WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Series Editor: Alexander W. Wiseman

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To our students – who continually challenge us to find better ways of preparing them for the future.

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FOREWORD

What first intrigued me about cooperative education was when a student who had taken one of my introductory classes (she barely passed, and seemed befuddled by most aspects of college life) showed up at my door after returning from her first co-op. She had a list of the items she wanted to talk about; this represented a level of organization I had not previously noted. Perhaps more importantly, she carried herself differently than when I'd seen her previously: there was an air of confidence about her, with a tinge of pride about her agency. As a developmental psychologist, I know that development is multiply determined, so I filed this observation away in my mental drawer called "complex combinations of nature and nurture." Across several years of watching students return from cooperative education experiences, I became more and more interested in what seemed to be a different type of growth and learning than that promoted in the classroom or the college community. What was this learning, and how did it happen? Eventually, through grant-funded trips for faculty to visit students on co-op and their employers, and then a shift from full-time teaching to serving as a co-op advisor and researcher, I had the chance to look more closely at these questions about what and how learning happened.

Part of my own inquiries about learning in co-op (now-called work-integrated learning or WIL) involved searching the published literature for answers to my questions. While one or two journals were enriched by thoughtful studies about specific learning outcomes, it was more difficult to find scholarly, big-picture observations by experienced WIL practitioners about the broad sweep of development I was observing.

This book joins a handful of others that have emerged in the last few years, to provide much-needed answers to our questions about student development. The editors, Dr. Bowen and Dr. Drysdale, are well-known to WIL practitioners for their deep and wide experience in this area. The chapter authors are top researchers and practitioners, recruited from disparate countries, institutions, and disciplines. They offer insightful summaries of what we know about WIL and what their cutting-edge practices are revealing. Inside this volume you will find exciting trends in WIL including − preparing students for economic disruptions, developing cultural intelligence, building the skills of a virtual professional, and the positive use of mobile devices by students to learn and work remotely, just to name a few. Dig into these chapters to learn more about digital agency, T-shaped professionals, photo elicitation, and mental health implications of students moving away from campus for work experiences. Not

all the chapters include research data, but they all offer intriguing hypotheses to show the way forward to research. If, like me, you are sometimes over-whelmed with the realization that "uncertainty is the only certainty" in helping students transition to productive and ethical work lives, these chapter authors have the experience and wisdom to preview that path for us. One important trend I see across several chapters is the focus on student agency. Rather than imposing the assignment of a "reflective paper" after WIL assignments that most of us use (and which, in my experience, students hate), these authors are encouraging students to take the lead in demonstrating their learning, while staff follows. Just like classroom professors must give up some control of infor-mation flow to allow students to make meaning of new knowledge in their own terms, WIL staff members are being encouraged to take the leap to allow stu-dents to frame their own learning. Hoorah!

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

For decades, work-integrated learning (WIL) has been a globally recognized pedagogical approach for helping students test their skills and knowledge in a real-world work environment. WIL originally began with the implementation of co-operative education in the late 1890s through the foresight of Herman Schneider (Howard, 2004), who saw the value in integrating academically acquired knowledge and skills within the real world, problem-solving context of the workplace. Over 100 years later in a world of rapid technological advancement and globalization, the value of creating opportunities to test what is learned in the classroom within messy real-life work contexts is more urgent than ever before (Fullen & Scott, 2014). WIL has long been lauded as a way for students to test their skills, knowledge, and character in relation to developing attributes that foster success post graduation (Billett, 2009; Drysdale & McBeath, 2012, 2014; Drysdale, McBeath, Johansson, Dressler, & Zaitseva, 2016; Jackson, 2015; Linn, 2004; Smith, 2012), develop a sense of professionalism and ethical responsibility (Bowen, 2016; Coll & Zegwaard, 2012; McNamara, 2013; Trede, 2012), and prepare for an unknown future (Johansson, Kopciwicz, & Dahlgren, 2008; Kramer & Usher, 2011). However, how is WIL changing in response to the educational and economical shifts we see in the 21st century? In what ways are program developers, researchers, and faculty exploring new ways to implement WIL programs and how are they assessing the need to grapple with the unknown marketplace and work world both locally and globally? In what ways are these changes affecting what students need to learn and the skills they need to acquire?

