

A framework for managing the impacts of work-integrated learning on student quality of life

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Although work-integrated learning represents an increasingly prevalent part of the tertiary education landscape, there are limited explorations of student experiences through a wellbeing lens. Wellbeing represents more than an individual's quality of life; it is an individual's ability to manage different inputs across intersecting physical, social, cognitive, psychological, environmental and economic factors often from a moment-in-time positioning. In connecting work-integrated learning and wellbeing, this conceptual article introduces work-integrated learning wellbeing (WIL wellbeing) as a construct to identify potential impacts of work-integrated learning on participants' wellbeing within and beyond learning contexts. The model highlights the importance of recognizing and appreciating student diversity in personal circumstance and experience when undertaking work-integrated learning. Explicitly connecting work-integrated learning and wellbeing emphasizes the importance of nurturing a combination of individual coping strategies, formal policy and informal institutional support, and provides a framework for higher-education institutions to address the impact of work-integrated learning on students.

Keywords: Professional experience, student equity, practicum, quality of life, wellbeing, work-integrated learning

Work-integrated learning (WIL), often in the form of practicum placements or internships, is an increasingly common feature of the tertiary education landscape and encompasses a wide range of educational activities designed to apply theoretical and practical learning within a workplace context (Atkinson, 2016; Brown, 2010). Generally unpaid, participation in work-integrated learning can range from short-term work experiences through to extended work placements that last for many weeks (Grant-Smith & McDonald, 2018a; Patrick et al., 2008). There has been extensive research on the positive pedagogical contribution of participation in work-integrated learning and its potential to enhance graduate employability through the development of interpersonal, social and professional skills (e.g., Carter, Winchester-Seeto, & Mackaway, 2014; Coiacetto, 2004; Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, & Cragolini, 2004; Drysdale, McBeath, Johansson, Dressler, & Zaitseva, 2016; Elijido-Ten & Kloot, 2015; Freestone, Thompson, & Williams, 2006; Freudenberg, Brimble, & Cameron, 2010; Jackson, 2015, 2016; Jackson & Wilton, 2016; Patrick et al., 2008). However, although the work-integrated learning experience is recognized as a period of intensive learning and adaptation for participants, advocate accounts have been less likely to highlight the personal factors that contribute to and potentially affect a student's experience of work-integrated learning, or the potential impact of participation in work-integrated learning on other life domains (Grant-Smith & Gillett-Swan, 2017) and their development of a "pre-professional identity" (Jackson, 2016). More critical studies have highlighted the potentially negative aspects of participation in work-integrated learning activities including increased psychological and financial stress, social isolation, study/life imbalance and exposure to exploitative or unlawful work practices (Bergin & Pakenham, 2015; Grant-Smith & McDonald, 2016, 2018b; Johnstone, Brough, Crane, Marston, & Correa-Velez, 2016; Maidment & Crisp, 2011; Pelech, Barlow, Baldry, & Eliot, 2009). Addressing these stressors and negotiating the associated tensions has the potential to affect student wellbeing. Indeed, research outside the area of work-integrated learning confirms that increased stress can negatively impact student's experiences in higher education, and result in

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increased student attrition and effect student wellbeing (Leveson, McNeil, & Joiner, 2013). Research such as this affirms the need for “qualitative data on the issue [of external pressures] and by developing a model to explore whether external factors identified ... acted as mediators or moderator in students’ departure intentions” (Leveson et al., 2013, p. 942). This is where a model for WIL wellbeing may be particularly useful.

