



Work Integrated Learning

A Template for

Good Practice:

Supervisors' Reflections

Andy Martin

Malcolm Rees

Manvir Edwards



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NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TERTIARY TEACHING
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Levinia Paku, Placement Coordinator, Cooperative Education Unit, Waikato University, for her help in transcribing the interviews and providing valuable feedback for the data analysis.

Massey University Work Integrated Learning Supervisors who were interviewed as part of this study. Their passion and enthusiasm for their work was clearly evident, as was their commitment to students to make the most out of their practicum/internship experiences. Representative quotes from these supervisors are used to highlight each of the key common themes.

The practices described are based on a) the primary data from the interviews with academic supervisors, supported by b) relevant documentation (e.g. course/paper outlines, graduate competencies, etc.), and c) existing literature/ research. This triangulation strengthens the credibility and dependability of the findings (Stake, 2008; Yin, 2009). A convenience sample of fifteen academic supervisors engaged in WIL from across a range of academic disciplines (e.g. business, creative arts, education, applied & social sciences) was used in the study. The participants related aspects of their WIL programs at Massey University, New Zealand and shared opinions on meeting learning outcomes and the needs of students during the WIL experience. However, the findings of this study lend themselves to being transferred and applied more widely to, or in other, WIL contexts i.e. by any tertiary provider either offering or considering WIL as an option for enhancing student learning.

KEY ELEMENTS

This research project was conducted for the purpose of developing a Template for Good Practice in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs. The key good practices for each of the six common areas are briefly listed below:

1. Organisation set- up
 - a. Placement requirements and support
 - b. Placement selection and location
 - c. Risk management issues
2. Student preparation
 - a. Pre-requisites and theoretical basis
 - b. Careers interview skills and CV preparation
 - c. Readiness for practice
3. Supervision
 - a. On campus academic supervisor and mentor
 - b. Work place employer
 - c. Work place university staff
4. Competencies
 - a. Self-confidence
 - b. Communication and people skills
 - c. Teamwork
 - d. Professional standards
5. Pedagogies
 - a. Scenario based learning and project work
 - b. Theory lectures and labs
 - c. Oral presentations
6. Assessment
 - a. Learning contract
 - b. Reflective journal
 - c. Final report
 - d. Industry based competency checks
 - e. Oral presentations

INTRODUCTION

WIL is the heart of the programme

WIL inspires students

WIL is fantastic for setting up networks

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is a structured educational strategy, which aims to merge theoretical knowledge gained in academic studies to workplace experiences by developing relevant professional skills in preparation for future career opportunities (Coll & Eames, 2004; Little & Harvey, 2006; Martin, Fleming, Ferkins, Wiersma & Coll, 2010). It is a bridge for the student between the academic present and their professional future.

WIL programmes seek to provide graduates with a comprehensive industry skill set desired by potential employers, in particular the development of behavioural competencies such as self confidence, communication, customer relationship management, initiative, and relationship building (Archer & Davidson, 2008; Dressler & Keeling, 2004; Fleming & Ferkins, 2006; Martin & Hughes, 2009). These personal attributes and graduate capabilities are important for success in the workplace (Bell, Crebert, Patrick, Bates & Cragolini, 2003).

Terminology

There are a variety of terminologies for WIL. WIL is also known as sandwich degrees (Ward & Jefferies, 2004), cooperative education, internships or practicum (Sovilla & Varty, 2004) depending on the international context. The World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE) combines both cooperative education and WIL (WACE, 2011). Regardless of the terminology, WIL provides a tripartite partnership between the student, the workplace organisation, and the university (Fleming & Martin, 2007).

It's a partnership between [the work force] and [the institution] to build capacity in the workforce for the region

There is increasing emphasis on WIL or work-based experiential learning within tertiary organisations (in New Zealand and Australia) to enhance graduates' employability (Newcastle University, Australia, 2008). Experiential learning is a cyclical process that involves observation, reflection and action (Dewey, 1938).

Developing our students' employability... by increasingly embedding workplace and applied learning opportunities within the curriculum (Massey University, 2011, p.7)

Advancement of WIL

The inclusion of a WIL dimension in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) Institution Report highlights the importance of this activity for students. The AUSSE provides information for stimulating evidence-based conversations about the quality of student engagement in university education (Coates, 2011). The AUSSE is conducted by, for, and with participating tertiary institutions. Clearly then there is an increasing interest in this area of teaching and learning. Coates (cited in Higher Education Update, 2011, p. 13) states that:

If learning how to think is the primary purpose of University then getting a job at the end likely comes a close second.

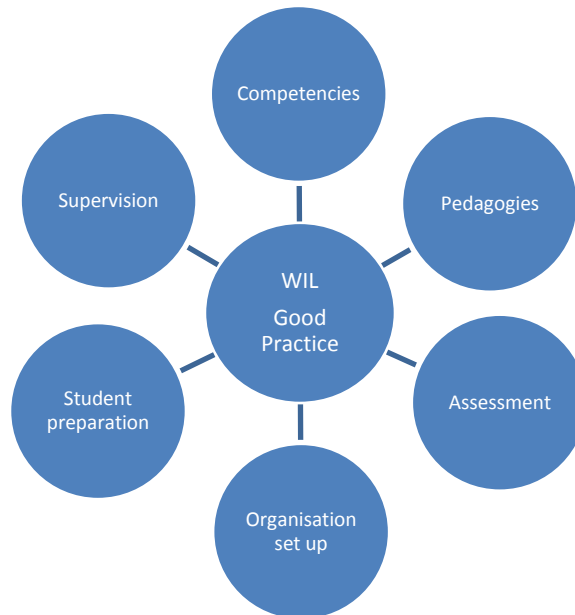
This current publication is aimed at any tertiary provider either offering or considering WIL as an option for enhancing student learning. 'A template for good practice' focuses on practical information for students, lecturers, and employers and is based on six themes. Quotes from academic supervisors interviewed for this research project are used to highlight each of the key themes.

