

Postgraduate work-integrated learning: Using diversity to prepare graduates for a messy and uncertain world

KRISTEN LYONS¹

University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

MONICA SEINI

Southern Cross University, Lismore, Australia

CATHERINE COOGAN WEST

PEDRAM RASHIDI

CAMILLE FREEMAN

GLENN RYALL

SUSAN CHEN

CIARRA VU

University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a teaching and learning approach widely adopted across Australian universities. With inclusion across a wide range of programs and courses, WIL is championed as providing authentic and transformative learning environments that may equip graduates for the world of work. Despite a rapid expansion in WIL scholarship, there remains scant attention at the postgraduate level, including its specific contributions in preparing students for life after completion of postgraduate studies. This paper contributes to nascent literature in this space. Taking the case of the University of Queensland's Master of Development Practice, this paper argues there are challenges in ensuring postgraduate WIL prepares graduates for careers in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. The paper concludes that a diverse approach to WIL is vital to provide relevant pedagogical practices that prepare postgraduates for uncertain, and unknowable futures.

Keywords: Crisis; development studies; practice-based learning; postgraduate; uncertainty; university

Most Australian Universities articulate a commitment to work-integrated learning (WIL) pedagogical practices. WIL is part of a broad set of practice-based, industry and professional oriented education and training opportunities, and is widely championed as part of a national agenda to ensure 'job ready graduates,' as set out in the Federal Government's much contested higher education policy in 2020 (see Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020; Norton, 2020). The integration of WIL as a key learning tool is also supported by Universities Australia (2019). While there is abundant WIL scholarship, there remains scant analysis of WIL at the postgraduate level, including its specific contributions in preparing students for life after graduation. Specifically, there is a gap in knowledge related to how postgraduate WIL might prepare graduates for careers, and life, in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world (Stein, 2021). While WIL may offer opportunities to support graduates in the context of a VUCA world, what might be the challenges in implementing postgraduate WIL, distinct from its undergraduate counterpart?

To address these questions, this paper takes the case of the University of Queensland's (UQ) Master of Development Practice (MDP) to analyze the contributions of diverse WIL activities in supporting postgraduates to prepare for careers in development practice. The MDP, and the field of development practice more broadly, provides a valuable case to examine postgraduate WIL; given the program's emphasis upon theoretically informed practice across diverse national and international settings. Graduates from postgraduate studies in development practice follow diverse career pathways,

¹ Corresponding author: Kristen Lyons, kristen.lyons@uq.edu.au

including the humanitarian sector, foreign aid, government policy and planning, community development and elsewhere (Rashidi et al., 2019). Postgraduate development practice, including the MDP, is therefore tasked with equipping graduates with the conceptual and methodological tools required to enable ethically grounded work that supports a socially and environmentally just future (Sultana, 2019). Given this mandate, critical praxis, including via diverse WIL initiatives, might be expected to play a role in this task.

Through an analysis of diverse WIL practice-based experiences associated with UQ's MDP program, this paper contributes to the nascent literature on postgraduate level WIL. It begins by providing a review of existing literature on postgraduate WIL, and then considers the pedagogical challenges and responsibilities for WIL, alongside higher education more broadly, in responding to the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that has come to define the contemporary world (Stein, 2021; Stein et al., 2020.). Through our case of the UQ's MDP program, this paper demonstrates opportunities for WIL to support students in fostering ways of grappling with the messiness of the world they work and live in and engage in reflective practice to make meaning of, and navigate such messiness. It demonstrates the need for diverse and flexible WIL opportunities that match student needs, in terms of both their professional and personal backgrounds and histories, to deliver meaningful pedagogical outcomes. We conclude that a diverse approach to postgraduate WIL provides a basis for ensuring relevant pedagogical practice, including the support for postgraduate students to foster ways of knowing, being and doing that are compatible with uncertain and unknowable futures (Stein, 2021; Stein et al., 2020.).

POSTGRADUATE WIL IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD: A REVIEW OF NASCENT LITERATURE

WIL is an umbrella term that includes various activities designed to ensure students experience work-related practices relevant to their studies (Universities Australia, 2019). It was introduced, at least in part, to provide students with an opportunity to improve their study-related practical knowledge, while at the same time supporting the community, not-for profit, government, and industry sectors to benefit from research skills and perspectives. WIL was also intended, according to Xia et al. (2015), to ground academic disciplinary training in real-life scenarios, including the integration of theoretical training within workplace settings. As a pedagogical practice, WIL offers the possibility to defuse criticism that conventional university curricula can be limited by its strongly-theoretical content, or reliance upon formulaic learning environments, both of which may leave students ill-prepared for the world of work, and more broadly, the world that awaits them (Katajavuori et al., 2006).

