The power of hermeneutic phenomenology in restoring the centrality of experiences in work-integrated learning

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Our research using hermeneutic phenomenology positions a pre-service or graduate teacher's learning to be a teacher as a process of formation which involves relational sensibilities and ontological understandings that are often taken for granted and can be drawn from teacher's everyday experiences of 'being-in' their practice. We live in ideological times that are challenging the priorities, practices and discourses within pre-service teacher education programs. Critically important here are changes driven by an ideological 'evidence-based' priority for the 'measurement' of preservice teachers and graduate teachers' professional practice. In this paper, we share our concerns over this narrowing of educational outcomes toward behavioral practices occurring in the context of work-integrated learning (WIL). How have Initial Teacher Education Programs lost sight of the holistic, complex and contextual nature of their praxis? Not to mention the nuanced and experiential improvisation occurring within every relational engagement that constitutes WIL.

Keywords: Ontological, hermeneutic, phenomenology, pre-service teachers, work-integrated learning, Heidegger

This paper describes a research method and approach known as hermeneutic phenomenology, as it has been applied to the study of pre-service teachers' placement experiences. While recognizing the environmental, neoliberal and technocratic context in which our research is immersed we advocate hermeneutic phenomenology as a research method providing a humanistic consideration of human experience. Such an approach encourages an awareness of the nature of pre-understandings, prejudices, and context, and a need to remain open to alternative ways for 'understanding lived experiences'. The following text describes hermeneutic phenomenology as it is experienced, undertaken, and thus understood. Beginning with an overview of our research context we move into the philosophical underpinnings, application and presentation of hermeneutic phenomenological research, before addressing 'perceived' limitations with the method.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The ideological positioning of neoliberalism impacts teachers' everyday lives. Teachers are experiencing increased administration motivated by systematic needs of compliance, accountability and performance comparisons. It is not surprising that the standards across the system appear to engender a greater standardization of praxis as a way of coping with the pressures of being an educator in a school or in tertiary education. Another important shift, brought about by ideological imperatives is the need to 'measure' what is observable, reliable and valid. All too often, what is measurable is driven by the need for quantitative data which is reductionist in nature as these measures remove the problematic nature of seeking to measure the immeasurable.

The context described above is also applicable to pre-service teacher education courses. In the urgency of preparing future teachers, universities' pre-service teacher education courses are being increasingly commodified, focused on knowledge and understandings, with scant attention to holistic concerns and practical wisdom, required of graduate and early career teachers in the experience of teaching. Knowing about teaching and learning in a decontextualized manner overlooks the importance of pre-service teachers' experiential knowledge acquired from being in various teaching contexts in the role of teacher. More seriously, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2011) regulatory framework accrediting Initial Teacher Education Program courses in Australia fails to mention the word relationships in the professional standards criteria for being a professional teacher. This begs the questions of whether it is too difficult to measure the quality of teacher-student relationships or that quality relationships between teachers and students are not viewed as pivotal to be an effective teacher.

The priority of deepening sensibilities in the ongoing formation of beginning teachers is not served by reductionist thinking about work-integrated learning (WIL). In addition, teaching should be thought of as a phenomenon of inquiry that can be hermeneutically explored through the gathering, telling and interpretive activities which show the essence and ontological nature of a pre-service or early career teacher's *becoming* a teacher. These types of activities open the relational nature of being in teaching. It is important to note that these powerful windows into the ontological nature of teaching and learning require deliberative and contemplative ways of 'seeing' experiential understandings in WIL experiences. Constrained by the limitations of words in the quest for deepening meaning-making activities, we offer a poem to initiate each section as a means of holding open further ontological inquiry into the essence of being a teacher. Poetry is able to hold open subsequent meanings, beyond this paper, where further hermeneutic exploration can show the ontological nature of 'being in' lived experiences of WIL. In this poem, a person's stance is critical to 'how they are' as they seek to meticulously and sensitively explore a phenomenon of interest.

