

University teachers' perceptions of the impact of work-integrated learning placement on students' on-campus learning

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This article problematizes the impact of the organization of work-integrated learning (WIL) teacher education on student teachers' learning at university. The perceptions of university teachers on WIL student's potential for learning within university-based components are explored. The theoretical perspective of boundary crossing is used to conceptualize what this organization of WIL teacher education entails. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and the analysis revealed that this way of organizing teacher education provides additional benefits for students' learning at university, but also presents obstacles. When WIL student teachers become central participants in workplaces, it has implications for their campus-based education. These students shift positions, identify themselves as ready teachers, de-identify themselves as students, and demand something else from university studies. This leads to a shift for university teachers who reconceptualize their practices and reevaluate how they can accommodate these student teachers' acute needs without compromising course content.

Keywords: Practice turn, work-integrated teacher education, boundary crossing, student teachers' learning

BACKGROUND

A Practice Turn Within Higher Education

This study concerns the 'practice turn', which has emerged within higher education over the last two to three decades (Raelin, 2007; Reid, 2011), where the value of work-place experience, intended to enhance students' work-readiness, has been elevated (McManus & Rook, 2021). This recognition of workplace experiences, emphasizes the importance of off-campus learning, prioritizing concepts such as work-integrated learning (Caspersen & Smeby, 2021). Teacher education here exemplifies the practice turn where the time student teachers' spend within authentic school environments, with an emphasis on essential teaching practices, has been reorganized. This practice turn aims to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world contexts, thus enhancing scientifically grounded learning (Gardner, 1999; Merrill, 2002). However, it is important to reflect upon the implications of this approach. While WIL is seen as essential, the significance of learning in university settings can be underestimated (Caspersen & Smeby, 2021). Thus, the necessity of finding a balance between university and school contexts is crucial (Gardesten, 2016; Håkansson & Olsson, 2017), and questions concerning how an emphasis on workplace learning can impact students' learning at university must be addressed (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

The Practice Turn Internationally and in Sweden

The practice turn of teacher education takes different forms worldwide. Some countries organize teacher education around professional development schools that are actively engaged in research to support student development (e.g., Finland). Some require that students pass an assessment based on teaching in the classroom as a condition of their initial licensure (e.g., the United States). Others have

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teacher education models based on student preparation taking place mainly in schools (e.g., the United States and England) or universities and schools having shared responsibility for educating students (e.g., Wales) (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, 2020). In Sweden, WIL teacher education is a governmental effort to increase the number of applicants and to strengthen student teacher outcomes. The organization of WIL teacher education can for example, as in this study, be that student teachers are employed at schools on a 0.5 part time basis while simultaneously studying the coursework components of the teacher education degree (Government Offices of Sweden, 2019). This reform of teacher education is one of a suite of additional Swedish practice turns following other measures, such as specific practice schools, to which students are connected throughout their education (Government Offices of Sweden, 2014).

The Link between Campus and Practice

Motivation, efficiency, and learning strategies are crucial for students' academic achievement. Research shows that differences exist between WIL teacher education and campus based teacher education program students in terms of these strategies. Research findings are, however, contradictory and with few exceptions, mainly based on students' experiences (e.g., Batholmeus & Carver, 2019; Pazur Anicic & Divjak, 2022). Studies show that campus based teacher education students tend to have shallow learning strategies and less motivation (Drysdale & McBeath, 2018), and are deficient when it comes to conflict-management and decision-making (Jackson & Chapman, 2012). On the other hand findings indicate that students in WIL teacher education programs show limited abilities concerning critical reflection (Gustafsson Nyckel et al., 2020).