While there is a growing body of scholarship that examines the opportunities and challenges related to the design and delivery of WIL at the undergraduate level, including assessment of its impacts for graduates; scholarship at the postgraduate level remains scarce. This paper responds to the gap in the literature by examining how the potential benefits from WIL might translate at the postgraduate level. Given postgraduate students commonly bring a wide range of practice-based experiences, and are sometimes embedded within professional communities, this paper asks what specific contributions WIL may offer postgraduate learning experiences? It also considers how WIL might support students in preparing for careers in today's uncertain world.

Given the limited literature that has, to date, focused on postgraduate WIL, this paper adopts a wide and inclusive approach to WIL to maximize the scope. WIL is taken to include diverse practice-based learning such as internships, meetings and workshops with industry professionals, alongside mentoring and other professional training that is both aligned to, and in some cases not bound by,

assessment, as well as that which occurs alongside (rather than embedded within) formal course delivery. It is also taken to include those “learning experiences that explicitly integrate theory with practice within a purposefully designed curriculum to foreground employability” (UQ, 2019, p. 1).

The nascent literature on postgraduate WIL identifies a range of potential benefits associated with diverse WIL activities. Barber et al., (2004), for example, describe WIL as providing experiences that may support postgraduate students in making new meaning of their current employment, as well as career pathways and broader life experiences that are often already attained at the time of entry into postgraduate study. It may also affirm and/or enhance postgraduate students’ self-motivation, self-management, and resilience in diverse workplace settings (Barber et al., 2004). Postgraduate WIL experiences are also reported as assisting students to foster advanced, and perhaps more nuanced, understandings of specific workplace cultures, including hierarchies and power politics (Zegwaard & McCurdy, 2014). Through positive postgraduate WIL experiences, Zegwaard and McCurdy (2014) also report that students are encouraged to pursue roles with higher levels of responsibility and further independence once they return to the workplace.

Similarly, research by Thune and Støren (2015) found that master degree students’ participation across a range of WIL initiatives had a positive outcome related to on-time completion of their studies, as well as fostering new motivations for study, and increasing overall learning outcomes. These authors reported postgraduate WIL experiences as supporting students to develop highly relevant new competencies, skills, and networks required in the labour market, including by offering to update competencies gained via previously completed undergraduate studies. Overall, WIL supported postgraduate students in cultivating a professional identity and professional networks that assisted in their on-going career enhancement (Støren & Arnesen, 2016).

A diverse range of Honors and Master level WIL initiatives were reported by Xia et al., (2015) as enhancing students’ project management skills, alongside networking and communication abilities. In particular, their research highlighted the significance of workplace experiences that enabled students to regularly meet with supervisors and employers as providing opportunities for professional feedback and mentoring. Workplace experience created pathways for collaboration on writing projects and academic publications (as evidenced in this paper), which further supported career progression.

Additionally, across both under- and postgraduate programs and courses, WIL is widely championed as providing an opportunity to incorporate learning methods that may support unique and authentic educational experiences for students (see, e.g., Deale et al., 2010). Similarly, WIL programs are championed as enhancing critical thinking that may lead to transformative life-long learning outcomes. Previous literature has, however, identified conditions and contexts that may affect the extent to which any such benefits are realized, including: ensuring alignment between student and host expectations; adequate resourcing from both the university and host organisation; substantive academic support for students; no financial costs for students; equitable student workload, commensurate with other similarly weighted coursework; and specific support for international and other diverse student cohorts (Coogan West & Lyons, 2020).

But just how might diverse postgraduate level WIL activities support graduates to flourish in their careers, and more broadly, to support ways of being, doing and knowing, that are responsive to today’s contemporary challenges and issues?

The COVID-19 global health pandemic has exposed the complexity and uncertainty of our contemporary world. It has further uncovered the structural inequalities – including, but not limited

to, race, class and age, that shape experiences of health and illness. But the global health crisis is just one of the conditions driving volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Stein, 2021). So too is the climate crisis, and simultaneously escalating biodiversity loss and other environmental crises, each of which is driving eco-anxiety, especially amongst young people, in the face of possible systems collapse (Klein, 2014). Similarly, structural racism, as brought to life via the resurgence of the global Black Lives Matter movement, and alongside a culture of misogyny and institutionalized sexual assault and violence, can each be seen as further signs of a faulting system exposed (Stein, 2021; Stein et al., 2020). These failings across health, the environment, race, and gender equality, are each tied to histories of colonial violence that have, and continue, to deliver profound impacts across the global north and south (Lyons et al., 2021). Today's VUCA world provides an invitation to analyze their causes and consequences. It also invites us to imagine a world otherwise.