The way that participation in work-integrated learning affects student wellbeing differs according to context, wellbeing in other life domains, and the presence of protective factors. When present, these protective factors, such as support networks or flexibility in paid work commitments, may serve to mitigate or eliminate risk or otherwise enhance wellbeing (Grant-Smith, Gillett-Swan, & Chapman 2017). There has been little research that explores participation in work-integrated learning activities within a wellbeing framework with much greater focus on evaluating the work-integrated learning experience itself—commonly in the extent of alignment between intended and actual outcomes (Crebert et al., 2004; Smith, 2012). However, research has considered how work-integrated learning activities can serve to enhance an individual’s generic skill base (Crebert et al., 2004; Freudenberg et al., 2010), which from a wellbeing perspective, may then offer additional support for a university student experiencing a mismatch between their intended career path and their requisite skills. A prevailing focus on the work-readiness of graduates creates additional pressures and stress to an already pressure-filled work-integrated learning experience (Crebert et al., 2004). An approach that links student wellbeing with work-integrated learning, therefore, has the potential to assist higher education institutions to identify and put in place measures to manage the potential impacts on student wellbeing within the work-integrated learning context.

Interrogating work-integrated learning through the lens of wellbeing can also assist academics and workplaces supervising work-integrated learning activities to better understand participant experiences and the coping strategies they employ. This paper introduces the concept of work-integrated learning wellbeing, or *WIL wellbeing*, as a construct to recognize the impact of work-integrated learning on participants’ quality of life, both within and beyond the learning context. By explicitly connecting work-integrated learning experiences and accrued wellbeing, this conceptual paper seeks to theorize the ways an individual’s WIL wellbeing may be shaped, and the importance of nurturing a range of individual coping strategies through formal and informal institutional support mechanisms. In linking this concept to practice, the utility of the WIL wellbeing framework for identifying potential risks to student wellbeing and the development of protective strategies is also explored.

WELLBEING IN CONTEXT

In recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on student wellbeing within the context of tertiary education more generally (Bailey & Phillips, 2016), and also to address issues identified within specific disciplines—such as education, nursing, medicine and law—which typically involve high levels of work-integrated learning (Deasy, Coughlan, Pironom, Jourdan, & Mannix-McNamara, 2014; O’Brien, Tang, & Hall, 2011; Väisänen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom, & Soini, 2017). Wellbeing can be understood as a heterogeneous combination of an individual’s physical, mental, emotional and social health. As such, wellbeing is often linked to happiness, life satisfaction and quality of life (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012; Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2015). Common to most conceptualizations of wellbeing are multiple overlapping and inter-related dimensions working together as part of a wellbeing whole. The most commonly identified dimensions of wellbeing are cognitive, economic/environmental, social, physical, psychological and sometimes spiritual (Gillett-Swan, 2014,

2017; Fraillon, 2004; La Placa, McNaught, & Knight, 2013; McNaught, 2011; Pollard & Lee, 2003; Schickler, 2005). Figure 1 diagrammatically represents the relationship between these various dimensions as a series of interlocking circles in a complex Venn or Euler arrangement.



FIGURE 1: Typical representation of wellbeing and its dimensions.

The development and maintenance of wellbeing depends not only on fluidity in all of these dimensions but also on their increasing integration over time (Atkinson, 2013). The concept of wellbeing as an accrued process has been proposed in an attempt to capture the dynamic and temporal nature of wellbeing and the capacity for growth and change that is embodied in the lived experience of wellbeing. Gillett-Swan and Sargeant (2015, p. 143) define accrued wellbeing as “an individual’s capacity to manage over time, the range of inputs, both constructive and undesirable that can, in isolation, affect a person’s emotional, physical and cognitive state in response to a given context”. As such, an individual’s accrued wellbeing has the capacity to affect and be affected by the introduction of external stressors such as participation in work-integrated learning.

EXPLORING THE IMPACTS OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING ON WELLBEING

It has been reported that students participating in tertiary education experience high levels of stress and distress (Bailey & Phillips, 2016; Stallman, 2010), sometimes even exceeding levels in the general population (Stallman, 2010). Students undertaking programs of study with significant work-integrated learning requirements are exposed to additional stressors which increase their risk of psychological distress (Hillis et al., 2010). Research suggests that the experience of participating in work-integrated learning activities and the coping strategies employed by these students to deal with the additional stress presented by participation have potential consequences for student wellbeing in terms of their physical and psychological health as well as their academic performance (Deasy et al., 2014).

