

# Examining the efficacy of a work-based learning project: Preparing new academics to teach in higher education

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Tertiary institutions have been called to account for the quality of their learning and teaching through measures such as Course Experience Questionnaires (CEQs). As institutional reputation and funding is linked to student responses, the capacity of academic staff to design and facilitate quality learning opportunities for twenty-first century learners is highly valued and increasingly encouraged by tertiary institutions. To align with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' *Provision of Professional Development for University Teaching in Australia*, Charles Sturt University's new academics are required to enrol in the introductory subject EEL409 of the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching. The assessment in this subject is informed by the pedagogical theory of Work-based learning (WBL). The purpose of this paper is to report on the efficacy of this assessment in preparing new academics to undertake a teaching role in a higher education context. (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 13(3), 147-158)

Keywords: academic learning, graduate certificate in university learning and teaching, higher education, quality teaching, work based learning

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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, the Vice Chancellor badged Charles Sturt University as a "University for the Professions". As such, a percentage of academic staff has been recruited directly from the professions of accounting, marketing, management, journalism, paramedicine, teaching, and nursing. For many of these academics, who have been employed for their extensive professional knowledge, experience and expertise, teaching is a new requirement of their portfolio. Refashioning their professional identity to become a valued member of the academy presents itself as a challenge in a competitive environment that values research capacity and output, and teaching quality. As a means to ensure a systematic approach to developing teaching quality, all probationary Charles Sturt University academic staff enrol in an eight credit point one session subject, EEL409 University Learning and Teaching, in the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching.

The Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching aims to sequentially scaffold new academics' learning in their workplace, and provide a scholarly community of practice, in which a refashioned professional identity may be developed, rehearsed and refined. To create conditions conducive to supporting academic staff to achieve these goals, the course coordinator of Charles Sturt University's Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching has drawn on the principles of work-based learning (WBL) to inform the design of the assessment and pedagogy of the mandatory probationary subject EEL409 University Learning and Teaching. The subject description for EEL409 exemplifies the commitment to work-based learning (WBL):

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Grounded in practice-based education principles, the subject provides participants with opportunities to participate in a scholarly community of practice that shares an understanding of educational theory and practice, and engage in interest based authentic negotiated work-based learning projects. (Clarke, 2011, p. 1)

In EEL409, WBL is taken to refer to “all and any learning that is situated in the workplace or arises directly out of workplace concerns” (Lester & Costley, 2009). As a result of this framing, the purpose of this paper is to:

- evaluate the efficacy of the work-based learning project as an authentic assessment in preparing new academics to teach in a higher education context; and
- inform the design of the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching to create future champions of learning and teaching at Charles Sturt University to assist in meeting the University Strategy measures of quality by 2015.

As an authentic example of work-based learning, the subject assessment calls for academics to complete a work-based learning project that aims to assist them to:

- analyse their current professional context and consider the wider contexts and factors that shape it;
- describe student diversity within their specific learning context;
- adopt university learning and teaching metalanguage;
- engage in a variety of educational models;
- critique a multitude of educational tools; and
- develop evidence of achievement of the subject learning outcomes.

The assessment task was introduced to academics during a one day face-to-face residential session before the commencement of the academic teaching session. The subject coordinator facilitated a series of workshops that provided opportunities for participants to identify, explore and clarify their thinking around potential issues for investigation. The academics also participated in an interactive workshop that modelled the use of the technology (Pebble Pad – an e-portfolio tool) associated with the planning for and submission of the assessment task. The subject outline provided a detailed scaffold for the design of the assessment task and acted as a model on which to base the explication of the assessments in their own subject outlines. The following text is drawn from the EEL409 subject outline assessment task description:

Participants are required to design and implement a work-based learning project. The aim of the project is to modify aspects of a subject or your teaching in the subject to enhance student learning outcomes. So ...

- select a subject which you currently teach;
- decide on an aspect of the subject or your teaching in the subject that could be enhanced;
- justify why you have chosen this aspect of the subject or your teaching (you need evidence for the change - it can be anecdotal);
- prepare an **action plan** to implement the changes to the subject or your teaching in the subject;
- implement the changes;

- evaluate the changes (you need evidence of the success or otherwise of the change/s – subject evaluation, student comments, colleague feedback - perhaps use your Educational Designer as a reflective resource!).