> To look at any thing,
> If you would know that thing,
> You must look at it long:
> To look at this green and say,
> 'I have seen spring in these
> woods,' will not do – you must
> Be the thing you see:
> You must be the dark snakes of
> Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
> You must enter in
> To the small silences between
> The leaves,
> You must take your time
> And touch the very peace
> They issue from.
>
> (Moffitt, 2003, p. 125)

This paper draws upon ongoing phenomenological research (Giles, 2008) which focuses on the centrality of relationships in the preparation and formation of teachers, with particular attention to the holistic, WIL experiences.

A DIFFERENT ORIENTATION TO WIL IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

In this paper, a phenomenological approach to researching WIL is explored in the context of pre-service teacher education. In doing so, the approach speaks back to concerns over this narrowing of educational outcomes toward behavioral priorities and practices occurring in the context of WIL. In the first instance, a phenomenological approach to professional learning is detailed. Secondly, pre-service teacher education courses are critiqued for the limitations of their WIL practices and procedures. Finally, the ontological outcomes and influences of adopting a phenomenological approach to WIL in pre-service teacher education is considered.

Research using hermeneutic phenomenology positions a teacher's learning to be a teacher as a process of formation which involves relational sensibilities (Giles, 2010, 2014) and ontological understandings that are often taken for granted but can be drawn from teacher's everyday experiences of 'being-in' their practice. In the section that follows there is a brief introduction to the origins of hermeneutic phenomenology, the research paradigm which situates the experiential learning, before discussing the way in which hermeneutic phenomenological research is practiced, and why this research methodology is ideal within the context of WIL.

Hermeneutic phenomenology originates from the existential philosophy of Hans George Gadamer (Gadamer, 1994) with roots that may be traced back to Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl. Each a student of the other, they developed the thoughts of their teacher to what is arguably a current and contemporary philosophical and practical approach, albeit not widely adopted or accepted within the academy. The research process focuses on lived experiences which are significant to WIL; itself a lived experience. We briefly discuss the significant thoughts and implications of each scholar.

Husserl, the founder of phenomenological philosophy, advocated for the description of phenomena (van Manen, 2014). According to Husserl's descriptive phenomenology a researcher would study an event and concisely describe their observations and interactions with this event without consideration of the surrounding context (Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixsmith, 2013, p. 18). The researcher in describing the event being studied was expected to bracket out their prejudices from influencing the study (Crotty, 1996; Flood, 2010). In other words the researcher transcends their own prejudices, ways of knowing, and the context surrounding the phenomenon to describe the "essences of [its] pure experiences" (van Manen, 2014, p. 89).

Alternatively, Heidegger, Husserl's student believed that it was impossible to study an event without in some way being influenced by it or its description. It is from this viewpoint that Heidegger developed interpretive phenomenology, an ontological methodology searching for the meaning of 'being' (Reiners, 2012; Todres & Wheeler, 2001). For Heidegger, the researcher is unable to, nor should, divorce themselves from the event being studied (Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008), instead the researcher has a responsibility to identify and disclose their influence and prejudices on and with the study. That is, the very description of an event is given with influence and prejudice, and this is unavoidable for the language used, the stance from which an event is viewed, is done so from the researcher's own standpoint. Research of lived experiences cannot be any other for Heidegger, and this in itself doesn't negate the validity of the research but it does necessitate the disclosure of the researcher's stance. As such, according to Heidegger, the researcher must bracket in their research

prejudices (Tuohy et al., 2013). In this way, the research is always contextual and speaks back to a particular context. The following poem describes the contextual priority of hermeneutic inquiry as leaving the roots on.

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These days
whatever you have to say, leave
the roots on, let them
dangle

And the dirt

Just to make clear
where they come from

(Olsen, 2003)

</div>

Another significant Heideggerian concept is the multiplicity of meanings. For Heidegger a seemingly simple term such as 'care' is recognized as having multiple meanings, with the 'true' ontological nature determined in the way in which it presents. Accordingly care, which our research identifies as ontologically foundational to the nature of pre-service teachers' professional experiences in schools (WIL) will be encountered and understood in a variety of forms. One example of care in these neoliberal and risk averse times is illustrated in the story that follows. While we have interpreted this story for our research, here, like the poem above we leave the story with the dirt on, so to speak for you. In this story a student teacher describes an associate teacher, we have called Callum, his classroom and the pre-service teacher's observations that trouble her/him.

