

CEWIL Research Matters

CEWIL Research Matters is a monthly newsletter showcasing research in co-operative education and work-integrated learning. The newsletter is a joint initiative of the CEWIL Canada Research Committee and WatCACE (University of Waterloo). We profile published research that we believe will be of interest to the CEWIL Canada community and feature practitioner and researcher viewpoints on the articles.

March 2019

• [Article #1](#) • [Article #2](#) • [News/Updates](#)

Article #1

Achieving the partnership principle in experiential learning: The nonprofit perspective (2013)

Author(s)

Gazley, B., Bennett, T. A., & Littlepage, L.

Journal

Journal of Public Affairs Education, 19(3), 559-579

Source

[WIL Research Portal](#)

Purpose: To explore what cultivates truly mutually beneficial partnerships between universities and community organizations in experiential learning based on the perceptions and recommendations from community partners.

Methodology: The authors combined quantitative and qualitative approaches of perceptions of community organizations who currently or had previously partnered with a university in an experiential learning capacity. The researchers conducted focus groups and also disseminated a representative survey.

Key Findings: An overwhelming majority of community partners indicated receptivity to welcoming student service learners, interns or volunteers in their organization. Community partners mentioned challenges, including weak communication/connection with the university and lack of agency/inclusion in program development, management and evaluation.

Practitioner's Thoughts by [Hannah Stevenson](#) (*Experiential Education Promotion and Outreach Coordinator, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto, St. George Campus*)

Q: What insights did you gain from reading this article that were useful to you?

A: Universities undoubtedly contribute to their surrounding communities, but this article emphasizes that we must not rely on this assumption when it comes to the partnerships we have with community organizations. This article references a "Three-Legged Stool" for actors involved in experiential learning made up of 1) students, 2) the university and 3) the community. Despite all three being critical for the success of experiential learning, the community leg receives less attention in both research and practice.

This article provided a helpful reminder that we must not make a unilateral assumption that communities are grateful to be on the receiving end of student skills and labour. Assumptions such as these without active communication and check-ins with the community partner to determine their needs, expectations, and organizational capacity can shift the relationship from partnership to exploitation. Furthermore, there must be clear respect and acknowledgement of the expertise that both parties bring to the partnership. As universities, we send students into the community with an understanding that their learning will be enhanced by the knowledge that exists outside our walls. As practitioners, staff, and/or Faculty members, it is important to realize that we have as much to learn from these partnerships as our students do. It is of mutual benefit to recognize the knowledge and expertise our partners hold, which requires involving them in the broader vision, planning, and goals for the student experience and overall partnership.

Q: How will the findings from this research impact your work?

A: As an Outreach Coordinator, I plan to take this reminder into my work by regularly challenging my automatic perceptions and assumptions. To do this, I plan on emphasizing the priority to engage in thoughtful conversations with community members, with the goal of listening and learning about their needs and what recommendations they suggest for strengthening the partnership.

Article #2

Realising the educational worth of integrating work experiences in higher education (2009)

Author(s)

Billet, S.

Journal

Studies in Higher Education, 34(7), 827-843

Source

[WIL Research Portal](#)

Purpose: Billet asks, how can we organize the learning experiences students have in practicums in order for students to have a better transition from university to professional practice?

Methodology: Examples of supportive pedagogy for students are taken from previous work and the initial findings of a project that seeks to integrate student learning experiences across the disciplines of human services, physiotherapy, nursing and midwifery, which are growing fields of occupational-specific higher education courses.

Key Findings: Billet provides several recommendations to consider prior to, during, and after practice-based experiences. He also emphasizes the need for mature relationships between academics and practitioners, and between academic institutions and practice settings.

Practitioner's Thoughts by [Natasha Jamal](#) (Placement Program Coordinator, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto, St. George Campus)

Q: What insights did you gain from reading this article that were useful to you?

A: Billet speaks of three types of knowledge students need to develop as a practitioner: conceptual (the what); domain specific procedural (the how); and dispositional (values and how to behave in certain conditions). While our academic courses, including those tied to placements, can address some of the above knowledge types, much of the learning students develop in placements require a transformation in dispositional knowledge as students will be faced with new challenges in an authentic, imperfect professional workplace setting. We should expect discrepancies at times, largely due to the fact that practice in industry can have different goals and priorities from the goals academic institutions have with respect to providing a particular learning environment for students. Therefore, integrating theory to practice is not a seamless learning process. Embedded supports and pedagogy during placements can better prepare students to embrace the learning opportunities that come from real workplace settings that have regular challenges of the profession, which usually do not have a simple resolution or solution.

Q: How might the results of this work impact how you do your job?

A: My role as a placement coordinator goes beyond securing placements for students as I have been providing supports for students prior, during and after their placement experience. Billet's article reminds me it's normal for students to have cognitive dissonance during their placement experience. Much of the onus of learning in placement is left to the student to be an active agent, which is quite different to the role students are used to when learning in a classroom setting. Intentionally embedding the value of adopting a growth mindset in workshops and in one-on-one supports can help reframe the expected challenges students experience in placements, much of which require strategies in conflict resolution, effective communication and self-directed learning to support their dispositional professional development.

News and Updates

- **CEWIL "Taking a Pulse on Interest in Research" Survey**

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey! Stay tuned for the results.

- **2019 ACE-WIL Conference**

The ACE-WIL Conference is taking place May 12-15, 2019 in Victoria, BC and early bird registration ends **March 31, 2019**. Visit the [website](#) for more information.

Contribute

Suggest articles or contribute to future issues by emailing us at watcace@uwaterloo.ca.

Learn more

CEWIL Canada: cewilcanada.ca

WatCACE: uwaterloo.ca/watcace

WIL Research Portal: wilresearch.uwaterloo.ca



@CEWILCanada



@UW_WatCACE



WatCACE