Curriculum and pedagogic bases for effectively integrating practice based experiences within higher education

National Teaching Fellowship Dialogue Forum
28-29th June 2010
Brisbane – Southbank (Ship Inn)
9.00 am to 4.30 pm

A National Teaching Fellowship
funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council
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Introduction

Welcome to the Dialogue Forum for the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) National Teaching Fellowship: Curriculum and Pedagogic bases for effectively integrating practice-based experiences. The goal for this Fellowship is to identify and generate curriculum and pedagogic principles and practices for integrating learning experiences in practice and university settings. The key means for achieving this goal is the work undertaken in the 20 projects that comprise this Fellowship and which will be presented and discussed during this Forum. These projects address issues that are important for those undertaking these projects across 6 Australian participating universities and through investigations across a range of disciplines, yet each with a specific focus or problem to be addressed. Collectively and individually, each of these projects will inform the process and outcomes of the two-day forum. Across the two days, the projects will be presented and then discussed, and issues arising will be identified. The documents provided here are draft reports from those projects that stand as a resource to be used in and after the Forum.

These projects and their reports address a range of issues associated with the provision and integration of experiences in the practice settings (i.e. workplaces) into the programs students are studying. In different ways, each focuses on curriculum, pedagogic and epistemological issues associated with these experiences and their integration. They, the data they provide, the discussions they promote and the analysis of their findings are essential for addressing the aims and questions to which the Fellowship is directed, that is an applied curriculum and pedagogy of practice, whose development is guided by the following questions:

- What combination of curriculum and pedagogic practices will secure rich integration of learning experiences in academic and practice settings?
- How are these best enacted before, during and after practice-based experience to secure the most effective outcomes?
- What particular curriculum and pedagogic practices are aligned to secure instances of ‘hard to learn’ conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge required for effective occupational practice?

The Forum is the central event that will be used as a platform to generate sets of principles and practices. All project leaders, university coordinators, along with two international experts (Anne Edwards (Oxford, United Kingdom) and Wolff-Michael Roth (University of Victoria, Canada) and Siobhan Lenihan from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council will have active roles in the proceedings. The findings here will be extended in subsequent processes of development and refinement and will be disseminated to participants for discussion and further elaboration.

It is intended that the forum be engaging, stimulating and generative of useful outcomes that will be helpful for organising and enacting experiences for students in higher education that will assist them learn in both academic and practice settings, and then come to reconcile and integrate what they are learning in these distinct settings.

Stephen Billett
ALTC National Teaching Fellow
June 2010
## Forum Participants

### Griffith University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinator/Project Officer</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Billett, Coordinator</td>
<td>Michael Balfour and Sarah Woodland</td>
<td>Applied Theatre</td>
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<td>Lainie Groundwater, Project Officer</td>
<td>Susan Forde and Michael Meadows</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
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<td>Zoe Rathus and Jeff Giddings</td>
<td>Law</td>
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### Flinders University

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<tr>
<td>Heather Smiegel, Coordinator</td>
<td>John Oliphant</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Linda Sweet</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceri Macleod, WIL Project Officer</td>
<td>Chris Fanning</td>
<td>International Tourism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Damien Mills</td>
<td>Accountancy</td>
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### LaTrobe University

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<tr>
<td>David Spencer, Coordinator</td>
<td>Karen Dodd</td>
<td>Allied Health</td>
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<td>Vaughan Prain</td>
<td>Education – Teacher Training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>John Benson</td>
<td>Communication, Arts and Critical Inquiry</td>
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### James Cook University

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<tr>
<th>Coordinator/Project Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Westcott, Coordinator</td>
<td>Ryan Daniel</td>
<td>Creative Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Angela Hill and Helen McDonald</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anna Blackman</td>
<td>Business</td>
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### Murdoch University

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<th>Coordinator/Project Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Cummings, Coordinator</td>
<td>David Holloway</td>
<td>Business Studies (Accounting)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kate Fitch</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jo Anne Maire</td>
<td>Chiropractic &amp; Sports Science</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gareth Lee</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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### The University of Newcastle

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<th>Coordinator/Project Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen Crump, Coordinator</td>
<td>Willy Sher</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gina Caddies, WIL Project Officer</td>
<td>Christine Yap</td>
<td>Business/Commerce</td>
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<td>Nathan Scott</td>
<td>Drama/Music</td>
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### International Experts

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Edwards</td>
<td>Oxford University, United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wolff-Michael Roth</td>
<td>University of Victoria, BC, Canada</td>
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### Australian Learning and Teaching (ALTC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siobhan Lenihan</td>
<td>Head of Programs, ALTC</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Address Details and Map for Accommodation, Forum and Dinner

(A) Accommodation

The Mantra, South Bank
161 Grey Street
South Bank Qld 4101
Ph: (07) 3305 2500
Check in time: 2pm
Check out time: 11am

(B) Dialogue Forum

The Ship Inn Function Room (S06)
Stanley Street
South Bank Qld 4101
(07) 3844 8000
Enter via the Griffith Graduate Centre
(Red and Grey Building)
(Building number S07).
Go up the flight of stairs to Level 2.

(C) Forum Dinner

Ahmets Turkish Restaurant
10/164 Grey Street
South Bank Qld 4101
(07) 3846 6699
Time: 6:00pm
Program

The key goal for the Dialogue Forum is to bring together participants to share experiences, present findings and collaboratively develop further and elaborate curriculum and pedagogic practices that support work integrated learning. The Forum participants comprise academic staff from the 20 projects, 6 institutional coordinators, 2 international experts (Anne Edwards, Wolff-Michael Roth), the National Teaching Fellow and supported by Lainie Groundwater. In addition, Siobhan Lenihan from the ALTC will be joining us.

The process across the two day forum will comprise each project presenting their experiences, outcomes and suggestions for discussion with other participants, guided by critiques and suggestions from the international experts and Fellow. The findings will be ordered in terms of their contributions to understand the processes of effectively integrating students' learning experiences in practice and academic settings and how these are generative of the kinds of learning students need to secure their intended learning outcomes. In addition, there will be a particular focus on: i) how curriculum and pedagogic interventions before, during and after experiences in practice e settings (e.g. practicums, clinical placements, internships etc) assist students realise their goals for learning and ii) what kinds of integrations occurred and what did they contribute to the students' learning outcomes (e.g. conceptual or procedural knowledge) likely to be developed through particular approaches to integrating these experiences.

Key Forum outcomes will be: (i) the further generation and elaboration of sets of curriculum, pedagogic and epistemological practices that can effectively integrate work experiences within higher education and (ii) building further the participants' capacity to implement WIL effectively in their institution.

Key elements of the Forum include:

1. Presentations – each project has 30 mins (20 mins presentations- 10 mins discussion). The 20 presentations are distributed across 3 forums, each of which will be facilitated by either Edwards, Roth or Billett, and 2 university coordinators.

2. Discussions will focus on – i) projects, ii) integrations, iii) lessons for what needs to be done - before, during and after students' practicum experiences.

3. Deliberations on curriculum, pedagogy and students' personal epistemologies

   - curriculum – the experiences for students be best organised (e.g. sequence, duration etc) (i.e. overall program/structuring of experiences (the track students are asked to run)

   - pedagogy – what kinds of instructional interventions, guidance and pedagogic practices assist the integration of experiences for particular purposes

   - epistemology – the actions or orientations that students need to posses and enact to effectively integrate experiences

4. Sharing information and synthesising
# Day One

## Sharing and synthesising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9.00–9.30| Introduction to Forum  
Orientation to our activities  
Goals to be achieved  
Processes to be enacted  
Terms used  
Introductions (personal Anne and Michael, and Sobihan) |
| **Forum 1** – (7) (Main room)  
Discussants: Stephen B, Rick * Gina (bda – integration) |
| **Forum 2** (Room 2.17)  
Discussants: Anne, Ceri & Stephen C (Siobhan) (bda – integration) |
| **Forum 3** (7) (Room 2.19)  
Discussants – Michael, David & Lisa (bda – integration) |
| Anna Blackman, Willy Sher, Karen Dodd, Linda Sweet, Kate Fitch, Chris Fanning & Gareth Lee |
| Angela Hill & Helen McDonald, Chris Yapp, Vaughan Prain, Jo-Anne Maree, Jeff Giddings & Zoe Rathus & John Oliphant |
| Ryan Daniel, Nathan Scott, John Benson, David Holloway, Michael Meadows & Susan Forde, Michael Baifour & Sarah Woodland, Damien Mills |
| **Presentations** 30 mins (20 – 10 discussions) in Forums 1, 2 and 3  
Purpose: to present and discuss project findings, and identify key issues for practice (curriculum and pedagogy)  
2 presentation  
5 mins Focussed Reflection on first 2 presentations (what do the findings say about integrating experiences?) |
| **Morning Tea - 10.45-11.00** |
| **Presentations** 30 mins (20 – 10 discussions) in Forums 1, 2 and 3  
Purpose: to present and discuss project findings, and identify key issues for practice (curriculum and pedagogy)  
3 presentations 30 minutes each  
10 mins Focussed Reflection on 3 presentations (what do the findings say about integrating experiences?) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30-2:35</td>
<td>Lunch - 12.45–1.30 &lt;br&gt; Presentations 30 mins (20 – 10 discussions) in Forums 1, 2 and 3 &lt;br&gt; Purpose: to present and discuss project findings, and identify key issues for practice (curriculum and pedagogy) &lt;br&gt; 2 presentations &lt;br&gt; 5 mins Focussed Reflection on 2 presentations (what do the findings say about integrating experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:35-2:50</td>
<td>Discussion and reflections in 3 groups on: - projects, integrations and BDAs in Forums 1, 2 and 3 &lt;br&gt; Key focuses: &lt;br&gt; What are some of the key findings that were expected and those unanticipated? &lt;br&gt; What do these projects say about integrating experiences and for what purposes? &lt;br&gt; What do the findings of these projects say about what needs to be done before, during and after practicum experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-4:15</td>
<td>Afternoon tea - 2.50-3.15 &lt;br&gt; Plenary session – feedback – as one entire group &lt;br&gt; Focuses on what has been presented and learnt in the three groups &lt;br&gt; Overall issues and comments: &lt;br&gt; What are some of the key findings that were expected and those unanticipated? &lt;br&gt; What do these projects say about integrating experiences and for what purposes? &lt;br&gt; What do the findings of these projects say about what needs to be done before, during and after practicum experiences?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15-4:30</td>
<td>Ordering for tomorrow &lt;br&gt; Foreshadowing procedures &lt;br&gt; Questions, queries etc</td>
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<td>Conference dinner – Ahmet’s Turkish Restaurant, 10/164 Grey Street, South Bank at 6pm</td>
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## Day Two

**Developing principles and practices for integrating experiences across academic and practice settings**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00-9.30</td>
<td>Recap, links and plans for Day Two</td>
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<td>Key findings on integrations, BDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30-10.30</td>
<td>Arrangements for Day Two processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three working forums: Curriculum, pedagogy and students’ personal epistemologies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revisiting these terms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each group has 3 facilitators (Anne Edwards, Wolff-Michael Roth &amp; Stephen Billett)</td>
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<td>Process of considering the findings from the previous day – and advancing</td>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30-10.30</td>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong> (Big room)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Forum #1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did the deliberations say about curriculum considerations for WIL?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David S, Lisa W, Anne E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Forum #1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did the deliberations say about pedagogic practices supporting WIL?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rick C, Gina C, Michael</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Forum #1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What did the deliberations say about students’ personal epistemologies for WIL?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ceri M, Stephen C, Stephen B</td>
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<td>10.45-12.00</td>
<td><strong>Students’ personal epistemologies</strong> (Room 2.19)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Working Forum #2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What principles about students’ personal epistemologies arise from your deliberations?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen, Anna, Helen, Willy, Michael B, Zoe &amp; John B (7)</td>
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**Morning tea (10.30 to 10.45)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.45-12.00</td>
<td>Working Forum #2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What curriculum principles arise from your deliberations?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intended, enacted &amp;experienced</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Working Forum #2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What pedagogic principles arise from your deliberations?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Working Forum #2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What principles about students’ personal epistemologies arise from your deliberations?</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Session/Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td><strong>Plenary session 1</strong> – sharing and discussion about principles&lt;br&gt;3 X five minute presentations - 5 key ideas&lt;br&gt;Discussion –&lt;br&gt;How should we arrange learning experiences?&lt;br&gt;How can we augment practice based experiences through educational processes?&lt;br&gt;How should students be prepared for and engage in these experiences?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-1:45</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong> – 1.00 to 1.45</td>
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<td>1:45-3:00</td>
<td><strong>Working Forum #3</strong>&lt;br&gt;What curriculum practices arise from your deliberations?&lt;br&gt;Intended, enacted and experienced&lt;br&gt;Working Forum #3&lt;br&gt;What pedagogic practices arise from your deliberations?&lt;br&gt;Working Forum #3&lt;br&gt;What practices arise from your deliberations about students’ personal epistemologies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00-3:45</td>
<td><strong>Plenary session 2</strong> – spokespersons and feedback from AE, MWR and SB&lt;br&gt;Curriculum practices – how should students’ experiences be organised and ordered and for what purposes?&lt;br&gt;Pedagogic practices – how should these experiences be enriched and for what purposes?&lt;br&gt;Personal epistemologies – how should students engage and how should we prepare them to engage?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45-4:30</td>
<td><strong>Afternoon tea 3.45</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00-4:30</td>
<td><strong>Progression from here:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Developing principles and practice further&lt;br&gt;Publications&lt;br&gt;Further projects</td>
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Title of project
Careers, career development and creative arts students: an investigation of the impact of theory on practice

Author and affiliation
Professor Ryan Daniel, Head of School Creative Arts, James Cook University

Abstract
This project reflects an ongoing research project in the area of WIL for creative arts students. In 2009, the first formal trial of a structured program of integrating WIL experiences occurred, with the results yielding a range of insights and positive outcomes for students involved, such as direct experience of industry practices and new knowledge about the skills required beyond University. The key findings from this research (Daniel 2010) formed the starting point for this next phase of research and investigation. The key goals here were to a) follow up with the graduates from the initial trial, b) explore the perceptions of former graduates regarding WIL and other industry issues, c) explore the views of industry representatives regarding internships in particular, and d) gain an additional set of data from the 2010 cohort of students. The findings are considerable and provide a range of insights into how the implementation of integrated WIL activities leads to better career preparation for creative arts students, with those having completed industry research and work experience reporting very positive views on these two strategies. In addition to the views of current students and graduates, the findings include the insights of industry professionals towards both internships and the work-ready skills they seek when considering new graduates as employees, with industry professionals identifying the key positives and challenges associated with hosting creative arts students. The research has also enabled an analysis of the alignment between the views of former students, current students and industry professionals. For example, all stakeholder groups argue that in addition to having content knowledge and skills, it is critical that a creative artist has a network of contacts, keen industry insights and key personal attributes such as passion, determination and resilience in order that they might establish a meaningful and viable career.

Brief description of academic area
The Creative Arts, specifically including photomedia, music & sound, visual arts, contemporary theatre and media design.

Particular purpose
Creative arts students present a different set of challenges for the higher education sector in that it is less common that a graduate from this area will move straight into full-time employment. Research to date (e.g. McCowan, Col & Joanna Wyganowska 2008, Victorian College of the Arts 2004) demonstrates that for several years after graduation, many will continue to combine part-time work in a non-creative area with some work in their specialist area. Many will also continue to produce art for art's sake, as unpaid work, until they have a reputation for or they have established sufficient demand for their creative outputs. In addition, recent research and discourse proposes that creative arts graduates will move into a portfolio or protean type career, each of which is substantially different to the traditional linear career (Bridgstock 2005). Do creative arts graduates know this and, more importantly, are they prepared for the relatively tough transition into the workforce and a meaningful career? This particular set of WIL interventions was put in place to respond to these facts and which represent significant challenges for both students and university educators. To connect quickly and meaningfully to the industry sector is both the challenge and the goal, therefore, students need to understand these various issues, engage directly with them by gathering their own insights and evidence, and develop a career plan that will more adequately prepare them for the realities of life after graduation.
Process for enacting WIL
As discussed in item 3 above, the preliminary findings of this intervention strategy are presented in Daniel (2010). This second phase involved both the continuation of these strategies as well as the broadening of the data in order to better understand the range of issues and perspectives of relevance to this project. In essence, students involved in the subject in both the initial trial and the 2010 offering were required to:

a) learn about career types, career theory, as well as some of the key events and trends driving the creative industries sector and which they would soon enter;

b) complete a major “industry research folio”, and which required that they:
   a. develop a career plan, identify with career types and theories, and consider the key short and long term issues of relevance to them;
   b. research their chosen sub-sectors within the creative industries to fully understand the realities of their area(s);
   c. undertake 10 case studies of practitioners in their field(s) including internationals;
   d. reflect on the learning achieved in the folio and apply this to a revised plan or set of goals;

c) present a seminar on their key findings as a group of “reflective practitioners”, thereby gaining new knowledge from the experiences of their peers;

d) complete a short practical internship in industry; and

e) close the circle by completing a final reflection on their overall experiences and the extent to which they need to reaffirm or reassess their initial career plan.

In addition to the second trial of this set of interventions, data was gathered from three key stakeholder groups to triangulate the first phase findings and provide broader perspectives into the key issues of relevance. These three groups were:

1) Industry professionals from the creative sector, in order to identify the key issues relevant to their experiences of hosting creative arts students in internships, their interest in hosting additional students, as well as their views on the key attributes and skills required of a creative arts graduate;

2) The 2009 graduates who had experienced this first set of interventions and who were embarking on the first phase of their career; and

3) Graduates from earlier years who were asked to comment on the key issues of relevance to them today as well as their advice on the key skills and attributes of relevance for a successful career in the creative arts.

Hence, in total, the data proved to be a rich source of insights into the realities for creative arts students who face a particular set of challenges when moving from education to the industry sector.

Key findings
While the research findings are ongoing given the project continues and therefore so does the data sample, there are some key findings to date relevant to the following four stakeholder groups:

1) Industry professionals
2) Graduates pre-2009
3) 2009 graduates
4) The 2010 cohort

The findings relevant to each group are discussed below:

Industry professionals

An e-survey, via surveymonkey.com, was sent to 120 creative practitioners working in industry in the northern Queensland region and where the majority of the graduates typically seek work. Of these, 51 completed the full survey, representing a 42.5% response rate. A good spread of the industry sector was
achieved, with representatives from the areas of design, photography, visual arts, arts administration, cultural policy, music and theatre. The majority of respondents had worked in the sector for at least 4 years, with 44% having over 20 years experience. Of the group, 36.5% (19 respondents) had taken on a student or students for work experience or an internship, with this occurring since 1996. Of these, 15 (79%) found it at least generally positive, with only 2 identifying it as a generally negative experience, evidencing the fact that there is merit in this strategy and it is worthy of continuation and nurturing.

In general, the feedback from industry on taking students for work experience was positive, with representative comments as follows:

- The student was a good fit to the organisation so both her and our needs were met
- I actually employed a few of my work experience people and they turned out to be fantastic employees
- Easy way of finding employees
- One can sometimes get away with thinking you know all there is to know with your job. Then along comes a 3rd year uni student with new and fresh ideas who asks you to explain it and prove it. I relish those opportunities. It keeps me fresh and on my toes.
- Fresh perspective and enthusiasm added to morale

Some difficulties and challenges were reported however, across logistical and performance issues, with representative comments including:

- They all want to specialise rather than gain broad brush knowledge
- I have not been happy with the students’ professionalism and communication skills
- Turning up late or not at all
- They can get in the way when you are extremely busy and you feel guilty for not paying attention to them
- Not structured enough generally and it takes time to develop something that is meaningful for the student and needs resources to do it properly
- It took extra time to train them in what was needed, but they didn’t stay around so we could benefit from their new-found skills;

In addition, it would appear that the student is a primary driver of the success or otherwise of the experience:

- Students need to fit in with the rest of the team and the demands placed upon them at certain times
- The level of satisfaction is dependent on the initiative, work ethic and skills the student brings
- When a student is keen to work and learn, and shows initiative the experience is good
- Students were not really engaged

While there were the expected positives and negatives associated with embedding creative arts students in the sector, 32 respondents (64%) did agree to take on future creative arts students, a positive result which will require follow up to determine how to maximize the outcomes for both parties. These industry representatives also provided very useful advice for current creative arts students, with representative comments supporting key theories discussed and presented to students in class, including:

- Be prepared to compromise until you are in a position to follow the path that you want
- Be prepared to evolve with the times as demand areas of photography change
- Do work experience as much as possible and get to know the industry while you learn
- Don’t give up! It’s not an easy industry to have full time work in, but it’s possible
Graduates pre-2009
A rich body of data was received from the creative arts graduates who were invited to complete an e-survey reflecting on their experiences as a student at JCU (via surveymonkey.com). The data obtained by 88 students who completed the survey included an analysis of their gender, age, study area while at University, current employment situation including reasons influencing this situation, as well as the extent to which they engaged in work experience and associated issues. In terms of the profile of the respondents, the majority were female (68%), in the 20-30 year age bracket (70.5%), and the majority had left with a 3-year undergraduate degree (88%). There was a good spread of disciplines from music (27 respondents), photography (28), visual arts (19), design (12), and theatre (11).

A broad summary of the key employment issues relevant to this cohort can be summarised as follows:

- Just over half (51.6%) were in full time employment in the same area of study they focussed on at University, with the others indicating the following reasons (some more than one) for not working in their focus area:
  - unable to gain any work in that area (17%)
  - unable to gain full-time work in the area (34%)
  - do not wish to work in the area (10.6%)
  - focus area is now a hobby only (23.4%)
  - new creative arts area is of more interest (14.9%)
  - new non-creative area is of more interest (10.6%)

Of the 88 graduates, 64 (70%) had completed work experience in some form, with significant positives reported including:

- It helped me realise what I wanted and didn’t want in the work force
- I was able to get an insight into how he ran his business and interacted with his subjects and clients
- It was brilliant to see how the industry actually worked
- Industry contacts and experience

Challenges reported included the following representative comments:

- Realising the hard male dominated industry I was going into
- Choosing the specific area I wished to work in
- I needed to convince myself that I was going to get as much out the of the placement as possible
- Getting up early, trying to find something to do and trying to design something that suited the company

A positive overall result was that of those that did not undertake work experience during their degree studies, 82% wished that they had given that it would have led to a greater understanding of the realities of the work place following graduation. Of the remaining graduates, 9% did not feel it would have helped while 9% were not sure whether it would have in fact made a difference.

2009 graduates
Of the 43 students involved in the 2009 offering of the WIL-oriented subject “Professional Studies 1”, 24 had graduated at the time of this research. Of these, 7 had moved onto further graduate study in Education, hence the other 17 were contacted in order to request a follow-up interview to explore the extent to which the interventions in the curriculum assisted in their transition into the sector. Subsequently, short interviews were held with seven of the students who volunteered to participate. A broad summary of the key findings from these follow-up interviews is as follows:
All seven were in a transition phase of employment, where their non-creative activities continued alongside their preferred creative work, although this balance varied from student to student with one student working virtually full-time and another doing very occasional casual work in the industry;

All recognised the “industry research folio” completed during their studies as being particularly helpful in opening up their eyes to the sector, enabling them to develop contacts and networks in the industry, as well as requiring that they develop an action plan relevant to their career;

All had learnt that the creative industries sector offers a particular set of challenges in terms of gaining meaningful and continuing employment, such as the reality of not moving straight into full-time employment on graduation, the need to nurture contacts and networks, the need for resilience and determination, as well as the competitive nature of the work environment; and

The graduates provided helpful advice on how current students might enhance their chances of success post graduation, including the need to develop a comprehensive folio of work beyond the normal requirements set within the curriculum, and the importance of embedding industry realities within their training more rigorously or in more depth e.g. stricter deadlines, simulations involving clients, knowledge of business practices.

The 2010 cohort
The fourth and final data collection strategy involved applying a similar method to that undertaken in 2009, where students enrolled in “Professional Studies 1” were, as one strategy, surveyed in week 1 and 13 to ascertain their engagement with career theory and with the case studies undertaken as part of the “industry research folio”. Preliminary findings further support those identified in Daniel (2010) and include the following:

- The majority of students identify significant growth in understanding of career theory and see at least some relevance towards their career(s);
- The “industry research folio” is a particularly demanding but equally rewarding assessment activity identified by students, with key outcomes including a greater understanding of industry realities and the establishment of a network of contacts for the future; and
- Students argue that they are significantly more aware of the realities of the creative industries sector in terms of how they affect the transition to a meaningful and rewarding career, with exemplar comments relevant to insights gained from the “industry research folio” being:
  - There are so many options available to me … I also have to get a lot of experience
  - You need to mix it with a regular income till you’re famous
  - It’s going to take a lot of hard work
  - Sounds stupid but the most valuable thing is the fact and realisation that I can actually talk to the industry
  - I really need to brush up on my business/marketing skills if I want to start my own business

Issues arising for discussion
The key issues arising for discussion are as follows:

- In what ways can the relationship between the University and the creative industries sector be developed and/or nurtured to further enhance the potential for students to engage in meaningful experiences in the sector?
- Would a staged approach to professional experience such as that adopted in Education be a suitable model to apply to creative arts programs?
- Are there models of practice in existence internationally for creative arts students that can be explored and applied within the Australian context?
- What is the optimal balance between University directed and student driven experiences in the sector?
- In what ways is it useful or possible to test and determine the point at which a student is mentally and educationally prepared to engage directly with the industry sector?
References
**Title of project**
Learning and Earning: What do business students learn from part-time employment?

**Authors and affiliation**
Pierre Benckendorff and Anna Blackman, School of Business, James Cook University

**Abstract**
There is substantial evidence from the USA, UK and Australia that greater numbers of university students are mixing their studies with paid employment. The high rate of student participation in the labour market raises a number of interesting questions, particularly for those students enrolled in vocational courses such as business. However, there is little empirical research investigating what skills and learning benefits business students might gain from part-time work. More importantly, it is unclear whether students can easily connect learning in the workplace with learning in the classroom environment. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the role of part-time work in helping business students understand the world of work and in allowing them to integrate theory and practice. Ninety-seven business students were surveyed mid-semester following a one hour workshop designed to encourage students to reflect on informal learning and tacit knowledge acquired in the workplace. The results indicate that students found the intervention useful but that it did not change their perspectives about their paid part-time work. The results also show that a majority of business students do perceive some congruence between their work and academic studies. In addition, paid part-time work is perceived as a useful activity for developing a number of transferrable skills, notably interpersonal skills, teamwork and adaptability, numeracy skills, problem solving and communication. The analysis reveals that work/study congruence has an important influence on both job satisfaction and satisfaction with academic performance. If part-time work does have useful integrative learning outcomes for business students and if appropriately designed pedagogy can assists students to integrate their experiences in the workplace with the curriculum then paid part-time work may be a useful alternative to more costly Work Integrated Learning programs.

**Brief description of academic area**
This project is focussed on undergraduate business students. While there has been some emphasis on WIL in business education, WIL programs have not been as intensive or extensive as other academic areas. It is proposed that the high rate of student participation in the labour market raises a number of interesting questions for students enrolled in business.

**Particular purpose**
While it has been claimed that the majority of part-time student employment involves unskilled work where there is little or no connection with the students' course of study (Ford, Bosworth and Wilson, 1995), business students are perhaps somewhat unique because they are not only studying business; they have an opportunity work in and experience real businesses through their paid-part time employment. McKechnie, Hobbs and Lindsay (1997) propose that students in more vocationally-focused courses should be able to connect their experiences of working part time with their studies. This in turn should enhance academic knowledge and improve academic motivation and employment prospects.

It has been argued that students' part-time employment experiences should be more closely linked with higher education (Richardson, Evans and Gbadamosi, 2009). Billett & Ovens (2007) propose that the
educational value of students reflecting on their paid employment is a resource for developing informed and critical insights about work. They suggest that paid part-time work may be effectively integrated into the curriculum to provide a potentially viable and highly accessible alternative to structured work placement programs. Likewise, Richardson et al. (2009) argue that it will become increasingly important for universities to adapt courses in order to create credible connections between their studies and their work experience. Paid part-time work experiences which are integrated with the formal curriculum may provide a more effective means for developing the knowledge and commercial skills demanded by the business community. If part-time work does have useful integrative learning outcomes for students and if appropriately designed pedagogy can assist students to integrate their experiences in the workplace with the curriculum then it stands to reason that costly work placement programs may not be required.

The purpose of this project was to explore the role of part-time work in helping business students understand the world of work and in allowing them to integrate theory and practice. This purpose is supported by four specific aims:

1. Conduct & evaluate an intervention designed to help students to reflect on informal learning and tacit knowledge acquired in the workplace;
2. Examine what skills business students think they develop as a result of the paid part-time work;
3. Explore whether students perceive some congruence between their paid part-time work and study; and
4. Examine whether perceived congruence between paid part-time work and study is linked with the development of skills and whether both of these aspects affect job and academic satisfaction

Process for enacting WIL

This report describes and evaluates an activity that required business students to reflect on their part-time work as a means of sensitising them to the learning benefits of work. This intervention was followed by an exploratory survey which evaluated what skills students develop through paid part-time employment and which considered how the perceived congruence between paid employment and academic study might affects the development of transferable skills.

Following the approach used by Billett and Ovens (2007), students were surveyed mid-semester following a one hour workshop designed to sensitise them to the interface between work and study. The one hour workshop was designed as an intervention to allow students to reflect on informal learning and tacit knowledge acquired in the workplace. The process required students to complete two worksheets. The first worksheet was completed individually and contained a number of open-ended questions requiring students to think about their paid part-time work. Students then used this information to complete the second worksheet in small groups. The second worksheet contained more focused questions, which allowed students to compare their paid-part time work experiences and outcomes of paid work with their peers. The small group discussions were followed by a full class discussion which was designed to further illuminate the outcomes of paid work.

Once the class discussion had been concluded students were asked to complete a questionnaire which was developed from a detailed review of the literature. The questionnaire was administered in the controlled environment of formal class time and under the supervision of the researcher in order to maximise the response rate and to address any questions students raised during the completion of the questionnaire.

The sample for this project comprised 97 first and second year business students enrolled at a mid-sized regional Australian university. A profile of the sample is presented in Table 1. Eight out of every 10 students
(84.5 per cent) in this cohort had some form of part-time employment. Of these, only two students were not working before commencing their university studies. Most students had been employed before, with only 15.6% of students indicating that their current job was their first job. A majority of students had been in their current job for more than 18 months and consistent with previous studies, students were more likely to be employed in retail, tourism and hospitality. The students in this cohort were working an average of 17.7 hours per week with average earnings of $17.00 per hour.

**Key findings**

The first aim of this project was to briefly evaluate whether the one-hour workshop conducted with students was a useful intervention for helping students to reflect on informal learning and tacit knowledge acquired in the workplace. Two thirds of students (68.1 per cent) indicated that the workshop activity was useful in helping them to think about what people might learn from paid employment. To test whether the intervention changed students' perspectives about work and self development, students were asked at the start of the workshop to respond to the following five Likert scales:

- My job helps me to learn about the ‘real world’
- My job helps me to understand the world of work
- My job helps me to understand how a business is run
- My job enables me to organise my time more effectively
- My paid work helps me develop skills relevant to my future career
Table 1. Profile of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Job Characteristics</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hours worked / week (mean = 17.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>10 to 19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 or more</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age groups (mean = 20.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>Industry sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 to 20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>Shopping &amp; retail</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>Tourism, hospitality &amp; leisure</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>Education &amp; childcare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration &amp; clerical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIF</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>Accounting &amp; finance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESB</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born overseas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>Time with current employer (mean = 22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>6 months or less</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/remote</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>7 to 12 months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for dependants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>13 to 18 months</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part-time</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>19 to 24 months</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working before university</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>Over 24 months</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hourly rate of pay (mean = $17.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>$12.00 or less</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off campus shared</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>$12.01 to $15.00</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With parents</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>$15.01 to $18.00</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single occupancy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>$18.01 to $21.00</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>$21.01 or more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience (no. jobs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employer Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>Under 5 employees</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>5 to 20 employees</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>21 to 100 employees</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Over 100 employees</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or more</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* FIF = First in family to attend university; NESB = Non-English speaking background; ATSI = Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
The same five rating scales were also included amongst others on the questionnaire administered at the end of the workshop. Means testing was conducted to determine whether there were any significant statistical differences in the pre- and post-workshop ratings. The testing indicates that there were no significant differences, so it appears that while students found the workshop useful, the intervention did not change their perspectives about work and self development.