> Going in to Callum's class … He was working from the text book and the text book was good. The other teachers would accommodate that because that was his class. As long as they were keeping up to date on where the rest of the students in that year level were and they were getting to those landmark points at the same time it didn't matter. As long as they [the students] were still up to standard and continuing at pace. Different teachers, different teaching styles, it didn't matter so long as you got the results. (C4.27)

In this story the effects of measurement influences the experience of teaching and learning for teachers and students alike. The appearance of on-task impersonal and outcomes focused behavior lacks care. While it's important to have students up to standard from the administration point of view, ontologically, the push for academic completion impacts on the quality and changing nature of the relationships. The mood of the class is felt by the pre-service teacher. How might a pre-service teacher understand and reflect upon this teaching context? How normal is this experience? Should a pre-service teacher provide feedback to an experienced teacher on observations of such processes? What should a pre-service teacher do when they feel trapped in a particular and unwanted teaching style? How is a pre-service teacher assessed in such a context where their approach to teaching is different to their supervisors? These complex questions need nuanced responses; the reason for adopting hermeneutic phenomenology in our ontological consideration of these experiences. The approach to hermeneutic phenomenology involves interpreting the ontological meanings of lived experience found in between the lines of an experiential narrative. For Gadamer, not only did a researcher's prejudices accompany and influence their study, these prejudices needed to be carefully examined and re-examined as part of a research process known as hermeneutic phenomenology; the study of lived

experience (*Erlebnis*). In summary, hermeneutic research is based on the study of texts, in this research, the case stories gathered from final year pre-service teacher education students.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is an iterative and circling process described by Smythe et al. (2008) as "reading, writing, talking, mulling, re-reading, re-writing and keeping new insights in play" (p. 1393). An objective of hermeneutic phenomenology is to uncover the taken for 'grantedness' of an experience and present understandings in such a way that the meanings are available for shared understandings. Importantly the iterative and circuitous nature of hermeneutics is able to bring forward ways of thinking that may delimit the way we are in our everyday practices (Gadamer, 2014, p. xxxv). To do so however, researchers need to be open to other ways of being and thinking, researchers need to create space to contemplate and reflect on their prior understandings (Giles, 2007; Spence, 2016). It is through this particular way of being in the research that awareness of the researcher's preconceptions and historicity are brought forward and disclosed to situate interpretive prejudices (Laverty, 2008, p. 24).

HOW IS HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY EXPERIENCED?

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a method of unintentional change requiring active engagement in the construction of meaning from, and presented in, text. By its very nature, the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher seeks to uncover the ontological nature of experience where there are moments of discomfort and vulnerability. We find ourselves compelled towards our study and as one question is resolved others arise to take their place and throughout the process, prejudices are uncovered, re-covered, re-formed, and disclosed.

Phenomenologists do not position themselves as seeking absolute truths, and undertake research knowing there will always be more to discover, more to deeply reflect on, and more to share. The research process influences the researcher's way of being by illuminating understandings and prejudices. Prejudices that, again aligning with heideggerian phenomenology, need to be disclosed in our writing and open to development and critique. Phenomenological researchers are passionate about both the findings and the way in which they are able to share these with others, seeking to build on these new knowledges and understandings, and in the process constantly coming back to revisit past and present understandings, inviting fresh thoughts.

HOW IS HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY UNDERTAKEN?

There is no one way of undertaking hermeneutic phenomenology, in fact as a research methodology it is not uncommon to read or hear people state that hermeneutic phenomenology is a research method that has no strict method (van Manen, 2014). While agreeing with this notion, a strength that is recognized is that trustworthy research is always undertaken with a strong and ethically endorsed method. As Crowther, Ironside, Spence, and Smythe (2016) write, hermeneutic phenomenology "is a methodological approach not bound by structured stages of a method; it is how one attunes, questions, and thinks in and through evolving methods" (p.2). The method utilized is that which is appropriate for the researcher, the study to be undertaken, and research participants. The rationale being that hermeneutic phenomenological researchers enter into their research with unique understandings and callings to explore and discover. Actively questioning their prejudices and searching for new ways of understanding a phenomenon therefore requires adjustments to the questions that are asked of participants and how the interpretive approach unfolds. Fundamentally, engaging with research texts in a variety of ways, and coming back to the same piece of text over and over again to seek further meanings and understandings, is a process known as hermeneutic circling. Through hermeneutic circling the researcher is drawn back and forth, closer and further, away and towards the ontological

