perceived as important features of the courses.
- All four students reported an enhanced level of confidence following the completion of both courses
- Grading positively affected students’ motivation and efforts in all aspects of both courses, thereby enhanced their employability.
Implications

The findings of this study support the use of the SOAR model of career development learning as a strategy to enhance the benefits of work integrated learning in university settings. The importance of providing CDL activities, in addition to WIL placements, that develop all four elements of the model (self-awareness, opportunity awareness, aspirations and results), rather than simply the final element, has been demonstrated in student responses. These elements require significant time in development and would appear best spread over two courses, rather than condensed into a single course over a shorter period. The structure and interrelationship of the two courses provides students with a competitive advantage for employment and enables them to become more proactive, confident and motivated in order to maximise opportunities to manage their careers and lifelong learning. Furthermore, the combination of quality WIL with CDL as part of students’ formal program of study enhances their employability with significant economic and social benefits to the individual and society.

References


Matching and mismatch: Understanding employer expectations of work placement applicants

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The success and sustainability of work integrated learning (WIL) is an abiding concern for universities, as institutions seek to mainstream WIL within academic programmes. A supply of placement opportunities, and students successfully being appointed to opportunities, is fundamental to sustainability. This paper focuses on employer perspectives on WIL, looking beyond often-reported challenges of supply and demand to examine decision-making processes around placement. Data collection is undertaken via unique access to a region-wide placement project, e-Placement Scotland, which promotes paid, quality placement opportunities to computing students throughout Scotland. Analysis of operational data from the project shows patterns of student applications and appointments. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with six employers in small and medium sized enterprises is used to explore their perspectives and identify the issues that affect their decision making when offering placement roles, and appointing students to those roles. Findings are reported under six key themes; ‘improvisation’, ‘business positioning’, ‘skills focus’, ‘initiative and self-management’, ‘company focus’, and ‘making the appointment’. The findings can be used to strengthen university-employer connections through providing insights into employer priorities, and how their particular contexts affect priorities, particularly with regard to small and medium sized employers.

Keywords: Student placement, employer expectations, applications, employer engagement

Background

The value of integrating theory with practical work experience during students’ education (also known as work integrated learning) is widely acknowledged. It has been argued that relevant work experience is one of the main contributory factors in graduates quickly achieving graduate-level jobs (Hall et al., 2009; High Fliers, 2013; Mason et al., 2006). In the UK the number of students undertaking a ‘traditional’ one-year placement during their studies has declined, because of reduced employer and student demand (Wilson, 2012). e-Placement Scotland was established to work with employers to produce paid placement opportunities in the IT sector for students studying computing in Scotland’s universities and colleges, and has created over 1300 placements since 2010. This paper examines patterns of student engagement, uptake and use of e-Placement Scotland, and investigates employer perspectives around offering placements; the ways in which employers develop job descriptions, shortlist applicants and appoint candidates. Lessons are set out both for the project and for broader WIL practice.

Research aims and intent

The aim of this paper is to explore employer perspectives on offering and filling placement roles, in order to better delineate any mismatch between employer expectations and student applications. Developing a good understanding of employer expectations can help academics and placement support staff design relevant and useful preparation programs and activities for students, bringing positive impacts on success rates when students apply for placement roles. A research approach drawing upon quantitative and qualitative data was defined, informed by a critical realist perspective which emphasises the need to observe interactions between power structures, resulting events and individual experiences (Archer et al., 2013). The starting point for the research was the answer to the seemingly simple question; what matters to employers when aiming to recruit a placement student?

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Methods

e-Placement Scotland, with an established track record in employer engagement and creating and filling placements, provided a valuable opportunity for data collection. The project works with employers to produce placement roles, and then advertises these via the recruitment website (e-placementscotland.com). Students register, upload a resume/CV and apply, and over 3000 students have registered. Quantitative analysis of employer engagement data and student registration data were analysed to outline patterns of uptake and use of the project. Data from 2010-2014 highlight employer preferences for skills and length of placement, year of study, age and gender. To explore some of the factors contextualising these placement patterns, a purposive sample of six small- and medium- sized enterprise (SME) employers was selected, all of which had provided placement roles within the last 12 months. SMEs were chosen because of their prevalence in the Scottish IT sector and because they are less likely to have extensive HR support and well-defined placement policies and procedures, meaning that recruitment decisions are comparatively ad hoc and informal. The aim was to surface and explore approaches to the placement process normally hidden, from assembling the role description through to short-listing and appointment. Data were transcribed and thematic analysis undertaken.

Results and discussion

Characteristics of e-Placement Scotland filled placement roles

Data relating to employer engagement in the project are detailed below in Figure 1. These include the sector and the size of companies using e-Placement, preferred placement length and salaries.

![Figure 1: Organisation size, length of placement and salaries](image)

Over half of the placements are for 3 months, running over the summer. Student availability over this period guarantees employers a good pool of applicants, however, some employers have expressed a preference for longer placements to ensure a return on investment in induction and training (Smith et al., 2015). SMEs provided 53% of placements. Students register and upload a resume/CV before applying for roles. When a student accepts an offer his or her data are anonymously recorded to generate a placed student report, so that a comparison can be made between students who register and those who have successfully applied for roles. The demographic data for those students who were successfully in applying for and being appointed to a placement role (‘placed’) are given in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Profile of placed students: age, gender and level of study](image)
Demographic data for those students who had not yet been successfully placed is given in Figure 3.

![Registered Students' Age](image1)

![Registered Students' Gender](image2)

![Registered Students' Level](image3)

**Figure 3: Profile of registered but not yet placed students: age, gender and level of study**

Placed students are on average older than registered students (comparing Figures 2 and 3). Students aged 23 and above may have had some previous work experience, commonly thought to be beneficial in securing a work placement. Although female students secured only 26% of roles, in computing they make up 27% of the student population (HESA, 2014) and so the figures are proportionate. Indeed as 22% of registered students were female, women would appear to be more successful than men in securing a placement. Data suggest employer preference for placing third year students who have a wide range of skills. This is mirrored, however, by higher application rates from third years compared to second years.

**What matters to employers when aiming to recruit a placement student?**

Interviews focused upon employers’ process of developing the placement role description, the balance required between technical skills and personal attributes, the short-listing process and how a decision to appoint was made. One interview was undertaken with each company, and the research participant in each case was the person who had consulted with e-Placement Scotland when working towards advertising the role on the website. Post-coding was then applied to the data and emergent issues aggregated around themes. Six themes were discerned, relating to organisational capacity and strategy as well as perceptions of applicants.

**Improvisation: recognising the learning curve**

This theme highlights improvisation as an element of the process, perhaps particularly affecting SMEs who recruit sporadically. Experience in writing job specifications is often limited; “the CTO (Chief Technology Officer) had some experience of this, he managed his own company before so he knows what should have been in it” (Participant 2), and the examples provided on the e-Placement Scotland website were used as a resource; “we looked at what e-Placement Scotland ads were before, and there was a ‘template’” (Participant 2).

**Business positioning**

Employers appreciate that they compete for the ‘best’ students and for each employer the role description was developed with this in mind. For Participant 4, working in a small start-up, the role descriptor offered a chance to explain what the company did and “try to convince [the student] that this is a company they should want to be considering”. The placement advert therefore forms a dual function – setting out the role specification, but also articulating the company proposition for the applicant to attract the applicant towards a company that may have little name recognition.

**Skills focus: skills as ‘gateway’**

The third theme from the data relates to the technical skills focus, evident during the role descriptor writing, short listing and interview processes. To some extent the technical skills defined reflect what already works for the company; “the job spec is basically a description of what our current staff look like. Familiarity with some languages is a giveaway that they will like working here” (Participant 1). Employers need to be convinced that, if a student lacks a particular programming language or technique, they will be able to pick it up without too much support from colleagues – ability to learn is valued. Employers seemed satisfied that students were reading the role descriptors before applying, and had the required baseline skills.

**Initiative and self-management**

Employers were looking for attributes other than specific technical skills, and this came through at more than one point in each interview. Online portfolios of work were seen as very positive in this context and as a sign of initiative and ambition; “someone can have a great CV but I could pay £10 right now and someone could make
me a good CV – so it’s about online presence as well. So if you type their name or email address into Google….one of the candidates had 15,000 twitter followers” (Participant 2). Effort put into writing a covering letter was also seen as a sign of initiative, showing personal motivation towards getting the role (Participants 3 and 5).

A degree of self-management was seen as a key attribute; “we’re looking for technical skills, definitely, but also someone who will ask questions, someone who will take a bit of responsibility, initiative and communication skills as well as good technical skills. The world of work is changing and our software developers talk to our clients sometimes” (Participant 3). The need for students to stand out and be distinctive was emphasised; “everyone has done the same student project – we’re looking for something that sets them apart a little. For example, programming projects that they’ve pursued in their own time” (Participant 5).

Employers were also keen that applicants should have some experience of the world of work via, for example, an existing part-time job, though the type of work was not considered important; “we wanted evidence of work experience – no work experience is certainly a negative at short-listing. Didn’t matter what it was. The fact they could show up for work day after day, that’s all I expected” (Participant 1). Again, this is likely to be a reflection of the fact that SMEs, with a small headcount and lack of formal processes and procedures for training, have a need for applicants to be work-ready and not require significant ‘on-boarding’.

Company Focus
Employers wanted to see students display a positive attitude towards working for that company, for example, through a tailored CV showing how the applicant meets the job specification. By interview stage, employers wanted students to have researched the company; “we wanted students to be knowledgeable about the company – I had no expectations but it helped a lot” (Participant 1). For other participants this was expressed as a means of differentiating candidates with similar skill sets, and used as a proxy for motivation; however none of the participants used a lack of knowledge of the company solely as a means to rule out an applicant.

Making the appointment
The sub-themes to emerge from the selection process were based on student performance at the interview: ‘going beyond the brief’ and ‘face-fitting’. Not all participants had found a successful match, however Participant 1 shared insights leading to a recruitment decision; “he was able to talk at length and it wasn’t in the job advert – his course had covered that”. In this case the differentiator with students on the same course was related to the student’s wider knowledge of the technology sector. This sector knowledge was also used to infer interest, being keen to learn and taking enjoyment in work. However there were also culture-based influences summarised as face-fitting; “I felt I could work with him” (Participant 1).

Conclusion and implications
The overall goal of the paper was to better understand the gap between employer expectations and applications to contextualise the project data on students relating to placed and unplaced students.

The paper highlights ‘improvisation’ as part of the employer experience, and it seems likely that employers would benefit from support to produce role descriptors that define their baseline skills needs while recognising that students who may not currently reach this are capable of learning on the job. Similarly, where ‘business positioning’ is a component of the job advert, a balance may be required between setting out an aspirational vision for the business and the possibility that students may doubt their own ability to contribute to this, and be put off from applying. Conversely, students should be reassured about the value that employers place on their current work experience, even if part-time and unrelated to the technical domain.

The extent to which ‘company focus’ determines a good outcome for placement applications is worth further consideration. While in an ideal world students might extensively research each company they apply to, practical considerations make this impossible. However, it is certainly the case that developing an online footprint showcasing their own skills to complement their CV might effectively demonstrate the initiative that employers seem to be looking for.

The outcomes of this study have implications for the support offered to employers entering the placement marketplace and for the pre-placement preparation activities that universities deliver to students, as well as for those responsible for giving students feedback on unsuccessful applications. The next step is to explore student reading, interpretation and recognition of role descriptors to better understand student approaches to the application process.
Acknowledgments

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References


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Scaffolding employability throughout undergraduate degrees: A case study in criminology

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The employability of students is increasingly seen as an important outcome for universities. While a field placement experience is one method of developing employability, the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University uses a range of approaches to embed employability throughout its degree programs. The School follows a student lifecycle approach using the Employability Framework. Thus activities occur as students transition into university, transition through their degree and then transition out. Activities also involve alumni within the transition up and back stage. This paper provides a case study for how employability is scaffolded throughout a university degree program. The case study demonstrates how students can begin to develop their understanding and skills in the area of employability prior to commencing their study and then progressively throughout and after their degree program.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, employability, student lifecycle, criminology

Introduction

There is an increasing emphasis on developing students’ employability throughout their university studies (Qenani, MacDougall, & Sexton, 2014; Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). While there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of employability, it appears that students tend to view it as a short-term concept which involves finding a job, although it also includes elements such as ability to obtain employment (but not necessarily being employed) as well as possession of skills and certain personality attributes (Tymon, 2013). Students also view placements, a form of work integrated learning, as key in developing employability (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Tymon, 2013).

Work integrated learning is a process that provides students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge that they have learnt at university within the workplace (Beattie & Riley, 2015; Jackson, 2015b; Zegwaard & Coll, 2011). It can be delivered in a range of formats including placements as well as internships, practica, supervised practice and simulations (Smith, 2012). Work integrated learning is becoming increasingly mandated in Australian tertiary programs although collaboration between universities and employers in other countries may be rarer (Bilsland & Nagy, 2015).

Research suggests that there is a wide range of benefits of work integrated learning including the development of professional identity and the socialisation of students into the professional workforce (A. Bates, Bates, & Bates, 2007), assisting with the selection of a career (Jackson, 2015a) and career clarification (Zegwaard & Coll, 2011) as well as enabling students to develop and refine their skills (Jackson, 2015b). Additionally, work integrated learning appears to facilitate self-efficacy (Freudenberg, Brimble, Cameron, MacDonald, & English, 2012), work self-efficacy (M. Bates, Thompson, & Bates, 2013; Raelin et al., 2011; Raelin et al., 2014; Thompson, Bates, & Bates, 2016) and career decision self-efficacy (Reddan, 2014). Participation in work integrated learning may also affect student retention (Raelin et al., 2014). Recent graduates recognise the value of work integrated learning with a study conducted within a child protection context identifying that recent graduates were able to identify the benefits of participating in a placement (A. Bates & Bates, 2013). However, work integrated learning courses are resource-intensive and frequently require staff to undertake different roles and responsibilities than those who teach more traditional academic subjects (M. Bates, 2011). Given this, it is worth identifying other ways to enhance students’ employability throughout their studies by embedding opportunities throughout degree programs.

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**Student lifecycle**

The student lifecycle is a framework that enhances our understanding of students’ engagement and success by considering their needs as they move through each stage of their university degree (Burton, Chester, Xenos, & Elgar, 2013). The lifecycle focuses on four primary transition points within each student’s higher education career: *transition towards, transition in, transition through and transitions up, out and back* (Lizzio, 2012). *Transition towards* refers to future students and involves them aspiring and exploring before choosing what they will study (Lizzio, 2012). *Transition in* is the second stage of the lifecycle and constitutes commencing students. In this stage students commit and prepare for their study and join and engage with activities (Lizzio, 2012). The third stage, *transition through*, represents continuing students and is where they work for, and build on, their success (Lizzio, 2012). Transitions up, out and back describes how graduates and alumni concentrate on their future success and how they can partner with and continue their relationship with the university (Lizzio, 2012).

**Employability Framework**

Griffith University’s Career Development and Employability Framework integrates career development learning, industry connections and student actions together to map the advancement of a graduate career (Careers and Employment Service, 2015). The framework is mapped against the Student Lifecycle so that students and staff are aware of what actions should be taken at particular times.

Even during the *transition in* stage of the student lifecycle, there are important processes that enhance graduate employability. For instance, throughout this stage, students become increasingly aware of possible career options and avenues to increase their employability. While *transitioning through*, students are encouraged to develop professional networks both in person and virtually (for instance, through LinkedIn) to better connect with others in the field (Careers and Employment Service, 2015). They are also building their professional identity. The *transition out* stage supports students by assisting them to make preparations for graduate employment by encouraging them to feel part of a professional community. The *transition up* stage is directed more towards establishing a graduate role and by inviting graduates to re-engage with the university to mentor, make presentations or support internships (Careers and Employment Service, 2015).

**Context**

In the early 1990s Griffith University established a degree program in Criminology and Criminal Justice (Wimshurst & Ransley, 2007). Since this time, it has grown into the largest criminology program in Australia and one of the largest in the world. The field of criminology at Griffith is multidisciplinary and its curriculum includes studies in research skills, the legal system, psychology and sociology as well as more traditional criminology courses. In 2014, the school had 1,280 undergraduate students with approximately 50% of these in the single three year degree program. The remaining students were enrolled in a double degree which, in addition to their studies in criminology, involved studying human services, psychology, forensic science (each requiring four years of full-time study or equivalent) or law (comprising five and a half years of full time study or equivalent) (Wimshurst & Manning, online first 2015). Prior research suggests that it is important for criminology schools to focus on the transition from university to the workforce (Wimshurst & Allard, 2007). Thus, the School has a strong focus on employability.

**Application of the Employability Framework within the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice**

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University utilises a range of strategies within the career development framework at each stage of the student lifecycle (see Table 1). The *transition towards* stage provides potential students with their first connection with their field and assists them to consider future employment pathways. Initiatives within this stage include high school visits by academic staff where students participate in an interactive criminology problem to demonstrate the type of work undertaken by criminologists. Additionally, teachers and principals are invited to a lunch where the Deputy Head of School (Learning and Teaching) explains the program so that they are able to answer their students’ questions. Finally, potential students are invited to attend a careers evening. At this event, students hear about the career paths of criminology alumni. Potential students can also attend Open Day and TSExpo events where information about potential careers is available.
Table 1: Embedding employability in criminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Transition Towards | • High school visits  
|                 | • Teachers’ and Principals’ lunch  
|                 | • Careers evening  
|                 | • Open Day  
|                 | • TSEXPO                                                                   |
| Transition In   | • Orientation  
|                 | • 1011CCJ Criminology Skills                                               |
| Transition Through | • Flexible study options  
|                 | • Criminology Student Society  
|                 | • Griffith Industry Mentoring Scheme                                       |
|                 | • Criminology Undergraduate Research Internship Scheme (CURIP)              |
|                 | • Academic Excellence Society (ACES)                                        |
|                 | • 3002LFC Community Internship                                             |
| Transition Out  | • 3007CCJ Developing Professionally                                         |
|                 | • 3008CCJ Professional Practice                                             |
|                 | • 3022CCJ Restorative Justice Practices                                     |
| Transition Up   | • Careers evening  
|                 | • Arts Education and Law alumni awards                                     |
|                 | • Supervision of placement students                                         |

At Orientation, students begin to be exposed to potential career options. Additionally, within the transition in stage, the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice offers the course 1011CCJ Criminology Skills. This is a core first year course which teaches students a number of key skills including referencing. However, it also includes a career development component. Within this component, students view videos of criminology professionals talking about their careers and attend an introductory lecture provided by Careers and Employment Services.

As students transition through their criminology studies, they are provided with a number of career development activities. Firstly, there are a number of study options available including internal, external and via Open Universities Australia. Students may use these options to enhance their employability. For instance, students may elect to swap study modes from internal to external so they can undertake relevant employment or take some courses over the summer break through Open Universities Australia so they can graduate a semester earlier. Additionally, there is a strong Criminology Student Society. This society, which is run by undergraduate students, includes a number of activities such as visits to Police Headquarters, Police Academy, correctional facilities and the courts to enable students to explore potential career options. Criminology students are also able to participate in the Criminology Undergraduate Research Internship Program (CURIP). This program enables students to volunteer to work on research projects being run through the school. It provides students with a hands-on opportunity to participate in research. High-achieving students may be invited to join the Academic Excellence Society (ACES). ACES members are offered certain career opportunities such as attending seminars given by visiting academics and professionals. Additionally, criminology students can avail themselves of university-wide initiatives. This includes the Griffith Industry Mentoring Scheme. This scheme is run centrally by the Careers and Employment Service. In this scheme, students are provided with an industry mentor with whom they can meet and discuss their career plans. Students are also able to participate in a university-wide service learning course, 3002LFC Community Internship. Within this course, students complete a 50 hour placement in a not-for-profit organisation.

As noted earlier, the transition out stage is targeted at final year students and aims to prepare them for transition out of university and into the workforce. In this stage of the student lifecycle, the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice offers three courses for students. The first course, 3007CCJ Developing Professionally, is a core course for all single degree students. The course provides students with a number of career development activities including advice on job search strategies, preparing resumes and interview techniques. Additionally, the course discusses professional identity and self-care. The School also offers two elective courses: 3008CCJ Professional Practice and 3022CCJ Restorative Justice Practices. Both of these courses are work integrated learning courses. Professional Practice involves students completing a 100 hour placement in an organisation.
related to criminology and criminal justice. Students complete a project under the supervision of an organisational mentor. Restorative Justice Practices is co-taught by the Department of Justice and Attorney General and the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. In this course, students are taught practical skills in communication, which are skills needed to run mediation conferences.

While the transition up phase is largely self-directed, it is scaffolded by final year courses and continued support from the university. Frequently, alumni of the School return to participate in activities related to the career development of future or current students. This includes presenting at the Careers Evening or supervising students on placement. Additionally, the Arts Education and Law Alumni Awards recognise the achievements of criminology graduates working in industry.

Therefore, while many of the elements that build employability include a work integrated learning component (e.g. Developing Professionally, Professional Practice, Restorative Justice Practices, Community Internship), many other opportunities to enhance employability are present throughout the degree. Thus, students’ development of employability skills occurs before, during and after their studies in criminology.

**Conclusion**

Student employability is increasingly seen as an important outcome of tertiary study. While there is some discussion regarding what constitutes employability, the emerging school of thought is that it is necessary to scaffold it before, during and after a student’s time at university. To this end, the Careers and Employment Service at Griffith University has developed the Employability Framework. The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice has had a strong focus on employability and, in line with the Employability Framework, embeds employability at all stages of students’ studies including before they commence their studies. Further research is required to fully understand the impacts of this process, but anecdotal evidence suggest that it is a useful process to enhance students’ professional skills and employment prospects.

**References**


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WIL 2020: A framework for cultural competency in the workplace

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Addressing cultural boundaries in the workforce is a new challenge for WIL 2020. Demographic and generational change, varying technological, socio-economic, political/religious beliefs impacting on individuals and society have prompted discrete, incremental change in the acceptance of cultural diversity. The objective of this research is to use the cultural intelligence construct to achieve greater intelligibility, relevance and focus on cultural diversity in the workplace by introducing a constructivist framework to understand and address cultural diversity in the workplace. The Cross Cultural Competency (CCC) framework is based on the concept of cultural intelligence introduced by Earley & Ang (2003) together with a new cultural intelligence construct introduced in this paper, Affective Intelligence, which collectively set the boundaries for recognising and addressing cross-cultural competency in the workplace. Primarily aimed at WIL students, the framework has the potential to be used by employers to influence culturally-inclusive professional work skills within their organisations and promote professional success. The CCC framework is presented for critique and to initiate research on its efficacy in WIL contexts. Pending positive findings, the implications of the framework are far-reaching in that it pre-empts issues of escalating cultural disharmony, conflict and international instability of the future and workplace repercussions. It is an innovative WIL framework addressing cultural diversity and contributes to pedagogical change in WIL teaching and learning in the changing face of employment.

Keywords: Cultural diversity, cultural competency, WIL teaching framework, employability

Background

While Australia’s population reached the 24 million mark in February 2016, the cultural diversity of its current 11.9 million employed persons (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) is also rapidly expanding. Demographic diversity in ethnicity, religion, language, gender and age, resulting from globalisation, political instability and labour migration, has contributed to this diversity. While one in four Australians is born overseas, net overseas migration contributes 53% to Australia’s population growth and is on the increase (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). WIL 2020 must therefore incorporate this inter-cultural dimension in the workforce in its teaching and learning practices.

Cultural diversity is not restricted to race, ethnicity or nationality as perceived at times (Ang et al., 2007, p. 336), but manifested across age, gender orientation, religion, nationality and disability. Cultural differences are observed in values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours held by a culturally-distinct group of people. This diversity is an advantage when it provides a source of potential comparative advantage which better equips a country (Australia) to be more competitive in the global market place and improve its export performance (Australian Government, 2015). There are other competitive advantages from managing cultural diversity (Cox & Blake, 1991) and global leadership (Ng et al., 2012; Kim & Van Dyne, 2012; Deng & Gibson, 2008). At the same time, it is possible varying cultural attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and behaviours within the workplace can cause misunderstandings that detract from working towards a common goal (Ang et al., 2006; Earley & Mosakoky, 2004; Earley & Gibson, 2002; Tsui & Gutek, 1999).

While there is a plethora of information on cultural diversity, the more recent research on managing cultural diversity emphasises the global context (Barak, 2014), off shore outsourcing (Ang & Inkpen, 2008), organisational competitiveness (Cox & Blake, 1991), business (Earley, 2002; Earley & Ang, 2003: Zakaria, 2000), performance predictors (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013), or emotional intelligence as a predictor of cultural adjustment (Gabel et al., 2005). These studies focus on the more perceptible surface-level cultural

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diversity and the effect on organisational performance, rather than the underlying mechanism to implement cultural inclusiveness within a workforce and manage diversity.

The objective of this research is to use the cultural intelligence construct to achieve greater intelligibility, relevance and focus on cultural diversity in the workplace by introducing a constructivist framework to understand and address cultural diversity in the workplace.

**Methods**

This paper sets out to define cross-cultural competency facets and levels of competence to develop a framework that links cultural intelligence to developing resilience to cultural diversity in the workplace. A well-articulated WIL framework, the Work Skills Development framework (WSD) (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2009) is used to define six generic cross-cultural competency facets - Initiative & Goal Orientation, Technology & Resource Use, Learning & Reflecting, Management & Planning, Problem Solving & Critical Thinking, and Communication & Teamwork (Table 1).

The framework is modelled on cultural intelligence concepts of metacognition, cognition, behavioural and motivational intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003), with a fifth and new dimension, Affective Intelligence, which together set the boundaries for recognising and addressing cross cultural competency in the workplace.

**Cultural Intelligence**

Cultural Intelligence is knowledge and skills developed in a specific cross-cultural context (Thomas et al., 2008) and indispensable to managing the interconnectedness of today’s world (Brislin et al., 2006). Thomas et al., (2008) defines cultural intelligence as “a system of interacting knowledge and skills, linked by cultural metacognition that allows people to adapt, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment.” Culturally intelligent individuals therefore recognise behaviours that are influenced by culture (Tan, 2004).

Earley and Ang (2003, p.59) posit cultural intelligence is the ability to interact successfully with people who are culturally different and introduced a four-stage model of cultural intelligence.

1. **Metacognitive** - conscious cultural awareness during cross cultural interactions and learning process generated through those interactions.
2. **Cognitive** - the learning of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures.
3. **Motivational** - the ability to direct attention, energy and motivation to learn and function in a new culture setting.
4. **Behavioural** - the ability to express appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions while interacting with individuals of culturally-diverse backgrounds.

While Earley and Ang’s cultural intelligence model provides an overall useful guide to adjust to cultural diversity, it focuses mainly on thought processes, cognition and skills with no reference to the affective domain. Therefore to complement this model a fifth cultural intelligence dimension, Affective Intelligence, is introduced in this research. Affective intelligence is the capacity to reflect and address personal bias and prejudice, of thoughts, emotions and feelings when interacting with people from different cultures.

**Cross-Cultural Competency Measures**

The literature on cultural diversity uses a variety of terminology such as, inter-cultural competence, transcultural communication, cross cultural adaptation and inter cultural sensitivity (Fantini 2000; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006), but they all refer to a common objective - the capacity to understand other individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds. Cross Cultural Competency (CCC) is defined in this research as the ability to apply appropriate knowledge and skills to understand the norms, beliefs, values and behaviours of oneself and those of other cultures. The term ‘Cross-cultural’ is used here (in preference to ‘Inter-cultural’) in the context of recognising cultural beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups, more so than just mapping differences between two or more cultures (inter-cultural). Kawar (2012, p.105) confirms that the difference in the use of terminology (cross cultural vs inter-cultural) depends on the actual problem which is being investigated.

Research on intercultural/cross-cultural competence pre-1996 focuses on behavioural assessment scales (Koester & Olebe, 1988; Ruben & Kealey, 1979), inventories (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Bennett, 1993) and later, indices (Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Fantini, 2000, 2006). More recently this year, Garneau (2016) published
a framework for critical reflection in cultural competency. However, none of these address work skills or the assimilation of cultural diversity through the practice of cultural intelligence in the workplace.

The Cross Cultural Competency (CCC) framework (Appendix I) on the other hand, is an innovative transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) framework for WIL students to increase their awareness and understanding of cultural sensitivity in the workplace. The CCC work skill facets are adapted from a validated work skills framework, the Work Skills Development Framework [WSD] (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2009) which has been tested with multidisciplinary WIL students in Australia (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2010, 2015). The CCC skill facets are identified in Table 1 Column 1 and the WIL focus for each of the six facets given in column 2 below.