A Template for Good Practice

1. Organisation set- up
2. Student preparation
3. Supervision
4. Competencies
5. Pedagogies
6. Assessment

A TEMPLATE FOR GOOD PRACTICE

*[WIL]... the integration of theoretical work into practice
... serving as a culmination of theoretical studies
... hands on experience... leads to a better graduate*



There are specific components, which when melded together, define an optimal WIL activity through the tripartite partnership between the employer, the teacher, and the student. The student brings to the WIL placement theoretical knowledge, industry skills and prior experiences, which have helped develop their personality (Boud & Knights, 1996). The WIL experience then provides the opportunity for the student to develop both personal and professional attributes and enhance employability upon graduation. It adds a complementary, professional dimension to academia, and builds networks. Done well, WIL benefits each stakeholder within the tripartite relationship.

It's fantastic for setting up networks... the students do get a range of opportunities for networking with people.

It puts a rounding on the work that we're doing here... it actually lets the student see exactly the environment that they will be working in, understanding the skills and the knowledge they're developing within our particular degree paper... how it fits into the business structure.

Benefits to the students

Clearly one of the themes is that WIL enhances employability. In fact many students set-up employment opportunities whilst on WIL placements. They also develop a range of additional competencies or work-based knowledge that is not as easy to learn through conventional means.

A lot of our students find jobs from doing their internship... we've had jobs created within companies to fit round students.

Students are very competent to do the job they've been trained to do... they have good transferrable skills.

Our students have the ability to hit the ground running in their first jobs and in the industry here... they have a reputation to be able to do that, in comparison to [other] graduates who haven't done this sort of thing.

Benefits to the workplace

The workplace can also benefit greatly by having a student on placement. They are often able to provide a new or innovative point of view not recognised by those already in that workplace. WIL also provides the opportunity to prepare and evaluate potential employees, along with gaining assistance and expertise in ongoing related projects (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

Very often [students] make really quite good suggestions as to how the company could improve what it's doing.

[Students] are able to take a critical overview of what's going on at work as well as making a practical contribution to the workplace.

More than a pair of hands... There is a brain there with some knowledge.

Benefits for the University

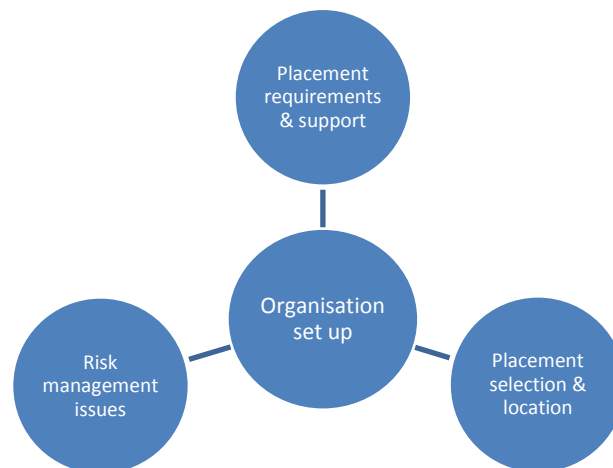
The university both directly and indirectly benefits from the WIL experience as much as the student (Weiz & Chapman, 2004). Students are able to demonstrate professional competencies and indirectly provide an assurance of high standards to employers. WIL also provides collegial contact with professionals in the field and enlarges the scope of the curriculum (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

The quality of our graduates is very high and they're recognisably different... we've had very good feedback about our graduates when they go out places.

To be able to provide opportunities for the students to integrate their theoretical knowledge with practice skills and ensure that they are ready to become competent practitioners by the time they complete their qualification...in line with [industry] requirements and standards.

1. ORGANISATION SET UP

It is expected and required of us that we will have a component of practical work and placements... which has been warmly received by the practising profession... as a means of increasing the kind of graduation level competencies of the students



The WIL experience should be part of the whole course of study, rather than as a stand-alone component (Martin & Leberman, 2005). From a university standpoint the set-up, administration, resourcing and implementation of WIL are influenced by certain precursors. Relevant components can be combined and matched to fit appropriately within different academic programme structures. The underlying rationale for taking a particular approach to WIL is linked to how the precursors combine. This rationale has a bearing on supports and resources that are brought into play together with the activity around managing placements. The precursors that influence what is done, why and how, with respect to WIL within an academic programme course include:

- Is it a programme completion requirement and does it carry academic credit/ points?
- Is it undertaken within an academic year or outside of the academic year?
- How many students are involved?
- What number of hours are involved?
- Is it an individual/standalone paper, or is it a component integrated within a programme?

- Does it involve a scaffolded approach over a number of years with multiple exposures, or is it a single exposure in one year only?
- Is it stipulated as part of an accreditation requirement, or for registration and recognition by a professional field/ body/ agency?

There is value that can be derived by students from WIL opportunities irrespective of when, where and for what duration in the programme of study the opportunity is presented. A positive WIL opportunity for students can be achieved regardless of which precursors combine.

It is essential, but it is not counted towards the GPA... no completion, no degree.

Merely course requirements until about 18 months ago when we made them zero credit papers... by making them zero credit papers we could ensure the students completed them before they could progress to the next stage of enrolment.

Multi-years WIL experience over the duration of a programme of study... reports get more complex and substantial from practicum one, practicum two, and practicum three.

WIL included ...as a part of the accreditation process.

Placement selection & location

A variety of approaches can be used for placement selection:

Self-selection

It is sometimes advantageous for the students to select their own placement. This is not only because of a particular competency or experience that they want or a capability that they know the employer has, but another strong motive is the prospect of future employment. In addition, other competencies can be developed in the run-up to the self selected cold calling process, especially the soft skills relating to communication and time management.

We encourage students to make their own pitch to an organisation of their choice...prefer to get them to do some cold calling... I've got a letter which they can adapt and they can send it to workplaces of their choice... It's good practice for them to try to sell their skills... and they are more likely to go for an organisation that they feel passionate about or they like the sound of..

Gives them the opportunity to look inside that organisation once they are there as an intern and figure out if they would actually want to try to get a job there on graduation.

Some of the international students go back to their mother countries... and do their practicum over there.