nature presented. For researchers with firsthand experiences of the phenomenon being studied, circling brings their own experiences back to life in quite vivid ways, requiring deeper exploration of the understandings they've taken on these earlier experiences. Through this simultaneous exploration of others stories along with previous experiential understandings there becomes a melding of possibilities as to the ontological meanings. Gadamer refers to this melding as the 'fusion of horizons' (Flood, 2010, p. 10; Laverty, 2008, p. 25) to recognize that "the research text emerges as a fusion of the researcher's experiences with the phenomenon" (Giles, 2008, p. 22).

The question a researcher asks of a text, which in this research will be what is the relational nature of WIL experiences in the context of pre-service teacher education. From this question, other questions are formed and explored in the search for meaning, feeling, illustration or depiction of this feeling, the nature of the event, and what it is like to be the participant in the story. Searching for meaning in experiences is at best a circling activity and at worse an overwhelming challenge. To facilitate the meaning making process van Manen (1990) and others encourage the thought that the researcher writes to understand, rather than writing our understanding. This comes back to the researcher's prejudices and the necessity to be open to other ways of understanding the phenomenon. Could the story mean, feel, and show a nature to the experience that we, ourselves, have not experienced? The researher actively looks for other ways of understanding and 'knowing' the phenomenon. Through this iterative process space is provided for the silence to be seen and Heidegger's multiplicity of meanings to emerge. This discussion on care as an ontological nature of Initial Teacher Education Program professional experience moves on and considers how the stories are gathered and studied.

Gathering Stories for Data

Hermeneutic phenomenological research works with firsthand accounts of experiences. The researcher wants to hear stories, rich with details of what happened and how it felt. Often stories are elicited from participants with questions such as "Can you tell me about…?" and "Can you tell me of a time when you felt…?" Researchers have found questions such as these have resulted in numerous stories being obtained. Crowther et al. (2016) wrote "story tellers anticipate that their story is valued, and in sharing their story (in a way that makes sense to them) give it to the researcher to shed light on their experience and reveal the phenomenon of interest" (p. 3). Instead of asking participants to attend interviews, the term conversations is used because it more accurately reflects the way in which we as hermeneutic phenomenological researchers engage with participants and the stories they share. While the conversation might appear to conclude for the participants it continues much longer for the researcher, for they are involved in transcribing the recordings, crafting stories, interpretations and then hermeneutic circling is undertaken. These ongoing conversations, between the researcher and the gathered stories are considered and purposeful.

WHY IS HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY APPROPRIATE FOR RESEARCH IN WIL?

Hermeneutic phenomenology, a humanistic methodology positioning the ontological nature of shared experiences within specific contexts, such as WIL experiences, brings sustained focus on lived experiences. Gadamer (2014), the founder of hermeneutic phenomenology stated that "the most important thing in education is still something else – the training in the sensus communis … .the sense that founds community" (p.19). This sentiment, the development of cultural competence and relational sensibilities (Giles, 2014), is central to pre-service teacher education WIL experiences and students' success within these contexts.

Within these neoliberal times with calls to measure the value of higher education - particularly in terms of economic and social capital, find efficiencies, and increase income for your university, hermeneutic phenomenology as we practice it brings the researcher back to the humanity of those involved. Space is created where educational endeavors are undertaken with people who will, based on their prior experiences, respond differently within similar contexts. Through ontological exploration the influence of neoliberal practices on how those working in education are, and how students are impacted and highlighted. Here Verhoeven (1972) aptly reminds us of the importance of relational sensibilities by simply, yet profoundly, stating that "the heart is the center of an inner life in which experiences are absorbed and from which contact with the world is made" (p. 120). Heart, in this sense should be considered as a place where being, developing, and becoming as part of a professional community converge within oneself and contribute to the formation of self-identity (Palmer, 2007, pp. 11-12).