**Analysis**

**The Framework**

The Cross Cultural Competency (CCC) framework is a teaching and learning tool developed for use by WIL students moving through the 21st century and challenged with cultural diversity in the workplace. This constructivist framework allows for integration of cross-cultural content into existing generic work skills regardless of discipline content. The framework comprises two facets – *Cross Cultural Competency* [CCC] facets and, *Levels of Competence* (Table 2, Appendix I).

**Cross Cultural Competency [CCC] Facets**

The CCC framework facets in column 1 are based on the original WSD framework’s (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2009) articulation of work skills and adjusted to reflect the cultural context of a workplace. The placement focus or WIL objective is identified in column 2. It demonstrates how WIL students can adjust to a cross-cultural environment focusing on aspects of cultural intelligence and cultural diversity.

**Table 1: Cross Cultural Competency [CCC] Facets & Workplace Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross Cultural Competency (CCC) facet</th>
<th>Placement [WIL] Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCC1 Initiative &amp; Goal Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Show motivation and capacity to direct attention and energy towards recognising and learning cultural differences and working towards a common goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are goal directed &amp; motivated to embark &amp; clarify cultural diversity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCC 2 Technology &amp; Resource Use</strong></td>
<td>Express respect, positive regard and mindfulness of other cultures in the use of resources and technology, including the ability to intuitively understand what others think and feel when new resources are introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students find and generate data / knowledge using appropriate skills &amp; technology while respecting cultural diversity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCC 3 Learning &amp; Reflecting</strong></td>
<td>Critically evaluate ambiguity and clarity (in cultural diversity) to demonstrate a culture specific understanding and acceptance of cross cultural working environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students critically evaluate cultural diversity reflecting on lifelong learning skills &amp; career management in a cross cultural environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCC 4 Management &amp; Planning</strong></td>
<td>Display a shared understanding of cultural values through the use of appropriate language, behaviours and actions to articulate goals, visions, innovative strategies, and develop coping mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students organise and manage self &amp; others, while being perceptive to cultural diversity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCC 5 Problem Solving &amp; Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Use appropriate cultural knowledge to initiate change and extrapolate outcomes and recognises the extent to which knowledge is individual in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students analyse &amp; synthesise data / knowledge to initiate change and extrapolate cultural outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCC 6 Communication &amp; Teamwork</strong></td>
<td>Respond professionally in a non-evaluative and non-judgemental way using verbal and nonverbal actions and behaviours, and interacts mindfully with people from other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students demonstrate culturally acceptable professional conduct and communicate with sensitivity to interpersonal and cross cultural requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• CCC1 – The objectives in this facet are supported by Earley and Ang’s Motivational Intelligence (2003) which states energy and motivation (desire & self-efficacy) are required to function within a new culture situation. The student therefore aims at higher levels of self-efficacy and alignment (Kim & Ormiza, 2005), and achieves ‘long term goal orientation (Hofstede, 2001) within the workplace.

• CCC 2 – The essence of a culture is how the members of a group interpret, use, and perceive a resource. For example, respect, positive regard and mindfulness of culture in the use of mineral resources includes awareness of mining rights and potential conflict with traditional aboriginal land ownership rights (Australia). This entails cross-cultural sensitivity to indigenous emotions and feelings on ancestral land and ownership rights. Early and Ang’s Behavioural intelligence (2003) refers to the use of ‘culturally appropriate behaviour in using resources’, and Hofstede (2001) warns of ‘care in using something new and, indulgence vs self-restrain’.

• CCC 3 – Clarity of thought in understanding lifelong learning and career management by WIL students is predisposed to learning norms, practices, conventions of different cultures to support career management in a cross-cultural environment (Earley & Ang’s cognitive intelligence, 2003). Further, Hofstede (2001) articulates the need for clearly defined rules of behaviour in lifelong learning, and Zakaria (2000) to ‘tolerance for ambiguity’.

• CCC 4 – Perceptiveness and sensitivity to others’ feelings, thoughts, and emotions (Affective Intelligence) assist WIL students in managing others in the workplace. Earley and Ang’s Metacognitive intelligence (2003) refers to understanding cultural knowledge and developing coping mechanisms, or as Triand (2006) articulates ‘overcoming ethnocentrism’.

• CCC 5 – A high degree of cross-cultural sensitivity is required in engaging in critical thinking and initiating change in the workplace. Earley and Ang’s Metacognitive intelligence (2003) states ‘cultural consciousness and awareness promotes active critical thinking and evaluates and revises knowledge about difficult cultures’. Endicott et al., (2003) refers to the end product, cultural outcomes, as exposure to cultural diversity increasing cognitive flexibility as well as cross cultural competence in extrapolating outcomes.

• CCC 6 – Cross-cultural sensitivity training for WIL students in Communication & Teamwork includes conforming to ethical standards of a profession and exhibiting courteous, conscientious, culture-mindful verbal and nonverbal communication. Mindfulness is enhanced attention to, or monitoring of, own thoughts, motives, emotions and the external environment to adapt to the other (Thomas, 2006).

Levels of Autonomy [Appendix I, Table 2]

Student learning capacities vary depending on the ability to apply cognitive and affective knowledge and skills and the aptitude for work-readiness (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2015). For example, a student identified at Level 3 in CCC 1 may not necessarily have the same level of competency in the other CCC facets at that particular time.

• Level 1 [Aware] - Cultural competency begins with observation and self-awareness of cultural differences and similarities (Level 1). Students will identify differences using simple procedures to recognise and comprehend their emotions, feeling and thoughts (Affective Intelligence) on cultural diversity in the workplace. This challenge is referred to as ‘culture shock’ by Zakaria (2000). For example, with reference to Initiative & Goal Orientation [CCC1], a student works towards understanding the placement role requiring highly-structured guidelines to monitor their emotions, feelings and thoughts towards cultural diversity. During this phase the student examines own biases and prejudices (Affective Intelligence) and becomes aware of other cultural norms, practices, behaviours different to one’s own (Cognitive Intelligence, Earley & Ang, 2003). This initial phase is most important to understand cultural diversity, remain motivated and successfully engage in all other CCC facets.

• Level 2 [Adjust] - The student modifies behaviour and learns to align oneself with other cultures by consciously adjusting thoughts, emotions, strategies, actions etc. to deal with workplace diversity. With Initiative & Goal Orientation [CCC1] at Level 2 for example, responding to cultural diversity will improve and enable students to clarify and accept cultural ambiguities with limited guidance.

• Level 3 [Adapt] – The student realigns with cultural diversity and is able to work self-reliantly, and with a high level of cultural competency. A realignment of goals takes place changing the original apprehensions
of fear, caution, doubt (*Affective Intelligence*) to become more accepting of diversity in the workplace. With reference to *Initiative & Goal Orientation* [CCC1], the student now reconciles differences between one’s own culture and that of others to engage and clarify one’s role.

- **Level 4 [Integrate]** – Critical reflection and integration refers to the consolidation and assimilation of cultural diversity. Critical reflection is part of the critical thinking process of making judgements about what has occurred and making a deduction (Dewey, 1933). It is a way of confirming one’s thoughts, feelings, and emotions on decisions taken. With reference to *Initiative & Goal Orientation* [CCC1], for example, the student works with self-confidence to assimilate cultural diversity.

- **Level 5 [Review]** – The student works with complete autonomy and professional capacity showing high degree of sensitivity and competency to communicate professionally with a culturally-diverse workforce and extends experiences gained to a wider community. This level equates with Biggs & Collis (1982, 1989) SOLO taxonomy level 5 designated ‘extended abstract’. In applying [CCC1], *Initiative & Goal Orientation*, students will fully embrace their role and project their knowledge to a wider community.

**Discussion**

The CCC is a teaching framework intended to sustainably develop cross-cultural competency in the workplace and assist WIL students in understanding a cross-cultural perspective of openness and acceptance of diverse cultural systems. Employment is most often associated with generic competencies (Core Skills for Work development framework (CSfW), 2013; Australian Qualification Framework, 2013; DEEWR, 2012). The CCC framework, while being generic in its application, is innovative and didactic and works within the context of WIL studies addressing specific work skills to optimise levels of competency with student progress in WIL. Owing to its logical and systematic approach, the framework is designed to be easily integrated into the pedagogy of a WIL curriculum.

The training provided via the framework ideally focuses on awareness or mindfulness of cultural diversity [Level 1], attitude of inclusiveness [Level 2], adaptation or acceptance [Level 3], integration and reflection [Level 4], and review and projection of the concept to a wider community [Level 5].

Primarily the CCC framework is of relevance to WIL 2020 to change the way students think and understand contemporary workplace diversity in managing indigenous and migrant populations, consolidation of baby boomer to Y generations, and, socio-economic / religious diversity.

Awareness of cultural diversity in the workplace via cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003), and strategies to manage personal bias and prejudice of thoughts, feelings and emotions (*Affective Intelligence*) is a priority in framing the CCC. To seek guidance from mentors/supervisors and adjust to the workplace with Prescribed, Bounded, Scaffolded direction and subsequently progress to Self-initiated and Open Direction (Table 2, Appendix I) provides a gradual transition in the understanding of cultural diversity from nil or minimal [Level 1] to total assimilation [Level 5].

Although primarily aimed at WIL students the CCC framework has the potential to be used by all Cooperative Work Integrated Education (CWIE) students, industry employees and employers to influence culturally-inclusive professional work skills and promote professional success. Research on WIL and CWIE applications is needed to determine the efficacy of the CCC framework in various contexts.

**Limitations**

While the scope of the paper is to introduce the concept of CCC to guide WIL students, it requires application and evaluation to transfer theory to practice. This evaluation may parallel the successful application of the WSD framework’s work skill concepts (to WIL) where reflective journals, reflective essays and follow-up interviews were used (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2010, 2015). For the CCC framework to be effective it also requires workplace supervisors/mentors to be trained in cross-cultural competency to guide/direct WIL students, and this framework is useful in training those people.
Conclusion

Demographic and generational change, varying technological, socio-economic, political/religious beliefs are deepening disparities in our contemporary society. The CCC framework articulates dimensions of cross-cultural competence interventions that can facilitate the minimisation of these disparities. Probing these cultural disparities through teaching and learning orientations is of utmost importance to WIL 2020. The CCC framework addresses the needs of the contemporary workplace and provides attributes needed of future graduates dealing with issues of diversity and inclusivity to address the changing face of employment of the 21st century.

References


The objective of this framework is to provide an understanding in the use of cross cultural competency to manage cultural diversity in the workplace. This concept was developed by Suniti Bandaranaike, James Cook University, Australia.

### Table 2: A Framework for Cross Cultural Competency [CCC] in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCS 1: Initiative &amp; Goal Orientation</td>
<td>Prescribed Direction</td>
<td>Bounded Direction</td>
<td>Scaffolded Direction</td>
<td>Self-initiated Direction</td>
<td>Open Direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are goal directed &amp; motivated to embark &amp; clarify cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Minimal understanding of CCC &amp; requires highly structured directions</td>
<td>Some understanding of CCC &amp; works with limited direction</td>
<td>Work independently within provided guidelines to apply CCC</td>
<td>Work innovatively developing own strategies in applying CCC</td>
<td>Strong insight to CCC &amp; works within self-determined guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with highly structured guidelines to recognize cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Work with limited guidance to clarify and understand cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Work with self-reliance to reconcile differences between one’s own culture and that of other cultures.</td>
<td>Work with self-confidence to assimilate cultural diversity using multiple approaches.</td>
<td>Work with high self-efficacy to embrace cultural diversity within one’s own role &amp; that of the wider community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS 2: Technology &amp; Resource Use</td>
<td>Technology &amp; Resource Use</td>
<td>Find data / knowledge using culturally appropriate skills and resources with a high degree of instruction.</td>
<td>Find &amp; generate data/knowledge using prescribed structures to generate culturally sensitive information.</td>
<td>Find &amp; generate data / knowledge while showing a high degree of responsibility in using culturally appropriate tools, technology, and resources.</td>
<td>Find &amp; generates data / knowledge showing complete sensitivity and understanding in the application of culturally diverse technology &amp; resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students find and generate data / knowledge using appropriate skills &amp; technology while respecting cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Evaluate cultural norms, practices, conventions, value systems etc. using a highly structured format.</td>
<td>Evaluate information/data with limited direction to understand and reflect on cultural sensitivity in the workplace.</td>
<td>Evaluate &amp; reflect on the match between theoretical and practical applications of cultural sensitivity to understand cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Critically evaluate &amp; reflect on cultural ambiguity using self-determined criteria to generate lifelong learning skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS 3: Learning &amp; Reflecting</td>
<td>Learning &amp; Reflecting</td>
<td>Organise information/data with prescribed direction to understand and manage culturally sensitive information.</td>
<td>Organise information/data with bounded direction to understand mapping cultural variations.</td>
<td>Organise information/data using a self-determined structure to manage culturally sensitive information.</td>
<td>Organise information/data to develop a culturally competent workforce and addresses complex and culturally diverse needs in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students critically evaluate cultural diversity reflecting on lifelong learning skills in a cross cultural environment.</td>
<td>Organise information/data with prescribed direction to understand and manage culturally sensitive information.</td>
<td>Organise information/data with bounded direction to understand mapping cultural variations.</td>
<td>Organise information/data using a self-determined structure to manage culturally sensitive information.</td>
<td>Organise information/data to develop a culturally competent workforce and addresses complex and culturally diverse needs in the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS 4: Management &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Management &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Interpret information from several sources using a structured format to analyse &amp; synthesise culturally sensitive data / information.</td>
<td>Analyse &amp; synthesise from a range of culturally sensitive resources within provided guidelines, to generate new knowledge.</td>
<td>Analyse &amp; synthesise cross culturally sensitive information to produce creative solutions.</td>
<td>Analyse &amp; synthesise data/knowledge showing a high degree of cross cultural sensitivity to initiate change and extrapolate outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students organise &amp; manage self &amp; others while being perceptive to cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Interpret given information with a high degree of guidance to analyse &amp; synthesise culturally sensitive data / information.</td>
<td>Analyse &amp; synthesise from a range of culturally sensitive resources within provided guidelines, to generate new knowledge.</td>
<td>Analyse &amp; synthesise cross culturally sensitive information to produce creative solutions.</td>
<td>Organise information/data to develop a culturally competent workforce and addresses complex and culturally diverse needs in the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS 5: Problem Solving &amp; Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Problem Solving &amp; Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of guidance to understand culturally distinct verbal &amp; non-verbal communication.</td>
<td>Communicate using prescribed language and genre to understand interpersonal and cross cultural communication.</td>
<td>Communicate professionally and openly with a culturally diverse team using mutual respect and shared understanding.</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of professionalism and conduct in negotiating and asserting own values while respecting cultural diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students analyse &amp; synthesise data/knowledge to initiate change &amp; extrapolate outcomes.</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of guidance to understand culturally distinct verbal &amp; non-verbal communication.</td>
<td>Communicate using prescribed language and genre to understand interpersonal and cross cultural communication.</td>
<td>Communicate using culture specific oral and written language to communicate with sensitivity to cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of professionalism and conduct in negotiating and asserting own values while respecting cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of professionalism and conduct in negotiating and asserting own values while respecting cultural diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS 6: Communication &amp; Teamwork</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Teamwork</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of guidance to understand culturally distinct verbal &amp; non-verbal communication.</td>
<td>Communicate using prescribed language and genre to understand interpersonal and cross cultural communication.</td>
<td>Communicate professionally and openly with a culturally diverse team using mutual respect and shared understanding.</td>
<td>Communicate with a high degree of professionalism and conduct in negotiating and asserting own values while respecting cultural diversity.</td>
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</table>
Practical typology of WIL learning activities and assessments

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Increased graduate employment is an aspiration of Australian universities for their graduates. Universities are adopting a number of strategies to increase the employability skills of students including the placement of students in host organisations to enable them to apply and practise their disciplinary learning in workplace contexts as part of study programs. Currently this opportunity is not available to all students but what is available are opportunities to develop graduate capabilities such as communication, teamwork and problem solving, much sought after by employers, which are embedded in their courses to complement disciplinary knowledge and skills. More recently, further non-placement Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities are being adopted to expand the employability development opportunities for students such as applied and work-related learning activities and assessments which authentically emulate workplace practice and/or enable students to interact directly with workplace personnel. A study at an Australian university investigated 1,500 assessments from 40 courses across four Faculties in order to determine the nature and extent to which authentic work-related assessments were embedded in courses. This paper presents the development of an authentic assessment framework and typology that was employed to conduct the action-in-research investigation.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, typology, authentic assessment, non-placement WIL

Introduction and literature

Increased graduate employment is an aspiration of all Australian universities as well as their graduates. The 2015 Australian Graduate Survey (Graduate Careers Australia, 2015) reported that nearly 69% of Australian graduates were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees. A further 20% were working in part-time or casual positions while continuing to seek full-time employment, and the remaining 11% who were not working were still seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey. These full-time employment rates have dropped by 8% since 2010 and by nearly 13% since 2005. The news is more encouraging on a mid- to long-term basis, where the three years post-graduation for 2010 graduates full-time employment was 89%.

The aim of increasing employment prospects for graduates has led universities to seek new and improved ways by which to equip students with employability skills. For the past decade-and-a-half employers have been calling for increased job-readiness among university graduates to better meet the changing needs of their industry/sector/profession. Industry generally views graduates as being technically competent in their specialist field, but less so in workplace skills such as teamwork and interpersonal communication (Brimble & Freudenberg 2010; McLennan & Keating 2008; Patrick et al., 2008). In 2002 the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) commissioned research by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia whose report recommended the adoption of the following graduate attributes: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning, and technological literacy. Guided by the DEST report most, if not all, universities began to formally adopt the integration of their own customised group of generic and transferable skills into curricula.

In recent times, however, strong indications show that these capabilities will no longer be sufficient to prepare graduates for the rapidly and ever-changing labour market. The latest reports of market and workforce trends from the Committee for Economic Development of Australia’s (2015) and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2014) indicate that jobs of the future are changing more rapidly and unpredictably than they have in the past. Oliver (2015) explores these new patterns of work and suggests what this might portend for

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1 Corresponding author contact details; Deakin Learning Futures/Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, +61 3 924 68198, friederika.kaider@deakin.edu.au
universities. Adapting Yorke’s (2006) definition of employability, Oliver (2015) proposes that employability requires “that students and graduates can discern, acquire, adapt and continually enhance the skills, understandings and personal attributes that make them more likely to find and create meaningful paid and unpaid work that benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy” (p.63). This portends the need for universities to do even more.

Universities have been embedding graduate capabilities into the curriculum to enable students to become more work-ready or work-progressive in a number of ways. A major avenue has been through WIL, a pedagogy that essentially “integrate[s] theory with practice of work within a purposely designed curriculum” (Patrick, Peach, Pocknee et al., 2008, p.iv). The increasingly robust practice and scholarship in this field (Billett, 2000; Boud, 2001; Calway, 2006; Coll & Chapman, 2000; Eraut & Hirsch, 2007; Yorke, 2006) demonstrates the wide range of WIL approaches that have been adopted. Predominant among these are placements of one type or other (McLennan & Keating, 2008; Smith, Ferns & Russell, 2014). Despite the value to both employers and students, the percentage of students afforded the opportunity of a placement remains relatively low. Some disciplines have a strong tradition of student placements while others offer few or no such opportunities, witness creative industries and some science fields (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2009; Hains-Wesson & Campbell, 2014; Office of Chief Scientist, 2015). For this reason, as well as the increasing competitiveness among existing placement seekers, newer forms of WIL are gaining appeal. Non-placement WIL such as industry and community projects, problem-based learning and simulated and/or online workplace environments are emerging as significant authentic and innovative alternatives to traditional placements (Hains-Wesson, 2013; Hains-Wesson & Campbell, 2014; Cooper, Orrell & Bowden, 2003; Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick & Cagnolini, 2004; Reeders, 2000).

Research aim and methodology

In 2014-15 research was conducted at a large Australian University (with funding support from ACEN) to investigate the scope and types of assessments offered to students that were deemed to be “authentic” in terms of emulating professional practice. Authentic assessments were seen to offer students opportunities to contextualise both disciplinary knowledge and develop graduate capabilities in work-based and work-linked scenarios aimed at increasing their employability skills. This research project had its origin in a major course review at the University which was aimed at increasing the number and type of authentic assessments offered to students in all courses.

The methodology employed was an action-in-research framework which is well suited to the evaluation of curriculum design (Stenhouse, 1975; Carr & Kemmis 1986; McAteer, 2013). The action-in-research was comprised of a mixed method (Walter, 2010) where the quantitative component of the study examined assessments in 40 courses (ten from each Faculty) via a desk top audit of Unit Study Guides. Fifteen hundred individual assessments were examined and grouped according to assessment type (n=1500). The qualitative component of the study then analysed the types of authentic assessments more closely. In addition, a student focus group was conducted to elicit students’ perceptions of their experiences with authentic assessments in their courses. There is not scope to present the overall findings of the study in this paper so what has been selected is the development of an amended typology of authentic assessments which was critical for classifying and analysing the data and which arose from the action-in-research process.

The action-in-research method also included critically analysing the existing framework for analysing the assessments (Oliver, 2012); reviewing the literature on other authentic assessment frameworks and typologies (Bosco and Ferns, 2014; Rowe, Winchester-Seeto and Mackaway, 2012); amending the existing framework and developing a typology of examples; testing the proposed typology against a sample of assessments; validating the proposed typology with assessments across disciplines; and reflecting on and reviewing the proposed typology with colleagues.
Research-in-action outcome

The University’s existing typology framework for authentic work-related assessments was comprised of quadrants in which the vertical axis reflected the level of authenticity of a learning task in relation to real-world practice and the horizontal axis reflected proximity to the workplace. This provided for the categorisation of learning activities and assessments into Low Authenticity-Low Proximity; High Authenticity-Low Proximity; Low Authenticity-High Proximity; and High Authenticity-High Proximity classifications. Although this framework provided the critical criteria for examining assessments not all assessments could be classified according to these categories. Looking to the literature on other assessment frameworks and typologies (Rowe, Winchester–Seeto & Mackaway, 2012; Bosco & Ferns, 2014) the existing framework was amended. The major change was the inclusion of a Medium category for both the Authenticity and the Proximity criteria. This expanded the original quadrants into a nine-squared grid, adding the categories of Low Authenticity–Medium Proximity, Medium Authenticity–Medium Proximity, Medium Proximity-Low Authenticity and Medium Authenticity–High Proximity. This expansion provided for greater differentiation and between the category types and enabled all the examined assessment types to be classified (See Figure 1).

The descriptions of the criteria on both axes were also expanded to read:

- Authenticity: learning activities and assessments requiring students to work on problems, processes and projects that they may encounter in their professions and produce artefacts reflecting professional practice.
- Proximity: learning experiences that occur in real workplaces and professional contexts; in online or live complex simulated workplace environments; and those that enable students to interact directly with industry practitioners or community members on work related activities

(developed by Kaider, Hains-Wesson & Young, 2015)

To apply this framework to the investigation of assessments a table of examples of authentic assessments was drawn up. (See Table 1). Although the table was designed to aid the research process it was evident that it could also serve as a resource for academics. The examples were grouped into the year levels of when they might be offered to students with the view of scaffolding the learning, both horizontally and vertically across a course. Thus:

- Introductory WIL learning activities and assessments offered in the first year introduce students to the world of work and the beginning of their own professional identity and aspirations.
- **Year 2 and 3 WIL** afford students the opportunity to design and develop a range of artefacts that reflect practice in their professions; undertake processes characteristics of workplaces; and engage directly with industry/sector/community personnel. This may include learning in complex simulated workplace environments such as studios, moot courts and practice clinics in which students perform all or most of the functions that they would in a real work situation. Students may also be offered opportunities to interact directly with industry and/or community personnel in a client-consultant type relationship that is common in many professions. Additionally, direct interaction may also take the form of feedback from practitioners on student work; panels; and discussion groups, the essence of which students ideally integrate into summative assessments.

- **Placements** reflect a long tradition of on-the-job learning and vary in length, time offered, paid or unpaid, intensity and orientation.

### Table 1: Table of Authentic Learning Activities and Assessment Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTORY WIL</th>
<th>2nd &amp; 3rd YEAR WIL</th>
<th>WIL PLACEMENTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Authenticity Low Proximity</td>
<td>Complex simulated face-to-face workplace environments with industry involvement such as moot courts; extensive role play simulations</td>
<td>Work placements of various types, which can take place in any year, or at times, all years:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Authenticity Low Proximity</td>
<td>Comprehensive simulated online workplace environments with industry involvement including simulated work practices, environments or scenarios</td>
<td>• Internships, practicums, co-op years, clinical placements, Industry Based Learning (IBL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Authenticity Medium Proximity</td>
<td>Studios or practice clinics with industry involvement e.g. design studio or performing arts studio working with the industry and community; or allied health clinics staffed by students with industry supervision</td>
<td>• Industry-based (or community-based) projects undertaken in the workplace for a nominal period of time but not a formal placement. Includes industry supervision or feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Authenticity High Proximity</td>
<td>Laboratory days in which students plan, design, set-up and conduct experiments alongside multiple responsibilities and contingencies and which involves industry</td>
<td>• Work Based Learning (WBL) where students are employed in an organisation and specifically fashion their studies around their work with University authorisation and guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projects for organisations e.g. individual or student teams undertake consulting projects for industry personnel</td>
<td>• Service learning where students undertake voluntary work in the not-for-profit sector and which is formally integrated with their studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-based learning with/in organisations e.g. students work on solutions for real problems for real clients, similar to above</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community-based projects similar to industry projects, but with the involvement of not-for-profit/community sector</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capstone units in which students undertake a significant work-applied project for an organisation, similar to problem-based or project-based learning but integrating key learnings from the whole course in analysis and reporting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Simple simulations** (online or live) without industry involvement
- **Case studies** without industry involvement
- **Studios** without industry involvement
- **Authentic simulation** such as full lab/prac/design work with multiple responsibilities and contingencies but without industry involvement
- **Role plays** without industry involvement
- **Career Development Learning** activities such as composing resumes, job search activities, interview practice
- **Workplace checklist** which is student-led
- **Film or video** of workplace or work practices (with permission), again student-led
- **Job shadowing** with minimal or no tasks
- **Observation** of workplaces or work practices without detailed reporting

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Conclusion

The amended framework and typology that emerged from this research not only provided a working schema for classifying the authenticity of assessments in relation to work-relatedness but also served as a construct for how a variety of WIL learning experiences could be offered to students over the duration of their course. The typology of practical examples illustrates the types of authentic assessment types that could be horizontally and vertically scaffolded over a course. Students could undertake a range of WIL learning activities from first year to the final year where they would undertake multiple learning activities which authentically emulate work-related tasks and processes and also offer direct interaction with professionals, be it in the workplace or outside. This package of experiences would provide students with rich and varied opportunities in which to apply their disciplinary knowledge and skills to workplace contexts; advance their graduate capabilities in work-related contexts; and interact directly with professional personnel, all of which contribute to the development of employability skills. For students fortunate enough to access placements, these activities would prepare them for and complement their placement experience, and for the majority of students who do not have access to placements, such a comprehensive and integrated WIL learning structure could potentially be a transformative learning experience that readies them for an increasingly competitive job market.

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References


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Australian academics in communication fields such as journalism and professional communication have needed little encouragement to develop international experiences for their students. New funding opportunities for undergraduate students through the Australian Government’s New Colombo Plan (NCP) have enabled universities to make student mobility a priority, encouraging more academics to broaden student experiences in global, not just domestic, workplaces. To meet this objective, universities are increasingly adopting initiatives grouped under Work Integrated Learning (WIL), where academic learning is embedded in projects and placements with appropriate industries internationally.

This paper outlines why one Australian university, whose communication students generally have an opportunity to participate in an international internship of three to six weeks, is creating ‘Global Work Ready’ resources. The Global Work Ready project is focussed on creating resources to enable a greater pool of students to be prepared for communication industry internships in Asia. Designed to improve preparation and outcomes for students, the learning resources will be created for students before, during and after an international communication internship. We argue that these resources are required so students can: be taught how to self-assess if they are global-work-ready; utilise culture-specific resources to prepare them for international internships, particularly in Asia; and improve knowledge transfer between interns of the past, present and future to enhance their employability.

Keywords: WIL, internationalisation, globalisation, internships

Introduction

Like many Australian universities, RMIT University in Melbourne has responded to the internationalisation of education with corporate goals that include being “Global in attitude, action and presence, offering a global passport to learning and work. In particular, by promoting and facilitating international internships, the University prioritises “increasing the quality of student and staff mobility, and industry partnered activity”, and “expanding opportunities for WIL in international and cross-cultural contexts” (RMIT, 2015, p.9).