Yet how might we collectively grapple with, and respond to, this world? And for educators and students, what kinds of pedagogical practices might support preparedness for work (and living) in this world, with all the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that it entails? Berlant (2016), Meyerhoff (2019), Hil et al. (2021) and others have argued that crises provide powerful moments that expose the 'broken infrastructure' of contemporary societies. This, in turn, creates the basis for new responsive possibilities to arise. In terms of higher education, Meyerhoff (2019) argues it provides the conditions for transformative educational pathways to take shape.

This paper critically examines the opportunities for WIL to provide possibilities for transformative pedagogical experiences at the postgraduate level, including consideration of the conditions in which such transformative potential might be realized. Anchoring this analysis in the context of postgraduate development studies is germane; given graduates from this program enter (or return to) diverse professions that sit at the frontline of multiple crises, and are often oriented toward a social, environmental, and economic justice agenda (Sultana, 2019).

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

This paper draws from research conducted as part of a 'Developing Postgraduate Student-Led Engaged Learning Environments for Specific Cohorts' project for a University of Queensland (UQ) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Teaching Fellowship. This Fellowship aimed to better understand the suite of diverse WIL experiences available to students enrolled in the MDP Program, and to foster opportunities to expand WIL in the MDP program, and more generally across postgraduate programs in the HASS Faculty and the University. At UQ, one of Australia's so-called 'sandstone' universities, a term widely used to describe some of Australia's older universities, that are also often perceived as elitist, and with an emphasis on curriculum ground in theory, rather than practice, WIL aligns with an institutional agenda to foster strategic partnerships to ensure high-level impact and engagement across research, teaching and service (UQ, 2021). A specific focus of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of WIL in meeting the diverse hopes and aspirations of postgraduate students with a commitment to development practice.

A number of Australian universities, including the University of Melbourne, the University of NSW, Murdoch University and others, offer a Master of Development Studies similar to UQ's MDP program (Rashidi et al., 2019). The Development Practice program is designed to enable students to appreciate the multifaceted nature of development by drawing connections, identifying challenges, and devising critically informed problem-solving strategies to address local to global issues. At UQ, the MDP is distinguished on the basis of its overt stated commitment to practice, with a commitment to enhancing

students' theoretically informed development practice (Coogan West & Lyons, 2020). At least 50% of the cohort enrolled in the MDP (pre-COVID-19) are international students, who represent diverse cultural, linguistic, religious, and other backgrounds (see Coogan West & Lyons, 2020). With a student cohort that comprises diverse professional and educational backgrounds, WIL practice-based experiences are challenged to provide broadly relevant pedagogical environments.

The impetus for this research was grounded in observations by the lead author over a decade as Program Convenor, and member of the Program Committee and teaching staff, noting that experiences and pedagogical needs of postgraduate students differ significantly from their undergraduate counterparts. With this as background, the research sought to enhance broad understandings of various aspects of postgraduate WIL, with a particular focus on the development practice space, but with insights that may inform broader postgraduate WIL practice and scholarship. The research aimed to garner new insights into both current and graduated students' experience with postgraduate WIL as part of their MDP studies, including the extent to which it was both perceived, and actually, enhanced preparedness for return to professional practice after completion of postgraduate study. Given the orientation of the MDP towards career pathways that sit at the confluence of health, environmental and other crises, a key focus for this research was upon the relationality of WIL to its VUCA context setting.

The findings presented are drawn from diverse stakeholders engaged in various activities related to the delivery of postgraduate development practice WIL activities. This included a series of focus groups with MDP students (three focus groups, with a total of 14 students included across all focus groups), alongside interviews with three MDP alumni and eight industry representatives. Focus groups with a random sample of current students provided the opportunity to generate understandings of student expectations and experiences related to postgraduate WIL offerings. Interviews with a non-random sample of program alumni provided insights into the kinds of practice-based skills required in diverse development practice related settings, as well as any specific skills development that could be directly attributed to the MDP program. Meanwhile, interviews with industry representatives assisted to gain understandings about the range of skills and competencies the sector seeks in graduates. Non-random sampling ensured industry stakeholders represented the diverse contexts in which contemporary development practice takes place, including with representatives working across environment and sustainability, gender equality and Indigenous rights' related professions. Ethical clearance was obtained for this research through the University of Queensland's Ethics Committee – Developing Post Graduate Student-Led Engaged Learning Environments for Diverse Cohorts (see also Coogan West & Lyons, 2020).