WIL, pre-service teacher education, and teaching in general are all relational endeavors (Giles, 2008). At the heart of teaching, is the art and science involved in the formation of an individual human, and yet neoliberal ideology seems to "leave no room for softer, human qualities such as intuition, emotions, imagination, and creativity. They are denigrated …. And yet we implicitly know how important these qualities are for human growth and development" (Henriksson, 2012, p. 119). If a key purpose of WIL is the intentional, structured, integration of theory and practice in a workplace environment then attention needs to be given to how this is experienced by students and supervisors. Simultaneously the interpretation and enacting of neoliberal managerialism by students may be visible in their practice. In this respect hermeneutic phenomenology brings sustained focus to interpreting the "gap between what theory and educational documents say should take place in the classroom and what actually takes place in every-day pedagogical practice" (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012, p. 9).

HOW ARE HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL FINDINGS PRESENTED?

While hermeneutic phenomenology does not proffer theories, the considered and purposeful ongoing conversations between researcher and participants' texts are undertaken with a clear intent to present findings in a way that resonate with the reader. In the case of the research discussed in this paper findings are intended to be presented in such a way that wonder is created. Wonder at the taken for grantedness of care, in neoliberal and risk averse times, that has been rediscovered and re-presented. How does an ontologically fundamental nature of care in WIL and pre-service teacher education professional experiences seemingly become mute? Our hope is that readers wonder how care is demonstrated and modeled, in their everyday activities.

Just as hermeneutic phenomenology begins from wonder so it also pauses with wonder, and through writing creates a mood, to present findings. Writing absorbs hermeneutical phenomenological researchers in such a way that the writer carries the conversation with participants' stories, philosophical texts, and ourselves into a conversation with a reader who is unlikely to be met.

We transition from our hermeneutic circling to write musings specifically for the reader. Musings conveying explorations and discoveries in a relatable manner. The writing draws a picture of what and how the researcher sought, located, and placed the research findings. Gathered stories are interpreted to demonstrate understandings and continually connects to the relational nature of education and WIL. Much like presenting, or teaching, we wish to bring you along on our journey of discovery, recruit you, if you will, to self-identify and modify practices that contribute to change and reposition personal relationships as a central concern. Van Manen (2014) wrote "when a text is successful, and when the reader is open to it, then the text may have an effect that is almost inexplicable" (p. 359).

Care

Phenomenological research has found that care is an ontological notion for pre-service teacher education students' professional experiences. While the example above, was one of a number that, highlighted students' experience of neoliberal and risk averse ideologies at play on professional experience, it was heartening to see many more stories of pedagogical care for a person's wellbeing. The following story demonstrates one such moment of care experienced through community on WIL placement. "They're very approachable, really friendly, really welcoming and I stepped in and felt like I'd been there for years. Everyone kind of just took me under their wing". (C1.1)

In this story a pre-service teacher describes their final professional experience. The sense of being welcomed, without hesitation, into a community is evident. Such immediate feelings of support are likely to provide safety and create space for a pre-service teacher to develop, take risks, and look forward to joining the professional community of teacher educators. And this, the early career teacher experiences were taken as the hermeneutic phenomenological research next.

Relationships

Researchers have also found that ontological relationships also exist *in* our way of being with others. Relationships exists in between us (Giles, 2008). Relationships exist *in the spaces between us, a notion that is captured in* the following poem.

What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.

So building fires
requires attention
to the space in between,
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned
to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and the absence of the fuel
together, that make fire possible.

We only need to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings

> in which the flame
> that knows just how it wants to burn
> can find its way.
>
> (Brown, 2003, p. 89)

In the story that follows, a student teacher describes a very knowledgeable lecturer who does not appear to have a breadth of experience as a teacher. The student teacher senses a lack of experience in the way the lecturer carries herself towards their responsibilities with pre-service teachers.