A range of academic and personal factors have been recognized as eliciting stress in university studies generally (Leveson et al., 2013) as well as contributing to stress relating to the work-integrated learning experience. Academic factors include study workload, participant relationships with mentor/supervisor in the work-integrated learning workplace or academic setting, and participant preparedness for the experience (Goh & Matthews, 2011; Hamaidi, Al-Shara, Arouri, & Awwad, 2014; Kanno & Koesk, 2010; Murtagh, 2017; Pellett & Pellett, 2005). Personal factors impacting work-integrated learning experiences include financial stress, caring and familial responsibilities, cultural differences, travel requirements and transport issues, and unmet expectations (Andrews & Chong,

2011; Carter et al., 2014; Crebert et al., 2004; Drysdale et al., 2016; Forbus, Newbold, & Mehta, 2011; Gardner, 2010; Jackson, 2017; Johnstone et al., 2016; Patrick et al., 2008).

Although participating in work-integrated learning is stressful for participants due to the intensity of the learning experience, for some students the pressures associated with placement, when combined with other commitments, can further exacerbate the level of stress experienced (Gardner, 2010). Personal factors are likely to be more strongly experienced by students from certain equity groups such as second career students (Crosswell & Beutel, 2017), parents-as-students (Brooks, 2015; Marandet & Wainwright, 2009; Murtagh, 2017; Patrick et al., 2008), and students completing their placement in a country or location where the native language is different to their own (Carter et al., 2014; Nguyen, 2014; Patrick et al., 2008). These personal factors can have a significant impact on an individual's completion of their work-integrated learning placement. Although the impact of personal factors that contribute to student experience in the work-integrated learning environments are under-explored, the importance and transferability of coping and resilience strategies in supporting an individual's wellbeing is widely discussed across other contexts (Chow et al., 2018; Drysdale et al., 2016; Jackson, 2016; Jackson & Wilton, 2016; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Mate & Ryan, 2015; Zautra, Hall, & Murray, 2010).

Students overwhelmingly prioritize their practicum over personal factors despite the additional stress practicum experiences place on other life domains (Grant-Smith & Gillett-Swan, 2017; Grant-Smith et al., 2017). This prioritization has the potential to impact all five dimensions of wellbeing: economic; cognitive; physical; social; and psychological. For example, economic factors such as financial pressures associated with loss of paid work opportunities combined with additional transport and childcare costs add increased pressure to an already stress-filled time with an individual's ability to manage these factors significant in their satisfactory completion of the placement and development of their pre-professional identity (Jackson, 2016). This is consistent with the literature about student retention in the significant impact of each these factors in determining whether students persist with, or discontinue their university studies (Leveson et al., 2013). Students report going without food, sleep, and other basic necessities in order to ensure that they can meet the requirements of the practicum and still afford to live and pay the rent, also indicating that these behaviors noticeably impact their physical, psychological and cognitive wellbeing resulting in sickness, exhaustion, lack of energy, and physical stress (Grant-Smith & Gillett-Swan, 2017; Grant-Smith et al., 2017).

Acknowledging the potential impact of extra-curricular commitments, such as paid employment and caring responsibilities, and other personal factors on the work-integrated learning experience and providing focused support is important for supporting student wellbeing and increasing the potential for successful placement. The benefits of support may extend beyond the learning context and support students to develop a range of skills and coping strategies that can be applied in their future employment as well as skills and strategies that can be drawn upon in their graduate teaching practice (Gardner et al., 2000).

The importance of incorporating effective and appropriate strategies into pedagogical and institutional practice to support the rich diversity of the student cohort participating in work-integrated learning has been emphasized in recent research (Carter et al., 2014; Crebert et al., 2004; Freudenberg et al., 2010; Jackson, 2016; Jackson & Wilton, 2016; Katz, Tufford, Bogo, & Regeher, 2014; Leveson et al., 2013; Litvack, Mishma, & Bogo, 2010; Nguyen, 2014; Patrick et al., 2008; Smith, 2012; Wall, Tran, & Soejatminah, 2017). To address these, students utilize different combinations of active and passive coping and support strategies; this occurs within and across student population cohorts (Forbus et al.,

2011). Meeting the needs of student cohorts with extensive external commitments and diverse educational, employment and cultural backgrounds may require the provision of access to greater levels and more focused support, and an awareness that they are likely to employ different coping strategies to their “traditional” student peers (Crosswell & Beutel, 2017; Forbus et al., 2011; Jackson, 2017; Murtagh, 2017).