The second aim of the project was to explore whether students perceived some congruence between their paid part-time work and study. Table 2 presents the distribution and mean ratings of student responses to the items related to work/study congruence. It is clear from the data that a majority of students agreed with most of the statements about work/study congruence. While students were noticeably less likely to agree that their business degree was related to their job, the distribution for this item was distinctly bi-modal. All of the other items received positive mean ratings indicating a relatively high level of work/study congruence.

Table 2. Work-study congruence distribution, means and standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can apply my academic studies to my job</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can apply my job experience to my academic studies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working helps me better understand concepts discussed in class</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job has a positive effect on my academic studies</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working while studying has enriched my educational experience</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The degree I am studying is related to my job</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate percentages / mean</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean based on 5 = Strongly agree ··· 1 = Strongly disagree

The third aim of the project was to examine the skills business students felt they were developing as a result of their paid part-time work. The 37 items used on the survey were grouped into eight broad skills categories to simplify interpretation. Table 3 shows the distribution and aggregate descriptive statistics for each of the eight categories. The table indicates that most students were inclined to agree that they were developing a number of skills as a result of their paid part-time employment. More than two thirds of students (72.4 per cent) agreed that their work was helping them to develop interpersonal skills. This category included the following items:

- Ability to deal with a wider range of people (mean = 4.20)
- Awareness of how I interact with people (mean = 4.07)
- Better listening skills (mean = 3.91)
- Maintaining professional and ethical standards (mean = 3.89)
- Empathy in dealing with colleagues and customers (mean = 3.84)
- Cultural awareness in dealing with colleagues and customers (mean = 3.84)
- Giving and receiving feedback on performance (mean = 3.46)
Table 3. Skills development, distribution, means and standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Category</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork &amp; Adaptability</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral &amp; Written Communication</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Management</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Leadership</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean based on 5 = Strongly agree ··· 1 = Strongly disagree

The teamwork and adaptability category also rated highly and included the following specific skills:

- Working better with others in a team (mean = 3.97)
- Feeling more comfortable in busy and stressful situations (mean = 3.90)
- Adapting creatively to change (mean = 3.44)

Numeracy, problem solving and communication were rated positively by a majority of students. It was a little disappointing to observe that business students were less likely to agree that their work helped them to develop management and leadership skills and information management skills. Given the high proportion of Generation Y students in the cohort it is possible that many students may perceive that they already have good information management skills and that their work offered limited opportunities to enhance these further.

The final aim of this project was to explore whether perceived work/study congruence is linked with students’ development of skills and whether both of these aspects affect job satisfaction and academic satisfaction. The analysis also included measures for self efficacy and core self-evaluation because the literature suggests that students who have higher levels of self-efficacy and core self evaluation are more like to provide higher satisfaction ratings. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between all of these variables. ‘Skills development’ was reduced to a single variable by calculating an average rating of all skills for each respondent. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Pearson correlations between main study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure (no. items)</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antecedents</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Core self-evaluation (12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Self efficacy (8)</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Work/study congruence (6)</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Skills development (37)</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Satisfaction with job (1)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.52</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All correlations were significant at the 0.05 level
As expected, the core self-evaluation and self efficacy measures were highly correlated with each other. Self efficacy relates to a person’s belief about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance and is a component of Judge et al.’s (2003) core self-evaluation measure. A strong correlation between these two measures would therefore be expected. Judge et al. argue that core self-evaluation determines an individual’s disposition towards job satisfaction and in this analysis both core self-evaluation and self-efficacy were moderately correlated with job satisfaction. However, what is most notable from these results are the good to moderate correlations between: work/study congruence and job satisfaction (0.68), work/study congruence and skills development (0.55), and skills development and job satisfaction (0.52). It is somewhat disappointing that satisfaction with academic performance was not strongly correlated with any of the antecedent variables.

Two separate regression analyses were conducted to further explore the relationships between the four antecedent measures and students’ satisfaction with their job and academic performance. The results for the first regression model (job satisfaction) indicate that the F ratio of 15.55 was significant, with a multiple R value of 0.70, and an $R^2$ of 0.49, indicating that about 49% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by the variables included in the regression. The results indicate that work/study congruence ($\beta=0.57$) contributed most strongly to job satisfaction and that the link between these two measures was significant. The results for the second regression model (satisfaction with academic performance) were similar but less convincing. Work/study congruence ($\beta=0.37$) was again the only measure that was strongly linked with students’ satisfaction with their academic performance. However, the regression model indicates that only about 17% of the variation in academic satisfaction is explained by the variables included in the regression. This would suggest that there are many additional unmeasured variables that contribute to satisfaction with academic performance.

**Issues arising for discussion**

The results of this project have shown that from a student perspective, paid part-time work is perceived as a useful activity for developing a number of transferrable skills, most notably interpersonal skills, teamwork and adaptability, numeracy skills, problem solving and communication. These skills are often challenging to develop through traditional, classroom-based instruction. In addition, it has identified that a majority of business students do perceive some congruence between their work and academic studies. Questions for further discussion include:

- What new pedagogic approaches, activities & assessment can we design to increase work/study congruence and to help students to integrate their experiences from the world of work with their academic studies?
- What types of jobs results in better work/study congruence?
- Do business students report higher levels of work/study congruence than students from other disciplines?
- How do the skills developed through paid part-time work contrast with other WIL approaches such as business simulations and internships?
References


Title of project
Navigating new identities: Indigenous teacher aides moving to preservice teacher status.

Authors and affiliation
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Abstract
James Cook University provides opportunities for Indigenous people to undertake a Bachelor of Education program in their home communities. Many of the students who undertake this program are experienced and valued para-professionals in their local school communities and hold qualifications as teacher aides.

As Reid and Santoro (2006) note the “impenetrable Whiteness’ of schooling impacts on the range of identity-constructions available to Indigenous people entering the teaching profession” (2006, p. 144). While teacher aides play a valuable role in Indigenous community settings, their importance arises from the historical and social realities whereby most teachers and school leaders are non-Indigenous and transient and community members are positioned in often poorly paid contracted labour. Consequently, transitioning from often-marginalised status within the school, to the core role of professional decision maker presents a range of challenges. This project aims to facilitate their transition from teacher aide to professional decision maker and teacher.

In the project, 15 RATEP students undertaking their first period of placement in the Bachelor of Education engaged in a revised curriculum and targeted activities to promote more successful outcomes. As part of this project, the RATEP students experienced a range of pre-placement activities designed to focus attention on the identify transitions that might enable more ‘agentic’ engagement with the program. A series of activities involving both cooperative learning and explicit teaching strategies were developed and included as part of the residential program. During the placement, identity transitions in the trajectory from teacher aide to preservice teacher were further highlighted through the use of an online survey. Finally, focus group interviews were conducted on completion of the subject to capture through narrative inquiry, stories and reflections on the transitions.

The findings of the project highlight the importance, as Polyani (1958) argued of making tacit knowledge, explicit. The revised curriculum and pedagogy utilised in this project confirms the need for academic experiences that explicitly engage students with race relations can begin students’ journey on reconceptualisation of their roles, and the support required to engage with historical relations in work sites should not be underestimated. The project also recognises the urgent need to engage with workplace stakeholders more rigorously, including engaging supervising teachers and principals in supporting identity transition required.

Brief description of academic area
Teacher education

Particular purpose
James Cook University provides opportunities for Indigenous people to undertake a Bachelor of Education program in their home communities. These communities include locations such as Palm Island, Yarrabah,
Cherbourg, Bamaga, as well as numerous islands in the Torres Strait. Many of the students who undertake this program are experienced and valued para-professionals in their local school communities and hold qualifications as teacher aides. Their academic study is undertaken in the community school with access to an onsite qualified teacher and their academic program is delivered using a range of technologies, including a weekly workshop with academic staff via Elluminate software, as well as residential schools held on campus. Periods of practicum or placements are completed throughout the program including periods of placement in home communities.

While teacher aides play a valuable role in these community settings, their importance arises from the historical and social realities whereby most teachers and school leaders are non-Indigenous and transient and community members are positioned in often poorly paid contracted labour. Consequently, transitioning from the often marginalised status within the school, to the core role of professional decision maker presents a range of challenges. This project aims to facilitate their transition from teacher aide to professional decision maker and teacher.

Thus the project focuses on students reflecting on their historical experiences as para-professionals as a basis for engaging with the new identity demands of practice as they begin their role as preservice teachers. Hence, the key focus areas for the project are:
- How can workplace learning be used as a reflective tool on historical roles within the students’ communities?
- How can academic experiences that engage with the historical and social realities of race relations in Indigenous communities and Australia more broadly, contribute to the students ability to reposition themselves within the workplace setting.
- How can the integration of workplace and academic learning focus on issues of identity where there are multiple stakeholders involved?

Specifically, the project aimed to improve outcomes – completion and achievement - of a core subject in the degree – ED2491 Teaching for Learning 1, undertaken by 15 students in 2010. This subject requires students to undertake a half-day placement in a school setting each work for 10 weeks commencing Week 3 of the semester. The curriculum and pedagogic activities undertaken as part of this project included revised pre-placement activities, a survey to promote reflection on placement experiences and targeted interviews at the end of semester.

**Process for enacting WIL**

Reid and Santoro, in their study of the challenges confronting Indigenous teachers within the ‘whiteness’ of Australian schooling, draw on post-structural accounts that note “that identity is never fixed but is always being produced, changed and shifted with changing” (2006, p146).

As the first part of the project, pre-placement activities were designed to reframe and refocus students on issues of identity. Two aspects of identity were specifically targeted. Firstly, to focus on the status of Indigenous students in a community setting, and secondly to focus students on the transition of from teacher aides with a completed VET qualification moving into university study and in particular a Bachelor of Education. These activities were conducted in the compulsory residential school held at the start of the first semester of study and prior to the first period of placement.
While the residential school had always provided a forum for pre-placement activities, such activities had traditionally been focussed on the ‘technical’ preparation for placement. Such a technical focus prioritised issues of timing, activities to be completed on placement, code of conduct, safety, reporting and performance requirements. Engagement of students in issues of identity addition to technical requirements for placement was then, the first key intervention as part of this project. The pre-placement activities were completed over two half days in the residential period.

The first session involved students’ focus on reflection of their Indigenous status within their community. Students worked in small groups to develop a group picture on butchers’ paper of their educational experiences within their communities, reflecting on the historical and social factors that account for this picture. This including a mapping of educational facilities, their relationships with teachers, highest levels of western education within their communities etc. Students were then led through an extract of a key review of teacher education - Top of the Class (2007, pp.38-41) which highlighted the need for more Indigenous teachers and “1000 Aboriginal Teacher by 1990” (Hughes and Wilmott, 1982, pp.45-49) which argued that, while Indigenous Education Workers had made a significant contribution to the education of Indigenous students, fully trained Indigenous teachers in decision making roles was the necessary next step. Students were asked to reflect on their own goals and write a mission statement for becoming a teacher following engagement with these readings.

The second session of pre-placement activities engaged cooperative learning strategies to explore the transition from teacher aide to preservice teacher. The first activity in this session involved the use of an ‘extent continuum’ where students were asked to physically position themselves in line up in response to the question “To what extent will undertaking placement as a preservice teacher be the same or different to working as a teacher aide?”. Following this physical representation of beliefs of the transition required, students were asked to work in small groups to review the Queensland College of Teachers’ Professional Standards statements, and highlight each component with highlighter pens to review the status
Green: work that has been a central part of your work as teacher-aide.
Orange: work that has been a part but not central to your work as a teacher aide.
Purple: work that you have not engaged in as a teacher aide.

Students were asked to review the degree to which the work on placement would change from the work completed as a teacher aide.

To reinforce the awareness of the transformations required in transition, students completed a focussed review of formal job descriptions of both teacher aides and teachers. To conclude, students completed an action plan for their placement.

The data collected from these pre-placement activities included observations and completed teaching activities.

While students were actively engaged in the requirements for placement each week within the regular teaching of the subject, during placement, a survey was designed to promote further reflection on their learnings around identity as they participated on placement. The survey, completed on-line, and utilising a Likert scale, was designed to promote reflection on the pre-placement activities, again drawing students’ attention to issues of identity. Students were asked to identify the strategies they had found to be successful in re-positioning their identity, as well as noting any new insights on the role of teacher aides within the
community, and how teachers would work effectively with teacher aides. They were also specifically asked to re-position themselves on a ‘virtual’ extent continuum in response to the same question asked in the pre-placement session.

The final intervention as part of this project involved focus group interviews conducted at the end of the semester. Small groups of students, were interviewed utilising Elluminate software, to promote further reflection on the experience of transition and further support required. The focus group adopted a narrative inquiry approach to engage students in stories around critical incidents on placement.

Key findings

Data
The data collected on this project then, included observations and artefacts from pre-placement activities, survey data, student practicum reports, student results and the stories collected from the focus groups. Additional data was obtained through conversations with students during visits to RATEP sites.

Findings
Findings from pre-practicum activities
The tasks we set to support reflection on their Indigenous worker status within the school appeared problematic to the students. Students asked many questions about the group picture activity, indicating that the task was not clear to them. The group discussions and pictures produced around this task tended to emphasise individual motivation and achievement and exceptional family support rather than their positions as Indigenous Education Workers. The discussion of importance of professional Indigenous teachers as opposed to Indigenous para-professionals focused more on the general value of Indigenous adults in schools. This is understandable given the findings reported below on the students understanding of the differing roles of Indigenous Education Workers in comparison to teachers.

These observations give rise to several possible findings. First, the findings could indicate that the activities devised were not effective for the aims set. The setting of a residential school with teachers who the students did not know may not have been conducive to these activities. A sense of trust and safety may be needed before students are prepared to reveal their families’ historical experiences and we had allocated little time to develop this trust. Alternatively, students’ expectations of what is appropriate in a university context may have prompted them to use the discourses of individual achievement within this setting.

A second possible finding focuses on students’ previous engagement with their historical positioning as Indigenous people in their community, and as Indigenous Education Workers with significant community links. It appeared that students had varying access to the colonial history of Indigenous peoples. For example, one student asked a question that indicated she had no previous knowledge of the extent and nature of the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Acts which controlled the lives of Indigenous people at the same time as demonstrating strong personal knowledge of the impact of stolen generations on families in her community. The understandings of the historical position of a student from the Torres St came through her experiences as a speaker of English as a third language. However, it seemed that students’ engagement with these tasks required a more comprehensive picture of the historical positioning of Indigenous people and its impact on Indigenous experience.
Observing the tasks we set to prepare students in thinking through the transition from para-professional to preservice teacher suggested that students had not contemplated the transition required. Drawing on a ‘community of practice’ ideal, Andersson and Hellberg note in their 2006 Swedish study of child care workers transitioning to preservice teachers, a change in trajectory such as those experienced by students in the RATEP program requires significant teaching focus. Our project confirms their view that “students have valuable tacit knowledge, the challenge then is to make this knowledge explicit rather than to develop new knowledge” (2006, p 281).

Our pre-placement activities then involved explicit teaching to unpack the implicit understandings of the role of a teacher aide and allowed for a review of the transition required. Students appeared surprised that such a transition would involve a substantial repositioning. However, there was also a tension in the curriculum and pedagogy involved in this project. This tension arose from the need to highlight the differences between the work of teachers and Indigenous Education Workers and the greater decision making and agency of teachers without devaluing the students’ past and current roles as IEWs. Indeed, the recognition of the understandings of the role of the teacher aide is crucial.

Overall the findings from these pre-practicum activities indicate that the pedagogy employed was personally engaging for students who participated enthusiastically and thoughtfully, demonstrating an interest in the idea of repositioning themselves as preservice teachers. According to Clarke (2009, p.186-187) “engaging in ‘identity work’ is indispensable for teachers if they wish to exercise professional agency, and thereby maximize their potential for development and growth”. This seems particularly important for Indigenous preservice teachers who, as suggested by Reid and Santora (2006, p.155) may struggle “for a coherent sense of self as ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Teacher’”. The complexity of this task means that time beyond this project is required to support students in this work.

An interesting finding for us as teacher educators came through the action plan prepared by students. This intervention had been designed as additional to the usual professional experience briefings which focus on technical aspects on preparation such as rules to follow, how to behave, how to “comply”. However, the action plans prepared by students generated actions that incorporated the technical aspect which would have normally be “given” to students. This has caused us to re-think the adequacy of the pedagogy of work place experience briefings for all students.

Findings at the end of the practicum
As indicated above, we had planned a survey and focus group interviews as part of this project. However, students are currently still involved with assessment and this needs to be the priority we support. Additionally not all professional experience reports have been received and so the findings from these are not available for this report. However, findings from interim reports on students and conversations with students during site visits by one of the authors have been included.

Following the residential at the beginning of the semester, three students withdrew from the professional experience subject to reduce their student load, a practice supported by the university. One student was withdrawn from professional experience at the request from the placement school and subsequently failed. Comments from the school focused on his unwillingness or inability to plan in an appropriate timeframe and to respond to professional feedback, indicate that he was unable to make the identity shift to preservice teacher.
Remaining students self reported that they were “going well” and this has been confirmed by informal conversations with school principals at their placement schools. All remaining students were looking forward to the two week professional experience block. In conversations, three reported that they found it difficult to reposition themselves as preservice teachers in the “fragmented” experience of the half day a week placement in the school where they also worked as an IEW. They believed that the two weeks continuous experience would provide them greater opportunities to reposition themselves as they would not be switching from one role to another in the space of one day. This observation supports the finding that students are engaging meta-cognitively with the concept of identity shift. It also poses an interesting pedagogical challenge for our program in that the half day a week professional experience within the subject Teaching for Learning 1 provides tight integration of workplace learning with university study.

While this project has a limited timeframe, the success of this intervention cannot be judged until students have undertaken more professional experience. This also provides opportunities to continue to collect data and to enrich findings.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- Academic experiences that explicitly engage students with race relations can begin students’ journey on reconceptualisation: establish first stage of meta-cognition but this is a significant challenge to reflect on personal history. It is not always clear if understanding of personal history is a precondition of success in workplace or academic study.

- Transitioning after a period of working in a designated role in a practice setting can take substantial work: meta-cognition and actual repositioning is required and a curriculum and pedagogic focus can enable such meta-cognition.

- It appears that generally, students with VET qualification transitioning to University study require a reconceptualising of the nature of the work role - explicit teaching of transformation required will be beneficial for students.

- The extent to which the repositioning in identity is required for minority groups appears to have been ignored in the literature and invisible in curriculum of WIL. Curriculum and pedagogic interventions may become powerful tools for such repositioning and success in the workplace.

**References**


Title of project
Embedding work-integrated learning in the Business curriculum

Author and affiliation
Christine Yap, The University of Newcastle

Abstract
This paper describes the implementation and evaluation of a course which embeds work integrated learning (WIL) in the Business undergraduate program at The University of Newcastle. The course, Project in Business, was developed to give final year students the opportunity to complete curriculum aligned work integrated learning projects as an integral part of their academic program. Students were assigned projects supplied by the local business community, relevant to the discipline majors being undertaken. Although the students made a contribution to the workplace, the central focus of the course was on university level learning: grades were awarded based on written accounts of their projects and evaluations of workplace experiences, not the time spent in the workplace or amount of work accomplished. Early indications suggest that students successfully completing the course have increased their skill and knowledge base, experienced the culture and ethics of the workplace and engaged with the professional identity of their discipline. However interviews with workplace supervisors and students identified several challenges which will need to be addressed if WIL is to be made available to a greater number of students. The key issues being the development of effective assessment methods, the challenge of making WIL available to low achieving students without disenfranchising local firms, conflicting expectations among stakeholders, and staff workload.

Brief description of academic area
The course (i.e. subject), BUSN3001 Project in Business, is placed in the final semester of a three-year Business undergraduate degree program.

Particular purpose
This initiative aims to implement and then evaluate a course which will embed work integrated learning (WIL) in the Business undergraduate program. It will examine the effectiveness of the course in preparing students for working life in their area of specialisation and in consolidating their academic knowledge. ‘Discipline centred approaches are widely held to be more engaging for students and ultimately viewed as leading to better graduate employability outcomes’ (Precision Consultancy, 2007, p.13).

In a study of employer satisfaction with graduate skills it was reported that 75% of university graduates were not suited for the jobs for which they applied (Eunson, 2000). This suggests that, even though the majority of university students have workplace experience through part-time jobs, their skills from part-time employment are not necessarily in their area of specialisation (Vickers and Singh, 2008). WIL can assist students to find ways to translate skills from part-time jobs and university studies to suit professional contexts. The challenge for providers of WIL opportunities is to determine the nature of the learning experience and skills that will be most beneficial.

Work-based practical experience via practicum/internship programs is well established as a central feature within key professional courses at most universities (eg. medicine, nursing, teaching). It has been less
common in more generalist courses. While work experience opportunities have been provided to business students in the past, they have not been integrated into the degree program. Past programs include industry scholarships, which provided some students with the opportunity to combine studying for their degree and placement with their Sponsor company, and vacation work experience, which gave undergraduate students exposure to the practice of their discipline by placing them in unpaid work experience positions during the summer vacation. This new course, BUSN3001, Project in Business, has been developed to give students the opportunity to complete curriculum aligned work integrated learning projects as an integral part of their academic program. Within a guided research project, students identify an organisational problem, explore relevant literature, develop appropriate solutions and construct a final report.

**Process for enacting WIL**

The course was offered for the first time in semester 1, 2010 to selected students in their final year of the three-year undergraduate program. At this point students have completed most of the cross-disciplinary core courses and at least half of the courses in the specialised major sequence of study – they were therefore taking to the workplace a body of knowledge on which the experience could build. Positioning the course at the end of the program ensures that workplace supervisors accept the students as emerging professionals.

Students were assigned projects, relevant to the discipline majors being undertaken (Human Resource Management, Marketing, International Business, Management, Tourism or Supply Chain Management). The course is project-based in the belief that the best placements occur when students have something specific to do (Patrick et al., 2008, p.15). Project-based work retains its academic emphasis, while exposing the students to workplace environments and interactions. The projects, initiated and organised by the University, were provided by the local business community.

Each student was assigned an academic mentor and workplace supervisor, both providing advice and support. The course coordinator acted as an intermediary between student and workplace. The students conducted their activities largely unsupervised. Critical to the success of the course was the development of a shared vision for the experience among students, workplace supervisors and academics. With this in mind, to reduce the risk of disaffection due to unclear expectations from University and/or placement provider, an information sheet was distributed to all stakeholders setting out roles and responsibilities. However university staff did not visit the workplace.

Although the students made a contribution to the workplace, the central focus of the course was on university level learning: grades were awarded based on written accounts of their projects and evaluations of workplace experiences, not the time spent in the workplace or amount of work accomplished. Assessment was made up of four components: (1) a project proposal (prepared in consultation with employer and academic); (2) a reflective essay documenting personal experiences and critical reflections on the placement; (3) a presentation of the research project to fellow students, academics in discipline area and employer representatives and (4) a final project research report in which students related their project to broader theoretical contexts. Assessment of student learning outcomes was difficult as students were placed in a wide range of business settings and contexts, resulting in varied learning experiences and outcomes. Guidelines were developed for grading student performance: learning outcomes for each discipline were identified and linked with assessment methods. To ensure consistency, major assessment items were

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1 While BUSN3001 was open to all Bachelor of Business students, entry to the course was competitive based on academic merit (minimum Grade Point Average) and a requirement that core courses and at least half of the major sequence of study had been completed.
Fifteen students completed the course. At the end of the semester, the initiative was appraised by analysing:

(a) Student reflective essays

At the end of the semester, all students submitted a reflective essay on their workplace experiences. Their instructions were ‘to write an essay that describes, and critically reflects on, your placement experience, and on what you believe to be your own strengths and weaknesses’.

(b) Semi-structured interviews with students

A semi-structured questionnaire (recorded and transcribed) was used to evaluate the students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of this curriculum initiative in providing them with the experience of putting the theory of their discipline major into practice in a workplace setting. Students were provided with opportunities to suggest changes to the course to better facilitate their transition from an academic to business setting. They were encouraged to draw on the realities of their 10-12 weeks in the workplace to inform their appraisal.

(c) Semi-structured interviews with workplace supervisors

Phone interviews were used to obtain feedback from workplace supervisors. They were given the opportunity to comment on the best aspects of the course and how the course could be improved.

**Key findings**

**Student reflections on experiences**

The common themes to emerge from student reflections on experiences, as expressed in their reflective essays and semi-structured interviews, are summarised in the following section.

After completing the workplace project, students reported many benefits:

- increased confidence, both in applying discipline knowledge to their project and in their other courses ("Not only was I able to have a greater understanding of marketing, but I was able to use this understanding and apply it to all of my courses. I began to speak up in class, state my opinion whether I was right or wrong. In return by throwing myself out there I was able to get more in return. My knowledge increased, my confidence increased and before I know it I was having hour long conversations with lecturers about marketing and marketing concepts").
- improved communication skills ("you have to communicate not only with your mentor, but with your co-workers").
- acquisition of practical experience in their discipline ("Very fulfilling course that provided me with workplace experience and practical knowledge that will be used in the future"; the project “did open my mind”; “relating the experience to your discipline major is very useful”).
- satisfaction from working independently ("working independently I developed both personally and professionally – I could set goals and then meet those goals in the short-term").
- increased knowledge in the discipline area and acquisition of new skills ("I developed a lot of skills that I wouldn’t have developed if I hadn’t participated in the work placement").
• identification of gaps in their knowledge (“BUSN3001 provided me with the opportunity to test my knowledge and identify any knowledge gaps that I had”).
• assistance in identifying the type of work they wish to undertake and the type of organisation they will aim to work with upon graduation (“it was good to get out there and see what it’s going to be like when you get out there in the real world when you graduate”; “it definitely gave me some direction...what sort of business I’d like to work for”).

Students also reported a number of challenges:
• great difficulty in balancing workplace expectations (which were generally very broad) and the requirements of the academic mentor (“the biggest challenge ... was to try and bring together what the workplace wanted and what was expected academically”).
• the course was more challenging and time-consuming than other courses at the same level.

**Semi structured interviews with workplace supervisors**

In the final weeks of the course, phone interviews were conducted with workplace supervisors from 12 firms. In response to the question “What do you see as the main benefits of the course?” supervisors identified:

**Benefits to the student:**
• “opportunity for the student to apply theory in a practical way”
• “student gets exposure to the corporate environment”
• “student gets the opportunity to engage with an organisation and get their perspective on a topic”

**Benefits to the organisation:**
• “potential to have the services of a motivated student”
• assistance with an organisational issue (“ability to have a dedicated person to conduct in depth research/analysis into a not necessarily priority area”)
• “organisation’s employees get fresh insights and outside opinions on topics”
• maintaining a “positive continuing relationship with the university”

In response to the question “What were the aspects of the course that could be improved?” supervisors identified the following issues:
• some students “did not bring as much value to the organisation as expected”; “students participating in this course need a really strong academic background and need to be very highly motivated”.
• greater interaction between the workplace and the academic mentor would assist in gaining greater clarity regarding organisation expectations versus student expectations (eg. “it would have been useful to have a 3 way meeting with student, project provider and academic mentor”).
• more direction from the university to assist in bridging the gap between university studies and the workplace (“Student was supposed to apply theory to a practical piece of work, but student did not appear to have enough assistance from the university to do this”).

Early indications suggest that students successfully completing BUSN3001 have developed both personally and academically; experienced the culture and ethics of the workplace and engaged with the professional identity of their discipline. Every student reported that the course benefited them (the best aspect of the course was the opportunity “to apply the theories that you've learnt for the past two years practically because I hadn’t ever been able to do that before. And I think I was successful in applying those. I think it shows I’ve done well, the knowledge is in there – it hasn’t gone in one ear and out the other”). However WIL
also presents several challenges for universities. Successful integration of WIL in the curriculum is
dependant on a shared understanding of the purpose of the placement among all stakeholders.

**Issues arising for discussion**
The preliminary findings from student and workplace supervisor feedback, suggest that some issues need to be addressed if WIL opportunities are to be expanded.

- **Development of effective assessment methods**
  Students obtain variable outcomes from the course as placements involve a broad range of environments, from small business to large corporations, making consistent assessment difficult. At present, assessment items are very much focussed on academic requirements: assessment is designed to encourage reflection and the integration of theory and practice. Formal feedback from workplace supervisors on student performance is not incorporated in the assessment. A redesign of the assessment to include such an evaluation may help inform the assessment process to try and recognise differing student achievements in the workplace. Such feedback however would involve greater employer and academic staff commitment and interaction.

- **Options for low-achieving students**
  Consideration needs to be given as to how WIL opportunities can be offered to students of lower academic ability without disenfranchising local firms. BUSN3001 is only available to final year credit average students. Nevertheless some firms expressed disappointment in the capabilities of students. One option could entail greater preparation for students prior to engaging with the workplace and more extensive academic mentoring during placement. Such a solution would have significant workload implications for academics. Another option may be to provide these students with WIL experience within the university environment through workplace simulations or ‘virtual’ WIL.

- **Conflicting expectations**
  Conflicts between workplace supervisor’s aspirations for the project and academic mentor’s requirements for assessment purposes were identified as an issue for all students. Some students felt that they were caught ‘in the middle’ of the competing demands of the workplace and university. Interviewees suggested that visits to the workplace by academics would improve the course and help resolve the differing expectations. At present the course does not involve visits to the workplace by academics. To incorporate such meetings into the course structure would have significant resourcing/workload implications, yet such visits are important to avoid conflict between the workplace supervisor’s aspirations for the workplace project and the academic mentor’s requirements. There is a clear need to work more closely with workplace partners to ensure there is a nexus between curriculum and the university and the requirements of the workplace.

- **Staff workload and time constraints**
  Most issues raised by students and workplace supervisors could be addressed by devoting more resources to WIL courses. Greater interaction between the three key players (academics, workplace supervisors and students) would be beneficial but very resource intensive. Visits to the workplace by academics and greater mentoring of each student would be very time consuming. In addition, staffing is required to build and maintain links with business community; to identify suitable projects; and to co-ordinate the course. From the coordinators experience, this first offering
of BUSN3001 has demonstrated that a WIL course requires far greater resourcing than a conventional 'on campus' course.

References
Title of Project
Preparing Creative Artists for the Creative Industries: Helping Musicians Cope with a Range of Work Environments

Author and affiliation
Nathan Scott, School of Drama, Fine Art and Music, The University of Newcastle

Abstract
This WIL project targeted final (third) year undergraduate Bachelor of Music students. It aimed to:

- ascertain their comprehension of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and establish a common understanding of the process;
- assist in relating WIL to student’s individual contexts through the close examination of existing work activities;
- invoke consideration about employment in the current Creative Arts industry and identify how WIL could relate to these work opportunities;
- examine student’s perceived readiness for entry into the work force and consider ways that WIL could be better employed throughout undergraduate music studies.

The aims were achieved through several mechanisms which included:

- a series of four one hour lectures (delivering information about WIL and careers in the context of the Creative Arts);
- opportunities for students to openly discuss WIL with the researcher and peers;
- an assessment task (incorporating reflective writing, research activities and a short survey).

Key findings from the research included:

- The lack of awareness about WIL (and its potential value) amongst undergraduate music students;
- The presence of a significant amount of student-initiated (i.e. unmonitored) WIL activities undertaken outside of a degree structure;
- The strong desire of students to undertake more WIL activities as part of their studies;
- The need for a closer linkage of theory to current industry practice throughout undergraduate studies.