PREPARING POSTGRADUATES FOR CAREERS IN A MESSY AND UNCERTAIN WORLD

Drawing from research findings related to UQ's MDP, this paper now turns to set out some of the conditions that may enable WIL to support postgraduate students in grappling with the political, ecological, socio-cultural, and economic volatility that appears as the new normal (Berlant, 2016). WIL experiences were fostered that support students in dealing with the messiness of the worlds they work and live in, and to cultivate reflective practice to navigate uncertainty. It also includes meeting diverse postgraduates needs as part of designing WIL for specific postgraduate student cohorts.

Dealing with the Messiness and Uncertainty

Effective WIL activities are frequently described as grounded in authentic learning. This refers to a method of learning where students engage with real-world tasks that correspond with their current and future professional lives. Throughout these learning experiences, students have opportunities to

engage directly in problem-solving in ways that enable them to explore and discuss issues in an academically supported context, and to collaborate in designing responses and solutions (Deale et al., 2010; Sullivan, 2009). A key component for authentic learning, Rule (2006) argues, is that students are empowered to shape their own learning.

For MDP students, authentic learning is supported via several courses that offer WIL content. This includes courses that offer placements that situate students in practice-based settings enabling immersion amongst the throng of local community power dynamics, state and federal political tensions, Indigenous politics, cross cultural contexts with diverse gender and other norms, and more. As well as exposing students to the vexed and messy spaces in which development practice takes place, these placements expose students, first-hand, to immediate observation of the ways in which dynamic political, economic, and social dimensions can disrupt, delay and/or destroy projects and community-based interventions.

Specific examples of this as part of the MDP at UQ involve students conducting a social impact assessment (SIA) related to a contemporary development project in southeast Queensland (past projects include a proposed large scale dam project and a local social enterprise for economic development), while guided with high level academic supports. Through the conduct of the SIA, current students described the opportunity for practical skills development and to contribute to something valuable in the context of a real world scenario. Mirroring this, alumni and industry representatives similarly described it as offering work and contextual experiences that are significant in enabling graduates to cultivate increased understandings of the politics shaping decision making processes and outcomes.

Other WIL placements offered as part of MDP coursework, comprising working with Indigenous landholders to understand the limits and opportunities of Native Title legislation and working with local communities in Indonesia to understand local livelihood challenges and opportunities, offered similar learning pathways. In each of these cases, students were exposed to, and required to navigate, the politics of native title and Indigenous land rights, as well as the politics of international aid and development through fieldwork that includes interviews, and participant observation alongside other research methods. Interviews with alumni from the MDP program indicated this training opportunity, together with other critical anthropology and politics courses, provided important new knowledge they could apply to understanding the politics of their workplaces, especially related to working in the context of the Native Title Act 1993. These findings correlate with Zegwaard and McCurdy (2014), who similarly found postgraduate WIL experiences as assisting students to foster in-depth understandings of specific workplace dynamics.

Locating students in such settings, in and of itself, however, is not enough. Indeed, doing so without academic and professional support may do more harm than good. Rather, in each of these placement settings, it is vital that students are guided through the morass of local, national, and international politics that each shape, in various ways, SIA, native title, and community development work (alongside a host of other scenarios in which development practitioners may work). As part of this guidance, postgraduate students require conceptual tools (e.g., an analysis of power relations, structural racism, and power mapping), to assess, and work effectively, within complex and messy workplace settings. Similarly, they must be supported academically in applying these frameworks to assess the professional context, and to navigate a work plan. Current students in the MDP demonstrate a high-level understanding of the need for this, including in their identification of key practice-based experiences they seek as part of their postgraduate studies to support skills' development. As example, the current students included in this research described professional networking opportunities and

mentoring as crucial in enabling them to better understand the diversity of sites in which development practice takes place. The MDP's Industry and Alumni annual networking events and mentoring program, respectively, each provide opportunities for this. These opportunities also ensure a well-supported environment that can assist them in designing responsive pathways within these unpredictable workplaces, and indeed global, settings.

Reflective Practice

Critical reflection is widely documented as enhancing WIL throughout the learning process. Prior literature reports, for example, that reflective practice supports students to “engage, bridge and negotiate challenges across the learning environments of their classroom and host organisation, and interact and learn with teachers and host supervisors” (Ramsey, 2006, pp. 1-2). Moon (2004, p. 83) describes reflective learning as providing a deliberate process that may foster “learning, action, and modification.” Importantly, reflective practice provides students the opportunity to move between action and reflection, with a “cycle of enquiry” supporting students to constructively modify their actions on the basis of deliberate reflections (Ramsey, 2006, p.5). Critical thinking as part of reflective practice may also enable students to contextualize what they learn; with outcomes that may provide critical perspectives on ethical, social, and political issues, including course and program material, professional workplace scenarios, as well as the very process of learning (Brockbank et al., 2017).