In the RMIT School of Media and Communication, increased international student mobility suits the outcome objectives of many courses. By preparing students for a globalised media environment, we recognise the need for internationally-relevant curricula that incorporates cross-cultural learning and engagement with industry and alumni. The School currently has different levels and types of short international internships and experiences across media and advertising, design, music, journalism and public relations (PR) for around 15 to 80 students per year.

The Global Work Ready project is focussed on creating resources to enable a greater pool of students who are prepared for communication industry internships in Asia. The project has been specifically designed as a small-scale project focused on two countries, Korea and Indonesia, where the university has had a long-standing commitment to send interns. Working in communication fields such as journalism and public relations in these countries can be challenging because of significant differences in freedom of speech, expectations of the press and social norms.

This paper specifically highlights the need to develop resources for Australian communication students who undertake study experiences in Asian countries, which have different political, economic and social contexts. While all international students can expect that their host nation will share a different set of assumptions and values (Hansel, 2007), a journalism internship at an international news organisation, for example, can put a

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This project accepts that universities have to ‘let go’ of students when they intern overseas, but argues that more needs to be done to ensure students are well-prepared and supported through international internship processes. By doing so, universities can enhance the student experience, mitigate risks and ultimately, improve their employability.

**Literature**

There is now wide acceptance that international internships can accelerate the learning of discipline skills and provide intercultural competence and ‘soft skills’ which enhance graduate employability (Gates, 2014; Jones & Brown, 2007; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Shoenfelt, Stone & Kottke, 2013; Sison & Brennan, 2012; Toncar & Cudmore, 2000; Trooboff, Vande Berg & Rayman, 2007; Wake, 2012). Moreover, media and communication industry practitioners acknowledge that on-the-job or work-simulated training is either essential, or at least an important adjunct to academic teaching. While much importance has been given to experiential learning experiences in the communication fields, “much of the literature is anecdotal or descriptive in nature” (Daugherty, 2011, p.470).

Communication is only one of many academic fields that values global internships. Business courses, for example, have a history of sending international interns to join offices of western organisations (see Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2010) and there is a growing body of work on the globalisation of businesses and the need for business graduates to be globally aware and competent (Clark, 2003; Feldman et al., 1999; Mello, 2006). However, little of the literature is focussed on ensuring students on internships are ready for being immersed in another culture, and less still on preparing for experiences in Asia.

This paper argues that while students undertaking internship need support and appropriate skills training, regardless of their country of destination, students going overseas must have a capacity for personal development and the flexibility and insight to immerse themselves in another culture (Woolley, 2015). To that extent, an international communication internship can learn from other fields, such as a European culinary internship, where Cullen (2010) explains:

> All internship training agreements should add value and status to the students’ learning, and international internship preparation should make provision for cultural and the personal development workshops that assist the students with their integration during the internship (p. 104)

By the end of 2016, the authors plan to have created a series of resources to fill a gap for academics sending students to communication internships. The pre-, during, and post-internship resources will be designed to enhance, rather than add to, an already-full curriculum.

**Background**

The RMIT University School of Media and Communication organises a range of short international communication internships of between three and eight weeks to Asian countries including Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. Longer internships are often considered logistically difficult because the non-teaching times (January-February and June-July) are considered the best periods for students to leave Australia without missing classes. As a result of this timeframe, we have identified a need to create better, self-directed and targeted resources to enable undergraduate students to assess if they are actually ‘culture immersion-ready’.

The Global Work Ready project aims to create a set of learning resources to assist staff and their students who are interested in undertaking communication internships in Asian workplaces. The resources being created are expected to augment those already available to the student via university-wide initiatives including: Careers Week; workshops on professional networking, managing online presence, and mock interviews; a Careers Toolkit with an online ‘WIL Ready’ set of modules; and a resume and job application reviewing service.
Academics are already required to outline to any international intern the purpose and aims of the WIL activity; the roles, tasks and expectations for meeting the stated learning outcomes; their workplace rights and responsibilities; and assessment requirements. However, none of these aims is focussed specifically on the differences of an international internship experience.

Drawing on resources created for other disciplines, and looking at the specific needs for communication internship placements, the Global Work Ready project will provide more relevant knowledge for the students to ensure they have a smooth transition to an Asian culture and workplace. We also intend to strengthen and broaden the relationship between students intending to go overseas and those who have already returned.

The current lack of resources for preparing students (between second year and third, or third and graduation) means our WIL staff have limited the risks by accepting students who are already acculturated –i.e. those who have travelled overseas, lived independently, and/or had language/cultural training etc. We would argue that students who have gained a level of cultural and contextual knowledge during an internship have an enhanced employability both in multicultural Australia and overseas.

**ToolKit to fill a need**

The Global Work Ready project has five stages: formative research; creation of learning materials/resource development; pilot testing; evaluation/refinement; and dissemination. The toolkit set components are the pre-departure ‘Global Visa’, a ‘Global Passport’ site for while students are away and a social media site, ‘Global Futures’, for alumni to connect with each other and those interested in going.

The formative research began with three months of desktop research, consultation with university colleagues involved in international placements; video interviews with students intending to undertake, currently in and returned from, Asian internships, as well as a sample of employers and key stakeholders. The researchers have identified common themes around what is missing in the process and delivery (from each perspective), the key points for a successful placement in these countries and common themes around preparation, practice and fitting back into life at home.

**Pre-departure toolkit: the global visa**

The first part of the toolkit ensures students are appropriately prepared for an internship as part of their career planning. The researchers intend to create an online self-assessment survey to help students determine their own eligibility: Am I ready for an international experience? This survey will ask questions about the students’ intercultural awareness/competence and, where appropriate, refer them to courses or programs where they can gain these skills. This is an important step in ensuring students have considered the implications and scope of specific communication issues that they might face e.g. dress codes and blasphemy in Muslim Indonesia.

A country-specific online module on history, culture, politics and technology will be created and ask the students: How much do I know about the history of the country? What form of government does it have? It will point students to information about the media/communication industry in Indonesia or Korea: What is the media/communication industry like? How does a media/communication practitioner work there? These online resources will be supported by: country-specific video interviews from students and employers and case studies; readiness checklists, further readings and hyperlinks (e.g. to DFAT, journalism ethics sites etc.).

Online tools are designed with questions that need to be answered to proceed and a completion certification system that will provide results as part of the international intern selection process in the future. These tools are being tested on volunteers across communication programs.

Although the researchers acknowledge the limited amount of time for career planning in any communication degree, this project intends to create workshop discussion questions/assessment pieces for academics; and role play/simulation/scenarios for staff in the school who have the time in class to devote to international internships.

**During the internship: global passport**

While students are in situ in Indonesia and Korea they will have access to the Global Passport site, via social media (we are testing Facebook, which we currently use, in comparison with a Google Plus-based group). This site will be a real-time online community platform where current students and alumni can discuss work issues
and support each other. The staff responsible for their placement will also be linked to the site, but it will be
designed primarily as a meeting place to be run by students and alumni.

For a number of years, journalism students have successfully used Facebook. For instance, it gave students real-
time contact with each other during the bombing of the United Nations building in Indonesia, and the testing of
the so-called hydrogen bomb in North Korea in January 2016. Nonetheless the researchers would like to explore
other options for real-time contact with students in multiple countries. In reviewing platform options, we hope to
engage young people in a future-proof online exchange platform with which they are comfortable and will
actually use.

Post internship: global futures

Another, more static, social media site is being developed as a platform open to current and past interns as well
as alumni. They will be encouraged to upload videos and photos of their experiences to help them reflect and
learn from the experience of others. Alumni will be able to post job vacancies and future internship
opportunities. As an example, a former Korea radio intern, who is now a SKY TV reporter, has created a set of
videos about his experiences for current students to view ahead of their internships.

Summary

This year-long project is designed to create learning resources for long term use by staff and students within the
School of Media and Communication and is envisaged to be adopted across the university where appropriate.
Each stage of the work is being tested with student volunteers from the undergraduate communication programs,
and reviewed by a reference committee encompassing academic internship coordinators and staff from the
University’s Education Abroad team. The project also specifically seeks input from international experts and
internship providers to ensure that their responses are incorporated into the materials. Feedback at each stage
will allow refinement of the tools as they progress. The students on internships during the June/July 2016 period
will be the first to complete a post-placement survey as part of assessing the effectiveness of the resources. The
researchers believe that the Toolkit and associated resources will be an exemplar for other disciplines to
replicate, or build upon. Once completed, the Toolkit will be distributed and disseminated across the University
for evaluation and consideration across other programs. We would also like to see it used by communication programs in other Australian universities with international internship units. This learning resource is envisaged
to enhance the employability of students entering a global workplace.

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Learning and teaching through PACE: Changing roles and environments

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This paper reports on a study which explored the implications of new roles generated within WIL-activities through the interrelationships and interconnections of university teachers with other stakeholders. We identify important elements of the context within which participants perform unfamiliar roles and experience within the hitherto unknown environments of WIL. The concept of liminality, or “in-between-ness” is used to explore the processes of role transition in WIL. Students, when undertaking a placement, for example, are neither fully ‘professional’ nor fully ‘student-like’. And similarly university teachers and supervisors at external organisations play out a set of alternate identities that differ from their official job descriptions. None of the cohorts are either fully supported in or securely ascribed these roles, and the unsettled nature of this situation for all is argued to be both a key benefit and challenge of WIL. We conclude with some recommendations for improvement in supporting all stakeholders to maximise the potential benefits of undertaking new and unfamiliar roles.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, professional identities, liminality, roles

Background

This study explored the new roles generated within and outside Universities when teachers, students and partners are brought into new interrelationships and interconnections with other stakeholders through work integrated learning (WIL) activities. This study explored the expansion of relationships and roles within a single Sydney-based University, with an explicit policy to involve students in WIL activities through its Professional and Community Engagement (PACE) program, Macquarie University. The study found that new and diverse connections of higher-education learning and teaching prompted by WIL are a key context for new occupational identities within which participants perform unfamiliar roles and experience hitherto unknown environments.

The concept of liminality was deployed in this study to explore the “in between” spaces that all participants in WIL occupy. This concept was emergent from the interview and focus group material, where it became useful to capture the transitional and uncertain nature of the movement between familiar and unfamiliar sites and roles of learning and teaching associated with WIL. The notion of liminality has been widely used in the anthropological and sociological literature since the early twentieth century (van Gennep 2004; Turner 2001), and increasingly in management and organisation studies literature during the early twenty-first (see for example Ibarra 2007), to shed light on the ambiguity of the identities of individuals transitioning between stable social roles.

The concept of liminality has proved apposite to explore the processes of role transition in WIL. Students, when undertaking a placement, for example, are neither fully ‘professional’ nor fully ‘student-like’. And similarly university teachers and supervisors at external organisations play out a set of alternate identities that differ from their official job descriptions. Both cohorts are neither fully supported in nor securely ascribed those roles, and this is both a key benefit and challenge of WIL, as discussed in the following sections.

The concept of liminality has been explored within organisational studies in two key ways:

- first, to account for the experiences of individuals who find themselves in a transitory state (e.g. Ladge et al., 2012); and
- secondly to explore the ways in which work transitions and changes in occupational identity require “identity work” which lead individuals out of a state of ambiguity or in-betweenness into new realisations via reflective practices (Beech, 2011).

It is this second understanding that is relevant to our study and findings, as the three groups of participants are all learning through participation in unfamiliar environments, at the same time as they are working within a structured framework that is supported by the University’s PACE framework.

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Research aims and intent

The project’s aims were

- To understand the different professional roles and working environments that stakeholders in PACE units engage in, and how these affect all parties and their practices.
- To assess the challenges, opportunities and practicalities involved in experiencing these new roles and environments, and appraise them from three intersecting perspectives: academics, students and workplace supervisors from partner organisations
- To generate an analysis that can be used to inform improved delivery of PACE units in particular, and WIL projects in general.

Methods/approach

This project was based on a constructivist grounded theory approach to develop a robust set of analytic categories from the focus group data (Charmaz 2000, 2006). Thus our study goes beyond the initial, ‘positivist’ version of grounded theory, which has been argued to limit its usefulness as a qualitative research method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Our approach foregrounded the interplay of participants’ unique experiences with themes emergent from the literature on learning and teaching WIL, thus deploying a ‘constructivist’ framework. It is also worth noting that the three authors have been part of PACE—two as university teachers and one as student—which further supports the need for a constructivist methodology that acknowledges the researchers’ experience in the generation of knowledge. The primary research and data analysis phases were therefore contiguous in this project, and the Research Assistants were involved in debriefing from interviews via memo-writing immediately after each focus group and throughout iterative coding. For this reason, the final report and publications were co-authored, with the RAs as third and fourth named authors.

We gathered data from the three different groups involved in WIL: teachers, workplace supervisors and students. The researchers interviewed unit convenors (n=18), workplace supervisors (n=12) and students (n=9) across a range of disciplines at Macquarie University in 2015. The small number of cases in each cohort, which could be seen as a limitation of the study, in keeping with the aims of qualitative research allowed the researchers to draw out important themes and provide context to individual experiences, rather than attempt “representativeness” (Crouch & McKenzie 2006, pp. 491-492).

The focus group approach was chosen as the desired technique for data collection, in order to bring out the commonalities of issues of changing roles and environments for all PACE stakeholders (as indicated in our 2013 PACE research project discussed in Lloyd et al., 2016) and to allow the researchers to understand the roles and environments that placements imply for each of these groups. Interviews with host supervisors, however, were used as an alternative tool as well to follow up with participants who were unable to attend the focus groups, but were keen to participate. Ethics approval was gained for the 2013 project (HREC ref. 5201300520), and we requested an amendment to cover this new tranche of research (Amendment approved 13/11/2014).

The table below specifies the number and organisational profile of participants and the type of methodology used to gather data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A: Unit Convenors and teachers</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Discipline of participants</th>
<th>Method used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts (4 departments)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty of Business and Economics (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty of Science (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty of Human Science (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 two-hour long focus groups (the first one with 3 and the second one with 4 participants); 8 one-to-one interviews and 3 via email; all based on the same semi-structured questionnaire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Group B: Workplace Supervisors       | 12                     | Not-for-profit/Community Organisations (8) |
|                                      |                        | Government (3) |
|                                      |                        | 12 one-to-one interviews (5 face to face, 3 over the phone, 4 over email), all based on the same semi-structured questionnaire. |

| Group C: Students                    | 9                      | Faculty of Arts (4 departments) |
|                                      |                        | Faculty of Business and Economics (3) |
|                                      |                        | Faculty of Human Sciences (2) |
|                                      |                        | 2 two-hour long focus groups (the first one with 4 and the second one with 5 participants), both based on the same semi-structured questionnaire. |
Results/discussion

We found that the three cohorts experience changes in identity when adopting new roles within WIL in very different ways. For example, in contrast to the somewhat linear trajectory of student to ‘worker’, the academic and workplace supervisor cohorts in particular do not undergo a unidirectional transition from a particular state or role to another. These two cohorts are constantly playing out alternate roles and identities.

Thus there is a clear need for each cohort to process these experiences in unique ways that lead to new and profound insights into their primary identity. We therefore acknowledge the existence of uneven power relations within these settings, but we also point to the work of those that have argued that despite the obvious challenges, controlled states of liminality open up the potential for creativity, flexibility and risk-taking (e.g. Tempest and Starkey, 2004; Sturdy et al., 2009; Swan et al., 2015).

Key findings from the project are:

1. The concept of risk is prevalent in the data. For all involved, there are risks each time a student goes on placement.
   a. For the unit convenor, the risks relate to placements not going smoothly, either due to a mismatch, student or supervisor personal issues, or miscommunication, which can greatly increase their workload, as well as affect the relationship between the university and partner organisations.
   b. For the host supervisor, the risk is of a similar nature: every time a student is placed there is the risk that he or she will need more support than expected, may find challenging balancing student and professional life, or may not fit in with the culture of an organisation.
   c. For the student, a series of risks are also present when they take up a placement; they may struggle to manage both student and workplace workloads, they may not have the skills or knowledge expected by their supervisors, or they may be allocated to a team of students that does not operate cooperatively.

2. Because these risks are real and the stakes involved for all parties, but students especially, there is great potential of the experience to lead to a set of rewards that are directly related to the risky environments enabled by WIL.
   a. For the unit convenor, the rewards relate to seeing their students apply and extend their existing knowledge, and undertake projects that are moving them closer to their potential careers; creating opportunities for organisations to reach their goals; and expanding their networks.
   b. For the host supervisor, the benefits stem from the potentially innovative ideas and energy as well as the enhanced research capacity that students bring to their organisations.
   c. For the student, the benefits are a combination of both tangible and tacit skills that are unique to the workplace, and a sense of confidence in achieving their work within the context of the organisation’s own goals.

3. It is a combination of these first two themes that provides the distinctive construction of knowledge that creates WIL as “real world with training wheels” for students in particular. Students are able to access an “experience without consequences”, while still having the pedagogical structure of a University course to enable them to work on integrating the experience into their identity as a student.

4. Ambiguous spaces/environments (liminality) are experienced by all cohorts with varying kinds of tensions and efficacies, but this liminality is a constant for convenors and supervisors, whereas students experience their moves into and out of a liminal status. The implications of this finding points to a need for professional development or similar processes to be employed to allow convenors and supervisors to actualise the benefits of being involved in WIL activities within their primary role.

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Experiencing India: Choice, communication and individual change

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Western Sydney University had ten years’ experience of sending students on international internships prior to the introduction of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) by the Australian Government. WSU also has as a graduate attribute an ability to apply their knowledge to diverse contexts. This paper identifies issues emerging from this level of experience in the international internship space. The shift from an individual and independent international experience to a broader program offered to students, has seen increased communication and group problems emerge. This is despite a rigorous recruitment and selection process used to ensure the suitability of students travelling to countries such as India and Vietnam. Gibson’s (2004) situated learning framework is utilised to analyse the recruitment and selection process. A greater emphasis on understanding the comparison of the pre-departure context of the student to the re-entry context of the student allows understanding of future adjustments to improve the overall mobility experience. The major recommendation is significant support for student adjustments pre-departure, in the early stages of the internship experience, and following their return to Australia.

Keywords: Outbound mobility, transformative learning, India, pre-placement

Background

Fewer Western Sydney University (WSU) students have been participating in outbound mobility programs than students from other Australian universities (i-graduate, 2015). WSU has the largest number of Low Socio Economic Status (LSES) students in the sector (Department of Education and Training, 2015) with a higher percentage of students working while studying, and working longer hours (Universities Australia, 2013).

Between 2004 and 2015 to encourage outbound mobility, the WSU School of Business provided ten grants of $3,000 annually for students to undertake international co-curricular internships during the summer vacation. These grants were managed in collaboration with the WSU Careers office, and students were sent to India and Vietnam. During this period, 68 Business students undertook international internships at leading organisations in both countries, with students working and living independently. Despite the grants, it was never easy to recruit students. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the main deterrents are the cost and a lack of awareness of the importance of an international experience. The students who were finally selected however seemed to thrive and almost all indicated an extraordinary experience (Western Sydney University Careers, 2014; Wester Sydney University Careers, 2015).

In 2014 the Australian government changed the outbound mobility landscape, offering a large number of grants under the New Colombo Plan (NCP), Asia Bound and Short Term Mobility Program. Universities which had low outbound mobility in the past, such as WSU, were targeted and received substantial funding. Additionally Overseas Study Help funding was now easy to access, lessening the financial burden for students.

The Careers unit was confident that with ten years’ experience, there were quality systems in place which could be easily scaled up to suit the NCP. In 2014 and 2015 in conjunction with academic staff, the Careers unit was successful in getting grants for 30 Business, 25 Construction Management and 30 Humanities students. It was decided that the Business and Humanities students would benefit from an ‘Immersion Experience’, going as a group and working in pairs at non-profit organisations. The students worked at NGOs for four days of the week and on the fifth day attended classes at a leading college in Mumbai.

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While this Immersion experience was a great plan, with the best of intentions and allowing transformative learning (Lough, 2009) to take place, several problems emerged which included difficulties in managing the expectations of students and dysfunctional group dynamics.

This paper does not seek to make generalisations, but attempts to identify the kinds of issues emerging from over ten years’ experience in the international internship space (Tayjebee, Broinowski, & Eagle, 2009). It is important to identify and address the problems faced to navigate potential risks and effectively manage the risks at hand (Gibson & Busby, 2009). What follows concentrates on the areas of choices made by the students and the university, and communication as the enabling factor which ensures the success, or otherwise, of student mobility.

Choice: choices made by the applicant and the university

Choice in the context of international internships means two types of choices, those of the student applying for the internship and those granting the opportunity for the internship.

First the choice by the student to apply for the internship opportunity is a mix of situational factors and ‘beliefs’, interpreted as being beliefs about ‘choice, agency, opportunity, aspiration, expectation, culture and the self’ (Gibson, 2004). Gibson (2004) utilises the concept of habitus proposed originally by Bourdieu (1997) to understand the personal outcomes of international internships. Habitus proposes that ‘human agents are historical animals who carry within their bodies acquired sensibilities and categories that are the sedimented products of their past social experiences’ (Wacquant, 2011, p.82) and has specific characteristics being:

- a set of acquired dispositions,
- practical mastery operates beneath the level of consciousness and discourse,
- sets of dispositions vary by social location and trajectory:
- socially-constituted conative and cognitive structures that make up habitus are malleable and transmissible because they result from pedagogical work.

Individuals develop their cultural capital through habitus ‘work’ as a result of these Indian international internships. Individual personal change is something that has been observed during the years of the various programs. Students have been able to discuss their experience at interviews and include the internships as part of their resume and overall career development (Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010). It is therefore important to assess that an applicant is capable of engaging in their own personal development during the immersion experience.

The choice process for the university included an application process and an interview. The interview questions attached in Appendix A are based on seeking specific information from the applicant.

The applicant choice to apply for an internship

Application rates are often low so the choice to apply for the internships, linked with an individual’s habitus, becomes important. The first interview question on how this experience fits into the applicant’s short- and long-term career plans is asked to ascertain the intersection between the applicant’s aspirations and expectations, and how they view the opportunity as linked to Gibson’s (2004) choice and agency beliefs.

Question three on the individual adjustments required hints at the level of understanding of the habitus ‘work’ that is identified by the student at the time of interview. It also makes the applicant think carefully about the cultural comparisons that will occur. The sixth question provides an opportunity for the applicant to reflect on specific personal attributes that they wish to develop.

The university choosing the appropriate applicant

The second form of choice is by those deciding who is capable of undertaking the internship and if there are any relevant behaviours that are seen to potentially impact the internship. The behaviours exhibited by the applicants are important due to the reputation and visibility of the university emerging from internships (Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner, 2015).

The second question explores specific resourcefulness behaviours that applicants can answer showing this behaviour in any given context. This links to the behaviourally-anchored interviews (Legge, 1995; Searle, 2003) that are the dominant model of business interviews and are seen to predict future behaviours of the applicant.
Question four hints at the research capacities of the applicant and their ability to source information relevant to their current and future context. This skill is essential in developing the applicants skills and competencies, in this instance into the international context (Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner, 2015).

The context of the internship is explored in the fifth question where curriculum and context are matched. Reciprocity emerging from the internship is a key element of engaged learning and students need to see the link between the internship and their own learning (Laplante, 2009).

**Situated Learning**

Situated learning is the only element of Gibson’s (2004) framework not fully explored during interviews in the Gibson framework. Academic referees and non-academic referees were requested in previous years; however it was rare to contact the referees unless there was doubt as to the suitability of the applicant.

Enhancing cross cultural competence is a key element of these internships to India (Mikhaylov, 2014). In the current immersion experience, working with charitable organisations is directed at understanding socio cultural factors. Students also may experience difficulties settling on their return due to reverse culture shock (Kartoshkina, 2015).

**Communication**

Throughout all programs to India, problems have emerged. Communication is one such broad problem that was identified at all stages. The main problems with communication stemmed from student preparedness for their overseas experience, student expectations versus the reality of the experience, and culture shock. These had various critical impacts on the student, industry partner experience and the university experience.

**Recruitment**

The focus of the communication strategy is to cultivate engagement with and awareness of short-term mobility and NCP. The first immersion iteration received 58 applications from humanities students for the 10 placements on offer. This is starkly contrasted with the second and third immersion where applications from both humanities and business students were poor. The lack of applications impacted the ability to select the most capable candidates from a larger pool for the overseas experience.

**Pre-departure**

Students are expected to attend at least 3 of the 5 pre-departure workshops delivered before their embarkation. These workshops cover important issues such as visas, insurance, flight and accommodation arrangements, budgets and intercultural awareness. Lack of student attendance and unavailability of the pre-departure workshops online or as learning modules negatively impacted student expectations of their overseas experience. There was a general lack of communication between students and their respective industry partner in the pre-departure phase. Students expected more time for leisure activities and did not understand their industry partner’s expectations. The lack of intercultural awareness, understanding of responsibilities, the expectations placed upon the students by the university and industry partners, all geared the students to having a ‘holiday attitude’. This communication breakdown compounded the cultural shock experienced by the students in their first two weeks (Furnham, 1993).

**Internship**

Student expectations and lack of student preparedness for their overseas experience due to not attending predeparture training negatively impacted the severity of culture shock the students experienced. While overseas, language barriers, unreliable Wi-Fi connections and lack of on-ground-support in the first week compounded the culture shock in some students. Heightened culture shock led to aberrant behaviour in some students. For example, one student was heavily monitored by the university as mental issues and alcohol abuse became apparent during the period in India. A few students dealt with their culture shock by forming group cliques which, while creating a cohesive group, isolated other students. The third iteration of the immersion program became particularly difficult to manage due to the development of an early negative attitude towards the experience by a few students which led to difficulties facilitating communication between the university and the group.
Returning

Many universities find it difficult to communicate with students when they return. As they go back to work and study, students do not reply to requests for evaluations, feedback, and promoting to prospective students (AIM Overseas, 2011, p. 186) This program had the same difficulty and this lack of communication from students. This lack of communication affected the project team’s ability to assist students with their reflection on the experience they just had and inhibited the ability to enhance the program. Some students may therefore struggle to articulate what they had learned and identify their achievement in personal, interpersonal and career development terms (Kartoshkina, 2015).

Conclusion

Increased independence reflected from these internships may mean a change of habitus through increased confidence in an individual’s problem-solving capacities (Molony, 2011). Any support that is provided (Lough, 2009; Rosser, 2012) needs to carefully consider the impact on this sense of individual independence. Group cohesion, while important, is secondary to individual student development.

Culture shock in travelling to India for the first time is inevitable. However this is exacerbated by no direct support in the first week of the experience. This support can change the lens in which students view and choose to experience India. Support during the first week of these internships is to be considered due to significant levels of cultural shock experienced by some students (Rosser, 2012).

Finally, considering the context of the student in terms of situated learning is critical. Any efforts prior to departure on providing strategies to adapt students from their current context into this new international context could prove essential to the students’ understanding of the individual changes that will occur. Reflective opportunities (Lough, 2009) and re-entry workshops planned a few months after the experience, may assist with adjustments that are required (Kartoshkina, 2015).

References


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Appendix A

Interview questions asked by the University seeking specific information from the applicants as to their suitability for international internships

1. **Motivation**
   Why did you apply for this internship/how does it fit in with your short or long term career objectives?

2. **Resourcefulness**
   You will be in a foreign country without a support network and could face a range of difficulties. We therefore need to select a student who is resourceful and fairly independent. Bearing this in mind can you tell us of an instance when you faced a problem in your personal or professional life and how you overcame it.

3. **Adjusting to a multicultural environment**
   What are the major difficulties you think you will face when you go to India? How will you cope? (To prompt re living in multi-cultural country, language barrier etc)

4. **Understanding of country (Research capacity)**
   Can you tell me about some points of similarity and dissimilarity between Australia and India/Vietnam? (To prompt as required re population, size, language, religion, government)

5. **Understanding of organisation and work**
   (This will depend on which internship(s) the student has applied for. Need to also check that the student has completed relevant units.)

6. **Special qualities of the student**
   Can you tell us about three of your strengths which we should consider when making our selection for these internships.

7. **Administrative**
   - Willing to undertake an internship which s/he has not applied for
   - Able to go to India for 5 or more weeks during the summer vacation
   - Will be returning to UWS next year
   - Australian citizen or PR
   - Access to $3,000

8. **Verbal communication and interpersonal skills**
   (To be noted during interview)
Developing students’ employability and work readiness within tourism and hotel management

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Today’s business environments are continually changing, and as organisations change, so do the requirements of their workforce. Evolving workforces represent a challenge for universities to ensure students’ learning outcomes remain relevant. A further concern for universities and students is the increasing competition for graduate positions. These factors are placing additional pressure on universities to deliver work-ready graduates with the necessary capabilities to meet current industry demands. The course Career Development is a recently established course that aims to support students’ professional and career development and facilitate a successful transition from university to work. An evaluation of this course was undertaken to determine its effectiveness in developing students’ employability and to also assess the contribution of three different experiential learning opportunities offered within the course.