This task requires you to prepare an action plan for your project using the action plan tool in Pebble Pad. Go to Pebble Pad, log in and select *create new*. Select *action plan* and then design your project under the following headings: current situation, ideal situation, steps to success, SWOT, supporting resources, and reflect. (Clarke, 2011, p. 8)

Examining the efficacy of this WBL project as an authentic assessment task, and assisting probationary academics to meet the challenges of teaching in a higher education context are the foci of this research.

## LITERATURE

### *Work-based Learning (WBL)*

The most effective and valuable learning experience for people in work, is often that which occurs through the medium of work, or is prompted in response to specific workplace issues (Eraut, Alderton, Cole, & Senker, 2000; Eraut, Steadman, Maillardet, Miller, Ali, Blackman, et al., 2005; Felstead, Fuller, Unwin, Ashton, Butler, & Lee, 2005). As such, the workplace is recognised as a valid and authentic environment in which a planned curriculum for learning can be designed. The design of formal workplace curriculum can be identified in this study as a “negotiated work based learning” project. According to Lester (2007), negotiated work-based learning allows individuals in work to use their activities as a vehicle for high level learning and to gain an industry award. In this case, participants in the negotiated WBL project are credited with satisfactory completion of EEL409, the mandatory subject in the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching. Negotiated WBL can include learning that is *for* work and takes place *at* work, but its main feature is that it centres on learning *through* work – active and reflective engagement with work activities that produce academically valid and practically useful personal and professional development (Cairns & Stephenson, 2002). As Billet (2001) states, the:

readiness of the workplace to afford opportunities for individuals to participate in work activities and access direct and direct support are key determinants in the quality of learning that arises from that participation. (p. 1)

In relation to this research, the tertiary context, the academics’ world of work provides an authentic and valuable site for work-based learning. Ensuring that learning opportunities are intentionally planned, well designed and effectively supported will contribute to the quality of the learning that takes place in the workplace (Lave, 1993). It is important here, however, to acknowledge that despite the learning opportunities afforded by workplaces, the level and degree of participation and engagement by individuals will vary according to their human agency (Engeström & Middleton, 1996).

The principles of WBL that are crucial to this research relate to assessment and pedagogy. In relation to pedagogy, it is important to acknowledge firstly, the role of the learner (the participant in WBL subject), as WBL is informed by a constructivist view of learning: one in which the learners construct their meaning of experiences in relation to the context (Wertsch, 1991), and secondly, the recognition that learning is socially constructed through participation in communities or groups (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) provide a critical framework for learning at work, particularly through informal interactions with peers. Learning is embedded in the practices and relationships of the workplace and assists in fashioning member identity and meaning. Thus the pedagogical approach to constructing assessment needs to encourage relationship building, a sharing of knowledge and strategies, and a common goal or outcome.

#### *Research Design*

The research used an interpretive approach to investigate the efficacy of the WBL project, and the ability of the EEL409 subject to nurture academics to be future champions of learning and teaching at Charles Sturt University. The study adopted a case study approach (Yin, 2003) as it allowed the case of EEL409 University Learning and Teaching to be explored as a subject, and its academic participants' multiple meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) of WBL to be investigated. A case study is a generic term that is adopted when investigating an individual, group, or phenomenon that claims to retain a high degree of faithfulness to real-life processes through the collection of extensive and rich data (Burns, 2000). The case study sample comprised seven academics that had completed the EEL409 University Learning and Teaching subject in 2010. The sample was purposively selected to represent academics from the four Faculties of Charles Sturt University, and include participants with a range of years of professional experience pre-employment to the university. In keeping with the nature of a case study, this research drew on multiple sources of data, using interviews, artefacts, and surveys.

In this instance, participants in the case study were invited to participate in thirty minute semi-structured telephone interviews which were conducted by the subject coordinator, were digitally audio-recorded via a speaker phone, and transcribed using a professional transcription service "Outscribe". The data were coded using a thematic approach drawn from Maykurt and Morehouse's (1994) inter- and intra-textual analysis schema, and explored within the theoretical framework of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The WBL literature was used to decode and further explain the participants' responses. Secondary data sources included the participants' assessment samples of the e-portfolio work-based learning projects, and the results of the Charles Sturt University Online Student Evaluation Surveys. These data sources acted to verify the internal validity of the research design. Table 1 illustrates the nexus between the research questions and the data sources and analysis process.

#### RESULTS

The broad themes that emerged from the interview data were related to the formation of professional identity for the academic; the necessity for inclusion in a scholarly community of practice; the efficacy of the assessment and the subject to capacity build; and the usefulness of the project in creating reflective practitioners who are motivated to advocate for quality learning and teaching.

