Student insights: The added value of work-integrated learning

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Work-integrated learning (WIL) has attracted considerable attention as an instrument for enhancing professional practice and developing work-readiness in graduates. It is widely considered as a point of difference in developing graduate employability by enhancing skill outcomes through an authentic learning experience. This paper focuses on student insights of the added value of WIL and their development of personal and professional graduate attributes. Thematic content analysis was undertaken of students' reflections (n=271) of their perceived learning outcomes and overall experiences from their sport management and coaching WIL experiences at Massey University, New Zealand. The findings show that enjoyment, achievement and reinforcing career decisions added value to the student's experiences. Gratitude for the support and mentoring of workplace and academic supervisors was also evident. Development of personal attributes involving self-management, enterprise, and effective communication were important learning outcomes. Professional development of a community of practice and leadership responsibilities were also highlighted.

Keywords: Reflective practice, pedagogy development; graduate attributes

The New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)'s 2014-2019 strategy (Ministry of Education, 2014) emphasizes the importance of graduates gaining both transferable skills and specific qualifications that are matched to labor market demand; specifically, to ensure there are better employment outcomes for graduates and investments in education (by students, employers and Government). Massey University's strategic plan *Road to 2025* highlights the need "to enable our students to support their life-long learning and develop their preparedness for employment in a global context" and to "actively enhance career and employment outcomes for student by developing a new, integrated approach to applied learning" (Massey University, 2017). However, practical implications are that while the employability emphasis (Jackson, 2013; Yorke, 2004; 2010) aligns well with government and university agendas, graduates need to be prepared for complex and dynamic workplaces, and to be future ready for careers that arguably are yet to exist. The skills-based approach to employability has been criticized as being too narrow. Bridgstock (2009, p. 31) argues that "in the context of a rapidly changing information-and knowledge-intensive economy, employability involves far more than possession of the generic skills listed by graduate employers as attractive". Programs need to reconsider the curriculum learning outcomes that should be imperative for university education in the twenty-first century (Fleming & Haigh, 2017).

Career preparedness includes self-management, having a clear professional identity and the ability to network (as examples). The development of self-efficacy has been highlighted as an important outcome in the WIL process (Freudenberg, Cameron & Brimble, 2011; Fleming, Martin, Hughes, & Zinn, 2009; Reddan, 2015, 2016; Subramaniam & Freudenberg, 2007). In a broader sense Bandura (1988) defined self-efficacy as belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task, which can play a major role on how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. Zelenko and

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Bridgstock (2014, p. 213) argued that "WIL opportunities can potentially be of great value to students providing opportunities to experience and make sense of professional practice.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the added value of WIL experiences through student insights of their journey to be a graduate. Specific objectives were to examine WIL student's responses (n = 271) in respect of their perceived learning outcomes and overall experience from a work-based experiential practicum program in sport management using thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings highlight that while skills are important, it is also important to acknowledge the broader notions of career preparedness and enhancing employability. The paper provides empirical support for graduate attribute themes related to self-management, enterprising individuals, a community of practice, effective communication, and leadership responsibilities as well as the additional themes of critical reflection and an added value dimension through enjoyment and passion for the role, reinforcing career decision, and supervisor and workplace gratitude.

Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are generic skills, qualities and understandings that are developed by students (Precision Consultancy, 2007). This publication and a more recent analysis of 36 of 40 listed universities on the Australian Universities website identified the four most common graduate attributes across the higher education sector (Hall, Pascoe & Charity, 2017), namely communication, global citizenship, discipline specific knowledge and lifelong learning. Communication and global citizenship are also included within Massey's employability characteristics, along with three others; namely enterprise, self-management and exercising leadership. Broad definitions of these five attributes are as follows:

- Self-management: Working independently, taking responsibility for personal actions such as planning and organization, having the confidence and self-awareness to plan and realize goals and ambitions, and being adaptive to respond to changing situations
- Enterprise: A combination of individuality, creativity, and leadership that enables a culture of innovation, risk taking, and opportunism, enabling entrepreneurship and facilitating knowledge transfer.
- Global Citizenship: Engaging ethically and efficiently in the professional context and understanding and engaging with diverse communities and cultures in a global context.
- Information Literacy: The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand, and to communicate that information effectively through oral, written, or visual methods in order to inform, motivate, and effect change
- Exercising leadership: Ability to work confidently and collaboratively with a group of people, and as a leader when necessary, including encouraging and motivating team members toward a shared vision to achieve goals.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Career Development Learning and Sport

A conceptual model of graduate attributes for employability and career development was developed by Bridgstock (2009), incorporating career building skills and self-management skills through acquisition, display and use of discipline specific skills and generic skills. "Career building skills refer exploiting career opportunities to gain advancement or other desired outcomes. Self-

management skills relate to the individual's perception and appraisal of themselves in terms of values, abilities, interests and goals" (Leong & Kavanagh, 2013, p. 9).

WIL and sport are natural curriculum partners, given the applied and vocational nature of the various contexts (Agnew, Pill & Orrell, 2017; Fleming, & Ferkins, 2011). Graduate feedback has indicated that to enhance employability in the sport and recreation industry, work-integrated learning (WIL) programs need to be designed so that students are provided with opportunities to facilitate the development of various competencies (Fleming & Ferkins, 2006; Fleming, Martin, Hughes, & Zinn, 2009; Martin, Fleming, Ferkins, Wiersma, & Coll, 2010). "In this context, attributes that are highly valued include the ability and willingness to learn, enthusiastic participation (passion for sport), use of initiative/self-sufficiency, and personal organizational skills. Success in this industry relies on relationship building/ developing professional networks as well as teamwork and cooperation" (Martin, 2013, p. 131).

WIL programs seek to provide graduates with a comprehensive industry skill set desired by potential employers (Fleming et al., 2009), and for success in the workplace (Bell, Crebert, Patrick, Bates, & Cragnolini, 2003). Rowe, Mackaway, and Winchester-Seeto (2012) argue that the workplace host supervisor plays a vital and complex role in WIL settings (i.e., cooperative education, work-based learning, and practicum). Their conceptual framework outlines four key roles commonly expected of host supervisors: support, education, administration/managerial and guardian, ensuring clear understanding and effective communication of stakeholder roles.

Self-Efficacy and Work-Integrated Learning

Freudenberg et al. (2011) argued that self-efficacy is an important measure of an individuals' capacity to cope with learning whether at university or in the workplace. Bandurra's (1977, p. 3) social cognitive theory defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments". Fletcher (1990) promoted self-efficacy as a theoretical framework and indicated that enhancing self-efficacy may help the transition from the student to professional practitioner persona in the workplace. WIL experiences can improve self-efficacy through performance accomplishments and such experiences can result in a feedback loop leading to increased self-efficacy and, in turn, further enhancing an individual's performance and reinforce career decision-making (Redden, 2015). Redden (2015, p. 423) reinforces that "the notion of work self-efficacy is significant as the self-efficacy beliefs of an individual have considerable influence on his/her level of motivation and performance in the workplace."

Experiential Learning and the Sport Management and Coaching Practicum

Experiential learning is a cyclical process that involves observation, reflection and action (Dewey, 1938). Dewey (1938) advocated the value of experiential learning but argued not all experiences are educative. He suggested that learning occurs as a result of problem solving and requires thinking and reflection guided by educators. The experiential learning model follows a cyclical process involving concrete experiences, observation, reflection, evaluation and future action (Kolb, 1984), or 'learning by doing'. Schön's (1983) notion of the 'reflective practitioner' is particularly applicable to the WIL process. He argued that reflective practice is a learned skill most effectively introduced through an experiential component (Schön, 1987; 1991).