Placed

A deliberate placement typically is where the university has a long-standing relationship with the company involved. The development of such connections is a time consuming process, but the benefit of access into a reliable environment is important and necessary particularly in professions where there is either competition from other educational providers or limited opportunities for placements. There also needs to be an understanding that educational learning outcomes do not necessarily align with commercial expectations from the employer, and therefore a degree of latitude is sometimes necessary if the student does not appear to have achieved in the workplace when in fact they have achieved the academic requirements of the course.

The students might propose a site and an alternate site, but then there's a lot of juggling about whether the site can accept that person, and indeed if it's a good match. I tend to do all the legwork to do the placements.

The students have a lot of say in what sort of placement they want, so it's different to education or nursing where they're told to go to this school or that hospital. They basically get to state their first three choices. We try and match them as closely as possible with the agency and a field educator [who is a supervisor person in the agency].

They send their CV to that person once I've spoken to them and there's an interest there in having a student. Then the students have to go for a formal interview with the agency staff. That's a checking out time for the agency to see if the student might be suitable, and also for the student to see if they might want to be placed there.

Just as the placement approach can vary, so too can the location of the placement. Typically WIL is seen as an off-campus activity; however, examples of on-campus activities can equally result in effective placements. The different locations for placement could include:

- Off-campus placement - this is a common type of WIL experience where a student is placed with a specific employer.

- Off-campus facilitated - the student may propose a placement organisation, the academic supervisor then assists with matching them as closely as possible with the agency.
- Off-campus self-selected - this is where the student, for various reasons may select their own off-campus placement.
- On-campus allocation into teams - this is a very effective way of managing large numbers of students who are placed in purposively selected teams. They conduct the activity on campus sometimes but not always with industry representative in attendance
- On-campus placed – this is where the student is undertaking their placement based on campus.

We also invite all prospective employers to come and visit our students and informally mix and mingle with our students enticing them to come and apply to work for them

Industry networks

A key feature of many placement types is the “industry network” that is needed to set them up. Such networks are time consuming to create and maintain. They require dedicated academic staff, and or liaison staff, being in regular contact with industry and or the professions. What an organisation needs to be prepared to do is develop long standing relationships with industry so that placement of students is seen as “business as usual”. In many instances the identification of placements is reliant upon a longstanding association with industry.

Our relationship to particular institutions is very close; it needs to be highly professional... so the type of relationship and discussion has to be of mutual trust... the nature of the practice, the nature of the work that we do together has to be on that basis.

What we're really doing is driving the relationships with the institution... It's a matter of negotiating with the institution under what circumstances the student can undertake the particular project

An observation that can be made is that the length of placement is known to vary greatly from just a few weeks to full one-year internships. This variation is not unusual although in some parts of the world an internship is understood to mean a full “gap year” or one year, sometimes in paid employment.

Typically though a WIL course is likely to span at least one semester and whilst the actual time in the workplace might not be very long, additional learning outcomes can be achieved through the preparation that is undertaken prior to the commencement of the off-campus component.

Risk management issues

The academic requirements should be articulated and administrative and other obligations made known as these relate to those within the tripartite partnership for WIL. This is necessary to manage expectations, to define lines of responsibility and where obligations rest, to mitigate risk. The importance of establishing, maintaining and sustaining positive relationships in relation to WIL, and particularly with workplace employers, should not be understated.

My job is to ensure that the university regulations and the industry regulations integrate nice and safely.

The WIL experience may require a formal contract, confidentiality agreements or similar formal demands from the employer. Other issues such as insurance, visa arrangements and contact details must be arranged prior to the placement taking place. There are likely to be an additional range of institutional policies or procedures to comply with if off-shore placements are being considered. Refer to your own organisation's risk management procedures.

There's the university contract that we require the students to get their host internship post to sign-off and I also sign-off, and that indemnifies the institution against students making some kind of error...there's one to one counselling that students get... I talk to them all prior.

In the agreement it does state what to do in the event of a student exhibiting unsafe behaviour...and the processes to follow...and who's to be notified... the agency is quite within their rights to ask a student to leave the premises. It wouldn't happen very often but they can do it... students do incident reports on unsafe incidents that they've been involved in or peripheral to.

We have a contractual agreement for every placement... between the university and the agency... They've got contractual arrangements about what to do if there's a problem with the student... we have an after-hours phone right through all of the time - that's the emergency port of call.

Placement requirements and support

Some placement employers are naturally more risk averse than others. Not surprisingly the health and allied health professions have a strong focus on ethics, confidentiality and privacy. Workplaces should be encouraged to expose students to the same level of induction training as they would for their permanent staff.

The student will be briefed on [the organisation's] practices, the operations, health and safety, the hazards and things like that.

I think that the kind of OSH type of risk is managed reasonably well... they're expected to demonstrate a level of competency... they have a reasonably good idea of what is expected of them and what are the boundaries...we give them some fairly clear guidance on what behaviours are expected of them within a practice situation.

Students are covered under the employer's liability insurance... because they are effectively being employed by the employer and we're just bringing the two together.

Students also have to have their own personal insurance so as far as loss of their own personal belongings or car accident is concerned, they will meet those obligations.

Relationship and network support

Developing and maintaining ongoing good relationships with industry staff and organisations in the field is vital for the success of WIL programmes.

We send a letter once the student has found the place and the contact...we send them a letter to say "thank you" for offering the opportunity... we usually give a bit of background about the internship...what the student needs to be looking at, what they're going to complete at the end of their internship and then we also have an evaluation sheet which they fill in.

I write to all previous employers that have employed students before... we ask them if they've got work available and then we advertise the jobs... the students are aware of the website... they follow the process from there... they will get in touch with the employer... ring-up... and then the employer will either ask for a CV or an interview over the phone.

Student support

Providing support to students in the field allows them to make the most of their workplace opportunity and assists them to achieve their learning outcomes.

Memorandum of understanding... signed by both the students and the clients... stated up front that the learning outcomes that were required for the students were the first and foremost thing that we were interested in.

We've only had one instance so far where we would say that the internship didn't work as well as we wanted it to... the student complained that... an element of exploitation potentially... so we jumped in at that point and made sure that the student had a better experience from thereon in.