TABLE 1. Research design

Research Focus	Data Source	Data Analysis
Evaluate efficacy of the work based learning project in preparing new academics to teach in a higher education context	Semi-structured interviews  Charles Sturt University Online Student Survey Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intra- and inter-textual analysis (Maykurt &amp; Morehouse, 1994)</li> <li>• Theoretical framework – Communities of Practice (Lave &amp; Wenger, 1991)</li> <li>• Literature Review – Work-based learning as a pedagogical learning theory</li> </ul>
Inform design of the Graduate Certificate in University Learning & Teaching to create future champions of learning and teaching at Charles Sturt University to assist in meeting University Strategy measures of quality by 2015	Charles Sturt University Online Student Survey Evaluations  WBL projects presented using e-portfolio tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency count of Likert scale results</li> <li>• Thematic analysis of open-ended participant (student) responses</li> <li>• Theoretical framework – Communities of Practice (Lave &amp; Wenger, 1991)</li> <li>• Literature Review – WBL as a pedagogical learning theory</li> </ul>

#### *Formation of a Professional Identity*

The first general theme arising from the interview data related to the formation of a professional identity. For those academics newly recruited from the professions, positioning themselves as teachers required an element of self reflection and an emotional openness to *refashioning* their professional identity. Participants in the sample expressed their awareness of the devaluing of their *real-world professional profile* by some of their academic colleagues. An EEL409 participant who had been recruited from the business industry presents his perspective of the valued capital in the academy:

I mean I'm coping with the academic snobbery that's going on around the place... and I've come out of industry and I had a PhD in the university of the world, but that didn't have much grounding in human resources, so there's a whole lot of 'how come these people are here? And what can they bring to the table?' The fact that I'd been teaching for 12 years and I have had good industry experience and I was teaching business, which nobody prior to me really have had real understanding of, I mean they hadn't actually *done* it. But read about it, and they thought about it, but they'd never *done* it, and that's the difference between me and a professional, if you like, in personal and academic strength. (Participant 3)

This participant further commented on the role of EEL409, and in particular the WBL project in assisting him to assume the role of an academic:

you suddenly get into that role and so I think, what it [GCULT] does, it sets you on a path to ... merge you into the world of academia without loss of your professional knowledge as applied now, particularly this university, because its charter now is right into this workplace learning and work-integrated learning and actually

preparing people for the profession. You gave us the academic framework to support us into being an academic through the work-based project. (Participant 3)

Having completed the EEL409 subject, several of the participants noted their changed self-described role as an academic:

I do see myself as more of an academic. I do see myself as being a lot more knowledgeable than what I was about academia and learning and particularly in the university sector. So while I wouldn't say that I was a full academic, I am well on my way. (Participant 2)

Whilst I still have the industry focus, I now have it with an academic background. It's improved my academic assessment of things. Coming out of the industry you still need to learn how to become an academic, and I honestly believe, I really believe that's what I've learnt. I now see myself as an academic. I am a professional academic and I now have the qualifications and the backing. (Participant 1)

The interview data provide a range of evidence that confirms the efficacy of the EEL409 WBL project and the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching in general, in guiding the refashioning of participants' professional identities. As legitimate peripheral participants in the academic community of practice, (Lave & Wenger, 1991), these "professional academics" are using the knowledge gained, and skills developed, in EEL409 to craft an inbound trajectory to the centripetal practices of quality teaching, valued by the academy. Legitimate peripheral participation is the process of enculturation into the community of practice. Wenger (1998) suggests that communities of practice assist in constituting members' identity and that learning is inseparable from membership and, as members change their learning, their membership status and identity also change. The goal of acquiring domain knowledge and full participation becomes important for the new academic. Initially, according to Wenger (1998), their contributions to the shared repertoire of the community of practice may be minimal; however, it is in the learning process, in undertaking the tasks and participating in the conventions and rituals of the community, that the new academic moves from peripheral to full participation and essentially fashions their identity as a "master practitioner" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 111).