Brief description of academic area
The composition, performance and production of music material

Particular purpose
The purpose of this WIL project was to aid students in comprehending WIL, to enhance the perceived value of WIL, to relate WIL to individual contexts, and to examine ways that WIL activities could be better employed in an undergraduate context.

The worth of the project became quite apparent as the project progressed. Initially students were a little apprehensive about WIL but once they grasped a better understanding of the concept (and related it to their individual contexts) they became more engaged in the discussion. Eventually all students were able to identify self-initiated WIL activities and recognise how WIL is integrated into their undergraduate program. In addition to bringing WIL to the fore, the project also raised a few other issues that were in the background (e.g. work opportunities in the current industry). These topics are related and tied in well together.
From a cognitive viewpoint, the students utilised critical thinking, reflective thinking, problem solving ability and lateral thinking (to name a few). They were encouraged to think outside of their immediate realm of knowledge and consider unconventional options (particular in relation to employment opportunities).

The assessment task associated with the WIL project required students to consider and document their thoughts. This proved challenging for some as they were more used to thinking about WIL on a conceptual level. Requiring them to deliberate and detail their thoughts provided them with a deeper understanding of the topic. (By the conclusion of the lecture series many students were buzzing with exciting new ideas about WIL and how it could be incorporated into the undergraduate program.)

**Process for enacting WIL**

Several options were considered for the delivery of the WIL project including the development of a dedicated course (subject), integration as a component into an existing course, delivery (online) to an entire program, or development of the project independently of any course/program. The second option (ie. integration as a component into an existing course) was considered the most suitable option considering the given time frame, the nature of the content to be examined and accessibility to the student cohort. (The first option was already being pursued as a general university-wide WIL course, the third option proved to be too large for this project, and the fourth option presented potential problems of accessing the necessary resources as it would operate outside a course/program structure.)

The course chosen for the WIL project was MUSI2462 (Collaborative Music Making 4). This was the first offering of this course and the WIL component fitted in very well with the subject matter. Content was developed for a series of one hour classes covering material about WIL, examining music career paths, discussion about the demands of the creative arts industry (current and future), and discussion about the growing number of potential employment scenarios musicians are expected to adapt to.

The classes were held across the first four weeks of semester (March 2010) in a lecture/seminar format. This allowed for the delivery of content and discussion amongst the student cohort. At the conclusion of the lecture series an assessment task was distributed requiring students to consider the discussion from the first four weeks, undertake reflective thinking relevant to their individual circumstances, and complete research activities into employment in the creative arts industry. (Relating the content to the student’s individual needs was deemed more beneficial than an objective consideration of the subject matter.) The assessment task was divided into three main sections:

(i) Experiences in Work Integrated Learning
(ii) Employment in the Creative Arts
(iii) Questions about WIL (short answers)

Part One required students to identify a music-related work opportunity they had previously undertaken (either in a paid or unpaid capacity) and provide a brief summary of what they were required to do. (All students had previously indicated that they had undertaken some form of related work.) After detailing the work they then reflect on their activities and identified what they had learnt from the activity (including any positive and negative aspects). The aim of this specific exercise was for them to realise that they had already undertaken a self-initiated WIL activity and that there was a learning experience integrated with their work.
Part Two aimed to broaden the students mind by exposing them to a wide array of music-related work situations. (This also exhibited the versatility a graduate musician may be required to possess.) After examining a number of contrasting activities they were required to select a non-traditional job advertisement and, using the criteria, relate it to themselves. When relating it to their situation, they were requested to identify what additional study and/or experiences they should ideally obtain to enhance the likelihood of being selected in a job interview. In addition to broadening the student’s perception of the industry, it added value to WIL opportunities and highlighted the industry’s desire for prior experiential learning.

Part Three comprised of a series of short questions about (a) the students confidence of entering the industry, (b) the further integration of WIL activities into undergraduate studies, and (c) their perceived benefit (or otherwise) of undertaking the WIL project.

The cohort of students selected for this project was all 3000 level BMusic students commencing the final year of their undergraduate music program (30 students in total). Of these, 24 submissions were provided for assessment and the data utilised in the research (below). This response rate (80%) was deemed a good sample size to obtain satisfactory results. (A larger sample size from across different years of the program would have yielded better results but was not possible in the given time frame.)
Key findings
The data obtained from the project was all in textual form. It was primarily sourced from the work students submitted as their WIL assessment task, with some additional data obtained from in-class discussions. The analysis proved difficult owing to the nature and wide variety of responses supplied but the results are summarised below and general trends did emerge from this.

Part One - Experiences in Work Integrated Learning
The experiences students detailed in part one of the assessment task varied from solo volunteer activities through to paid involvement in large collaborative activities. 100% of the activities were of a casual employment nature (as is common in the creative arts industry). This is also not unexpected considering the students are concurrently studying for their undergraduate degree. A significant amount (65%) of activities was in a paid capacity and a number of the remainder may have eventually led to paid work.

Evidence of the work activities they presented were all related to the music industry and primarily self-initiated. It was noted that much of the work was unmonitored, independent work (such as individual instrumental tuition) which require a higher level of motivational and organisation skill.

Observation - Most music students are capable (and willing) to initiate related work activities for experiential learning purposes
All students provided detail of how they benefited from their work activities (learning from both positive and negative experiences). The main outcome observed was the furthering of their musical development (e.g. improved levels of musicianship) but a selection of students also explicitly commented on the development of networking with others working in the industry (an important part of working in the creative arts).

In their reporting many of the students discussed the development of additional skills that emerged from their WIL experiences. These were not directly related to their music studies but were integral to them working in the different scenarios. These included:

- Child behavioural management
- Working with disabilities (e.g. autism)
- Dealing with negativity
- Importance of punctuality
- Dealing with other sectors of the Creative Arts (e.g. drama)
- Having contingency plans
- Learning to stand up for oneself
- Development of good organisation skills
- Dealing with institutional hierarchy
- Working with funding bodies

Additionally, some students noted how they started to adapt to the needs of their work situation. Specific examples include:

- A saxophone player starting to teach the clarinet, and then progressed on to flute as the demand became apparent. (They may not have otherwise done this.)
- An instrumentalist developed their production (sound/lighting) skills owing to their work situation. This in turn has improved their ensemble performance ability.

Observation – WIL fosters the development of skill sets that may not be explicitly provided as part of an undergraduate curriculum
Part Two - Employment in the Creative Arts

The broad spectrum of employment opportunities the students located evidenced the multifarious skill sets they may require when working in the industry. The jobs ranged from arts management activities (orchestral librarian), teaching activities (including international schools), production ability (including online music making) through to music performance (e.g. entertaining on a cruise ship).

When relating the positions to their individual circumstances, the students observed that most of the work opportunities required additional study (in addition to their undergraduate music degree) and/or experience in the field. The areas of additional study ranged from bookkeeping and arts management, through to education and religion. But importantly, many of the positions desired some form of experiential learning in the field. WIL could play a role in this, particularly as students may learn the required skills while being exposed to the realities of the industry.

Observation – Many music job opportunities require prior industry experience. WIL activities provide a learning environment within the context of current industry practices which may provide an useful augmentation of the undergraduate study experience.

Part Three - Questions about WIL

In this section students addressed three specific questions about WIL. Responses were provided in free text with some students providing a single sentence while others responded with a whole paragraph. The three questions are discussed individually below.

Q1) How would you rate your level of confidence of entering the creative arts industry at the end of your undergraduate degree? Explain.

This question was included to ascertain the student’s perceived level of comfort with the thought of entering the Creative Arts work force. (The word “perceived” is selected as it may not necessarily gauge a realistic measurement of their readiness as some may be overconfident while others may be overly cautious.)

There are a number of factors that affect a student’s transition into the work force including skills and experience. The integration of WIL activities into their undergraduate studies is seen as a way of assisting this transition by providing preliminary exposure to the industry and providing an opportunity to learn some of the specialist skills that it will require. (This extends beyond the benefits of traditional “work experience” as a higher level of engagement is utilised.)

The initial response to this question was analysed and organised into three categories (low, moderate, high). Of the 24 students who responded to the question, the following data was tabulated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Confidence</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Numbers of Students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These results are perhaps lower than desired considering the students are soon to enter the work force. The associated comments provided some explanation of the situation. It highlighted factors including:

- Inexperience
- Uncertainty
- Lack of confidence
- Need for additional training
- Difficulty of finding a place in a competitive industry

These concerns are not just limited to graduates in the music discipline but they do show that a large proportion of students have some fear of entering the industry. In general, the ones who rated higher (ie. more confident) had a greater level of existing industry engagement and were already starting to establish themselves as professional musicians. Those who had a limited exposure to the industry were the ones with moderate or low levels of confidence.

**Observation** – WIL activities undertaken during undergraduate years develops comprehension of the industry, improves student morale and aids the establishment of graduates in the profession

Q2) What additional work integrated learning activities do you think would benefit students in an undergraduate music program? Please provide an example(s).

The responses to this question were relatively specific. They are summarised below:

- Introduction of internships
- More industry replication in coursework activities
- Public outsourcing/exposure (important for the Creative Arts)
- Involvement in larger collaborative projects (particularly with industry)
- Compulsory work experience component
- Industry personal visiting University
- Exposure to a wider range of work situations

All the students stated that they desired more connection with industry practices. While they appreciated the activities currently available in their undergraduate program, they felt as if there could be more connection to the “real world”. The majority of suggestions incorporated some form of WIL whereby students would be working and learning amongst established professionals.

**Observation** – Students have a desire to make more of a connection to the profession during their undergraduate study years

Q3) How helpful did you find this task? Did you learn more about the creative arts industry and some of the variety of work environments? Why/why not?

This question was included to ascertain the effectiveness of the WIL project and refine it for future reference. It provided the students with an opportunity to critique the process and provide feedback. All but two of the responses provided positive comments. (The two that didn’t found little value in the WIL project, perhaps because they were not able to comprehend the scope of WIL or perhaps they were comfortable with their studies and career direction.)
The following summarises what students gained out of the WIL project:

- It highlighted what skills a graduate music student didn’t necessarily obtain from a “sheltered” undergraduate program
- It provided evidence highlighting the importance of gaining experience in the workplace
- It provided a much broader horizon of employment opportunities
- It assisted some students in shaping the direction of their career
- It inspired some students to initiate their own WIL activities

Observation – A range of different benefits can arise from WIL activities (some unintended) which can significantly assist in the early stages of a student’s development in the profession

Issues arising for discussion
This project has highlighted a number of important issues concerning WIL and its relation to undergraduate studies in music. These include:

- There appears to be a need for increased awareness of (and perceived value of) WIL amongst undergraduate music students;
- Mechanisms should be considered to encourage, monitor and support students self-initiated WIL activities;
- Consideration should be given to closer linkage of coursework to current industry practices (in a global perspective) throughout undergraduate studies in music;
- WIL activities can foster the development of skill sets that may not be provided as part of an undergraduate curriculum.
Title of project
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment students’ views about their industrial experience / work integrated learning.

Authors and affiliation
Willy Sher and Sue Sherratt, University of Newcastle

Abstract
This investigation explores the experiences of engineering and built environment students during their work experience programs. The aim was to understand the demands, engagements and outcomes of learning through work experience activities. An internet-based survey was administered to all students in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment at the University of Newcastle (FEBE), Australia. This paper reports on responses to quantitative questions (Qualitative data will be reported on at a later date). 201 students responded, the majority of whom were construction management students. Only a quarter of respondents were not working, indicating that students have ample opportunity to relate their studies to the world of work. This paper reports on the sources of information students used to find out about their industrial placements and how useful these were. The findings reported here are preliminary and will be supplemented in due course with those of the qualitative data to provide a fuller picture.

Brief description of academic area
To understand the demands, engagements and outcomes of learning through work experience activities of engineering and built environment students.

Particular purpose
FEBE students identify and arrange their own industrial placements. To assist them, they are encouraged to make use of the University’s Careers Service and, depending on their discipline, provided with lists of employers to approach. Students usually complete their placements during University vacations, but some study and work simultaneously (For example, the construction management degree is offered online to distance learners. Many of them are of mature age and in full-time employment). Students may consult university staff about placement opportunities, but staff generally play no further part in placements until students submit evidence of their experiences. A range of documentation is called for in this regard, with some degree programs requiring students to submit formal reports and others simply requiring employers to confirm the duration of placements and the nature of the work students completed.

An exception is students on who obtain UNISS scholarships (The University of Newcastle, 2010). These students are recruited through advertisements and selected based on interviews. Their industrial experience activities are assessed through a ‘Scholar Placement Report’ and a ‘Scholar Placement Evaluation’. In addition, representatives from sponsoring organizations are asked to complete a ‘Sponsor Placement Evaluation’.

The purpose of the survey was to review these arrangements and provide baseline data against which future changes could be measured.
Process for enacting WIL
The survey was administered between 6th and 24 May 2010 and delivered electronically through SurveyMonkey ("SurveyMonkey," 2010). It comprised 13 quantitative and 7 qualitative questions. Only quantitative data are reported here. An analysis of the qualitative data is currently being prepared.

3521 students were invited to participate (951 from the School of Architecture and Built Environment and 2570 from the School of Engineering and the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science). 210 students responded, a response rate of 6%.

Key findings
This project used an internet-based survey to gain an insight into the industrial placement experiences of students enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment and how this relates to their university courses. 210 students responded to both quantitative and open-ended questions; however, only the quantitative results are discussed in this paper.

At face value, the response rate of 6% appears low. Although it is below the average email survey response rate of 33% (Shih & Fan, 2009), it does fall within the expected range of between 5 and 85. In addition, our response rate falls well within the "liberal conditions" response rate put forward by Nulty (2008). Although a higher rate of response would have been desirable, there is considered to be no "magic formula by which a response rate can be identified as ‘acceptable’" (Bennett & Nair, 2010, p. 359). Although a number of factors may have contributed to the lower response rate (see discussion below), the results from the 210 students taking the survey may be considered to be indicative of the factors that concern them.

Surveys with low response rates are not necessarily biased, according to Bennett and Nair (Bennett & Nair, 2010). Nonetheless, it is apparent that this survey is more representative of students enrolled in programs within the School of Architecture and the Built Environment (with a response rate of 9.7% of students) rather than the two Schools of Engineering (response rate of 4.32% of the student enrolments). Furthermore, students enrolled in the Bachelor of Construction Management (BCM) had a response rate of 7.7%, compared to Architecture and Industrial Design students with a response rate of 2%. The high rate of response from the BCM students may reflect the fact that one of the authors teaches these students and anecdotal evidence suggests that students respond to emails from staff they know and with whom they have a rapport. Other relevant factors are that this is the only undergraduate program offered by FEBE which can also be studied solely online by distance learners. These distance students may be more responsive to online surveys because of their online learning experiences (Nulty, 2008).

The age and gender details of the respondents were as expected for these degree programs. Most students at the University of Newcastle enter their studies directly from school or within a few years of completing schooling, although the BCM recruits a higher proportion of mature age students than other degrees (possibly because it is offered online). Gender in all programs within FEBE continues to be biased in favour of males (with the exception of Architecture, where females make up approximately 50% of cohorts). Poor participation of females in engineering and construction has long been a problem, and several initiatives have sought to improve enrolment of females over the years. The most recent is an ALTC funded project entitled "Gender Inclusive Curriculum in Engineering and Construction Management" lead by the University of South Australia (J. Mills, 2010). Other initiatives include “Women in Engineering” (Engineers Australia, 2010) and The National Association of Women in Construction (Australia) (NAWIC, 2010).
The extent to which students currently engage in work (whether part or full-time) is high (75.5%), and aligns with other discipline related surveys (Lingard, 2007; A. Mills, Lingard, & McLaughlin, 2007; O'Leary, 2006). This trend is in common with other Australian Universities, and is arguably representative of a worldwide shift in the ways students engage in tertiary level education (Ford, Bosworth, & Wilson, 1995; McInnis & Hartley, 2002). For those students working in positions unrelated to their degree program (21.5%), the practical (time, financial) demands of an industrial placement may place additional demands on them. In such circumstances, they would have to interrupt their present employment to take on (possibly unpaid) work. The James et al. (2007) student finances report (cited in D. Bradley, 2008) found that “students were very concerned about the impact engagement in paid employment was having on their studies. Over half of undergraduate and postgraduate part-time students indicated that their work commitments adversely affected their performance at university, causing them to miss classes.” (p. 50). Those students working in discipline-related employment have a considerable advantage in that their usual, paid employment can provide them with easily-accessible industrial experiences.

Responses provide no clear-cut indication of how difficult or easy it was for students to obtain their placements. Indeed, similar numbers of students observed that this was easy as did students who said it was difficult. It is not yet clear what particular factors facilitated or hindered students obtaining placement: the responses to the open ended questions should provide more information about this.

Students are initially notified about the need to complete periods of industrial experience during lectures. Additional information (e.g. briefing documents describing the reasons for industrial experience, the type of employment students should secure, the records they should keep, insurance arranged by the university etc) is provided electronically on various Faculty and School web pages. Notwithstanding these formal sources, Figure 3 indicates that students found out about this from staff and other students. This situation is not altogether unexpected as the role of industrial experience tutor is loosely defined and the tutor may rely too heavily on Blackboard to disseminate his instructions. With respect to the requirements of their industrial experience, students indicated that the formal information provided by the industrial experience tutor and on Blackboard is at best sketchy. Students appear to be consulting teaching staff on a seemingly ad hoc basis, and approaching other students and unidentified ‘others’ for advice. Clearly students are finding it difficult to find out about the formal requirements to complete their industrial placements as well what this entails.

Despite some students having difficulty obtaining information about placements, as well as obtaining the placements themselves, it is heartening to note that most students considered themselves prepared for their industrial experience. It is pertinent to note that University staff assist students in other disciplines to obtain placements (e.g. nursing, speech pathology, social work etc). There is a clear need to further investigate issues relating facilitating and securing placements as the data elicited so far are inclusive.

Around 80% of respondents also found that their experiences related effectively to their university courses. It is possible that students may have provided answers that they felt the researchers hoped for to this question. Students have verbally questioned whether some of the university courses they take relate to what they experience on site; the qualitative findings should provide additional insight into this aspect.
Limitations

This paper reports on responses to quantitative questions asked. Responses to open-ended questions are currently being analysed and are likely to provide a richer understanding of some of the issues noted above.

The modest response rate we achieved was despite several best practice approaches we used. For example, we structured the survey to elicit constructive criticism, we reminded students about the survey, and we offered ten cinema tickets to be awarded at random to those completing the survey (Nulty, 2008). Factors contributing to the low rate include timing (as the survey was administered towards the end of the semester) as well as the gender and age profile of the students. Women are reportedly better at responding to email surveys than men (Sax, Gilmartin, Lee, & Hagedorn, 2008); the relative preponderance of males not only enrolled in the programs, but also responding to the survey, may reflect this. Furthermore, Sax et al (2008) note that older students are also more likely to respond than younger students. The majority (83.3%) of respondents were aged under 29 years, placing them squarely in the age group of poor responders.

Generally, although students are familiar with the internet and emails, they do not necessarily respond better to email surveys (Sax et al., 2008). In 2009, Newcastle University moved from paper to electronic surveys of students’ views about their courses. The response rate was substantially lower for the electronic version. This echoes the observations of Shih and Fan (2009) who noted that postal surveys achieved higher rates than email surveys.

Despite these limitations, these quantitative results have provided useful data on the experiences of these students, as well as insight into their attitudes and rates of responding to internet-based surveys. The qualitative responses will provide an additional understanding of the issues raised here.

Conclusions

This paper provides preliminary indications of the factors that concern engineering and built environment students engaging in periods of industrial experience. These placements are a mandatory accreditation requirement for the vast majority of degree programs offered in FEBE, making this an issue of considerable importance to the majority of students in this faculty.

This survey provides a robust overview of relevant issues. It has highlighted the relative efficiency of the current system, considering the modest burden placed on the faculty and its staff. The study has also pinpointed those aspects of industrial placements (e.g. sources for helpful advice and information) which appear to be in need of overhauling and upgrading. The needs of those students who are not working or who are working in unrelated employment may need particular consideration. Although the data are weighted in favour of the construction management students, it is likely that the issues raised by these respondents are similar in nature to those of the engineering students.

The University of Newcastle is working to provide students in all faculties with opportunities to engage in WIL. This survey is thus timely and can provide a baseline on which to judge future changes to the effectiveness and efficiency of the process.
**Issues arising for discussion**

We need to better understand:

- what engineering and built environment students require as preparation for their industrial placements.
- students’ needs and preferences in terms of the strategies/methods and media used to communicate WIL-related issues to them.
- how to guide and support students who are experiencing difficulties finding placements.
- How to assess/determine more accurately the benefits gained by students during their industrial experience placements (e.g. by administering a pre- and post-questionnaire).

**References**


Appendix

Demographics

83.7% of the respondents were male. The majority (73.8%) was aged between 20 and 29 years with 16.7% (35) being over 30 years of age. About half of them had started their degrees one (22.9%) or three (26.9%) years previously. 11 students (5.5%) had started their degrees six or more years before.

Over a third of respondents (36%) were enrolled in the Bachelor of Construction Management (Building) program (see Figure 1). Most double degree engineering programs, software and telecommunications engineering degrees and industrial design programs had few respondents (under 2%) and these are represented collectively as “Other” in Figure 1. There were no respondents from four engineering programs.

Students industrial experience / WIL

The main exposure of two-thirds (67%) of the respondents to the world of work was as a student rather than as an employee of a company (see Figure 2). However, 30% of respondents were working full-time, either in a field related to (27%) or not related to (3%) their studies, whilst 40% were working part-time in a field related or unrelated to their studies (27% and 18.5% respectively). A quarter of respondents were not working at all.

Figure 1: Degree programs surveyed
41.5% of respondents had already completed the industrial experience requirement of their degrees.

Regarding obtaining a placement, similar numbers of respondents found it difficult (39.3%) or easy (34.1%) to obtain a placement, and, likewise, a similar proportion found it very difficult (12.6%) or very easy (14.1%).

![Figure 2: Students’ work / study balance](image)

When asked how they became aware of requirements to complete their industrial experience, students identified the most common sources of information to be teaching staff and other students (as shown in Figure 3). Industrial experience tutors and employers were seen to have provided the least information in this regard. Figure 3 also shows that students mostly obtained information from teaching staff, as well as from other students, Blackboard or other unspecified sources.

Students were asked about the sources they consulted to find out what was required during their placement. They considered advice from other students and teaching staff to have been of at least some help, but previous work experience was felt to be the greatest source of very helpful or indispensable advice (Figure 4). Students stated that Blackboard and the industrial experience tutors were not helpful in this regard.

70% of respondents considered themselves either prepared (49.6%) or well prepared (20.4%) for their WIL experience.

Whilst most respondents (61.5%) were not assessed on their WIL experience, those who were either produced a report (33.3%) or gave a presentation (5.2%).

Respondents considered that their industrial experience related either effectively (49.1%) or very effectively (30.2%) to their university courses. A small percentage (3.8%) indicated that there was a mismatch between their industrial experience and their university courses.
The majority of students also believed that their industrial experience was either important (36.5%) or most important (57.4%) to their professional preparation.
**Title of Project**
Professional Placement Preparation Program for Entry-Level Prosthetics and Orthotics and Podiatry Students at La Trobe University

**Authors and affiliation**
Karen Dodd and Sharon Rayner, La Trobe University

**Abstract**
The project aimed to gather student perceptions about, and ideas for improvements for a newly introduced pre-clinical program designed to prepare podiatry and prosthetics and orthotics professional entry-level students for clinical placements.

All fourth year podiatry and prosthetics and orthotics students at La Trobe University were invited to attend a one and a half day pre-clinical preparation program designed to assist them prepare for their first major clinical placement in public run health services. The program content was designed not to develop discipline specific technical competencies (which had already been addressed in coursework subjects earlier), but rather develop the students own personal capacities to operate in a complex health care work environment where they were expected to learn under the supervision of experienced clinicians. The content aimed to develop the students understanding of their own and others learning styles, how they dealt with stress, how they could better learn from feedback, and how they could build resilience as a professional.

The program was held in February 2010 in Orientation week immediately before semester 1 began. Students were invited to complete a feedback survey (in hard copy) immediately after completing the program, and then again after the completion of their clinical placement. The second survey was completed electronically by Podiatry students, and in hard copy paper form by Prosthetics and Orthotics students.

Overall, these students appear to value the importance of being adequately prepared for placements. However, preparation is reported to be of greatest value when:

1. It comes before the first practicum experience;
2. the experiences are strongly focused on discipline-specific information and procedures, rather than content which they perceive to be irrelevant or untimely;
3. it uses their time effectively;
4. draws upon their existing experience; and,
5. it provides procedural capacities (i.e. how to do things – e.g. practice).

**Brief description of academic area**
Podiatrists are health professionals who prevent, assess and manage disorders of the foot and ankle. Prosthetics and orthotics health professionals provide prostheses (artificial limbs) to people with amputations, and orthoses (i.e. supportive devices) to people with musculoskeletal and neurological disabilities.

**Particular purpose**
Student clinical placements are an integral part of entry-level health professional programs, and all health professional courses require students to successfully complete a considerable number of hours of this work integrated learning. Indeed courses can only be accredited if they provide these clinical experience hours.

If students are adequately prepared for learning in this often high pressured and complex work environment, it will assist them to become better prepared graduate health professionals. Clinical supervisors had reported to us that our students in Podiatry and Prosthetics and Orthotics often required further development of their ‘soft-skills’ in order to operate optimally in health workplaces.
The purpose of the project was to gather student perceptions about, and ideas for improvements for a pre-clinical program designed to help prepare podiatry and prosthetics and orthotics professional entry-level students for their clinical placements.

**Process for enacting WIL**

All professional entry level fourth year podiatry and prosthetics and orthotics students attended a one and a half day pre-clinical preparation program designed to assist them prepare for their first major clinical placement in public health services. Students were then invited to complete a feedback survey immediately after completing the program, and then to complete the same survey immediately after the completion of their first major clinical placement experience. The Table summarises the program content.

**Placement Preparation Program Outline**

**Day 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
<td>Podiatry Specific Session (this comprised discipline specific information about the assessment requirements of the placement, paperwork required, specific information about the clinical facilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prosthetics and orthotics Specific Session (this comprised discipline specific information about the assessment requirements of the placement, paperwork required, specific information about the clinical facilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>1.5 hrs</td>
<td>Learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>BBQ Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>Dealing with stress and anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>Dealing with feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>End of Day One</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Day 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>Building resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>Cross cultural communication with clients and colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>1.25 hrs</td>
<td>Dealing with challenges on placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>End of Day Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The program content was built from previous pre-clinical placement programs run successfully and with good feedback from students of other allied health disciplines, specifically physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology. Indeed many of the facilitators for the Podiatry and Prosthetics and Orthotics preparation program were involved in delivering similar content in previous pre-clinical programs.

**Key findings**

Approximately 70 students participated in the two day program (approximately 40 Prosthetics and Orthotics students and 30 Podiatry students). Thirty three students completed the pre-placement survey (29 podiatry students and 4 Prosthetics and orthotics students) and 32 students completed the post-placement survey (18 podiatry students and 14 Prosthetics and orthotics students).

**Positive responses**

In the pre-placement survey, 54% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the pre-clinical program improved their knowledge and so it helped them to effectively learn during clinical placement, and 60% agreed it helped them to prepare for clinical placements. In the post-placement survey students were less positive, with 34% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the pre-clinical program improved their knowledge, and 38% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that it helped them prepare for clinical placements (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1](image_url)

Overall, in the pre-placement survey, students thought that discipline specific information (with 39% of students selecting it as the most important) and dealing with challenges on placement (with 23% of students selecting is as the most important) were the most important learning topics to help them prepare to learn in the clinical environment (see Figure 2).
In the post-placement survey, students indicated that the discipline specific session was most valuable, with dealing with stress and anxiety, and dealing with challenges on placement also seen as useful learning topics in helping them to learn in the clinical environment (see Figure 3).

A number of students found value in components of the program that were not discipline specific. In particular, in the pre-placement survey responses, stress management (n=5); learning styles (n=3); coping strategies for cultural challenges and (n=2); and receiving feedback (n=2) were noted by students as particularly useful to them. However, a number of students also reported that these sessions were not helpful.

In the post-placement data, the non-discipline specific contributions reported to be worthwhile included the sessions on learning styles (n=5), cross-cultural competency (n=2), feedback (n=2), managing stress (n=1), and workplace communications (n=1). In both the pre and post survey responses there were also positive references to the opportunity provided by the program to think about and reflect upon practicum experiences. However, these were in the minority.
It is important to note that the same group of students did not necessarily completed both the pre and post placement surveys, so it is not possible to make direct comparisons between these two groups of data.

Negative responses
Most of the critical perspectives related to concerns about the timeliness of the workshop, the relevance of the content, its presentation and focus.

The concerns about timeliness were of two kinds. First, it was suggested that this experience should have been provided before the students engaged in their first placement, not after they had had placements. Although these were the first intensive clinical experiences in non-university run clinics, both groups of students had completed time working in the University clinics under the supervision of University staff. Second, the timing of the workshop outside of semester time appeared to cause irritation to some students. Some students thought that orientation week was the students own time and being asked to attend a session such as this in that time was encroaching upon their own time. These two issues of timeliness appeared to come together and cause irritation for some participants.

The relevance of the content to participants varied. The sessions which some students found highly relevant, others found to be a waste of time because they had either had access to this information, or reported that they had learned it in other ways and long before. What was most strongly reported was the usefulness of the discipline specific sessions and in particular those that emphasized procedural capacities (i.e. how to do things).

The presentation of the material was criticized by some students for the time it took and, in some cases, the process and management of the presentation. These criticisms appeared to be linked to concerns by some students that they said they knew much of the content already and the longer it took to present it the more unhelpful it was for them. Yet, there were instances in the data where particular contributions in the presentations were valued (e.g. the interpreter in the cross-cultural session). Some data suggests that the experiences were too didactic and emphasized propositional knowledge (i.e. referred to as theory), and the students most valued experiences that led to procedural outcomes (i.e. how to do things better).

Suggestions for improvement
The suggestions for improvements to the program strongly emphasized the features that were the subject of critical feedback. Some respondents suggested abandoning the program in its entirety, others suggested making it shorter, and others that different means of engaging students in providing experiences were required. Then, there were those that suggested the material should be integrated into existing course units.

In terms of improving the existing program it was suggested that: i) students who have done placements might talk to and advise students, ii) make the sessions more interactive, iii) use electronic means to provide the course content, iv) have more opportunities for discussion, v) provide more breaks between presentations, vi) provide notes and materials that students could refer to later, and, vii) explain more clearly the purposes of the sessions and their practical application. Some suggested only the discipline specific material should be retained.

Alternatives suggested in the pre-clinical placement responses were that: i) the content should be integrated into existing subjects; ii) the content should be condensed into a very short session; iii) the content should be spread over a number of sessions over a longer period of time in the third year of their course; iv) not make attendance compulsory; and, v) provide it in earlier years and before the commencement of the University clinical placements. The post-placement responses were similar, emphasizing discipline specific material only, an emphasis on information about the clinical examination, greater gaps between sessions, greater alignment between the workshop and actual placements and making it shorter. Other suggestions were about using experienced students as mentors.

In summary, it seems that what was most valued was procedural information for discipline-specific purposes (how to perform effective in their placements), and other areas were seen by many, but not all as being peripheral and posterior to ‘core’ learning.
The timing of the workshop and its direct relevance to issues facing students was seen as a key impediment to engaging effectively in the workshop. It was strongly suggested that it would be of far more use earlier on in the program and either before students go on placements or between the first and second placements.

A strong sense of self was articulated by many about their time, impositions on it, other priorities they had, being affronted by a lack of understanding about their circumstances and needs and requirements. All of this was sometimes justified in terms of other demands upon their time, and prior knowledge. Yet there was evidence of contradictory accounts of forcefully rejecting experiences that were deemed irrelevant, whilst claiming to be aware of needs to accommodate difference.

Surprising were the (small) number of students who emphasized that sessions on learning styles, cultural understanding and stress management were valuable.