The learning outcomes come first and the clients know the learning outcomes come first.

Workplace supervisor support

It is important to establish realistic expectations and provide resources for workplace supervisors.

Once placements have been confirmed they get a handbook... details a whole lot of information.

We hold training sessions... two day training sessions on having a student at your workplace... all the general procedures of having a student with you... then we also inform them on techniques for training students, so effective questioning techniques... describing our students to them and then informing them of the assessment process.

Administrative support

Administrative support staff can provide student, academic and industry supervisor support.

We have a team of staff... and they do things like maintain our database and send out our letters and do that sort of admin work.

For the final year placements we have two full-time staff who deal with all of the undergraduate administration.

Online support

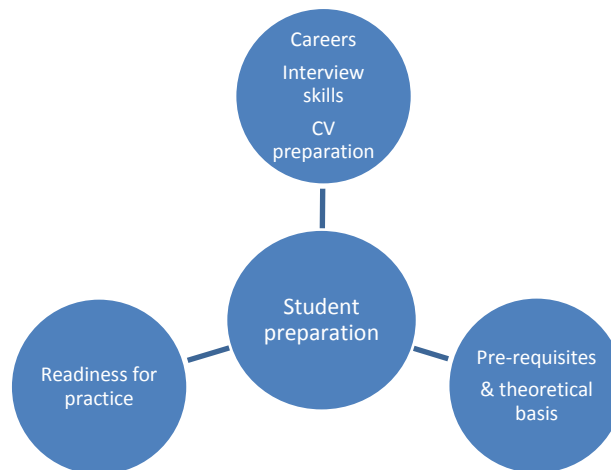
Web-based resources and opportunities to engage with other students and supervisors are increasingly being used to provide support to the WIL experience.

Everything is available online... PWO (Practical Work Office) website. All of the resources are there... very handy for students to grab.

They are given specific resources specific to their placement... they have access to web-based resources... such as documentation, assessment resources.

2. STUDENT PREPARATION

To be able to provide opportunities for the students to integrate their theoretical knowledge with practice skills



Prerequisites and theoretical basis

Ensuring that students can demonstrate both the theoretical knowledge and skills are important foundations for a successful placement experience. Theory papers are often done either prior to or concurrently with the WIL activity. In some instances there is also a need to scaffold an early work experience with a later year assessed WIL activity.

A lot of the initial preparation is done in papers that they're doing as pre-requisites. They do lots of lab work and role plays as well as learning about the theories. They get to do some work around ethics and boundaries, supervision, integration of theory in practice, action reflection material, conflict management, stress management, time management.

They actually get a lot of exposure in other papers that bolt the knowledge base and the skill base... before they enter into the practicum paper... to allow them to be effective in the practicum

Careers, interview skills & CV preparation

Preparing for the pitch – “making myself employable by developing the skills employers really want”. Universities provide career and employment services, which can integrate effectively with the academic domain to support the WIL activity. In addition to the careers support available, a cross-disciplinary approach can be taken, calling upon other relevant internal and/or external experts, to cover off skills development in specialist areas to prepare students for WIL.

This support could include not only careers personnel advising on CV and interview techniques, but also staff who can teach an awareness of the professional requirements and soft skills developed in the workplace environment (e.g. team skills, communication skills, coping skills taught during formal lectures).

We prepare them in terms of the knowledge base of skills they need to go into a particular setting... A careers person will come in and work with students ... guidance with developing CV and a portfolio.

We teach them how to communicate on a business level... understanding the importance of their CV. They have to prepare a CV... We work together to make sure that it's in a format of current standing.

We get the career staff into department meetings to talk to colleagues in the school to make sure that colleagues can counsel students appropriately.

Readiness for practice

Students need to research potential organisations, plan, be proactive and establish clear expectations (Martin & Leberman, 2005). It is important that students are properly prepared and ready for their practice experiences.

Students have to do a skills test, which is really about what we call micro-skills, basic communication skills. It is another check for us to make sure they are ready. Students also have to fulfil our fit and proper and readiness for practice criteria.

We have documents that the students have to do before we look at placements for them... they are given specific guidelines of what we want and we check those before they go out.

- *a police check which is just a clean slate police vetting*
- *sign a pre-placement disclosure statement in which they have to disclose any circumstances that might impact on their ability to undertake a placement, so that might be things like family circumstances, disability, not having a full driver's licence or it might be criminal convictions or other constraints*
- *sign consent to liaison form which means they give us permission to speak to agencies about them*
- *fill in a student information form, which gives us information about what they're interested in doing for their placement*
- *a two page CV and ...a covering template that goes out to the agencies as well.*

We have all our students sign a confidentiality agreement.

We've got a whole heap of written material that relates to them having to be fit and proper and ready for placement and it's specified if academic staff don't think they're ready to go on placement, what the processes are around that, so we're managing the students all the time.

They are going to be ambassadors... for the university.

Student resources

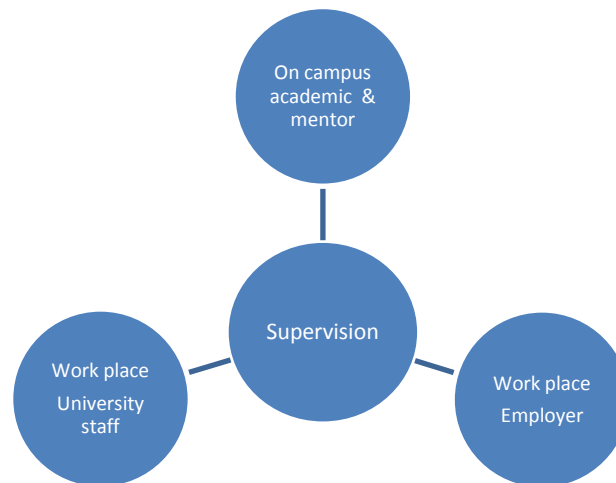
Extensive documentation should be provided indicating clear expectations of the students, suitable work activities, required competencies, assessment requirements, and theoretical resources.