#### *Inclusion in a Scholarly Community of Practice*

The second general theme arising from the interview data is related to the need for, and benefits gained from, participating in the scholarly community of practice initially created by EEL409 requirements. In EEL409, participants were required to create a shared Wiki that collated their ideas about how to cater for student diversity in their WBL project. Participants commented on the hidden curriculum associated with this assessment, as being the formation of a community of practice, and the realisation that a diversity of academic opinions existed relating to how to differentiate curriculum to cater for student learning. For example:

I'm just looking here at the Wiki group summary that we did. I found those useful, but again, the information I got from doing the summaries, and I know we had to talk about student diversity, was actually how different members of the group viewed student diversity in very different ways. So I remember I was with Tim, who was the physio and Anna, who was in the English faculty, so our views were really – Tim and

I had very similar views, but ours were different to Anna's, because of just vastly different experiences with cohorts of students. (Participant 5)

Here I overlay this participant's view of the diversity of academics in EEL409 with Wenger's (1998) notion of *mutual engagement*. The concept of a community of practice seems to imply a homogenous group with a set of shared understandings, beliefs, values and practices. However, Wenger argues that while a community of practice needs to have mutual engagement, homogeneity "is neither a requirement for, nor a result of, the development of a community of practice" (p. 76). Diversities of understanding allow members of a community of practice to contribute in complementary ways. Furthermore, participants acknowledged the benefit of interacting with members of overlapping communities of practice to assist them in reflecting on their teaching practice.

What I found most helpful was the one [assessment] where I got to have the educational designer, which was Greg, come in and actually evaluate my teaching. Come in and give me direct feedback, 'cause that was the thing that was most beneficial to me and I found that good, because it was .... So he could come in and see what I did, but he could tweak things and him coming in the next session actually made me implement the changes I said I'd do and then he came in for the third session, so it actually had, you'll like this, the active learning component included in my project. (Participant 2)

The value-adding provided by brokers (people who crossed between varying communities of practice) was acknowledged and celebrated by another EEL409 participant:

As I said, I think I really found working with the educational designer helpful and it would be nice to even work with them probably even a little bit more if they had that capacity, because I mean, I found her particularly good, because she had so much knowledge to be able to actually give. (Participant 1)

Wenger (1998) states that the act of brokering is complex and involves translating meaning between the connecting communities of practice, and assisting members to acknowledge the possibilities for alignment between perspectives. Ensuring that academics felt a sense of community and connectedness to each other and the academy in general was an aim of the EEL409 subject, and was engineered through the use of blog entries, face to face meetings and Wiki postings. An EEL409 participant comments on his experiences and the value-adding of the face-to-face meetings:

But it gave you that little extra piece of community and help and knowing other people in the course does a side thing, that first gathering, it's almost like a pre-course gathering and then say right we're all on this boat together, now let's go row. (Participant 2)

### *Capacity Building*

The third theme identified from the data sources was the efficacy of the EEL409 subject and the WBL assessment in particular, to build the capacity of the participants in relation to learning and applying the metalanguage of learning and teaching in higher education; designing authentic assessment in their own subjects; and acknowledging the nexus between theory and practice.

As previously stated, each of the EEL409 participants were new to teaching in higher education contexts, and had limited exposure to the jargon associated with the professional practice of the academy. While participants recognised that their industry had its own jargon they were unaware of the need for, and benefits of, learning the metalanguage of higher education. The following excerpts act as evidence of the lack of previous exposure of EEL409 participants to learning and teaching metalanguage:

And the language and the discourse of the language was something else again for a poor old outsider, 'cos I come from industry, we have our own jargon and I can talk about tarps and garps and all these things which mean absolutely nothing to anyone who's not in the industry, and suddenly I'm getting into pedagogy and ... no that's not it, what is it? - epistemology. (Participant 6)

As a component of the EEL409 subject assessment, participants were required to create and submit a higher education metalanguage dictionary, comprising terms that they had learned during the face-to-face residential schools, and in the design of their WBL project. The assessment instructions required participants to source a relevant, current, scholarly definition of the term, decode that definition in their own words, and provide an example of the term "in-practice". Table 2 illustrates an artefact (work sample) of the metalanguage dictionary from an EEL409 participant enrolled in 2010 Session 1.

Wenger (1998) suggests that communities of practice share not only their work but their histories, stories, techniques, tools, artefacts, routines, symbols, language and behaviour patterns. In other words there is a cultural context for members' work. This "shared repertoire" includes the discourses that shape members' understandings of their practice and their membership identity (Wenger, 1998). Several of the EEL409 participants proffered evidence of the efficacy of the subject to alter their perspective on learning and teaching, particularly in relation to designing assessment, and becoming familiar with the technology used as a learning platform at the University:

... theory into practise, and I thought that was very, very useful. Also getting familiar with a number of, what you call, different theories, getting also familiar with a number of different programs in terms of e-learning like Pebble Pad, like online learning in terms of distance education and Wimba and, yeah, all those different kinds of software programs and how to do blogging, how to do Wikis and the usefulness of these kind of software programs in terms of teaching and how we can make the most use of that in terms of the teaching. (Participant 7)

TABLE 2. Example, using Scaffolding, of EEL409 metalanguage dictionary

Scholarly definition	My definition	Example in practice
<b>SCAFFOLDING:</b>		
<p>Similar to the scaffolding used in constructing buildings, the scaffolding of learning involves the use of a range of strategies by the teacher to allow students to develop and understanding of new knowledge or concepts. However, scaffolding can also be seen to provide students with strategies they can use for future learning in the teachers absence (Holton &amp; Clarke, 2006).</p> <p>It has been proposed that scaffolding can be defined as "...an act of teaching that (i) supports the immediate construction of knowledge by the learner; and (ii) provides the basis for future independent learning of the individual" (Holton &amp; Clarke, 2006).</p>	<p>Scaffolding is a process by which teachers guide students towards knowledge &amp; understanding. This can be performed with the presentation of manageable pieces of information, &amp; the judicious use of questions directed to the student. However, scaffolding should always be performed with reference to the distance between the student current knowledge &amp; the concept trying to be taught. Scaffolding only works when the students feel supported &amp; trust their teacher. High levels of frustration felt by students will significantly limit the effectiveness of scaffolding techniques, &amp; can lead to an erosion of trust between teacher &amp; student.</p>	<p>As the focus of my WBL project, I have rewritten all of the nervous system lectures for BMS191. During this rewrite I was focused on delivering the information in manageable pieces. I used a question and answer format in an attempt to stimulate students thinking. In short I have tried to scaffold the student learning to help them to gain knowledge and understanding about concepts that they would not be able to grasp without my help. Practical classes are a great environment to scaffold students learning. In practicals I ask lots of questions. I ask students what their thoughts are. Why did they think that? What might be happening here? I am very focused on guiding them through the knowledge and not simply providing it and moving on. However, I find that it is important to be able to gauge the level of frustration felt by my students. If I feel that a student is starting to feel annoyed or frustrated at being questioned, I give them the answer and then move on to discuss with them the significance of it. This is harder in the DE environment where body language and tone of voice are often not available. In general I will answer the students question directly, but then ask a follow up question to push them along into the next concept.</p>

To support the findings from the interview data, the researcher drew on the University's Online Student Evaluation Surveys. These data reveal that participants rated the statement "the assessment tasks assisted my learning" as 5.38 from a possible 7.00. These scores indicate the 92% of respondents rated the statement as "Very Strongly Agree, Strongly Agree, or Agree". Furthermore, in response to the open ended request "Please comment on aspects of this subject you found helpful to your learning" the following participant responses are offered:

I enjoyed the real world application of assessment tasks (authentic and useful). Assessment tasks were directly related to work.

The work based learning project focussed my attention and made me do something useful about something I knew was a problem.

Ability to complete assessment items relating to my area of teaching.

These data reflect the efficacy of the WBL project as an authentic assessment task, and pay tribute to the design of the subject as providing real world applications aimed at improving teaching in higher education.

#### *Champions of Quality Learning and Teaching*

The fourth and final theme identified from the data sources was the usefulness of the project in creating reflective practitioners who are motivated to advocate for quality learning and teaching. Within the EEL409 community of practice, members began to candidly explore new possibilities relating to learning and teaching, and request advice from their colleagues both within and beyond their Schools. The familiarity nurtured by the network of relationships within the community of practice provided stability for the legitimate peripheral participants and ignited their excitement to engage in positive risk taking practices within their learning spaces. As evidenced by the outcomes of their WBL Projects, the participants in EEL409 had developed a wealth of knowledge relating to curriculum design, technology-enabled teaching, and reflective practice. As the legitimate peripheral participants began to embody the central practices of the community the members i) publicly acknowledged the need for opportunities to learn about teaching; and ii) advocated for further professional learning opportunities to be embedded in the professional development requirements of academic staff. EEL409 participants stated:

I think the time when lecturers didn't need to do these sorts of things has gone. I think if you want to be a lecturer now you need to have a background in research and teaching. (Participant 7)

I think when you have a qualification you will have more satisfied students. (Participant 3)

And also, interest in wanting to learn more about university teaching and yeah, learning really, because I hadn't had a background in that. Not a teacher background at all and so I want to know more information about what was good practice with regards to teaching. (Participant 5)