Reflective practice is a core skill for development practice professionals to assist in navigating the terrain of ethical, social and political dynamics across local, national and international development settings. This is reflected in the establishment of a separate field of development ethics, and the proliferation of codes of conduct across public and private sector organizations working in the development sector (Gasper, 2012). Reflecting this, both alumni and industry representatives described critical reflection as a highly valued skill in diverse development professions, including assisting in monitoring and evaluation of development projects, and related work.

Reflective practice is embedded across a number of core and elective courses in the MDP, and in some instances is linked to assessment tasks. In one course, Histories and Theories of Development, for example, students are required to engage in a weekly reflective practice that applies theoretical concepts to comment upon contemporary development debates on topics such as sexual misconduct in the humanitarian aid sector, public debate related to the removal of colonial monuments, the #Me Too Movement, and so on. Reflective practice is also built into a range of student-led practice-based initiatives, including a ‘build your career narrative’ workshop, which supports postgraduate students to reflect upon their professional stories, weaving professional practices with postgraduate training, to create a compelling story about their unique career pathway which is intended to assist in on-going employment possibilities.

Matching Work-Integrated Learning to Postgraduate Students Wide-Ranging Backgrounds

Postgraduate students in the MDP have diverse academic and practice-based backgrounds, alongside varied professional interests. With this in mind, Winchester-Seeto et al. (2015) argue that there is a need to respect the diversity of students, and to take a holistic view of students' lives. This should be considered as part of ensuring equal access to, and appropriate design of, WIL for postgraduate students.

Matching WIL to postgraduate students' wide-ranging backgrounds and experiences is important to ensure it complements, and builds upon, their disparate knowledges, understandings, ways of being

and doing, as well as issues of pertinent concern. It is also essential to ensure equitable and inclusive participation in WIL experiences.

In responding to this challenge, the MDP offers diverse practice-based training opportunities that include both WIL, as well as broader WIL-type practices. The diversity of this program, including WIL activities embedded within core and elective courses (as described above), as well as a range of events and activities offered both within and outside university settings that students can opt in or out of, are intended to ensure MDP practice-based training opportunities are matched in this way.

Placements were amongst the most valued practice-based experiences for international students as part of their postgraduate studies at UQ. As one international student described: "That's the ultimate thing the university can do, teach me both knowledge and practice." Several international students also described choosing UQ for their postgraduate studies to take advantage of both "the lecturer's connections with local NGOs" (non-government organizations), and "UQ's existing partnerships." In addition, some also explained they selected UQ based on its "prestige" and "reputation." More broadly, international students hoped postgraduate studies would give them "a foot in the door" to establish a development practice career based in Australia.

Research with current students highlighted gendered dimensions of postgraduate WIL. Demonstrating this, female identifying students commonly described the importance of practice-based opportunities in supporting them to build both their confidence and professional networks. They also frequently described practice-based training as supporting them to further cultivate more meaningful ways to make a contribution, through their professional lives, to address profound social and ecological issues and challenges. In so doing, they articulated a future focused orientation, including with some empathy and understanding of the complexity of the world in which they intended to work.

Male identifying students described the importance of practice-based experiences as enhancing their preparedness for entry into diverse development professions. Foremost amongst their priorities were practice-based opportunities that would enhance dialogue and facilitation skills, as well as community-based and community development techniques they could directly apply in professional settings. Simply put, they wanted to expand their development practice toolkit as part of their postgraduate studies to grow as a development practitioner.

While in some ways the findings in relation to domestic and international postgraduate students, and amongst genders, are similar, there are some significant differences. Firstly, while domestic postgraduate students expressed interest in internship and practice-based training, they were more interested in opportunities in international, including developing countries. Such findings demonstrate the global orientation of this student cohort and the importance of a holistic approach. Similarly, while a future orientation as the basis for engagement in practice-based experiences was common amongst all genders, female identifying participants appeared to be more outward focused; describing enhancing their skills and competencies as vital for ensuring they are effective change agents. In contrast, those male identifying participants commonly described the importance of practice-based training in fostering career opportunities and professional impact.

The findings demonstrate the importance of attending to these two student background attributes as part of considerations in shaping effective postgraduate WIL experiences (see also Coogan West & Lyons, 2020). Further research into postgraduate student WIL can be expected to reveal additional attributes and dynamics that may enhance postgraduate WIL effectiveness, a theme returned to further below.