**Implications for integrations**
In this situation, it seems that what was afforded by the University was rejected by a large number of the students, although not all of them. What many of them indicated was that they have learnt these things elsewhere, and are now seeking to identify the relevance of this material to the coursework and their own personal goals. Yet, in a curious and perhaps not a very productive way they are integrating the two sets of experiences. That is, they are comparing what they have learnt, and what they sense they need to know against what was provided. Consequently, it could be proposed that they are appraising the experience of the pre-clinical preparation program based upon what they know from earlier experiences, including those in their practicums. However, ultimately, this might be counter-productive.

What this does indicate though is the importance of the personal basis by which integrations occur. That is, the individual will construct meaning, understanding and the valuing of the experience based upon what they know. Hence, the most strident criticism came from those who claimed to have made a significant investment in attending the program (e.g. from country locations).

**Implications for curriculum**
A key implication for curriculum appears to be the sequence and timing of the program. That is, the students claimed that this experience would best be sequenced ahead of their clinical experiences commencing, and also that the experiences (i.e. what is provided in the preparation program) should be held either within semester time or integrated within course components, so that is part of the overall study.

**Implications for pedagogy**
Some key implications for pedagogy are as follows. Given the strong student disposition and sentiment about their existing understandings, regardless of whether the program is held later or earlier it seems that a greater level of interaction and engagement of students in learning related experiences is warranted. That is, for instance, students might be presented with case studies associated with cultural sensitivity, learning styles, management of stress etc, and then be asked to consider these case studies, individually and/or in groups in ways which acknowledge and draw upon the existing knowledge. Then, there might be some input which provides an expert response to these same problems. Obviously, there is need to avoid being formulaic, that is, offer all of the same kind of experience. But, it seems from the student feedback that they want to be engaged, they want to engage their existing knowledge, in preference to had been told things.

**Implications for students’ personal epistemologies**
The data from this project overwhelmingly demonstrates the importance of accommodating students’ personal epistemologies. What comes through as the most central element of the data is the strong sense of self that the students refer to and articulate, and how this relates to how and what they engage with, in the program. Any sense that the knowledge provided to them is not useful, is taking up their time or ignores their existing knowledge was roundly rejected. Hence, the experiences are likely to be only engaged with grudgingly rather than fully by these students. Only when they perceive these experiences to be worthwhile (i.e. pertaining to their experiences) do they report valuing them and wanting to engage with them fully. This suggests that without accounting for students’ needs, interests and exiting knowledge their engagement in such pre-clinical preparation programs may be of limited efficacy.
**Issues arising for discussion**

While overall, these students appear to value the importance of being adequately prepared for placements, preparation is reported to be of greatest value when:

- It comes before the first practicum experience;
- the experiences are strongly focused on discipline-specific information and procedures, rather than content which they perceive to be irrelevant or untimely;
- it uses their time effectively;
- it draws upon their existing experience (e.g. knowledge of cultural sensitivities);
- it provides procedural capacities (i.e. how to do things – e.g. practice).

**Acknowledgement**

We would like to thank Professor Stephen Billett for his help in developing the assessment survey used in this project, and for assisting us with the analysis of these data.
Title of project
Enhancing developmental coherence in a teacher preparation program

Author and affiliation
Vaughan Prain, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

Abstract
This study aimed to evaluate the effects on student learning of an extensively revised Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education at La Trobe University. These revisions aimed, among other goals, to achieve more developmental coherence in student learning experiences in the first 8 weeks of their program, entailing university-based and school-based learning. Students were expected to make links between their academic subjects and between their university program and their 8 week school-based program prior to their first 5 week practicum. The study aimed to address the following questions: (1) How effective was the curricular content of the first 8 weeks of the course in preparing students for their first practicum? (2) How effective were the pedagogical strategies in this preparation? (3) What are the implications of these findings for future program development? While recognizing that answering the first two questions comprehensively would entail identifying the perspectives of the three key participant groups (university staff, teachers, and LTU students), this study has focused mainly on the students' perspective as the crucial "site" of integration. Data were collected on student perceptions of the linkages between their orientation experiences in schools and the university program in the first 8 weeks of the course, and the value of both programs for their practicum preparation. The combined university and school-based program was intended to prepare students as pre-service teachers for their first practicum by developing their understanding of (a) current school practices, and (b) requirements of beginning teachers.

The study found that (a) students perceived the curricular content in their university and school-based experience in the first 8 weeks of the course had many positive features in terms of practicum preparation, (b) the students also raised various concerns about content and pedagogy, and (c) their responses have various implications for further effective integration across both learning contexts.

Academic area
The Graduate Diploma is a one-year secondary teacher preparation program in the Faculty of Education.

Particular purpose for WIL initiative or activity
As noted by Darling-Hammond (2010, p. 42), teacher preparation is centrally about theories of practice, about how to foster in future teachers "learning about and from practice in practice", where practice refers to all the professional dimensions of teachers' lives, not just the practice of teaching. This assumes that pre-service teachers need diverse opportunities for theory-building, guided experiential learning and intensive focused reflection on practice as part of their preparation for the profession.

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of various curricular and pedagogic practices in integrating learning experiences in academic and school settings, as a basis for successful preparation for an extended practicum. Students participated in a school-based immersion program starting in February 2010, entailing half-day visits to 5 schools in the first 5 weeks of their university program, supported by an orientation program by La Trobe staff. This program focused on expectations about the students' responsibilities, observations of classrooms practices, skills required of teachers, and general familiarization with the
diversity and sameness of school cultures. Students then participated with individual teachers in a classroom-based orientation program for 2 weeks, leading to their first assessed practicum experience (April 26-May 28). Students were encouraged to share their experiences with peers and to identify effective teaching and learning sequences during this orientation in schools. As part of this project, students recorded observations and reflections in their practicum folders and on Pebblepad, and participated in a one-hour reflection session with LTU staff at the end of the first 8 weeks. This session focused explicitly on links between school practices and content in the university course, with students encouraged to review the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes they have observed and in which they have participated.

Pre-service teacher learning in the course is broadly conceptualized as a mix of cognitive and sociocultural perspectives on interactions between learners, resources and contexts. From cognitive perspectives, pre-service teachers need to develop resources such as mental models, schemas, organizing strategies and frameworks to learn through interacting with peers and students in school, using material and symbolic tools (Bruner 1966, 2004). From sociocultural perspectives, participatory experience in authentic activities with appropriate tools is critical for learning (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Both perspectives acknowledge crucial reciprocities between active learners and supportive environments, including the role of teachers and lecturers in guided activity, and the key role of focused reflection on practice. Pedagogical practices aligned with these frameworks and used in the course included: traditional lectures and tutorials with guided instruction, micro-teaching experiences with peers, role-plays, guided focus groups by university staff, informal discussion between school staff and students, and individual and student group reflection sessions.

All students in the program (n = 117) were invited to participate in an online survey after the completion of their practicum, where they were asked to rate the value of the key components of the university and school-based parts of the orientation program, as well as respond to open-ended questions on the value of the course for practicum preparation. Eleven students were also invited to participate in 2 focus group interviews (groups of 5 and 6 students for 90 minutes) after the completion of the practicum to discuss these issues at greater length.

**Process for enacting WIL**

A major review of the course was undertaken in 2009 as preparation for re-accreditation, with a major aim being to increase its developmental coherence for students as a learning experience. All content in each university subject was reviewed to identify content duplication and divergence, and key themes were identified within and across subjects, with the intention of making explicit to students general and specific learning outcomes of the course around the professional knowledge, capabilities and values/attitudes expected of beginning teachers. Content in subjects was revised to maximize a sense of the connectedness of key ideas and themes in the program, including assessment requirements. The 5 week school-based orientation program has been running for 4 years, with strong positive feedback from past student cohorts. This program is viewed by University staff and local secondary schools as an effective collaborative partnership. Most of the teaching method subjects in the University-based program are taught by teachers in local schools who participate in an annual University induction program covering expectations about subject requirements, including content and assessment practices.

An on-line survey questionnaire using SurveyMonkey was developed to collect student judgments on the program. The survey included 11 items on a Likert scale covering key components of the course at La Trobe
and in schools. The survey also contained open-ended questions inviting students to identify what they found most useful about the preparation program, least useful, suggested improvements, and scope for any further comments they wished to make about their experience of the program as practicum preparation. Two one-hour guided reflection sessions were conducted by University staff with students in tutorial groups of 25 students, one at the end of the 8 week program, and the other at the end of the practicum. Interviews were also conducted by a research assistant with two focus groups (5 and 6 students) at the end of the practicum, with participants chosen on the basis of volunteers covering a range of teaching methods. The research assistant did not know the students prior to the interviews.

Seventy-three students out of a cohort of 117 participated in the on-line survey after the completion of the 5-week practicum. The methods of data analyses followed principles outlined for qualitative case study, focusing on identification of patterns in students’ responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2008), leading to the development of themes in the light of relevant literature on teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006).

**Key findings**

A main finding of the study was the strong student endorsement of the curricular content in their university-based and school-based components of the first 8 weeks of the course (See Figure 1). Students strongly endorsed the School Immersion Program generally, with 80.9% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that this part of the course was very useful. All the other elements had strong endorsement by the students, particularly classroom visits in the School Immersion Program, and the Method subjects, with 73.6% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that these subjects were very useful for practicum preparation. The aspect of the course in the survey that received the most modest endorsement was the first reflection session on links between university and school programs, with students responding as follows to the question of whether they saw this component was very useful: neither agree nor disagree (41.2%), agree (33.8%) and strongly agree (11.8%). This suggests that students were less clear about the purpose of this experience and its relevance to their first practicum. Subsequent comments by students in the interviews indicated that they were not clear about the purposes of the reflection session, and perhaps needed a clearer framework or focus to guide this reflective work.

In response to open-ended questions on the survey, students reported the following features as the most useful for their first practicum experience:

1. Practical advice from Methods lecturers
2. Case studies to identify and apply theories to practice
3. Micro-teaching lessons for structuring classroom experience
4. Visits to schools prior to practicum
5. School immersion program
6. A Practicum folder that outlines in detail expectations of the practicum
7. Anecdotal information from all staff about past teaching experiences
8. Classroom presentations that simulated real world working environments

These findings are broadly consistent with past research on teacher education that highlights the pre-service teachers’ strong concern with practical considerations such as coping with classroom demands, and developing confidence in their new identities as teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006). The students repeatedly commented on the value of insights into effective day to day
practices that enabled them to understand and rehearse professional skills for the classroom. They appreciated access to the proven resources of their method lecturers, and found the micro-teaching of peers valuable because it allowed for effective self-assessment and appropriate planning.

While the students were broadly positive about the curriculum and teaching/learning methods of the first 8 weeks of the course, they also raised a range of concerns about various facets of the program. The following were identified as the least useful features of the course:

1. Lack of sufficient examples on how particular theories could be practised/applied to specific topics, lessons, student activities, and different school subjects.
2. Lack of sufficient focus on student behaviour management strategies, with some tips from university staff considered either too blatantly obvious or extremely situational, and therefore not adaptable to a broad range of contexts. One pre-service teacher claimed that “if there could have been some actual classroom re-enactments of student control techniques, this would have been useful”.
3. School representative talks to groups of pre-service teachers felt like a “sales pitch”.
4. PebblePad.

Suggested improvements to the program included:

1. More scenarios, role plays, case studies, stories, videos of actual teaching, guided reflection on outcomes, such as “holding class discussion on what we might do in these situations”.
2. More guidance with student behaviour management.

In summary, the students considered that the content of subjects and the teaching and learning experiences of the first 8 weeks of their program provided an effective preparation for the practicum. However, they also considered they needed further opportunities to gain practical experiences around pedagogical and management matters. Their responses also indicated that some of the students were unconvinced, at this stage in their course, about the strong practical usefulness to the practicum experience of some theoretical discussion, and the benefits of theoretical reflection on practice.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- **Defining and enabling integration**
  The findings raise the general question of how integration should be defined and by whom. While university staff members seek to structure and organize the potential for students to have “integrative” learning experiences and reflection, where university and school-based learning complement one another, what is integrated depends on the agendas and contributions of university staff, school staff, and the students. This raises the question of how a clearly articulated and shared agenda between these groups can be developed.

- **Developing a shared agenda for WIL**
  The students’ responses to the survey indicate that there is a strong alignment between the content of the course and the students’ general sense of their needs in succeeding in their first practicum. However, their preference for an experiential epistemology and mode of learning poses some challenges for meeting their agenda as well as addressing diverse course requirements from a University perspective, including maximizing the perceived value of reflection on practice, theory building, and broader cognitive/cultural perspectives. There is also the issue of the role of the teachers in schools in contributing to a shared agenda about the expectations and outcomes from practicum experience. While this study did not seek formally to identify their perspective on these matters, their orientation and input is also crucial for developing a shared agenda for WIL.
The Role of Practice in Preparation for WIL

According to Darling-Hammond (2010, p. 40), the features of a quality teacher preparation program include “a focus in courses on helping candidates learn to use specific practices and tools that are then applied in their clinical experiences”. She adds that “in this way, prospective teachers learn the fine-grained stuff of practice in connection to the practical theories that will allow them to adapt their practice in a well-grounded fashion and to innovate and improvise to meet the specific classroom contexts they later encounter” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 40). She further argues that, “these opportunities for analysis, application, and reflection should connect to both the subject matter and the students whom candidates teach” (p. 40). This ideal poses an ongoing challenge for the role of practice in practicum preparation, and reflection on this practice, given that schools vary in their range of practices, resources, cultures, and student profiles. Adapting practical theories to “specific classroom contexts” is critical for success in teaching, but is difficult to develop in 8 weeks, and needs to be viewed as a developmental capacity refined across multiple practicum experiences.

References

Figure 1. Summary of rating averages of student responses to components of course
Title of project
The Debrief.
Evaluating and enhancing student experience, self-insight and perception as:
   (1) the organizing principle of the professional media internship placement and as
   (2) a model for ongoing career management and self-assessment in an industry where career change is a constant.

Author and affiliation
John Benson, School of Communication, Arts & Critical Enquiry.
I want to also acknowledge the invaluable work of Ms. Ruth Richter who acted as a part-time researcher on the development of this project.

Abstract
This research set out, initially to design and implement a procedure or process which focused on the actual debrief of students post their internship.

The specific aim was to add more value to what students had already informally stated over more than 10 years to be an enriching and worthwhile aspect of their professional media internship as a university subject.

As preliminary research into developing a guide to the debrief advanced and a literature review undertaken it became increasingly clear that the more dynamic, encompassing and skill-building the initial preparation for the internship was, - the better the likelihood that a more positive debrief experience would follow for all students. Furthermore, the greater the sensitivity of the student to the self and the integral element of the self in any new experiential workplace culture, the better the long term value in terms of career understanding. To this end the curriculum for the pre-internship period was substantially revised with a central focus on three major areas namely:

1. The self both as a unique person and as an emerging professional.
2. The nature of modern work and instruction and exploration in the skills required for success in completing both the internship requirements for the University and the internship’s external work placement responsibilities.
3. The future in the profession and the attendant issues which surround such professional work including ethics, social justice and career options etc.

While these three areas became the specialised thematic core content of this revised internship curriculum which ultimately links the university and workforce placement, inexperience with experience and the self with others, each component is driven by an initial exposure to the concepts and elementary instruction in the use of action research as a methodology which underpins all of the above three aspects of the internship. Action research in this instance- the self as the astute reflective researcher of one’s own life experiences and social contexts- provides the means by which a more acute sense of observation, engagement and awareness is achieved throughout the period in work placement by the student. It acts as one of the means for capacity building for genuine reflection, engagement and dialogue about the self. More importantly, it directly empowers the student to better undertake the immediate debrief process which forms part of the original intentions of this research both as a short term outcome for this internship course and potentially informing a beginning lifelong capacity for an examined and autonomous professional life.
**Brief description of academic area**

All students who complete this professional media internship are completing a Bachelor of Media Studies which equips them for work in the print, radio and television area or a Bachelor of Journalism which leads into the world of contemporary journalism.

**Particular purpose**

A La Trobe University professional media internship placement is a third year learning experience which should build on what has been learned in the University classroom setting. The goal of an internship is to offer students an opportunity to apply their theoretical background and skills to an experiential professional work situation. Although the intern is expected to make a significant contribution to the workplace, university level learning must be the central focus of all internships. The workplace supervisor and departmental supervisor have two distinctly separate sets of responsibilities, and therefore, one person may not assume both roles. The workplace supervisor evaluates the intern’s work performance, while the departmental supervisor is responsible for evaluating the academic component of the internship and assigning the final grade, although in making this determination the department advisors will consider the advice of the workplace supervisor.

Performance in the internship program is evaluated. The student must clearly demonstrate to the departmental supervisor that university level learning is taking place. Credit is awarded for the documented university level learning, not the time spent or amount of work accomplished at the work site. This will normally be determined in the written accounts and evaluations of the workplace experience which the student/intern will submit.

In addition to these written accounts a mandatory minimum half-hour debrief with the internship supervisor is required. This has usually been individual, informal and relatively unstructured discussion which students have greatly appreciated and responded to very positively.

As the designer and supervisor of this internship I have also found these debriefs offer significant opportunity to discuss not just job specifics regarding the recent internships completed by the student but also career options and management issues as well as issues related to the self that many students only confront or realise after they have been in a real work situation related to their chosen career choice.

The debrief therefore, offers great potential to be enhanced not just as a response to an immediate work situation which is justification enough but also as a site for students to learn how to engage in a practice of managing particular employment positions within a broader future career path, and more dramatically learn management of the self as an autonomous agent in the context of professional media work and the private world.

For most students taking the professional media internship placement their formal assessment satisfies University requirements at the end of third year where the internship takes place at the end of their degree. But this is also the tangible moment of transition as for the first time in their years of study they are faced with the immediate possibility of paid employment as professionals in the media industry and a considerable opportunity exists at this juncture to provide them with a life skill which goes beyond the mechanics of University assessment.

Students return from internships with a range of emotional and psychological reactions not to mention issues related to their exposure to real industrial settings.
Most are elated and enthusiastic ready to engage the world, a few disillusioned -but none of them are as innocent as they were in relation to their chosen industry as when they first started university. Regardless of their individual state this period of awakening presents a heightened opportunity via a well-designed debriefing process to teach them how to reflect, to engage in true dialogue and to contemplate action and the self again in relation to future work- to learn a skill for life not just for assessment. This could be realised through the debrief, but also by providing students with a template for use and consideration at future career junctions.

**Process for enacting WIL**
A summary of the steps taken in enacting the Internship:

1. Curriculum redesign and course materials with an emphasis on the “Self” of students and Action Research as the central driving intellectual force or practice.
2. A curriculum model influenced by but not restricted to “Bennett’s Hierarchy” (Bennett 1976), which allows for the structuring of the pre-internship curriculum and additionally evaluation by the student of their own placement during the internship. It also importantly functions as a potential 7-step model for future career re-assessment by students themselves. In essence, they learn to repeat what they have learned and how they learnt it in the classroom and workplace to a future or different situation as the skill is portable and transferable to a variety of contexts.
3. The use for all students of two qualitative depth interviews which address issues before the internship and especially combined with the use of the reflective essay to contemplate the post-internship experience.
4. Other issues are addressed under the following headings.

*Curriculum.*
As stated in the abstract above the first task on this project was to redesign the curriculum for the approximately 30 to 35 students who undertake this course each semester.

Every student must complete three by three-hour workshops/seminars before they embark on an actual workplace.

Centred on an action research model and the self and aiming at skills development these workshops covered a range of tasks from considering individual personalities, self-management, university requirements of the internship and a vast range of other complex relationship and institutional issues. An overview of this curriculum is attached.

*Pedagogy.*
Although the curriculum redesign required a significant change in pedagogy in seminars more intensive and detailed qualitative personal preparation and coaching sessions were developed which were based on a one-to-one interview with each student and myself as the internship coordinator.

These were beyond the normal attendance of students to the required seminars. These one-on-one interviews considered the unique attributes and interests and career aspirations of each individual student and acted as a listening post to potential issues, strengths, doubts and uncertainties.
They also provided an informal and personalised touch to ongoing phone and e-mail contact and conversation as the need arose in finding a placement or as issues developed while on actual placement in the media industry. In essence, these one-on-one interviews or conversations took the essential elements of the seminars and individualised and personalise them and checked to make sure that each student had a clear sense of what was required of them especially in relation to the process of reflecting on their actual workplace experience.

The assessment for this unit now requires students to complete a report which has three components which are briefly: (a) 750 words outlining what tasks they actually performed on their placement; (b) 3000 word reflective analysis on themselves in the workplace; (c) 1500 word account of the structure, ownership and purpose of the enterprise they worked at as an intern.

Finally, as part of the actual debrief students post-internship again engage in an extended one on one interview where their reflective 3000 word essay is used as the basis of the debrief process.

**Epistemologies**

The major epistemological element of this curriculum design and pedagogic methodology is to build real confidence and faith in the student that they are capable of successfully completing this first venture into the professional workplace and that the university as an institution supports them in that endeavor.

To all intents and purposes the knowledge that students need to be successful in this process is knowledge about themselves and that they have completed enough throughout the previous years of their degree to achieve technical success in the workplace. To that end the internship itself, virtually ignores many of the detailed aspects of their previous instructions and courses and concentrates on what is required to successfully achieve progress in the experiential work environment. Namely, an expressed and implied discursive statement by its very existence that what students are taught and learn in their degree is of international value and that they can achieve this transition into professional employment if they grasp the opportunity and allow the self to flourish. To that end the stories of other students who have previously successfully completed internships function as a great motivator for students as does the media industry continuous requests for our students.

**Key findings**

At this stage of writing almost all students are still engaged in the completion of the Internship in the media industry and are yet to complete any formal writing or engage in the debrief interview and so no firm findings are available however, some general observations regarding this year’s group are tentatively offered.

1. The preparation this year with a much more targeted focus on the “self” of the student and the teaching of rudimentary skills in action research and reflection and the whole general shift to a more individual focus has been warmly received by most the students, especially the younger students.

   While this was certainly the attitude which informed other groups in the past and has always been my personal approach- the fact that it was formally given attention in the one-on-one interviews and workshops has really caused most students to be highly motivated and encouraged by the fact that their individual concerns were given an airing and to a degree legitimated through that process. This has been evidenced by the increase in follow-up emails and phone conversations about issues raised in the workshops and interviews and casual conversations in the corridor. Of ongoing
interest especially, is the extended engagement experienced with some students about personal differences in the workplace and how coaching over the phone about techniques suggested in the workshops seems to be reaping benefits for students and their attitudes to “difficult” people they have encountered.

This seems to speak to the constant demand from employers that they are seeking good communicators and good team players for their organizations and perhaps further emphasis should be placed on developing these skills in future workshops.

2. It is clear that the better the immediate preparation for the internship the better the student is engaged and likely to experience a rewarding placement and the better the host organization appreciates the student as a beginning professional.

3. As in most instances of sophisticated and complex education effective formal curriculum design is crucial to overall student learning and the transition to this model so far, has been positive for both teachers and learners. Moreover, this design has no unique application to media or journalism students and seems to be applicable to several discipline areas including a general arts degree. An example of this is the ownership students have taken of the internship by always having something to do on placement even in slow times by completing their reflective journal or diary and as means of capturing the issues of the self at work or being absorbed into the issues of workplace culture.

4. Even after this experience of change in approach further change will be incorporated into next semesters workshops such as more formal emphasis on action research and at least one more 3 hour workshop in order to more adequately cover the material which now forms part of the curriculum. This applies especially to the transfer of this experience to developing a debrief model for students which while conceptualised has still not seen the light of the computer screen in tangible form.

Issues arising for discussion

- Curriculum and pedagogy:
  Inherent in this curriculum development this semester is a silent transition from an academic to almost being a life coach which seems from the student’s point of view, at least from anecdotal comments, to be a positive change. It is apparent that students are deeply interested in developing and learning about the interpersonal skills and techniques which will assist them in human relations.

- The question then arises as to how much our engagement in work integrated learning is about our specific discipline and how much is it about mentoring life and interpersonal skills and attitudes.

- Pragmatic issue: How can this work be accommodated in normal university workloads?
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Research</th>
<th>Introduction Workshops</th>
<th>Preparation-Personal Coaching</th>
<th>Internship-tasks and Work based coaching</th>
<th>Demonstration of learning</th>
<th>Integration of learning interview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self as person</td>
<td>Workshops/seminars covering personality, self-management, problem solving and assertion. Social justice.</td>
<td>Identification of unique strengths, needs, potential and possibilities and identification of learning from previous experience &amp; employment</td>
<td>Application of understanding of self, reflection on strengths, changes and dissonance</td>
<td>Journal entries and demonstration of reflective practice and learning. Participant observation.</td>
<td>Integrating understanding of self and work skills through journal and coaching interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self as worker</td>
<td>Workshops covering communication theory and strategies, work goals and assessment. Case studies. “What might you do if?” Role-play. Dealing with and avoiding conflict. “Aiming to make issues clearer and improve individual self-worth.” Active listening and problem ownership.</td>
<td>Skill development during previous study and learning from previous experience &amp; employment. Identification of network and possible placements. University requirements, assessment, legal, insurance, ethical and professional behaviour. Confidentiality.</td>
<td>Coaching from supervisor and co-workers about work tasks and relationships with colleagues Continuing contact with university if needed Developing understanding of the organization Work assessment tasks</td>
<td>Written assessment including reflection and essay. Feedback from supervisor about work performance</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Tools | Information on:  
  - Reflective journals  
  - Communication skills  
  - Assessment requirements  
  - Workplace self evaluation form  
  - Personality Test performance achievement scale form | Personal coaching on:  
  - Identification of strengths  
  - Personality test  
  - Goal setting form  
Goals

Self as person
- To learn about self as worker
- To develop reflective lifelong learning skills

Self as worker
- To apply media skills
- To experience the media work environment
- To begin development of professional persona

Industry
- To contribute to student and course development
- To identify possible new staff

University
- To develop work ready graduates
- To stay in touch with industry requirements
Title of Project
Preparing International Social Work Students for Practice

Authors and affiliation
Penny Clark and John Oliphant; Field Education Coordinators, Department of Social Work and Social Planning, Flinders University

Abstract
A series of 7 x two-hour workshops were designed for international social work students in the MSW course in addition to the regular curriculum available to students. 3 groups were facilitated each week averaging 2 or 3 students in attendance. These sessions were informal and focused on ways to increase the students’ confidence in relation to social work in the Australian context. Discussions took place each week with a highly flexible agenda to respond to the issues raised by the students.

Issues covered in the discussions included:
- Human service agencies – their variety and scope
- Funding arrangements and staffing in NGO’s and government agencies
- Faith based NGO’s
- Schools
- Mental health services
- The role of social workers
- Who are their client groups
- Ways to increase English language proficiency – in particular, understanding Australian slang and colloquialisms
- Education in the Australian context eg., expectations of using initiative, asking questions and writing in an analytical and critical fashion
- How to write an essay for an Australian university
- The role of religion in Australia
- Social relationships in Australia
- How to interact in an Australian workplace
- Racism and what to do if a student was a victim of discrimination

Overall the students are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the course; they have difficulty understanding the lectures and workshops. These sessions provided them with the kind of additional support needed and a number of them expressed concern they were not to continue into the next semester.

Brief description of academic area
The Department of Social Work and Social Planning offers professional degrees in social work enabling entry on graduation to the social work profession.

Particular purpose
Many international students have struggled in placements in the past because of lack of English language skills both written and verbal and a lack of knowledge about Australian workplaces and the Australian context.
The purpose was to more fully prepare international students for practice, to offer them additional sessions on a voluntary basis that would increase their ability to successfully undertake their field education placements.

The goal was to increase the exposure of international students to social work in the Australian context and provide more opportunities for discussion and clarification and to build upon the skills and knowledge they have gained through the ‘Preparation for Practice' topic. These workshops were designed to support international students. They have usually arrived in Australia a short time before commencing the course; they have little, if any, knowledge of social work in Australia.

**Process for enacting WIL.**

Initial discussion was undertaken with the three facilitators of the small groups to plan areas that needed to be covered. Newly enrolled international students were identified and invited to attend the workshops and staff within the field education team were encouraged to refer students they felt would benefit. A total of 15 students were invited to attend.

The groups were open so students could attend some weeks and not others or could attend all of the sessions. Students were allocated to particular groups in a way that ensured that each group would have a mixed cultural background. The sessions were promoted regularly during one of the students’ ongoing classes.

**Key findings**

A survey was completed by individual students in the first session and repeated in the last session. (See: Appendix 1; Preparatory sessions for international social work students.)

In Session 1, 9 students completed the survey; in Session 7, 6 students completed the survey. The findings were as follows:

- The students came from a variety of Asian cultures including China, India, Nepal and Taiwan
- The length of time that they had spent in Australia varied from 3 weeks to 2 years
- They were all aged under 31 years, mostly in the 20-25 age group; and predominantly female
- English language literacy ranged from limited to comprehensive in all categories (understanding, speaking and writing) with the majority of students rating themselves in the limited or satisfactory range
- 2 of the 9 students had undergraduate degrees in social work, while the other 7 had quite unrelated degrees
- In terms of their social work experience, they either had none at all or limited unpaid experience
- In the section relating to issues facing international students, the living arrangements were the most settled, with the other four areas rated as either very relevant or a key concern. 8 of the 9 students rated understanding of the social work profession and practice in Australia as an issue of key concern
In the survey in the final session:
- English language literacy appeared to have stayed at about the same level
- Students appeared to be more settled in their living arrangements with most rating the issue as somewhat relevant
- In other categories there appeared to be slightly less concerns than in session 1
- The students indicated there were many issues about engaging in social work placements that were still a concern. These issues included:
  - travelling long distances to agencies, transport to and within the placement
  - communicating with clients and colleagues, language, misunderstandings, ability to understand accents, slang, idioms etc.,
  - characteristics of the agency, the size and importance of the agency, the responsibility placed on students in the agency, the expectations of knowledge and the nature of supervision in the placement
  - the schedule of the placements and managing placement and university commitments
  - cultural differences/barriers, racism and discrimination re age, gender and culture
  - absence of previous experience in the field
  - how will the placement relate to work in the future

In the final survey, students made suggestions as to what would help them further. These included:
- Need to extend their vocabulary
- Need more practice of language and skills learned in workshops
- Australian student mentors for the international students to talk to and with whom they can practice
- Feedback from Australian students who have seen them struggle
- To start these sessions earlier in the semester
- International students who have graduated to present information re their study and placements
- Opportunity to meet international students who are in the final year of the course
- Cultural days

In addition to the surveys, an evaluation was conducted in the final session. This was done in the form of a discussion within the groups. 6 students participated in 2 groups. (See: Appendix 2: Evaluation of additional sessions for international students)

Areas identified as most helpful were discussions around:
- Feeling concern from the Faculty for international students
- Hearing about other people’s experiences
- Opportunity to clarify information and misunderstandings
- More one-on-one information
- Felt supported by facilitators
- People care about us
- Giving feedback and sharing information about the topic
- Help with assignments and teachers’ expectations
- Information re placements and agencies
- Talking with local people
Areas that students identified that were useful were:
- The small size of the groups, although would be helpful to come together as well in the large group
- Every week, regular timeslot

Areas they would have liked covered but weren’t:
- Specific career advice
- What do we do after finishing the MSW?

Growth in knowledge of Australian culture:
- Professional knowledge
- Local phrases, slang
- Cultural and educational norms
- Sharing with local people
- Looking for work

More understanding of social work in Australia now:
- Knowledge about agencies
- Experiences of social workers

Original proposal
- Before practice-based experiences
- These will be taught and practised in the Preparation for Practice topic as well as offering additional workshop sessions for those students identified as needing more time/support/learning/practice
- Clarify expectations about purposes, support, responsibilities
- Prepare students for workplace learning
- Provide students with skills to perform workplace roles

During practice-based experiences
- Encourage direct guidance by more experienced practitioners; supervision sessions with qualified social workers
- Practice based curriculum; concurrent academic topics
- Promoting effective peer interaction; field integration seminars
- Emphasise purposeful engagement by learners through field integration seminars and supervision sessions

During and after practice-based experiences
- Drawing out and sharing students’ experiences
- Making explicit links to what is taught in the university setting
- Encourage students to adopt critical, constructive perspectives on work and learning processes.