The growing significance of WIL programs is driven by the inadequacy that graduates show in terms of job skills and work-readiness (Jackson, 2009). WIL programs offer several advantages, such as preparing students for employment transition (Ferns et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2018) and enhancing students' employability (Jackson et al., 2018; Kaider, 2017). However, Jackson (2015) highlights how WIL students may prioritize practical knowledge over theoretical knowledge, thus perceiving the latter as insufficient for real-world preparation. Learning in the practices of workplace and university have characteristically different curricula structures, enfolding aims and unique rules of their own. The different curricula structures are premised on different coding in the two contexts; university education is typically arranged around theoretical knowledge and formal assessments, whereas workplace knowledge is arranged around practical learning processes. This generates student teachers who distinguish the two contexts as detached from each other and university teachers who have difficulties organizing teaching in a manner that strengthens the integration of theory and practice (Billet, 2011). The inadequate connection between campus courses and workplace experiences is an Achilles' heel and is seen as undermining the quality of teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2006), thus coordinating work experiences with campus courses is crucial for effectively preparing students for complex teaching routines (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, even though research shows that WIL student teachers perceive a gap between theory and practice, contradictory research shows that organizing higher education, where student teachers are based in the workplace, inspires students to enhance their skills at university as they grasp the significance of these skills in the workplace (McKinnon, 2011). However, universities should identify the importance of reinforcing WIL in teacher education by, for example, identifying learning requirements, and necessary resources that specifically support this way of organizing teacher education (Barends & Nel, 2017). Essentially, WIL needs to be embedded into the curriculum for a successful and effective educational experience (Passow & Passow, 2017).

Challenges for Work-Integrated Learning Students

Many students have limited or no prior teaching experience and thus, there are challenges for WIL teacher education student teachers similar to those traditionally faced by novice teachers entering the profession (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Liston et al. (2006) propose two explanations for these challenges. To begin with, novice teachers struggle with the emotional demands of teaching. Secondly, they often find themselves teaching in schools that lack adequate support systems to enhance their learning and professional development. Like experienced teachers, WIL student teachers are responsible for daily instructional decisions regarding what to teach and how to teach. They spend substantially more time than experienced teachers planning and preparing lessons. Further, they conduct assessments, attend meetings, respond to parents and fulfil various other duties. Unlike experienced teachers, novices have not yet developed routines to manage these tasks, which can be overwhelming. They are still consolidating their knowledge of teaching and learning and lack the confidence that comes with experience (Liston et al., 2006).

Teachers' visions of teaching influence their approach and student teachers often face difficulties aligning their visions with actual classroom practices, leading to feelings of hopelessness (Flores & Day, 2006). Further challenges have to do with how student teachers are adequately supported by their practice schools regarding their further development and learning. Structural contexts within schools differ with some schools substantially better than others at developing student teachers' professional capacity (Hammerness, 2006), which is crucial as initial years in the profession significantly shape a teacher's identity (Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

The Swedish Context

This Swedish model of WIL in teacher education involves employing student teachers in schools from the beginning of their university education. A large part of the research on WIL teacher education presents results based on students' experiences (e.g., Thomson et al., 2017), or teachers in the field (e.g., Usher, 2019), regarding this way of organizing teacher education. Similar to prior studies, this study aims to further understand how the Swedish model of WIL teacher education impacts students' learning, but unlike many previous studies, attention is drawn specifically to teacher educators' perceptions of how university teachers' perceive students' potential for learning in their university courses on campus. This study addresses such issues by examining one type of WIL in a teacher education program in Sweden that has been running since 2018. The academic content for the WIL-teacher education program is the same as the campus-based teacher education program in Sweden, the programs differ in the time students spend in schools.

Teacher education in Sweden leads to a teacher certificate for teaching primary school and traditionally consists of three parts: subject studies/subject didactics (150 ECTS), educational science (60 ECTS), and teaching placement (30 ECTS). In the revised WIL program (WIL teacher education), student teachers study 75 % of a full time load during the autumn and spring semesters and 50 % of a full time load during the summer semester (a total of 5.5 years) while at the same time being employed on a 0.5 part time basis as teachers in schools. WIL teacher education combines academic studies at university three days a week and teaching at a school two days a week. These students therefore cross boundaries on a weekly basis as they coexist in two separate contexts and participate in both to learn the profession of teaching. WIL teacher education students thus spend over twice as much time in schools, including teaching placements (20 weeks spread throughout the program), which they complete in addition to

the 0.5 employment, compared to students in traditional teacher education programs. Within WIL teacher education programs, students combine studies with paid work, ideally under the supervision of experienced teachers (Swedish Government, 2020). However, the level of supervision varies, where some students have full responsibility for a class whereas others share a class with an experienced teacher (A-K. Fornberg, Faculty Program Director, personal communication, June 11, 2021).