Quite a comprehensive study guide... which has things like learning objectives...describing what they can expect to be trying to achieve during it... We've got posters in which students describe the kind of work they've been doing... so students can look at the kind of activities that they can expect to be doing which opens their mind to the kind of work they could be doing potentially in a workplace environment.

They have a handbook...they also have a manual that is related to their assessment... so they are aware of all the competencies and each of those competencies have specific criteria that they have to meet.

3. SUPERVISION

Part of the requirement of placement - they have to have formal supervision - settle the learning goals that fit under the learning outcomes... that is when a lot of the teaching happens as well.



It is important to emphasize the importance of matching students' expectations to projects and supervisors (Martin & Leberman, 2005). The project, supervisors and range of organisational experiences should provide opportunities for the student to build industry relationships (Martin, Fleming, Ferkins, Wiersma & Coll, 2010).

On campus academic supervision & mentoring

Student learning is supported through appropriate industry and academic supervision (Martin & Fleming, 2010). Each WIL student should have some sort of supervision from the university. The level and approach could vary from on-site, hands-on direct supervision of an activity, through to an off-site supervisor offering advice from a distance on a regular basis, perhaps participating in formative assessment, reinforcing theories and generally providing support. The supervisor provides a point of reference within the university to where he/she can turn for advice, support, reinforcement, oversight related to WIL while on placement.

The learning objectives are very much geared to what they will encounter in the workplace and the internship environment... The commonality across them is that every student has two supervisors... one is the academic supervisor whose role is to focus only on academic issues such as helping the student with their three academic assignments... plus a workplace supervisor who keeps an eye on the student and mentors them in the workplace environment, solves workplace problems.

Supervision can also take place in the form of an on-campus mentor. In some instances these mentors can be allocated for a number of years and have the function of providing academic and career guidance along with encouragement, positive reinforcement, criticism and feedback. In other instances they can be course coordinators who are supervising an on-campus activity. Both options are equally effective in managing the WIL experience.

Each student when they enrol have [allocated to them] a mentor for four years.

The best resources are the discussions they have from time to time with [the] mentor.

Workplace - University staff

Some professions require the presence of university staff in the workplace to act as supervisors for the students on placement. This is particularly evident in health and allied health professions where the ratio of university staff to students can be as high as 1 to 10.

They get allocated to an instructor and as much as we can we keep them with the same instructor... it's one-on-one... they get to know each other very well.

Postgraduate students work with an academic advisor and they also have a clinical preceptor and that's quite a structured process.

Workplace – Employer supervision

Under most circumstances there is usually a workplace supervisor as well as the university staff. Typically they know the business well and usually have a good understanding of the academic requirements in relation to learning outcomes and WIL objectives. They are often, but not always, asked to contribute towards the assessment process.

The local expert in terms of the internship host is someone on the ground who knows intimately what the business is trying to achieve and that kind of thing.

[Workplace supervisors] are invited to give feedback on particular things that students do or don't do, and where there is a need for remediation for students.

4. COMPETENCIES

Part of that formative assessment is the students saying “this is the sort of person that I am, I understand working in this environment”... learning about who they are as people, how they work in a group environment



Competencies are the qualities or extent to which the students develop the necessary ability or knowledge to do something successfully. Essentially WIL provides opportunities to enable individuals to apply academic theory to a “real world” setting/environment, with individuals able to test out the extent of their skills/competencies linked to interpersonal attributes.

A particular strength of the WIL experience is the ability to enhance those “soft skills” that could not be learnt in the classroom environment (Fleming, Martin, Hughes & Zinn, 2009). Despite the variation in the type of work placement, the range of competencies identified, outside of specific professional skills, are remarkably similar for all placements. These include; self confidence, communication skills, people skills, teamwork, and professional standards.

Other competencies get developed too... Students encounter the pressures of the workplace... They encounter the politics of the workplace... They’re quite naïve when it comes to workplaces.

So the internships are an important opportunity for them to see first-hand what happens in sophisticated and demanding workplace environments.

They're much more real life... they've been through three different companies, they've got a good idea of how industry works and the importance of people relationships, importance of good oral and written communication and that's boosted by the project they do and by a number of other papers.

Self confidence

As far as the specific competencies are concerned, developing self confidence is one of the most important. The opportunities for students to develop in this area through WIL exceed the possibilities of classroom-based learning. By being open minded, observing, listening, asking questions, reflecting and requesting feedback, students can help this process supported by their supervisor's positive reinforcement, criticism and feedback (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

The most important thing is they are self confident... that they can work with people and they feel confident to actually go into the workforce and confident in their ability to work with people on the floor.

What a lot of practicum's do is to give students confidence... They've seen how industry works. They can see why their technical skills are going to be wanted by the industry.

Communication skills

The ability to develop communication skills can begin very early in the process with many students required to make their own pitch to prospective employers. Communication can be oral, non-verbal (gestures, kinaesthetic) and written. Listening, asking questions, public speaking and preparing documents are all aspects of good communication (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

In terms of effective domain communication skills...it's the hardest to [achieve].

I really like getting your students and the reason is that they ask really good questions... Not only were they asking good questions... they managed to frame and phrase in a way that wasn't seen as inappropriate for the people in the dominant group.

People skills

The WIL experience provides the opportunity to liaise with a range of different industry stakeholders. Meeting their needs may require planning, engagement, discussion, review and evaluation. The development of a network of contacts is important in enhancing future career opportunities (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

To be able to build and be empowering in collaborative relationships with people.

They see how people in commercial situations interact with clients and they get to practice these social skills.

Teamwork

On-campus activities provide the opportunity to form teams with complementary capabilities that closely resemble the real world environment. Off-campus employers value staff that work collaboratively and enthusiastically as part of a project team.

The company isn't interested in the fact they've got a degree... that's [technical knowledge] kind of taken as a given... what they want to see is can the students' communicate... what sort of personality they have... can they work in teams... in fact, industry doesn't like students with straight 'As'... they are very good academically but they're not particularly good team workers and not particularly good at getting their hands dirty. ...so you can be too clever for industry... [WIL] probably makes straight 'A' students a bit more employable.