Learning, Barnett (2012) suggests, "implies a change in understanding and a change in one's relationship to the world" (p. 65). As most individuals know through experience, learning can be disruptive, joyous, painful, confrontational, life altering, and/or exhilarating. When learning is integrated with exploring a career or profession through hands-on experiences, the potential lies not just in the application of skills and knowledge, but also in the individual's opportunity to test how their disposition, attitudes, and "human qualities" (Barnett, 2012, p. 65) affect how they apply skills and knowledge in cooperation with others toward a common goal. Barnett questions what it means to learn for an unknown future. His query is particularly timely for scholars, teachers, students, and employers engaged in WIL, particularly in an economically volatile, quickly changing global information world where the jobs new graduates may

be doing three years from now, don't yet exist. As much as a university or college education enables students to develop skills and gain knowledge, Barnett (2012) contends that individuals learning for an unknown future, must rely on their capacity to determine the direction forward through challenges and obstacles, and their ability to reflect on, reappraise, and learn from the past to predict new pathways for the future. WIL placements provide the settings for students to test their capacity for resilience (Mate & Ryan, 2015) and the reflective components of WIL pedagogy provide the site for rethinking their actions and reappraising their pathways (Smith, 2012). The experiential learning inherent in WIL can be considered a form of transformational pedagogy that encourages risk taking, facilitates self-assuredness, and fosters "adaptability, flexibility, and self-reliance" (Barnett, 2012, p. 75) in new graduates so they may prosper in the uncertain world of the 21st century.

Preparing students for an unknown future means helping them adapt to uncertainties, take risks, confront dilemmas, embrace complexity, recognize the limitations of their own knowledge, and maintain health and wellness. While educators cannot alleviate uncertainty for the future, we can help students develop the tools to learn how to adapt and live effectively in uncertain times (Barnett, 2012). Some of this learning and adapting will come when students are placed within a context − such as a work placement − that is unfamiliar where they must identify and adopt codes and conventions as they learn to solve problems (Bowen, 2011, 2016; Jackson, 2016; Trede, 2012). Learning for an unknown future means making decisions *in situ*, without all of the information at hand (Barnett, 2012). This responsiveness and adaptability requires resources, creativity, and experience. Fullan and Scott (2014) call for a new pedagogical approach that focuses on deep learning and real world problem solving for educating individuals to lead within an uncertain world. They propose the concept of "E Squared, Ethical Entrepreneurialism" (p. 3). Their concept of entrepreneurialism is not based on economics, a position often equated with technological innovation; rather, their definition is based on individuals who can identify and solve complex, real world problems on personal, social, local, and global levels. They consider the educated individual in the 21st century as "a doer (a doing-thinker; a thinker-doer) − they learn to do and do to learn" (p. 3). This integration of thinking, learning, and doing is driving WIL pedagogy (Smith, 2012; Smith & Worsfold, 2014). Fullan and Scott (2014) also use the term "work-ready PLUS" (p. 3) to describe the desirable new graduate who is "*sustainability literate* (socially, culturally, economically and environmentally); *change implementation savvy* (being able to engage others in constructive change and make it happen); *inventive* […] and *clear on where you* [they] *stand*" (pp. 3−4). These qualities of work-ready PLUS, however, may more aptly describe an individual who is world-ready, prepared to live with uncertainty within a global context, and have the knowledge, skills, dispositions, attitudes, and empathy to effect change in that world.