Six university teachers, experienced in teacher education and with a history of teaching in the school sector, were chosen for the study. The study explored how university teachers' perceive WIL teacher education student teachers' potential for learning in the university-based components of teacher education. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are teacher educators' perceptions of how WIL students potential for learning at university is impacted by being employed as teachers and simultaneously studying at university?
2. How do teacher educators identify and negotiate the impact of the boundary crossing that WIL teacher education -students encounter between the two contexts of work and university?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Learning Between the Boundaries

Learning occurs within specific contexts, but it can also happen when people engage with and connect to different contexts (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). This applies, for instance, to student teachers in higher education, transitioning between campus and workplaces (Tuomi-Gröhn et al., 2003). The present study recognizes that learning across separate contexts involves boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundaries are described as sociocultural disparities that result in a disjointedness in activity or interactivity between two or more sites that are significant to each other in a specific way (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is difficult for students participating in dual contexts to navigate boundaries across different established practices on their own. Thus, a challenge within higher education programs is to generate possibilities for participation and cooperation across different sites within as well as between institutions (Daniels et al., 2010). Crossing boundaries requires grappling with differences and entering unfamiliar territory, often necessitating cognitive adjustments (Tuomi-Gröhn et al., 2003). Wenger (1999) makes use of the concept of 'broker' when describing how individuals (brokers) are capable of making new correlations between communities of practices in order to enable coordination. From this point of view, brokers hold an important position, as they intervene and bring together contemporary elements from one community of practice to another. Student teachers are in a distinctive position of undertaking the role of broker, bringing new tools and understandings from their work experiences into universities and from their universities into workplaces. However, student teachers face challenges: boundaries are significant barriers in numerous working and learning processes (Engeström et al., 1995), and the students may have to deal with, for example, contradictory perspectives on subject matter (Christiansen & Rump, 2008). Contextual knowledge is often fixed within an epistemological structure that involves particular aims, approaches, standards and opinions of structure; that is, what a student has learned to make use of in one context may therefore be considered of no use, or inapt, in another context. This is especially the case in apprentice-like higher education programs (Andersson & Andersson, 2008; Edwards & Mutton, 2007), where students frequently confront boundaries between the university and their workplaces. Thus, student teachers may encounter different sociocultural and pedagogical values between their campus-based courses and workplaces which can cause confusion and perplexity (Alsup, 2006).

Learning Mechanisms Within Boundary Crossing

A promising initiative that developed analytical tools for investigating learning that occurs across boundaries, has been implemented by a Dutch research group (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). The tools are based on learning theories that pay attention to the transfer of knowledge (Star & Griesemer, 1989; Tuomi-Gröhn et al., 2003; Wenger, 1999) and they contain concepts such as boundary crossing, boundary objects and brokers (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). These concepts illuminate learning processes between different practices as a dynamic phenomenon, where difference is seen as a potential for learning. Boundary crossing can take place on three levels: *institutional*, *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal*. Boundary crossing occurs at an institutional level when interactions are instigated between multiple organizations: for example, when universities and workplaces investigate ways to align their practices, culminating in the identities of the separate units being reassessed. On an interpersonal level, boundary crossing concerns interactions between particular groups of individuals from separate practices. For example, campus teachers and workplace mentors cooperate on a project and form relations with each other. Boundary crossing processes on an intrapersonal level is when people concurrently partake in interconnecting practices and come to personify boundaries and borderlands in and between the practices. For example, when students transfer between the university and their workplace during their higher education program. The present study looks at boundary crossing on an interpersonal level, in that it delves into university teachers' interacting with student teachers who are simultaneously employed in schools. The intrapersonal level of boundary crossing is explored through examining university teachers' perceptions of how student teachers' participation in interconnecting practices affects their potential for learning at university (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