The importance of social supports and peer interactions in providing a stress relief mechanism for students has been highlighted in the literature (Antoniou, Ploumpi, & Ntalla, 2013; Crebert et al., 2004; Klassen & Durksen, 2014). However, the need to prioritize placement often results in an increased reliance on familial and other social supports (Jackson, 2016) while at the same time limiting opportunities for social interactions while undertaking a placement. It then becomes evident that participation in work-integrated learning has the potential to impact, and be impacted by, each of the five main wellbeing dimensions, typically in a negative way.

INTRODUCING WIL WELLBEING

WIL wellbeing exemplifies one aspect of an individual’s accrued wellbeing. It highlights the impacts of participation in work-integrated learning and the influence of coping strategies utilized prior to, during, and after the work-integrated learning experience in supporting overall wellbeing. Accrued wellbeing, understood through the specific lens of WIL wellbeing, helps to identify and understand the consequences of work-integrated learning on an individual’s wellbeing and shifts the emphasis from more subjective and short-term experiences of wellbeing (Onyekachi, Oodo & Chukwuorji, 2017) toward considering the strengthening and enhancing capacity of the experiences and actions that both precede and follow it. Building on Gillett-Swan and Sargeant’s (2015, p. 143) definition of accrued wellbeing, we define WIL wellbeing as: *an individual’s capacity to manage the social, economic, personal and physical factors that impact on the work-integrated learning experience and how the work-integrated learning experience impacts on an individual’s social, economic, personal and physical wellbeing domains.*

WIL wellbeing, as a construct, recognizes that wellbeing is dynamic and fluid. It goes beyond moment-in-time assessments to present a holistic representation of the protective effects that different inputs, actions, and experiences may have on an individual’s ability to respond to threats to their wellbeing during challenges of both an acute and chronic nature. Each dimension of wellbeing within an individual’s WIL wellbeing contributes to an individual’s overall experience of wellbeing.

The intricacy, interrelatedness and protective capacity of chainmail, in which individual metal links are joined to create integrated protective armor, provides a useful metaphor for conceptualizing wellbeing. In this metaphor, each link and the connection of links can help to understand the complexity of wellbeing. We believe such an understanding is superior to the more common understandings of wellbeing as separate but interlinked dimensions as these dimensions do not exist independently. Rather, they are inextricably connected in the same way that forged metal forms each link. Through the process of forming the chainmail, each link is reconfigured to create an interlinked and intertwined whole. As an individual progresses through time, their wellbeing, like the chainmail, forms intricate layers and patterns are created. Through this process, there are continual, dynamic, and multi-elemental processes in play that shape and place tension on individual links and the chainmail as a whole. However, fortification and refortification around weaker links support wellbeing over time. This is the process of accrued wellbeing. Thus, while an individual link may fail during the construction of the whole (lifespan), such as may occur during a stressful event such as participation in work-integrated learning, the whole is held together by that which precedes and follows it. In isolation,

the problematic nature of a weak link decreases as it is absorbed into the subsequent layers. However, problems may arise where multiple weak links create a hole in the design. It is here that the protective strategies for dealing with the weak links serve to buffer and enhance the individual's wellbeing and restore the status quo. This potential to manage external threats on wellbeing demonstrates the importance of both an individual's capacity to identify "experiential reference points from which to take action" (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2015, p. 143) to restore equilibrium and their capacity and resources to take this action.