The sport management and coaching practicum at Massey University is a compulsory full year course, where students are based at a sports organization and work on a specified project for a

minimum of 180 hours. A learning contract is agreed upon by the student, the supervisor within the organization and the academic supervisor responsible for coordinating the practicum at the University. This contract provides "detailed overview of the practicum, including expectations, responsibilities and assessment" (Martin & Leberman, 2005, p. 19). Reflective practice is the primary pedagogy employed to integrate knowledge in WIL settings (Coll et al., 2009). Students keep a reflective journal composed of a brief synopsis (diary type format) outlining "the duties performed, work behaviour and reflections on all activities that take place throughout the practicum experience" (Fleming & Martin, 2007, p. 117). The journal entails more than just listing experiences; it includes revisiting feelings and re-evaluating the experience related to activities undertaken, learning and linking to theory, a process suggested by Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993).

METHOD

Understanding students' perceptions helps to inform and change teaching practice through increased focus on specific graduate attributes and a broader range of added value aspects of WIL programs. In this case study we undertook a thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of all the available students' immediate post-practicum reflections (n= 271 of 299 students who had participated in the practicum over this period) from those who had undertaken Massey's sport management and coaching practicum between the years 2007 and 2016. The Word documents (final reflective journal entries) all followed a similar structure, which included sections where students were asked to reflect specifically related to their perceived WIL learning outcomes and overall experience. The documents were not part of any course assessment but were initially collated to provide detail of practicum placements and learning outcomes for future students to reference. The fact that all the available documents were available for inclusion in the project strengthened the power of the analysis. The project was approved and deemed to be low risk against the university's research ethics criteria, and information provided for analysis was anonymous. Students who participated in the practicum were enrolled at the time in either: a Bachelor of Sport & Exercise (58%; Major in Management & Coaching), a Bachelor of Business Studies (36%; Major in Sport Business Management) or another qualification (6%).

Data Analysis

Each individual's document was uploaded into Nvivo11 and coded separately. Thematic content analysis involved searching for common themes based on the model of analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006). A theme or node hierarchy was created by aggregating and merging to align with higher level nodes. The learning outcomes section and the overall experience section were combined together for coding because in many instances, the students did not respond as though they were separate sections. This content was coded in the first instance in a deductive manner against the five Massey employability characteristics (enterprise, global citizenship, information literacy, self-management and exercising leadership). If additional themes emerged from the coding analysis this was also included in an inductive manner as new themes. Some importance was placed on the frequency or variety of the most salient themes. The counts were recorded for each coded reference made (how many separate bits of information were coded) rather than numbers of people coded meaning that an individual's content could be coded to more than one theme or to more than one place in an overall hierarchy of comments.

Credibility and Dependability

To address potential limitations of researcher' bias, various quality assurance activities have been deployed across the project to ensure the credibility and dependability of the thematic analysis. These include:

1. An independent coder provided an objective view of the data and minimized any potential for coding bias by anyone closely associated with the program.
2. Use of NVivo 11, Computerized Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) permitted the orderly creation of nodes that could then be grouped and sub-grouped into themes. The inclusion of demographic variables that provided a modest level of further analysis and cross checking of participant responses.
3. Reflexivity by peer reviewing the process, coding structures and the themes developed continued throughout the process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The themes derived from the thematic content analysis included aspects of added value, and the five Massey employability characteristics. An additional sixth theme, critical reflection, also emerged from the analysis. Example quotes are provided below using the following student coding (Student x/N year).

Added Value

Added value was the second most frequent theme described (21% of all comments). Within that broad theme, comments relating to enjoyment (Martin, 2013), reinforcing employment decisions (Redden, 2015), as well as expressions gratitude to both academic and the employment supervisor (Rowe et al., 2012) or organization were commonly seen. The added value of these WIL experiences in terms of students' future careers is highlighted by the following quotes. "This practicum has allowed me to grow as an individual and gain the necessary skills required to add value to any organization in the sports industry, I may be a part of in the future (S6/17 16)."

Overall many students were able to express the view that they had added value to their placement organization through their experiences, skills and attributes; as well as adding value to themselves in terms of the skill learning, enjoyment and networks developed during their WIL placement. For example, "I am now confident that I can add value to any organization in the sport management and coaching industry from my experiences and look forward to entering into the workforce (S22/48 15)."