Keywords: Employability, career development, work integrated learning, higher education

Introduction

Business organisations and the environment in which they operate are currently undergoing significant change. This progress has seen the notion of employability become increasingly important. Furthermore, the higher education sector is also experiencing change, particularly with rising expectations, stronger competition and growing student diversity. These elements represent increasing challenges for universities to produce employable, work-ready graduates (Leong & Kavanagh, 2013; Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2009). Career Development is a final year course designed to consolidate students’ knowledge and understanding of professional practice and employability. This endeavour is facilitated through a combination of in-class and experiential learning activities which will be evaluated within this paper.

Employability and the current Australian university sector

The notion of employability has existed for a number of years, however, there has been a growing interest, particularly in university graduate employability over the past decade (Lowden, Hall, Elliot, & Lewin, 2011). The term employability can be ambiguous and often difficult to articulate and define (Andrews & Higson, 2008). On one hand, the term can describe graduates’ professional and academic skills, whilst on the other it can also refer to graduates’ specific employment outcomes (Andrews & Higson, 2008). From the perspective of employers, employability often refers to work readiness, that is, the possession of the relevant skills, knowledge, behaviours and commercial awareness that enable graduates to make positive contributions to organisations, soon after commencing employment (Mason et al., 2009).

There are several reasons why employability is gaining an increasing focus within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This attention can be in part attributed to supply and demand, both in the increasing number of students undertaking university degrees, and the decreasing number of available graduate positions. As a result of these market conditions, many universities in Australia are now strategically addressing employability (Universities Australia, 2015). Previously, employability was not such a major concern of HEIs, however proponents suggest that universities now can no longer afford to overlook it (Grotkowska, Wincenciak, & Gajderowicz, 2015).

The contribution of experiential and work integrated learning (WIL) to employability

There is strong evidence to indicate that authentic work experience contextualises learning, has a strong influence on graduate employability and therefore should be integrated into course curricula wherever possible (Reddan, 2015). Indeed, one of the most significant obstacles for graduate employment, according to Bennetts

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is the lack of work-related experience. Appreciating the importance of work experience, students will also increasingly value universities that offer WIL programs when making their university selections.

The value of WIL and its contribution to employability has been validated by numerous studies. Lowden et al. (2011) determined overwhelming support for WIL from both education institutions and employers. Devins (2013) identified WIL as a key factor in improving the match between graduate skills and employers’ needs. Overall, there is growing evidence that both students and employers want and value WIL, and that WIL contributes positively to employment outcomes for students.

Research context

This research project was undertaken with a group of undergraduate students enrolled in the course, Career Development. This course is a third and final year course within the Bachelor of International Tourism and Hotel Management, at Griffith University. The course aims to support students’ transition from university to work, and within the course; students must undertake one form of experiential learning. Students can select from three experienced-based learning options: i) Industry Shadowing (working alongside and being mentored by an industry manager for a period of 30 hours); ii) Industry Experience (undertaking 75 hours of work experience); and (iii) Industry Analysis (evaluation of a degree-related organisation, with no work experience necessary). From the three experiential learning options, Industry Shadowing is limited, due to the availability of industry mentors. Industry Experience requires students to reflect on current or past work experience, and Industry Analysis, requires an evaluation of an organisation and is offered to students with no current or prior work experience.

Research aims and intent

The research project aims to identify the impact of both career development learning and work integrated learning on students’ perceived work readiness and employability. The study examines the impacts of the course on students’ employability and compares the learning outcomes of three different experiential learning opportunities. The results will be used to provide feedback on this new course and to ascertain the most effective experiential learning opportunity.

The study included two main research objectives:

1. How has the course impacted each of the following six dimensions of students’ employability?
   a. Commencement readiness?
   b. Ability to collaborate?
   c. Informed decision making?
   d. Attitude to lifelong learning?
   e. Professional practice standards?
   f. Ability to integrate theory and practice?

2. How effective were the three different experiential learning options in developing students’ employability?

Methods and approach

The study was conducted in semester two 2015 with a cohort of 84 undergraduate students who undertook the course. The instrument used for data collection incorporated the Work Readiness Scales which were previously utilised by Smith, Ferns, and Russell (2014) in an Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) WIL project. The survey instrument included 35 statements reflecting students’ perceived level of work readiness, which were categorised into six dimensions of students’ employability. The questionnaire was completed by students at the beginning of the semester, to gauge their perceived existing levels of work readiness, and also at the end of the semester, to measure any changes following their experiential learning opportunity and class activities. Students were invited to respond using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated ‘not at all’ and 5 indicated ‘completely’. Students were also requested to indicate which of the three options of experiential learning had been undertaken. A copy of the survey instrument can be found as appendix A.
An independent t-test was used to determine any significant differences in students’ perceived level of work readiness, and to also evaluate the effectiveness of the three different experiential learning options. During the final survey, students were also invited to give qualitative comments to elaborate (refer to appendix B).

Results and discussion

The following findings are reported for research objective one, using the six different dimensions of employability as sub-headings. A table is also provided at the end of this section summarising the results:

How has the course impacted students’ Commencement Readiness?

The post-test score for Commencement Readiness were greater than the pre-test score. This measure experienced the second largest increase in students’ perceived work readiness from the six dimensions. Several written responses were provided by students. Student A indicated “this course helped confirm my career choice”, while student B suggested “my work confidence has improved significantly as a result of this course”.

How has the course impacted students’ ability to collaborate?

Students’ perceived Ability to Collaborate also demonstrated a significant improvement during the course. Student C commented that “my teamwork, communication skills and cultural understanding have been strengthened”, whilst student D noted an improvement in their listening skills.

How has the course impacted students’ informed decision making

An improvement in the mean scores for Informed Decision Making was also evident throughout the course. Student E noted: “this course made me realise that gathering varied information was important in decision making”. Similarly, student H indicated that the course had raised their awareness of the importance of considering different alternatives before making a final decision.

How has the course impacted students’ attitude to lifelong learning?

The mean scores for Attitude to Lifelong Learning had also improved during the course. Student L suggested “this course made me realise that my learning had only just begun”, whilst student R noted: “the course helped develop a passion for on-going learning”.

How has the course impacted students’ professional practice standards?

A significant improvement in the mean scores for Professional Practice Standards was also demonstrated. Student I commented “the topic on business etiquette helped improve my professional practice”. Student N noted more confidence in preparing for a job interview.

How has the course impacted students’ ability to integrate theory and practice?

Students’ Ability to Integrate Theory and Practice also improved dramatically throughout the semester. Overall, this measure experienced the most significant increase. Several students commented on the benefits of being able to apply theory to practice. Student K suggested: “This course not only affected me as a student, but also as a person in today’s society and in life”.

In summary, the questionnaire at the commencement of the course was completed by 75 students (89% of the student cohort), and by 71 students at the end of the semester (85% of the cohort). Table 1 indicates that the scale scores collected at the completion of the course for all six dimensions were significantly greater ($p<.001$) than the scores attained by students at the commencement of the course. These results suggest that students’ overall perceived levels of work-readiness had developed significantly as a result of undertaking the course and provide a strong indication of the course’s ability to develop students’ employability skills.
Table 1: Effects of the course on students’ perceptions of employability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of employability</th>
<th>Mean - start of semester</th>
<th>SD - start of semester</th>
<th>Mean - end of semester</th>
<th>SD - end of semester</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commencement readiness</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to collaborate</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed decision-making</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to lifelong learning</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional practice standards</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to integrate theory &amp; practice</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research objective two: How effective were the three different experiential learning options in developing students’ employability?

The three different experiential learning opportunities offered to students included: Industry Shadowing (IS); Industry Experience (IE); and Industry Analysis (IA). Table 2 below summarises the effects of three types of experiential learning opportunities on students’ employability.

The mean score for Industry Shadowing improved over the semester. This option at the end of the course demonstrated the highest level of students’ perceived work readiness. One reason for this option rating the highest was, this cohort commenced with the highest levels at the beginning. This factor could be due to the higher calibre of students undertaking this experience option (which had a 5.5 (out of 7) GPA prerequisite). This group of students’ employability skills would have then been further developed throughout the course and while undertaking their industry mentorship.

The mean score for Industry Experience demonstrated the largest improvement during the course. This increase suggests students’ perceived levels of employability grow as a result of undertaking practice-based experience and class activities. Moreover, as this experience option involves the largest number of work hours, the length of work experience may also contribute positively to students’ perceived work readiness.

The mean score for Industry Analysis also improved throughout the course. However, as this experience option does not incorporate any actual work experience, this improvement would most likely have come from undertaking the course lectures, workshops and assessment. Indeed, course participation would have contributed positively to the results for all three experience options.

In summarising the results for research objective two, all three experiential learning alternatives demonstrated improvements in students’ perceived work readiness. The end of semester survey results suggest students undertaking Industry Shadowing had the highest perceived levels of work readiness. Students undertaking Industry Experience demonstrated the second highest levels of perceived work readiness, and Industry Analysis was rated third. Furthermore, a comparison of the end of semester results of students undertaking actual work experience (IE) and students with no work experience (IA) demonstrated a significant difference in students’ perceived work readiness (p <.001). This result reinforces the benefits of undertaking an actual work placement in the development of employability skills.

Table 2: Effects of three types of experiential learning opportunities on students’ employability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiential learning option</th>
<th>n – start of semester</th>
<th>Mean – start of semester</th>
<th>SD – start of semester</th>
<th>n – end of semester</th>
<th>Mean – end of semester</th>
<th>SD – end of semester</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry shadowing (IS)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry experience (IE)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry analysis (IA)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Students who undertook the course, Career Development, perceived all six dimensions of their employability were enhanced throughout the semester, with their ability to integrate theory to practice and commencement readiness indicating the most significant improvement. Students also suggested that they had a higher perceived employability as a result of undertaking an actual work placement, compared to students who undertook no actual work placement. Overall, the findings highlight the positive impact of the course on students’ employability.

References


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Appendix A

Work Readiness Scales – End of semester questionnaire

Please indicate below your intended experience option:

☑ Industry shadowing
☐ Work experience
☐ Industry analysis

There are 35 statements presented below that reflect your work readiness. Using the 1-5 scale outlined below, please record the number that is most reflective of your current ability to perform each process.

1 = not at all  2 = a little  3 = moderate amount  4 = a lot  5 = completely

1. Effectively seek work relevant to my studies
2. Present myself effectively in selection interviews
3. Evaluate how well my skills and performances fit different employment opportunities
4. Commence a job in my field and be immediately effective as a worker/ new professional
5. Display overall work readiness confidence
6. Obtain work relevant to studies
7. Work towards a compromise between opposing views when it is best for the organization
8. Ensure everyone feels heard in group discussions
9. Interact appropriately with people from different levels of management in a workplace
10. Recognize the ‘politics’ of a workplace environment
11. Interact effectively and respectfully with people from other cultures
12. Learn from and collaborate with people representing diverse backgrounds or viewpoints
13. Listen empathetically, sympathetically and with compassion to colleagues in the workplace
14. Appraise the quality of information I obtain from the web, books or other people
15. Use information and my knowledge to make reasonable decisions and then act on these
16. Weigh up risks, apply evaluation criteria to alternatives & make predictions from data
17. Collect, analyse and organize information
18. Identify the value of continuing to learn in order to improve work or professional practice
19. Identify the knowledge I lack/ need to improve in order to be effective in the workplace
20. Identify the skills I lack/ need to improve in order to be effective in the workplace
21. Be prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills
22. Understand the theories and principles in my discipline
23. Understand the practices and methods used in my discipline
24. Take responsibility and act alone with autonomy appropriate to my role & level of training
25. Seek out opportunities to develop my workplace or professional skills and/or knowledge
26. Recognise ethical practices in the workplace
27. Identify the standards of performance or practice expected in my profession
28. Develop a personal code of values or ethics
29. Interpret and follow workplace procedures
30. Seek clarification when I do not understand instructions
31. Effectively manage multiple and different priorities to achieve workplace or professional goals
32. Take responsibility and be accountable for my workplace or professional practice
33. Judge the applicability of knowledge gained in my studies to the workplace
34. Apply knowledge and skills gained in my studies to the workplace
35. Recognize and value the role of theoretical ideas in work or professional contexts
Appendix B

End of semester questionnaire

Please review your responses to questions 1-6 of the Work Readiness questionnaire. How has the course (WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS, PLACEMENT) affected your COMMENCEMENT READINESS?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Please review your responses to questions 7-13. How has the course (WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS, PLACEMENT) affected your ABILITY TO COLLABORATE?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Please review your responses to questions 14-17. How has the course (WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS, PLACEMENT) affected your INFORMED DECISION-MAKING?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Please review your responses to questions 18-23. How has the course (WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS, PLACEMENT) affected your ATTITUDE TO LIFELONG LEARNING?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Please review your responses to questions 24-32. How has the course (WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS, PLACEMENT) affected your PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARDS?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Please review your responses to questions 33-35. How has the course (WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS, PLACEMENT) affected your ABILITY TO INTEGRATE THEORY AND PRACTICE?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your participation.
Assessment of student learning in WIL: Workload implications for university staff

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Professional and Community Engagement, Macquarie University
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Professional and Community Engagement, Macquarie University

Assessment of student learning has been identified as one of the biggest challenges facing WIL practitioners. Assessment of WIL differs to assessment in other university classroom-based courses because of the involvement of an external partner as well as the complexities of assessing learning in WIL, which is often more holistic in nature. This paper investigates workload implications of WIL assessment for staff at an Australian University, with findings sourced from a broader study examining the amount of time and types of tasks involved in the teaching, administration and support of WIL courses. Over two years 34 courses were surveyed and 18 staff participated in individual interviews. Analysis of survey data reveals assessment of student learning is the largest single contributor to staff workload in WIL courses, with qualitative data providing some insight into the reasons for this. This paper reports preliminary findings from the study, noting implications for policy and practice, as well as future research.

Keywords: Workload, assessment of WIL, external partners, student learning

Introduction

Assessment of student learning outcomes has been identified as one of the “biggest challenges” facing developers of WIL programs (Orrell, 2011, p. 9). Although assessment of student learning is a fundamental part of any university course, the nature of these activities for WIL courses is more complex. A number of WIL-specific issues have been reported in the literature, many of which have potential workload implications. The first involves responsibility for assessment as there is often the direct involvement of a third stakeholder, i.e. an external partner. The partner may be required to directly contribute to assessment, as is the case with practice based courses, such as nursing, teaching and engineering, where supervisors could be called on to make a judgement about student proficiency in order to meet professional accreditation standards. Supervisor involvement in the assessment of WIL frequently extends beyond the domain of professionally accredited courses, however, so as to enable partners to provide feedback on the broader capabilities displayed by the student during their WIL experience. Indeed, collaboration between industry/community partners and universities is being encouraged more broadly for assessment as well as other aspects of curriculum design (Smith, Ferns, & Russell, 2014). Partners may be reluctant to collaborate or engage with assessment for a variety of reasons and/or may not have the capability to do so (Mackaway, Winchester-Seeto, Coulson, & Harvey, 2011; McNamara, 2013), therefore requiring additional support from academics with attendant workload implications.

Secondly, there are difficulties specifying standards appropriate to WIL, including the extent to which WIL activities can be reliably and validly measured and graded (e.g. Connaughton, Edgar, & Ferns, 2014; Mackaway et al., 2011; McNamara, 2013). The variability of workplace/community learning in terms of ‘situatedness’, unpredictability and authenticity means that assessment needs to be responsive to individual circumstances (i.e. often it cannot be prescribed to all students undertaking the same course), and does not necessarily suit exams and other traditional methods of assessment (Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, in press). A diverse range of assessment strategies may be required such as reports, oral presentations, reflections, case studies, critical incident analyses and portfolios (Connaughton et al., 2014; Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, in press). Reflecting the diversity of possible approaches, it is important that time for experimentation in assessment be allowed for and encouraged to support the adoption of the most appropriate assessment regime for a particular WIL course.

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(Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, in press). Related to this is the need to assess learning that is more holistic in nature (Brodie & Irving, 2007), e.g. development of knowledge, skills, capabilities and personal transformation.

This paper will report preliminary findings relating to workload implications for the assessment of student learning in WIL, sourced from a larger study investigating the workload associated with teaching, administering and supporting WIL courses at an Australian University. WIL experiences at the University are offered through an institution-wide program called PACE (Professional and Community Engagement). PACE encapsulates a broad range of WIL experiences including service learning, community development projects, internships, fieldwork, practicums and industry panels with project mentoring. Most courses are convened by academics in particular disciplines (e.g. business, statistics, sociology, psychology) although a range of interdisciplinary courses are also available. Course convenors are supported by systems, procedures and resources developed and delivered by academic and professional staff in Faculty-based PACE teams and a central PACE office.

**Method**

Participants (20 course convenors, three non-academic/professional staff) involved in the teaching, administering and supporting of WIL at the university completed a survey which captured information on the amount of time and type of tasks involved in the design and delivery of their WIL course. The survey consisted of two parts: a ‘preliminary’ survey which captured demographic information about the course and participant (e.g. the type of WIL activity that students undertake, the location of the activity etc.) and a ‘weekly’ survey that captured preparation work and work associated with the delivery of the course across nine categories of workload tasks: curriculum development/preparation; curriculum delivery; assessment of student learning; student-related tasks; partner-related tasks; administration; risk assessment/legal/ethics/insurance; PACE-related research; and PACE-related organisational service and leadership. Thirty-four course offerings were surveyed (some courses were surveyed multiple times) over 2013-2014 through online survey software Qualtrics (with a small number of participants opting to complete surveys via Excel spreadsheets). A more comprehensive description of the survey instrument and data collection process is reported in Clark, Rowe, Cantori, Bilgin and Mukuria (2014). Eighteen staff (16 academic course convenors, two professional staff) also participated in semi-structured interviews. Questions encouraged participants to reflect on various aspects of teaching, administering and supporting their WIL courses. Interview transcripts were coded by the research team, first individually and then collectively, using NVivo software Version 10; data coded in relation to assessment of student learning were subsequently extracted and forms the focus of this paper.

**Results**

Analysis of survey findings reveal that assessment of student learning is the single most important contributor to course convenor workload in WIL courses ($M = 2.5$ hours, $SD = 1.8$ hours), followed by partner-related tasks ($M = 1.6$ hours, $SD = 3.2$ hours) and administration ($M = 1.5$ hours, $SD = 2.1$ hours), as measured by mean workload hours (per student per course). It was somewhat surprising to the research team that assessment took up so much time in comparison to other tasks: it was initially expected that student- and partner-related tasks would have a higher workload given the amount of effort involved in organising suitable WIL activities for students. Interestingly, despite being the most time consuming task according to survey data, assessment was mentioned less frequently than other workload tasks in interviews with course convenors. This could be because assessment, while different in WIL courses, remains a key part of any academic course, while tasks such as partner development, many student-related tasks, risk assessment etc. are unique to WIL and may be more salient in participants’ minds (particularly if they perceive their workload is not being recognised in these areas).

A key overarching theme identified through interviews was that both teaching staff and students felt increased responsibility and pressure in relation to assessment in WIL because project deliverables and assessment tasks were often tied to business deliverables/outputs for partners/clients requiring the application of solutions to communities, e.g. projects, reports, development of mobile phone apps/other materials such as information booklets, events. Specifically, there was a perceived need for assessment to be high quality to meet partner expectations and avoid reputational risk. Participants also emphasised the importance of respecting students’ work and recognising the effort they invest. As noted by one participant (11), “to respect their [students’] work we have to be allowed the hours it takes [to assess]”, rather than restricting assessment time to that dictated by existing workload models. Participants reported that ensuring high quality assessment required more time to design and mark, and there was the potential for additional supervisory work (e.g. enquiries and applications for special considerations from stressed and anxious students).
Further analysis (Table 1) of workload across different modes of delivery revealed that assessment-related workload (as measured by median hours per course/per student) increases when partner/activities are sourced by University staff, when students partake in individual activities (such as an internship/individual project), and when WIL activities are located off-campus. Interview data provides some insight into why the ‘individualised’ nature of assessment in WIL courses is a key driver of workload. Many of the WIL activities in these courses involve fairly long individual placements, which can require increased student support, e.g. maintaining collaborative learning spaces where regular student posts make up part of the assessment (e.g. Facebook) in addition to the factors identified earlier. Related to this is the marking of WIL assessments which, unlike those in other courses, do not cover a common core of information and hence can be more time consuming. Convenors also reported that the work involved in designing and developing quality assessment was time consuming, e.g. constant “re-jigging” assessments from one session offering to another. Marking individual student assessments and projects, as well as managing student queries could be taxing: “Every time you've got a new assessment, more questions come with it” (Participant 6).

The increased workload associated with assessment of University-sourced WIL activities and those located off campus may be explained largely by the nature of long term partnership commitments involved in these types of placements. Building and maintaining long term partnerships can, over time, reduce the amount of “lost effort” that occurs with having to constantly source and induct new partners, and repeat communications about course learning outcomes, assessment etc. However, as noted earlier, the importance of maintaining these partnerships can also make the assessment of student learning a particularly “high stakes” activity. In addition, even long term partners may require students to engage in different WIL activities each semester/year and this can result in ongoing work associated with the modification of assessments. On the positive side, while there was a perception that WIL assessment requires additional workload compared to that incurred in regular classroom teaching, a number of respondents indicated that it could also be more enjoyable for staff: “Marking, it's not easy but it's enjoyable…When you have different projects, I mean you get excited reading different things all the time” (Participant 18). Such benefits can also extend to students, as regular assessments provide students with timely and frequent formative feedback, and thus opportunities to improve the quality of their outputs/deliverables to partners and industry/community clients.

### Discussion

Assessment of student learning is a crucial part of quality WIL (Smith et al., 2014). It is also a major contributor to workload associated with the delivery of WIL courses. Our research reveals a number of contributing factors in assessment which can impact on staff workload, many of which reflect the broader challenges of WIL assessment reported in the literature, e.g. the involvement of an external partner, the individualised nature of assessment and establishing valid and reliable measures of holistic student learning (e.g. Mackaway et al., 2011; McNamara, 2013). Several participants commented that workload models don’t currently “allow for a lot of development of course materials associated with assessment tasks” (Participant 15), nor do they account for the time required to effectively assess (mark/grade) student learning in WIL. Related to this issue was the perception that WIL assessment requires additional workload compared to that incurred in regular classroom teaching, a number of respondents indicated that it could also be more enjoyable for staff: “Marking, it's not easy but it's enjoyable…When you have different projects, I mean you get excited reading different things all the time” (Participant 18). Such benefits can also extend to students, as regular assessments provide students with timely and frequent formative feedback, and thus opportunities to improve the quality of their outputs/deliverables to partners and industry/community clients.

Data collection for the ‘PACE Workloads Study’ is in its final stages and will be compiled and analysed over the coming months. A more thorough analysis of the broader data set (2013-2015) in relation to assessment will also be undertaken. Our findings suggest a number of implications for policy and practice. For example, collaborative assessment models, incorporating input from all three stakeholder groups – external partners, academics and students – have been proposed as a way of enabling WIL assessment to meet the unique context and situation that each student faces while undertaking their WIL activity (McNamara, 2013) as well as improving employability/work-readiness outcomes (Smith et al., 2014). Such strategies may be beneficial, but can also have workload implications for staff which need to be carefully considered. Situatedness,
unpredictability and authenticity are particularly salient issues for WIL assessment. For example, while it is important for the delivery of WIL courses to remain ‘situated’ in disciplines rather than generalised internship units, there is a tendency by higher education institutions to centralise and generalise WIL provision. PACE differs in that the vast majority (90%) of the 77 different PACE courses on offer are located within disciplines. However, it is important for students to also have the chance to work together in interdisciplinary courses, which is one of the roles of Faculty PACE courses. Our findings suggest that existing WIL workload models may need to be re-visited, teaching practices adjusted and further consideration given to factors such as staff expertise, experience and connectedness. Given the recent impetus to expand WIL and student internships not only within undergraduate programs, but also postgraduate programs including doctoral research (e.g. Watt, 2015), it is important that universities identify and recognise the various aspects of assessment that can impact on staff workload in the design and delivery of quality WIL.

References


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Win / Win! Embedded Work Integrated Learning in action

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Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is widely accepted as an effective pedagogical strategy and a quality learning experience which enhances students’ employability. Embedded Work Integrated Learning (EWIL) is one specific model of this teaching and learning strategy which adheres to quality WIL benchmarks and is effective in fulfilling specified learning outcomes. This paper outlines the curriculum design of a specific EWIL program currently implemented in a teacher education degree and uses industry partners’ responses as evidence of successful attainment of EWIL learning outcomes. Industry partners were interviewed in a semi-structured format responding to questions on the effectiveness of the EWIL program. Results demonstrate that this EWIL enhances students’ employability, industry partners are better resourced to provide improved delivery of organisational objectives and the university also benefits by fulfilling the obligation to produce work-ready graduate teachers. This ‘win / win’ scenario secures the EWIL program’s inclusion in this HPE teaching degree.

Keywords: EWIL, curriculum design, evaluation, teaching and learning

What is EWIL?

The term Work Integrated Learning (WIL) encompasses a plethora of experience-based models of learning, customarily identified by their integration of theory and practice and common goal of facilitating students’ smooth transition to successful members of the workforce (Ferns, Campbell, & Zegwaard, 2014; Smith, 2012). One particular model of WIL, known as Embedded Work Integrated Learning (EWIL), uses strategic placement of work experiences throughout the curriculum; the work placements are strategically woven or explicitly embedded into a subject throughout a semester and into subjects throughout the degree. Students learn theoretical aspects of a profession and are then placed in suitable work scenarios for a given timeframe, where they may implement learnt theory, reflect and critique their experiences and then apply their edification. Students’ learning and development over this time is purposefully scaffolded. As EWIL is a subgroup of WIL, acknowledged benchmarks of WIL provide appropriate measures for analysis of EWIL design and evaluation (Campbell, Russell, & Higgs, 2014; Wingrove & Turner, 2015).

Design of EWIL

Designing a quality EWIL curriculum requires consideration of myriad factors. Most notably:

- EWIL placement within a unit, year of course and whole degree should be strategic (Campbell et al., 2014).
- Individual EWIL must align with learning outcomes, be designed to suit students’ levels of development and preparedness to expand their professional repertoire (Bosco & Ferns, 2014; Campbell et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2006).
- Incorporating critically-reflective practices for students is paramount for transformative learning experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Wingrove & Turner, 2015).
- Providing diverse EWIL experiences, using multiple relevant pedagogies, and ensuring adequate resources are available are all key factors for an inclusive EWIL (Winchester-Seeto et al., 2015).
- EWIL placements require planned preparation and should be mutually beneficial to all stakeholders (Kay, Russell, Winchester-Seeto, Rowe, & Le Clus, 2014; J. Orrell, 2004).
- Evaluation of the program is integral to improving future implementations and maximising EWIL effectiveness (Campbell et al., 2014; Smith, 2014a).

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Evaluating EWIL

A quality EWIL will incorporate an evaluation process (Billett, 2009; Patrick et al., 2008). A robust evaluation process should compare EWIL outcomes against prescribed learning objectives, call for feedback from all stakeholders and be instrumental in developing and refining the program for future implementations (Jackson, 2015; Smith, 2014a). At the heart of EWIL, is the provision of authentic, real-world experiences in which students are able to integrate theory and practice (Smith, 2014a; Smith, Ferns, Russell, & Cretchley, 2014). These aspects should not only be woven into the curriculum design, but given due consideration in the evaluation process. Given this strategy, the following section outlines an EWIL that is believed to meet the requirements for a robust and successful model.

EWIL in a HPE degree

This paper focuses on an EWIL program, embedded within a Health and Physical Education (HPE) degree.

In HPE330, Adapted and Inclusive Practice for Physical Education, a third year unit in a four year HPE degree, students identify and develop learning, teaching and assessment skills to support the needs of people with special needs. Students plan, adapt and implement physical activity sessions and develop a deep understanding of the aetiology of, and specific limitations related to, a variety of disabilities. At the completion of HPE330, students are expected to have achieved a number of outcomes, including being able to:

- Describe a range of disabilities and the implications these would have on physical activity
- Understand the broad cross-section of stakeholders involved in regard to the education of students with special needs and that all views should be treated with respect
- Formulate, implement and evaluate a series of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) sessions for a student with special needs
- Outline issues that are relevant to the teaching, learning and assessment for students with disabilities.

