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 the highlighted articles, and share updates on current WatCACE projects.

**June 2017**

- Article #1
- Article #2
- Updates

**Article #1**


**Author(s)**

McRae, N., Ramji, K., Lu, L., Lesperance, M.

**Journal**

Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 17(4), 377-386

**Purpose:** To examine the changes in students’ cultural competency as a result of a work or study abroad term.

**Methodology:** Students from Canada and Europe, part of a program called CANEU-COOP, were given a test to measure cultural intelligence before and after a work term (Canadian students in Europe) or study abroad term (European students in Canada).

**Key Findings:** Both the study and work abroad students reported increases in their cultural competence with slight differences in the groups across different dimensions of cultural competence.

**Practitioner’s Thoughts by Lisa ter Woort (Account Manager, International, CECA)**

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

**A:** Since I have been working professionally in the “international” arena for over 25 years now and was onboard the CANEU-COOP Project from its conception, it wasn’t a surprise to me to see that students are changed as a result of international work term experiences. The value of this study is in the effort to focus on cultural intelligence as the entry point to assessing change in the student and the four ways in which cultural intelligence is measured. I might suggest that measuring cultural intelligence is just the tip of the iceberg in unpacking and further capturing the richness of the change that is a student’s international work or study experience.

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

**A:** One of the limitations identified was the clearly small sample size used to collect and analyze data. This brings to mind the potential to harness the large cohort of Waterloo co-ops that undertake international work terms, which is between 200-350 students each term, to further investigate meaningful questions brought about by this study.
Purpose: To develop a framework to help explore and explain the concept of graduate employability.

Methodology: A literature review within graduate employability research was conducted and previous research was integrated in order to create the framework.

Key Findings: Human capital such as skills, social capital such as social class, individual behaviours like career-building skills, and individual attributes like adaptability, all contribute to perceived employability and this, along with labour market needs, contribute to actual graduate employability.

Practitioner’s Thoughts by Matthew Rempel (Associate Dean, Career Education and Co-curricular Learning, Sheridan College)

Q: What insights did you gain from reading this article that were useful to you?
A: This model reminds us that the term "employability" is very complex and can be somewhat elusive. We hear this term used in the media, by government, employers, students, parents, and most of us probably use it daily as part of our profession. Some think our graduates will be employable if they develop soft skills or participate in work-integrated learning. While this may be true to a certain degree, Clarke’s model should inspire us to consider all the influencers on graduate employability holistically and challenge us to look at higher education programming, including student services, for how we educate, support, and develop our students.

Q: Did this model raise questions for you that require further research or consideration?
A: The role of employers and individual students need to be included in this discussion. How can education and industry come together to promote, maintain, and support the employability of tomorrow’s labour force? How can we stress the importance of career self-management upon our students? Lastly, how might we measure graduate employability beyond simply tracking graduate employment rates?