

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.

MAY 2018

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Article #1

Creativity as a desirable graduate attribute: Implications for curriculum design and employability (2014)

Author(s)

Giselle Rampersad & Fay Patel

Journal

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, 15(1), 1-11

Source

[IJWIL \(PDF\)](#)

Purpose: To examine student and employer perceptions on how creativity in leadership can be developed through a work-integrated learning (WIL) approach at an Australian university.

Methodology: This study was conducted with 15 employer-student dyads of a WIL placement program involving industry projects geared towards innovation, science and technology over a 12-week period.

Key Findings: WIL helped to develop greater creativity and self-efficacy in students. Employers also confirmed creativity as a desirable graduate attribute with important implications for employability.

Faculty Member's Thoughts by Oscar Nespoli (Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering)

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

A: The article was useful in confirming our research conducted as part of our pilot iCapstone programming where students undertake co-op work terms and where faculty facilitate their learning of creative problem solving skills. I found the research methodology of using dyadic data, that is reflections from not just students, but reflections by industry supervisors as well, very interesting. This idea of 'giving voice' to all participants in researching WIL seems important. The development of self-efficacy cannot be over-emphasized in developing creative problem solving skills, as the article points out. Confidence in tackling tough problems develops leadership competency.

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

A: Our emphasis on having students acquire a broad and deep knowledge base, while necessary, is clearly insufficient if we want to prepare them as global leaders and citizens. Complex problem solving skills have been identified by the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report as the top skill required for future success, and creativity is a central component of that skill. These findings confirm that the 'clinical' dimension of our programming is clearly where the opportunity for us exists for novel teaching, learning, assessment, and research in creativity, problem solving and leadership academic programming.

Article #2

The influence of work-integrated learning on motivation to undertake graduate studies (2014)

Author(s)

Karsten E. Zegwaard & Susan McCurdy

Journal

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, 15(1), 13-28

Source

[IJWIL \(PDF\)](#)

Purpose: To understand how work terms influenced science students in pursuing graduate studies.

Methodology: Science graduate students participated in semi-structured interviews of 45-60 minutes duration.

Key Findings: Graduates indicated greater awareness of career prospects, experience doing research during their work term, and an awareness of credentials needed for careers at higher levels, as motivators to carry on with graduate studies.

Faculty Member's Thoughts by Zara Rafferty (Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies; PD13 Content Developer)

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

A: I had always assumed that the primary impact of co-op experiences for undergraduate students was to prepare them to be workplace-ready upon graduation. According to the article, this type of thinking is in line with the majority of research into the impacts of co-op, which tends to focus on career clarification, realistic career goal setting, and understanding workplace expectations. However, after reading this article, I am aware of an additional impact: that exposure to research experiences in the workplace can lead students to seek out a more focused, specialized research skill-set at the graduate studies level.

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

A: One note of interest was that students in this study participated in work terms that were not limited to a "work experience," but additionally offered guided experiential learning opportunities. In this case, most students worked in project-oriented placements that included a focused research element. As we think about the upcoming co-op research certificate, as well as the broadening of experiential opportunities for University of Waterloo students, it is important to emphasize principles of experiential learning to ensure that those research experiences generate meaningful impact for students.

News and Updates

WACE 3rd International Research Symposium

WatCACE is attending this year's symposium from **June 23-27, 2018** hosted in Stuttgart, Germany.

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> [WACE website](#)

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