Pedagogic strategies to be incorporated in the project
- Workshops
- Field integration seminars
- Before and after testing/surveys
- Clinical supervision
When the project was formulated the idea was to continue into second semester when students are in placement to explore their ‘during practice-based experiences’ and ‘after practice-based experiences’. There has now been a significant change in staffing within the field education team in the department which will impact on this research to the extent that it may not be able to continue past its current stage.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- Are these international students adequately prepared to commence their placement one semester after arriving in Australia and starting the course?

- Do universities provide enough resources and support for international students?

- What is the experience (both positive and negative) of agencies and the university with growing numbers of international students needing placements?

- How do we prepare international students for, or protect them from, racial discrimination in the workplace?
Preparatory sessions for international social work students

Appendix 1

Semester 1 2010

Please respond to the following items to help us understand your learning needs and how they might best be addressed. Information you provide here will be treated confidentially, and any identifying information will be merely to re-engage with you about your progress and development. However, the data gathered here will be used for research purposes, including publication. However, your identity will not be revealed.

Name

Country of origin

How long have you been in Australia?

Age-grouping (please circle)

20-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 over 46

Gender (please circle)

Male Female

Describe your English language literacy

Ability to understand English (please circle)
Limited Satisfactory Comprehensive

Ability to speak English (please circle)
Limited Satisfactory Comprehensive

Ability to write in English
Limited Satisfactory Comprehensive

Please state your undergraduate degree including your field of study

Please indicate your experience in social work (please circle)

None at all
Unpaid experiences
Up to two years of practice
More than two years of practice
Can you identify five issues about engaging in social work placements that are of concern to you?
1 ________________________________________________________________
2 ________________________________________________________________
3 ________________________________________________________________
4 ________________________________________________________________
5 __________________________________________________________________

The field education team have identified a number of issues that some international students have had to resolve before or during their placements.
Please read each of the issues stated below and indicate on the scale below the degree by which this issue pertains to you.

Settled in your living arrangements, e.g. housing, transportation, shopping, and health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not relevant</th>
<th>Somewhat relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>A key concern</th>
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</table>

2. Knowledge and understanding of Australian culture

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<th>Somewhat relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>A key concern</th>
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3. Understanding of Australian workplaces

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<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>A key concern</th>
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</table>

4. Communicating effectively in the workplace

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<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>A key concern</th>
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5. Understanding of the social work profession and practice within Australia

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<th>Somewhat relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>A key concern</th>
</tr>
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</table>

What do you most hope to gain from your involvement in these sessions?
What has been most helpful about the sessions?

Were there specific things/issues/concerns you would have liked to have talked about but not had the opportunity?

Was there anything that was not helpful?

Has your knowledge of Australian culture grown? If so, in what ways or areas?

Do you think you have more understanding of social work in Australia now than when you started these sessions?
Title of project
Flinders Tourism Work Integrated Learning Program – evaluating learning outcomes

Author and affiliation
Chris Fanning, School of Humanities, Flinders University

Abstract
Flinders University Tourism programs offer a range of work integrated learning opportunities at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The purpose of this study was to identify student's perceptions of learning outcomes between tourism placements, tourism research and tourism projects. It examines the tourism student's perspective and how they rated their learning between the three topics in question and whether one form of work integrated learning within the tourism industry is more effective than another. The findings suggest that the Tourism Work Integrated Learning programs are positively perceived by students as worthwhile learning experiences providing a range of learning outcomes to enhance their career options. In particular, tourism projects (both independent research projects and non-research based projects) provide rich student learning opportunities not just in obvious ways such as research skills and the ability to work independently but show student awareness of very strong academic/industry connections. Furthermore, it is suggested that the students were able to apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace, gaining confidence from doing so, which in turn appeared to reflect in their positive attitudes towards the Work Integrated Learning programs and their industry contacts. The three modes of work integrated learning provided quite distinct learning outcomes from each mode of engagement to the Flinders Tourism students. In turn the work integrated learning programs were considered as the catalyst for connecting the knowledge gained from formal university study to the knowledge and skills needed for future career opportunities. Although the presented findings in this paper are representative of a small group, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the findings would be generalised further.

Brief description of academic area
Flinders University Tourism has both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with long standing international tourism industry contacts for work integrated learning programs.

Particular purpose
A core component of the International Tourism programs at Flinders University has been the links with the tourism industry especially via placements and industry based research projects. A list of industry contacts has been built up and refined over the past twelve years which become the basis of all of the Tourism WIL topics.

Tourism industry placements require 160 hours of unpaid work in a relevant organisation selected by students from a suggested list and based on their interests and current skills. Students may work on a major festival and event, museum, with a tour operator or for a local government or state government tourism department. Students must attend the place of employment as any other employee would. Students apply skills and knowledge acquired in their course in a practical environment. They should also be able to gain a practical understanding of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required in operating an event and tourism business.

Research projects such as marketing plans, visitor survey studies, feasibility studies, trails, brochures across individual businesses, local and state government organisations are matched by industry needs and academic interests of lecturers and students. Generally research projects are independent study conducted...
for an industry partner but not necessarily at their work place. This topic develops the student knowledge of tourism research methodology and current practice. Students are expected to work on a major independent research project and present their findings in different forms such as reports and conference posters. It allows the student to develop independent research skills and demonstrate the ability to work with comparative and interdisciplinary.

Other tourism projects have been added to the WIL programs which include the opportunity to work in a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) on a regular basis – similar to a placement, or to do one off projects with or for event management organisations which may or may not require regular attendance at the workplace. The Visitor Information Centre is a local government run, volunteer based service for locals and visitors to a major Adelaide location. This topic allows the student to work with or for a professional and suitable tourism and events environment on professional projects. It allows them to appreciate how a sector of their chosen industry operates, how they can best contribute and also gain a realistic sense of a possible career path.

In each placement, project or research project students are assessed not only on the formal written outcomes (which can include reports, papers, brochures etc) but also on reflective journals of their experiences. In each scenario students are briefed before undertaking the WIL activity by university staff whom maintain regular contact with the student during the experience and students report back to their peers and topic coordinator at the end of the topic.

**Process for enacting WIL**
All current tourism undergraduate students who had completed an industry placement (CUTU 2005A Industry Placement 1), research project (CUTU 3006A Tourism Research Project) or tourism project (CUTU 3101A/2 Tourism Project 1 / 2), were invited to complete a survey about their learning experiences with these topics. The placement and research projects are compulsory final year core topics of the Bachelor of International Tourism whilst the Tourism Project is an elective topic. A second tourism placement elective topic is also available to students upon negotiation.

Some students had undertaken multiple topics i.e. completed each of the possible topics listed above. 25 responses (50%) were obtained from 51 possible replies. Whilst the sample size is small and could be regarded as a pilot study, the quality of the responses enabled valid data to be used and provides the opportunity for a longer study to occur. The majority of the respondents gave valid, thoughtful reasons to support the rating they gave. Most responses, 48% were related to industry placements with an even spread over the other two topics. The survey was constructed with a combination of five point Likert (Poor, Average, Good, Very Good and Excellent) scales and open comment options for each question.

**Key findings**
This study has shown that the Tourism Work Integrated Learning programs are valued by students as worthwhile learning experiences providing a range of options for students to learn from and enhance their career options. These results compare favourably with other student experiences more broadly who acknowledge the benefits of work integrated learning (Weisz & Smith, 2005; Smith et al, 2009). Students expressed how important it was to see industry standards discussed in the classroom come into play in real organisations. Respondents stated that the best things they had learnt from the WIL programs was based on the experiences and exposure to the tourism industry and the contacts they had made, as several gained paid employment on completion of the programs.

Previous studies of the Flinders University Industry partners revealed that the areas that were of most interest to them were adaptability, attitude and initiative (Fanning, 2006) along with the ability to competently
apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace (Graham and Lewin, 2000). In this study the students stated that they were able to do this and gained confidence from doing so, which in turn appeared to reflect in their positive attitudes towards the WIL programs and their industry contacts.

WIL is not about experience for experience sake or work for work’s sake (Britzman, 2003; Orrell, 2004) but rather the learning that takes place from the experience. The interaction that takes place with individuals within the organisation whilst on placement or conducting a project can be a major influence on the whole experience. Whilst there were a significant number of responses who perceived that they had gained both knowledge and skills from the WIL activity, there were still some students that stated that they had gained very little from the experience. This could be reflective of the engagement that the student felt with the workplace activities and interactions that occurred. If the student did not feel that they were in an inviting situation then they will not engage with any learning experiences that may be offered (Billett, 2009).

Communication before, during and after a work integrated learning activity is imperative between all partners in the process (the student, the university and the industry partner). If a student’s communication issues are impeding on their learning abilities they need to feel that they have an alternative source either within the business or the university to resolve the issue. This ability to communicate is one of the most widely recognised employability skills (Quinn et al, 2008) and yet communication and confidence as seen in the student responses can be one of the greatest benefits of the tourism and other international work integrated learning programs (Kelton, 2008; Willis 2008; Wolf, 2008).

Tourism projects, both research based and general, provide rich student learning opportunities not just in obvious ways such as research skills and the ability to work independently but show student awareness of very strong academic/organisation connections (Smith et al, 2009). The high percentage of students who had their interest in the tourism industry stimulated, often return to their university studies with a high level of motivation to continue to learn more and to achieve their career goals (Freudenberg et al, 2008). They are usually more prepared to share what they have experienced within their WIL with other students, which provides a further reflective learning activity. The gaining of confidence was reflected throughout the outcomes by respondents. If students feel confident, then their dispositional learning through understanding the value of the work will be more active and significant (Billet, 2009).

Each Flinders University Tourism WIL topic provides opportunities to benefit students learning across a range of skills and knowledge, with no topic a major standout from the other. As students have expressed, each topic in its own way allows the chance to build on networks and increase confidence and knowledge to enhance not only the student’s immediate employability skills but their longer term career prospects. Flinders University has made a clear commitment to work integrated learning (Smigiel & MacLeod, 2008) and the results of this preliminary study support the importance of the combination of academic and work integrated studies.

This study considered the differences and similarities of student learning between the various Work Integrated Learning programs in the tourism area but the data could also be analysed to view whether there were any differences in the learning depending from the first, second or further Work Integrated Learning topic the student had undertaken. Analysis of this area was outside the scope of this paper. A previous American study (Parks et al, 1991) did not find any statistically significant positive relationship based on the amount of Work Integrated Learning the students had undertaken, even though at a glance it would be a valid assumption that there would be a positive correlation. Conversely, it could be argued that each
experience is an individual one and that other factors besides student confidence may come into play such as lack of connection with the workplace or communication issues with an industry provider.

The Flinders University Tourism WIL programs have shown that student learning successfully bridges the knowledge students gain from academia with the knowledge student's gain from experience. This paper has shown that even from a small sample that there are different learning outcomes emerging from different modes of engagement with Work Integrated Learning programs by students with their industry partners, and that curriculum’s should consider more than the traditional ‘industry placement’.

**Issues arising for discussion**

Students are often very keen to get started on placements without doing the preliminary work to gain an understanding of the organisation they are entering. This preparation may help to overcome communication issues some students have with their providers and enter the placement with clearer expectations of their role. This preparation could begin by getting students about to embark on a placement to observe the feedback presentations of students who have already completed them.

**References**


**Title of project**  
Developing a WIL curriculum and pedagogy at Flinders Business School

**Authors and affiliation**  
Mr Damien Mills and Prof Angele Cavaye, Flinders University

**Abstract**  
This very brief paper highlights the path and issues confronted for Flinders Business School (FBS) in beginning a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) program. FBS had no existing formal program pertaining to WIL and sought to develop capacity to deliver WIL and place students in work placements using the Skilled Migration Internship Program—Accounting as a vehicle to achieve the capacity to provide the opportunity for WIL to all students in the school.

This paper outlines the process that this followed and then highlights some of the major issues confronted in this project.

After nearly two years the project is still under way and is not yet complete. However many obstacles have been overcome and a great deal of progress has been made. FBS now has enough trialed teaching material to run two pre placement topics/subjects/units as well as material for Industry placements and projects. This includes an online “hurdle” quiz incorporating OH&S and Workplace law designed to ensure that students have a working knowledge of their obligations before going into the workplace.

This means that FBS can now offer both post graduate and undergraduate topics in 2011 in WIL and Industry placements and projects.

There are 5 phases identified so far and we have offered 3 findings.

The phases are:

a. Application for DIAC ‘approved provider’ status  
b. Approval within the Flinders University  
c. Preparation to provide the Program  
d. Pilot Phase and Initial Appraisal  
e. Program Start

We have moved beyond Program Start but have not yet come to a point where description or analysis is appropriate. Speculatively… the next phases would be Curriculum Review, Program Review and Consolidation but this will take at least a further 12 months.

These findings are:

Finding #1. A clear definition and purpose of WIL is of vital importance.  
Finding #2. There is need to educate the educators.  
Finding #3. Adjusting to student (lack of) knowledge/skills can be a major impediment to developing material of this kind.

**Academic area**  
Flinders Business School, Flinders University, South Australia
**Purpose**

The nation-wide expectation that WIL is incorporated into the university curriculum has been recognised by Flinders University.

In early 2008 Flinders University flagged the requirement for all students to have access to some Work Integrated Learning experience. This requirement has resulted in an institutional “…exploration of WIL…” with a view to WIL “…becoming an explicit feature of all undergraduate programs.”

The WIL initiative described in this report is Flinders Business School’s (FBS) first response to the challenge associated with this expectation. Without any structure or organised WIL within the school, FBS has no background or experience with WIL. This means we need to plan, decide and implement what is most appropriate and at what level within the educational career of our students.

Graduates from the tertiary education sector have been criticised for not being ‘work ready’. This criticism has become particularly pronounced for international accounting, engineering and computing graduates who are graduating in areas where there are significant shortages in the workforce and who potentially have a good career ahead of them in Australia. In order to address the (perceived) lack of work-readiness among these international accounting graduates the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the national accounting accreditation bodies (Certified Practising Accountants, Chartered Accountants and National Institute of Accountants (CPA, CA, NIA)) developed the framework and criteria for the SMIP-A (Skilled Migration Internship Program – Accounting), also known as the Professional Year (PY).

Flinders Business School decided to use the challenge and framework offered through the SMIP-A opportunity as a vehicle for the development of WIL within the school. In order to deliver SMIP-A the school needed to gain approval from an external body (a committee comprising the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Australian accounting bodies). The rigorous application process required us to consider WIL issues including learning outcomes, methods of delivery, principles of assessment, duty of care to students. Previously there had been no reason for FBS to delve this deeply into WIL issues and so the learning curve was steep and sustained. It was clear from the beginning that the insights gained from the process and the materials developed for the SMIP-A program could become a significant resource for other subsequent WIL initiatives within FBS and the Flinders University as a whole.

The SMIP-A program offered the opportunity to develop a WIL program for our most challenging, and challenged, students: international students whose language skills, and by implication cultural skills, were weak. The simple but compelling logic was: if FBS could develop and manage an effective WIL program for this cohort, we would likely have addressed most or all the issues around WIL. After all, this cohort presented all the barriers to success we could identify.

Through engaging with this particular WIL initiative FBS expected to achieve the following educational outcomes:

- The development and ownership of coursework material that can not only be utilised in conjunction with a placement but also be diversified into other teaching and learning settings so that we may provide the opportunity, for all our students, the necessary learning that will carry them through from undergraduate student to effective participant in their chosen field.

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- An increased understanding within FBS of the nature of WIL and how it can be effectively deployed to enhance all our programs.
- The capacity to source, monitor and manage placements outside of the University.
- Greater connection with and, relevance to, the industries with which we partner.

**Process for enacting WIL**

The process undertaken can be roughly divided into five phases:

1. Application for DIAC ‘approved provider’ status
2. Approval within the Flinders University
3. Preparation to provide the Program
4. Pilot Phase and Initial Appraisal
5. Program Start

**Phase 1. Application for DIAC ‘approved provider’ status (October 2008 – April 2009)**

The application process required FBS to consider and detail all aspects of the program. The actual application ended up as a comprehensive 101-page document covering every conceivable aspect from curriculum to delivery and timetabling. The application became the source document for all following documents.

As noted above the decision to apply for ‘approved provider’ status as SMIP-A provider was a strategic decision. The following factors (listed in summary and in no particular order) drove the decision to select the SMIP-A program as an appropriate way to build WIL capacity in the school:

- Lack of perceived capacity or experience in FBS;
- SMIP-A presented a set of detailed learning outcomes which would need to be delivered and hence there was no need for FBS discussion around learning outcomes;
- These learning outcomes originated from industry and hence there was no need to consider whether the learning outcomes were appropriate or relevant;
- SMIP-A set high standards and hence success would place FBS in a strong position with regards to WIL;
- SMIP-A delivery has to satisfy external bodies (i.e. DIAC, CPA Australia, ICAA and CA) and these bodies were already highly relevant and linked to existing FBS programs;
- The student cohort targeted by SMIP-A are our most resource intensive and at risk students, so anything that helped us improve our delivery to them was worthy of some investment;
- SMIP-A could be undertaken outside of the normal University delivery mode and provided the opportunity to experiment with intensive delivery methods;
- SMIP-A allowed FBS to seek specialised providers of materials;
- SMIP-A offered the opportunity to develop course materials in a modular fashion;
- SMIP-A “stands alone” and so was quarantined from the rest of FBS’ offerings;
- SMIP-A was likely to be self funding;
- FBS had support from other (non academic) sectors within Flinders.
Phase 2. Approval within the Flinders University (April 2009- Sept 2009)

Since the program (designed by external bodies to spread over at least 44 weeks) was too long to fit the mould of a ‘short course’, the University required the SMIP-A program to be approved as a standard coursework program. Hence, the SMIP-A documentation had to be re-written to fit into a standard postgraduate coursework model and had to go through the standard university approval process. This process of gaining approval was expedited, but still it added at least 3 months to the lead time.

Since the SMIP-A program was not conceived as a standard university course, there were a number of difficulties to overcome when turning it into a university program. There were issues with pricing, billing, enrolment, student cards, library access, even the issue as to whether SMIP-A’s special visa category students were to be recorded as domestic or international. These issues would not have arisen if the SMIP-A program had been allowed to progress as a ‘short course’. The additional hurdles forced the school to work through every little detail of the program and thus added to the learning and capacity building within the school.

Approval was given for the SMIP-A program to be provided as the Graduate Certificate in Professional Studies (Business).

Phase 3. Preparation to provide the program (August to September 2009)

Teaching preparation for SMIP-A involved far more coordination and was more time-consuming than preparation for standard teaching. This was primarily because we wanted to ensure we would achieve our educational outcomes in terms of building capacity to provide WIL into the future.

The SMIP-A program consists of 8 clearly identified modules each with a set of learning objectives. For the purpose of the Graduate Certificate the modules were placed into two university subjects consisting of four modules each.

In order to enhance the quality of the content it was decided to progress on the basis of the 8 modules. Seven specialists were identified – one for each of the eight individual modules (e.g. OH&S, Diversity, Communication, Career Development) with one person taking on two modules. The teaching staff were provided with a document detailing learning outcomes and delivery expectations as well as a template for presenting their materials. This package of documentation was designed to guide the specialist developers during development and delivery of the first course.

Teaching staff were asked to prepare a folder to hand out to students and also to prepare teaching materials. The materials would be assessed after the first course, improved and then re-delivered. Staff needed to be ready for delivery in time for their particular module; a “just in time” method of preparing materials has proven successful.

Timetabling the program and finding teaching space to teach a large number of face-to-face hours (which is required for the SMIP-A program) was difficult and remains an issue.
Marketing was difficult as the timeframes were compressed and the target market (of a special group of international accounting students) is fragmented and removed from mainstream media access (due to language barriers, social isolation, and disengagement from the university).

Phase 4. Pilot Phase and Appraisal (October – December 2009)

Five students were ready to start the program in October 2009 and, with the first modules ready to go and teaching space identified, we started a pilot with these first five students.

It was during the pilot phase that many of the institutional issues became apparent. Trouble shooting required a lot of time (days rather than hours).

Many issues arose that were new to us and not a feature of usual University courses. These issues are discussed below in the section on Key Findings.

Phase 5. Program Start (February 2010)

The program is proceeding, but under the cloud of a much changed immigration environment which has created paralysing uncertainty for the SMIP-A program, In February only three students started to the program.

FBS has begun the process of re-writing with a view of using the materials in undergraduate degrees offerings and a no SMIPA post graduate certificate.

Key findings

Finding #1. A clear definition and purpose of WIL is of vital importance.

Depending on the definition of WIL and the purpose of WIL as defined with the context at hand a variety of divergent curricula can potentially emerge. That is to say: the eventuating curriculum is dependent on the definition of WIL at the initial stage of creation of that curriculum.

In our SMIP-A project, we had a precise WIL definition and purpose and prescribed, clearly defined intended learning outcomes. We have found this to be a major success factor for the project. It allowed us to guide staff very clearly; to develop learning materials (including readings and activities assessment) which are highly focused; to align assessment closely to learning outcomes.

Even with this tight definition of WIL and the set of learning outcomes provided; the actual curriculum produced by each specialist was still deeply a product of their own epistemology. Interpretations of the learning outcomes were highly varied. The teachers were given a delivery structure that required one third of contact hours to be “stand and deliver”, one third student activity and one third supervised report writing and assignment work. This was interpreted widely with a variety of techniques employed including: direct lecture, role plays, debates, oral presentations using Power Point, written reports, online research, visits to workplaces, visits to workplace tribunals and external experts providing presentations to the students. This was both moderated and encouraged with a view to offer a diversity of pedagogical experiences to the students and allow FBS to assess the viability of alternative pedagogical approaches. This assessment process is still under way.
Student epistemologies have been a fundamental factor in the SMIPA program. The definition of WIL and indeed “work” in the SMIPA context has been constantly reiterated to, and contested by, this group. The students’ assumptions and preconceptions regarding WIL, work and work culture have been seriously challenged throughout this program.

**Finding #2. Need to educate the educators.**

The base level of understanding of WIL (among school staff) is very low and diverse. A lack of a common understanding as to the nature of WIL is a real impediment to the delivery of a program such as SMIP-A. Successful delivery of WIL requires a common understanding among all staff (both directly and indirectly) involved.

We found that academics were not prepared to engage in WIL as the legitimacy of the inclusion of WIL in the academic endeavour was dependent on their perception of WIL within their own educational context and experiences. Their own epistemologies prevent inclusion of WIL outside of their own definitions of WIL. So we found that it cannot be assumed that the working definition of WIL within a particular context is universally understood and that understanding translates into legitimisation (and implementation) of WIL within that context.

But as noted above, the definition of WIL in this case was not contestable. The learning outcomes, time in placement, activities in placement and many other factors were already stipulated by the (externally conceived) SMIP-A program.

In order to circumvent the problem of staff not fully understanding WIL and/or not willing to implement WIL, successful delivery of the SMIP-A project required us to hand-pick teachers/specialists who understood the issues and had a clear understanding of their area and what was needed to achieve the outcomes by virtue of their previous experience (but also see Finding #3 below). Specifically, we engaged:

- an OH&S manager who is now an academic;
- a tutor who previously worked as a salesman;
- a business consultant who is also an academic;
- a former contracts manager who now an academic;
- a clinical psychologist who is working towards a PhD;
- professional careers consultants;
- and a former workplace Ombudsman.

It was not hard to get these teachers/professionals involved. They did not require much explanation regarding the relevance of the program. They did not question the appropriateness or legitimacy of the content of work-readiness content in a university teaching context. They knew; they were already convinced. It is likely to be much more difficult to disseminate WIL across the school and to involve more staff in more courses.

**Finding #3. Adjusting to student (lack of) knowledge/skills**

Despite all the preparation and coordination described above, teaching staff described their experience as a (culture) shock. The lack of student understanding and capacities are a real and ongoing issue. Even the simplest things could not be taken for granted with respect to students’ prior knowledge and skills. This resulted in major curriculum revisions and alterations of the methodology of engaging with the students. SMIP-A is a program seeking to address the transition from Uni to work in Australia for international students who have an accounting degree. The cohort of students came from radically diverse backgrounds. Their reluctance to engage in many cases was deeply cultural. The kinds of knowledge the students considered
legitimate, or in some cases even permissible, deeply impacted on their engagement. Compliance with requirements of the course was compromised by the reluctance to recognise the validity of both the curriculum and the pedagogy utilised.

Pedagogical techniques, speed of delivery, depth of curriculum, assumed knowledge and even issues of gender were challenged by students. Understanding better these students’ personal epistemologies is a major spin-off benefit of the program. The cultural exchange has been profound. We have come to know these students much more intimately than we would during our normal Uni teaching and in so doing had to significantly reframe our understanding of their needs, values and challenges.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- F#1 Context moderates both the definition and purpose of WIL
- F#2 What do we understand to be WIL? Is it a legitimate part of Uni?
- F#3 Culture (shock) is a major issue – this needs further exploration
Title of Project
Integrating workplace based learning and continuity through the first clinical year of the graduate entry medical program

Author and affiliation
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Abstract
This study uses case based discussion groups as an innovative approach to improve integration of learning in a traditional discipline specific block placement model for medical students in a large tertiary hospital. Three group discussions have been conducted to date, with students presenting and discussing cases from their own clinical experiences. Data has been generated from feedback forms which ask questions about their key learnings from both their clinical experiences and the case based discussion groups. Further data will be generated as the groups continue throughout the year and from individual interviews with participants. From the data collected to date, key findings are around relationships between student and supervisors, responsibility for authentic learning opportunities, types of learning opportunities afforded in the workplace and the students’ awareness of self as learner in the clinical context.

Brief description of academic area
This project explores integration of higher education and WIL experiences for medical students in the first clinical year of a graduate entry program.

Purpose
The Graduate Entry Medical Program (GEMP) at Flinders University is a 4 year program comprising 2 pre-clinical years and 2 clinical years. This results in predominantly classroom and skills laboratory based learning experiences in the pre-clinical years and work place based experiences (WIL) in the clinical years. The latter is supplemented with tutorials and problem based learning sessions. However, the core curriculum is based on authentic learning opportunities in clinical health care settings, with patient care taking centre stage in the learning process. At Flinders University, there are essentially 3 primary clinical placement models that the students can choose from for their third year program. The first is a block placement model in a tertiary hospital, whereby students in groups of 12-15 people rotate through the core disciplines in 5 x 8 week blocks. The second model is the longitudinal integrated clerkships (LICs), wherein students spend the 40 weeks immersed in a general practice and are afforded additional experiences in the local hospital and community health services. This model is available in metropolitan and rural locations. The third model is a hybrid of the first and second models, whereby students do 20 weeks in each type of placement model and is a mix of rural and metropolitan settings.

The LIC model has been shown to be a successful model to optimise continuity and integration across the year. The LIC models are based on educational continuity, whereby there is continuity of care, continuity in curriculum and continuity of supervision [1]. Furthermore, recent research on LIC models are showing them to be successful models to secure instances of the ‘hard to learn’ knowledges required for professional practice, and therefore assist in the smooth transition of students into professional practice [2-3]. Indeed the inception of a rural LIC model in the Flinders University program resulted in improved clinical and academic performance from the students when compared to students in the hospital based rotation model[4].
The traditional block placement model, it seems, does not achieve this educational continuity to the same degree. A recognised deficit of the traditional block placement model is the lack of integration across the discipline based block rotations, and the lack of educational continuities. Each block rotation results in students needing to get acquainted with new workplaces, work practices, supervisors and new patient cohorts. The learnings from one placement are not necessarily built on during the next rotation, and at the end of the year long program, students are examined on learning across each of the disciplines throughout the year.

The purpose of this project is to explore the use of case based learning groups as an innovative curricula and pedagogical approach that aims to support effective and rich integration of learning experiences for students undertaking their first clinical year in the traditional block placement model.

**Process for enacting WIL**

This project has used a reflective practice approach, which incorporates student-led peer learning, group problem solving and integration across medical disciplines through the implementation of case based discussion groups. The case based learning groups are currently being evaluated at each session to see if and how they assist the students’ integration of experiences from both educational and practice settings in their development of conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge for effective professional practice. The integration across disciplines blocks will be a focus of this intervention. Further exploration of integration of learning and usefulness of case based groups will be conducted in the second half of the year.

Student volunteers were sought and formed one case based learning group to meet on a monthly basis throughout the third year program of the block placement model program. All students undertaking their third year of the GEMP at Flinders Medical Centre were informed of the project and the potential risks and benefits to their learning experiences. All students were invited to participate. Whilst desiring two groups, there were only enough student volunteers to create one mixed discipline rotation group. This mixed group is comprised of 12 students from three of the five rotational groups. Monthly case based discussion groups have been conducted as an extra-curricula activity. Refreshments have been provided at each group discussion as an enticement for their participation.

Three case based discussions have been held to date. During these, students have been asked to discuss a case that afforded them significant learning. This may be something exciting, puzzling, a critical incident or memorable for their learning. For future meetings the student have requested to conduct these using a problem based learning approach where the case will be presented, give the group time to consider the information, reflect and pose possible diagnoses, problems, management strategies etc. The student presenter will then describe the case as it unfolded, including diagnosis, management and outcome. This is anticipated to result in significant peer learning, and to be an effective way to encourage students to articulate, share, express and utilise their existing knowledge and experiences. It is anticipated that this approach will result in further learning, through articulating, extending and refining what they already know, and use the group process to share their experiences with others to engage the group in learning across disciplinary boundaries. A monthly evaluation form has been requested from each participant at the end of each session. The student participants will then be invited to participate in an interview about the value of the process for their learning.
**Key Findings**
To date the collection of data has been relatively slow. There have been 8 feedback forms returned from 24 attendances across the 3 meetings. Students have commented that the forms are a little difficult to interpret. Additional data will be collected during individual interviews later in the year.

From the data collected to date, key findings are around relationships between student and supervisors, responsibility for authentic learning opportunities, types of learning opportunities afforded in the workplace and the students’ awareness of self as learner in the clinical context.

*Importance of relationships in learning: relationship with supervisors create opportunities or challenges for learning*

The case based learning groups have resulted in significant discussion around supervision and the benefits when the students have a supervisor interested in teaching and interested in them as a learner. There have been examples from students when they felt the supervisor and/or clinical team did not engage them in the day to day work and this negatively affected their learning. Whilst this has not evolved into data on the feedback form, it nevertheless is integral to the learning afforded students in this WIL model. Students have made comments about positive teaching and learning in the workplace such as:

- **Having an experienced consultant explain the steps involved and demonstrate key features to look for.** This particular consultant was able to give us a very practical tips.

- **The consultant actually gave us an individual tutorial on a number of patients, showing us what to look for and how to interpret what we see.** It was explained clearly and we can actually practice it there on a patient

Students also commented about their desire for more feedback in the workplace environment to improve their learning.

- **More feedback on my performance in interviewing and case write-ups**

The constant change in learning environment, whilst affording variety in clinical cases, does not provide continuity in supervision and therefore support for learning.

- **Less requirement to attend ward rounds where teaching isn’t a high priority for some staff. Spending consistent time on the one ward rather than moving to a different team each week I have been on Gen Med G, then acute assessment unit, then Gen Med G, then coronary care unit and it has made it extremely hard to settle into a role. The rapid change of consultants in the general medicine team makes learning opportunities very inconsistent.**

Students are expressing discontent between wanting to see variety of cases and feeling a sense of belonging to a team. When they constantly move to different teams, the focus becomes one of observation and discussion rather than active engagement in the daily work.

*Responsibility for constructing authentic learning opportunities: whose responsibility is it? The students or the clinicians?*
Students in this study have spoken of their dependence on the clinicians and supervisors to afford them authentic learning opportunities. They have expressed uncertainty in what they are allowed to do or not allowed to do, and a lack of clarity in what they should be doing as the student. The students seem to be prepared for the knowledge and skill required but not of the attitudes and behaviours within the workplace.