There are four potential learning mechanisms that are spoken of within boundary crossing: *identification*, *coordination*, *reflection* and *transformation*. Boundary crossing can enable processes of reciprocal identification, where people are involved in defining or redefining the way that the intersecting practices, for example university studies and workplaces, either differ from each other (othering) or how they can justifiably coexist. Secondly, boundary crossing can also lead to processes of coordination, where people make efforts to outline a communicative link between 'actors' or differentiate them so as to arrange the activity as efficiently as possible and try to generate reliable routines. Thirdly, boundary crossing can bring forth a reflection process, which addresses a mutual definition of the different perspectives that the separate intersecting practices involve and the consideration of others' perspectives in order to visualize one's own practice. Finally, boundary crossing can result in a process of transformation wherein changes become noticeable either in the current practices or as part of new intermediate practices that are generated. Characteristic of transformation processes is primarily addressing a certain issue, involving a mutual problem area and outlining new ideas. Typically, transformation signifies some conservation of the distinctive within the intersecting practices combined with ongoing efforts at the intersection for improved value. The foremost types of learning by students, when transferring between two contexts, are identification and reflection (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). To further understand how university teachers' perceive students teachers' potential for on campus learning, the four learning mechanisms, devised by Akkerman and Bakker (2011) are used as analytical tools.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured individual interviews with six university teacher education teachers. These university teachers were chosen for the study firstly because the focus of interest was on the illumination of boundary processes on the campus site. Secondly, these

boundary processes were better illustrated by comparisons with students in campus based teacher education programs, and thirdly, that the expressions of the boundary processes were better nuanced if informants have a long and broad experience of the phenomena. Hence, the university teacher education teachers needed to have experience in WIL teacher education as well as in campus based teacher education programs so as to be able to compare their perceptions of students' learning within the two contexts. The chosen university teachers were also required to have a history as school teachers themselves. Twelve university teachers were asked to be part of the study. Four of them had not taught students within either teacher education programs and were therefore excluded. One of the teachers had not taught within the WIL program for three years and declined participation for that reason. Another of the teachers declined without giving a reason. The six university teachers who volunteered were women between the ages of 41 and 74. They had been teaching at the university for 5 - 25 years, in teacher education programs and had experience working as teachers in schools for 5 -28 years. During the interviews some of the teachers spoke of experiences of visiting student teachers during their workplace-based teaching practice, and they referred to those visits when discussing possible effects of WIL teacher education.

Table 1 shows the respondents' subject affiliations and years of teaching experience. Some respondents taught more than one subject.

TABLE 1: Respondents' subject affiliations and teaching experience.

Respondent	Subjects taught at university	Years teaching at university	Years teaching in compulsory schools	Experience teaching WIL
1	Social studies	7	5	Two courses
2	Educational science and visit of practice	7	13	Two courses
3	Mathematics	5	26	Two courses
4	English and visit of practice	25	20	One course
5	Aesthetic learning processes	7	25	Two courses
6	Social studies and visit of practice	6	28	Two courses

The interviews were conducted individually in spring 2021 via video due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents were asked questions regarding their perceptions of WIL teacher education students' potential for learning within courses at the university. The questions concerned issues on an intrapersonal level, such as perceived differences between WIL teacher education students and campus-based students potential for learning, or perceptions of how WIL teacher education students approach their studies at university. On an interpersonal level the questions concerned perceptions of teaching and interacting with WIL teacher education student teachers. Since the questions did not involve the processing of sensitive or personal data, there was no need to obtain a human research ethics approval. This is because research of this nature adheres to the code of research practice established by the Swedish Research Ethical Authority. In order to safeguard the well-being of the participants, great care was taken in handling the issue of anonymity to ensure that no individual could be identified. This was particularly crucial as providing negative feedback about WIL teacher education might contradict the intentions of their employers. Prior to the interviews, all respondents

were provided with an informed consent form, via email or in person, which included details about the study and contact information. The consent form explicitly stated that their identities would remain anonymous, emphasized the voluntary nature of their participation, and assured them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so desired.

Video interviews offered the opportunity for interpersonal interaction, which maintained access to visual interactive dynamics (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The interviews were recorded on an iPhone, transferred to a computer, and listened to several times. They were then transcribed word for word. The transcripts were scrutinized several times, and data was compared and coded in themes according to the overall purpose (Fejes & Thornberg, 2019). The analysis process was conducted with the aim, questions, conceptual framework and analytical tools of the study in mind (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). There is a limitation regarding the number of university teachers who were interviewed, however, data saturation was attained after analyzing six interviews. This was due to what Burmeister and Aitken (2012) refer to as the depth of the data. Saturation is attained when subsequent coding of new data indicates no new themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data was compared and further categorized into themes with the aim of encapsulating what is illustrated in the data (Fejes & Thornberg, 2019). The procedure used was abductive, by conducting a to-and-fro procedure between research data and consideration of theory (Rinehart, 2021).