Enjoyment

Students frequently reported that they enjoyed taking part in the practicum experience. The opportunity to participate in an authentic learning experience with real activities and outcomes is clearly resulting in an experience that is both stimulating, enjoyable and rewarding. Typical student responses were "I have also learned that I really enjoy being in this industry. Being put into a real organization helped me learn more about who I am as a person and that I would really enjoy working/managing in sport (S13/29 13)" and "the practicum experience has been the most enjoyable and practical aspect of my university degree and I look forward to using the skills I have learnt for the rest of my working career (S8/40 14)". However, one student did note that although the WIL experience had been enjoyable, they would change career. This is a useful finding and an honest reflection of an experience that has still been worthwhile.

Academic and Workplace Supervisor Support

The value of both workplace supervisor and academic support was noted, as important mentors who undertake professional guidance, give direction and care (Rowe et al., 2012), but also provide insight and encourage independence for the students to learn and develop a range of skills (Martin, Rees, & Edwards, 2011). The dominance of comments about the workplace supervision as opposed to the academic supervisor reflects a change in the relationship, representing a departure from the standard academic environment into the workforce. Example comments about such supportive workplace supervisors were: "they gave me direction when it was needed and there were always rewards at the end of the day" (S3/27 09) and "they allowed me the latitude to grow my independence with this role, becoming more of a 'mentor' in the end" (S24/40 14).

Reinforcing Career Decisions

Many students were able to reflect on the view that the practicum reinforced sport management as a career choice. Rodden (2015) also pointed out the importance of the WIL experience in reinforcing career decisions. The opportunity of a work placement allows students to consider their options and reinforce their career choice, which is highlighted in the following typical student response. "Overall my practicum experience has been an extremely enjoyable one. It has opened my eyes to the fact that working in a sporting organization is definitely what I want to do in the future" (S9/12 07).

Having the opportunity to learn and apply skills in the industry that student want to work in the future has been particularly valuable, as noted in the following quotes. "From this practicum I learnt that the sport industry is definitely the industry I want to work in. I learned valuable event management aspects such as planning, sponsorship and volunteer coordination" (S6/29 13).

Graduate Attributes

From the student's reflections, we were able to identify that the WIL process involved developing*:* self-management, enterprising individuals, a community of practice, effective communication, and leadership responsibilities as specific attributes, which when melded together, define an optimal WIL outcome through the tripartite partnership between the employer, the teacher, and the student. The focus of this paper is the student insights of the added value of WIL along with their development of personal and professional graduate attributes.

Competencies are the qualities or extent to which the students develop the necessary ability or knowledge to do something successfully (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2015). Essentially WIL provides opportunities to enable individuals to apply academic theory to a real world setting/environment, with individuals able to test out the extent of their skills/competencies linked to interpersonal attributes. A particular strength of the WIL experience is the ability to enhance those soft skills that could not be learnt in the classroom environment (Fleming et al., 2009). The following quotes highlight personal and professional development opportunities through these WIL experiences. "I have been provided with plenty of professional development and self-management opportunities which have increased my enjoyment in the role and equipped me with valuable sport management skills" (S14/17 16) and "I have learnt so much about the sporting event management world and how it all works, [the sport] as an organization, as well as learning just as much about myself throughout the process" (S13/30 11).

These work experiences reinforce the students' commitment to the roles, passion for sport and pursuing a career in the industry. Enthusiastic participation has also been highlighted by sport management graduates as an important attribute for employability (Fleming et al., 2009), and the students have also noted their passion to be involved in the future. For example, "it requires a lot of passion for the sport and I found this passion within myself, taking on a lot more responsibilities than I initially wanted. It reinforced that I have a passion and drive for this industry and provided me learning experiences." (S23/30 11)

Students also highlighted to other potential students the importance of being passionate about their involvement in the sport industry. The following quote provides useful advice for Wil students:

> Without a passion for sport and personal improvement, you will struggle in the sporting industry. Without passion, you will not be willing to work hard to achieve certain objectives for the organization. Without the willingness to achieve personal improvement, your own development will suffer (S15/43 12).

