Unpacking Supervisor Experience

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Overview

• Context
• Literature Review
• Methodology
• Themes Identified
• Implications and Next Steps
Context

• 3 key stakeholder groups in a co-op system

• Significant research on benefits, challenges and outcomes for students

• Some research on benefits and challenges for employers
Literature Review

• Within the co-op literature
  o Abel & Love, 1988
  o Bartkus & Stull 2001
  o Vaughn 2014

• Within the OB literature
  • Beehr, 2006
  • Beehr 1987
Methodology

• Semi-structured interview with 14 co-op supervisors

• Grounded theory approach Charmaz
  o Transcripts reviewed separately by two RAs and the primary investigator
  o Concepts identified and grouped together which formed four main themes
# Employer Orientation Towards Co-op

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<th>Orientation Type</th>
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<td>Pragmatic/functional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning/developmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
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Organizational Citizenship Behaviours

• OCBs are behaviours not part of an employee’s role but contribute to the success of an organization (Organ, 1988)

• Connection between OCBs and employers reports of “best” experiences with co-op students
Person-Organization Fit

- Compatibility between individual and work environment when characteristics are well matched (Schneider, 2001, Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005)
  
- Affects the co-op experience positively (when the fit is good) and negatively (when the fit is poor)
Onboarding and Training

• Consistently reported by employers as a factor that represents a challenge for them

• Potential value of formalizing training processes

• Students who can get up to speed quickly are particularly valued by employers
Strategies

1. End of Term Presentations (developmental perspective)

2. Front-end load training; getting current students to prepare materials to support transition

3. Raise students’ awareness of
   - ROI for employer
   - Importance of OCBs
   - Connecting with colleagues (person-org’n fit)
Discussion

Similarities to O/B research

- Importance of person-organizational fit
- Organizational citizenship behaviours

Differences from O/B research

- Onboarding and training
- Pragmatic vs. developmental perspective
Limitations and Future Research

• One form of WIL studied (co-op) in one institution

• Exploratory, small sample

• Need to examine connection between results and characteristics of the supervisor (e.g. age, gender, educational background) and organization (e.g. size, industry)
Thank you!

Questions?

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