The groups we formed were interdisciplinary...they banded together their sets of skills, working with a real client with a real world problem or opportunity...they essentially created smaller agencies that dealt with real world issues.

[The professor] used to form students into teams like they might have in a company and he'd get them to behave as if they were in a company developing a product or a process. He'd introduce arbitrary setbacks. He gave them a fairly rigorous training. He made what they had to do as realistic as possible.

Professional standards

There is no better way of demonstrating professional standards than in the workplace. Many courses have prescribed competencies. Professional standards support the culture of an organisation, where employees are expected to be honest, trustworthy, courteous and conscientious.

The students have to meet the competencies that are set by [industry].

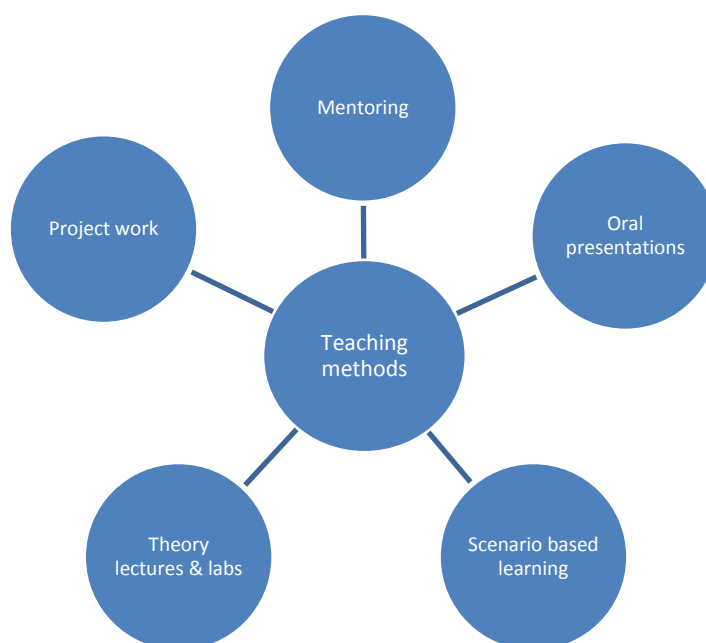
[The students] were treasured because they came and they assessed and ...demonstrated knowledge of the organisation and the products they're producing, services that they offer... It really gives them an overall view of the market, the target market that they're looking at... the legal requirements for operating a business. So it's giving them full rounded knowledge.

They need to be sure that they recognise the confidentiality of working within a company because they get access to some quite confidential information... So we teach them about the confidentiality clauses and business ethics.

We would never allow our students to practice unless they had the clinical competencies...it's just standard practice for us.

5. PEDAGOGIES

There's a view that how you communicate & relate, is innate... it's getting people to understand that it's a learnt skill... the same way that anything else is a learnt skill



Dewey (1938) advocated the value of experiential learning, but argued not all experiences are educative. He suggested that learning occurs as a result of problem solving and requires thinking and reflection guided by educators. Similar characteristics define the pedagogical approach of WIL. A range of pedagogies provide students with content knowledge and theory, linked to practical work through the placements/practicum or project. Programmes should be applied in nature, employing group work and other pedagogies to foster both industry skill development and behavioural soft skills development (Coll et al., 2009).

Mentoring

Mentoring requires close supervision of the WIL activity. This is both time consuming and resource intensive and to some extent dictates the possible scale of WIL activities in an institution. The initial purpose of mentoring is to ensure that the student is capable of handling this form of learning and to assist them in developing a degree of independence, confidence and time management.

The student needs to be able to demonstrate that they have at least begun to master those soft skill competencies already mentioned. They are representing the institution they come from so an assurance that they are ‘capable people’ is very important.

As the WIL activity progresses, mentoring provides a mechanism to reflect on the activity so that the student understands that they are aligning the theory learned in lectures with practice in the workplace. It is also important to have somebody who the student can contact should they encounter difficulties.

You're trying to send them out with a level of experience that they're not going to be inept and make a fool of themselves. But in fact what you're hoping is that you give them enough skills at the imitation level so that when they're in their placements they can actually start to take that up to the next level.

We have a tutorial space that we set aside for meeting them individually one-on-one. So that we are working together with them all the time and making sure that they're choosing the right companies to work with, and making sure that the company that they're going to is prepared to give them the time.

Some placements also have a workplace mentor, these can be either university staff who also attend the workplace at the same time as the students and closely supervise the activities or, alternatively, they can be a company employee with a specific responsibility for the student and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Supervisors in the clinic are employed by [the institution]... we do have an operational clinic which has a throughput of clients... there are people with different areas... coming through the clinic to provide a good experience for the students.

Oral presentations

Oral presentations provide an opportunity to reflect on action (Schön, 1991) both during and at the end of their placement projects. Presentations can be informal, formal or even on-line. The oral presentation is a common way for students to present their WIL experiences.

They do some presentations... ..we give them topics...and they've got to do 10 minute presentations.

Not just formal presentations... they might go into small groups and talk about “this worked really well for me and it wasn't something I tried before and maybe you could try that”.

They presented to the [industry] clients at the university.

Scenario Based Learning (SBL)

Scenario based learning occurs in a context, situation or social framework (Kindley, 2002). It's based on the concept of situated cognition, which is the idea that knowledge cannot be fully understood independent of its context. Kindley (2002) was referring to scenario based learning within reference to e-learning, but equally the concept also applies to WIL. The strength of this approach is that several competencies can be taught during one session. Controllable actions and reactions can be included and assessed in a safe manner. A “real world” approach can be applied to the learning.

When we are teaching theoretical concepts we make them come alive through case-based learning, case studies, role plays, demonstrations, and then when they get into their actual applied papers that intensifies more so that by the time they get to their internship they are seeing actual clients... to simulate what it's going to be like in the real world.

He'd let a team of students proceed nice and smoothly and then he'd drop a bombshell of some sort on them and they'd have to cope with it... it's a sort of team work paper... while it's not in the workplace it tries to simulate the workplace.