Self-Management

Comments about self-management were the most frequently reported (31%; n=700). Focus on aspects of personal development comprised three self-management sub-themes, namely self-sufficiency, self-confidence and self-awareness. Example student comments of these sub-themes are: "I learned that no matter how large the task, with the correct planning and implementation, anything can be achieved."(S4/12 07), "I have gained a great deal of confidence in how I interact with people, how to make judgement calls under pressure" (S18/43 12), and "I learnt the importance of being self-driven and motivated when in a managerial role" (S18/40 14).

There is increased self-efficacy and focus on self-development throughout the WIL experience, as reported by Freudenberg et al., 2011; Fleming et al., 2009; Reddan, 2015, 2016; and Subramaniam and Freudenberg, 2007), which is a catalyst for both personal and professional change and development. The following student quote highlights these points:

> Another major component of the learning aspect was what I was able to learn about myself. At first, I was tentative, apprehensive and unconfident in my abilities. However, as time progressed and my knowledge base increased, I began to believe in myself and my abilities a lot more. I became more independent in my duties, more confident in what I was saying, and was able to use my initiative to get projects started/finished (S15/27 09).

Enterprising Individuals

Organizations need enterprising young people who are ready to undertake projects of importance or difficulty and are energetic in carrying out such roles. These individuals are characterized by imagination or initiative. Sub themes developed from the thematic content analysis were organizational awareness, achievement, creativity and initiative, which are highlighted by the following student comments: "It has allowed me to achieve tasks I thought were once out of my comfort zone" (S29/43 12), "reasonably high levels of responsibility given allowed personal initiative and skills to be implemented" (S29/31 15) and "when managing a project, the ability to adapt and change when it is required may be something that needs to happen to ensure a successful outcome" (S23/29 13).

Understanding the structure of sports organizations; how they operate, and discovering their place in our communities was clearly a significant outcome for many of these students. The organizational structures, operations, responsibilities and tensions all help contextualize the placement in a way that was not previously understood by many students. Such industry and business knowledge has been highlighted elsewhere as an important graduate competency (Fleming et al., 2009).

Effective Communication

Effective communication is an important competency for graduates (Fleming et al., 2009; Freudenberg et al., 2011), and the range of opportunities to improve communication throughout their WIL experiences was evident in the student reflections. "I feel the most important aspect that I learnt from my practicum experience is the importance of effective communication" (S11/27 09) and "The most important thing I have learnt from this practicum is how essential good communication and strong relationships is with people not only in the sport industry but also within the community" (S3/29 13).

A variety of digital communication activities were described by students. An interesting feature of this type of communication is that the activities or the use of tools would not have been taught within the curriculum, yet the employer, through allocation of online tasks, assumed a high degree of capability with such things, for example, website development, database management and management of other technical computer programs. Many participants took on these technical challenges and performed more than adequately. Types of online communication included:

- Web pages: Create web pages within an organization's homepage.
- Social media: To promote the organization and event.
- Computer programs: Excel, Project Management and Accounting software Xero.
- Database management, Sports Administration Software: e.g., Goalnet, New Zealand Football and Fifa's online database.

Community of Practice

The community of practice theme involved engaging with diverse communities and cultures (9%). These spanned the following sub-themes; networking (e.g., sponsors), volunteer and community contributions, and diversity of participants. The importance of developing a community of practice, particularly in the sport industry was highlighted by students' feedback. "It has allowed me to operate within a legitimate sport organization, gain an understanding of a sport management environment, and develop network opportunities" (S25/29 13). Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, (2002) reinforced social participation where the individual is an active participant in the practices of social communities, and in the construction of their identity through these communities.