WIL wellbeing highlights the importance of facilitating these capacities as part of a process of accrued wellbeing in which the enhancing, multidimensional, interconnected, and capacity building nature of an individual's overall wellbeing can be further fortified. Identifying WIL wellbeing to exemplify one aspect of an individual's experience of wellbeing recognizes that participation in work-integrated learning can have an enhancing or diminishing impact on accrued wellbeing. It also highlights the importance of providing support at an institutional, course, workplace, and peer level.

Strategies to Manage Impacts on Wellbeing

Students utilize a number of strategies in addressing some of the factors that contribute to and have an impact on their work-integrated learning experiences. Each of these strategies demonstrates some of the protective mechanisms or buffers that students implement in an attempt to reduce the impact of the challenges they experience (Grant-Smith, de Zwaan, Chapman, & Gillett-Swan, 2018). The strategies employed by students represent how the individual ensures that the impact of any weak links within their chainmail of wellbeing is minimized and that the surrounding links are fortified, thus emphasizing the accrued process of wellbeing. Strategies include the importance of forward planning (cognitive and economic dimensions of wellbeing), seeking external assistance (social and economic dimensions), budgeting (economic dimensions), time management (cognitive, economic, and social dimensions), prioritizing placement over other commitments (psychological, economic and social dimensions), coping with the situation (psychological and physical dimensions), and self-care (physical and psychological dimensions) (Grant-Smith & Gillett-Swan, 2017; Grant-Smith et al., 2017).

Levels of institutional oversight and support for WIL are variable, particularly around screening potential WIL workplaces and providing academic mentoring (Elijido-ten & Kloot, 2015). From the institutional perspective, a number of supports can be provided for students, including financial assistance (e.g., scholarships, payment/stipend), support from university staff (e.g., knowledge, resource access, placement assistance), acknowledgment and clarity around academic expectations and the competing demands of workload and assessment requirements, and relationships with key personnel on the placement (e.g., mentor/supervisor and how to communicate effectively and proactively with them) (Grant-Smith et al., 2017).

Successful WIL participation is typically viewed as the result of a strong tripartite relationship between the student, the 'employer', and the educational institution (Batra, Scudder, & Piper, 2014). However, the presence of social support has also been found to be influential (Väisänen et al. 2017). In terms of social supports, the level of involvement of peer networks, extended family, and paid employers, as well as the attitudes and behaviors of the people in the placement environment, all contribute to either enabling or hindering the individual's experience. The willingness, support, and flexibility offered, directly and indirectly, by those involved in the individual's life domains also have a significant impact on the extent that their WIL wellbeing will be either hindered or strengthened (Grant-Smith & Gillett-Swan, 2017; Grant-Smith et al., 2017). Outside of the placement, examples such as family members

taking leave or bearing the full load of domestic responsibilities (e.g., childcare, cleaning, cooking), as well as peers and family networks being understanding around social absence, are important in supporting their placement success. For those working, having an employer accommodating workplace absences while on placement, or allowing them to stockpile hours in advance, are ways that different aspects of students' regular lives can either support or hinder the individual's wellbeing on placement. Within the placement environment, the importance of supportive and understanding co-workers is important in enabling students on placement to balance the competing demands of personal, professional, and placement life.

While an individual student may be able to implement personal strategies to lessen the potential impacts on their WIL wellbeing around their placement experiences, without a support system in place across the individual's other life domains, the effectiveness of these individual strategies may be limited (Grant-Smith et al., 2017). As shown in Figure 2, the relationship between what the institutional and community supports can strengthen the individual strategies implemented by the individual serve to further fortify and strengthen an individual's WIL wellbeing.



FIGURE 2: Conceptualizing WIL wellbeing as achieved through a combination of personal strategies and institutional and community support (Grant-Smith et al., 2017, p. 38).

DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS OF WIL WELLBEING

The WIL wellbeing construct has implications for a variety of stakeholders involved in promoting and supporting work-integrated learning activities within and beyond the different work-integrated learning disciplinary contexts. Each of the aforementioned areas represented in Figure 2 could be developed further and investigated individually for each person as a pre-intervention support mechanism. Through strengthening the links between each aspect of an individual's wellbeing, further emphasis can be drawn to how each factor contributing to the individual's wellbeing formation works both in isolation and in combination with one another to help in addressing deficiencies in other life domains. Reapplying the earlier chainmail metaphor, the support mechanisms provided through specific identification of the components outlined through the WIL wellbeing model serve to strengthen the support provided by what has come before, while also strengthening and reinforcing what is yet to come. This provides a framework to understand and describe the way an individual's WIL wellbeing may be affected throughout the work-integrated learning experience, the relevance of WIL wellbeing across other life domains and different points in time in an attempt to bridge the gap between wellbeing and work-integrated learning.

For those directly involved in the provision of services and support for students undertaking a work-integrated learning placement, the model can aid in ensuring the utilization of the self-learning that has been acquired through both internal and external support strategies from the individual's previous experiences. This can then aid in the identification and provision of further support when it is required.

Through enacting the protective factors inherent within one part of an individual's wellbeing, intrinsic internal support is provided, while also acknowledging how external factors can also support this process. While the range of inputs contributing to an individual's accrued wellbeing may be simultaneously influenced by both enhanced and reduced internal and external inputs, the earlier mechanisms employed—consciously and sub-consciously—to cater for these inputs serves as a palimpsest to further strengthen, build upon and support an individual when faced with any subsequent and additional inputs. Acknowledgment of this may serve to assist the students themselves in utilizing the model as a preliminary and in situ reflective self-assessment mechanism. To this end, their WIL wellbeing can be self-monitored and self-supported self-care, with additional support provided by the university, their placement site and their social support structures (e.g., family and friends) where required. Baseline information can be provided that presents a pathway for further intervention or support across each indicator that varies in intensity, focus and strategy depending on time and contextual factors.

Through investigating the personal factors contributing to and having an influence on the work-integrated learning experiences of students, it becomes clear that there are universal applications and experiences that are not unique to discipline-specific contexts and have a far wider application to other fields undertaking work-integrated learning experiences. That is, seeking to understand work-integrated learning through a wellbeing lens provides a framework that different stakeholders involved in the work-integrated learning processes may support, which can be supported by the policies and practices involved. To this end, understanding the role that wellbeing has in these formative stages of a students' career may serve to assist those responsible for their education and development to better support them in their endeavor to build resilience in the student and early career context, while also recognizing the diversity inherent within and between different types of students engaging in work-integrated learning. Gustems-Carnicer and Calderon (2013) noted a correlation between tertiary students' emotional and psychological wellbeing and the coping strategies they use to manage potential threats to their wellbeing. These coping strategies have applications beyond their tertiary experiences and into the workforce through the ability for the individual to manage stressors and change. Within the context of pre-service teacher education, Gardner (2010, p. 24) concludes that there may be benefits for students if universities consider "the potential of developing preventative self-help and well-being programs for future student-teachers' wellbeing" particularly around focusing on the students' ability to cope with practical experiences. This can also be applied to other student work-integrated contexts. Through exploring the impacts of personal factors on an individual's wellbeing within the context of work-integrated learning, an opportunity to better understand their WIL wellbeing is therefore potentiated.

There is a need for greater coherence and understanding of institutional support and practices around the factors that contribute to student experiences of work-integrated learning; through this understanding, instructors and course administrators can provide more focused support through both formal and informal institutional practices. The multidirectional impact of work-integrated learning experiences on accrued wellbeing must be recognized, due to the increasing importance being placed on successful participation by universities, employers and students, and the potential impact that pre-graduate experiences have on a student's post-graduation employment (Jackson & Collings, 2017; Mate & Ryan, 2015; Sullivan & Johnson, 2012). The WIL wellbeing model could even be applied at a unit level to provide focused discussion around the range of personal factors that students may experience while on placement and strategies and processes to assist and support students before, during, and after their placement. While the extent to which each of the components of WIL wellbeing are impacted may vary depending on factors such as whether the placement is paid/unpaid, length of placement,

family status, and other relevant personal factors, the model remains the same with the size of the component increasing and reducing dependent on the force and size of the input.

