This is the inaugural issue of Co-op Research Matters. It’s been something that we have wanted to do for quite a while and so we’re very excited to send this to you. Co-op Research Matters will be a monthly newsletter/update on what’s happening in co-op research and WatCACE. We will profile published research, by us and others, and include a practitioner’s viewpoint on the article. In addition, we will share updates on current WatCACE projects.

**Article #1:** The influence of cooperative education and reflection upon previous work experiences on university graduates’ vocational self-concept

**Authors:** David Drewery, Colleen Nevison, T Judene Pretti

**Journal:** Education + Training, Vol. 58 Iss: 2, pp.179 - 192

**Link to article** (to access from off campus you will need to be logged into the library website)

**PRACTITIONER’S THOUGHTS BY JENNIFER WOODSIDE**

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

This study leaves me wondering how we at the Centre for Career Action could enhance our impact on students’ careers and employment outcomes through spurring more reflection about the last summer job, work term, volunteer experience, etc. It would be interesting to spend more time examining which types of questions are best suited to brief vs. more lengthy interventions, too.

Are these findings relevant for other stakeholders (e.g. students, employers, faculty)? If so, in what ways could this information be shared with them?

It’s important for CCA to impart these findings to student leaders when we undertake train-the-trainer initiatives, such as with the Co-op Living Learning Community’s peer leaders, WatPD’s TAs for PD1, Engineering’s WEEF TAs for Co-op Fundamentals for Engineering (CFE), and our very own Student Career Leaders running CCA drop-ins this spring. If we can effectively coach these influencers to identify comfortable ways to integrate reflection-promoting questions into their own student support processes, we’re on our way toward spreading career development leadership skills across campus.
Article #2: ‘Get foot in the door’: International Students’ Perceptions of Work Integrated Learning

Authors: Tran, L. T., & Soejatminah, S.

Journal: British Journal of Educational Studies, 2016, pp. 1-19

PURPOSE
To explore why international students value work-integrated learning

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY
Interviews with 105 international students in a Vocational Education and Training program in Australia

KEY FINDINGS
WIL helps international students adapt and build a career in a new country through expanding their networks and opportunities

PRACTITIONER’S THOUGHTS BY SHABNAM (SHAY) SURJITSINGH IVKOVIĆ
In what ways do these findings have the potential to change practice for us at Waterloo?

uWaterloo’s strategic mandate of ‘internationalization’ means that we will have larger incoming cohorts of international students. The success of their employability after their graduation will reflect on the uWaterloo brand. There are various models and methods to accomplish WIL, one of them being co-op. Maybe we should give serious thought to what other models can better serve international students, and how can we, as an institution, provide support in the form of preparation and opportunities for WIL. Participants in the study mentioned the symbolic advantage of showcasing their vocational capabilities in their professional portfolios. E-portfolios are gaining traction across campus. I wonder if there is an opportunity to encourage and support international students to enhance their employability selling point via this medium?

Does this study raise questions for you that require further research/investigation?

The social connectedness piece jumped out at me - anecdotally speaking, new immigrants must try harder than others to find a place in a new environment and an identity in a foreign context. Undertaking WIL provides avenues to build on both. What can uWaterloo do in this context to create more rooted citizens of the uWaterloo community, and eventually, citizens of the province and country?

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, April 5, 2016
WatCACE “Open House”
During the break at the CECA Business meeting, the WatCACE team will be set up at Fed Hall to showcase recent and current research projects and to get your input and ideas on future research projects. We can’t wait to share our work and hear your ideas.

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

Subscribe
Future issues of Co-op Research Matters newsletters will not be sent out as a blast to the full department, so please let us know if you want to be on our mailing list. Email watcace@uwaterloo.ca with your email address with the title “Subscribe to Co-op Research Matters.”

Contribute
If you have suggestions for articles that we should profile, or would like to be contribute the ‘practitioner’ viewpoint to any of future issues, please share them with us at our tables during the break at the CECA Business meeting.