WatCACE Objectives

**Conducting and facilitating research**
- Projects undertaken by ‘core’ team
- Collaborations with both on and off campus partners
- Sponsored through WatCACE research funds

**Thought leadership**
- Involvement in on-campus and off-campus committees to provide input and to gain insights to inform research direction for WatCACE

**Dissemination**
- Presentations on and off campus
- Publications
- Research seminars
- Website, Daily Bulletin

CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION
OUTLINE

Subjective Well-being
+ 5 minutes for questions

Unpacking the Supervisor Experience
+ 5 minutes for questions

A Case Study
+ 5 minutes for questions

Final Question Period
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION INTERVIEWS AND STUDENT SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING
Subjective Well-being

- Subjective Well-being (SWB):
  - High satisfaction with life, high positive affect, and low negative affect

- Integrated framework: happiness comes from combination of pleasant and unpleasant moments and experiences; individual personality can impact perception

- Over 20% more first work term students unmatched after main round than total co-op students

Research Question:

1. How does the main round job match effect SWB for first work-term students?
2. If there is an effect, what can be done?
Participants

- **First work term students (Fall 2015)**
  - 2700 recruitment emails sent
  - 154 usable responses (~6% response rate)
  - 64% female, 36% male

- **First work term students (Winter 2016)**
  - 1741 recruitment emails sent
  - 119 usable responses (~7% response rate)
  - 40% female, 57% male
The Study

Procedure: Five electronic surveys (self-report)

• T1: After main round interviews, before match
• T2: After match results
• Random assignment (intervention or control)
• T3: After being exposed to the intervention for one week (immediate post-test)
• T4: After having been off the intervention for one week (one week post-test)
• T5: After having been off the intervention for two weeks (two week post-test)
Findings: Employment On Positive Affect

Fall 2015

Winter 2016
Findings: Employment On Negative Affect

**Fall 2015**

**Winter 2016**
Findings: Employment On Satisfaction With Life

Fall 2015

Winter 2016

MATCHED
NOMATCH
Findings: Treatment On Life Satisfaction For Unmatched Students

Fall 2015

![Graph showing Life Satisfaction for Treatment and Control groups over time (T2, T3, T4).]
Findings: Rejection Sensitivity as a Potential Moderator On Negative Affect
Implications

• Unmatched students experience a drop in positive affect and life satisfaction, increase in negative affect
  o Clear that this is an emotional experience

• Unmatched students can be targeted more directly

• Interventions can be effective – more research to determine best path to take
  o Test coping interventions to improve SWB after rejection/failure or buffer against low SWB after rejection/failure

• Test effects of other possible moderating variables

• Improve awareness of counselling services/increase social support
QUESTIONS?

5 Minute Question Period
UNPACKING SUPERVISOR EXPERIENCE*

* RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY ONTARIO HUMAN CAPITAL AND INNOVATION FUND
Overview

- Context
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Themes Identified
- Implications and Next Steps
Context

3 key stakeholder groups in a co-op system

Significant research on benefits, challenges, and outcomes for students

Some research on benefits and challenges for employers
Literature Review

• **Within the co-op literature**
  - Abel & Love, 1988
  - Bartkus & Stull, 2001
  - Vaughn, 2014

• **Within the OB literature**
  - Beehr, 2006
  - Beehr, 1987
Methodology

• Semi-structured interview with 14 co-op supervisors

• Grounded theory approach Charmaz
  o Transcripts reviewed separately by two RAs and the primary investigator
  o Concepts identified and grouped together which formed four main themes
Employer Orientation Towards Co-op

- Pragmatic/functional
- Learning/developmental
- Mixed
Organizational Citizenship Behaviours

• **OCBs** are behaviours not part of an employee’s role but contribute to the success of an organization (Organ, 1988)

• Connection between **OCBs** and employers reports of “best” experiences with co-op students
Person-Organization Fit

- Compatibility between individual and work environment when characteristics are well matched (Schneider, 2001; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005)

- Affects the co-op experience positively (when the fit is good) and negatively (when the fit is poor)
Onboarding and Training

- Consistently reported by employers as a factor that represents a challenge for them
- Potential value of formalizing training processes
- Students who can get up to speed quickly are particularly valued by employers
Strategies

1. End of Term Presentations (developmental perspective)

2. Front-end load training; getting current students to prepare materials to support transition

3. Raise students’ awareness of
   - ROI for employer
   - Importance of OCBs
   - Connecting with colleagues (person-organization fit)
DISCUSSION

• **Similarities to O/B research**
  
  o Importance of person-organizational fit
  
  o Organizational citizenship behaviours

• **Differences from O/B research**

  o Onboarding and training
  
  o Pragmatic vs. developmental perspective
Limitations and Future Research

• One form of WIL studied (co-op) in one institution
• Exploratory, small sample
• Need to examine connection between results and characteristics of the supervisor (e.g. age, gender, educational background) and organization (e.g. size, industry)
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE AND SUCCESS: A CASE STUDY
Success of co-op depends upon mutual benefit to the student and the supervisor.

Certain workplace characteristics influence student satisfaction, performance, and learning (Crebert, 1995; McRae, 2015).

Little work has been done on how the supervisor can modify the environment to maximize benefits for the student and the supervisor.

The current case examines a particularly successful co-op workplace.
• Health-related organization that hires co-op students from the University of Waterloo

• Students are hired in their first or second work term and remain there for all of their remaining work terms

• A junior and senior student work together concurrently

• While working there, students conduct research and have the opportunity to publish research articles, book chapters, and textbooks, and attend conferences

• The vast majority of these students go on to medical school
Themes

Motivation and internalization

“He expected a lot from us even though we were just students. That meant a lot because you knew someone was trusting in the work you were doing and saw that you could actually contribute something”

Commitment

“After my first term I was like, ‘I don’t think there’s a better place or a better coop job to have where I would be getting the kind of experience that I wanted to get’”

Mentorship

“I would describe [supervisor] as my mentor and I always say this but I don’t believe I would be where I am right now if I didn’t have that mentor and my relationship with him”
QUESTIONS?

5 Minute Question Period
YOUR FEEDBACK

WITH THE PERSON BESIDE YOU:

• What would you like to know more about?
• What surprised you?
• What are the implications for your institution?
THANK YOU!

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