DISCUSSION: POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION FOR LIFE NOT JUST A CAREER

There is a growing body of literature that sets out the various ways in which WIL may assist graduates to prepare for the ‘real world of work’ (Ashford et al., 2018; McRae, 2015; Russell & Kay, 2020). Much of this research, however, relates to undergraduate WIL activities. The contributions of WIL at the postgraduate level, by contrast, remains under-researched. Based on findings presented in this paper we argue that caution should be taken in extrapolating knowledge and understandings of undergraduate WIL for postgraduate cohorts. Indeed, postgraduate students frequently bring diverse professional backgrounds and experiences and are often embedded in professional networks. In this context, postgraduate WIL is challenged to support students in creating time out from commonly accepted practices to reflect upon these critically, with a renewed focus on both theory and practice. It is also challenged to ensure relevance in the context of the VUCA world that we inhabit (Stein, 2021; Stein et al., 2020).

This case study of UQ’s MDP demonstrates the need to offer diverse WIL opportunities and experiences to ensure relevance, and richness, for postgraduate students. WIL, and related practice-based training, should be as flexible and expansive as possible to ensure it supports the on-going professional development of a diverse, and already highly qualified postgraduate student cohort. An expansive approach ensures pedagogic practices are in alignment with postgraduate students wide-ranging backgrounds. Postgraduate students’ broad personal and career aspirations and the varied goals and purposes that domestic and international students each attribute to WIL. Similarly, it may ensure WIL accounts for the ways diverse genders may shape understandings about, and experiences of, WIL pedagogic practices.

To ensure WIL supports postgraduate students in their goals of fostering deep expert and specialist identities, expanding useful professional networks, and generating enhanced and/or new meanings of professional practice, this research has demonstrated the importance of reflective practice as a part of WIL. In the case of the MDP, reflective practice is supported via an interdisciplinary program approach that enables students to develop conceptual frameworks that can then be applied in making meaning of diverse workplace settings.

Graduates from UQ’s MDP return to, or take up new careers that sit at the front line of social, environmental, and economic crises. Graduates work in careers that include public health, Indigenous rights, international aid, community development, climate change, homelessness, and sexual violence, amongst others. WIL, alongside other complementary pedagogical practices, may provide useful educational and other career development to prepare graduates for these careers. At its best, WIL can further support postgraduates preparing for the messiness and uncertainty of this world, including working in the context of injustice and inequality, as well as designing pathways and possibilities for positive and effective social and environmental change.

Findings demonstrate how professional training and career progression cannot be demarcated from broader social, political, and ecological dimensions. Indeed, the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of workplaces is a microcosm for the rest of the world. Grounding WIL and indeed all pedagogical practices in this reality will be central if postgraduate education, and indeed universities, are to remain relevant in today’s world (Meyerhoff, 2019).

There are many challenges in ensuring WIL, and higher education more broadly, is relevant to contemporary circumstances. The marketisation and commodification of universities continues to shape all aspects of university life, including curriculum (see for example Hil et al., 2021). This includes

its increasing orientation toward the interests of industry, via a focus on vocational and job ready skills. As Johnston (2011) explains, the restructuring of educational and academic settings has "become more responsive to the needs of employers, viewing students as human capital" (p. 176). While this agenda places value on 'job ready skills', employment, and a secure income, this research shows how catalytic critical thinking through embodied practice is for cultivating new understandings of, and responses to, intersecting health, environmental and inequality crises. Further research into postgraduate WIL, and how it may continue to support graduates for diverse careers that are responsive to volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, may make an important contribution to this nascent field of scholarship.

CONCLUSIONS

Through analysis of UQ's MDP, the particular responsibilities and challenges related to effective implementation of postgraduate WIL activities are demonstrated. This research has identified the importance of WIL to support postgraduates in preparation for the messiness and uncertainty of diverse socio-political and environmental settings in which their development practice careers may take them. It has also identified the importance of WIL to foster postgraduates' reflective practice, as well as offering maximum diversity in content and experiences to ensure WIL is able to match postgraduate student backgrounds; by acknowledging and building upon the diverse professional backgrounds they bring to postgraduate study. These must be considered if postgraduate WIL is to support ongoing career development. Similarly, all graduates, whether social workers, architects and planners, engineers, doctors, as well as development practitioners, face a VUCA future (Stein, 2021; Stein et al., 2020). In this context, WIL, alongside all pedagogical practices, is challenged to ensure it supports postgraduate students in fostering ways of knowing, being and doing that are compatible with this future.