Students have been able to articulate the types of learning experiences they have found most beneficial, and in so doing are learning about which are the most valuable opportunities to seek.

The medical ward rounds were not particularly helpful at our level of understanding what was helpful was when we were asked to work at patients and present them to the consultant.

Being asked by the clinic team on the ward to decide what should be done with a patient I had seen on my own prior

Through the case based discussions, which incorporated dialogue about the students’ role and potential role in the presented cases, participants have made comment about an increasing awareness of being more proactive about their own engagement with patients, clinicians and ward activities. They have expressed a sense of increasing agency and increasing responsibility for their own learning.

In next 4 weeks I intend to seek opportunities to have more one on one time for example outside ward round hours or out of hours, with junior staff, or in clinics, which has been best for learning. Also intend to take on 1 to 2 patients personally, under supervision, and try to present progress at ward round or to team on a regular basis.

Helped me to think more about my role as a student on the wards

Types of learning opportunities

Through the feedback forms, students have clearly highlighted that their best WIL learning was experiential learning, and this was not just taking an observatory role in clinical practice. However, just doing ‘things’, having ‘experiences’ alone is insufficient. Students recognise the need for dialogue and feedback, to discuss cases with experts, and to present their findings and rationalise their decisions. Being actively engaged in authentic learning that was problem oriented, had work value and built on their prior knowledge was the most effective learning experiences for them in the WIL model.

See patients first hand and conducting interviews with the patients, being involved with the treating doctors and getting involved in treatment management

Being on the ward with junior staff as an episode [of chest pain] evolved with one of our patients, and following as things developed

Have gained most from experiences where I have followed patients closely from presentation throughout admission, particularly when involved in initial diagnosis and examination.

Actual experience of seeing a PPH evolve, the management and after. Seeing two cases in the same day
By attending clinic and actually doing the consultation and physical exams

Students discussed in the case based groups the desire for increased dialogue around patient management at ‘their’ level as apposed to the level of an expert. For most of the students the case based discussion groups have afforded this learning opportunity. The case based discussion groups have encouraged the students to think more broadly about their clinical experiences as well as engage in peer learning through sharing experiences.

Benefits cited included:

Going over things previously learnt -- refreshing memory

Practising presenting patient cases

Thinking of differentials

It prompts questions that are raised in group meeting that I had not thought about when observing. Questions that I might have had thought of but ignored as passing

Had me think about topics I normally would not currently (e.g. kidney issues)

It had me discuss a case in the rotation I am not on therefore think about topics I normally would not right now

Exposed me to clinical situations that I had not experienced. Discovering the case as a group facilitated learning from others and absorbing necessary info on the spot. Given me incentive to learn more about the case in my individual study time

Helpful to have you asking probing questions to make us think about things we wouldn’t normally think about

Students’ awareness of self as learner in the clinical context

Student feedback to date has identified the need for the students’ own self awareness as a learner and the need to develop agency in this WIL model. Supervision varies considerably, and students recognise that they need to take responsibility for their own learning. Students gained an awareness of their need to understand what the student role is and how they can maximise their learning, becoming agentic in WIL. This became problematic for some as they struggled to rationalise their time across different modes of learning.

Being more proactive to see more cases clinically. However I find that clinical commitments takeaway times for study. And the lack of background knowledge is actually detrimental to my confidence leads to lack of going to see or volunteer to see patients
However many examples have been presented above as to how students have recognised this learning opportunity, and learnt to engage as a student in the clinical environment.

The student group have also become more agentic by requesting the change in delivery of the case based discussion groups to be driven a problem based learning model; a model they are highly familiar with. By doing this, they have recognise the PBL approach as one where they anticipate achieving the greatest learning from the case based discussion.

**Issues arising for discussion**

The main issues that have arisen for me about before, during and after practicums in this WIL model include:

- **Before & During**: awareness of self as the learner - learning to engage as a student
- **During**: time poor but time jealous? The value of time in WIL versus book study? Finding a balance and engaging in reflective dialogue.
- **Before, During & After**: culture and cultural awareness. Preparing for and understanding the workplace culture.
- **During & After**: sequencing and integration of learning across discipline based blocks.
- **Before & During**: internationalisation - need to explore amongst my participants as they are an international cohort of students

**References**

Title of project
Influence of an Overseas Clinical Placement on the Acquisition of Cultural Competence in Chiropractic Students

Authors and affiliation
Jo-Anne M. Maire and Barrett Losco, School of Chiropractic and Sports Science, Murdoch University

Abstract
This educational research study describes the influence of a voluntary overseas clinical placement experience on chiropractic students’ level of cultural competence. All participants consented to complete the Inventory for Assessing the Process of Cultural Competence Among Healthcare Professionals-Student Version (IAPCC-SV) immediately prior to the placement. Students from the same cohort who did not participate in the placement served as controls. A post-test survey was administered to both groups within two weeks of the placement.

Analysis of the survey results indicated that there was no significant difference in the Level of Cultural Competence score, nor any of the subscale scores between experimental and control groups before the intervention. After the overseas placement, the overall level of Cultural Competence increased by 14% (P < 0.05) in the experimental group, while the control group showed no change. Eleven participants in the experimental group increased their level of competence from Culturally Aware to Culturally Competent.

The results of this study demonstrated the positive effects of an overseas clinical placement on the level of cultural competence in chiropractic students.

Purpose
There is a clear imperative that graduates of chiropractic programs be culturally competent and ready to meet the challenge of an increasingly diverse patient population. Accreditation standards for most undergraduate healthcare programs in Australia require inclusion of material and opportunities for students relevant to cultural diversity and competence in the curriculum. Cultural competence is a developmental process which can best be achieved through professional training and experiences. The purpose of part one of this project is to ascertain whether a voluntary clinical placement overseas significantly contributes to developing cultural competence in chiropractic students.

Process for enacting WIL
Twenty-two students commencing their 5th and final year of an undergraduate chiropractic course in Perth Australia participated in a voluntary self-funded two week clinical placement in Siliguri India. The Siliguri placement is run by the students annually and provides real-life situations that encourage self-awareness of their own values and beliefs and increases cultural knowledge through personal exposure. This clinical placement provides opportunities for students to both observe modelling of culturally competent care by their supervisors and practice culturally competent healthcare themselves.

All students who traveled to Siliguri participated in the study. Nineteen students from the same cohort volunteered to serve as controls. All participants were provided with information about the study and signed a consent form before completing a pre-trip survey, the Instrument for Assessing the Process of Cultural Competence Among Healthcare Professionals – Student Version (IAPCC-SV). Personal details, such as sex, age and whether the participants were born in Australia or overseas, were also collected. Surveys were submitted anonymously and data was coded so that the investigator could not identify individual participants.
A post-trip survey was completed by all participants within two weeks of the students’ return from the placement. This study was approved by the Murdoch University Ethics Committee.

Survey data were analyzed using descriptive and multivariate analysis. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether any significant differences occurred between the mean scores for each group both pre and post overseas placement, both for intra-group and inter-group analysis. Where the one-way ANOVA test revealed a significant difference then a Tukey’s multiple comparison test was used to determine exactly where the difference occurred.

To determine whether an interaction between the gender of the student and overseas placement had an effect upon the outcome scores, a two-way ANOVA was used. Statistical significance in this study because of the small sample, was set at $p < .05$.

**Key findings**

The findings indicate that a short-term international clinical placement significantly increased levels of cultural competence in chiropractic students. The results showed that 11 of the 13 participants who were culturally aware before the placement, had become culturally competent after the placement indicating a meaningful change. Participants’ age, sex, or country of birth did not play a role in the level of increase in competence. Although there is a paucity of longitudinal studies in this area, some studies have shown that changes in cultural competence levels following an educational intervention tend to be maintained, even after one year. (Ho, 2010; Lasch, 2000) It would therefore be expected that the short term placement described in this study would result in long term changes to participants’ cultural competency. Further investigation is required to confirm this assumption.

It is worth noting that at the beginning of the study no significant difference was found between the mean scores for cultural competence between the two groups. This was somewhat surprising as one would expect that students who are motivated to volunteer for a placement in a developing country would have higher levels of cultural competence, at least in one component (cultural desire) than those who do not volunteer. It is likely that other factors unrelated to motivation, such as family, employment, or financial constraints prevented some from participating.

Given the importance of cultural competency for health care providers, and considering that not all students are able to participate in an international clinical placement, it is imperative that other educational interventions for developing cultural competence be offered in the undergraduate curriculum. Comparative studies are required to determine the efficacy and utility of such interventions in the chiropractic curriculum.

This study was carried out with one cohort of chiropractic students from one university, and as such, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this demographic.

**Issues arising for discussion**

In a systematic review of health care provider educational interventions for developing cultural competency, Beach et al (Beach, 2005) conclude that:

- both longer and shorter duration interventions, experiential as well as non-experiential, and curricula focusing on general concepts of culture and specific cultural information (alone and separately) are all associated with positive outcomes.
However, there is a paucity of peer reviewed literature on curricular inclusion of culture and diversity in chiropractic, which suggests that, at best, the profession is only in the early stages of the continuum. This study found that, in the short term, cultural competence can be developed through participation in an international clinical placement. Longitudinal studies are required in order to demonstrate whether these improvements are maintained over time, and comparative studies are required to determine the efficacy and utility of other interventions designed to develop cultural competence.
Title of project
Extending Knowledge Through a Structured Post-placement Seminar

Author and affiliation
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Abstract
This educational research study describes the evaluation of the effectiveness of a seminar designed to facilitate reflective practice surrounding an overseas clinical placement for chiropractic students.

Two weeks after students returned from a clinical placement in Siliguri India, four small group seminars were run. The groups comprised those students who participated in the overseas clinical placement and students in the same cohort who remained in their clinical placement in Australia. The seminar was designed to allow the students who participated in the overseas placement to share their experiences and to assist all students, through reflective practice, to identify how lessons learnt in the overseas experiences might apply more widely.

A survey designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminars was administered two weeks after the seminar. Descriptive statistics and inductive qualitative analysis were used in the evaluation of the survey results.

Survey respondents comprised seventeen students who participated in the overseas placement, and nineteen students who remained in Australia. The seminar was overwhelmingly viewed as a “useful exercise” by both groups. The majority of those who participated in the overseas placement stated that the seminar assisted them to reflect on their practice experiences.

This study demonstrated that a structured post-placement seminar, by engaging students in listening, debate and personal reflection, can extend and transform their understanding of chiropractic practice, and promote conceptual, procedural and dispositional development.

Purpose
A post-placement seminar was developed to include both students who participated in the overseas placement, and those who remained in their placement in Australia.

The purposes of this seminar were threefold:

i. for students to share experiences of different chiropractic practices,
ii. make explicit links between those experiences and program goals, and
iii. to challenge students to think differently and critically about existing models of chiropractic practices.

Accepted wisdom dictates that experiences in both academic and workplace settings are best for the development of robust professional knowledge, skills and dispositions, as both have their strengths and weaknesses, and may be seen as complementary. Although much has been written on learning in the workplace, there is a dearth of literature on methods to explicitly integrate the learning acquired in the workplace with that acquired in the academic setting, and exemplars of connecting activities are particularly scarce. This leads one to suspect that, in many cases, opportunities for extending and transforming the learning arising from both settings are lost in practice. Most models of reflective learning suggest that
reflective discourse is a necessary component of transformative learning (Atkins, 1993; Boud, 1985; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2004; Schon, 1983). The post-placement seminar was designed to afford students the opportunity to reflect on the learning acquired in the clinical setting, make explicit links with the curriculum, make comparisons and judgments about worth, and share their observations with peers through semi-structured discourse.

The evaluation of this seminar will serve to inform the curriculum design and pedagogy for the chiropractic course at Murdoch University. Opportunities for similar interventions can be made available following other clinical placement experiences, particularly those involving remote Indigenous communities.

**Process for enacting WIL**

Two weeks following the students’ return from the placement in Siliguri, one-hour small group seminars were held. Participants in each seminar comprised approximately five students who participated in the placement in Siliguri, and ten of their classmates who remained in the placement at the University’s on-campus clinic in Perth.

In the first part of the seminar, students with experience in India were asked to identify common practices and particular requirements of the work by briefly stating the single most significant learning outcome for them personally, identifying aspects of practice that were the same as in Australia, and aspects of practice that were different from Australia. Following this, students without experience in India were encouraged to engage critically with their classmates’ experiences by discussing their own personal experiences in clinic that support or add to what had been described.

Students were then given time to individually consider and reflect on three issues:

i. how these experiences supported, extended, or contradicted understandings about chiropractic as taught in the university;
ii. how these experiences supported, extended or contradicted advice about how to practice chiropractic; and
iii. how these experiences reinforced or transformed their views about chiropractic practice.

It was considered essential to allow the students sufficient time to reflect before engaging in discussion so the conversation would be based on the information discussed, and not solely on their preconceived notions about these issues. It was hoped that this time for reflection would encourage the students to make connections between practice experience and curriculum content.

The students’ responses to these issues were then shared and discussed in the hope of developing a shared understanding of practice requirements and how these requirements are affected by the practice setting, whether in India or in Australia.

Two weeks after the seminar, surveys were distributed to all students who had attended (61% responded). Please refer to Table 1 for the survey results pertaining to the students who had experience in India, and Table 2 for survey results pertaining to those students who did not have experience in India. Descriptive statistics and inductive qualitative analysis were used in the evaluation of the survey results.

**Key Findings**

The survey results indicate that the seminar was overwhelmingly supported by both the students who had experience in India, and those who had not. It appears both groups were able to gain from this interaction, albeit in different ways.
Comments made by students during the seminars and in the survey suggest that for some, the seminar experience served to extend their knowledge, allow them to examine issues from other perspectives, and clarify their understanding of certain aspects of the curriculum. The kinds of learning that appeared to arise were largely premised upon discussions about practice experiences. These learnings were associated with conceptual, procedural and dispositional dimensions of learning.

Conceptually, the students engaged in discussions about what constitutes chiropractic practice, how it is enacted, what is the scope of practice, and the variations and limitations that confront practitioners. Added to this were considerations of upon what basis should chiropractic work progress: philosophical or evidence-based. These kinds of conceptual learning are central to professional practice and seemed to be particularly stimulated by discussions about practice in different contexts. For example, one student who participated in the placement described a case where a terminally ill patient in severe pain was helped substantially by care given by one of the chiropractic supervisors. Until observing the patient's response, this student had not considered that a chiropractor could play a role in this type of case. After discussion of this case in the seminar, there was general consensus amongst the students that chiropractors could play a role in caring for such patients, with one student commenting in the survey, “Made me wonder why we don’t have a broader scope of practice”.

Procedurally, the students engaged in discussions about the applications of chiropractic work in particular settings and on what basis are particular procedures valued. What is significant about this kind of learning is the strategic qualities that arise through the students’ considerations of and reflections upon these procedural issues. What we know is that rather than just the use of specific procedures, effective practitioners also require strategies to work out under what circumstances particular approaches are appropriate. One student commented that he “finally understood” why the School does not teach the “philosophy” of chiropractic, and instead teaches an “evidence-based practice” approach. There was much discussion about how busy the clinics were in Siliguri and what strategies the students employed to cope with the sheer numbers of patients. Students who did not participate in the overseas placement commented that they were surprised and “relieved that you could see so many patients” and still deliver a good service. Communication issues arose here as well, as the students were required to quickly adapt to working with interpreters, thus their approach to taking a patient history and obtaining consent required substantial modification. One student commented that she realized how “important being able to ask open ended questions was”, only after this luxury was not available due to time constraints and language barriers.

Dispositionally, the students engaged in discussions about what constitutes appropriate and worthwhile values that underpin chiropractic work. One student commented that having seen how difficult life is in Siliguri, and how the people cope with their situation, he “doesn’t sweat the small stuff anymore”, and that issues he “used to complain about just don’t bother me now”. Other students related similar stories about how their attitudes had changed after seeing patients with serious health problems or difficult life situations. There was much discussion about the ethical issues surrounding the trip, with some students questioning the morality of offering health care for such a short period of time only. This was confronting for some who participated in the trip, and although most took the utilitarian view “at least we provided some care that they otherwise wouldn’t have received”, some suggested there were some long term benefits as patient education was provided in terms of hygiene, diet and exercise advice, and provision of school supplies, medical supplies and funds raised to build a local school. Here, there is evidence of diversity of views and values associated with this work, and discussions around what constitutes worthwhile practice and worthwhile goals. In this way, the experiences seem to have been generative of dispositional development. It
is interesting to note that shortly after the seminar, students who participated in the seminar contacted other educational institutions with chiropractic courses in Australia and New Zealand with a view to organising placements in Siliguri at 3 monthly intervals.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- The results of this study support a constructivist view of learning whereby conceptual development is an active, evolving process in which individuals use their own experiences as a context for constructing meaning. This is facilitated by affording students the opportunity for interacting with others in discussion groups, sharing and articulating different experiences and considering different perspectives.

- Although transformative learning theory suggests that this type of learning requires discomfort prior to discovery (Taylor, 2008) seminars such as the one described in this study should be structured in such a way that differences of opinion and values are productive and don’t limit learning or entrench attitudes of practice.

- The effectiveness of workplace learning is widely considered to hinge on the act of critical reflection on the experience thus clinical placements need to have embedded in them some opportunities for such reflection. The post-placement seminar helped students make connections by giving them a structure within which to reinforce and extend their learning, and undertake the crucial activity of critical reflection within an environment which was distant from the actual clinical setting. It is hoped that by enabling the students to see the connections between academic theory and clinical practice they will develop greater clarity about their own academic goals.

- From comments made during the discussions, it appears that, for many students, learning the importance of good communication requires active knowledge construction in a real setting. The seminar discussion allowed the students to make their learnings surrounding patient communication explicit as well as share these learnings with their classmates. For some participants, this may well have been a transformative learning experience.

- Although not all students in the group agreed as to the best approach to some of the ethical issues raised surrounding practice, the discussion allowed them to consider an important ethical issue from different perspectives. In one group, students who did not participate in the overseas placement raised concerns about whether offering healthcare to the poor for such a short time was morally right. Although this seminar did not afford sufficient time to deal with such a complex issue in a productive manner, it served to flag the issue for discussion in tutorials at a later date.

**References**


Table 1 - Students with recent India experience (respondents 17)

Did you find sharing your experiences in India with other students to be a useful exercise?  
Yes = 16  No = 1

Comments:
1. Thank you for organising the feedback sessions on the 2009 Hands on India trip during the Rounds sessions.
2. Thank you for organising the exercise. It was stimulating and thought-provoking.
5. It was a good opportunity for us to reflect on the experience.
7. Brought up some interesting issues surrounding the ethics of Humanitarian work.
8. I thought the class didn’t really want to hear what we said. (Students X & Y) were rude & condescending & did not even attempt to diplomatically raise their point – which we had already considered & experienced for ourselves.
12. Very useful. It made me think about what chiropractic can do for people in any situation.
14. Thank you for giving us the time to talk about the trip. It reinforced my views on what chiropractic is all about.
17. Yes – thanks! You should do this again next year.

Did the discussions assist you to reflect on your practice experiences?  
Yes = 16  No = 1

Comments:
1. The discussions helped me more carefully collate my thoughts and relate my experiences.
5. see above
6. It made me think about how priorities shift when you only have a limited time with a patient. Long term management is not an option in India!
7. I don’t know about my practice, but it made me think about my motivation for the trip in the first place.

How could the process have been improved for you?

Comments:
5. A more structured presentation from the whole India group.
7. have some graduates who went to India in earlier years attend
13. Felt the “discussion” became more argumentative/attacking

What would you say to a student who did not attend this seminar about its overall worth?

Comments:
Was a worthwhile discussion with a range of viewpoints.
3. I found the experience stimulating and rewarding.
8. Don’t feel that it was worth the time.
10. useful for educating/informing the rest of class.
11. If you want to know about India attend!
Table 2 - Students without recent India experience (respondents 19)

Did you find discussing the experiences of student recently back from working in India a useful exercise?  
Yes = 17  No = 2

Comments:
18. I was a bit surprised the younger students had not considered ethics associated with their experience; esp ‘informed consent’ & giving of placebo vitamin pills to pts who expected to receive drugs.
23. It was very interesting.
24. I believe that I could have better spent my time just listening to the experiences of those who went to India rather that some other peoples opinions!
28. Thanks! I have already contacted (4th year student) about going to India in 2010! – maybe I can help supervise.
31. I already talked to the students who went to India, so didn’t really learn much.
32. Very interesting.
35. Definitely! Made me wonder why we don’t have a broader scope of practice.
36. Thank you – I found it very valuable.

How could that process have been improved for you?

Comments:
18. Young students who went to India were very defensive & hurt by comments made by those who did not go to India; need to be aware of their sensitivities & have some follow up with these students. These guys share a special bond because of their experience, but they need to be open to the views of others that question the process. This is part of the learning too.
24. If everyone in the class was present at the one time
29. Have the supervisors who went to India present.

In what ways were your values or interests associated with chiropractic confirmed or extended through this process?

Comments:
18. Heightened concern over whether we should be doing this, in its current format; (going to India that is).
23. Extended my passion for chiropractic
24. Confirmed that the power of touch is vitally important
27. Made me realize why Murdoch doesn’t teach as much ‘philosophy’ and is more evidence based.
32. Confirmed that there’s more to treatment than adjusting – communication is most important – not just in words but in touch

What would you say to a student who did not attend this seminar about its overall worth?

Comments:
18. All views are valuable; different people with different life experience have something to contribute; not necessarily right or wrong. But need to appreciate the views of others.
23. It was great to see how chiropractic benefits people in other areas of the world.
24. Our session became very heated & raised many ethical questions
32. A great way to learn about the trip if you couldn’t go.
33. Too bad you missed it – it was really interesting!
Title of project
BUS2011 Work Based Business Learning – Murdoch Business School

Author and affiliation
David Holloway, Murdoch Business School, Murdoch University

Abstract
The WIL project in the Murdoch Business School was a one-off special topic unit in first semester 2010: fourteen students completed the semester. Students were required to already be in a work placement as a precondition in the unit enrolment process. The learning outcomes were focused on students evaluating and reflecting on the ‘authenticity’ and relevance of their University based learning when mapped against their current ‘real world’ work experiences. The students were being asked to assess, question and integrate their individual (and collective) work-based experiences and acquired real-life knowledge with their business-based university learning.

The students completed a number of individual and team based learning tasks including a reflective learning log; an individual reflective essay on a personally selected topic; in-class team based tests; and, a team based business relocation assignment. There was no final exam in the unit, which for a number of students was an initial attraction in the early enrolment numbers.

The students reported a universally positive assessments of this WIL unit in their teaching evaluations and in the two focus group interviews conducted at the end of the semester. All students rated this particular unit as one of the best learning experiences they had encountered to date at the undergraduate level within their MBS business programs. They also concluded that the learning topics within the unit had provided them with critical and personally useful insights into their own and the wider work environment. It also led to a deeper questioning of the university learning that they had received to date within their Business majors.

Brief description of academic area
Murdoch Business School (MBS) has over fifty full-time academics and over three thousand equivalent full time students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate offerings.

Particular Purpose
The particular goal for work-integrated learning in MBS will be as part of curriculum renewal and a rethinking of the current pedagogical approach used across the school. It is intended to move away from the over-focus on individual learning with some group based learning (which is used in a number of the discipline-based units at first, second and third-year levels) towards an enhanced combination of individual and team based learning approaches with deeper engagement in the learning process by the students themselves.

This project aimed to develop an innovative work experience unit which enhances the preparation of business students in both understanding and performing to expectations (their own and their future employers) in their chosen career paths.

There has been increasing emphasis across the professional areas within business to promote generic learning skills and learning outcomes that are not limited to the acquisition and mastery of pedagogical content or the professional body of knowledge. In particular, the professional accounting bodies, as well as other professional business associations, have placed increasing importance on generic skills such as communication; problem solving; innovative thinking; team-based skills; and, the ability to think creatively and laterally. The result is they are looking to recruit well-rounded individuals capable of both operating independently and collaboratively within teams to further the tactical and strategic goals of the organisations for whom they work. In addition, they are looking for graduates who are also work ready and capable within a short time of joining the organisation.
Currently there are no specific work integrated elements in the Murdoch business curriculum that are specifically focussed on developing student skills in preparation for working within organisations across the private, public and non-profit sectors. The aim of this special topic unit is to utilise students existing experiences in the workplace while they are still studying full-time or part-time in their undergraduate programs. The intention is to enable students to embed and reflect on the applicability of their work experiences back to the curriculum content within their business programs.

This was a one-semester unit offering in semester one, 2010 that was made available to second or third-year students. It was planned to integrate students learning experience(s) in the workplace with their learning in the academic curriculum at University. The aim was to enhance vocational outcomes by integrating student expectations with organisational expectations of work readiness and professional expertise.

A key element of this initiative is that there was no need to provide students with either internship or work placement processes because they were already working in a part-time or full-time mode. Currently a significant majority of students in the higher education sector are working (often more than twelve hours a week) whilst they are pursuing their further higher education studies. The resource implications for the University are minimal in this respect. The necessity to find work placement positions for students is a barrier that this initiative is not required to overcome.

**Process for enacting WIL**

The unit was one that used students existing work placements (existing part-time or full time jobs). Students were required to reflect on the synthesis between their workplace experiences and learnings and integrate those with their Murdoch Business School based formal in-class learning in their respective Business majors. There were twelve three-hour seminars during the semester with learning activities that included a reflective learning journal; a major individual essay assignment; and, a major teamwork based assignment. There was no final exam.

The reflective business experience unit focused on learning topics and student experiences around the following eight themes:

- occupational health and safety
- training and professional development regimes
- management theories and supervision roles and practices
- leadership in the workplace
- professional ethics and values
- corporate social responsibility
- change management practices
- sustainable business

The unit was planned to give students the opportunity to consolidate their theoretical knowledge and develop their professional competence in the workplace. The learning experience takes place inside and outside the classroom with students having the opportunity to participate in real world business experiences and integrating those with their formal business studies.

The teaching period (semester one, 2010) started with an initial enrolment during December 2009 and January 2010 of thirty four students who were interested and initially enrolled in the unit. They had been recruited via a series of emails sent out to Business student cohorts over a two-week period at the end of 2009 whilst they were re-enrolling for first semester in 2010. However, the initial teaching period was changed from a Tuesday to a Wednesday evening and a number of students withdrew because of this late change just prior to the start of semester. A number of other students also changed their minds about being involved in a new special topic unit and withdrew. The semester commenced with eighteen students enrolled and a further four withdrew during the semester because they felt (when giving feedback about the reasons they were withdrawing) that the work involved in the learning tasks and assessment was more than they anticipated.
Fourteen students completed the semester and they were placed into three collaborative learning teams at the beginning of semester and stayed within those allocated teams for the entire semester. They were asked to sit with other teams members for each of the twelve weeks of lecture/seminar sessions. This approach worked well and the level of team bonding early on was then sustained and effective and lasted through the entire teaching period. What this also meant that for the team-based learning tasks, as well as the individual learning tasks, they acted as a learning resource for each other in terms of learning support and clarification of the requirements of the different assessment tasks. Effectively, they managed regularly to interact with each other and to ‘teach’ others in class as the semester progressed.

Key Findings
The teaching topics were selected for this initial offering of the unit because it was expected that all part-time and full-time work based students would be exposed to the work practices of these significant elements of work life and work cycles within their organisations.

The approach taken at each lecture/seminar was to cover the academic material and research findings in each of the topic areas in the first part of each teaching session. The students within each one of their teams then discussed the teaching material and the ‘actual’ work experiences in each of these areas. Having discussed each area in depth within the teams then there would be an overall whole class (plenary) discussion of the week’s allocated topic. The focus each time was a complete reversal of what normally occurs in work integrated learning units. The usual approach is to assess the authenticity of the workplace experiences and the degree of integration between the University based in-class elements of work integrated learning compared to the students’ actual experiences in the work placement itself. However, in this unit students were expected to analyse what they had personally experienced in the workplace and whether this could be ‘mapped’ backwards to what they were learning at university within the respective business majors. What therefore is being questioned and evaluated in this unit is the ‘authenticity’ of their University learning experiences in Business school majors when compared to their current ‘real world’ organisational experiences.

The feedback from a teaching evaluation survey, which was completed in week nine of the semester, was very positive. Several student comments were recorded as follows – attached in appendix 2 is the tabulated results from the student teaching evaluation:

Student 1
“David has an affective (sic) way of communicating and illustrating theories and ideas. He relates a lot to everyday life, treats us as intelligent human beings and simplifies things. Examples that are used are very appropriate and encourage better understanding. His enthusiasm and energy encourages me too.”

Student 2
“His presentation of a topic is riveting and interesting which assists in learning about this topic. His opinions always add interest and conversation to workshops.”

Student 3
“As this unit is work based all of the learning areas are relevant. Examples are current and relate to students of different ages. Class discussions are lively and everyone is encouraged to participate.”

Student 4
“And thank you for a good semester, by far the most refreshing unit I've done. I think I can relate it to "in advance of the Corporate Rambo", it's all about the little things that can keep you alive in the wild! But i (sic) wasn't going to put that in my journals.”

A human research ethics application was submitted earlier in the year because the project plan had as an objective the conducting of focus group and individual interviews with students who had completed the unit. Individual interviews with students are planned to be held over the next month after completion of the
examination period in Semester One. However, the two focus group interviews were arranged and completed at the end of the semester. An independent research associate undertook the interviews. The University ethics committee stipulated this course of action to avoid any possibility of a conflict of interest (real or perceived) between the students and the unit coordinator. The list of focus group questions that were asked is detailed in Appendix 1.

The student responses to Questions One and Two were very positive. They reported that the weekly learning process of providing an academic overview of both the mainstream and critical theory literature and research findings in each topic area was a particularly useful insight in their overall learning within the unit. They also expressed a strong preference for the process of within-team discussions following the academic overview and then an overall plenary discussion in-depth of the different positions and arguments that they had encountered in the workplace as well as in the academic university environment. These discussions were often intense and (surprisingly) insightful at times which was a reflection of just how much students had already accumulated useful knowledge in the work environment. Questions Three and Four about what did not work for them as learners elicited little criticism or concern other than a request for additional in-class discussion time on specific topics of personal interest.

Questions Five and Six resulted in students expressing a preference for a continuation of the combination of individual and team based learning approaches. No student wanted an all individual nor all team based learning approaches to be used in future offerings of the unit. Question Seven did not elicit any specific suggestions for changes to the learning approaches adopted in this unit. This might change when the students have had some time to reflect on the unit, which will be the case when the individual interviews are held.

The question about future class sizes led to students arguing quite strongly for class sizes to remain small. A number of comments were made to the effect that they had enjoyed being in a small class size in which they got to know all the other students in the class. This was a rare event in their experience of business school units. They did acknowledge that the class needed to be larger than the fourteen students that completed the first semester. The ideal class size was, in their collective opinion, to be no larger than thirty students. This would maintain what to them was perceived to be the optimum learning environment. Their final input was to assert also strongly that the unit should have an enrolment quota but that it should not be a competitive entry process (only open effectively to elite students) but open to all students on first-come, first-served enrolment process.

**Issues arising**

- Should this unit be offered again in the Murdoch Business School?
- What should be the balance between individual and team based learning in future offerings of this unit?
- Should additional topics be introduced such as ‘budgets’ and corporate governance’ to provide more accounting and finance content?
- Is there a need for student to receive a pre-semester briefing about the learning expectations in this unit?
- What should be the future enrolment quota for this unit?
Appendix 1

BUS2011 Work Based Business Learning Project

Focus Group Questions

Assessment of Learning Experiences

1. Please explain what were the positive aspects of this unit from your perspective as a student.

2. Can you describe what worked best for you as a learner?

3. Please explain what were the negative aspects of this unit from your perspective as a student.

4. Can you describe specifically what did not work for you as a learner?

5. What is your judgment of the value (or otherwise) of using team based learning approaches in a work integrated learning unit such as BUS2011?