The conceptual framework regarding the interpersonal level was used to guide the interpretation and data analysis regarding potential for learning that is perceived to occur when teaching and interacting with WIL teacher education student teachers who spend the majority of their time in a practice setting. On an intrapersonal level, the framework was used to analyze university teachers' perceptions regarding WIL teacher education student teachers' personification of boundaries between the interconnecting practices of work-places and universities, and how this impacts their potential for learning within campus studies. The four learning mechanisms of identification, coordination, reflection and transformation were used to interpretate and analyze university teachers' perceptions regarding WIL teacher education student teachers potential for learning within the levels of boundary crossing outlined above.

This process, in accordance to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), facilitates an analysis that is transparent and based on a more solid foundation. The themes are not sorted in order of importance. Quotes from respondents are representative quotes due to recurrence in the data. It would also be of interest to include student teachers' perceptions regarding boundary crossing on an intrapersonal as well as interpersonal level, but this was out of scope for the study.

FINDINGS

The findings are categorized into three major themes, each relating to the learning mechanisms in the conceptual framework of the study. Under the first theme, 'Not a teacher yet' – a brokering student position of coordination and reflection, focus is on an interpersonal level regarding university teachers' viewpoints of how some WIL teacher education students make use of the intersecting practices of both contexts. The second theme 'Too much of a teacher too fast' – students othering the campus context, also focuses on an interpersonal level. This theme addresses university teachers' perceptions that WIL-teacher education student teachers tend to position themselves differently as learners in comparison to students in traditional teacher education programs. Finally, the third theme University teachers – reluctant transformers of the campus context, is on an intrapersonal level and relates to the reluctance

of university teachers to transform practice in campus courses to accommodate the shifting learning needs of WIL teacher education students as a result of their workplace experience.

'Not a Teacher Yet' – a Brokering Student Position of Coordination and Reflection

On an interpersonal level, the respondents saw opportunities for students crossing boundaries between the intersecting practices of the university campus and the workplace. WIL teacher education students were thus perceived to get the opportunity to reflect in a different manner than campus-based TE program students. The respondents described how some WIL students, on an intrapersonal level, tried to coordinate resources for learning from the intersecting practices.

There is more weight in the discussions concerning, for example, didactic issues and didactic analysis. Campus-based students, they contemplate and say, 'Well, I don't know what it's going to be like in my future teaching, but I can imagine that it would be like this', whereas WIL students, they tested things straight away and then came back and said, 'When I did this, things worked well, but when I did this, it didn't work at all. How come?' Another type of reflection takes place. (Respondent 6)

Several respondents perceived that WIL teacher education students have an advantage compared to students in the campus-based program. The WIL teacher education students seem to be involved in a learning transformation process, where they outline new ideas within their work places concurrently with studying theory within their university courses. Thus, these WIL teacher education students showed higher proficiency with complex critical thinking and problem-solving.

They [WIL teacher education students] are more involved, i.e., they are, they have a lot more experience. You do not have that distance to begin with where you have to get an understanding of how things are. They have quite a lot of insight so you can reason in a completely different way than with those who have nothing with them and come directly into teacher education. (Respondent 5)

Respondent 1 mentioned repeatedly that WIL teacher education students' participation in both contexts facilitates their understanding of how educational theories apply in practice, and makes it easier for university teachers to illustrate such points because students can relate the concepts to the real world: "How would you interpret this and how would you say that this can be used in the classroom? This discussion was made possible...and was much easier to illustrate" (Respondent 1).

Several respondents perceived that WIL teacher education students reflect upon what they can apply from course content to inform their approach to teaching. The ability of the students to reflect in this way leads to the university teachers being open to initiate more reflective discussions. This requires university teachers to reconceptualize the dynamics of the classroom, justify lesson content, and be prepared for a more organic classroom structure with students who are experiencing the workplace first-hand and are more confident in questioning course content.