This EWIL program is conducted over a 13 week semester utilising a combination of lecture and tutorial classes. Semester begins with 2 hour weekly lectures which prepare students in regard to knowledge of special needs, students with special needs and appropriate teaching strategies. In this time, industry partners also join the lectures to communicate their perspective about expectations, general information for their organisation and specific information about their students. Lecturer and industry partners collaborate in assigning students a ‘buddy’ – a student with special needs from the industry partner school.

Tutorials run for a separate 1.5 hours per week over 13 weeks, of which 10 involve working with industry partners. The tutorials provide an authentic work environment for students to implement, explore and refine their teaching repertoire. Industry partner staff and the university lecturer are in attendance to mentor and support students before, during and after each tutorial. This unit also requires students to work with an industry partner to run an inclusive Athletics Carnival on their behalf. This involves fulfilling key roles involved with the administration and implementation of a sports carnival.

Approach

The aim of this paper is to outline the design of a specific EWIL program, identify evidence-based outcomes of the program and evaluate its effectiveness as a teaching and learning strategy. Taken from a larger mixed methods study using a triangulated design, where the quantitative and qualitative components hold equal weight, this paper reports on the qualitative data only.

Contribution

This paper contributes to the field and holds significance for universities using or intending to use EWIL; it is instrumental in justifying the inclusion of EWILs in curriculum design and/or refining current EWIL curricula. Information relating to EWIL design and potential outcomes also enlighten student and industry partner stakeholders to the benefits of EWIL inclusion. The paucity of literature on EWIL, specifically in the area of teacher education, will also be addressed.
Data Collection

Industry partners (two local secondary colleges and a regional secondary colleges’ sports association, all with 5-10 year histories of providing EWIL placement opportunities for this HPE degree), were interviewed in regard to their perceptions of the program, using a semi-structured interview format. After gaining institution ethics approval, interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded using an emerging theme model. Industry partner responses specific to the design, outcomes and evaluation of HPE330’s EWIL were isolated for the purpose of this paper. Student responses were also sought, in line with Smith’s (2014b) recommendation for input from all stakeholders, but inclusion of this data exceeds the scope of this paper. A limitation of the study is that only EWIL placements in one University subject were used; the HPE degree involves more EWIL placements and these could be investigated in further studies. The following section outlines the participant responses in line with effective EWIL design factors outlined previously.

Results / discussion

Interviews with industry partners revealed strong support for the EWIL program design and its effectiveness in fulfilling learning outcomes.

The integration of theory and practice is a definitive characteristic of EWIL (Ferns et al., 2014; Smith, 2014a). This incorporates implementation opportunities, reflection on current theory and practice and critique of implementation experiences (Jackson, 2015; Smith, 2014b). HPE330’s curriculum design fits this description admirably, particularly with the opportunity for critical reflection and reimplementation of students’ teaching performances. Harold, one of the industry partners, reflected on the nature of the course design.

Because it’s embedded, it gives the students a chance to weekly review their professional practice. With this program, they try it, they review it, and they try it again, and they review it again…work out what went well and what strategies worked for them…I think that’s a good system. (Harold, industry partner)

Provision of authentic, real world experiences is another accepted benchmark of quality EWIL (Bosco & Ferns, 2014; Smith, 2012, 2014b). HPE330 presented ample opportunity for students to experience a variety of encounters, offering occasions to exercise autonomy and encounter responsibility and consequences of their practices as evidenced by Jenny, an industry partner.

Allows students to see the process from start to finish of the carnivals…get to see behind the scenes all the way through to the finished product…gives …an insight into what to expect when they get a job. (Jenny, industry partner)

Industry partners identified the organisation and preparation of the HPE330 curriculum as a real strength. Combining these characteristics with open dialogue and a flexible, considerate approach, ensured the program’s effectiveness was maximised; this notion is supported by research (Kay et al., 2014; Patrick et al., 2008; Winchester-Seeto et al., 2015) and the following quote from industry partner Harold.

They’re always organised … [university lecturer] always comes out well in advance to get us organised with the dates. (Harold, industry partner)

This notion of partnership helps not only the students but has positive effects for the staff in both institutions. Wendy, another industry partner sums the collaboration up in the following way.

The consistency between (university lecturer) running the (university) side of it and myself running the (local school) side, means that we both know what we’re trying to achieve. Both organisations know that the program benefits all involved so we work well together. (Wendy, industry partner)

The strategic placement of this EWIL in the third year of the HPE degree and over the 13 week semester, accounts for the degree students’ stage of development and allows for scaffolding of learning across the program, adhering to principles of quality EWIL (Campbell et al., 2014).

I think that it works well that you come to us… so by the time we go to (activity sessions) there is already familiarity. [The uni] students know what to expect. (Wendy, industry partner)
HPE330 curriculum design also follows the inclusive WIL guidelines (Winchester-Seeto et al., 2015) of offering flexible and diverse experiences (Campbell et al., 2014) and a range of teaching practices as endorsed by industry partner, Jenny.

It’s very cooperative, very flexible – obviously to accommodate the range of students that we are working with, as well as the level of students at (uni) that we’re working with. (Jenny, industry partner)

Most notably, HPE330 EWIL is beneficial for all stakeholders; this concept is endorsed by research (Kay et al., 2014; Janice Orrell, 2011; Patrick et al., 2008) and through the following interview response.

It’s very positive on all levels – on a student level, right through to an administrative level for both the university and the (regional sporting association). (Jenny, industry partner)

The above quotes focus attention on each of the factors required for the development of a quality EWIL program. That industry partners see the program as having a positive impact on all participants, is in part due to its deliberate design. Success also relies on the program’s ability to deliver unit outcomes.

Evaluation in relation to Learning Outcomes

Industry partners’ interview responses indicate that the HPE330 EWIL was highly effective in fulfilling prescribed learning outcomes.

- **Outcome:** Describe a range of disabilities and the implications these would have on physical activity.
  “With the inclusive students there is a range of disabilities. The uni students are exposed to all these and have to integrate these students into activities.”

- **Outcome:** Understand the broad cross section of stakeholders involved in regards to the education of students with special needs and that all views should be treated with respect.
  “They’re dealing directly with teachers, and teacher’s assistants State Sporting Body Educators…”

- **Outcome:** Formulate, implement and evaluate a series of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) sessions to a student with special needs.
  “We’re working with [uni] students that want to be a part of the physical education world and they’re tailoring lessons to suit the individual needs of our students.”

- **Outcome:** Outline issues that are relevant to the teaching, learning and assessment for students with disabilities.
  “At times [uni] students have to work with some students who are unable to communicate verbally.”

Conclusions / Implications

This success of this model of EWIL as an effective teaching and learning vehicle is inextricably linked with its adherence to characteristics of quality WIL programs. A number of worthwhile consequences therefore, stem from this EWIL model’s ability to fulfil specific learning objectives. First, engagement in this EWIL enhances students’ employability. Second, industry partners are better resourced to provide improved delivery of organisational objectives and in the long term, are provided with higher quality potential employees. Third, the university also benefits by fulfilling the obligation to produce work-ready graduate teachers, which enhances its institutional reputation. Furthermore, community members (special needs students, parents) receive improved quality of services. This ‘win / win’ scenario, supported by ongoing evaluation and refinement, suggests the HPE330 EWIL program will continue to be a feature of this HPE teaching degree.

References


Responding to industry needs for proactive engagement in work integrated learning (WIL): Partnerships for the future

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With increasing global competitiveness and the need for innovative and entrepreneurial employees, industry are seeking graduates with the skills to meet the demands of an uncertain workplace. Work Integrated Learning (WIL), where skill development is scaffolded across the curriculum, is essential to ensure students are work-ready and prepared for the transition from study to work. Robust partnerships with industry are fundamental to enacting a WIL curriculum as they provide the real world perspective. While industry partners are keen to engage with universities to support authentic learning for students, recent reports highlight the need for industry-focussed resources to facilitate optimal outcomes. This research, funded by The Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT), aimed to determine the topics, format and mode of resources that industry perceived as most useful.

The project used a mixed methods approach to ascertain strategies and resources required by industry to support their engagement in WIL. A combination of roundtable discussions, workshops and a survey were deployed to gather data and validate research findings. Outcomes confirmed the topics mode and type of resources industry are seeking. The research will inform national initiatives aimed to enhance the capacity of industry partners to participate in WIL activities.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, partnerships, industry resources, graduate employability

Background

With increasing global competitiveness and the need for innovative and entrepreneurial employees, industry are seeking graduates with the skills to meet the demands of an uncertain workplace (AWPA, 2012; Clements & Cord, 2011). Concern for the capacity of graduates to contribute to growth and innovation has been raised across all industry sectors with recent attention focused on work-readiness graduates in STEM disciplines (Foundation for Young Australians, 2015). Universities are considered integral to providing learning experiences which ensure graduates acquire the capabilities to address the needs of industry thereby ensuring a sustainable Australian economy (Cai, 2012; Robertson & Scott, 2010).

Work Integrated Learning (WIL), where skill development is scaffolded across the curriculum through work-based learning and on-campus learning where students engage with industry (Ferns, Campbell & Zegwaard, 2014), is essential to ensure students are work-ready and prepared for the transition from study to work. Robust partnerships with industry are fundamental to enacting a WIL curriculum as they provide a real-world perspective (van Rooijen, 2011). While industry partners are keen to engage with universities to support authentic learning for students, recent reports highlight the need for industry-focussed resources to facilitate optimal outcomes. This research, funded by The Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT), aimed to determine the topics, format and mode of resources that industry perceived as most useful. Research has validated that employment outcomes are improved for students when WIL is embedded across the degree (Edwards, Perkins, Pearce & Hong, 2015; Smith, Ferns & Russell, 2014).

partners, Australian Industries Group (AiG), Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Business Council of Australia (BCA), Universities Australia (UA) and the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) recognised that building collaboration between employers and universities is crucial in growing and enhancing WIL in Australia and ensuring a productive and globally-competitive Australian economy (Hodges, 2011).

The challenges and barriers faced by employers when engaging in WIL have been documented in several recent reports (Phillips KPA, 2014; Smith et al, 2014). Issues such as cost, resourcing, support, staff capacity, student supervision, partnering with universities, communication and limited information about WIL are recurring themes. Interestingly, these challenges were cited in the 2009 WIL Report confirming that progress has been limited (Patrick, Peach & Pocknee, 2009). This project endeavors to proactively address some of these longstanding challenges.

**Research Aim and Intent**

The research consulted with industry partners to ascertain the precise resource topics deemed useful and the most user-friendly mode and presentation of resources to support engagement with WIL. The deliverables were:

- A. Develop resources for industry engagement encompassing partnership arrangements, best-practice supervision and feedback for optimal student outcomes, and functional Best Practice Guides.
- B. Develop a model for WIL curriculum design and evidencing student outcomes that incorporates best practice WIL informed through consultation with industry and institutional representatives.
- C. Produce a complementary set of Good Practice Guides that outline the role of stakeholders in quality WIL experiences.
- D. Create an interactive and user-friendly website which promotes best practice WIL, facilitates dissemination of strategies, and enhances impact of findings.

This paper reports on the outcomes for the first deliverable, resources for industry engagement.

**Methodology**

The project used a mixed methods approach to ascertain strategies and resources required by industry to support their engagement in WIL. A combination of a literature review, resource critique, roundtable discussions, workshops and a survey were deployed to gather data and validate research findings. The merging of both qualitative and quantitative data reinforced the findings through a multi-faceted approach (Creswell, 2012). Ethics approval was granted by Curtin University in July 2015.

**Phase one**

A literature review of national reports published in 2014 and 2015 provided the foundation for phases of the research. Rumrill, Fitzgerald and Merchant (2010) refer to this research methodology as an empirical literature review where characteristically numerical data is ‘collected, created, codified and analysed reflecting the frequency of themes, topics, authors and other attributes’ (p. 400). (Appendix A outlines the publications that were analysed for this purpose). In addition, a critique of 127 WIL resources was undertaken to determine the gaps in industry support. Criteria were developed to ensure a systematic and consistent approach to critiquing the literature (see Table 1) (Ferns, Russell, & Kay, In Press). Common themes were determined which informed subsequent phases of the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline</strong></td>
<td>Discipline, field of education resource targets e.g. health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>Format of resource is available/accessible e.g. PDF, web-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Element</strong></td>
<td>The component of the WIL process targeted e.g. preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Type</strong></td>
<td>Style of the resource e.g. case study, report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of WIL</strong></td>
<td>The nature of the WIL activity e.g. placements, simulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>Audience the resource targets e.g. supervisors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase Two

The events listed below enabled rich conversations with a range of stakeholders:

- Industry-based student supervisors from health disciplines, April 2015, 22 attendees
- National Association of Field Experience Administrators (NAFEA) conference, July 2015, 75 attendees
- Criterion conference workshop, August 2015, 12 attendees
- Charles Darwin University, September 2015, 20 attendees
- Health Sciences summit, November 2015, 49 attendees

Participants were invited to respond to questions that explored the challenges for workplace supervisors engaged in WIL.

Phase Three

A survey to capture employers’ views was developed based on data gathered in the previous phases. Administration of the survey was online and utilised databases from universities and peak industry bodies to invite employer respondents. Survey respondents who were from diverse industry sectors provided both quantitative and qualitative data including demographic information and their perspectives on the usefulness of topical resources using a five-point likert scale ranging from Not useful at all to Very useful on the following topics:

- Preparation of students and host organisation staff
- Supervision and providing feedback to students
- Student assessment
- Developing partnerships with educational institutions
- Different types of WIL and their benefits

Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the research methodology and the sequential nature of the research design. As is typical of mixed methods paradigms, data collection strategies were informed by preceding phases.

Figure 1: Overview of research methodology
Results

Phase 1: Analysis of contemporary literature

Through analysis of the literature listed in Appendix A, common themes across all publications were identified. These themes included (Ferns et al., 2016):
- Sustainability of the Australian economy and the need for skilled, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient graduates to sustain global competitiveness
- Partnerships between University and industry/community and clarification of roles are pivotal to a sustainable economy and skilled graduates
- Communication and collaboration between universities and industry
- Need for flexibility in WIL arrangements
- Need for shared understanding of WIL and associated benefits
- Challenges of providing equitable WIL experiences for a diverse student cohort
- Lack of incentives, rewards, time allocation and funding for WIL activities.

Industry are seeking resources which focus on the following topics:
- Supervision and providing feedback to students
- Student assessment
- Preparing students and staff for a WIL placement
- How to engage with universities and develop partnerships
- Agreement and clarity on the term WIL
- Different models of WIL and their benefits

Phase 1: Critique of resources

Of the 127 resources examined, 44% addressed WIL from a broad perspective with 7% specifically aimed at workplace supervisors. Information on the preparation of students for WIL featured prominently with 48% of the resources dedicated to this topic. Seven percent of the resources dealt with assessment, a topic rated highly by employers as an area of concern. Resources tended to be bulky with 33% being guides and 27% reports.

This phase of the research highlighted some areas of concern:
- Resources are difficult to locate as they reside in multiple locations
- Resources on assessment, supervision and partnerships are scarce
- Available resources tend to be large documents where information is not readily discernible
- Examples of case studies and best-practice models of WIL are limited

Through this process, the following solutions emerged:
- Resources need to be available from a common online portal for easy access
- Development of resources focussed on assessment, supervision and feedback processes and strategies for industry partners should be priorities
- Innovative models of WIL need to be made available to facilitate diverse, cost-effective approaches
- Resources should comprise streamlined and coherent information that is concise and readily discernible.

Phase 2: Workshops and focus groups

Themes emerging from the analysis of literature informed the approach used and questions posed in this phase. The in-depth probing facilitated via the forums provided a detailed understanding of the systemic challenges. The inconsistency of partnership arrangements, diverse protocols across institutions and catering to diverse students were raised as challenges for industry.

Phase 3: Survey

The survey attracted 480 respondents with the majority (48%) being from large organisations and 21% with less than 20 employees. Private organisations were represented by 56% of respondents and 26% belonged to government corporations. While respondents came from a range of industry sectors, over 53% came from Health Care and Social Assistance, (22.29%), Manufacturing (16.46%) and Education and Training (14.58%).

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Figure 2 portrays resource types and the percentage of respondents who deemed these resources as moderately useful or very useful.

![Moderately plus very useful](image)

**Figure 2: Percentage responses for moderately useful plus very useful**

Student feedback, role clarification, industry-focussed assessments, monitoring student progress and negotiating partnerships recorded the highest preference with a score exceeding 80%. Respondents expressed a desire for industry-specific resources with 61% expressing a need for support that had a particular focus on the industry context. Qualitative data captured in the questionnaire complemented the quantitative data with affirmation of the findings.

Figure 3 below shows the preferences for mode in which resources are made available. A central website is clearly preferred by most with over 54% of first preferences opting for this mode. Almost 40% of employers who responded were interested in a blended model where face to face workshops were complemented by online resources. The least preferred modes were CD/DVD (ranked 7th by 113 respondents) and video with 25% of the votes.

**Discussion**

With the prominence of WIL growing and being on the political radar for multiple stakeholders including government agencies, peak industry bodies, discipline specific organisations, universities and university corporations as evidenced by high profile national reports (Office of the Chief Scientist, 2014; Ferns et al, 2016; Universities Australia, 2014), it is timely to proactively progress initiatives that have been on the agenda for some time. The National WIL Strategy has prompted collaboration among all agencies to establish solutions to the barriers in realising an authentic university experience for students and industry-university partnerships that inform real-world learning through embracing WIL curriculum. The employability of graduates is largely dependent on input from industry partners and the rich feedback they provide to students ensuring currency of industry perspectives. This research has substantiated the need for resources that enhance the capacity of industry to engage in WIL activities. Furthermore, the study has revealed the topics, mode and type of resources industry partners would prefer, thus ensuring maximum benefit and return on investment.
Figure 3: Percentage of most preferred votes across modes of resources

The data reveals that industry partners are seeking resources that support their involvement in designing and implementing assessment of students, supervising students with constructive and timely feedback, and clarification on roles and responsibilities. Assessment designed and enacted collaboratively with university personnel and industry colleagues advances the acquisition of employability capabilities and empowers students to take responsibility for their learning and provides opportunities to network with potential employers (Smith, 2011). Lombardi (2008) articulated the importance of this level of engagement believing ‘The days of the walled-off classroom are giving way to change – a change driven by students looking for practical meaning in an open-ended world’ (p. 15).

Through multiple data collection avenues and appraisal of recent literature, this research has determined the specific nature of resources required by industry partners in order to benefit from their expertise and currency of industry experience in preparing students for the workplace. Industry require concise, clear and accessible information (Phillips KPA, 2014) to fully engage with WIL and optimise the benefits for all stakeholders. As a result of the extensive consultation through the project, a range of well established and new resources were discovered which were previously unknown. This heightened the need to develop a central repository where all resources could be housed for easy access and streamlined communication channels. The National WIL Strategy has raised awareness of the need to consolidate information and establish a single portal which is widely publicised and accessible to all stakeholders. Collaborators in the National WIL strategy are currently working to create a website for all WIL stakeholders from where relevant information and resources will be accessed. To complement this development a communication strategy is also in the process of being developed.

Conclusion

Economic, social, technological and environmental impacts are influencing the workplace globally (Ferns et al, In Press). The rate of exponential change is creating uncertainty in required work force proficiencies for the future (Probert & Alexander, 2015). Universities are increasingly charged with the responsibility of preparing graduates for the world of work but determining the curriculum focus and learning activities is proving a challenge. It is imperative that a university education provides experiences that reflect real-world scenarios. Establishing partnerships with industry whereby they inform curriculum innovation and assessment processes is essential (Foundation for Young Australians, 2015). Partnerships premised on clearly articulated, two-way channels of communication are fundamental to achieving this aspiration (Cooper, Orrell & Bowden, 2010). The outcomes of this project will inform the development of resources and support mechanisms for industry to engage in WIL and enhance students’ employability outcomes.

Acknowledgments

Support for this project was provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT). The views in this project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning
and Teaching. The authors would like to acknowledge both the OLT and the participants who contributed their time and expertise.

**References**


Foundations for Young Australians. (2015). The new work order: Ensuring young Australians have skills and experience for the jobs of the future, not the past. Sydney, Australia: AlphaBeta.


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## Appendix A

### Analysis of literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/ Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Australia’s future workforce</em></td>
<td>Committee for economic development of Australia (ceda)</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>National Strategy on Work Integrated Learning In University Education</em></td>
<td>Universities Australia, Australian Collaborative Education Network, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Industry Group, and Business Council of Australia</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Progressing Stem Skills In Australia</em></td>
<td>Australian Industry Group</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The new work order: Ensuring young Australians have skills and experience for the jobs of the future, not the past</em></td>
<td>Foundations for Young Australians (FYA)</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Industry innovation and competitiveness agenda: An action plan for a stronger Australia</em></td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Work Integrated Learning AWPA Scoping Paper</em></td>
<td>Australian Workforce And Productivity Agency</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Engaging Employers In Work Integrated Learning: Current State and Future Priorities</em></td>
<td>Phillips KPA: Report to the Department of Industry</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>WIL in Curriculum HERDSA Guide</em></td>
<td>Ferns (Editor)</td>
<td>2014</td>
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</tbody>
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WIL-ing our way to the top: Australia's national work integrated learning strategy

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Universities Australia
Judie Kay
Australian Collaborative Education Network
Anne Younger
AIGroup
Jenny Lambert
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Blye Decker
Business Council of Australia
Tom O’Brien
Commonwealth Department of Education and Training
Roslyn Prinsley
Office of the Chief Scientist

Australia’s National Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Strategy brings together universities, government and industry for the first time at a national level to support work integrated learning opportunities for higher education students. Launched in 2015, the Strategy aims to be a crucial mechanism for strengthening collaborations, facilitating and promoting WIL, and providing overarching guidance for universities and employers undertaking WIL activities. It is a key step in ensuring Australia’s university graduates can make a powerful and positive contribution to our workforce and the overall prosperity of our nation.

The partners to the National WIL Strategy work collectively across eight key areas, including providing national leadership to expand WIL; clarifying WIL-related government and regulatory settings; building sector-wide support for WIL; promoting sustainable investment in WIL; developing and providing WIL resources, systems and processes; building capacity for employers to participate in WIL; addressing equity and access issues in WIL; and increasing opportunities for international students and for domestic students to study off-shore.

In this Professional Conversation, Strategy partners will share their experiences and initiatives to date and seek input from delegates around current issues and future priorities. Higher education partners will outline how they have reached a better understanding of employers’ needs through the partnership and their approach to addressing the barriers employers face when engaging in WIL. They will also provide a sector-wide view on WIL, highlighting success stories as well as areas for improvement. Industry partners will share their learnings of the higher education sector, how employers can best engage with institutions and how information on WIL is shared and promoted amongst their networks using the Strategy. Government and independent advisory bodies will discuss how their policy work and other programs and activities support WIL and how the unique connections facilitated by the Strategy have benefitted their work.

Conference delegates will discuss in small groups how the National WIL Strategy can positively affect WIL practice and provide input into future areas of focus for the Strategy and priorities for future action.

Keywords: Partnerships, industry, national strategy, policy

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Enhancing workplace learning through mobile technology

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Susie Macfarlane
Deakin University
Lina Markauskaite
The University of Sydney
Freny Tayebjee
Western Sydney University
Celina McEwan
Charles Sturt University

In the mobile age, conditions for learning are changing and these changes could be harnessed to increase students’ capacity to learn in the workplace. However, within the context of university education, workplace learning and technology-mediated learning often remain separate discourses and practices. The integration of authentic work-based activities and technology-mediated learning can provide important opportunities to bridge education and work contexts and build students’ digital capacities, online professional identities and technology-mediated work practices.

Four universities are collaborating on a major Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching project, titled "Enhancing workplace learning through mobile technology", to develop a mobile technology capacity building framework for students, academic workplace learning coordinators and workplace educators. During this Roundtable, conceptual ideas that inform the development of this framework will be presented together with the online learning resources developed during the project. Then discussion will be opened up for participants to provide feedback and share their perceptions and practices of using mobile technology to enhance workplace learning. Participants will develop a better understanding of the possibilities and challenges of effectively using mobile technology to enrich learning experiences on placement.

- During this 90 minute session, participants will:
  - learn about the project’s aims and method;
  - discuss mobile learning pedagogy to prepare students for work;
  - examine the role of workplace cultures, personal or professional preferences on the use of mobile technology for WPL;
  - review a mobile technology capacity-building framework; and
  - provide feedback.

As this is an interactive session, ample time will be provided for questions to be asked throughout. This Roundtable is open to all delegates, but more particularly to academics, educational designers and other professionals/practitioners involved with students on placement.

Keywords: Workplace learning, mobile technology, mobile learning

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Internationalising the curriculum to enhance employability: Collaboration between international mobility and work integrated learning professionals

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International mobility through work internships, volunteer and service learning programs has increased in popularity in recent years as students seek different types of international experiences to enrich their professional and personal lives. New options for students include credit bearing internships attached to subjects, international service learning experiences within the curriculum and self-sourced volunteering in short-term projects during semester breaks (Nolting, Donohue, Matherly & Tillman, 2015). The purpose of this discussion is to explore good practice for collaboration between work integrated learning (WIL) and international mobility professionals to both maximise graduate outcomes and to ensure that students have enriching experiences while undertaking international WIL. By using the World Café methodology to facilitate discussion and obtain feedback from participants, the presenters in this session will propose topics for group discussion under the broad themes. The first theme will explore relationship management including consideration of key stakeholders involved in international WIL in Higher Education and how they can collaborate to support and facilitate a meaningful international experience for students to maximise graduate outcomes. A second theme will be the value proposition including how international WIL is valued at the student, academic and institutional level and what WIL professionals can do to get more commitment at these levels. The third theme will be the student experience including consideration of processes that can be put into place to ensure that students are adequately supported, before, during and after their international experience. Minimising the level of risk while balancing educational outcomes will also be canvassed. The intended audience will be international mobility, WIL professionals and academic staff involved in international WIL placements.

Keywords: Professional collaboration, employability, internships, international mobility

Reference


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Using WIL to develop leadership talent for the Asian Century

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Diversity Council Australia’s Cracking the Cultural Ceiling report identified a disparity between the ambition and capability of Asian Leadership Talent and their representation beyond entry level and midlevel jobs in Australian business. To proactively address this disparity, Westpac Banking Corporation established an Asian Leadership Employee Action Group. One of the strategic initiatives of the action group is to develop Asia-aware leaders within Westpac and support future Asian leadership talent through our eMentoring program. In its first 12 months the eMentoring program will see 60 Westpac mentors support 250+ university students through structured Work Integrated Learning subjects in NSW and QLD.

This Round table discussion will present the Westpac eMentoring program as a case study for using WIL to develop leadership talent for the Asian Century. Delegates will form groups to discuss and debate the operational, curriculum and pedagogy mechanics of the program and provide recommendations to improve the model. Key insights from the discussion will be used to refine the model with the intention of presenting it as a framework for other corporations to engage in large-scale WIL programs in a way that is mutually beneficial for the students, universities and industry.

Keywords: Asian leadership development, WIL in the Asian Century, diversity, employability, Asian capability

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WIL in Science

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Participation in work integrated learning in science disciplines is low (1 in 7), compared to other disciplines. The Chief Scientist of Australia recently completed a report that highlighted the need for students in science disciplines to increase participation in WIL activities and, as a consequence, improve graduate employability. The Chief Scientist has provided funding to the Deans of Science to increase participation in WIL. The Deans of Science are funding “Lighthouse Projects” and to supporting “Champions of WIL”. This Roundtable will provide a forum for practitioners to present models of WIL in science that are providing benefit to students, industry/community and the university. It will also provide a forum for Lighthouse Project leaders and WIL Champions to network and share ideas.

Keywords: WIL, science, employability

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Community Internship: Pushing the boundaries of curriculum and practice

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Griffith University offers a university-wide WIL shell course opportunity to all students as a free choice elective. Its enrolments are unlimited with students being able to enrol as a free-choice elective option, as a listed elective option in some degree programs, and as over-enrolments beyond their degree program requirements. The only restriction is a minimum requirement of the equivalent of first year of completed university studies. Since 2011 the course has provided over 1,600 WIL experiences, almost 80,000 course–related volunteer hours to 130 not-for-profit organisations. The number of students that undertake this course has increased from year to year and has recently been expanded to include a Masters offering. As the numbers increase so too does the challenge of providing a quality learning experience for students across all disciplines and an effective partnership with the not-for-profit organisations. To address this issue, a number of strategies have been implemented including a comprehensive approach to risk management with large numbers of students on a very wide variety of placements.

This session will explore the Griffith free-elective WIL model and consider alternative ways that have been developed in which to ensure the quality of a placement and partnerships across a university-wide cohort of students. Participants in this Roundtable will consider the key considerations required to offer WIL shell course experiences that provide equitable opportunities to students from different disciplines.