The development of important industry contacts, relationships and professional networks (e.g., sponsors) is a particularly valuable outcome of the practicum placement, a finding also highlighted by other research (Fleming et al., 2009). The following typical student comments illustrate this point: "This industry is about building and maintaining quality relationships with those involved and affected by management decisions" (S14/26 10) and "The importance of networking must not be underestimated. I have created a vast network of teachers, sporting coordinators and volunteers, as well as called on my sporting contacts from outside of the sport to help on a number of issues" (S9/12 07).

Leadership Responsibilities

Although a very important aspect of the practicum experience, leadership responsibilities was one of the least described attributes (8%), despite most describing leadership roles in the activities in which they participated. Students were given and assumed a range of formal and informal leadership responsibilities across a variety of other tasks, as indicated by the following statements: "I have a better understanding of what makes a good leader and how critical this is to make for an effective and cohesive team" (S24/29 13) and "I have been given great responsibility which has given me an opportunity to develop my leadership and communications skills" (S21/43 12). Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick and Cragnolini's (2007) findings highlighted the importance of teamwork, students being given responsibility, and collaborative learning as the most important factors graduate reported for effective WIL outcomes. These current findings, whilst noting the responsibility of their roles, indicate that many students have not reflected on the leadership aspects. Greater facilitation by educators/supervisors could enhance this connection and learning outcome.

Critical Reflection

A small number of participants (6%) were able to consider the critical reflection aspects of activities and putting learned theory into practice. Boud and Solomon (2003) argued that students are better career prepared and their learning is deeper and more meaningful when theory is integrated with practice. This additional theme that emerged from the data was not one of the Massey employability characteristics. It is encouraging to receive this insightful feedback from student experiences. "The reflective practitioner model has shown me the link between what I have learnt and experienced in the past, and how completing other subjects has a direct bearing on the decisions that I make today" (S12/12 07). Student feedback highlighted that the reflective process encouraged critical, analytical and systems thinking. "The environment I am working in and the varied nature of the tasks that I have been fortunate to be involved in has provided me with ample opportunities to reflect on how effect management theories can be applied to achieve progress and effect change" (S18/26 10).

CONCLUSIONS

A key aspect of WIL added value is the students' self-efficacy and perceived contribution coupled with enjoyment of the experience. An overwhelming feature of many of the placements was enjoyment of the experience, gratitude and thankfulness to their academic and work-place supervisors, coupled with reaffirming their likely employment pathway in the future. Increasingly, the WIL experience is providing a point of difference for students in enhancing their employability from tertiary education institutions. Overall, specific alignment with Massey University's employability characteristics is noted through this curricular WIL activity, but the outcome is likely to be subtly different for each qualification. We argue that whilst the WIL experiences help in the development of a community of practice, global citizen and life-long learning are also likely to be on-going attributes developed later in a career rather than as a graduate. However, the enterprise of these students is evident in the added value of the WIL experience, as one student said, "the most beneficial and rewarding part of my university experience" (S1/27 09).

IMPLICATIONS

The findings highlight that while skills are important, it is important to acknowledge the broader notions of career preparedness and enhancing employability. WIL critical reflection opportunities provide the added value of other dimensions of developing employability, enjoyment, and passion

for the role, reinforcing career decisions, and supervisor workplace mentoring. The paper also provides empirical support to graduate attribute themes developed through WIL opportunities related to self-management, enterprising individuals, a community of practice, effective communication, and leadership responsibilities, derived from a thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Implication for practice are the importance for academic supervisors to reinforce a learning process that facilitates leadership and critically reflective work-based experiences that link theory to practice. To enhance graduate employability, some workplace supervisors also need resources/professional development in terms of their support, management, leadership and mentoring of WIL students, which is noted as an area for potential future research.

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Papers stem from presentations[1] delivered at the 3rd International Research Symposium on Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education

[1] Papers included in this IJWIL Special Issue are based on selected presentations and manuscripts from the research symposium's refereed proceedings. All manuscripts were expanded and modified to meet IJWIL requirements followed by double-blind reviewed by the IJWIL editorial board, and then amended before being accepted to be published in IJWIL.

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.