

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.

September 2019

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Article #1

Ethical risks in work-integrated learning: A study of Canadian practitioners (2019)

Author(s)

Cameron, C., Dodds, C., & MacLean, C.

Journal

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, 21(1), 83-95

Source

[WIL Research Portal](#)

Purpose: To explore ethical risks in work-integrated learning (WIL) from the perspective of WIL practitioners.

Methodology: A case study, using a mix of semi-structured and structured interviews, of the experiences of 10 Canadian co-operative education (co-op) practitioners.

Key Findings: Co-op practitioners described five characteristics of ethical conduct: equity, integrity, transparency, care, and adherence to rules. Four themes about ethical risks emerged: making exceptions to rules, disclosure of stakeholder issues, negotiating competing stakeholder interests, and co-op versus employment.

Practitioner's Thoughts By Sarah Bray (Service Learning Placement Coordinator, Student Affairs & Services, Saint Mary's University)

Are these findings relevant for other stakeholders? If so, in what ways could this information be shared with them?

As we seek to develop experiential learning (EL) opportunities across our campus, it is important to consider the ethical risks, in an attempt to identify and manage risks throughout the experience. Although this article was centered around cooperative education, I felt that many of the ideas and discussions within it, could be relevant to other EL approaches, service learning including. Throughout the article, I found myself thinking that all stakeholders involved in EL should be aware of these findings. In my current role, I support Course-Based Service Learning (SL) experiences, which requires me to collaborate with faculty members, university staff, community partners, and students. Communication and transparency is such a huge piece of what makes an EL program successful, to ensure that each stakeholder is aware of their role(s), has the capacity to participate, and understands the expectations of all involved, which I believe includes ethical risks and identifying and managing risks. I found myself particularly interested in the discussion of the Higher Education Institution's (HEI) role in developing policies or procedures around managing ethical risks and the disclosure process. I feel that one way this information might be shared with employers (or community partners), could be to involve these stakeholders in the HEIs' process for developing rules, policies, contracts, etc., around EL experiences. I believe that this may create space for more communication and transparency, while including the employer/community partner perspective within the decision making process.

Article #2

Improving unmatched co-op students' emotional wellbeing: Test of two brief interventions (2019)

Author(s)

Drewery, D. W., Cormier, L. A., Pretti, T. J., & Church, D.

Journal

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, 20(1), 43-53

Source

[WIL Research Portal](#)

News and Updates

- **2019 CEWIL Annual General Meeting and PD Event**

Date: October 15-18, 2019

Location: Brock University

Registration closes October 3, 2019. Visit the [CEWIL website](#) for more information about this year's AGM and PD event.

Purpose: To test the effects of interventions for improving unmatched co-operative education (co-op) students' emotional wellbeing.

Methodology: An experimental design was used whereby participants (n = 74) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a positive psychology-based writing task, a toolkit with materials and information about coping with stress, or a control condition. A measure of emotional wellbeing was administered before and after the intervention period (one week).

Key Findings: Participants in the writing task condition showed statistically significant gains in emotional wellbeing. Similar interventions that encourage students to focus on "good things" could be particularly feasible and effective in the co-op context.

Practitioner's Thoughts by Sherry Ross (Senior Employment Development Officer, Co-operative Education, Student Affairs & Services, Saint Mary's University)

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

We provide workshops, and one-on-one sessions for all co-op students when they join the co-op program, and as they seek placements. When they do not secure a work term we can provide encouragement for them to continue to apply for co-op positions, and assist with resumes, cover letters and mock interviews. Though, this article confirms that positive strategies have to be developed and directed towards a student's emotional wellbeing if they do not secure a work term.

I have a strong interest in learning more about the research findings on positive psychological interventions. I believe if we have these opportunities available for our co-op students then the number of withdrawals from co-op may decrease, and students may have a more positive experience. Currently when students withdraw from the co-op program, the highest numbers are those students who did not secure their first work term.

The article described a writing activity for unmatched students. These students require a positive outlook for their emotional wellbeing and a longer distance from the negative emotion they feel when they do not secure a work term. We could create a more detailed message for our students who do not secure a work term, asking them to write about positive situations or events in order to direct their feelings towards positivity. As well, I believe they should be aware of the services the university counselling centre provides to all students.

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