Fullan and Scott (2014) contend that the PLUS in educating students is "not simply about learning 21st century skills in isolation of doing" (p. 4), but learning through collaboration and "through reflection in action and on action in order to become better at negotiating the messy, fuzzy, dilemma-ridden context of real world life and work" (p. 4). To be effective in the 21st century world, individuals must develop the interpersonal and cognitive capacity to identify problems in a world of continuous change and be capable of designing effective responses and solutions. Additionally, as Barnett also confirms, learning that is primarily predicated on academic disciplines and course content, will only take students so far − but not far enough. Now, more than ever, educators need to reappraise the use of experiential learning espoused over 30 years ago by researchers such as Kolb (1984), and prioritize high-impact practices such as WIL by capitalizing on experience "as a key source of productive learning" (Fullan & Scott, 2014, p. 8) and key to becoming more adaptable (Fazey, Fazey, & Fazey, 2005).

While the concept of using WIL to provide students with the opportunity to build resilience and face real world challenges is certainly not new, the urgency of learning for an unknown future is increasing due to rapid technological advancements and innovations that are driving the global economy (Long & Meglich, 2013). Maintaining the *status quo* is no longer acceptable in terms of programs, assessment, and student support.

As demonstrated by the many authors cited within this introduction, research within the field of WIL over the last decade has focused on identifying ways to help students become work ready from a number of perspectives. However the nature of work in the digital information world is undergoing rapid change. *Work-integrated learning in the 21st century: Global Perspectives on the Future* examines challenges and new questions about the state of work for today's university and college graduates as they transition into an unknown future. These challenges and questions are placed in the context of WIL and are organized into four sections: the nature of education in relation to the nature of work; the role of technology as both affecting change and implementing change; work-readiness and diversity; and the importance of student autonomy, mental health, and wellbeing. Each section is described in more detail below.

Part I, *Learning, Work, and Experience: New Challenges and Projections for WIL*, addresses the relationship between work, learning, and knowledge acquisition. This section begins with Rowe's research examining the nature and role of work experience as it pertains to WIL. Firstly, she defines work itself and describes how traditional definitions have changed due to the expanded parameters of how, when, with whom, and under what conditions work is performed. Rowe presents a model of work experience within the context of WIL that captures the type of WIL program and the characteristics of the job performed. She argues that all the variables within the model impact both the immediate outcomes such as knowledge, skills, and motivation, and secondary

outcomes such as career development and performance. Finally Rowe provides recommendations for future research, based on the model, focusing on what is required in order to address the evolving needs of our students, and how best to prepare them for working in the 21st century.

Johnston – in "Navigating Continuous Change: A Focus on Self-Direction and Skills and Knowledge Transfer" – focuses on the challenges that new graduates face as they transition to work after graduation. One challenge is that what students are learning in the classroom may not match what is currently needed in the workforce. A second challenge is recognizing the ongoing learning that is required to respond to the continuously changing needs of the labor market. Johnston describes what students and higher education can do to overcome these challenges. A suggestion is for students to learn how to recognize that the skills and knowledge they acquire within an academic context are transferable to workplace contexts. Further, she contends they must become self-directed in this endeavor and articulate their capacity for flexibility and adaptability to future employers. Johnston argues that institutions of higher education can incorporate instructional approaches that teach students how to be self-directed and how to transfer their knowledge from one context to another.

In "Workplace Learning in Higher Education: Two Examples from a Swedish Context", Gustafsson and Thång provide evidence from two case studies that show how students do indeed lack the understanding of how to transfer theory into practice. The case studies further demonstrate how higher education can be organized in such a way as to encourage new forms of knowledge production and how WIL plays a role in this. The first case study uses a problem-based learning approach in nursing to highlight the challenges students face when making explicit connections between the theoretical base of their subject matter and the practical application within a work context. The use of WIL in this case illustrates how higher education can help students transfer skills and knowledge in a way that is meaningful and authentic, and provides an excellent example of the kind of facilitation that Johnston says higher education should engage in to prepare work-ready students. The second case study focuses on the theory to practice disconnect from a different perspective, highlighting the tensions between program delivery and marketplace needs within vocational education. The major challenges noted were that students expressed a need for more meaningful work placements where they could have the opportunity to develop marketable skills, whereas employers stressed their desire to receive students who were skill ready, highly motivated, and self-directed.