Keywords: Risk, shell course, equity, quality, placement, partnerships

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Indigenous engagement in work integrated learning

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University of Victoria, Canada
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University of Newcastle

University of Victoria (UVic) and University of Newcastle (UoN) recently embarked on a unique Indigenous exchange program that enables Indigenous students from these institutions to participate in work integrated learning (WIL) experiences in their host countries. This Indigenous WIL exchange program provides a unique perspective into the cultural dimensions of learning that takes place for students, organisations and practitioners involved in the program.

In its inaugural year, a UVic Indigenous student completed a co-operative education work term at the University of Newcastle’s Wollotuka Institute, working with Australia’s leading Aboriginal historian, and contributing to UoN’s Global Indigenous and Diaspora Research Studies Centre team. In exchange, an Indigenous student from UoN participated in UVic’s LE,NONET program, which provides programs designed to welcome and support Indigenous students throughout their educational journeys at UVic. The student completed coursework at UVic, followed by a community internship within the Indigenous community. The program was a success; both students learned about Indigenous cultures in their host countries, connected with Indigenous communities and engaged in work integrated learning and other professional development activities that enhanced their professional and intercultural competencies.

Lessons learned included the importance of a strong support system for students, the complexities of adding an Indigenous aspect to an international experience and the importance of providing programming that adhere to principles and best practices for supporting Indigenous student success (Hunt et al., 2010).

This Roundtable discussion will take the form of an interactive talking circle where participants will engage in an exercise that demonstrates the interrelated support system required for this complex program. Successes, challenges, lessons learned and insights from this unique WIL program will be shared.

This submission speaks to the theme Strengthening connections: Students, higher education, industry and community, with a focus on indigenous community connections. The intended audience is WIL practitioners interested in the unique cultural aspects of indigenous WIL programs, intercultural competencies and critical success factors for this complex program.

Keywords: Indigenous WIL, Intercultural competencies, international exchange

Reference


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DRIVE to intercultural effectiveness through WIL

Karima Ramji\(^1\)
Norah McRae\(^2\)

University of Victoria, Canada

How well do you function in a different culture, country or workplace? This session will provide participants with an understanding of how University of Victoria’s Co-operative Education Program and Career Services has developed a strategy informed by Earley and Ang’s work on cultural intelligence (2003) to help achieve their mandate to develop global-ready graduates. The strategy involves a framework that includes curriculum for inbound international students, outbound work integrated learning (WIL) students and all students preparing to work in diverse workplaces.

This Round table discussion is geared toward WIL practitioners and will include a presentation of the strategy, followed by an interactive workshop where participants will work through the framework using a cultural challenge or problem they face in their role. Participants will leave this workshop with a better understanding of how intercultural competence can help them interact more effectively with people from diverse cultures. They will also appreciate how they can help students develop their cultural intelligence (CQ), while also developing their own CQ.

Keywords: Intercultural effectiveness, cultural intelligence, international WIL, intercultural competence, intercultural curriculum, global-ready graduates

References

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Developing tomorrow’s WIL Facilitators today

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Louise Horstmanshof
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The aim of this Roundtable is to present and discuss developing students’ skills in WIL/clinical education in the pre-professional curriculum, so they have foundation level skills at graduation.

We know that one of the limiting factors in finding suitable WIL placements for today’s learners is a reluctance by some professionals to engage in WIL. Plus, in many instances they lack knowledge of relevant scholastic strategies used to facilitate learning during WIL. To create a better future we need to push the boundaries of the curriculum and WIL practice. This Roundtable is designed to present and discuss our paper, 12 Tips for Proactive Approach to Clinical Education, which outlines, how, from the beginning of health students’ WIL experiences, they can be prepared to take up their professional responsibilities as tomorrow’s educators. This concept has the potential to both strengthen the skill base and increase the size of tomorrow’s WIL workforce.

This paradigm shift in thinking about preparing our students for employment is discussed as Tips that are easily embedded in curricula and learning activities. They have face validity, are relevant to WIL, and easy to apply. Examining the 12 Tips with participants who are involved in WIL activities, we will enable participants to tease out the elements already in use to address the myriad issues and concerns, consider how the 12 tips work as a whole, and what barriers there might be for practice.

The expected outcomes are that participants will improve their knowledge of:

1. The 12 Tips of PACE
2. The barriers and enablers of augmenting the pre-professional WIL curriculum to allow today’s students to develop their educative capabilities as they progress through their various WIL events
3. Vicarious liability

The intended audience is curriculum designers and WIL academics.

Keywords: Future workforce, employability skills, work integrated learning

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ACEN 2016 Roundtable

Teaching aged care facilities: Creating strong WIL opportunities and benefits

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Michael Annear
Kate-Ellen Elliott
Emma Lea
Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, (WDREC), University of Tasmania

Participants in this Roundtable will learn about an innovative, translatable approach to build and strengthen links between universities and community organisations: the Wicking Teaching Aged Care Facilities (TACF) Program. They will learn about development of an interprofessional education program in the aged care facilities and the evaluation and impact of placements on residents. This process has initiated a care redesign program, facilitated by workforce capacity-building and students’ resident assessments. Participants may find this approach useful in their own WIL practices, particularly around program design to encourage strong, sustainable relationships between universities and Work Placement Providers, workforce capability-building and evaluating placement benefits.

To discuss TACF and evidence-based strategies for implementation, evaluation, and outcomes of WIL-related programs, there will be two sessions in this Roundtable. Each will consist of two 8-min. presentations, 5-min. discussion, and a 24-min. group activity.

1. TACF: Developing workforce capacity and interprofessional education
Presentations: (a) Wicking TACF Program: instituting sustainable quality clinical placements in residential aged care; (b) Implementing interprofessional education in aged care.
For the group activity, participants will form small groups and, via case scenarios, problem-solve barriers to developing sustainable WIL opportunities in new settings.

2. Resident benefits from TACF placements
Presentations: (a) Resident perspectives on health student-delivered care in TACF; (b) Care redesign opportunities in TACF.
The group will explore WIL benefits for those other than students, which may strengthen Work Placement Provider, university and community connections. Participants will identify potential benefits in a range of settings, and workshop ways to measure them.

The intended audience for this Roundtable is higher education academics, clinical placement coordinators, aged care sector, government representatives and health students.

Keywords: Teaching aged care facilities, interprofessional placements, organisational capacity, care redesign

References


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International connection through online professional development: Extending the experience and impact

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Katharine Hoskyn  
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Judie Kay  
*RMIT, Australia*

Karsten Zegwaard  
*University of Waikato, New Zealand*

The intended aim of the Roundtable discussion is to demonstrate the benefits of a pedagogical underpinning for WIL activities such as that found in Eames and Cates (2011) and Fenwick (2000); to continue the dialogue about themes arising from the Global WIL module and to involve a wider range of practitioners in this dialogue.

The intended aim of the Global WIL module was to address a professional development need. With the national WIL agenda in Australia, there is a growing need to encourage practitioners to advance their best practice of WIL. The online delivery of the module particularly suited staff who have little time for professional skill development.

The Roundtable discussion consists of three stages:

1. Short presentation from the facilitators/presenters about the Global WIL module in order to set the scene;
2. Three – four cameo presentations from past participants about the way in which they related theory to their WIL activities;
3. Discussion involving all attendees of the application of learning theory to specific scenarios.

The intended audience is practitioners interested in discussing the pedagogical foundation for WIL; past participants in the Global WIL online modules; people interested in participating in a similar module in the future. From the registration data of the modules, it is evident that a high level of interest in this topic exists, particularly in Australia.

Keywords: Learning theory, experiential learning, community of practice, professional development

**References**


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Developing a journal article from referred conference proceedings paper

Karsten Zegwaard1

Editor-in-Chief for Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education
Director of Cooperative Education, University of Waikato

The intent of this Roundtable is to discuss how authors can craft a journal article and a conference proceedings paper from the same work. A common path of publishing scholarly debate and, especially, research in WIL is to first produce an oral presentation, followed later by a more expansive oral presentation with refereed conference proceedings, and subsequently a journal article. However, especially at the latter two stages, care must be taken that the two resulting publications (proceedings and journal article) do not result in ‘double-publishing’.

This Roundtable commences with a broad discussion around publishing strategies that allow researchers and authors to maximise publishing impact of their work. Academic staff are measured by the quality and volume of their research outputs, with journal articles being the more common significant research output. Therefore, maximising publishing impact can significantly influence career progress. Focussing primarily on the ACEN Conference Proceedings and the special issue in Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE) arising from this ACEN conference, discussion explores how a quality conference proceedings paper could be crafted into a journal article for the APJCE special issue. Roundtable participants are encouraged to bring along their conference proceedings paper which are used as examples during the Roundtable discussions. Other completed examples are also presented.

This Roundtable should particularly appeal to authors who intend to submit a journal article for the APJCE special issue arising from this ACEN conference. This Roundtable may also appeal to other authors who want to maximise their research impact by publishing conference proceedings as well as journal articles without causing double-publishing.

Keywords: Publishing process, writing, article review, maximising publishing impact

References


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Learning analytics and WIL: Pushing the boundaries with data

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Learning analytics condenses learning practices into data that can be used to understand and improve learning and learning environments. Despite the expanding possibilities, many learning analytics tools seem out of reach to practitioners. What does learning analytics offer to students, teachers and program coordinators in the context of work integrated learning? More ‘traditional’ learning analytics approaches have focussed on collecting and analysing online footprints which are not necessarily appropriate in the WIL context. Together with participants, we would like to explore other possibilities and expand the horizons of learning analytics to incorporate rich data and analyses, including but not limited to writing analytics, student-collected datasets and data for tracking student outcomes that can assist in managing and extending partner relationships. The Roundtable aims to collaboratively expand the possibilities, identifying ways that data can be used to improve work-integrated learning experiences and partner relationships, measure the impact of work integrated learning, and ultimately contribute to student and partner satisfaction and employability.

This Roundtable discussion adopts a world café style format to explore the use of data to support work integrated learning. What data would students, teachers and program coordinators like to have about work integrated learning, and why would they like to have it? How can data be used to support and improve work integrated learning? What are the constraints and challenges in using data to support work integrated learning and how can we address these? The Roundtable is intended for teachers, program coordinators, researchers and students interested in enhancing WIL experiences through data. Presenters have experience in learning analytics, higher education, work integrated learning, and partner management.

Keywords: WIL, learning analytics, writing analytics, data

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Revitalising WIL: Investigating senior learning and teaching management perspectives at a large metropolitan university

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Lyn Hannah
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The Centre for Collaborative Learning and Teaching is embarking on a revitalisation of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at Victoria University. This Showcase presentation shares preliminary results from an institutional study to inform the development of an agenda for change. It is aligned with the conference theme of “Analytics, evaluation and research of WIL: Towards 2020 and beyond”. Feedback on WIL will gathered from around forty Senior Learning and Teaching staff using semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, transcripts of which will be analysed using grounded theory in relation to the current literature around efforts to reshape WIL nationally. Within that literature, relatively little is known about the views of Learning and Teaching leaders at that level, according to Patrick, Peach and Pocknee (2009). These staff can offer valuable insights into experiences of navigating the challenges of WIL in practice. As such, the project is relevant to two key conference themes 1) evaluation and research-led WIL reform, and 2) WIL logistics, such as institutional supports and barriers, from the point of view of a group that Patrick has cast as a key set of stakeholders (2009). The recent National Strategy on Work Integrated Learning in University Education calls for efforts to deepen and broaden shared knowledge of Australian WIL (2015). This study is one contribution.

Keywords: Challenges, stakeholder views, learning & teaching management perspectives, WIL renewal

References


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Enhancing WIL outcomes for international students in Australia

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This study canvasses employer, academic and student perspectives on the challenges and barriers experienced by international students when participating in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in Western Australia (WA). It also explores the participation of international students, relative to domestic students, in work placements in WA universities. Data were gathered using an online survey of international students who completed WIL as part of their studies, focus group sessions with WIL academics and an online survey of potential and active host employers of international students on work placement. WIL is in high demand by international students who seek to gain relevant work experience in their host country to improve their employment prospects. Findings indicate a relatively low proportion of international students participate in WIL compared with domestic students. Further, stakeholders identified a number of challenges which impact on student performance and the success of their WIL experience. These include difficulties in managing assessment tasks, inflated expectations, cultural differences, relatively weak language skills and a lack of support during their WIL experience. The study identifies stakeholder strategies for enhancing WIL offerings for international students, thereby improving international student employability and making Australia a preferred study destination.

Keywords: International student, employability, inclusivity, barriers

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Collaborating with WIL stakeholders: Success factors for sustainable relationships

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WIL experiences rely heavily on the development of relationships between the university and key stakeholders, including industry, community organisations, and government. According to Mulvihill, Hart, Northmore, Wolff, and Pratt (2011, p. 11), “Each university must negotiate – and re-negotiate - the meaning, value and purpose of engagement with their communities if they are to ensure successful and sustainable partnerships in the long term”.

This Showcase reports on an international action research inquiry, which aims to identify and evaluate critical success factors for industry/community engagement across different WIL sectors and contexts. Drawing on literature of good practice frameworks for engagement, (Garlic & Langworthy, 2008; Arden, McLachlan, & Cooper, 2009; Fleming & Hickey, 2013; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Monczka, Petersen, Handfield, & Ragatz, 1998; Ankrah & Omar, 2015) and consultation with key stakeholders, a set of key themes; communication, commitment, compatibility, emerged to underpin the development of a framework for sustaining relationships. The subsequent cycle of research sought feedback on the accuracy of the framework themes. A questionnaire survey was distributed to partners and staff of universities, industry and community in New Zealand, Canada and Australia and the results analysed to determine the validity of the framework. The framework has applicability across a diverse range and scope of WIL relationships to assist practitioners cope with issues of scalability of WIL programs.

Keywords: Relationship, reciprocity, commitment, communication, compatibility

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Reciprocal relationships and real results: Envisioning new horizons in early childhood teacher education placements

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Pre-service early childhood teachers often cite practical experience in early childhood settings as the most important aspect of their university degree. However, increasing competition among universities for placements has created the need to reconceptualise the critical relationship between higher education and educational settings. Recognising the ongoing need for sustainable partnerships to deliver high quality practical experience (Department of Education & Training, 2015, p. 7), Flinders University has sought to re-imagine teaching practicum as ‘Professional Experience’; workplace learning integrated throughout our degree courses. Flinders University’s Professional Experience implements an inquiry-based WIL philosophy that positions the pre-service teacher as a knowledge creator, a participant, and a contributor within the field of early childhood education. Moving from the traditional practicum model to an inquiry-based WIL approach has required negotiating changes with participants across the field; university policy makers, schools and early childhood services, and educational administrators. The focus on active collaborations and reciprocal relationships, rather than ‘top-down’ university requirements, has created partnerships that result in sustained interest from early childhood settings and more placement offers for pre-service teachers. The agency of pre-service teachers and enthusiasm of WIL sites in these partnerships is contributing to meaningful, needs-based, knowledge generation for the 21st century.

Keywords: Teacher education, early childhood, partnerships, inquiry, reciprocity, relationships

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Get engaged: Growing WIL through a workplace student supervisor capacity building module

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While universities increasingly rely on placements within host organisations to enhance students’ work readiness and employability, little consideration has been given to strengthening workplace student supervisors’ (WSS) capacity to engage effectively with universities, students and colleagues in their workplace (McEwen & Maxwell, 2015; Universities Australia, 2014). WSS need to be supported to engage with academics to clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations in providing quality WIL experiences for students (Orrell, 2011). This ACEN-funded research project is conducted in partnership with the Media Federation of Australia and aims to (1) strengthen WSS capabilities to engage effectively with universities to better align industry, university and student expectations and to enhance mutually beneficial WIL experiences; (2) provide a better understanding of the need for engagement, possible engagement strategies, WSS roles and responsibilities and how WSS can clarify expectations; and (3) contribute to the expansion of WIL in other non-traditional courses. We present our self-paced, online module that has been developed and tested with industry’s strong participation. The module comprises six elements: all you need to know about WIL; industry benefits from WIL participation; engagement strategies before, during and after WIL; and FAQ. Feedback from the audience is welcomed.

Keywords: University-industry engagement, capacity building, online module, workplace supervision

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References

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Work integrated learning in higher education: Preparing students for collaborative practice

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‘Collaboration’ is acknowledged as a core concept to contemporary life and work (Croker, Higgs & Trede, 2009; Gittell, Godfrey & Thistlethwaite, 2013). In professional education programs there is a growing emphasis on the development of work-ready graduates and consequently a need to develop students’ collaborative practice capabilities (World Health Organisation, 2010). It is therefore essential that work integrated learning incorporates comprehensive preparation of students for collaborative practice. Despite this need for and subsequent focus on collaborative competence, there still remains a lack of conceptual clarity around the notion of collaboration itself and how students’ collaborative capabilities may be best developed within higher education programs (Thomson, Perry & Miller, 2007).

This presentation reports on emerging findings of doctoral research that aims to develop a deeper understanding of the nature, value and process within higher education of preparing students for collaborative practice. The doctoral research is using a qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm and utilities both literature and experiential (academic and student participants n=24) texts to illuminate the phenomenon. This presentation reports on the research findings looking to unpack and describe the underpinning values, attributes and capabilities necessary for students to participate in collaborative practice within health settings. Participants have the opportunity to advance their understanding of collaboration and collaborative capabilities, and how this illumination may inform work integrated learning.

Keywords: Collaboration, collaborative capabilities, collaborative practice, higher education

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Accessibility in WIL: Employer views on how work integrated learning (WIL) stakeholders can address the challenge of access and equity in WIL

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Work integrated learning (WIL) offers students many learning, career and personal benefits however, a contentious problem is emerging; namely that of student accessibility in WIL (Mackaway, Winchester-Seeto & Carter, 2014). This Showcase presentation offers findings from an Australian study into the challenge of access and equity in WIL. In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 partner organisations from a range of industries including law, banking and professional services, along with three community service not-for-profit organisations. Part of the research focused on understanding current practices employers use to address issues of accessibility in WIL as well as areas for further action. Thematic analysis revealed common measures taken involve the reduction of barriers associated with the selection process, and while the majority of participants identified ways their own organisation could improve, they also offered ideas regarding steps for professional associations, universities and students. Interestingly, recommendations largely related to capacity-building for all WIL stakeholders – a theme echoed elsewhere in current WIL research (Blackmore et al., 2014; Peach, Moore & Campbell, 2016). Findings suggest there may be shared concerns between university and partner organisations regarding issues of access and equity which could be used to strengthen connections and address the problem of student accessibility in WIL.

Keywords: Accessibility, placements, partner perspectives, capacity building

References


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Distributed leadership model: Enabling faculty-wide enhancement of scaffolded WIL

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A faculty-based Work Integrated Learning (WIL) team in an Australian university, charged with the mission of providing expertise to course teams seeking to improve graduate outcomes through WIL, was formed according to the key principles of a WIL Distributed Leadership Framework (Patrick et al., 2014). Due to the complicated nature of WIL landscapes, and given that the faculty wanted a sustainable approach to increasing and maintaining high employability outcomes for courses, two key requirements were identified: professional capacity-building of course teams, and a distributed WIL team approach to enhance good practice. While members of the WIL team work together on a number of WIL activities, each team member functions as the nominated leader of a particular segment of the WIL Leadership Domains and thus drives the expertise in that area. The take-home message as a result of the work being done in the faculty is that to improve employability outcomes for courses, increasing the numbers of ‘job-ready’ graduates begins with building the capacity of ‘WIL-ready’ academics through a diverse and cohesive WIL leadership group.

Keywords: Leadership, team, change, sustainability, employability

Reference


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Diversity and Practice-Integrated Learning (PIL) – An opportunity to engage and embrace inclusion

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Preparing students for the current workforce and dealing with contemporary society now and in the future requires finding creative and innovative solutions to addressing the increasing need for inclusive practices in increasingly diverse communities. As educators we are responsible for empowering students to develop their skills, be confident, ethical, and be respectful and inclusive of local and global citizens. Doing this effectively leads to students who are professionally, ethically and emotionally ready to take on a changing world, embrace diversity and be inclusive in their careers and personal life.

There is no universally-accepted definition of inclusion, however the definition used by United National Educational Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) highlights the value of human rights in a socially-inclusive society. Current trends in education focus on the importance of inclusive practices characterised by valuing all individuals, having tolerance for differences, and enabling the full participation of all learners, including addressing a sense of belonging for all (UNESCO, 2014). Inclusion is a holistic view of life and the world it requires being open, accepting, understanding, empathetic and adaptable to change and differences.

The PIL program in the College of Sport and Exercise Science (CSES) empowers students to be successful lifelong learners by developing their skills, capabilities and confidence through hands-on practical learning in diverse and inclusive situations. Inclusion can be taught in the classroom but it’s not until students are out in the field that they are able to put inclusion into practice. Although inclusion is not a main learning outcome in PIL it is a factor to consider in order to deliver a successful outcome in diverse environments.

PIL is a scaffold framework that delivers a practical learning journey for students throughout their courses. PIL engages with industry and the community to provide students with real life opportunities to apply what they are learning.

This presentation discusses the often neglected issue of diversity and inclusion in the management and practice of PIL. Examples of inclusion are presented and mechanisms to teach our students to be inclusive are explored and discussed. Examples of some successful inclusive programs are showcased including data from student and industry evaluations.

Keywords: Practice-integrated learning, inclusion, diversity, engagement

Reference


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EMPLOY101x: Embedding employability into the curriculum

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Employability is generally considered to be a set of achievements that provide the potential for graduates to obtain employment and be impactful in their careers. An employable graduate is someone who possesses the knowledge and skills of their field but also the personal attributes to allow for an effective contribution to an organisation. The University of Queensland (UQ) has launched its massive open online course (MOOC) to provide a platform for its institutional approach to student employability development that focuses on experiential learning. The MOOC offers students tools and strategies to translate learning from a range of experiences into employability, and the ability to communicate their potential to an employer and translate their learning into effective workplace performance.

The paper reports on the development and implementation of the MOOC across UQ, where it is being embedded into the curriculum in a range of disciplines. Initial results from 200 student evaluations of the MOOC content are presented which highlight the value of the structured self-reflective process that is a cornerstone of the course. This process provides scaffolding for students to realise the learning gained from a range of experiences and how this learning may be translated into practice in the workplace.

Keywords: Embedding, employability, self-reflection, massive open online course (MOOC)

References


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Capturing the student voice: Authentic WIL preparation

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Findings from research on students' experience of work integrated learning (WIL) provide a valuable foundation for initiatives intended to prepare them for such off-campus learning opportunities (Fleming, 2014). This premise is the basis for an investigation underway of students' views about aspects of their learning when they are on placement/undertaking WIL. These views are informing development of an e-book that will help prepare students for learning in off-campus contexts.

In this presentation, initial findings from interviews of 22 students, who are participating in five different programmes within the Faculty of Culture and Society at AUT University, are reviewed and discussed. In particular, they focus on advice students say they would offer fellow students embarking on WIL, based on their personal experiences and approaches. Common themes in their advice include proactive relationship building, identifying and following workplace communication practices, being adaptable and establishing support networks.

This advice, which represents the authentic voice of students, forms parts of the text of the e-book.

Keywords: Preparation, curriculum, student experience, student advice

Reference


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Culture and context preparation for international work placements

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WIL placement in Asia provides a rich opportunity to gain professional experience in a dynamic industry setting, while concurrently expanding global and intercultural competences. International experience, and the self-development that is typically entailed by sojourn abroad, can set a graduate apart from their peers in the job market. However, for institutions managing quality and risk factors, international placements entail complexity and challenge. Students may find entering a foreign environment disorienting, and ensuring positive outcomes from the experience for all stakeholders requires support for students acculturating to the new context.

This presentation overviews the development and implementation of a credit-bearing undergraduate course offered to international students taking up placement opportunities through an Australian transnational university in Vietnam. The course is intended to help students acculturate to the Vietnamese environment, and to equip them with knowledge and skills that will help them navigate cultural differences and challenges. The multidisciplinary intensive course delivered on campus prior to placements commencing, is designed to foster the development of intercultural competences and assessed using an intercultural competence framework. Challenges encountered in the development and implementation process are shared.

Keywords: Global, international, acculturation, pedagogy

References


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Negotiated assessment tasks and learning outcomes in the placement experience

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The real value of a placement experience is enhanced by a carefully planned assessment structure which is personalised to the student’s individual goals. While internships develop understandings of discipline-specific practices in industry, the development of employability skills such as professional behaviour, communication, conflict management and teamwork are prominent features of the experience that need to be fostered and emphasised in the assessment process.

Decisions about what learning outcomes are desired and the mode in which these will be assessed must involve the students to be fully effective in developing the suite of graduate capabilities determined by the program. To enable this, a program structure has been developed at the presenters’ home institution that identifies a set of learning goals and outcomes students can work toward achieving during their work placement. Within this set, students can identify the specific and personally-relevant goals and objectives they wish to focus on during their internship experience, and then proceed to negotiating the mode in which they will be assessed. Examples of specific assessment tasks and procedures used in the presenter’s context are provided, along with student feedback and evaluation of their experience through several cycles in the program are shared.

Keywords: Negotiated assessment, learning outcomes, feedback

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From supervision to mentoring: Working with industry partners to maximise opportunities for student learning during the placement experience

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Industry supervisors play a crucial role in any work placement, and are often the primary factor in determining the relative success of a student’s experience. The work supervisor’s level of engagement with and understanding of the goals of a placement program can significantly impact students’ experience, and influence the quantity, form and manner of feedback and guidance provided to them. However, despite the centrality of the supervisor to the placement experience, institutions often struggle to engage supervisors in actively and accountably contributing to the student’s development of professional expertise or soft skills during their work placement. Supervisors are frequently busy with the pressures of the work environment, and may additionally lack an awareness of appropriate strategies for overseeing students in the formative stages of building their career identity.

This presentation overviews an approach taken to developing mentoring skills among placement supervisors in industry at an Australian transnational (English language) university in Vietnam. Examples of training activities are shared, alongside discussion of context-appropriate approaches to dealing with industry partners, and feedback from participants in pilot and subsequent implementations of the program.

Keywords: Students, higher education, industry and community

References


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The impact of work integrated learning experiences on exercise and sports science students

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Exercise and sports science (E&SS) programs provide work integrated learning (WIL) to allow students to develop, apply and consolidate theoretical knowledge in the workplace (Lester & Costley, 2010). Current research indicates influential relationships between WIL experiences and future career choice, with supervisor attitude, level of support and ability to teach, having the greatest impact (Crowe & Mackenzie, 2002; Keller & Wilson, 2011).

The aims of this study were to determine the influence of WIL experiences on future career choice of E&SS students and identify graduate attributes developed during WIL. An online survey distributed to final year E&SS students, explored WIL experiences and the impact on career aspirations (n=20). Semi-structured interviews (n = 4) focused on graduate attributes and significant positive and negative experiences.

Results showed essential graduate attributes were developed during all WIL, regardless of whether the experience was positive or negative. Positive WIL experiences significantly influenced a student to pursue a career in the same field (p = 0.049) while negative experiences did not discourage a student from choosing a career in the same field (p = 0.093).

These findings have implications for E&SS higher education providers and industry supervisors to ensure WIL provides positive learning outcomes and the development of graduate attributes to enhance future employment opportunities.

Keywords: Graduate attributes, employability, skills

References


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Facilitating industry engagement in a STEM discipline with Live Ideas

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Student engagement in work integrated learning (WIL) in the science disciplines is low (1 in 7 science students participate in WIL in Australia). WIL has been part of the curriculum in the School of Environment, Science and Engineering for over 25 years. Connecting students with industry partners in a capstone project and internship unit has become more difficult because of changes to the mode of delivery. Allowing enrolment in these units year-round has also impeded industry engagement.

Live Ideas was introduced into the university in April 2015 to facilitate engaged, authentic, project-based learning. It was created based on the acknowledgement that increasing project-centric problem-solving skills and capabilities are becoming critical in emerging career pathways. Essentially, Live Ideas was created based on the needs and feedback of partner organisations aimed at streamlining connectivity. Through Live Ideas potential partners propose a project that is moderated by a central team in the University.

Live Ideas has facilitated industry engagement by; making registering a project/placement by a partner easier, bringing the student into direct contact with the host earlier in the process, automating registration of expressions of interest and greater cross-discipline engagement. Live Ideas has the potential to provide a mechanism to improve the engagement of industry partners and students and academics in science disciplines.

Keywords: Industry engagement, STEM, placement, project

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Negotiating clinical placements: Communication is key

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The aim of this study was to determine the influence communication has on university-industry partnerships and consequently clinical placement offers, for pre-registration nursing students.