6. Would you prefer to have all team-based or all individual-based learning assessment activities in this unit or a combination of the two approaches?

7. What elements of the learning process would you change, if you could, in the future teaching of this unit?

8. Should the class size on this unit be limited to a large seminar/workshop size (i.e. a maximum of 50 enrolments)?

9. If there is a maximum limit placed on unit enrolments should the unit be offered as a competitive-based entry or as a first-come, first-served enrolment approach?

10. Would you recommend that the unit teaching times be held early in the evening (from 4.30pm onwards) in future offerings of BUS2011?
Table 1 – Teaching Evaluation Survey

*Appendix 2*

Rankings for each response has a maximum score of 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Survey of Teaching (Murdoch University standard forms)</th>
<th>Murdoch University Overall Results 2009 Resp. 55%</th>
<th>Murdoch Business School Averages 2009 Resp. 54%</th>
<th>BUS2011 WBBL Semester 1, 2010 n=12/14 Resp. 86%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. Good understanding of concepts covered</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. Purpose of class explained</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. Well prepared for class</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Classes are well organised</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5. Communicates effectively with students</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6. Demonstrates enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7. Encourages student participation</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. Opportunities to apply learning</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. Be responsible for own learning</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. Sympathetic to student differences</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11. Helpful when having difficulties</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12. Clear expectations of learning</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13. Provision of useful feedback</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14. Work returned promptly</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15. Marks assigned work fairly</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title of project
A web-based tool for mediating interaction with industrially-based engineering internship students

Author and affiliation
Gareth Lee, Murdoch University

Abstract
In recent years 85% of Murdoch Engineering undergraduates spend their final semester of study undertaking an industrial internship. We have adopted a model of WIL based on courses pioneered by the University of Waterloo, Canada, directly assessing students on their performance, rather than treating it as a vacation practicum. The internship serves an essential role for curriculum design of our units, by providing feedback about the skills, capabilities and productivity of our graduates. As our student numbers increase we have noticed that it is becoming more difficult to manage students, both at a utilitarian level (managing diverse submission dates from geographically distributed students) and regarding assessment (obtaining salient feedback from industry supervisors). There is a tendency to judge students by their report writing abilities, rather than the range of professional attributes that we seek to develop.

Murdoch University already provides Learning Management System (LMS) software which serves a useful role for students enrolled in our units. It efficiently mediates communication between lecturers/tutors and students (allowing download of relevant documents and monitoring of continuous assessment marks) as well as between the student cohort enrolled in each unit (who are able to communicate via discussion groups). As part of this project the existing software has been assessed. It was concluded that established LMS systems do not suit the needs of interns particularly well, with three major shortcomings (i) they assume that all students in a unit are following a common schedule of assessment activities; (ii) they do not adequately support the roles of and interactions with industrial and academic supervisors, and (iii) they do not provide an efficient way to survey industrial supervisors regarding student progress and capabilities.

The primary objective of this project is to develop a prototype LMS which better targets the needs of students engaged in WIL activities.

Brief description of academic area
Software design and development of a learning management software system, for engineering undergraduates

Particular purpose
The project consists of a number of distinct activities (and in each case the current status is listed):

- Existing LMS systems have been evaluated to determine their efficacy for this application (completed);
- A list of shortcomings has been developed, and formed the basis for a software requirements specification (SRS) document to detail the capabilities of a new prototype system (completed);
- A survey was conducted of existing open-source LMS systems, to determine the most effective starting point for software development of the new prototype system. Several of the university's technical staff with responsibility for LMS, contributed to this discussion (completed);
- Essential capabilities, from the SRS, have been implemented and undergone initial testing (completed);
- Additional capabilities of the SRS are to be added in a modular fashion to the prototype (underway);
- The completed system is to be tested on the 2010 cohort of interns, and survey results collected (pending for second semester 2010).
Process for enacting WIL

In light of the prohibitive cost of creating large software systems from scratch we opted to adapt an existing LMS system, adding the additional features required for WIL. After an initial search and evaluation a decision was made to opt for Moodle [1] due to its widespread use, extensive existing capabilities and because it is an open source project. Many of the software systems deployed in this area are proprietary, such as the WebCT/Blackboard, and we would therefore not have access to the source code and would not be able to propagate the code resulting from this project as we are required to. This would greatly curtail what could be achieved within the tight budget and schedule, and would have provided a much less useful product.

Moodle has a relatively modular and open software architecture that has allowed us to “bolt on” the additional features required for this WIL project, without needing to make significant changes to the core features of the LMS. Programmers from the University’s Educational Development Unit have prepared a prototype module, which allows each student to have a different schedule of activities in the unit. It is common for our interns to start at different times (skewed by a few weeks) and the system reminds students of their assessment obligations and allows unit coordinators to see what progress has been made and which students are behind with their submissions. It also allows the associations to be established, linking each student to the appropriate workplace and academic supervisors that will take responsibility for their project.

As a second tranche of work, a module is to be developed that will allow industrial supervisors to partake in a “one click” survey process. This frees these time constrained participants from having to generate and keep track of username and login information, encouraging them to contribute regular feedback on the students in their care. The system automatically prompts workplace supervisors, by email, when it is time to complete a survey and ensures that their response is automatically recorded for the correct student. It also generates occasional reminders for supervisors who are overdue in their reporting. We hope to use a similar feature in future to prompt academic supervisors, since they too are suffering from increasing time stress in the modern university workplace.

Key findings

It was never envisaged that this project should focus on “social science”-styled survey research, so the conclusions to date do not directly fit this template; however there have been a number of significant outcomes from the project.

- We have a prototype LMS system tailored specifically for interns established, for evaluation in the second half of 2010, that provides an implementation of the several of the new features that we have identified;
- We have a software “test bench” in place allowing further features to be trialed in future;
- It is expected that the prototype LMS will also increase efficiency of the various supervisors’ time and provide greater consistency of supervision and support for WIL students;
- It is hoped that the project will encourage industry supervisors to engage more closely in the assessment of the students in their charge;
- It is expected that the prototype LMS will develop a greater sense of community amongst our interns and encourage them to be more reflective on their workplace experiences while studying off campus;
- Once more thorough assessment of the prototype is complete, we have the option of completing the system and using it for WIL students in other discipline areas;
The prototype will allow unit coordinators to keep track of a large cohort of students and minimize the chance of any student being overlooked. This quality control aspect is an objective of the industry bodies (in our case Engineers Australia) responsible for monitoring and accreditation of professional degrees;

The introspection resulting from this project has allowed the engineering academics to improve the internship supervision process somewhat, by recognizing that there are some shortfalls in our current supervision process and planning improvements;

As a by-product of this project, the technical staff with responsibility for LMS at Murdoch have been able to explore an alternative approach to LMS support for the existing undergraduate students. Such open source solutions as Moodle allow LMS capabilities to be customized in a way that is impossible using commercial closed-source software.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- What software systems are in place at other institutions to manage communication with WIL students? We have already encountered software solutions to related problems, such as SONIA [2] that deals with matching up students to the correct placement.

- Do other institutions face “quality control issues” maintaining consistency of the WIL experience for large numbers of students? Do any use the WIL component as a basis for student assessment? Are there accreditation issues resulting and/or issues relating to their professional bodies?

- How do we engage (encourage) industrial supervisors to contribute to the assessment of the interns in their charge?

- What strategies should we use with such a system to encourage our students to be more reflective of their experiences in the workplace? (One strategy that has been suggested is to get them to complete an expectations survey at the start of their placement and then comment at the end on how the actual experience lived up to their expectations. Is this the best way? Should we make this a basis for assessment?)

**References/Footnotes**

[1] Moodle is an open source LMS originally developed by Martin Dougiamas of Curtin University, Perth, and now supported by a broad community of secondary and higher education users. It is designed to support a social constructionist approach to pedagogy. See http://www.moodle.org for details.

[2] Sonia is a database software tool designed to aid the process of matching students to WIL placement opportunities. It keeps track of enrolment and associated issues such as police clearance, immunization and insurance. These are not issues that we have focused on in this project. See http://sonia.com.au for details.
Title of project
Developing professionals: Student experiences of a real-client project

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Abstract
This paper investigates the learning potential of the student experience of working with real clients in a final year undergraduate unit that aims to develop professional skills. Students, working in consultancy teams, developed communication strategies for a not-for-profit organisation. A teaching intervention was trialled late in semester to promote the sharing of client-interaction experiences amongst student teams. The student reflections were analysed to explore student perceptions of, and attitudes towards, their interaction with clients. This analysis led to the development of three frames: ambiguity of purpose (i.e. clarifying an issue and defining the goals); ambiguity of process (i.e. negotiating roles and dynamic relationships; tolerating change); and engagement with client’s values and needs (i.e. identifying with the client's mission and issues). The findings revealed that assumptions cannot be made about the value of real-life client projects and suggest that such learning activities need to be carefully structured and supervised to make the links between academic learning and professional development explicit and beneficial.

Brief description of academic area
Work-integrated learning investigation of final year public relations students’ experiences of the challenges of real-client projects

Particular purpose
This research is designed to investigate the impact of a work-integrated learning activity on students’ professional development. Although its focus is on one aspect of a real-client project—the challenges perceived by students—the investigation should provide useful insights for incorporating experiential learning into curricula. Students studying ‘Campaign Management’ develop communication strategies for an external client organisation in the not-for-profit sector. The unit aims to prepare students for communication-related careers through the development of professional skills and develop students as professional, reflexive learners. Student feedback in unit surveys identifies the client project as an effective, if challenging, learning experience and the community engagement has resulted in positive media coverage for the university. However, there has been limited investigation into how such a unit prepares students as future practitioners. This paper investigates student perceptions of client interactions using a learning activity, introduced late in semester, designed to ‘connect’ (to draw on Grubb and Badway, 1998) the diverse experiences of working with real clients with the students’ professional development. This activity aimed to encourage students to draw on their shared reflections of client interactions to consider how they might develop their professional capacity and client management skills.

Process for enacting WIL
Students were offered the opportunity to participate in the trial of a learning activity in 2009. Ethics approval to use the student reflections was granted by the researcher’s university. Students were asked to spend five minutes working individually on worksheets to respond to three questions. The questions were:
1. What was the most challenging aspect of working with your client organisation?
2. How did you respond to this challenge?
3. What recommendation would you make to future students in a similar situation?

Students were then allocated to small discussion groups of no more than five students; these groups did not include students from their own team. Students were asked to discuss their responses within these groups, enabling them to compare and contrast their experiences of working with diverse client organisations. The researcher then facilitated a discussion with all students, drawing out the commonalities between the experiences of client-interactions, and possible solutions or strategies in similar situations. Students’ participation in the learning activity and submission of their individual written reflections at the end of the activity was voluntary. Sixty-three worksheets were submitted. The analysis of the individual student reflections is the focus of this paper.

The researcher used a qualitative approach to analyse the worksheets, as this was appropriate for understanding the students’ perceptions of their interactions with clients. According to Daymon, Holloway and Holland qualitative analysis is initially inductive, because ‘patterns, themes and categories emerge out of the data’ (2002, 232). Each worksheet was allocated an identification number and coded using open coding to identify themes drawn from the students’ own word choices. The researcher then used axial coding to organise the coded data into broader categories in terms of their ‘collective meaning’ (Weerakkody, 2009, 283); this led to the development of three frames which categorised how individual students viewed the challenges of client interaction. These frames are:

- Ambiguity of purpose (i.e. clarifying an issue and defining the goals)
- Ambiguity of process (i.e. negotiating roles and dynamic relationships; tolerating change)
- Engagement with client’s values and needs (i.e. identifying with the client’s mission and issues).

These frames are useful in terms of understanding the nature of challenges posed by the real-client project perceived by the students.

**Key findings**

This paper reports on a real-client project aimed at developing students’ professional capacity. The project was a successful strategy in that it was popular with students and generated positive publicity for the program and the university. Therefore, the findings reported here are surprising because they suggest that the real-client project may not be effective in developing students as future professionals. Although students research and write an essay on professionalism early in semester and the unit guide outlines the roles and responsibilities of student teams in relation to their interaction with the client organisation, neither the theoretical activity (i.e. writing the essay) nor the explicit information on roles and responsibilities appear to have had significant impact on student perceptions of their interaction with clients, or on their reflexivity in relation to understandings of professionalism. In fact, there appears for many students to be a significant lack of connection between the theoretical learning around what it means to be professional, and their role in developing a professional relationship with their client. The analysis of student reflections reveals high levels of dissatisfaction with the experience of working with a client organisation (even acknowledging the students were asked to identify challenges). Of particular concern is the lack of reflexivity demonstrated by many students around their role in those interactions suggesting that far from developing the professional capacity of these future practitioners, the experience of working with a client has had limited impact.

This is not true of all students: some displayed creativity, flexibility and strong interpersonal skills in negotiating with their clients. They encouraged the client organisation to reconsider their position and open up to other possibilities. They worked within the parameters of the organisations, whether these were set by
the resources available, the values of the organisations, or the parameters established by the students in terms of a realistic strategy which the organisation could implement. The students who had positive experiences were able to adopt or appreciate the organisational culture of their clients and reduce ambiguity around the client task. They also appeared to have a more active role in negotiating the personal, as well as the business, relationship with their clients; alternatively, they recognised the two are inseparable. According to Chia (2008), the client-consultant relationship is characterised by constant change making the project different from most university assignments. The challenges for students of working with dynamic briefs and real clients demanded students were flexible and able to adapt to changing demands. They often required high levels of interpersonal skills in order to ‘manage’ their client. Not all students were able to achieve this.

The implications for educators are significant. Real-client projects do not automatically develop professional behaviour in students, or improve their relationship management skills. Rather, the ambiguity and dynamism of working with real-life clients is extremely demanding for students who have many other commitments. Not all students are willing to commit fully to such a project, or are able to engage with their clients, with the risk of damaging university-community relationships, as well as having an impact on other members of the student team. The willingness of students to be agentic learners, that is, to ‘participate in, negotiate and learn,’ and to afford the opportunities offered to them (to draw on Billett, 2004; 2009) suggests that the level of student engagement is pivotal to the effectiveness of a real-client project. The ambiguous dimensions of the client-consultant relationship offer students a very real opportunity to develop professional skills in terms of being able to conduct independent research, to negotiate with reluctant and time-poor clients and to develop a realistic and effective communication strategy out of a vague, ambiguous and sometimes changing brief.

While professional associations may insist on the inclusion of internships and experiential learning opportunities in courses of study, such activities cannot be assumed to be beneficial for developing students’ professional capacity. The role of students as ‘agentive learners’, and their personal epistemologies, experiences and attitudes, impacts on their engagement with experiential and workplace learning. Educators must carefully manage real-life client projects, and the process of client interactions deserves as much discussion and reflection in the classroom, as the actual tasks students perform. As one example, students may compare their experiences of working with a client at various stages during the semester, in order to articulate some of the challenges they are facing and to discuss possible strategies with their peers from other teams. In this way, students can begin to understand the impact of their own experiences on their learning, and learn to be reflexive in terms of their professional development. Drawing on Grubb and Badway, educators should view work-integrated learning as ‘a complex set of experiences’ which can potentially develop the professional capacity of students (1998, 9). This can only occur effectively if educators recognise students as agentic learners and encourage them to become reflexive practitioners. Reflexivity becomes a useful connecting activity between the student experience of workplace or experiential learning (such as the real-client project), their learning in a university setting, and their personal epistemologies. In this way, students can begin to develop as future professionals.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- The degree to which students are willing to engage with their client and adopt their client’s issues and concerns varies widely. Commitments external to the university (such as family and work obligations) may impact on their level of commitment to the project.
- Students need to establish and maintain a relationship with their client. However, the degree to which the client or workplace engages with the student team varies greatly. Students should recognise their role in taking responsibility for managing the relationship.
- Students need to define the task they complete for the client, and to reduce ambiguity by setting parameters around the task.
- Educators must integrate the workplace learning with academic learning. This means paying attention to client interactions as well as client tasks.
- Educators should encourage students to reflect and share experiences on their client projects, in order to encourage students to define their role and responsibilities in relation to the project. In this way, students begin to understand not just the dynamic nature of the project, but also their ability to adapt and respond to the challenges of the project and the development of their professional capacity.

**References**


Title of project
The impact of co-operative peer reflection on the integration of work integrated learning into journalism education

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Abstract
A considerable number of internship placements are undertaken by journalism programs around Australia with no systematic investigation of their effectiveness as a learning environment. There is much anecdotal evidence of their positive impact on the learning process but no hard evidence that work integrated learning placements in media industries contribute to student learning outcomes. This project explores the internship experience of students through a combination of approaches—a peer reflective session or focus group with student interns and interviews with selected media industry internship providers. Preliminary analysis of data suggests that student learning through the internship placement scheme takes place at several levels: through workplace variability; through students’ different and diverse internship experiences; and through participation in a post-internship peer reflective session. In addition, closer engagement with media industry internship providers has important implications for curriculum design and associated pedagogy.

Brief description of academic area
This project aims to identify and explore the dimensions of learning inherent in student journalism internship industry placements. In particular, it seeks to use a combination of innovative assessment models to develop a broader understanding of the learning benefits provided by industry internships.

Particular purpose (i.e. goal) for WIL initiative or activity
We want to discover what students learn from journalism internship experiences, and how the instruction we have provided in the years leading up to their internship has fed in to, or enhanced, their workplace learning experience. Importantly, though, we are also interested to discover how industry internships help students to learn about themselves in a broader way. In order to realise these research and teaching goals, we have developed a series of evaluative procedures which draw on a range of assessment models. We are particularly concerned with evaluating the usefulness of a ‘peer reflective session’ as a learning tool in work-integrated learning. This session has much in common with the ‘cooperative seminar’ (Grubb & Badway, 1999)—a key device used in cooperative education (Smollins, 1999). Based on Grubb and Badway’s ‘eight educational goals’ for cooperative seminars, we have developed a focus group method involving journalism internship students which uses a semi-structured discussion framework undertaken following completion of their media industry placements. This discussion, recorded and transcribed, prompts the interns to think about issues such as the meaning of day-to-day occurrences experienced during their internships; applying broad theoretical concepts to their recent industry experiences; gaining insight into the relationship between themselves, their workplaces, and society generally; and evaluating and understanding career decisions as they have evolved from their own experiences (Grubb & Badway, 1999). In addition to this peer reflective session, we seek to discover how the use of industry evaluations and feedback can enhance students’ understanding of their skills and of their own industry-readiness. The combination of a peer reflective session (with an associated assessed reflective essay) and industry feedback data may enable us to pinpoint how practice and academic experiences can be effectively integrated and evaluated in a journalism education setting. While a considerable number of internship placements are undertaken by journalism programs around Australia, there has been no systematic investigation of their effectiveness as a learning environment. There is much anecdotal evidence of their positive impact on the learning process but no hard
evidence that work integrated learning placements in media industries contribute to student learning outcomes. It is generally accepted that any professionally-oriented degree—such as journalism, nursing, teaching, physiotherapy etc.—should involve some level of workplace learning. However, the use of internships in journalism programs has become widespread only in perhaps the past 10 years and as such, there is little formal evaluation of their effectiveness. This project is significant in that our students usually carry out internships at a range of workplaces and are rarely limited to one site during their semester placements. This offers an important indication of the kinds of knowledge and the extent, duration and range of experiences required for students to apply effective practice in varying workplace settings (Billett, 2009a; 2009b). In summary, this project evaluates journalism internships as a learning tool—a currently under-researched field. Because of the diversity of internships undertaken by journalism students it may also provide some indications of the extent, duration and range of experiences that may be required before students are able to effectively adapt to different workplace settings. Furthermore, this diversity of internship experiences may also assist students to identify the types of journalism they wish to undertake along with the type of organisation they may aim to work for upon graduation.

Process for enacting WIL

The peer reflective session (PRS), which typically involves 8–12 students who have already completed their internships, was used for students to critically reflect on their experiences, to share experiences with other students, and to begin evaluating their workplace experiences within the context of prior university learning. This reflective session was recorded and transcribed to enable us to elicit themes and specific comments about students’ experiences. Importantly, the PRS was a pre-cursor to an assessment item—a reflective essay—which required students to compare their personal workplace experiences with broader and more theoretical notions of journalistic practice. In both the session and the critical essay, students were also encouraged to compare the different types of internships they experienced; to think about the learning and personal development they experienced at different workplaces; and to identify sectors of the media industry to which students may be best suited. In addition to these reflective requirements which provide data for this case study, written feedback provided by industry personnel will also be evaluated. This feedback provided the basis for semi-structured discussions with industry representatives/workplace supervisors which provided further insight into how effectively university journalism education curriculum at Griffith University interacts with practice settings; and how it might better achieve this.

Key findings

At the time of writing, we had yet to complete project data gathering so the following findings are preliminary although supported by the evidence we have gathered thus far. We will consider four key points that have emerged from an analysis of the first peer reflective session with student interns, and interviews with some journalism industry representatives.

Workplace variability

This has emerged as an important learning experience, primarily from data produced by the peer reflective session. Essentially, it stems from students being able to hear from their peers, very different interpretations of experiences with both the same as well as different news organisations. For example, where students found their experiences with one metropolitan newspaper variously ‘fantastic’ or a place they ‘loved’, others learned that the organisation applied a dubious interpretation of journalism ethics in some cases—in direct contrast to university journalism course teachings—and even elements of racism. Other elements which led to varied student experiences included personality clashes: one student had a run-in with a TV news camera operator on her first day, describing the experience to her peers (2009):
I didn’t want to come back the next day but I was like, ‘I’m here for a reason; I’m going to do this!’ And what do you know? The whole newsroom found out and I actually gained a lot of respect from them because everyone else hated him and I was the one who put him in his place. So I actually had some of the journos actually ask me to go out with them, which was good. So that’s something I learned: just stand your ground; you’re there for a reason; you’ve just put up with it and just go about your own business.

Others spoke about striking a particular news editor or chief of staff with little or no interest in fostering or mentoring interns, leaving them to work on their own. This intern (2009) sums up the opinions of others:

One thing that I did learn is that as a journalist, it’s not really a 9 to 5 job. When I was at the Courier-Mail, I was there, like, the first day, you’re here from 9 to 5. But often, I would have stories that would still keep running and I would be there until about 6.30, 6.45 at night. So, that’s just one thing I really learned: you are there to get your stories done no matter if you said, ‘You start this time; you finish this time’, you’re going to get it done. That’s one thing I really picked up.

Other variables identified by students include different experiences in the same newsroom triggered by particular news events or a lack of them (Bowen 2010; Clouston, 2010). As Ten News unit director Felicity Clouston (2010) observed:

The industry is very fluid; you have to be very flexible, I think, working in a newsroom or any sort of journalistic job probably, but a broadcast newsroom particularly. Things happen at last minute and you have to be able to adapt.

This particular element of the internship experience is an important one to consider in the learning process given the significant impact it can have on an individual’s overall experience. Interestingly, negative experiences reported by almost all students were most often interpreted as a positive learning experience: from either convincing a student that they were not interested in a particular genre (print versus broadcast; journalism versus public relations, for example), or by revealing to them a window on the ‘real world’ of media production from which they were able to learn something. Our initial assessment of this element of the learning process suggests the following:

- a two-hour pre-internship preparation session was a key element in ensuring students knew what to expect when they undertook a placement. This included briefing them on how to act, how to dress, their expected attitude, all contributing to increasing the chance that their internship learning outcomes would be positive, regardless of (and perhaps because of) their individual experiences;
- the size of the organisation offering an internship placement seemed to play a role for some students: for those who were more apprehensive or shy, smaller news organisations led to more positive internship experiences as students felt wanted/needed and were less likely to feel overwhelmed;
- some of the factors which led to negative experiences are out of our control — for example, particular personnel in charge of newsrooms when interns started or busy news days when interns might be ignored etc; and
- the importance of selecting the right students for a particular organizational placement. Some organisations (Bowen, 2010; Clouston, 2010) specifically request the ‘best’ students and will not accept those who are not in their final year of a journalism course. The onus rests very much with internship placement staff (academics) to ensure a good ‘match’ between particular students and particular organisations.
Internship diversity

A second key element to emerge from our preliminary analysis concerns students' learning based on their being able to compare internship experiences through a range of different organisational placements. In most cases under investigation here, students did undertake multiple internships (either two or three) at different organisations. This enabled them to learn through a comparison of management and personnel styles and to assess how well they were able to fit into each. One student (2009) made this observation following her placement with an Indigenous radio station:

It was really good just to get a perspective on Indigenous issues and do stories which are positive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I thoroughly enjoyed that; that was really good.

Another recounted different experiences (2009):

I basically ended up getting videotapes and finding my own work to do, cutting up stories, writing my own stories but that was probably the main reason I hated it. It was just an environment that was very sterile. My internship overseas? Absolutely loved it; everyone was very accommodating. You got to go out with journalists almost every day and cover really different issues compared to here … I learned a lot more there.

Adaptability is one of the key 'professional' traits identified by industry personnel, as Clouston (2010) suggests:

From our point of view, we are dealing with television journalism so I think they realize that each different medium you go to, you have to actually be able to adapt to a different type of writing … So, I think they learn a different style depending on which area they go and do their internship in … And these are little things that, as a student they need to learn and work on themselves as well.

The benefits that flow from this process seemed to be on several levels: enabling student to learn more about their own levels of personal development or confidence and, perhaps more importantly, facilitate their ability to develop clearer career goals and aims. This learned awareness is an important experience for students, most of whom are less than six months away from graduating. Interestingly, virtually all of the negative experiences students recounted as a result of their internship placements (even 'hating' them) were eventually interpreted as a positive learning experience. For example, one student who stood up to a critical camera operator learned to 'stand your ground on principle'; those who experienced unethical behaviour by experienced journalists at another site were able to recognise it as 'bad journalism practice'; shyness soon gave way to a need for greater self-confidence when students were told that they 'belonged' in a newsroom or were 'meant to be here'.

Peer reflective session learning

The post-internship peer reflective session emerged as a critical learning moment for those who participated, not only because it gave each a chance to voice their experiences, but also because it gave them the opportunity to engage with others’ experiences. Based on the dynamics of focus group research where interactivity between individuals creates something quite different from individuals' separate experiences, the peer reflective session in many ways enables students’ experiences to create a rich and varied learning environment for participants. The learning that stemmed from this session seemed to be complex yet central to students’ understanding of their role as journalists — at one level it enabled interns to put their experiences into a broader, pedagogical context and to connect their practical experiences with theoretical and university-based experiential learning; on another more practical level, it enabled students to learn
something about an internship placement that they had not been able to experience personally. The impact of peer learning in such a session seemed to be highly significant with students engaging with the ideas raised spontaneously honestly and with conviction. There was strong reinforcement throughout the session that each student intern had been able to successfully undertake ‘professional-level’ activities as judged by industry experts — their potential employers. The clear expressions of self-confidence emerging from the session — even through negative experiences — suggested students learned to adopt problem-solving techniques appropriate for their chosen professional vocation, as the following examples from the Peer Reflective Session (2009) indicate:

... internships certainly boost your confidence level, like when you sit there and work. They really boost your confidence: ‘You can do this!’

I definitely learnt that I’m a lot stronger than I thought. I think that I knew that I probably did have the abilities; it’s just believing in yourself. So when you first let go of that shyness, figure out that you can do it and then, I think, you sort of learn to, having a good attitude and wanting to be there and proving that you want to be there really helps, and just making yourself known.

It’s a bit scary when you walk in there (The Courier-Mail) but straight away, they were very welcoming and I think you have to just go and say hello to everybody. I just made sure I went and introduced myself to everybody and yeah, I think if you show you are not scared to go and introduce yourself, they are quite welcoming. They can see that you’re not, you feel that you have the right to be there

Learning from industry interactions

Interviews with a small sample of news industry representatives helped to offer another perspective on the existing internship placement system. Several of the interviewees expressed their strong support for an analysis of the current system to both refine it and to strengthen the existing relationships between industry and academia (Bowen, 2010; Budge, 2010; Clouston, 2010; Vyner, 2010). This clearly has important ramifications for curriculum design and pedagogy. For example, broadcast industry participants from ABC News and Ten News in Brisbane underlined the importance of graduates’ ability to have specific practical skills (Bowen, 2010; Clouston, 2010). It suggests the importance of retaining or even strengthening such skills in the curriculum while at the same time refining the associated pedagogy to maintain crucial links between theory and practice. The links between industry expectations and curriculum are critical, as Clouston (2010) suggests:

I think internships give them a very real sense of what the job is actually like. A lot of them actually learn more on the job then they do actually for the uni course, I know that’s necessarily a good thing to say but I’m sort of giving you an honest view here...

The academic-industry relationship in journalism education is a crucial element in the development of curriculum: internship providers’ comments on the appropriateness of students’ skills and knowledge are also able to highlight future directions we can begin to incorporate into curriculum design. This includes attention to such criteria as attitude and demeanour — perhaps normally associated with a basic vocational outcome but nonetheless of crucial importance to employers. This, of course, varies from intern to intern, as Vyner (2010) observes:
Confidence wise, some of the students were very shy and just about all of the feedback reports that I gave, I suggested that they do, either take up a course in debating or speaking or a toastmasters course, something like that that will get them used to speaking in front of people which will also get them used to speaking one on one with people even, and not being shy.

ABC State News Director Bernard Bowen (2010) reinforced this expectation:

> What you look for as an EP (executive producer) or a producer is, you’re looking at their attitude: if someone is prepared to work the phones; or if someone is prepared to listen to advice; or to have a go; or to come to the chief of staff or the EP with story ideas. You get to see what an intern is like and that is an invaluable thing which you can’t get from an application on a piece of paper.

**Issues arising for discussion**

- The importance of variability in internship experiences from the perspectives of both industry placement providers and students;
- Identifying the benefits involved in differing internship placements that enhance student learning;
- The important role of peer reflective discussion, post-internship, to share and reinforce students’ different learning experiences; and
- The importance of interactions with industry in refining both curriculum design and pedagogy.

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Student Peer Reflective Session (2009) focus group discussion, October.

Vyner, Holly (2010) Editor, Biological Farmers Association, Brisbane, interview 1.6.10.
Title of project
Developing the capacities of applied theatre students to be critically reflective learner-practitioners

Authors and affiliation
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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to explore the practice and work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences of applied theatre students as they move through the three-year undergraduate degree program. The study focused on the following key areas:

1. Sequencing of practice and WIL-based courses across the applied theatre program
2. Alignment between objectives, activities and assessment across these courses
3. Approaches to learning and teaching that develop students’ abilities to integrate theory and practice, and to engage in meaningful reflection.

By focusing the study on these three areas, it was hoped that a strong pedagogical framework could be developed that would enable effective integration of students’ conceptual understanding, practice and reflection within applied theatre in Year 1 and Year 3. This in turn was aimed at developing student capacities to become critically reflective learner-practitioners in both educational and professional contexts.

Brief description of academic area
Applied theatre is an umbrella term for a complex mix of different performance forms and styles operating in a bewildering diversity of social contexts. It encompasses theatre practice in schools, prisons, refugee camps, aged care facilities, community centres, hospitals, historic sites and museums, housing estates and many others contexts.

Alongside the development of a distinctive field of theatre/performance has been a growth in applied theatre courses and programs internationally. A common component of these programs are, unsurprisingly, the opportunity for students to apply theatre to a particular social context. The degree of involvement and engagement varies from program to program, course to course, and can involve students working from 2-3 sessions (usually a couple of hours each) to 4-6 months in a particular social context. The range of contexts is as varied and diverse as the field itself: Some courses focus on work only in a specific context (e.g. a prison); others intentionally give students the opportunity to work in two different contexts (e.g. a school and an aged-care facility) to contrast their experiences.

