

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.

### FEBRUARY 2018

- Article #1
- Article #2
- News and Updates

#### Article #1

Experiential learning through a health professional shadowing program (2010)

#### Author(s)

Priscilla Bell

#### Journal

Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships, 44(1), 34-41

#### Source

[WIL Research Portal](#)

**Purpose:** To assess the experiential learning experience of pre-health students participating in a health professional shadowing program.

**Methodology:** Shadowing was completed in two-hour time blocks. Two evaluation surveys were completed by current student and alumni participants of the program.

**Key Findings:** Value of the program was affirmed as the experience helped students decide whether they were still interested in pursuing a career in health (25% noted the shadowing experience made them realize they were no longer interested).

**Practitioner's Thoughts by Anthony Miller (Co-op Experiential Coordinator) and Sarah de Waal (Co-op Administrative Coordinator), School of Pharmacy, University of Waterloo**

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

**A:** What we found surprising was that such a short term experiential opportunity (two hours of shadowing) could influence the career choice of more than 60% of program participants. This research reaffirms the importance of prior pharmacy experience as part of our program's non-academic admission requirements.

**Q: In what ways do these findings have the potential to change practice for us at Waterloo?**

**A:** These findings support many of the benefits we already know about work-integrated learning at the University. While a short term experiential opportunity can help confirm or dissuade a student's interest in pursuing a particular health career, Waterloo Pharmacy's three four-month co-op work terms provide students with a greater understanding of the profession. There are many unique practice settings in pharmacy (e.g. community pharmacy, hospital, pharmaceutical industry, government, insurance, academia, etc.). Therefore, we require our students to explore at least two different pharmacy settings while on co-op to gain exposure to various unique experiences. The importance of real world experiences in helping to influence career choice prior to graduation will continue to be emphasized to our students.

## Article #2

Enhancing graduate employability through work-based learning in social entrepreneurship (2013)

## Author(s)

Afreen Huq &  
David H. Gilbert

## Journal

Education + Training,  
55(6), 550-572

## Source

[Emerald Insight](#)

**Purpose:** To investigate the benefits of a work-based learning (WBL) model in social entrepreneurship courses.

**Methodology:** Experience surveys and focus groups were conducted with students. Ten not-for-profit industry partners were also interviewed for feedback on the WBL curriculum.

**Key Findings:** Adopting a WBL curriculum in social entrepreneurship enhances graduate employability and opportunities for responsible entrepreneurship education. Students also gain skills in demand by employers, such as communication and strong emotional intelligence.

## Practitioner's Thoughts by Karleigh Nyman (Co-op Special Programs Manager, CECA, University of Waterloo)

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

**A:** Among the many insights I gained from reading this article, I found two most useful. First, evidence to support that students recognized the value of responsible entrepreneurship and developed "higher-order skills", such as emotional intelligence, among other highly-prized graduate employability skills by participating in social entrepreneurship WBL. Second, understanding the significance of one of the shortcomings of WBL ("[the] variability of the student experience"). Proof of the correlation between a student's WBL experience and the projects and partners involved is useful to me as I believe this conclusion can be extrapolated to apply to any experiential education experience. Ensuring these types of student experiences are innovating continuously in design and implementation is a way to address this challenge.

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

**A:** With respect to [GreenHouse co-op](#) (where first work-term Waterloo co-op students are placed in pairs with three social enterprises), the results of this work speaks to the opportunity for the program to focus effort on better managing variability of the pairings, projects, companies, and workplaces students are matched with. In its early stages, I am already observing the benefits of increased student autonomy within the program.

## News and Updates

**CEWIL Canada Research Grant (Sponsored by WatCACE)**

### Submission deadline:

Friday, March 30, 2018

### For more information:

> [CEWIL website](#)

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