Scenario based training...scenario and evidence based training... Every [lesson] the student does has a scenario in which the lessons are placed in order to give a context on what the learning is and why they do it.

Theory lectures and labs

WIL should not be a random activity with ill-defined outcomes. It needs to be quite purposely designed by combining theory and practice with quite specific learning objectives. This is distinct from a work experience activity which may be much more informal. The WIL activity should have a real purpose. The theory taught in lectures and labs should be reflected in the learning outcomes for the course, and it should be quite clear to the student what outcomes are expected.

Initial preparation is done in their practice papers that they're doing as pre-requisites... We start off first by providing them with theoretical understanding and knowledge of the areas that they are going to be trained up in...which they take in their first year... that is followed up in second year by an applied paper which actually does teach practical skills... which they do implement by seeing clients initially in a sheltered environment of our teaching clinic...so they are very heavily supervised.

They've got at least three papers that form the base... all built around labs where they are gradually taken step-by-step through the various skills they need. ...They also have a skills test in their second year as part of their exams ... In the third year, in the first two months of the practicum paper, we review all of those skills quite intensively... Then we have another skills exam... they have to pass this before they can work with clients.

The opportunity to include guest lecturers who are able to teach specific skills should also be considered. For example this could include careers staff, external industry experts, or recent graduates who are able to empathise and have 'street credibility' with the students.

We invited people of all walks of life and all stages of their profession... One of the most illuminating lectures we brought in recent graduates... Students who've been out for one or two years to come and talk about their experience of transitioning from a university to the workplace... There was a lot of empathy.

We had the IRD come, they gave a really great talk...we had a talk about intellectual property, absolutely fascinating.

Supported by weekly lectures... a three hour lecture per week... the first hour was a guest speaker from industry... the practice side was done independent of lectures...but within the university.

Project work

Giving students a chance to work on specific projects in groups or teams prior to the WIL experience, provides them with opportunities to develop skills that will enhance project work in the workplace. Project work is a particular strength of the WIL approach (Patrick et al., 2008).

The students do lots of group work right throughout our degree... They've all had these fantastic experiences that we try and get them to impart to others so that students can learn from each other.

They worked on small projects...sometimes there were four groups working with one client and the client would choose one of those groups... it was hugely successful.

[The students] have to build up a project plan, budget etc., and time plan... and have to work through it. Each project is supervised by an academic staff member... they've been quite successful in developing new products or in sorting out manufacturing problems.

6. ASSESSMENT

All of our assessment follows our learning outcomes so everything is tied to those learning outcomes that we've set for the papers



Assessment of WIL programmes should reflect the complexity of the dual and complementary nature of the learning environments (Eames & Bell, 2005). Many of the assessment approaches employed incorporate elements of reflection along with more conventional modes of assessment (Coll et al., 2009; Hodges, 2010). The experiential component is enhanced in WIL by the development of the student as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1991), who is able to transform experience and theory into knowledge (Roberts, 2002), resulting in transfer of learning (Macaulay, 2000).

Most WIL opportunities should have some form of assessment unless they are transitional activities i.e. a work experience activity that may be observations only (not assessed) that develops into an assessed WIL activity. A particular strength of WIL is the ability to combine both formative and summative assessment activities. WIL offers the opportunity to enhance greatly the utility of formative assessment. Informal formative approaches could include the use of technologies such as emails, blogs or other e-journals. More formal approaches are the use of a reflective journal and supervisor/mentor, as part of the overall course assessment plan.

Summative assessment activities can be similar to other standard courses; however, WIL provides a meaningful opportunity to assess in particular, report writing and oral presentations.

As with any course of study, the assessment should be linked to the learning outcomes of the paper recognising that there is likely to be more evidence of the development of “soft skills” through using WIL.

Soft skills... probably hard to mark... the fact that I'm working with them six hours every week on the floor I can see how they develop and I can sort of give them feedback (advising and managing them as far as I can).

They keep a diary ...they do a presentation when they come back... written presentations (as well)... they do a written report ... They do a daily record, daily form, and they have a list of questions to talk to the company about.

Learning contract

A learning contract describing work activities and project focus is prepared and negotiated by the student with the host organisation, which is then approved by the academic supervisor. Project and personal learning objectives are individually determined by each student, along with evaluation strategies to demonstrate that they have achieved their objectives (Fleming & Martin, 2007).

They have to do an assessment document...they are expected to contribute to, and sign, the learning contract...that's the foundation for the placement so it specifies a whole lot of things that the student's going to be doing.

Students have a series of documentation that they have to fulfil...first one is a learning contract All of our assessment follows our learning outcomes...that we've set for the papers. ...they do two progress forms...they have a staff visit, [with a report] then they have to do worksheets and those are mini-assignments.

The students have their own practicum workbook so they know what they're supposed to be doing. They have to set learning objectives....they've got particular things they have to do inside that context... particular assignment work.

They have learning objectives ...they have to design and show how they've met those learning objectives. The students have to go back at the end of their placement and get the original learning contract and indicate whether they've achieved those goals that they set.

Reflective journal

A reflective journal outlines the tasks performed and includes reflections on all activities that take place throughout the practicum experience. The journal entails more than just listing experiences; it includes revisiting feelings, re-evaluating the experience (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993), planning future action and linking theory to practice (Fleming & Martin, 2007).

In some instances a regular summary report of the student's reflective journal is also submitted to their academic supervisor. These reports encourage reflection in action and also provide an opportunity for the student to receive supervisor feedback on the development of their reflective writing skills (Fleming & Martin, 2007). The use of technology is developing through, for example, electronic blogs and e-portfolios.

Following every week in the workplace they have to email their academic with a short report (about 200 words) of what actually they learned from that day, or what their reflections on it were and at the end of their workplace semester they then aggregate those ... emails to the supervisor and they re-write them in a form of an assignment... It's an overall assignment which they pull out from those emails... Typically the academic supervisor will respond to each of those emails... There's interchange which occurs and that enables the student to get ongoing feedback... It's also not onerous on the academic because it's only one email per week from the student... to which they give a quick response

We require the students to have a workbook or a journal... to note their progress so that we can actually see how they're thinking about things from what they're doing.