On its own, postgraduate WIL is not a panacea for universities seeking to remain relevant to a discerning domestic and international student cohort. However, if embedded within broader critical concepts and theories, and grounded in meaningful and supportive academic environments, postgraduate WIL may support the flourishing of values and practices that enable professionals to navigate with meaning, and even care, through our messy and uncertain world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Australian Collaborative Education Network Conference (2020) entitled "Building Ethical and Mutually Beneficial WIL at the Postgraduate Level: Lessons from Development Practice Studies at the University of Queensland." This research was funded by a University of Queensland (UQ) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Teaching Fellowship entitled "Developing Postgraduate Student-Led Engaged Learning Environments for Specific Cohorts."

REFERENCES

- Ashford, S., Barker Caza, B., & Reid, E. (2018). From surviving to thriving in the gig economy: A research agenda for individuals in the new world of work. *Research in Organisational Behaviour*, 38, 23-41.
- Barber, L., Pollard, E., Millore, B., & Gerova, V. (2004). *Higher degrees of freedom: The value of postgraduate study*. Institute for Employment Studies; University of Brighton.
- Berlant, L. (2016). The commons: Infrastructures for troubling times. *Society and Space D*, 34(3), 391-419.
- Brockbank, A., McGill, I., & Beech, N. (2017). *Reflective learning in practice*. Routledge.
- Coogan West, C., & Lyons, K. (2020). *Postgraduate student led WIL: Needs and aspirations*. University of Queensland.

- Deale, C. S., Elders, E., & Jacques, P. H. (2010). The Appalachian growers' fair: An authentic learning, community engagement, sustainable tourism project. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 10(2), 143-162.
- Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2020). *Job-ready graduates package*. Australian Government.
- Gasper, D. (2012). Development ethics. Why? What? How? A formulation of the field. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 8(1), 117-135.
- Hil, R., Lyons, K., & Thompsett, F. (2021). *Transforming universities amidst global crisis. A university for the common good*. London. Routledge.
- Johnston, J. (2011). Interrogating the goals of work-integrated learning: Neoliberal agendas and critical pedagogy. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 12(3), 175-182.
- Katajavuori, N., Lindblom-Ylänne, S., & Hirvonen, J. (2006). The significance of practical training in linking theoretical studies with practice. *Higher Education*, 51(3), 439-464.
- Klein, N. (2014). *This changes everything: capitalism vs. the climate*. Simon & Schuster.
- Lyons, K., Esposito, A., & Johnson, M. (2021, February 1). The pangolin and the coal mine: Challenging the forces of extractivism. Human rights abuse and planetary calamity. *Antipode Online Intervention*.
<https://antipodeonline.org/2021/02/01/the-pangolin-and-the-coal-mine/>
- McRae, N. (2015). Exploring conditions for transformative learning in work-integrated education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 16(2), 137-144.
- Meyerhoff, E. (2019). *Beyond education: Radical studying for another world*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Moon, J. A. (2004). *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Norton, A. (2020, October 9). 3 flaws in Job-Ready Graduates package will add to the turmoil in Australian higher education. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/3-flaws-in-job-ready-graduates-package-will-add-to-the-turmoil-in-australian-higher-education-147740>
- Ramsey, C. (2006). *Introducing reflective learning*. Open University.
- Rashidi, P., Lyons, K., & Seini, M. (2019). *The development of postgraduate work integrated learning (WIL) – A review of the literature and lessons for the Master of Development Practice and HASS Faculty*. University of Queensland.
- Rule, A. C. (2006). The components of authentic learning. *Journal of Authentic Learning*, 3(1), 1-10.
- Russell, L., & Kay, J. (2020). Preparing for the world of work. In T. McLaughlin, A. Chester, A. B. Kennedy, & S. Young (Eds.). *Tertiary education in a time of change*. Springer.
- Stein, S. (2021). Reimagining global citizenship education for a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 19(4), 482-495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2021.1904212>
- Stein, S., Andreotti, V., Susa, R., Ahenakew, C., & Čajková, T. (2020). From “education for sustainable development” to “education for the end of the world as we know it.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(3), 274-287.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1835646>
- Støren, L. A., & Arnesen, C. Å. (2016). Skills utilisation at work, the quality of the study programme and fields of study. *Quality in Higher Education*, 22(2), 127-138.
- Sullivan, L. E. (2009). *The SAGE glossary of the social and behavioural sciences*. Sage.
- Sultana, F. (2019). Decolonising development. Education and the pursuit of social justice. *Human Geography*, 12(3), 31-46.
- Thune, T., & Støren, L. A. (2015). Study and labour market effects of graduate students' interaction with work organisations during education: A cohort study. *Education + Training*, 57(7), 702-722.
- Universities Australia. (2019). *Work integrated learning in universities: Final report*.
- UQ [University of Queensland]. (2019). *WIL guide to good practice*.
https://employability.uq.edu.au/files/106851/WIL%20Guide%20to%20Good%20Practice%20-%20cover%20sheet_V_6.pdf
- UQ [University of Queensland]. (2021). *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*. <https://about.uq.edu.au/files/112/UQStrategicPlan2018-2021.pdf>
- Winchester-Seeto, T., Mackaway, J., Peach, D., Moore, K., Ferns, S., & Campbell, M. (2015). *Principles, guidelines and strategies for inclusive WIL*. Australian Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Xia, J., Caulfield, C., & Ferns, S. (2015). Work-integrated learning: Linking research and teaching for a win-win situation. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(9), 1560-1572.
- Zegwaard, K. E., & McCurdy, S. (2014). The influence of work-integrated learning on motivation to undertake graduate studies. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 15(1), 13-2.



