Scaling up Experiential Learning Opportunities and Challenges

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SESSION OVERVIEW

1. Background
2. Scaling up: the opportunities
3. Scaling up: the challenges
4. Next steps: focus on collaboration and quality
Experiential Learning*
(Curricular) E.g.
• Field experience
• Interactive simulations
• Teaching labs
• Project-based coursework

Work Integrated Learning**
• Apprenticeships
• Co-operative education
• Internships
• Entrepreneurship
• Service learning
• Applied research projects
• Mandatory professional practicum/clinical placement
• Field placement
• Work experience

Co/Extra Curricular***
E.g.
• Observing a demonstration
• Job shadowing
• Student clubs
• Athletics
• Volunteer experiences
• Summer or part-time jobs

*Embedded in program or course design

**Embedded in program or course design and includes third party engagement. E.g. employer, industry or community partner

***Student-driven, may or may not be program related and is not embedded in program or course design
BACKGROUND: SHARED ATTRIBUTES (P.E.A.R.)

**PEDAGOGY**
- Curriculum integration of workplace and academic learning
  - Learning outcomes are articulated and measured and identified based on curriculum and needs of host organization
  - Assessed by institution in consultation with host organization/professional body
  - Workplace learning is re-connected to the curriculum

**EXPERIENCE**
- Experience in a workplace or practice setting
  - Has direct learner involvement and learner is enabled to contribute within the host organization
  - Meaningful to learners academic and/or career goals
  - Intentionally designed and linked to curriculum and program structures
  - Embraces disruptive moments and supports personal exploration of one's beliefs and values within the workplace

**ASSESSMENT**
- Student outcomes that lead to employability, personal agency and life-long learning
  - Skills and attributes that are relevant to the workplace context: locally, nationally, internationally
  - Knowledge of the discipline of study and the workplace context
  - Capacity to contribute as a member of a workplace or entrepreneur as well as a member of an ethical civic society
  - New meaning is constructed by connecting previous and new learning

**REFLECTION**
- Reflection
  - Ongoing and through formative and summative processes that could be shared with both academic program and host organization
  - Meaningful reflection designed to facilitate the student’s understanding of skills, knowledge, attributes and capacity to contribute
  - Reflection designed to facilitate the integration of learning from the workplace and academic program and career transition to workplace
Almost every post-secondary institution in Canada has some form of experiential learning.

Benefits of experiential learning have been demonstrated: for employers/host organizations (especially for WIL), students and institutions (employability, recruitment and retention, student learning).

Governments (Federal and Provincial), advocacy groups and industry are recognizing the benefits of Experiential Learning (EL) and WIL, recently calling for 100% WIL experience for all students in Canada.

Current # of post-secondary students (all levels): ~ two million (Statistics Canada, 2015/16).

Lots of expertise and a clear interest in building capacity for EL.

Commitment to quality.

National associations (e.g. CEWIL) providing opportunities for stakeholder conversations.

The time is ripe to coordinate efforts and tackle the challenges of getting to 100%.
1. You say tomato, and I say tomato...

- Ongoing debate about definitions and types
- Results in:
  - Confusion for students, employers/host organizations
  - Lack of coordination within/between institutions
  - Inadequate measurement outcomes
2. Mind the gap: how many experience are needed?

- Total number of post-secondary students in Canada:
  - 2,034,957 (Statistics Canada, 2015/16)
- Total number enrolled in EL programs?
  - Unknown
- 56% of graduate students had some form of work related learning in their final year (CUSC, 2018)
3. Quality not just quantity... or what's the point?

- Achieving desired outcomes from EL requires quality: Pedagogy, Experience, Assessment and Reflection (P.E.A.R.)

- Quality standards for EL needs to be established

- Quality Assurance processes needed

- Quality 100% EL will need capacity building support for:
  - Employers/host organizations
  - Educations/practitioners
  - Institutions
  - Students
SCALING UP: THE CHALLENGES

4. EL for all: ensuring equitable access

- Indigenous students
- Students with disabilities, including mental health challenges
- Visible minority/racialized students
- LGBTQ2+
- All genders
- All disciplines
- Low income/heavily indebted students
- Students in remote locations
- International students
- Mature students with dependents
5. Ensuring opportunities with a variety of employers/host organizations

- Large companies
- SMEs and startups
- Public sector
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Community based organizations (including Indigenous communities)
- Social enterprise
- Students as self-employed entrepreneurs

Domestically and Internationally
SCALING UP: THE CHALLENGES

6. Willingness

- Funding to incentivize employers/host organizations, support student access and build institutional capacity

- Legislative/policy/taxation changes that enable EL for all students (domestic and international) in a range of contexts (on and off campus, within workplaces, etc.)

- Curriculum development

- Employer engagement

- Student engagement
NEXT STEPS: FOCUS ON COLLABORATION AND QUALITY

1. Collaboration within institutions and across the sector
2. The development of a quality assurance framework
QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR WIL:
AAA★
AIMS, ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
AIMS
AAA ★ RATING

QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR WIL

ARTICULATE AIMS
ACCOMPLISH ACTIONS
ASSESS ACHIEVEMENTS
+ QA Processes
APPLYING THE QA FRAMEWORK TO ATTAIN THE AAA★ RATING

• What are the aims of your program for all five stakeholders?
• What actions will you undertake to accomplish your aims?
• How will you assess your achievements?
• What processes will you put in place for continuous improvement?
NEXT STEPS

- Presentation to CEWIL Canada (October 2018)

- White paper release (October 2018), www.watcace.uwaterloo.ca

- Goal for publication in International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL.org)
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THANK YOU