Australia’s future nurses depend on clinical placement learning opportunities offered by the health care industry, facilitated through strong university-industry partnerships. Preparing nurses who are fit for practice, purpose and academic award is a key issue for nurse education providers. Student nurses cannot learn practical skills in an authentic world setting, without quality clinical placements offered by the health care industry. Without meaningful partnerships between universities and industry, offers of clinical placement can be impacted on.

A qualitative methodology was used in this study. Analysis of the data was based on a Grounded Theory constant comparative approach. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with nine participants who self-identified as the person who made the decisions to accept or decline undergraduate nursing student clinical placements within their organisation.

Participants’ explicit feedback in regards to communication as a key element to strong stakeholder relationships and clinical placement procurement, was of primary value to the results. Participants iterated there must be quality communication between the two parties, ensuring the fostering of a culture that values the other and works collaboratively, to provide quality clinical placements to pre-registration nursing students.

Maintaining strong communication within a collaborative partnership between universities and industry will ensure quality clinical placements continue to be offered by the health care industry.

Keywords: Industry relationships, pre-registration nursing, clinical placement, communication, collaboration, mutual understanding

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Supporting students on work integrated learning (WIL) placements is a significant undertaking including responsibilities for numerous relationships. In many professional disciplines this role is undertaken by staff employed on a sessional basis. Providing institutional support, for these staff, in the form of professional development is an important responsibility for Flinders University, where WIL is a priority. Access to professional development activities is often difficult for all staff due to workload demands and further complicated for sessional staff by their limited time on campus and ability to acquire funding for professional development attendance. Flinders University has developed Supervising WIL, a student-centred professional development eLearning resource for staff supporting students on WIL placements. Launched in late 2015, Supervising WIL is currently being trialled in the University. This Showcase demonstrates elements of Supervising WIL, including its theoretical underpinnings and key design elements. Particular emphasis is given to the exploration of information and thought points as mechanisms promoting personal development and encouraging staff to support students’ development of self-efficacy skills. ‘Appropriate’ remuneration for sessional staff completing Supervising WIL is briefly discussed.

Keywords: Supervision, eLearning resource, professional development, reflective skills

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Making connections: Enhancing program outcomes via stakeholder partnerships

Jennifer Howell

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Pre-service teacher education programs have at their heart a well established WIL component. National accreditation requires a minimum of 60 days professional experience across the program duration. However, securing places in schools has increasingly become a complex challenge. A number of factors contribute to this; increasing numbers of programs and providers in the marketplace, increasing enrolments, a growing number of schools refusing to host placements, the shifting national guidelines that frame professional experience and the continual reform agenda.

What has become apparent is that teacher education programs need to look for new and innovative approaches if WIL is to be sustainable. This Showcase details one institution’s innovation to develop a new model for stakeholder partnerships. The model is built upon three components; embedded practice, professional experience placements and a professional learning hub. This model provides opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in a partnership that endures beyond WIL placements and navigates the problematical terrain of transitioning into the profession and supporting schools themselves. Whilst the model is only in the second year of implementation, what is clear is that there is a need to involve schools in WIL beyond professional experience placements and to rethink professional boundaries and partnerships.

Keywords: Stakeholder partnerships, pre-service teacher education, partnership mode, sustainable engagement

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An innovative and secure way of engaging with third party providers to offer international internships

Robin Chacko
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The significant demand for international internships among Monash Arts students could only be met with assistance from third party providers. To ensure due diligence and integrity of the pedagogy, the Faculty of Arts tried a different approach from the traditional style of third party provider sourced internship program. The Faculty, through extensive consultation developed policies and procedures that ensured compliance with the University and sectors standards. The feedback received from the participants and the third party provider as part of a post-internship evaluation meeting confirmed that the approach worked extremely well. We are on course to expand this arrangement now to engage with more providers. This would completely open up the opportunities available to Arts students while the management feels assured of the quality of the program and safety of its students.

This presentation recognises the challenges faced by program managers when dealing with the administrative complexities of managing WIL and limited resources to scale up (Patrick, et al., 2009). It discusses how the Faculty of Arts took initiative to define parameters for the admin complexities. It puts forward a model that could be adopted by any area to deliver a successful international internship program.

Keywords: Arts internships, third-party providers, international internships

Reference


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The student WIL journey: From 1st Year to final year

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University of Canberra

The University of Canberra has an excellent reputation for developing students who, on graduation, are work-ready. This reputation is reflected in a decade-long 4 and 5-star ranking for employability in the Good Universities Guide.

To enable students to navigate their way into a professional work integrated learning experience they first must be prepared personally and professionally. Over the last three years the University has embedded opportunities for students to develop and apply their work-related skills and attributes in a compulsory first-year unit, through to capstone international internship opportunities for later years of study.

This presentation shows how the University prepares students through Foundations of Professional Planning for their chosen careers. It concludes with an example of a multi-disciplinary final year international internship program.

Keywords: International internship program, employability, student preparation and support, first year

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WIL-ing the BA: Who is implementing work integrated learning opportunities in the BA?

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An intensified focus on the acquisition of vocational outcomes in higher education has seen a trend in Australian universities toward offering WIL in all undergraduate degrees (Marginson, 2004; Bridgstock, 2013). While professions-based programs have traditionally offered such experiences, generalist programs like the Bachelor of Arts have been less likely to incorporate WIL activities (Carr, 2009). Many BA programs are now grappling with providing embedded work experiences for their students.

This paper presents findings from an OLT-funded project investigating the multiple ways that Australian BA programs are engaging with the provision of WIL opportunities. The project aimed to (1) identify common features and models currently in use; (2) identify exemplary cases and models with potential for translation to other contexts; and (3) develop strategies to encourage adoption and translation practices between disciplines or programs.

This paper identifies the common features of practice in work experience opportunities in the BA curriculum. It outlines innovative curriculum design practices being implemented in a number of BA programs. Through mapping the current state of offerings in terms of their objectives, activities and structure, this paper aligns with the conference sub-theme Learning through WIL: Pushing the boundaries of curriculum and practice.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, Bachelor of Arts, curriculum design

Acknowledgments

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Mothering has been discussed in relation to teachers (James, 2012) and fits well with the role of a WIL facilitator. WIL facilitation encompasses the responsibility of caring for, protecting and nurturing a dependent while at the same time mediating the ‘sibling rivalry’ of demands from university policy, competing academic workloads, industry expectations and student aspirations.

Recognising the additional workload involved in WIL facilitation has been of recent interest (Bates, 2011; Rowe et al., 2013). Along with the practical and academic tasks, pastoral care and relationships between the facilitator and the student are fundamental.

Although many students are in paid employment at the time of their WIL placement, there is a great deal of emotion and anxiety where the workplace is new, expectations are unknown and the placement outcomes are evaluated (Abery, Drummond & Bevan, 2015). Students need support and guidance to determine where the placement fits within their academic pathway (Blackie, Case & Jawitz, 2010).

The added demands of workload (Bates, 2011) and emotional labour (Höcschild, 2012) often go unrecognised for those facilitating WIL programmes. Therefore staff risk their own emotional and workload vulnerability when attempting to allay the student emotion associated with undertaking a WIL placement (Berry & Cassidy, 2013).

Keywords: Work integrated learning, ‘Mothering’, student and staff wellbeing, emotion, workload

References


Getting on the front foot: Hitting boundaries to increase capacity for internships in the arts and social sciences

Robert Ewers

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This presentation addresses ways to allow more Arts students to connect with government and industry as part of the final year of their Arts degree studies. These initiatives include:

1. Facilitating ‘applied projects’ in compulsory capstone courses – pushing the ‘limited capacity boundary’
   This applied research project option enables students in their final year capstone course for their major area of study to be linked to relevant outside organisations to complete a policy report or research assignment for the organisation.

2. Group-focussed Internship research projects – pushing the ‘siloed curriculum boundary’
   This concept is to have students from different disciplines working together on a research project for a host organisation in small groups to bring to the table the distinctive skill set students have acquired, so that the project outcomes for the organisations are broader and the experience for the student is richer.

This presentation explores workable options to address the following key issues:

- Academic: adjusting assessment parameters to facilitate applied research-based projects and group projects,
- Administrative: connecting students with relevant host organisations and matching their respective needs,
- Student learning: maximising opportunities to empower students towards better employment.

Keywords: Increasing capacity in WIL, capstones and internships, cross-disciplinary projects, undergraduate arts students

References


Establishing good practice guidelines for international WIL in health sciences

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Despite being resource-intensive (Universities Australia, 2015), international fieldwork is an effective approach to developing graduate employability skills (Green, Johansson, Rossner, Tengnah, & Scott, 2008; Tomlinson, Tan, & Flavell, 2014). Furthermore, the value of student outbound mobility has been demonstrated by the Australian Government’s commitment to the New Colombo Plan (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015). Yet, little is known about what constitutes quality in international fieldwork. This Showcase reports the findings from an Office for Learning and Teaching project that established standards for international fieldwork in health.

Specifically, twenty-five experts representing 14 universities across Australia identified, through a Delphi process (Keeny, Hassan, & McKenna, 2011), the key preparation requirements, the level and model of supervision and assessment criteria to ensure excellent student learning in international fieldwork in health sciences. In accordance with the Delphi protocol three survey rounds were conducted. A total of 140 statements relating to standards for preparation, supervision and assessment were developed. Consensus by the expert panel on the relative importance of 114 statements was achieved.

The research findings address the lack of Australian good practice standards and frameworks for implementing and monitoring the quality of international fieldwork in health.

Keywords: Good practice, international fieldwork, health sciences, Delphi

Acknowledgments

Support for this project was provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT). The views in this project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government OLT. The authors would like to acknowledge both the OLT and the expert panellists who contributed their time and expertise.

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Transnational WIL: Supporting employability through innovative alternatives to internships

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As universities expand their international student markets and international reputations by establishing programmes and campuses overseas, equipping these transnational students with employability skills relevant to their locational context presents dilemmas. Constraints that challenge WIL provision on domestic fronts are magnified in the transnational operating environment.

In particular, this presentation discusses issues that arise from differences in the legal and cultural environments that present challenges to WIL internships in offshore campuses. Transnational campuses located in hubs such as Singapore, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates often attract international students. Legislated work restrictions on student visa holders in these hubs means that institutions must create alternative WIL activities that afford all students the opportunity to develop employability skills through authentic industry engagement. This presentation provides an overview of alternative WIL practice in transnational campus environments, and generates discussion about how effectively these alternative practices can effectively encourage and support employability outcomes valuable to transnational student and employer stakeholders. Finally, the potential of alternative WIL activities to provide wider institutional benefits based on collaboration between home and host campus stakeholders is proposed.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, transnational education, employability, international education

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At the 2014 ACEN Research Symposium several delegates gathered to investigate new and innovative alternatives to placement-based Work Integrated Learning. These approaches evolved over the past few years in response to several drivers including; increased student demand and diversity (Mackaway et al., 2014; Hoskyn & Martin, 2011); competition between institutions for limited places in industry (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011); increased expectations of students, industry and the community; varying context and style of disciplinary practice (Fincher et al., 2004); changing notions of work and the “workplace” in many professions (Deuze et al., 2007).

In this presentation a range of WIL activities is discussed, including: volunteering, community engagement, service learning, consultancy/advisory strategy, placement (inc. internships and practicum), on-the-job experience, and industry-style projects for real clients (in workplaces, or in academic institutions, or remotely supervised). These are presented as a circular continuum rather than a hierarchy to suggest that each has value and can support the achievement of quite different learning outcomes (Rowe et al., 2012), as well as preparing students for changing work patterns into the future (Oliver, 2015). Using a case-based approach, the benefits and limitations of these different activities is explored.

Keywords: Models of WIL, placement, case studies, learning outcomes
Enhancing WIL to place engineering practice at the heart of engineering degrees

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The Australian bachelors and some masters degrees in engineering that are accredited by Engineers Australia are intended to prepare graduates to commence practice in the engineering profession. Accreditation requires adequate ‘exposure to engineering practice’. Traditionally, almost all faculties have required students to complete a 12-week industry placement before they can graduate. Changes in the industry have made it increasingly challenging for faculties to sustain good quality placements for the annual graduating cohort of some 11,000 students. During 2012-14, with major funding from the Australian Department of Industry, the Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED) undertook a consultative research project to explore improvements to industry engagement. The research confirmed that all stakeholders – students, academics, industry and the profession – desire to make engineering practice the central focus of the curriculum in formative engineering degrees. The project delivered Best Practice Guidelines (Male & King, 2014) for faculties, industry, and professional and industry bodies to realise this goal. Essentially, the recommendations advocate integrating a wide range of work-related activities into the curriculum, including good quality industry placements, and industry-inspired projects. The university members of ACED and their industry partners are now systemically and collaboratively developing such WIL strategies to enhance their degrees and the employability of their graduates.

Keywords: Engineering education, industry engagement, work integrated learning, engineering accreditation

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Uncovering WIL in contemporary curricula

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In the last few years, like many Australian Universities, there has been an increased focus on Work Integrated Learning (WIL) within programs offered at the University of Tasmania. The University of Tasmania’s Faculty of Health has led the way with WIL and this knowledge has been shared through the initiation of the WIL Community of Practice (CoP). A finding from the WIL CoP was the need for better understanding of current WIL activity offered within courses at the University of Tasmania.

An audit of WIL activity in units and courses will occur in the first half of 2016 via an online survey. In particular, highlighting the types of WIL e.g. proximity and authenticity and how activity is scaffolded across each course (Kaider, Hains-Wesson & Young, 2015). Additionally, ascertaining effectiveness of assessment in WIL related to learning outcomes will be mapped (Higher Education Academy, 2015). This presentation showcases the survey’s findings and discusses impact on contemporary curricula and the University’s WIL strategy.

Keywords: WIL, curriculum, employability, strategy

Acknowledgments

The Authors wish to acknowledge the members of the University of Tasmania’s WIL Community of Practice.

References


Development of an online work integrated learning (WIL) survey tool to evaluate the quality of students’ WIL experiences

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Work Integrated Learning enables students to develop professional skills, integrate theory with practice, apply problem-solving skills, develop interpersonal skills and become socialised into the formal and informal norms, protocols and expectations of the profession (Edwards et al., 2004). The primary responsibility of extracting the most out of WIL lies with the student. A self-directed student may be characterised as being aware of one’s own limitations and potentials, as well as having a sense of responsibility and active attitude (Papp, Markkanen, & von Bonsdorff, 2003). Despite this, little is known about the extent to which students actively engage, and take responsibility for, their own learning while on WIL. This presentation outlines the processes related to the development of an online survey to measure and evaluate the quality of students’ WIL experiences.

While in its infancy the survey tool has provided a practical method of assessing and reporting student feedback on the quality of their learning experience. Additionally, the tool has provided: a mechanism to evaluate how students take responsibility for their own learning; a consistent strategy to measure and compare the quality of learning experiences across disciplines and capability to provide student feedback to placement organisations.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, evaluation, students, learning

Acknowledgements

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References


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Exploring the challenges of professional accreditation work integrated learning policies: An environmental health higher education perspective

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Recognition to practise as an Environmental Health Practitioner in Australia generally requires the completion of a professionally-accredited tertiary qualification which includes a work placement or a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component. This presentation discusses an informal review undertaken by course convenors involved in the provision of such programs in Australia, in conjunction with the professional body Environmental Health Australia. The review involved identifying the current strengths, weakness and challenges of current WIL offerings in professionally-accredited environmental health programs, together with a review of the Environmental Health Australia (EHA) course accreditation WIL policy requirements. This process identified a range of challenges including the need to develop a common understanding of what constitutes a WIL activity. The presentation argues that future WIL professional accreditation policy in this area requires recognition of these challenges and a shift from focusing on a specific work placement period to the development of a framework to identify how different WIL approaches contribute to graduate employability. For example, how to assess the contribution of a work integrated learning activity to the development of a graduate for professional practice in environmental health. In doing so, further consultation with the environmental health profession is required to assist in this process.

Keywords: Course accreditation, environmental health education, work experience, work integrated learning

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Professional and Community Engagement (PACE) at Macquarie University: Spotlight on employability

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PACE at Macquarie University offers undergraduate students credit, gaining work integrated learning opportunities with local, regional and international partners. Through PACE, students work on mutually-beneficial projects that both contribute to the partner’s organisational goals and enable students to strengthen graduate capabilities while contributing to positive social change. This Showcase outlines the findings of a PACE Research Project – ‘The Student Experience of PACE: Graduate Capabilities and Career Aspirations’. Developed in the context of efforts to advance our understanding of the ‘scholarship of engagement’ (Boyer, 1996), the project seeks to evaluate the perceived impact of PACE on a range of student/graduate capabilities. The project adopted a mixed methods approach incorporating interviews and a questionnaire survey of students enrolled in PACE Units in 2014 and early 2015. Findings were generated through a thematic analysis of the data involving ‘progressive focussing’ (Parlett & Hamilton, 1977) and a blended method of inductive/deductive coding in SPSS. Addressing the Conference sub-theme ‘Employability and WIL 2020’ this Showcase focuses on the findings relating to employability. While these findings are, for the most part, strongly positive, this Showcase draws on a range of evidence with due attention to counter evidence.

Keywords: Employability, work integrated learning, graduate capabilities, mutual benefit

Reference


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Preparing students for disruptive futures: Assessing intangible learnings from international study

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Short-term study experiences of less than one-month are the fastest growing format for international outbound education and provide exciting opportunities to support authentic learning in an international context. While these study experiences are increasing in popularity, particularly in the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) sphere, effective assessment models for this education format is an under-researched and under-resourced area. To fill this gap, a research project by the Queensland University of Technology and University of Queensland identifies the authentic and often intangible learning outcomes derived from this particular context and is developing a rubric of co-learning teaching modules and assessment frameworks, for those outcomes. The project engages a multi-method approach of pre- and post-tour quantitative data about student learning expectations, an audit of existing assessment models, input from a community of practice of leaders in this education area, and field-testing to align teaching, learning and assessment for international short-term study experiences. This research argues that complex intangible learning outcomes from international experiences not currently captured by traditional assessment, including curiosity, initiative, risk taking, cultural humility, resourcefulness (to name a few), can and should be measured by tangible assessment modules. Capturing and valuing these authentic learning experiences shifts how we can support students wanting to operate within a global environment and supports diversity within multidisciplinary teaching and learning contexts.

Keywords: Assessment, work integrated learning, short-term international study experiences, intangible learning outcomes

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Creating new multi-discipline subjects through cross-institutional partnerships: Developing leadership capacity for WIL professionals through curriculum design

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This session explores the role of WIL professionals and their leadership development in curriculum design, teaching and learning. The roles and responsibilities of professional and academic teaching staff in facilitating Work Integrated Learning programs in Higher Education have become increasingly ambiguous, as facilitating WIL programs requires non-discipline specific knowledge in developing students’ transferable skills. As WIL professionals take on the role of ‘para-academics’, their challenge is to ensure that their work is valued in an environment where “academic identity and status are closely related to research and scholarly activities” (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 64). This session draws on the experience of two WIL professionals who worked in partnership to design new multi-discipline and multi-campus online WIL subjects to enhance the employability of students. The WIL professionals worked in close collaboration with the teaching and learning team to design the subjects, empowering them to develop their leadership capacity in curriculum design, teaching and learning. The subjects were piloted across regional campuses in 2016 and will be embedded more broadly into the curriculum across the institution in the future.

Keywords: Leadership, teaching and learning, curriculum design, WIL professionals

Reference

Enhancing business ethics and employability in experiential learning

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Business ethics education has been researched from a cognitive perspective that assumes that ethics can be taught through thinking about ethics. Learning ethics from affective and behavioural perspectives has been under-explored. Through qualitative research, we examined the learning and perceptions of students when applying business ethics through experiential learning activities (ELAs).

Results show that business ethics can be taught using ELA allowing students to gain confidence in applying ethics to a range of issues in a safe learning environment. This led to social benefits including improved ethics and language skills, increased engagement with academics, improved employability, and satisfaction with university life. We also identified the perceived effects of ELA on applying business ethics to real life situations involved co-creation. This included increased student motivation and engagement with learning, improved team work, a greater understanding of different cultures and learning styles, and increased need for self-discipline in ELA.

Keywords: Participant centred learning, student learning experience, experiential learning activities, business ethics, graduate capabilities, affective learning

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Producing films for professional development in WIL

Franziska Trede
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Universities have a duty of care to provide support and education to workplace learning supervisors, those practitioners who supervise university students in their workplace as part of a university course. As a response to local research findings, literature reviews and buoyed up with the new WIL-Industry agreement, films were produced as an engaging and reflective tool to provide professional development for industry WIL partners. The aim of this project was to enhance WIL partners’ experiences of student supervision by using films as reflective triggers in professional and staff development activities.

In this Showcase presentation the conceptual ideas that informed the production of these eight films are discussed. Pedagogical underpinnings of how to use these films for professional development of WIL partners and also academic and professional WIL staff is presented. One of the eight films is shown before discussion is opened up to participants to provide feedback and comments. Participants should develop a better understanding of the possibilities and challenges of effectively using these films to support WIL partners.

During this Showcase session, participants:
• learn about the project’s aims, film production method and pedagogical intent;
• view one film and discuss its scope for professional development; and
• provide comments and feedback.

As this is a Showcase and interactive session, a film is shown to stimulate emerging discussions. This Showcase is open to all delegates, but more particularly to academics and WIL partners involved with student supervision in workplaces.

Keywords: Online resource, film, professional development in WIL, reflective practice, WIL partner

Acknowledgement

The films were produced in collaboration with a script writer Natascha Flowers, film director Ali Saad, professional actors and crew, with support from the CSU Legal Office and advice from CSU academics on script drafts. This film project was funded by The Education For Practice Institute, CSU.

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Aspects of WIL that improve student nurses’ attitudes towards working in aged care

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Recruitment and retention of staff is problematic in the residential aged care sector. Poor WIL experiences for student nurses contribute to reluctance to work in aged care. Yet, prior to this study, there had been no quantitative exploration of which aged care placement attributes link to students’ perceived likelihood of working in the sector post-graduation: a gap in the literature addressed by this study. A supported, evidence-based residential aged care placement program was developed for nursing students within an action research framework (Lea, Mason, Eccleston, & Robinson, 2016). Staff, predominantly nurses and care workers, formed a mentor group in two Tasmanian residential aged care facilities. During the three- or four-week placements, weekly feedback meetings were held for students (n=71) and their mentors. Students completed questionnaires on their placement experiences. Associations were identified between the likelihood of working in residential aged care post-graduation and nurse mentor–student feedback exchange, Teaching and Learning Score and supportiveness of care workers. These findings suggest that to increase interest in residential aged care work following graduation, the teaching and learning environment needs improvement, opportunities should be proffered for mentor–student feedback exchange, and care workers supported so they can mentor effectively.

Keywords: Teaching aged care facilities, clinical placements, career choice, mentors, nursing students, feedback

Reference


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Multi-modal connections- the case of three university strategic priority grant funded projects

Serene Lin-Stephens¹
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Clare Iarandine
Macquarie University

This presentation illustrates a university career service’s efforts to strengthen stakeholder relationships for the purpose of enhancing employability through three Learning and Teaching strategic priority grant-funded projects 2015-2016. Through various modes of connection, the career service collaborates with faculties and multiple areas within the university to establish measures which support work integrated learning. Together, they cover the creation of digital learning resources, entrepreneurship facilitation, and the development of a career curriculum conceptual framework.

The projects use four modes of connection. The first project builds digital connections with individual students directly via an online career portal CareerWISE, complementing a Learning Skills portal and a Library Research skills portal in the student online learning system. The portal provides training and resources to build student employability. The second project highlights a face-to-face interactive competition linking students and external industry representatives and alumni. The third project makes a curricular connection, entailing a study on academics’, students’, and employers’ conceptions of career information literacy and creates a framework tying learning approaches, career development learning and information literacy. These projects address the need for, first and foremost, cohesive connections between internal areas of the university, which then further facilitate connections with students and the industries.

Keywords: Career information literacy, career modules, employability, entrepreneurship

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Cross-peer mentoring in allied health student placements -
The "How-To" model

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There is a range of evidence on peer learning during student placement within the allied health literature, mostly discussing the benefit of the 2:1 and 3:1 models of pairing students (Martin & Edwards, 1998; Secomb, 2007; Martin, Morris, Moore, Sadlo & Crouch, 2004). Peer pairing has been shown to be beneficial in terms of enhanced learning of communication skills, development of practical and independent practice skills, and support; as well as increasing placement capacity.

With shortfalls of clinical placement opportunities in existence and predicted to grow, a HETI/ICTN grant was able to support cross-peer mentoring being piloted in two NSW local health districts in late 2015, and following this a "how-to" manual be developed for use by placement sites to support a paired student model of "emerging-competence (senior) with novice (junior)" (Martin & Edwards, 1998, Secomb, 2007, Blum, Borgland & Parcells, 2010, Morris et al., 2004). The project successfully gained further funding to support dissemination through the early part of 2016. This Showcase presentation shares the pilot phase, development of the manual and evaluation; addressing the issues often faced by sites/supervisors when considering a transition to a different model of supervision. The project was undertaken as a partnership between academic and clinical staff.

Keywords: Cross-peer mentoring, student placements, supervision models

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Framing a research project: International students and the factors that influence their future employability in first year

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International students in Australian Universities arguably do not have the same access to or participation in WIL experiences while studying at University. (Gribble, 2014; Orrell, 2011; Patrick et al., 2008). We know that many international students experience significant cultural challenges when transitioning to study in Australia (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2013) but there is less known about the factors that influence the development of employability, particularly during their first year as a student. This emerging qualitative research project, while in its early stages, has conducted a comprehensive literature review, is building a case study research design and will undertake data collection and analysis in the next 3 months. This study identifies a gap in the literature and aims to explore how employability is experienced and understood by international students while studying in their first year at an Australian University (Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Huang 2013; Huang, Turner & Chen 2014). The present research project will provide insight to the type of support that Universities can provide early in the international student experience to enhance graduate outcomes.

Keywords: International student employability, future employability, access and participation, diversity, international student experience

References


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Developing virtual WIL for engineering students

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There is a gap between engineering education and practice (Male, 2010). Engineering academics are ill-equipped to bridge this gap because most lack recent industry experience (Cameron, Reidsema, & Hadgraft, 2011). Virtual WIL will address the problem. This Showcase outlines the design requirements which were reviewed at forums with educators, students, engineers, and key personnel at Engineers Australia.

Keywords: Virtual work integrated learning, engineering education, virtual reality, work integrated learning

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Work readiness through team-based in-company consulting projects in Australia and overseas

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A work integrated learning model where the emphasis is on authenticity. Not only do students work on a project of real value in an actual workplace but they do so in a real team. We send teams of four to five students into organisations to work intensively or over a semester. Projects have taken place in companies in Australia and overseas in cities including; Bangkok, Berlin, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai, San Francisco, Santiago, Shanghai, Singapore and Seoul.

Teamwork underpins all phases of our for-credit WIL subjects at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Industry recruitment practices are embedded into the student selection and team allocation process. Compulsory contact hours start with on-campus preparatory seminars covering, business culture, consulting, teamwork and conflict, data analytics and presentation skills. Consulting professionals from industry are also brought in to present to students on relevant topics.

While teams are allocated an academic mentor and a primary liaison at the company, much like consultants, students work with a high level of autonomy. Student teams complete a written report and present their findings via a presentation to company staff at the conclusion of the project. Each subject holds a Showcase and networking event where student teams share their findings and come together with industry partners and staff to reflect on their experience and to celebrate their achievement.

Keywords: Team-based project work, embedding industry recruitment practice, global mobility, employability.

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Virtual orientation: Helping WIL students “belong”

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The University of Tasmania uses two virtual tours to help students in Faculty of Health courses explore settings, learning spaces, learning events, student profiles and topics of interest to help students orient themselves to study and placements. The platforms ‘Uni-View’ and the Tasmanian Clinical Education Network have potential to provide information in an engaging way that generates interest and also sense of familiarity and belonging for students contemplating Work Integrated Learning. The virtual tours permit “anticipatory adjustment” (Garza, 2015) involving the relationships between proactive orientation to, and exploration of, learning and placement environments.

This Showcase looks at the way these tours are used, as they have broadened access to teaching site and WIL orientation for staff, students, employers and other stakeholders. The technology has the potential to pilot student reactions to remote placement sites and “tasters” related to open content and experiences, so that all the key stakeholders in a WIL environment can detect barriers and enablers to introducing students to learning, teaching and placements in their chosen course of study. The tension between onsite and virtual orientation and “belonging” for students, especially as courses increase their blended delivery, is especially pertinent in WIL-based units of learning.

Keywords: Orientation, placement, technology, virtual

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University of Tasmania Centre For Rural Health, Tasmanian Clinical Education Network, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Tasmanian Area Health Services.