> She did come and visit me when I was on a practicum in a school. She was very positive and she was very specific with her praise, but some of the comments she made, I felt, were made from a perspective of someone not having been on the floor teaching herself, not quite knowing how it is to be there. Lecturers need to have the experience on the floor teaching, how can you teach when you haven't done it yourself? (Giles, 2008, p.124)

The lecturer in this story appears to lack personal experience of teaching. The lecturer's way of being makes an impression upon the student teacher's being (Buber, 2002). The student teacher feels that "somewhere there was something missing in her practical knowledge" as if the lecturer did not have a practical and experiential knowledge from having worked with children. This pre-service teacher is unsure how she/he knows this "but it was just something". Something in the way the lecturer acts, speaks of someone "not quite knowing how it is to be there" with children. Had the teacher been experienced, her comments and interactions would have been different, and shown in the way she comported.

The lecturer's way of being influences the way this pre-service teacher stands in their relationship with the lecturer moment by moment (Heidegger, 2001). The student expects the lecturer to teach out of who they are (Palmer, 1998), from "experience on the floor teaching". This lecturer does not appear to have experiences that this pre-service teacher deems to be critical to the teaching role they are in. The pre-service teacher feels as if the lecturer is unable to relate experientially. The lecturer's previous experiences are not known to the pre-service teacher. It is in the way the lecturer is with them that the pre-service teacher feels a "knowing" about who this lecturer is. Who this lecturer is comes across to the pre-service teacher on different occasions; such is the nature and influence of the lecturer's comportment (Dreyfus, 1991). The pre-service teacher felt an absence where they knew that the lecturer hadn't been there, that is, hadn't been a teacher. We would argue that this ontological knowledge shows the student teacher's readiness for embarking on other teaching experiences.

This article has opened some understandings about care and relationships which relate to the experience of being in teaching; being in a WIL experience. These descriptions and interpretations deepen the understandings of working with others in a complex teaching context.

LIMITATIONS

All research approaches have strengths and limitations. This is a matter of difference rather than a depreciation. Typically, criticism of hermeneutic phenomenology as a research method might be found in relation to a small number of participants, a lack of participants' context in gathering and interpreting stories, and the analysis of stories being towards phenomenological themes rather than emergent themes about a participant. We accept these differences and suggest that limitations are always prefaced upon a frame of thinking that is not part of the phenomenological method. We would argue the limitations researchers of hermeneutic phenomenological should recognize include the need to stay sustained, immersed, in the research for significant periods of time while contemplating stories for ontological meanings. Such an immersion experience requires researchers to remain open and available for new ways of knowing a phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenological researchers need to be skilled in conversational interviews that create space for the participant to share their stories of experience. Finally, arguably and most importantly, hermeneutic phenomenological researchers need to become comfortable with the uncomfortable and for this reason this method is not for the faint hearted.

CONCLUSION

Hermeneutic phenomenological research, and the interpretative processes within, provide an opportunity to unpack ontological meanings of the existential nature of WIL experiences. This deliberate process is not reductionist and very contextual; that is, this research practice seeks to uncover meanings and understanding of lived experiences which are then influential in an individual's ongoing professional practice. This is not a speedy or calculative process, neither is it an evidence based process, but rather one where the researcher or pre-service teacher lingers to look closely, as the first poem says, at a phenomenon of interest, contemplating meanings and shared understandings in a writing process.

The particularity of the relational nature of the context surrounding the lived experiences allows 'the roots to be seen', as poem two opened, described, interpreted, contemplated in a cyclic hermeneutic process of analysis. In contrast to the speed of neoliberal educational processes for reflective practice, the phenomenological approach takes time but we have a sense that the phenomenological experience is transformative in ways that we had not always anticipated.

The use of hermeneutic phenomenology and the sensitive and intuitive approach required, consistently reinforces the connectedness of our shared humanity as participants together in WIL experiences, while also showing the centrality and existential nature of relationships in holistic forms of education. The challenge remains as to finding ways to deepen taken for granted, ontological meaning-making findings associated with experiential accounts of WIL; a process where 'logs are gently laid for the space a fire needs to burn' (Brown, 2002, p.89).

Care and relationships are existential to our everyday WIL experiences. As humans we carry a concern for the nature of care we are experiencing. In the same way relationships are always experienced as how we are showing the nature of our being together in the world (Heidegger, 1996). The important message here is that we don't add care and relationships to WIL experiences that are already in! It is the quality and phenomenological nature of the care and relationships within participants' experiences of WIL that remain a matter for ongoing attention.

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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, entrepreneurships, 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 is 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.