

Co-op Research Matters is a monthly newsletter showcasing research in work-integrated learning and co-operative education. We profile published research by WatCACE and others, feature practitioner viewpoints on highlighted articles and share updates on current WatCACE projects.

APRIL 2018

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Article #1

Online professional development module for WIL practitioners: Participants' experience and impact on their practice (2016)

Author(s)

Karsten E. Zegwaard, Kristina Johansson, Sonia Ferns, Katharine Hoskyn, Norah McRae, Judie Kay

Journal

Refereed Proceedings of the 2nd International Research Symposium on Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education

Source

[World Association for Cooperative Education \(WACE\) \(PDF\)](#)

Purpose: To describe the experience and outcomes for practitioners who have participated in an online module about Global Perspectives of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL).

Methodology: A survey was administered to the first two cohorts of practitioners who participated in the module.

Key Findings: Practitioners reported an increase in understanding of WIL theories and different models of delivering WIL. They also reported a need to develop their understanding even further after completing the module.

Practitioner's Thoughts by Gail Tymchuk (International Account Manager, CECA, University of Waterloo)

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

A: Participants indicated they are still reflecting on the discussion from the module and reading more literature than before. I am pleased that throughout my work, I too am reading more articles devoted to the challenges of global perspectives on WIL. I also find that Waterloo's Co-operative Education (specifically International) has created even more campus partners that together share the desired outcome of positive outreach for students wanting to complete at least one international work term. Another interesting point from the article reflected on the importance of creating effective communities of practice. The suggestion is to maintain professional development opportunities within the community. As internationalization and globalization continue to grow in matters of importance in education and business around the world, the University of Waterloo addresses these opportunities quickly and provides excellent training and resources to continue the development.

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

A: I look forward to working with other campus departments and colleagues to increase knowledge and outreach on all matters pertaining to international WIL. Results of this article encourage me to look toward already established resources within the greater city of Waterloo, and also to initiate possible avenues to increase awareness of global perspectives in work-integrated learning.

Article #2

Bridging the gap between industry and university for international students through mentoring (2016)

Author(s)

Judie Kay, Kim Feneley, Hanneke Mallegrom, Adam Rowland

Journal

Refereed Proceedings of the 2nd International Research Symposium on Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education

Source

[World Association for Cooperative Education \(WACE\) \(PDF\)](#)

Purpose: To uncover outcomes for international students who participated in the Career Mentoring Program at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia.

Methodology: Surveys were administered to students and industry mentors mid-way and at the end of the program.

Key Findings: There was greater engagement between industry partners and RMIT University, and students reported high satisfaction with their mentoring experience.

Practitioner's Thoughts by Kira Brusckhe (Graduate Career Advisor, CCA, University of Waterloo)

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

A: It doesn't come as a surprise that in Australia, most international students choose to study there because of the opportunities to stay and work after graduation, yet they report frustration with barriers to gaining connections and experience. In a 2008 study in Australia, employers cited they were concerned about hiring international students because of lack of cultural awareness and worries about visa restrictions and language barriers. This has improved over the years with awareness campaigns geared at Australian companies. I imagine that these experiences are similar for international students and employers in Canada.

Q: In what ways do these findings have potential to change the way we practice in Waterloo?

A: In my work with graduate students, I do see the need for international students to have mentorship and WIL experiences. Finding staff and financial resources to run such experiential programs can be a challenge. RMIT University's alumni mentorship program was able to grow from 84 to over 500 students (mentees) by introducing a cloud-based mentoring system that eliminated the need for many of the manual processes required in the first two years of the program. Looking into cloud-based systems for managing experiential learning programs at the University of Waterloo (for international and domestic students) could help increase our reach to students without increasing need for staffing.

Q: Are these findings relevant for other stakeholders?

A: The findings may be of interest to CEWIL and Canadian employers in general. This type of mentorship program requires low commitment from employers and can positively increase industry and university relations. From the RMIT University mentorship program, the benefits seem clear in breaking down barriers for both international students and employers. While participating in the program, employers seemed to be even more engaged when interacting with a mentee who was an international student, and they gained greater awareness of international students' skills and abilities.

News and Updates

CEWIL/ECAMT 2018 National Conference

This year's conference is hosted in Montreal, QC from July 29 to August 1.

Register today:

> [CEWIL website](#)

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