It is positive in many ways. They have a prior understanding, and I feel that I can plan teaching at another level, as I have most of the students with me, while I can be criticized at the same time, of course. (Respondent 5)

Some of the WIL teacher education students are perceived by the respondents to have progressed further when it comes to reflecting upon their teaching practice than campus-based students. Also,

some respondents identified with this group of students. By constructing them as 'colleagues' a kind of legitimate coexistence seems to be established (Bakker & Akkerman, 2017).

Most of them were mature, so actually I thought it was more positive to have these students. You can talk with them as colleagues or ready teachers more than you can with students that come straight from upper-secondary school. (Respondent 4)

Thus, WIL teacher education students can be divided into two groups based on how they identify with the different contexts and how they manage to coordinate the two. On an interpersonal level one respondent mentioned that the two groups respond differently to course content. The difference seems to depend on whether students are able to establish a mindset of 'not a teacher yet'. These students are perceived to avoid identifying themselves as students. Subsequently, this makes them capable of perspective taking, i.e., "to see their own practice through the eyes of others " (Bakker & Akkerman, 2017, p. 7). Hence, it gives them the opportunity to benefit from the learning mechanism of reflection.

For those who couldn't accept that they were not teachers yet, for them it became quite difficult, and from them there was perhaps more questioning regarding 'Why should we learn this?', while those who thought 'I am not a teacher yet; I can learn more; I work as a teacher, but I am not a teacher yet', they were in a better position to embrace ongoing learning. (Respondent 1)

The respondents perceived the latter students to be in a more reflective phase—students who regard themselves as future teachers and who have not yet taken the full step of identifying themselves as teachers. Rather, on an intrapersonal level, they make use of the learning mechanisms of crossing boundaries, trying to create connections between the contexts that can lead to coordination allowing these diverse practices to cooperate. That is, they are trying to outline a communicative link between the contexts. This aspect, positively acknowledged by university teachers, shows that such a brokering position, releases a reflective learning mechanism which seems to foster a more reflective stance of perspective making and perspective taking among students.

'Too Much of a Teacher Too Fast' – Students Othering of the Campus Context

However, on an interpersonal level, many of the respondents reflected upon how WIL teacher education student teachers adopt positions different from those of students in campus based teacher education programs. Although they acknowledge some positive aspects of WIL teacher education students adopting positions as professional teachers, all respondents identified challenges. One of the perceived challenges is that WIL teacher education students identify with their role as a teacher while on campus which compromises their ability to identify with their role as a student and learner. They are perceived to pursue processes of reciprocal identification, where they define the way that the intersecting practices, university campus and workplaces, differ from each other. However, they do not pursue processes of how the two practices can justifiably coexist, as they de-identify themselves as students.

The respondents further perceived that due to this lopsided identification, students consequently miss the opportunity to learn from the brokering position in which they are situated.

Those who become too much of a teacher too fast, they become so practice oriented that their studies become something that they have to rush through....Yes, it becomes something that they just have to do, instead of being something that will enhance their learning. (Respondent 1)

According to the respondents, WIL teacher education students strong identification with their role as a teacher makes the theoretical components of their campus-based teacher education seem redundant and something that requires minimal effort. One respondent stressed that the strong identification as ready teachers can lead to the students developing a self-image of "bigger experts than they really are" (Respondent 2). Another respondent says "Well, they seemed to take their studies lightly and didn't really take their education seriously [...] In my view many have an overconfidence in their abilities" (Respondent 5).

The respondents struggle to engage WIL teacher education students, on an intrapersonal level, to take learning within university (i.e., academic) courses seriously, and encourage students to pursue processes of coordination where they create a link between being teachers in a school and students on campus. Instead, the students seem to initiate processes of identification that are based on the 'othering' (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011) where they define one practice (the workplace) and delineate how it differs from the other practice (university studies).

They couldn't reflect upon what we talked about in the same way because they were so deeply involved in their workplaces, I would like to say that this part of their education is not as important to them as practice. (Respondent 3)

The respondents expressed that these WIL teacher education students tend to get drawn into and remain holding on to the conceptions that prevail in their workplaces. They regard their experiences within the workplace as legitimate and are reluctant or have difficulties in making use of a reflective process where they visualize the integration of practice with theoretical studies.