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 2018 the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning.

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. Defining elements of this educational approach requires that students engage in authentic and meaningful work-related task, and must involve three stakeholders; the student, the university, and the workplace*". Examples of practice include off-campus, workplace immersion activities such as work placements, internships, practicum, service learning, and cooperative education (Co-op), and on-campus activities such as work-related projects/competitions, entrepreneurship, student-led enterprise, etc. WIL is related to, but not the same as, the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training.

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.

The Journal is ongoing financially supported by the Work-Integrated Learning New Zealand (WILNZ; www.wilnz.nz), and the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and received periodic sponsorship from the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and the World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE).

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 good 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.

Good practice and program description papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of good practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or was 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.



EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief

Assoc. Prof. Karsten Zegwaard

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Associate Editors

Dr. David Drewery

University of Waterloo, Canada

Assoc. Prof. Sonia Ferns

Curtin University, Australia

Dr. Judene Pretti

University of Waterloo, Canada

Dr. Anna Rowe

University of New South Wales, Australia

Senior Editorial Board Members

Dr. Bonnie Dean

University of Wollongong, Australia

Dr. Phil Gardner

Michigan State University, United States

Prof. Denise Jackson

Edith Cowan University, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Ashly Stirling

University of Toronto, Canada

Emeritus Prof. Janice Orrell

Flinders University, Australia

Emeritus Prof. Neil I. Ward

University of Surrey, United Kingdom

Copy Editors

Diana Bushell

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning

Editorial Board Members

Assoc. Prof. Erik Alanson

University of Cincinnati, United States

Prof. Dawn Bennett

Curtin University, Australia

Mr. Matthew Campbell

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Dr. Craig Cameron

Griffith University, Australia

Dr. Sarojni Choy

Griffith University, Australia

Prof. Leigh Deves

Charles Darwin University, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Michelle Eady

University of Wollongong, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Chris Eames

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Dr. Jenny Fleming

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Assoc. Prof. Wendy Fox-Turnbull

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Dr. Nigel Gribble

Curtin University, Australia

Dr. Thomas Groenewald

University of South Africa, South Africa

Assoc. Prof. Kathryn Hay

Massey University, New Zealand

Dr. Lynette Hodges

Massey University, New Zealand

Dr. Katharine Hoskyn

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Dr. Sharleen Howison

Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand

Dr. Nancy Johnston

Simon Fraser University, Canada

Dr. Patricia Lucas

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Dr. Jaqueline Mackaway

Macquarie University, Australia

Dr. Kath McLachlan

Macquarie University, Australia

Prof. Andy Martin

Massey University, New Zealand

Dr. Norah McRae

University of Waterloo, Canada

Dr. Laura Rook

University of Wollongong, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Philip Rose

Hannam University, South Korea

Dr. Leoni Russell

RMIT, Australia

Dr. Jen Ruskin

Macquarie University, Australia

Dr. Andrea Sator

Simon Fraser University, Canada

Dr. David Skelton

Eastern Institute of Technology, New Zealand

Assoc. Prof. Calvin Smith

University of Queensland, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Judith Smith

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Dr. Raymond Smith

Griffith University, Australia

Prof. Sally Smith

Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom

Prof. Roger Strasser

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Prof. Yasushi Tanaka

Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan

Prof. Neil Taylor

University of New England, Australia

Ms. Genevieve Watson

Elysium Associates Pty, Australia

Dr. Nick Wempe

Primary Industry Training Organization, New Zealand

Dr. Theresa Winchester-Seeto

University of New South Wales, Australia

Dr. Karen Young

Deakin University, Australia