In the final chapter of this section, Gannaway and Sheppard tackle the tensions between the traditional organizing principles and intentions of liberal arts programs and the contemporary global marketplace focus on graduate employability outcomes. Many liberal arts programs around the world realize the value of incorporating WIL for their students in order to gain real world experience. They also recognize the value of the critical, creative, and adaptive

thinking skills that liberal arts students bring to the workplace from their broad education. In the same way theory to practice disconnects have emerged in the discussion by Johnston, and Gustafsson and Thång, the connection between liberal arts student attributes and the attributes of 21st century graduates goes undetected by many employers, or undervalued at the very least. The models presented in this chapter suggest a move away from the transactional approach to WIL − where students draw knowledge and skills from disciplinary or professional based programs − to a transformational model − that capitalizes on the human qualities inherent in liberal arts, where students are positioned as knowledge workers that are adaptive, resilient, and prepared for an unknown future.

Part II, *Affordances, Impacts, and Challenges of New Technologies*, addresses the impact of technology on WIL programs from student, institution, and program developer positions. This section begins with Gardner, who examines the future of jobs, which he contends, will be constantly augmented, reconfigured, and relocated through economic decisions and technologies. He suggests that individuals will navigate a space between the order of the routine and the chaos of disruption in order to sustain and direct their career options. This space, described by Gardner, provides contextual learning stimuli that extend the student's disciplinary specific knowledge by blending with knowledge shared from other disciplines, sources, and experiences, and nurtures broadening boundary spanning abilities. Gardner also examines the student's ability to successfully span multiple boundaries and disciplines through the use of a specific model he labels as the *T-shaped professional*.

In "Learning in Hybrid Spaces: Designing a Mobile Technology Capacity Building Framework for Workplace Learning," Trede, Goodyear, Macfarlane, Markauskaite, McEwen, and Tayebjee argue that workplace learning is a hybrid space where work, learning, and technology intersect, allowing for traditional roles and identities to be fluid. More specifically, they contend that students shift between their role as a student to that of a practitioner within their WIL placement, transferring their learning across settings. However, because these roles between the different settings may be disconnected, they don't always have the support to help them make the transitions. Trede et al., describe how students can employ personal mobile devices (PMDs) to connect across settings and access the support they need, however, using PMDs in professional settings is not without its challenges − such as the professional and safe use of technology within the workplace context. The authors present a framework that highlights the resources that can be used to support students' use of PMDs in the workplace in order to be effective, autonomous workers.

Bowen and Pennaforte − in "The Impact of Digital Communication Technologies and New Remote-Working Cultures on the Socialization and Work Readiness of Individuals in WIL Programs" − present two examples, one French and one Canadian, to explore the importance of digital literacy in

relation to finding work placements, communicating with workplace co-workers and supervisors, and understanding appropriate uses of social media within professional contexts. Pennaforte uses a French study to examine the digital communication skills students require for work-readiness in the 21st century. He focuses specifically on students' abilities to effectively use ICTs to research career opportunities and to communicate professionally. Bowen specifically examines the impact of technology on the changes to work culture in regards to the rise of remote working for many organizations. Increasingly in the Canadian context, WIL employers expect students to work remotely for some, or all, of the work placement, which presents further challenges to students' communication skills and how they make decisions.