They may have had the possibility to have an influence, to make changes and to use the theories that they were exposed to in their university studies, but I think that many of the students had difficulties with this. It just became a burden for them to come to university. (Respondent 3)

University Teachers – Reluctant Transformers of Course Context

Further, some of the respondents indicated that when students move between the two contexts of school and university, their boundary crossing as brokers affects not only themselves as individual students but also the social situations they are in, and in which the respondents play an important role. Data reveals that, on an interpersonal level, the respondents (university teachers) are thus put in the position as brokers. Several respondents perceived that some WIL teacher education students expect all learning at the university to be directly applicable to school practice. "It almost feels like they want manuals.... And I see a risk in that they see us as answers to.... One has to work quite a lot with this " (Respondent 2).

Some of the respondents perceived that a difference between students in the campus based program and WIL teacher education students is that some of the latter, due to their employment as teachers in the context of school, are put in the situation where they require 'hands-on' material from the campus context in order to cope with the work situation. Hence, the transformation process, as a learning mechanism, is not applied where work-place demands prioritize theoretical university studies at campus.

This was the biggest difference, then. They also requested a lot of practical learning. They wanted feedback regarding things like 'What textbook can I use?', 'What web pages are there?',

or 'What film should I show?' They want a lot of concrete suggestions, like 'How do I go about this? How do I conduct this teaching?' (Respondent 1)

The respondents perceived that they need to reconsider their on-campus teaching practices to solve urgent problems students encountered within their work as teachers. Thus, on an interpersonal level university teachers need to provide additional support to assist WIL teacher education students to navigate between the two contexts. The university teachers identified a need to adapt course content in line with these concrete and practical problems. Respondent 4 expressed that they "would change the content of my course if I were to have it again so that I had more content directly linked to practice."

The respondents' experiences of being questioned by WIL teacher education students as to how they could make use of the course content in their teaching, causes a dilemma among the university teachers. On the one hand, they want to help the students to cope with everyday work in schools, on the other hand, they feel obligated to adhere to the course objectives.

Yes, they feel that they already have a job, so they do not really need me ... I think in a way that this is good. But at the same time, I do not want to cut back on my course content. (Respondent 4)

DISCUSSION

The Challenges of Work-Integrated Learning Within Higher Education

WIL- teacher education offers both advantages and challenges in shaping professional knowledge. Research underscores its benefits in preparing students for the transition to employment (Ferns et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2018), yet also notes challenges. WIL student teachers often prioritize practical over theoretical knowledge, potentially deeming the latter unnecessary for their future profession (Jackson, 2015), as echoed in the findings above. In the analysis, a theoretical point of departure is taken in Akkerman and Bakker's (2011) notion that learning across separate contexts involves boundaries. This study shows that while boundary-crossing between school teaching and university learning can create constructive arenas for study and reflection, some students struggle to take advantage of these opportunities. This could be attributed to the often chaotic and unsystematic work environment experienced by WIL teacher education students (Rhodes & Shield, 2007). Previous research predominantly highlights the benefits of WIL teacher education focusing on arrangements where students are supervised and have time to reflect on practice (Giles, 2010). This study explored university teachers' views on students who simultaneously work as teachers and study. Some of the WIL teacher education student teachers in this study did not benefit from the WIL experience due to variation in the quality of supervision and their capability to reflect on practice, highlighting the impact of inadequate supervision and inability to reflect on successful outcomes for students. This indicates that this arrangement fosters a unique learning approach on campus compared to traditional teacher education students. WIL teacher education students are perceived to quickly identify with their roles as teachers, potentially hindering their engagement in campus-based courses. While expected to benefit from both contexts, transitioning between them alters perceptions of the university setting, influenced by workplace experiences. Beach and Bagley (2013) refer to this as horizontal professional knowledge which leaves them limited to "common sense experience" (p. 390) and thus be deprived of theoretical knowledge that facilitates an essential distance from practice and therefore a wider understanding of education. This vertical discourse is needed in order to enable critical and strategic thinking regarding the effects and outcomes of teaching and learning procedures.

