

Book Review

The Routledge International Handbook of Work-Integrated Learning (3rd ed.) 2023

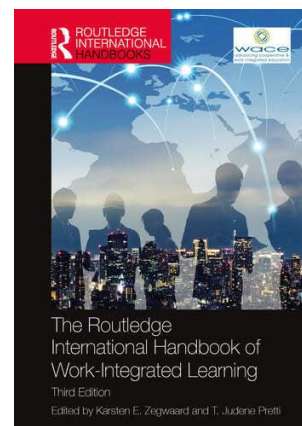
Karsten E. Zegwaard & T. Judene Pretti (Editors)
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Each community of researchers and practitioners has a book that its members would refer to as an essential resource. For the work-integrated learning (WIL) community, that book is the most recent edition of *The Routledge International Handbook of Work-Integrated Learning*. This third edition of the book contains 37 chapters and 644 pages written by 96 authors, all who are expert researchers and practitioners in WIL. These numbers are impressive. They demonstrate that the *Handbook* is a comprehensive resource constructed by WIL community members throughout the world who bring a multitude of perspectives to understanding and advancing WIL. That the book is published under the *Routledge International Handbook* series is a further testament to its comprehensiveness and broad appeal to practitioners and researchers alike.

The book is organized into five sections: (1) History, defining, and theoretical underpinnings, (2) Benefits for stakeholders, (3) Models of good practice of WIL, (4) Developing and managing WIL, and (5) Topical issues. Each section offers clarity about what WIL is, why it matters, and how to manage it successfully.

The first section of the book, History, defining, and theoretical underpinnings, provides an excellent introduction to the concept of WIL and the theory on which it is based. It also provides a historical perspective on the development of WIL, specifically contextualized within the United States, that reminds the reader of how far WIL has come in the last century. By the end of the first section of the book, readers will have a strong understanding of what WIL is (and what it is not), which is why it is a powerful tool for educating future-ready graduates, and how it complements organizations seeking talent.

The second section of the book, Benefits for stakeholders, addresses a fundamental question: what do participants “get out” of WIL? It addresses that question for the three key WIL stakeholders: students, host organizations, and educational institutions. The entire section is rich with literature, which may be important to those practitioners seeking to communicate benefits of WIL, such as those seeking support from host organizations. It also reviews the breadth and depth of research evidence pertaining to benefits, which is an invaluable literature resources for WIL researchers. One of the fundamental conclusions from this section of the book is that WIL works best when it features a system of co-creation and reciprocity. It reminds us that WIL works best when all three stakeholders share benefits of their participation.

The third section of the book, Models of good practice of WIL, contains 11 chapters, each on a specific model of WIL. Among all sections of the book, this one may be the most appealing to practitioners. It contains an abundance of examples of how to do WIL well. Practitioners such as educational designers will find great resources here on which they can base decisions about structuring their own WIL programs. The section is rich with literature, but it is also especially digestible for audiences who may be less familiar with or interested in research on WIL.

The fourth section of the book, Developing and managing WIL, has broad appeal for practitioners of all levels of responsibility and for researchers seeking to understand key issues with program administration. The eight chapters in the section cover key issues that must be faced by any WIL program design team, including centralization versus blended approaches, institutional structures, quality, accreditation, managing risk, and maintaining partnerships. This section of the book will appeal to those interested in developing WIL programs and those seeking to improve their WIL programs for maximum stakeholder benefit.

The fifth section of the book, Topical issues, identifies the most pressing challenges and opportunities faced by the WIL community. Some of those challenges include assessment of learning, the role of pay in WIL, supporting student wellbeing, and creating accessible and equitable WIL experiences. Opportunities that are addressed include using mentorship to prepare students for success, blending work and learning to create future-ready graduates, and using WIL to create culturally intelligent global citizens. Understanding these challenges and opportunities will be fundamental to the success of WIL programs, making this section of the book appealing to all members of the WIL community.

It is noteworthy that this third edition of the text is substantially different from the previous version, which was published in 2011. That is not to say that the previous version was of poor quality - on the contrary, it won the Cooperative Education and Internship Association's Tyler Award in recognition for its exceptional quality. Rather, the quality of content and organization in the third edition makes this updated *Handbook* incredibly readable, rich with resources, and full of practical guidance for WIL researchers and practitioners alike. As one example, whereas the second edition presented examples of good practice based on academic discipline, the third edition more clearly organizes such examples by model of WIL (e.g., co-op, part-time work placements), which will be appealing to the WIL community.

This third edition of the *Handbook* is incredibly timely for the WIL community given the tremendous need for education institutions across the globe to reconsider their relationships to the world of work. WIL continues to be offered to help institutions build such relationships, by intentionally connecting academic learning to the needs of industry. Education institutions that are interested in preparing students for an uncertain world should consider stocking their libraries with copies of this text. Practitioners, educators, curricular designers, and researchers interested in supporting students or host organizations through WIL will find the book a "go to first" resource.

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