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Outcomes from Global Scope - a large-scale “virtual micro internship” WIL pilot with NSW State Government

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Intersective
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We present the outcomes and finding from a pilot program involving over 200 international students from across University of Technology, Sydney, UNSW, MQ, Performance Education and TAFE. Students participated in 6-week (~40hrs total) consulting-style projects with NSW Government agencies including Arts, Justice, NSW Police, Small Business Commissioner, Screen Australia, Department of Industry, TAFE, StudyNSW and the Office of State Revenue. The students worked in multidisciplinary teams of 5 to develop options analysis to address current business improvement or research projects facing NSW government agencies. The teams were guided by NSW government mentors (approx. 1.5hrs per week) and Ernst Young consultants (bi-weekly sessions), developed real-world professional skills, built a better understanding of NSW Government and expanded their individual professional networks. The collaboration was guided and facilitated entirely online, using a collection of cloud-based technologies.

Keywords: Virtual WIL, micro internship, service learning, government, multidisciplinary, work integrated learning

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Interim Report on a longitudinal study of Deloitte Fastrack Innovation Challenge and its impact on students’ career trajectory

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In 2007 Deloitte’s Innovation team pioneered the Deloitte Fastrack Innovation Challenge (DFIC) in an effort to galvanise and expand our engagement in supporting students as they transitioned from university to the workplace. The program structure, learning outcomes and curriculum was designed to develop students’ employability skills with a particular focus on innovation capability. Since its inception 1000+ students have participated in the challenge and moved forward into their career. This longitudinal study aims to identify and measure the impact participation in DFIC has on students’ career trajectory using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The Showcase session provides an overview of the preliminary findings of the study including:

- DFIC participants are identified as high performers in their graduate intake
- DFIC participants have tended to looked at new career paths in the knowledge economy

The Showcase session, delivered by the authors and a panel of Fastrack Innovation Challenge Alumni, discusses the preliminary findings and implications for the instructional design of scalable work integrated learning programs.

Keywords: Student career trajectory, employability, network, evaluation of WIL, impact measurement

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Quality in WIL is everybody’s business: A university-wide approach to evaluation of the professional practice experience

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The importance of clinical placement experiences in the education of future health professionals is well documented. Furthermore, evidence suggests that monitoring and evaluating the student experience is central to the provision of sustainable quality clinical placements. It is often difficult however, for Faculty academic staff to monitor the quality of learning opportunity students receive on placement. Challenges to collecting data capable of informing best practice in WIL include: timing of evaluation data collection, achieving good response rates, and the need to protect the privacy of external clinical educators. Such challenges can lead to inconsistent approaches to the evaluation of professional placements subjects in the university sector. This presentation describes a collaborative approach to the evaluation of clinical placement adopted at a large national Australian university. Collaboration between a central unit responsible for Learning and Teaching services and Faculty staff led to development of a clinical placement evaluation tool suitable for use across all health science disciplines. The tool is being piloted. Lessons learned during the process of evaluation tool development, negotiating tool administration and encouraging student participation are discussed.

Keywords: Clinical placement, student feedback, WIL, quality assurance

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Embedding a scaffolded employability framework across curriculum supported by the use of e-Portfolios

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Research suggests that employability strategies should be embedded across the entire curriculum ‘to ensure that the learning, teaching, and assessment activities with which students engage will help develop’ employable graduates (Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaac, & Lawton, 2012, p. 45). The aim of this project was to embed employability strategies into the curriculum using e-Portfolios as a tool to assist students to explore and record progress of their employability. Academics within the Public Health and Environmental Health programs at Griffith University partnered with Career and Employment Services’ staff to develop and pilot an embedded employability framework. The project utilised a five stage process: discussion and reflection amongst partners; review and mapping of the employability curriculum for each of the programs; implementation of course changes and support tool development; and evaluation. The project has delivered on incorporating the use of e-Portfolios across two degree program curricula to embed a career learning framework. A mixed methods approach was used to evaluate the project and preliminary findings indicate that student self-assessment of skills and confidence associated with employability increased following the completion of courses that included the employability framework.

Keywords: Employability, ePortfolio, curriculum, embedding

Reference


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Developing career mentoring programs in Vietnam

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Macquarie University

Our purpose is to present our initial collaborative work on mentor programs at the ACEN conference and build our connections via the dissemination of information. RMIT Vietnam has a number of ‘start up programs’ with the aim of supporting career development for students in Vietnam, especially young female leaders. Our research has highlighted that there is a need to foster opportunities for development of women in leadership roles in Vietnam (Mate, McDonald, Morgan & Do 2016). Despite the implementation of gender equity law in Vietnam in July 2007 there remains a gap of women represented in leadership roles in Vietnam and practical implementation of opportunities for the development of women into mentorship opportunities (Cook & Glass, 2014). Conducting research in Vietnam and Australia will improve our understanding of cultural differences and provide insight into the significance of building mentorship programs across global communities. We will be working toward a collaborative project between Macquarie University (Australia) and RMIT Vietnam-Australia to evaluate the outcomes of mentorship models in 2016.

Keywords: Career development, mentoring programmes, Vietnam

References


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Understanding the ways practice is experienced: A strategy for the preparation of graduates for professional practice

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Professional education programs responsible for preparing graduates for professional practice employ a range of strategies, including the provision of work integrated learning opportunities. This Showcase presentation proposes that developing an understanding of the qualitatively different ways practice is experienced by practitioners is an additional strategy which could be considered to support this purpose. As an example, an overview of a phenomenographic study, aimed at investigating the ways the practice of environmental health is experienced by practitioners is showcased. It includes an overview of the research approach, study design and how the outcomes of a phenomenographic study could be applied to enhance preparation of students for work placement opportunities and professional practice as graduates.

Keywords: Phenomenography, professional practice, pedagogy, experience

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Graduating students are under increasing pressure to be able to present themselves as flexible, confident and motivated potential employees, prepared for their future employment (Jackson, 2016). However, many graduates apply for work unable to articulate what knowledge and skills they have learned or what they have achieved (Peet et al., 2011). In 2016, eight courses drawn from eight Schools were selected at Edith Cowan University to take part in a pilot project to develop employability skills. This pilot was designed to examine how students can be supported in recognising and articulating their learning, skill development and achievements throughout their course from first year, through WIL placement units, to a capstone unit and into employment. Through integrative learning tasks and peer interviewing strategies, students are given opportunities throughout their course to articulate their knowledge, according to their course’s Learning Outcomes, professional competencies, and generic work skills introduced in the Core Skills for Work (Australian Government, 2013). Students will be monitored throughout their courses to evaluate how this approach affects student confidence. Information gathered from this pilot will be used to inform future practice in course design at the university.

Keywords: ePortfolios, curriculum design, integrative learning, employability skills

References


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What do employers want? What do students have? 
Needs assessment of graduate attributes for work integrated learning?

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There is consensus by employer and professional groups, that the graduate attributes possessed by graduates are a core outcome of university study (ACNielsen, 2000; Precision Consulting, 2007). Graduates with relevant attributes are well regarded by employers. The University must therefore strive to embed the attributes relevant to their discipline in the curriculum which helps make their graduates work-ready.

How can the university assist students acquire graduate attributes to be work-ready?

This paper explores the expectations of domestic and international students about their university experiences and their acquired graduate attributes and the expectation of the employers, in order to identify the graduate attributes that make students work-ready.

The findings of this study suggest that the students expect that their tertiary experience should make provision for more opportunities for interactions and engagement and the two new attributes required by students to make them work-ready that emerged from this study were “social benefits” and “co creation”.

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Focus groups were conducted with students at a large metropolitan university in Australia and 11 employers. The data were analysed using qualitative analytic techniques and coded using NVIVO to understand student expectations and reality.

Keywords: Work-ready, graduate attributes, employers’ expectation

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‘Classroom of Many Cultures’ as a model for cross-cultural co-creation of curriculum

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If a key goal of contemporary university education is to ‘internationalise’ our students, then, ideally, principles of cross-cultural collaboration should be extended to the way that we create curriculum. Since Macquarie University implemented its innovative international PACE program (Professional and Community Engagement), staff have worked closely with partner organisations in a number of countries to place students in positions for work integrated learning. Ongoing conversations with these partners, however, revealed reservoirs of teaching expertise and a genuine desire to share their insights and teaching techniques. With support from the Office of Learning and Teaching, our project has been able to bring together a curriculum development team from nine countries that has met in both Australia and Malaysia, and collaborated online. Together, we have shared and developed partner insights, developing materials so that these contributions can be incorporated into the curriculum in which international placement experiences are embedded. This presentation discusses key insights into the challenges and opportunities of this type of international, cross-cultural co-creation, especially the necessity of building strong relationships, the pragmatics of collaboration, and some of the issues that were of greatest concern to our international partners.

Keywords: Co-creation, internationalisation, curriculum development, international partnerships

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Interim Report on Job Smart initiative and its impact on students’ awareness and exposure of employability skills

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In early 2016 USYD Business School’s CEO piloted “Job Smart” employability skill-building initiative at scale, in an effort to equip pre-experience Business School students to transition from university to the workplace. The program structure, learning outcomes and activities were designed to enable awareness and build a portfolio of ‘opt-in’ WIL experiences relevant to recruitment over the lifecycle of their degree.

In its pilot, 750+ students (over 90% international students) participated, with 150 engaging in 100% of the activities. This initial study aims to identify and measure the impact participation in Job Smart has on students’ confidence and exposure towards workplace transition, applying qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The Showcase highlights preliminary findings of Job Smart participants including:

- Better understanding of the range of career paths in the knowledge economy and how to approach recruitment processes accordingly, and
- Initiative to engage in workplace-relevant experiences (e.g., volunteering) from the commencement of one’s degree.

The Showcase, delivered by the authors, discusses preliminary findings and implications for learning design of scalable employability skill-building programs.

Keywords: Employability, network, evaluation of WIL, impact measurement

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WIL experiences - keeping placement safe and effective

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Optimising the WIL experience requires consideration of the student, the supervisory staff and the university. The strengthening of connections between these three components has allowed flexibility in the delivery of an undergraduate program at the University of Newcastle. An increase in choices for students has resulted in placement performance unimpeded by factors such as financial and personal limitations.

Degrees in the Health Professions integrate WIL throughout undergraduate programs. Programs include professional placements during which students are expected to display competence in several areas of practice.

The challenges to both students and supervisors are numerous and the dynamic nature of the health professional workplace requires continual modifications to maintain and ideally improve WIL standards. This mixed method study utilised purpose-built questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.

This presentation focuses on the Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science (Diagnostic Radiography) program. This undergraduate program has had to contend with a substantial student body increase in recent years and adaptations have been made to accommodate this. This paper has a focus on student opinion and feedback but the results may be of benefit in planning WIL for other programs as they include feedback from students, placement supervisors and university staff.

Keywords: Professional placement, radiation safety, student performance

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Collaborative partnership and shared value create a fresh approach to WIL placements

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RMIT and Brimbank collaborative partnership provided the foundation for the creation of a new WIL program concept that delivered shared value to the council, the university and to the students. In response to the challenge of over 600 third and fourth year students requiring WIL placements, RMIT needed a fresh response. RMIT developed some initial strategic ideas around Brimbank’s rolling asset management program. Our collaboration resulted in a long-term WIL program for groups of our students across a three-year Council asset assessment cycle.

The fresh approach delivers a three-pronged success to students, RMIT and for Brimbank. The program continues to evolve, aligned to the Council’s emerging needs. Long-term collaborative partnerships that continue to evolve, add value and meet the emerging needs of students, the university and industry, remain a strategic priority for RMIT, as we seek to enhance student satisfaction and employability of our students.

We are in the process of discussing similar models with other strategic partners including local councils and other asset owners. It delivers exceptional value to all key stakeholders, including the council, RMIT and our students. Brimbank was recently recognised as a Finalist LGPro Awards 2016 for Excellence in Innovative Management.

Keywords: Collaborative, partnerships, shared value, WIL program

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge Brimbank City Council for their support to and enthusiasm about this fresh approach to WIL Placements and thank CAST for their support in the initial phase of this new strategy development.

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Development of professional identity: Building a bank of dilemmas

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This Showcase presents aspects of Phase One of a strategically-funded tertiary project about the development of Professional Identity (PI) through independent critical reflection. The larger Three Phase research study investigates how students’ real-world learning and development of PI can be articulated across three university faculties: Art and Design, Medicine and Science. In this snapshot of research in progress, the focus is on identifying dilemmas of practice in Art and Design; then member checking and receiving feedback from students, academic staff and industry professionals. Initial data collection methods have revealed an emergent qualitative industry-specific ‘Bank of Dilemmas’. Snapshots from an online survey of first and second year cohorts in Art and Design is presented. A Dilemmas Framework has been selected to engage a diverse range of understandings of practice across specialised real-world scenarios. Key dilemmas from students and from industry are showcased in relation to identified frequency, and scope and relevance, opening previously closed doors into areas of ambiguity for students and industry. In seeking to push the boundaries through new assessment tasks and project design, this research focuses on student acquisition of tacit real-world knowledge and transformative experience.

Keywords: Professional identity, dilemmas of practice, critical self-reflection, real-world context

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Partner perspectives on paid versus unpaid internships

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Pressure to develop work-ready graduates is increasing, and universities are working more closely with industry partners to improve graduate employability, drive innovation and strengthen national economic competitiveness (ACEN, 2015). Internships provide one mechanism for enhancing students’ employability and active citizenship (Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010). Although long-term paid internships tend to be held up as a model of best practice in work integrated learning, and recent research suggests that both employers and students prefer this approach/model over short-term unpaid internships (Smith et al., 2015), unpaid internships continue to outnumber paid internships at Macquarie University. What influences an organisation’s decision to offer paid rather than unpaid internships? Focus groups held with industry partners at Macquarie University during April 2016 explore the perceived contributions of paid interns relative to unpaid interns, the impact on organisational capacity of hosting paid or unpaid interns, and Macquarie University industry partners’ awareness of paid intern models. At the same time, focus groups seek to provide an evidence base for improving work integrated learning and enhancing university-industry partnerships.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, industry partnerships, paid internships, co-op model

References


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Modelling partnerships: Exploring a whole of region approach to partnership development and management

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Inequities in employment, economic prospects, health and income can and do exist in Australia; however, they are not distinct to the rural and regional context (Pritchard & McManus, 2000). Focussing on these differences can conceal the diverse experiences of individuals, and the ways in which rural and regional communities thrive and have much to offer (Macadam et al., 2004). Informed by this context and the growing importance of work integrated learning, the Modelling Partnerships research project is focussed on exploring the potential for collaboration between Macquarie University’s Professional and Community Engagement (PACE) program and a whole of region.

This Showcase presents preliminary findings from this project, with the Region of Orange as its case study. Research data were collected from stakeholders through: focus groups with individuals and organisations from the Orange Region; semi-structured interviews with Macquarie University staff and; student surveys.

The Showcase briefly details some of the potential benefits, risks, and logistics involved in developing an innovative whole of region partnership - one through which mutual benefits can be meaningful, impactful, and sustained. The workshop gauges feedback on how best the project might progress. This Showcase is of interest to those involved in developing partnerships for work integrated learning purposes.

Keywords: Partnership development, regional, mutual benefit, PACE

References


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Visualising WIL: Using data to support transformative learning

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Learning analytics provides tools that enable and require learners to engage in new kinds of learning practices, including the interpretation and critical analysis of data representations. Given that analytics are now commonplace in organisational practice, our students need opportunities to develop expertise in, and a critical perspective on, analytics tools. Working with students in two PACE (Professional and Community Engagement) units at Macquarie University, we are developing a model for engaging students in visualising aspects of their work integrated learning. The model makes use of simple and readily available analytics, and is designed to facilitate transformative learning, building students’ capacity to learn from their experience of professional or community engagement through the use of visual tools. We report on our pilot project that involves supporting students in developing and reflecting on tools and strategies for imagining, mapping, observing and re-imagining key domains of work integrated learning within the scope of a unit of study. The project aims to produce a scalable model that has application across different disciplines. It is informed by recent literature on embedded learning analytics (Pardo, 2014), the alignment of learning analytics with learning design (Lockyer, Heathcote & Dawson, 2013), and data capture and representation (Pardo, 2014).

Keywords: Learning analytics, work integrated learning, transformative learning, data representations

References


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Learning in a connected world: Where employability agenda meets the principles of enactivism and connectivism

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The question of student employability has rapidly risen up the agenda in the higher education sector. Whilst students in their disciplines increasingly develop the intellectual skills and attributes widely sought by employers (e.g. critical thinking, reflective thinking, constructing arguments, and intercultural and communication skills), programs across the Universities that are designed to help students develop such skills and articulate these skills and attributes to themselves and to future employers, are not delivering the necessary outcomes. Australia is still facing a challenge in terms of creating graduates that can become a creative workforce. The biggest challenge of such programs is the emphasis they put on teaching generic employability skills that can be applied in any professional context. But can a one-size-fits-all approach work? What is the role of individuals in becoming active agents in shaping and further developing their skills to match the requirements of complex real-life work environments? How can individuals take control over their own professional development and lifelong learning in a digital era? This poster outlines an innovative approach taken by a Faculty of Medicine and Health Science program team in an Australian University to prepare graduates who learn how to go beyond the employability agenda and grow into or arise from their interactive role in a work-integrated curriculum. The focus of the Poster is the articulation of key principles of two contemporary learning theories, that of enactivism and connectivism, and how they can be translated in practical placement activities and authentic assessments for undergraduate students. Relevant examples from industry partners are used to strengthen the argument that learning how to learn at a workplace is the key to a successful career.

Keywords: Employability and lifelong learning, connectivism, enactivism, curriculum

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Wellness for health students during WIL

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The conveners established a new paramedic degree program at Western Sydney University in 2014 and endeavoured to provide a course with diverse clinical placement experiences including Australian and international ambulance services, mental health services, disability services, medical clinics and sporting and music events. Their experience in learning design, peer support and paramedicine combined to develop valid learning experiences for students as well as preparation to undertake, often confronting, placements.

Most students who undertake WIL will experience some level of personal challenge as part of the process, and this challenge is as much a part of the learning as the discipline-specific skills and knowledge. However in health-related WIL these experiences can be particularly confronting as students are faced with the extremes of the human condition as well as people from vastly different social and cultural settings from those with which they are comfortable.

Many experienced practitioners in these fields suffer negative effects from this exposure including burnout (38% in paramedics (Stassen, Van Nugteren, & Stein, 2013)), emotional exhaustion, depression and PTSD (Alexander & Klein, 2001) and even suicide.

This Poster outlines a suite of resources collated from participants’ experience to help future staff support students prior to, during and after a health WIL experience, as resilience and coping has been identified as linking to better outcomes (Porter & Johnson, 2008). The primary focus is the role of the university, rather than the preceptors, as the university has the opportunity to support and develop skills throughout a three-year period rather than the short term of the actual placement. Resources that have previously been trialled include: the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) to explore ideas around wellness, reflection and coping, serial reflections and mindfulness.

Keywords: Health student, paramedic, wellness, reflection

References


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Peer observation partnership: Developing educators’ capacity through WIL framework

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Educators are continually learning. Integrating learning while teaching allows educators to challenge themselves to innovate and improve their teaching skills. Peer observation is a well-established method to this end. However, many organisations struggle with the implementation of experiential professional development for their educators. Our initiative is to create a Tutorial Observation Guide (TOG) as a framework for reflection by a tutor observing a peer’s teaching. The TOG was incorporated in implementing a professional development program for tutors in an experiential environment. This in turn provided the potential to develop and enhance leadership capacity in the respective tutors. Mixed-methods evaluation was conducted of 10 participants from the tutors of first-year medicine involved in peer observation using the TOG. Data were collected through online survey and group interviews. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted.

The TOG was described as a helpful adjunct to peer observation that facilitated tutors in reflecting on and extending their own skills. The guided observation allowed the tutor to link the process of group teaching to theoretical pedagogical domains. However, tutors expressed concerns of similarity of the TOG to formal workplace evaluation, fear of judgement and a desire for more peer feedback. A framework for reflection based on pedagogical theoretical domains can enhance work integrated learning for educators. Peer observation can be broadened to consolidate reflection of educators to innovate and improve their teaching skills. The evaluation of the process identified changes required to improve its acceptability and uptake.

Keywords: Peer observation framework, reflection, innovate, experiential

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Year One PBL tutors who participated in this research at the School of Medicine Sydney.

References


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Understanding student interest in knowledge translation skills

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It is widely recognised Australian university graduates need training in knowledge translation skills such as leadership, management, finance, marketing, media and teaching to more effectively and efficiently transition into future careers (Research Skills for an Innovative Workforce, 2011).

Half of Australian PhD students plan to pursue non-academic careers, and many Bachelor graduates have a poor understanding of how their knowledge can be efficiently applied in an employment setting (Edwards, 2011). At the same time, Australian businesses consider university graduates lacking in key skills required for managerial roles.

In other countries the inability to effectively transition university graduates into non-academic careers has resulted in highly-skilled graduates not achieving the full economic benefits of their, and their community’s educational investment (Cyranoski et al., 2011; Fix the PhD, 2011). Thus there are strong economic, social and individual imperatives demanding improved training of tertiary students in areas outside their core discipline, in order to maximise the benefits of their education.

This project surveyed undergraduate and postgraduate students to better understand their views on knowledge translation training. The data showed students have: i) a desire for including knowledge translation training during tertiary education; ii) an understanding this training will improve competitiveness for employment; and iii) preferred knowledge translation delivery methods. Overall, the findings support development of formal tertiary knowledge translation programs.

Keywords: Knowledge translation, vocational training, employability, non-academic career

References


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Internships in the sport management discipline – the perspective of industry-based internship supervisors

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The review of literature indicates the widespread use of industry-based internships and their importance in undergraduate degrees (Schoepfer & Dodds, 2011; Wilton, 2012), but there is very little research on student internships in the sport management context. The research that there is in this context focuses on the student or tertiary perspective and the perspective of industry is missing (Calugher, 2013; Coknaz, 2014). Therefore this research is significant because it addresses the gaps in the literature by investigating the sport industry supervisor’s perspective in relation to undergraduate internships.

The aim of this study is to understand the sport industry supervisor’s perspective on the purposes of an internship; their views on the university internship processes and student’s progress; and any recommendations for future sport management internships. This is explored using qualitative case study research and nine semi-structured interviews with sport organisation internship supervisors. This methodology facilitates in-depth exploration of the industry supervisor’s meanings and perspectives in relation to undergraduate sport management internships (Creswell, 2007).

Preliminary results indicate that the sport organisation supervisor’s purpose for being a part of the internship program is not just to support students in their personal development, but to enhance industry staff’s professional development as they mentor the students. This research concludes that the strengths of an effective internship program are: consistency in procedures; the selection process emulating an actual job interview; a strong university presence; and support for industry to celebrate a student’s internship and maintain connections to the students in the longer term.

The sport organisation supervisor’s perspective on internships is explored in detail. Including this key stakeholder has assisted in further understanding their perspective, so that internship programs can be developed to incorporate the sport organisations requirements. As a result the connection between the sport organisation and university is strengthened.

The research reported on here indicates that a strong and effective model of integrated learning has been developed within the internship program that is the focus of the research and can inform sport management based undergraduate internships more broadly.

Keywords: Sport management internship, higher education, sport organisation, perspective on purpose

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Embracing the boundaries of interprofessional practice-based collaboration in work integrated learning

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For many students, learning to work with other professions during work integrated learning (WIL) requires them to engage with a range of ad hoc opportunities. Structurally embedded interprofessional WIL programs tend to be less commonplace. A WIL program of interprofessional activities was developed to educate students from speech pathology and dietetics, where a natural overlap exists in professional practice. The program aimed to foster students’ understandings of the other health profession, whilst developing discipline-specific clinical placement competencies (Croker, 2016). Focus groups explored relationships between different professions that were inherent in delivering and participating in the interprofessional WIL program. Kirkpatrick’s evaluation components of reaction, learning, behaviour and results were utilised to report on student and educator reflections. Through this innovative program students and educators from both disciplines collaborated and interacted in practical and professional ways developing their understanding of roles, relationships, and interactions in clinical settings. The importance of relationships and partnerships between universities and practice worlds and among profession-specific groups of educators in both contexts are explored using Higgs (2011) model of practice-based education. The notions of relationships, authenticity and context was highlighted as being key to the program’s success.

Keywords: Collaboration, interprofessional, practice-based education, work integrated learning

References


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On campus partnerships: Integrating work integrated learning into the student experience?

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In this Poster presentation we consider how on campus partnerships between centralised student and career development, experiential learning and academic skills teams with faculty based WIL and enrichment teams can maximise student experience. Can we together find ways to model the integration we believe to be critical in WIL? Looking at feedback from external business partners, student outcomes and the shared approaches used in experiential and blended learning, careers, student and skills development, course advising and WIL, we outline a proposed framework for collaboration and service coordination and the potential benefits to students, employers and academic divisions/university.

Keywords: Blended services, WIL, integrated cohort experiences, blended learning

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Sustainably supporting sessional staff involved in dental clinical placements by using quality enhancement processes

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Sessional teachers are critical for providing core learning and assessment support in dental clinical placements. Recognising that staff need appropriate academic and professional development to achieve quality learning experiences for students during clinical placements (Health Workforce Australia, 2013), we have planned and implemented a range of initiatives to support our sessional staff over the past 15 years. We used the continuous improvement cycle (i.e., “plan, do, check and act”) as the framework (Speroff & O’Connor, 2004, p17) to evaluate our sessional staff support initiatives. There were three phases in our review and development of sessional staff support. The first phase (2002-2006), identified a need to improve students’ experiences of clinical assessment by providing professional development particularly focused on clinical assessment. The middle (2007-2010) and current phases (2011-present) focused on recruitment, training, evaluation, and integration. Having a dedicated academic and administrative staff team enabled the implementation of new support initiatives, while sustaining previous strategies. Key features of this team included assigned roles and clearly-defined procedures to systematically manage sessional staff needs. Using the ‘sessional staff voice’ was constructive in moving forward on further improvements.

Using key frameworks and recommendations from the literature (Percy et al., 2008; Harvey, 2013) enabled implementation of a systematic approach to review and design support strategies. Sessional staff have ongoing needs related to giving assessment feedback and grading student performance. Our approach would be useful for other institutions which employ sessional staff from a profession or industry.

Keywords: Clinical supervisor support, sessional staff, quality enhancement process, dental clinical placements

References


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VetSet2Go - building veterinary employability

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VetSet2Go is an internationally collaborative, OLT-funded project, which aims to define the capabilities most important for employability and success in the veterinary profession, and create assessment tools and resources to build these capabilities. In this context, we have defined employability as: “A set of personal and professional capabilities that enable a veterinarian to gain employment, and develop a professional pathway that achieves satisfaction and success” (adapted from Hinchcliffe, 2001). An employability approach encourages focus beyond threshold (‘Day One’) graduate competencies (e.g. RCVS, 2014) towards sustained success and satisfaction in professional employment, thus addressing several emerging issues, e.g. emphasis on transferable professional skills, diversification in a changing job climate, resilience and mental health in the transition to practice, and alignment and unification of competing stakeholder perspectives (employer, client, patient, colleagues, profession, self). Current evidence for drivers of veterinary employability is limited, which has led Phase 1 of the project to commission qualitative and quantitative research into employer and graduate/employee perspectives, client expectations, and resilience. Phase 1 will inform development of a veterinary employability framework solidly grounded in both evidence and multi-stakeholder consensus. Phase 2 will adapt this framework to a multisource feedback approach including self-, peer- and supervisor (WIL) assessment, and associated teaching resources. The VetSet2Go website (www.vetset2go.edu.au; twitter @VetSet2Go) has been launched and the project team seek to engage with related employability/WIL projects and scholarship.

Keywords: Employability, veterinary, resilience, work-integrated learning

References


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Intersections of outbound mobility experiences, WIL and employability

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At Western Sydney, the Schools of Business and Education have combined to research Outbound Mobility Programs (OMEs) in an OLT project. The School of Business has taken students to hotel management and tourism situations in Vietnam. The School of Education has taken pre-service teachers to teaching placements in China and Malaysia. Our OME research has built on findings that internationally-mobile students who have engaged in WIL are 50% less likely to experience long-term unemployment than those who have not implemented their training abroad (Erasmus Impact Study, 2014). We interviewed participants (n=223) before, elicited photo stories during and interviewed participants in employment who looked back on their international WIL experiences.

Outcomes included developing global mindedness; learning by being there, including learning language, visiting cultural sites and experiencing life in another country; and developing employable skills. Enrichment from participating in international WIL has prompted students to engage in deeply reflective examinations of their personal and professional qualities, as well as their perceptions of the world around them. A key element in the OMEs has been the use of guided critical reflections.

Keywords: Outbound Mobility Experiences, service learning, global mindedness, employable skills

References


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