I think, I mean, I have never been trained as a teacher, only as a clinician, and I thought going to university and teaching students you have to have some kind of theoretical understanding and some kind of practical know-how how to do teaching. I mean teachers, in terms of education, they do three or four years of

learning how to teach subjects, and here we are at university level teaching students and we haven't got any instructions how to do, do that. (Participant 6)

And finally, a highly experienced industry professional who was recently employed at Charles Sturt University applauds the nature of EEL409 as follows:

Well I hoped that it would give me, if you like, a more formal sense of teaching. Whilst I'd done these other courses, they've all been bits and pieces you know so there's a half day here and a day there and, so I thought this would tie that together, and also give me some extra I suppose in-depth look at it. (Participant 2)

## CONCLUSION

The research data points to the efficacy of the work based learning project as a successful and authentic assessment task, and assists in positively positioning probationary academics to assume a teaching role in the Charles Sturt University higher education context. The four themes identified from the data include i) the formation of professional identity for the academic; ii) the necessity for inclusion in a scholarly community of practice; iii) the efficacy of the assessment and the subject to capacity build; and the iv) usefulness of the project in creating reflective practitioners who are motivated to advocate for quality learning and teaching.

The interview and online student evaluation data highlight the real-world applicability of the assessment, and applauds the learning design of the subject in creating opportunities for participation of legitimate peripheral participants to engage in a scholarly community of practice, aimed at enhancing learning and teaching. The work based learning project has clearly provided the vehicle for these participants to reflectively examine their own teaching practice, and respond with theoretically-informed curriculum and pedagogical redesign of their subjects. As noted by Lester et al. (2009), WBL is most often project based and includes peer group activities as central components. These characteristics are clearly played out in the design and implementation of the EEL409 subject, through each of the sequentially scaffolded assessment opportunities, and now soundly advocated by the participants in their subject evaluations, and interview responses.

It is clearly apparent that the subject and assessment design support the refashioning of academics' identity by allowing opportunities to explore the practices of central members in the community of practice (the subject facilitator), and inviting critique from colleagues. These practices are crucial in creating transitional pathways for new academics to assume more central roles in the Charles Sturt University learning and teaching community.

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## About the Journal

The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education publishes peer-reviewed original research, topical issues, and best practice articles from throughout the world dealing with Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Work Integrated Learning/Education (WIL).

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The Journal's main aim is to allow specialists working in these areas to disseminate their findings and share their knowledge for the benefit of institutions, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that will lead to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of co-op/WIL, and promote further research.

## Submitting Manuscripts

Before submitting a manuscript, please ensure that the 'instructions for authors' has been followed ([www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors](http://www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors)). All manuscripts are to be submitted for blind review directly to the Editor-in-Chief ([editor@apjce.org](mailto:editor@apjce.org)) by way of email attachment. All submissions of manuscripts must be in MS Word format, with manuscript word counts between 3,000 and 5,000 words (excluding references).

All manuscripts, if deemed relevant to the Journal's audience, will be double blind reviewed by two reviewers or more. Manuscripts submitted to the Journal with authors names included will have the authors' names removed by the Editor-in-Chief before being reviewed to ensure anonymity.

Typically, authors receive the reviewers' comments about a month after the submission of the manuscript. The Journal uses a constructive process for review and preparation of the manuscript, and encourages its reviewers to give supportive and extensive feedback on the requirements for improving the manuscript as well as guidance on how to make the amendments.

If the manuscript is deemed acceptable for publication, and reviewers' comments have been satisfactorily addressed, the manuscript is prepared for publication by the Copy Editor. The Copy Editor may correspond with the authors to check details, if required. Final publication is by discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. Final published form of the manuscript is via the Journal webpage ([www.apjce.org](http://www.apjce.org)), authors will be notified and sent a PDF copy of the final manuscript. There is no charge for publishing in APJCE and the Journal allows free open access for its readers.

## Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts the Journal accepts are primarily of two forms; *research reports* describing research into aspects of Cooperative Education and Work Integrated Learning/Education, and *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and give critical explorative discussion around a topical issue.

The Journal does also accept *best practice* papers but only if it present a unique or innovative practice of a Co-op/WIL program that is likely to be of interest to the broader Co-op/WIL community. The Journal also accepts a limited number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.

*Research reports* should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry, a description and justification for the methodology employed, a description of the research findings-tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance for practitioners, and a conclusion preferably incorporating suggestions for further research.

*Topical discussion* articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical discussion of the importance of the issues, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.



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