As brokers between the two contexts, WIL teacher education student teachers impact the social dynamics within the university, including university teachers (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). When WIL-teacher education student teachers are based in the school context, a problematic boundary crossing situation on an interpersonal level between the students and the university teachers at campus is created. These students influence the social situations they are a part of through their transformation process; that is, the university teachers are influenced by the students' brokering. The university teachers, eager to meet the students' needs, thus struggle to emphasize the value of theoretical knowledge. The university teachers are also positioned as brokers, trying to coordinate the intersecting contexts of the university and workplace. With their own teaching experience in schools, the university teachers understand the demands of the profession and easily relate to the school as a workplace. This creates a sense of legitimate coexistence between the two domains and thus the university teachers face a complex situation regarding the organization of learning for WIL teacher education students within campus courses. Some WIL-teacher education students are perceived to have benefited from transformative learning experiences and a deeper understanding of applying academic studies practically, which can enhance the depth of academic teaching regarding reflective learning opportunities. At the same time many WIL teacher education students seek hands-on assistance and consequently, university teachers find themselves in a reluctant transformative process trying to provide WIL teacher education students practical support to navigate their work situations. University teachers find themselves compelled to address WIL teacher education students' additional needs, leading to a reframing of their practices and a risk of intrusion into course content. A coordination process is initiated where university teachers strive to arrange the activity as efficiently as possible and to generate reliable routines while struggling to maintain course objectives. While sympathetic to students' challenges, there are, however, limits to accommodating their needs. Acting as brokers, teachers negotiate boundaries between university and workplace contexts, reluctantly adjusting campus practices to support students' teaching responsibilities (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Aligned with Billet (2011), integrating theory and practice in WIL teacher education challenges university teachers, as students often view knowledge from university and workplace settings as separate. Research shows student teachers prioritize practical over theoretical aspects initially (Hobson, 2003; Mayer et al., 2015), thereby supporting the findings of this study. Thus, the positioning of WIL teacher education students as employees during their university education appears to tilt WIL towards work-based learning rather than work-integrated learning. According to Gustafsson Nyckel et al. (2020), workplace routines and norms constrain critical reflection on theory, practice, and contextual conditions. In WIL teacher education, students vary in their perception of integrating workplace and university contexts. Some prioritize one over the other, while others adeptly navigate the boundary and leverage learning opportunities. This imbalance prompts university teachers to reassess their teaching strategies, either accommodating WIL teacher education students' content demands or fostering reflective discussions on essential course content.

CONCLUSION

Restructuring teacher education through approaches like WIL triggers a repositioning of the individuals involved. According to university teachers, some WIL-teacher education student teachers quickly assume a central teaching role, impacting their learning opportunities as students. This shift in identity and position as a student teacher suggests differing expectations from university studies, challenging teacher educators to bridge theory and practice effectively. They must adapt academic language, motivate reflective pedagogy, and balance scientific objectives with WIL teacher education students' immediate needs. This means a shift of position for university teachers also. This dynamic unveils a hidden curriculum, blending practice-based contexts with academic studies, that demands

attention. Thus, WIL teacher education poses significant challenges, urging thorough examination of these implications. Specifically, it requires adjusting course content to suit this unique educational model. This calls for a careful balance between meeting academic standards and catering to the practical demands of WIL teacher education students, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful implementation and consideration in educational restructuring. A systematic review and reflection of the educational innovation is needed where the shift for all stakeholders – students and teachers is considered. Finally, the capacity of university teacher's capacity to manage these innovations needs strengthening.

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About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues related to Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE).

In this Journal, WIL is defined as:

An educational approach involving three parties – the student, educational institution, and an external stakeholder – consisting of authentic work-focused experiences as an intentional component of the curriculum. Students learn through active engagement in purposeful work tasks, which enable the integration of theory with meaningful practice that is relevant to the students' discipline of study and/or professional development (Zegwaard et al., 2023, p. 38").

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, student consultancies, etc. WIL is related to, and overlaps with, the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training.

The Journal's aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, WIL practitioners, curricular designers, and researchers. The Journal encourages quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of quality practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

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Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL is 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 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.

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Reference

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