Future quantitative research could investigate the measurement of WIL wellbeing for the purpose of identifying targeted interventions surrounding the coping and support strategies that might best be utilized prior to and during a work-integrated learning experience (Olsen, 2017). This would require the creation and testing of a scale to measure WIL wellbeing to evaluate the level of impact of each component for the individual, before determining tailored and targeted ways that the individual may access and utilize the supports available (Arribas-Marín, Hernández-Franco, & Plumed-Moreno, 2017).

The coping and support strategies utilized by students (current and previous), as well as those known and incorporated by staff, could create a universally accessible database repository available to students, staff, and industry. This could then be used to provide holistic and consistent support for students while engaging in their work-integrated learning experiences. Investigating the application of the model using other disciplines to explore each of the inter-related components would also be a worthwhile endeavor. The WIL wellbeing model provides a representation for understanding the range of ways that work-integrated learning can impact students and, in doing so, identifies that single point in time interventions and support may not be the most effective or efficient mechanism to fix and fortify the weak links. Furthermore, although the ability of university supervisors and WIL administrators to support students undertaking WIL placements is impacted by their own wellbeing (Long & Clark, 2017) this remains an understudied aspect of the WIL environment. It is possible that the construct of WIL wellbeing could also be extended to ensure that all involved in the WIL environment are sufficiently supported.

CONCLUSION

The increasing focus on WIL as a rite of passage to transition from education to employment has at its heart a focus on learning outcomes and individual professional development that is tied to learning in workplace contexts. This is important, and the on-the-job learning focus contributes to the confidence of both graduates and employers regarding the ability to do the job. However, the employability benefits of work-integrated learning often overshadow the personal aspects of the experience. This includes the impact that participation can have, both negative and positive, on the participants' life outside of the experience which can last long after the WIL placement has ended. A focus on enhanced student wellbeing during WIL will likely also contribute to enhanced student learning outcomes while participating in a WIL experience as they are better able to manage the competing threats to their wellbeing and focus on the WIL experience.

The diversity in the student population presents a challenge for university administrators seeking to provide equitable access to high-quality work-integrated learning experiences. Extant policies focused on supporting work-integrated learning typically provide direction for discharging the institutional duty of care around a range of pragmatic, professional and academic interests. Such policies are intended to keep students safe while offering authentic learning experiences that meet professional accreditation requirements. However, there is often a more limited focus on ensuring that participants' social, psychological, and economic needs are both considered and addressed. Even where institutional supports exist, such as the availability of counseling services and food banks, they are often unavailable on weekends or after hours, and many students are also constrained in their willingness to access such services because of potential social stigma. Focusing on wellbeing avoids the potential to overlook this dimension of work-integrated learning and recognizes that it can have both an enhancing and a

diminishing impact on an individual's accrued wellbeing. As each individual's wellbeing experiences while undertaking WIL may differ, not all students will experience the same wellbeing issues in the same way. However, the systematic focused support for wellbeing for all students, such as presented in the WIL wellbeing model, will result in better outcomes for all students, not just those experiencing challenges.

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About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues dealing with Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE). Since then the readership and authorship has become more international and terminology usage in the literature has favored the broader term of WIL. In response to these changes, the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning in 2018.

In this Journal, WIL is defined as "*an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum*". Examples of such practice includes work placements, work-terms, internships, practicum, cooperative education (Co-op), fieldwork, work-related projects/competitions, service learning, entrepreneurship, student-led enterprise, applied projects, simulations (including virtual WIL), etc. WIL shares similar aims and underpinning theories of learning as the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training, however, each of these fields are seen as separate fields.

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

Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL primarily of two forms; 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of work-integrated learning and, 2) *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider best practice submissions.

Research publications should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed 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 to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data. And a conclusion preferably including suggestions for further research.

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

Best practice and program description papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of best practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or is situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.



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