Applied theatre courses present a considerable challenge for students, as they demand the development of competencies in a number of areas, including theatre facilitation, theoretical knowledge of applied theatre, and conceptual understanding of a particular social context (schools, prisons, special needs etcetera), and involve preparation for the implicit realities of an institution and/or context. Given the constraints of an average 12-13-week university course, preparation is often confined to training students in a repertoire of exercises and games, contextualised within broad approaches in facilitation and managing groups, and reflective feedback on context experiences.
**Particular purpose**

Drama students working in diverse ‘applied’ contexts need not only to integrate practical theatre skills, theory and conceptual knowledge, but also sophisticated workplace skills in reading and negotiating complex social contexts. Moreover, they also have to develop before, during and after meta-cognitive skills in reflecting in and on practice. This is a hefty demand for a second- or third-year student, and it is not certain whether the frameworks currently in place (in our program specifically – but also in other programs/courses) actually maximise the scaffolding of the student’s learning both for the benefit of the student and, importantly, for the impact on participants.

Drawing on the WIL literature the project sought to explore how applied theatre courses at Griffith attempted to structure and integrate conceptual, experimental, experiential and reflective learning components. The project sought to strategise the ways in which drama students were supported to integrate conceptual, experiential and reflective knowledge, and develop greater critical meta-cognition about themselves in relation to the practice.

The major changes we made to the courses themselves was to improve the alignment and integration of conceptual, experiential and reflective knowledge, so for example with assessments in the Year 1 course Introduction to Applied Theatre we moved from an Essay and Project Proposal model to an integrated journal and Workshop Portfolio (integrating research, practical work, and reflective exercises) (see next page).

The process we enacted was as follows:

(a) Development of a framework for practice-based learning within the program (refer to WIL framework).
(b) Measurement of current program courses against this framework.
(c) Strategic implementation of findings into applied theatre courses, a 1st year course Introduction to Applied Theatre (1st year), Applied Theatre Project (3rd year).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>Y R S E M</th>
<th>THEORY OUTCOMES</th>
<th>PRACTICE OUTCOMES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intro to Applied Theatre</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>Reading and reflecting on reading in relation to practical workshops</td>
<td>Designing a hypothetical project proposal that includes implementing a workshop with peer group and reflecting on.</td>
<td>Reflecting on conceptual, practice and context needs and demands (implicit and explicit knowledge)</td>
<td>Integrated Journal (individual). Structured reflection on workshop outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Theatre Project</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>Researching key theories that inform project development.</td>
<td>Real-world project/program development and management. Developing facilitation skills in situ. Partnership negotiation and consultation.</td>
<td>Reflective practice to address personal skills, project success, qualities of real-world context.</td>
<td>Project Proposal As per simple funding application, including mission and vision, strategies, project management, partners, sustainability etc. Practitioner Portfolio: Practitioner statement including personal approach to the work, ethics, philosophy, methodology. Project outline and rationale including changes. Reflective analysis of how project did/did not meet needs and demands of context including how it could be improved. Reflective analysis of the context as a site for WIL.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Practical workshop integrating conceptual, experiential and practical skills
Process for enacting WIL

We enacted WIL analyses through implementing and evaluating course changes in the following ways:

(a) Semi structured focus groups with 1st and 3rd year students
(b) Semi structured interview with course tutors
(c) Evaluation and reflection of course assessments
(d) Collect course evaluation data
(e) Analyses of data

Key findings

The starting point for the project was questioning if we were being effective in the way we thought we were. Were we communicating clearly about the complexity of applied theatre in the way we hoped across courses and the program as a whole?

The key areas of concern were students not being able to reflect in any depth about their experiences running applied theatre projects. The ‘reflections’ were highly descriptive and they found it hard to make connections between the practice, the ‘readings/theory’, and the need for reflection. For example students would write ‘we did a great job in the circumstances’, but were unable to dig deeper and assess the circumstances or examine how they were responding using different strategies. In the first year course there was an awkward alignment between conceptual and practical skills, allied with low reflective skills.

The two key changes we made were to the assessments used on the courses, and integrating and making explicit a structured method for reflecting on experiences, whether in class or in the WIL context.

The findings from the project point to a number of positive outcomes in the following areas:

Curriculum

Students from both courses felt that there was a clear distinction between conceptual, practical, context awareness (implicit knowledge), and skills development (drama). The students evidenced the explicitness and clarity of the course outline, and the follow through of this in teaching. The use of Gibbs’ (2009) reflective model was used to directly structure responses to workshop, and was explicitly set out in the course outline and guidelines to the assessment. Gibbs has suggested a useful model for thinking about how to structure not just reflection in and on practice, but also reflection-before-action, for example, how to plan out and re-think about plans before action. His six-stage approach involves:

Description of the event. A student describes in detail the event upon which they are reflecting—where were you; who else was there; why were you there; what were you doing; what were other people doing; what was the context of the event; what happened; what was your part in this; what parts did the other people play; what was the result?

Feelings and thoughts; the notion of self-awareness. A student tries to recall and explore those things that were going on inside their head.

Evaluation. A student tries to evaluate or make a judgment about what has happened, and considers what was good about the experience and what was bad about the experience, or what did or did not go so well.
Analysis. A student tries to break the event down into its component parts so they can be explored separately. The student may need to ask more detailed questions about the answers to the last stage. Including: what went well; what did they do well; what did others do well; what went wrong or did not turn out how it should have done; and in what way did they or others contribute to this?

1. Conclusion and synthesis. This differs from the evaluation stage in that now the student has explored the issue from different angles and now has a substantial amount of information on which to base judgement.

2. Action plan. During this stage the student should think forward into encountering the event (or similar event) again and to plan what they would do—would they act differently or would they be likely to do the same?

While some students didn’t use the format explicitly all understood the principles as elements they needed to use to structure their reflections. The result was a marked balance between description and reflection – entries were far more developed and analytical. There was a much stronger flow between conceptual, experiential, practice and skills.

The data also surfaced not only the importance of modelling a drama workshop, but also demonstrating a meta-awareness of context of workshop. So for example, not just running a prison theatre workshop with the student group, but offering a meta commentary on why exercises were run, and the kinds of responses that it might meet with. The third years also commented on this, with many of the student respondents to the project saying they had learnt a great deal from observing this, and even more so when they had the opportunity to re-rehearse the workshop themselves using the same techniques. ‘Doing it so you know how it feels’, as one student commented. ‘It’s easier to explain something once you’ve worked out how you would do it’. The rehearsal/role-play simulation helped to prepare the students as agentic learners, emphasising the implicit skills of observations, interactions and reflexivity expecting of them in the ‘real’ practice context.

Student:

The practical exercises that we did in class were very important to our learning and preparation in the projects. They demonstrated how activities would be run, including what language to use and what problems may arise as well as how to tackle them. The practical teaching was critically important in preparing for the projects, without this the standard of the projects would be a lot lower.

The simulations also helped students to ‘play the role’ of the context community/group thereby facilitating a much higher awareness of the importance of different ‘languages’, tones, and styles of content delivery.

There were a few additional more technical areas which emerged, for example the student feedback was that they wanted to write more in their journals and portfolios – this was self corrected in the course, and the word limit was increased from 2,500-3,000 to 2,500-3,000. The quality of this writing was strong – and there was a marked overall increase in the average mark.

In the third year course, students used Gibbs’ framework and grasped not just the mechanism/process of reflective practice, but understood why it was important to them. One of the students noted in their feedback: ‘The assessments were useful in making us understand the importance of the continuous cycle of research, practice and reflection’.
Pedagogy

The students (from both courses, also noted by tutors) felt there needed to be more teaching and learning strategies in aligning conceptual/theoretical reading with the classes. The tutors felt there needed to be more of a connection made between theory and practice in the class, particularly with the first years the readings were done after the class - and this impacted on the content of the class. In a few of the Year 1 journals they added a ‘link between reading and workshop’ section, which was excellent and something we will introduce next time as an explicit part of the assessment.

Both students felt strongly that the courses could improve their integration of reading/theory into the classes. The tutors assumed that the weekly set readings had been carried out by the students before class, and that the workshop complemented the reading. In the data analyses it was clear that students often read weekly readings after course work, leading to a course time needing to be spent introducing the background in greater depth. Students also felt that the workshops/reading should align and link far more overtly in the class time. On the occasions that classes did align the students learning was enriched by both the workshop and the ability to understand and critique the reading at a deeper level. One strategy suggested by the students was developing ‘reading circles’ – and this will be enacted next year. But tutors also needed to consider how to base and/or refer to conceptual knowledge more explicitly in the class.

The first year portfolio involved student groups interviewing and/or observing a practitioner in context, and this was highly effective in reinforcing the kinds of implicit knowledge present in a given context, and how this shapes the content, form and goals of an applied theatre workshop. However, students also identified a need for more assistance in preparing for the practitioner interview. First year students were not necessarily skilled enough to conduct basic research, and this surfaced an assumption within the pedagogy that students know how to search and identify a range of different sources of information. Again, this is a skill that needs explicit attention as part of the process of doing the assessment.

Personal Epistemologies

The focus group interviews with students demonstrated how significant the personal epistemologies of the students were in their reception to the courses. It was clear that the location of the first year course, in the first semester of study, significantly impacts on the students’ ability to contextualise their learning about applied theatre. There is considerable nervousness about working together, the students felt vulnerable about being in university (many first in family), and the transitional expectations of being a university student. In a minority of the reflective journals there was a central concern with the dynamics of group/group politics – and some students who couldn’t ‘see beyond themselves’, so the reflections were about whom they liked in class – or who talked too much etc. These were in the minority fortunately, and over the first five weeks the group gathered confidence in their abilities and trust in the other group members.

The personal starting point of a first year, first semester student is typically that they have no or very little prior knowledge of applied theatre (despite it being the name of the program). There were some comments from the students that they found the readings and concept that applied theatre was a fluid and contested term a challenging one – as they were used to fixed definitions. This extended to the emphasis on the course in reflection as a valuable and valid form of knowledge. The finding evidences the need to tread more carefully in acknowledging and guiding the student in the transition from High School to University.
The third years gained a very strong framework for understanding individual ways of learning through practice. The students discussed their experiences in a number of forums, collectively, in small groups, after each workshop as well as in weekly de-briefing sessions with the rest of the class, and individually in the practitioner portfolios. This range of modalities enabled students to understand that reflection was both a cathartic outlet for ‘communicating what happened in the workshop and get emotions/feelings out in the open’, and important because ‘it provides a base for deep reflection and discussion’, and a critical device in enabling students to surface and identify problems that happened and help them to ‘alter elements of the workshop to address these issues that were only subconsciously known’.

The third years were able to articulate and identify the situational requirements for practice, and the importance of the balance between planning and reflexivity. One of the students remarked: It is important to recognise this and accept that as a facilitator you need to adapt and go with the flow of the needs of the participants’.

The third years discussed that the link between the courses within the program needed to be more pronounced. The third years felt that the old version of the first year course was a basic foundation, but that they were ‘lost’ about its relevance to them at that stage of their studies. The students started to make connections between theatre and its applicability to social issues only when there was a ‘real’ task as part of the course e.g. an applied performance (in year 2) or project (year 3). The older version of the course was interesting, but ‘we couldn’t connect it with our experience’. This reinforces the changes that have been enacted within the course, and also more broadly in a recent review of the program.

**Issues arising for discussion**

Strong benefits in making explicit useful models of reflective practice e.g. Gibbs

- The need to consider how, when and where conceptual knowledge is more effectively integrated with pedagogy and the processing of WIL experiences.
- The significance of identifying how the personal epistemologies of students and the location of courses in the students program impacts on their learning.

**References**

Title of Project
Integrating and Sequencing Clinical Insights and Experiences Across The Law Curriculum

Authors and affiliation
Jeff Giddings & Zoe Rathus, Co-directors, Clinical Legal Education Program, Griffith Law School, Griffith University

Abstract
Our project has considered the enhanced potential for taking an integrated approach to providing law students with practice-oriented experiences as part of their law studies. As a professional discipline, law has been unusual in not emphasising such experiences with Australian legal education relying heavily on lecturing as the default form of delivery. We have looked particularly at a way of involving students in a WIL experience which delivers legal services beyond traditional casework. Drawing on models used elsewhere (South Africa, the USA and UK and, more recently, through South East Asia3), we have trialled a ‘Street Law’ course. It has involved law students developing and delivering community legal education activities in High Schools in the Gold Coast area.

We have sought to identify what skills and knowledge these students drew on in terms what had already been offered in their law curriculum and what key learnings they actually acquired in this innovative course. We discovered that this non-traditional approach to WIL, in which our students performed legal tasks outside of both their campus environment or a legal agency, provided complex challenges and opportunities for deep learning.

We have identified that students drew on a range of specific skill based activities as well as many more amorphous components of undertaking a law degree such as confidence and the ability to structure. Their learnings from this course were transformative. Having to teach law in engaging manner to high school students required our students to understand and think about the law in a new way. The process of organising the presentations, preparing and presenting them drew on a wide range of skills of both a personal and professional nature. Finally we were delighted by the enthusiasm of students to contribute to a novel approach and be part of creating something new.

Brief description of academic area
This project is situated within the Griffith Law School and is an initiative of the Clinical Legal Education Program.

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Particular purpose

The Educating Lawyers Report, published in 2007 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, emphasises the relative marginalisation of clinical experiences in legal education and identifies particular contributions clinics should make to the practical and professional apprenticeships considered integral to an effective legal education. Clinics (a form of WIL in the study of law) are not a prominent feature of the Australian legal education landscape. In fact, it is well known in the legal academy that the ‘role(s) and goal(s) of legal education are universally, and in some cases, vehemently, debated.’ One significant point of divergence is between ‘those who aspire to produce graduates who “think like lawyers” and those who aspire to produce lawyers.’ The Griffith Law School (GLS) endeavours to provide our students with experiences which bridge this unnecessary divide. This has been partly achieved by the establishment and expansion of a Clinical Legal Education Program which is celebrating its 15th year of operation.

GLS is distinctive in the diversity of its clinical legal education program. Our current suite of eight courses are based on partnerships with community legal centres (CLCs), legal aid organisations, government departments and agencies, private legal firms and barristers. Some courses involve groups of students attending on a given day each week at the organisation and being supervised on-site to undertake work allocated to the clinic. Others involve individual placements in which the students work one on one with their supervisors. There is an emphasis on social justice placements, although commercial and more general opportunities are also provided.

At the centre of this project is the Street Law course, offered for the first time in 2010. In developing this course, we were able to make use of the knowledge developed through our existing clinics. We understood the importance of the classroom component – commencing with a Three Day Intensive Workshop (the Workshop) and including a mid-point reflective seminar and a final de-briefing seminar. The Street Law course provides an opportunity for students to develop their legal literacy in a manner which brings information and knowledge to the community – in this case, Gold Coast High School students. To undertake any of the suite of courses described as clinics, students must be in the final or penultimate year of their degree program. They are expected to have a broad knowledge and understanding of both the content and processes of law.

At the workshop we were privileged to be led by an international expert on Street Law, Professor David McQuoid-Mason from the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal. Some of the key topics covered in Day One were:

- Interactive methods of teaching
- Human rights as a concept
- Role plays
- Making information accessible
- The fine art of listening

Sullivan et al (2007), 24. ‘Compared with the centrality of supervised practice, with mentoring and feedback, in the education of physicians and nurses or the importance of supervised practice in the preparation of teachers or social workers, the relative marginality of clinical training in law schools is striking.’


Preparing a good lesson

Day 1 used interactive processes but Day 2 fully modelled interaction with the students presenting lessons in pairs and the class engaging in debriefing. Day 3 was largely devoted to a mock trial. This was a sophisticated activity which took most of the day. This workshop demonstrates the workload intensity of WIL for academic staff. The convenor was engaged for the full three days.

The tasks for the students were to contact their allocated school, arrange the two presentations that each pair was required to give, undertake the presentations and submit a 1,000 word reflective journal at the end. The emphasis in the presentations was on engagement. The topics selected were to be of interest to school students (e.g. social networking sites, employment law, police powers, ‘schoolies’ etc). Further, our students were to use the interactive techniques which had been taught and practised in the Workshop. Individual feedback was provided on each lesson plan and every presentation was observed and assessed, again demonstrating the workload and commitment of WIL.

Process for enacting WIL

This project focused on identifying the ways in which simulations and legal literacy projects can best enable students to develop skills and understandings which can then be refined in other clinical contexts. The literature reveals a lack of focus on the sequencing of clinical experiences for law students. In Australia, this lack of attention might arise from the ‘add-on’ nature of clinical programs. Providing students with clinical experiences has not been seen as central to the mission of Australian law schools.

The complexity of working with real clients should be seen as part of a continuum which involves refining skills and understandings students have already started to develop. Maranville persuasively argues for clinical experiences to be integrated across the law school, with simplified forms (namely simulations) being used in the early years. She further suggests that integration ‘acknowledges that the quality of learning may vary according to whether it is relatively unconnected to other experiences, or is integrated with doctrinal courses and other learning experiences.’ The Best Practices Report endorses this type of integrated approach, referring to the value of seeing experiential education ‘as parts of a connected whole’.

We considered it important to look beyond what any one particular clinic-based learning environment can provide for a student to think about what a program that involves several clinical experiences might offer. Providing the best opportunities for students to learn through clinic-based experiences requires the setting of realistic objectives [recognising the variables that impact on this process] and the careful selection of a model or models that will facilitate meeting those objectives. This is best done by taking a curriculum-wide approach. Different models should be integrated, where appropriate, and sequenced to enable clinical

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7 One student withdrew from the course, so one student worked on her own – showing great tenacity and commitment in the circumstances.
8 In fact, in practice, the topics were generally selected by the teachers.
10 Maranville, 133
experiences to build on the understandings students have already developed. This project paid particular attention to how we can most productively utilise simulation as well as experiences which do not rely on traditional lawyer-client frameworks, in particular legal literacy clinics.

We were interested to explore how the new curriculum contributed to the development of practical skills and professional attributes throughout the degree. This curriculum is the outcome of a major Review which was published in 2005. The most innovative feature of this review was the development, or recognition, of key concepts or ‘subjects’ embedded in existing core courses. These are titled ‘vertical subjects’ and are designed to enable students to incrementally develop their knowledge and understanding in six key areas - Legal Skills, Ethics, Internationalisation, Indigenous Awareness, Legal Theory and Interdisciplinarity, and Groupwork & Leadership. Both the Legal Skills and Groupwork & Leadership Vertical Subjects involve simulation practice-based activities that we expect will be useful to preparing students for WIL courses and the workplace.

Some of the embedded activities include:

- Conducting a client interview in Introduction to Torts;
- Participating in an introductory negotiation exercise in Contracts & Civil Obligations 2;
- Conducting a negotiation later in the degree (about 3rd year) in Property Law 3: Regulation of Proprietary Interests;
- Team-based policy presentations in Negligence & Accident Compensation;
- Undertaking a more comprehensive moot (mock trial) in Principles of Criminal Law and Evidence (which is a key assessment item for both courses).

A range of elective courses make extensive use of simulations and the GLS also encourages and supports students to engage in extra-curricula practice-related activities such as moots, client interviewing and negotiating competitions.

Our methodology involved administering two surveys to our students – one at the end of the Workshop at the commencement of the course, and one at the end of the final Seminar. Nicknames were used to avoid identification. We also recorded the final Seminar with the students’ permission, and have a transcript of that event. The course involved a small cohort with 12 students commencing and 11 completing the course. We still intend to request the teachers a Survey but have not been able to conduct that in the available timeframe.

**Key findings**

Perhaps to our surprise it seems that some of the most frequently reported skills or learnings from our students were fundamentally personal in nature – self growth and self-confidence – which seemed to be at least as significant as the ‘professional’ skills. This would seem to contribute to the notion that WIL experiences facilitate dispositional developments which extend across both professional and personal attributes.

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13 The GLS has an outstanding reputation for its success in a range of national and international competitions including the Vis International Arbitration Moot held annually in Vienna.
Sequencing

Did they draw on skills previously learned on campus?

We wanted to understand whether this particular clinical course had been positioned at the ‘right’ time in the degree so we asked the students what they thought they would draw on in terms of the formal education received in their degree to date and what other activities associated with their studies?

Drawing from Survey 1 most students nominated the skills-based activities embedded into our courses and some extra-curricula activities such as competition moots. Terms such as ‘practical skills’ were used in answers to these questions\(^14\). Moots were mentioned by most students, along with ‘oral presentations’ which ranged from student led tutorials to more complex tasks. One student referred to a previous clinic.\(^15\) Interestingly many referred to the need to be able to ‘answer questions on the spot’\(^16\) or ‘think on their feet’\(^17\).

These choices suggest that the students considered these activities to be helpful in terms of developing both specific and strategic procedural capacities. Specific capacity is the skill to undertake a task (eg client interviewing). Strategic capacity is the skill to understand the overall task and how it might best be organised. This latter idea was expressed in terms of skills related to problem solving and dealing with hypothetical situations (the basis of moot problems and often tutorials). Of course, strategic assessment and understanding of a situation, the ability to think about it clearly and laterally and be aware of the nuances are critical skills in legal professional practice. The pedestrian lawyer knows the law and applies it, the excellent lawyer understands the law and uses it for the benefit of his / her client (taking into account the overriding duty to the administration of justice).

Other aspects of prior study referred to included some specific areas of legal content\(^18\) that may prove useful. Three students noted criminal law\(^19\), perhaps anticipating presentations about police powers, schoolies week and other well known issues that touch on young people and law. What is interesting about this is our students' understanding that conceptual requirements and procedural capacities were both important. There was a realisation that without the procedural capacities to explain and present, the conceptual content would not be useful. Yet, on the other hand, without the conceptual content, providing advice and negotiating would not be very helpful.

With the administration of Survey 2 and the recorded Seminar at the end of the course, we were able to ascertain what previous study had actually proved useful now that the students had completed the course. Mooting and oral presentations were still highlighted as critical in terms of preparation. Students also mentioned other skills based activities such as interviewing and negotiating. One mentioned a course called Communication Processes in the Law\(^20\). Of note was the extent to which the concept of ‘confidence’ started to emerge with these answers. Before the course these skills-based activities were listed as being likely to be useful seemingly for the obvious skill. After the course they were described, not only in terms of the

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\(^{14}\) Survey 1, Q 4, Barlo.
\(^{15}\) Survey 1, Q 3, Kitty
\(^{16}\) Survey 1, Q 3, Millie
\(^{17}\) Survey 1, Q 3, Bo Bae
\(^{18}\) Survey 1, Q 5, Millie noted criminal law, family law, torts and evidence
\(^{19}\) Survey 1, Q 5, Bubbles, Sugar Daddy and Millie
\(^{20}\) Survey 1, Q 5, Shelby
actual skills, but also for the confidence that they imbued in the students.\textsuperscript{21} As one student said in the Seminar:

I thought if I can moot in front of a Supreme Court judge, I can get up in front of grade 11 . . .\textsuperscript{22}

A term used by students in both Survey 2 and the Seminar was ‘structure’. Some students suggested that a skill they had gained, perhaps almost by osmosis, in their law studies is how to structure. Although it was not mentioned in Survey 1, three students used the term in Survey 2 in answering the question about what skills-based simulations or activities they had found useful\textsuperscript{23}. As one student said in the Seminar in answer to a similar question:

I’d say structure. In law everything’s about structuring things well so I think that came in useful for making lesson plans and things like that and structuring activities. I think that’s just something in general I learnt throughout my law degree.\textsuperscript{24}

This is actually a critical skill in legal practice – used in drafting pleadings and affidavits, in making submissions and preparing complex legal documents – whether a retail shop lease or a joint venture agreement.

Specific Preparation for this Course

The feedback about the Workshop was very reassuring for the Convenor, Jeff Giddings. The students described the event as ‘crucial’\textsuperscript{25}. According to one it ‘magically prepared us for making and implementing the lesson plan. It was very effective’.\textsuperscript{26} The only negative feedback about the Workshop was that the third day, the complex mock trial, had not been so useful because it was not the kind of activity that could be run with our target audience of school students as the presentations were to fit within an ordinary lesson. Although they learnt something from that day, it was not as directly applicable and we will be re-thinking the activity for the third day – or perhaps even whether a third day is necessary.

One of the few students who identified a preparation gap in Survey 1 was quite prescient in suggesting that ‘conflict resolution’ skills could be helpful. As will be seen in the next section, discipline in the classroom was a real problem for some students and conflict resolution skills could have been quite useful.

What they were not prepared for

In terms of what the students felt unprepared for, the only issue that arose was the problem of discipline in some classrooms. Significant discussion about this issue occurred at the Seminar with students comparing the different attitudes of the teachers to the discipline in their class and that school culture was a factor.\textsuperscript{27} One student commented in Survey 2 ‘I wasn’t prepared to play a disciplinary role in the classroom’\textsuperscript{28} although her description of how she handled the situation suggested that she remained calm and was

\textsuperscript{21}Five of the eleven respondents used the word ‘confidence’ or ‘similar in these answers.
\textsuperscript{22}Transcript p 51
\textsuperscript{23}Survey 1, Q 5, Barlo, Ruby and Turtle
\textsuperscript{24}Transcript, p 47
\textsuperscript{25}Survey 2, Q 6, Barlo
\textsuperscript{26}Survey 2, Q 3, Bo Bae
\textsuperscript{27}Transcript. p 17
\textsuperscript{28}Survey 2, Q 4, Bo Bae
assertive and firm. Although it was never explored with the students, handling a misbehaving student is likely to have many similarities to dealing with ‘difficult’ clients – a topic of scholarship.  

This is very interesting for us. It seems that as lawyer academics we could pass on the skills necessary for our students to engage school students in active learning about legal topics – however, we had not anticipated the discipline issues and had not equipped our students with the skills that are presumably developed in teacher undergraduates. This is something that we will address in the next offering – with extra time allowed for students to develop their lesson preparation and presentation skills. We may also call on some of our colleagues from the education discipline.

Integration

Of interest to curriculum design was that nearly all of the students indicated that they would have liked this kind of course earlier in the degree – and more often. The desire to undertake something similar earlier may be a bit unrealistic given the obvious need to have drawn on a range of prior learnings to complete the tasks of this course successfully. However, the message was clear that the students would relish the opportunity to tackle more practical and skills based activities throughout their degree. This could happen partly by the increased use of skilled-based simulations built into substantive law courses.

In terms of integration of what they had learned from the course back into their future studies, most students thought it would assist them in other courses. They mentioned assessments which rely on oral presentations, confidence, organisational and time management skills, legal research and the usefulness of the ability to state the law simply (e.g. for an assessment task that involves providing advice to a hypothetical client). This suggests both conceptual and procedural developments. For example the students return to campus with an understanding of the importance of tailoring communication to the particular audience (conceptual) and the skills of how to do that (procedural).

Reflection

It is well documented that reflection is a critical part of the WIL curricula and enhanced professional practice. Ferber draws on Schon’s work to outline two contrasting views of professional education: the ‘teaching of applied science’ and the ‘coaching in the artistry of reflection-in-action’, noting that the ‘expert professional must combine both the rational and the artistic.’ Ferber then asserts that ‘The only way to develop the ability for reflection-in-action is by taking action. In legal education that means clinic, externship, or simulation. Simulations give students the opportunity to learn what reflection-in-action is and to begin to develop that ability.’

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29 See: R Cava, Dealing with Difficult People: How to cope with impossible clients, bosses and employees, 1990, Pan MacMillan, Sydney

30 See, for example, J Raelin, ‘Public reflection as a basis for learning’ (2001) 32(1) Management Learning.

31 Ferber, 436

32 Ferber, 436-7
The major aspects of reflection occurred through a seminar held about mid-way through the course, the seminar held at the end and through the completion of an assessable reflective journal. The key components of these as reported by the students were the opportunity to ‘hear others’ insights and ideas’.

The mid-way reflective seminar seemed to have been of great assistance to the students for their preparation of the second lesson. Therefore the timing of this was critical – between the first and second presentations.

The seminars seem to have provided a basis for transformative learning directly through a pedagogic practice comprising presentation, opportunities for debriefing and sharing of those presentations and then opportunities for reflections upon them. The students were able to access other perspectives and then reconcile or integrate those perspectives with their own understandings and accounts.

The course also required a reflective journal or essay of 1,000 words. A guide was provided to the students. It suggested the framework of:

**Describe** - What happened and what role did you play in it?

**Analyse** - What went well? Why did it go well? What would you change if you were doing this again? How would you change it? Why would you change it?

**Reflect** Include your thoughts, opinions and feelings on what happened as well as what didn’t happen. Explain what you learnt from what happened.

These journals are still to be assessed.

What did you learn and what skills and understanding did you develop?

Survey 2 demonstrates that the students largely acquired the skill set and knowledge they were looking for with an emphasis on confidence and ability to communicate. One key theme regarding the ability to communicate was that ‘less is more’. There was an interesting discussion in the Seminar where the students talked about the decision of how much law to use. ‘I was worried all the time that we didn’t have enough law in there’. But they all realised that it was only possible to teach a little bit: ‘it doesn’t matter if you don’t shove all this information at them’.

Again, this is actually a very useful skill for client work. A lawyer cannot overwhelm their clients with lots of legal information at a first client conference.

**Active listening**

Given that these students went out with the task to present the surprise skill that was noted by four students in Survey 2 and discussed in the Seminar was active listening. As one student commented that after the first presentation she had really reflected on active listening. She added:

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33 Survey 2, Q 7, Bo Bae  
34 Survey 2, Q 1, Pleb.  
35 Transcript, p 12  
36 Transcript, p 12
After our first presentation, in terms of really listening to what was coming up in the discussions rather than going, this is a checklist of what I want to discuss and I need them to get through. Actually really listening to what they said and going, all right, now I build off that and I make a comment. Instead of, as soon as there was a silence jumping in with the next thing, I was like I've really got to just let there be silence; be okay with that and really really listen.\(^{37}\)

Active listening is also a critical skill for practising lawyers. The authors were able to point out some of the connections between the skills the students had developed as community legal educators and the skills they would require in practice, but these are matters that could be further emphasised in the next offering of this course.

Confidence

One student explained that her ‘confidence has been so shattered by doing law’. This is a serious issue in law schools. The Best Practices for Legal Education Report provides a compelling analysis of the failure of US law schools to attend to the well-being of their students, noting that there are ‘clear and growing data that legal education is harmful to the emotional and psychological well-being of many law students’.\(^{38}\) The Australian literature is also replete with concerns about law students and depression so this student’s comment was concerning.\(^{39}\)

But in terms of what this course offered her she chose the word ‘charisma’. Seeing the school students in the classroom:

… those kids loved what we did … The way I interacted with them, I was like wow my charisma’s coming out. It was such a confidence booster to me.\(^{40}\)

Conclusion

We have benefitted from the opportunity to have Stephen Billet review our data. We now re-produce his initial analysis:

The community legal education experience has a powerful impact, not only for its own purposes (i.e. advising students about preparing them for community legal education), but as a fundamental device for developing the law students capacities through the necessary process of engaging and integrating their understandings, capacities and values associated with law. Much of this appears to have arisen through them having to articulate concepts about law in a particular way, having come to understand those concepts and build important associations and relations in the use of those concepts. In addition the students develop and hone procedural capacities, and through both have come to develop more robust and enriched concepts of law. All of this not only emphasises the importance of integration, but the community legal education experience has provided a vehicle through which that integration necessarily has to occur. The concepts and propositions advanced about law had to be engaged with and considered in relation to a

\(^{37}\) Transcript, p 33


\(^{39}\) She later advised that she did not intend to be a legal practitioner, but rather to use her law in business.

\(^{40}\) Transcript, p 51
particular set of clients [or audience] and issues. This then required an evaluation of contextualisation of those concepts and propositions which students sorted into considerations, articulations and orderings that will likely have not only a lasting effect but also a deepening effect. So, the integrations were necessitated and served to enrich students' knowledge.

Issues arising for discussion

- The focus on self esteem and confidence – the development of personal as well as professional attributes.
- Skills that related to legal practice that were not even necessarily identified as such – active listening, simple communication of the complex issues in the law, structure and strategic thinking.
- The appropriate positioning of WIL courses in degree programs.
- Understanding the law in terms of human rights – the need to balance competing interests and values.
- Providing effective structures for students to use in operationalising and applying their knowledge
- Importance of modelling a problem-solving approach
- Enthusiasm of students to contribute to a novel approach – part of creating something new

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