Final report – written report

A common feature of the assessment of WIL is the submission of a final report. This is often, but not always, combined with the need for an oral presentation. The final report typically brings together the formative reflection from the various earlier contacts coupled with the summative outcomes as the student reflects on the overall activity. The style and content are largely dependent on the subject matter. There is usually no final written examination for WIL courses.

There are marking guidelines the students can actually see... where all the marks are concentrated... For each report there are learning objectives... It explains how to write the report; it gives them titles, what's expected under each title. So there's quite a good basis on what is expected from a student.

There's no [formal] exam...we assess totally on the report. [The student] should be able to articulate what they want to communicate through this written document... we look at how well they do the technical writing.

We assess the student's report which states what skills they took to their placement, what new skills they've learnt, what they've learnt about the place where they were working, and also the broader context.

Industry based competency checks – professional accredited programme

Some professional accredited programmes require specific competency based assessments. These requirements are usually well known to the students before they participate in WIL as they are often the style of assessment throughout their entire programme of study. The assessment typically occurs off-campus, however, on-campus assessments are also possible, especially where scenario based learning is deployed.

They've actually got to be assessed as meeting the competencies attached to that particular placement...and the assessors are looking at both... do they have the knowledge with which to make decisions, and do they make appropriate decisions as well as can they carry out particular skills.

End placement is summative and that's based on the field supervisor assessing the student... during the placement we are in contact with the supervisor to ensure that he/she is guided in this process. All of the supervisors go through training before they can supervise the students... They're also aware of what the assessment requires. They're trained in the use of the tools that they are required to use... We found that there's really good reliability.

Workplace supervisor report

Most courses require a formal report from the workplace supervisor, although some just require a signature that the student has actually been there for the time they have claimed. This activity can contribute to the final grade. However, this is not always the case as many workplace supervisors are not conversant with the academic assessment of learning outcomes so in some instances these reports are used as guidance only and do not contribute to the final grade.

We asked them to contribute a written document to us...we asked them specifically not to grade the students... we felt that it was inappropriate for them to be grading...because they might take things into account that weren't a part of our learning assessment.

We don't directly go and evaluate... Student(s) tend to attach a commendation letter from their employer that reflects how well the person is doing... the interpersonal relationships... the group dynamics.

[Workplace supervisors] have to do an assessment document.

Oral presentations

There are a number of ways that oral presentations can be used for either formative or summative assessment. Presentations can be individual or in groups and be delivered to a range of stakeholder audiences (e.g. fellow students, academic supervisors or industry staff).

[The students] present a prepared 10-15 minute oral presentation, which is usually a PowerPoint presentation. So under that they discuss the type of organisation that they've visited, describe the types of activities... they identify main roles and the type of structure of the business... they're looking at how that whole business is operating.

There's two assessment points in the course and one is a formative assessment where [supervisors/mentor] sat with the clients as a panel and the students presented a business strategy, which had clear things that they had to have in it and had to have achieved... We [give] feedback verbally to them.

In week 12/13 they presented their final concepts... and gave a mark... that was based on their work book on Google-wave, their presentation at the time, and their hand-in/documents/creative work... In addition, opportunities for them to first self assess and then assess those within their team in terms of how they worked... The students knew from the very beginning that their work within the group was being marked by other group members.

They do have oral exams... their final year consists of seeing a real client under examination conditions and [before] the examination panel... if you don't feel that by the end of the examination that this person is competent and safe to let loose on the world as an independent practitioner, which is where they are moving into, they don't pass.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

They get to see what it's like in the real world as opposed to the class room world. They get to figure out whether or not this field of practice is for them or not in terms of clients, and in terms of the profession.

Increasingly, the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experience is providing a point of difference for students in enhancing their employability from tertiary education institutions. There is a variety of WIL practice, with passionate staff leading WIL programmes across a range of disciplines. Structured guidelines provide clear outcomes for students, academic and workplace supervisors. Preparation is important and applied learning integrated as part of the whole programme of learning. However, the following represent a number of considerations that are important for resourcing effective WIL programmes.

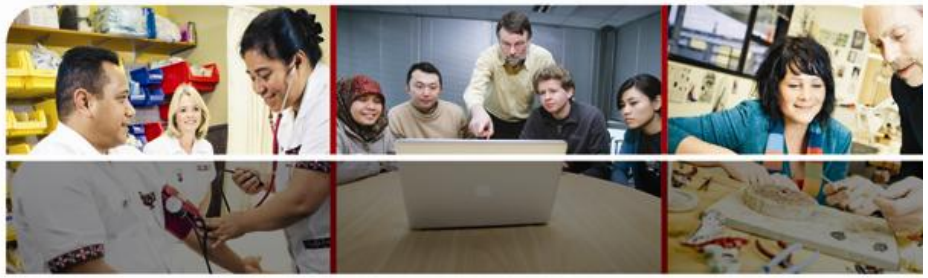
Item	Issue	Implication	Solution
Scalability	Elective or core paper	Increasing the scale of WIL programmes has resourcing implications	Group/team learning is one approach where WIL is a core paper. On campus SBL is another
Assessment	Quality control	Balance/triangulation of assessment is desirable	Use of both formative and summative
Assessment	Moderation of assessment	It is easy to over-assess WIL	Only the learning outcomes should be assessed
Workload	WIL is time consuming for staff	Workload management	Resources, administrative support
Industry connections	Credibility of students, academic and industry staff	Complex industry relationships	Formal agreement & assessment
Resourcing	Priority of WIL	Coordination of effort	Administrative and liaison staff to assist

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Work Integrated Learning
A Template for Good Practice:
Supervisors' Reflections
by A Martin, M. Rees & M. Edwards

Work-Integrated Learning and Cooperative Education are now well established in the New Zealand Educational landscape. Despite this, this is no clear formula for how we can facilitate such programs in a way that maximizes student learning and is not overly cumbersome. This work provides a sound coverage of the essential features of good practice. It is researcher-based and admirably pragmatic. Essential reading for all those involved in the practice of Work-Integrated Learning and Cooperative Education.

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