Part III, *Work-Readiness for a Diverse World,* explores the all-important role of diversity in thinking about, and developing WIL programs for the 21st century global village, and the need for not just work-ready, but also profession-ready graduates. This section begins with Pop and Brink who look closely at the challenges for developing WIL programs within emerging economies. The focus of their chapter is twofold. First, they address challenges at the academic level and the need to decolonize the curriculum so that classroom learning incorporates more locally based case studies, examples, and histories to ensure that the theory-to-practice transfer of skills and knowledge is more culturally appropriate, meaningful, and adaptable for students. The second focus builds on the use of such a curriculum to help students define their career goals and objectives, and develop career planning skills that include WIL. They conclude that attitudinal changes about how to incorporate WIL and the delivery of both academic and practical programs, will begin to help emerging economies with new graduate and youth unemployment challenges that are distinct from developed economies.

McRae and Ramji, in "Intercultural Competency Development Curriculum: A Strategy for Internationalizing Work-Integrated Learning for the 21st Century Global Village," focus on students who complete their WIL placements abroad and their capacity to develop cultural intelligence (CQ), as they prepare to work within a global marketplace. CQ is the ability to function within diverse contexts and interact respectfully with others in those contexts. The authors describe a specific international WIL program in Canada and provide evidence of the effectiveness of the Intercultural Competency Development Curriculum (ICDC) − which is an integral part of the program's preparation for sending students into an international work placement. Reflective writing, part of the ICDC reporting phase, is used to gain insight into the challenges students face when communicating across cultures and languages in order to gain respect and to demonstrate the skills that they can contribute to the international organization. The chapter concludes with a call to develop intercultural competency across the curriculum, for all students who will face diversity within the 21st century global village.

In "Professional Identities and Ethics: The Role of Work-Integrated Learning in Developing Agentic Professionals," Zegwaard, Campbell, and Pretti argue that while it is important to be work-ready, it is far more important to be profession-ready. Being profession-ready (or "professional") is characterized by one's professional sense of self and professional identity. They argue that this involves students developing critical moral agency — meaning that they have the ability to critically reflect on experiences in the workplace and their position; they have an awareness of moral and ethical ideals; and they have agency to effect positive change during their placement. The authors further contend that while WIL provides the context for developing profession-ready graduates, the WIL placement must be of high quality in order to provide authentic experiences where students can be active participants in the workplace guided by appropriate role models.

The chapters in Part IV, *Health, Wellbeing, and Pathways to Success,* focus on the WIL student and their wellbeing as they face the challenges of balancing student life with WIL. In "Driving Change: Students Shaping and Reshaping Work-integrated Learning Spaces," Patton examines ways that students can shape spaces to facilitate their learning within WIL. She highlights the importance of students driving their WIL experiences as active participants in shaping the context of those experiences. Included in this endeavor for gaining autonomy is learning how to negotiate within hierarchical relationships and understanding how their dispositions, including their wellbeing, can affect learning within different contexts, and shape the spaces in which the learning takes place. Patton uses the technique of photoelicitation and student created photos of WIL learning spaces, to spark discussions around practices and obstacles not recognized by the students as something they can overcome. Students use the photos to reconstruct the narrative about their experience as one that leads to empowerment. Patton concludes with recommendations for using photos of work and learning spaces to open up discussions between students and their supervisors. This can help them develop agency, autonomy, and wellbeing.

Finally, we have McBeath, Drysdale, and Bohn who address the growing rates of mental illness amongst students in higher education and explore the factors that might impact mental health and wellbeing for students who participate in WIL programs. More specifically, they discuss evidence that suggests participation in WIL can disrupt students' development of a sense of belonging to school and their perceived level of social support. They also examine emerging research regarding the impact of WIL participation on the mental health and wellbeing of at-risk and minority student populations. The authors review current evidence for mental health interventions, such as peer support, that can foster a sense of belonging and social connectedness, enhance mental health and overall wellbeing, and help students successfully prepare for the transition from the learning academy to the workplace.

The book concludes with *Moving Forward: The Future of WIL in the 21st Century* that explores the collective messages for the future that are intended to help facilitate further change. The conclusion examines potential areas for short-term change, as well as issues and challenges for WIL that have yet to receive the attention needed to help ensure student success.

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Editors

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