WatCACE Objectives

Conducting and Facilitating Research

- Projects undertaken by ‘core’ team
- Collaborations with both on and off campus partners
- Sponsored through WatCACE research funds

Thought Leadership

Involvement in on-campus and off-campus committees to provide input and to gain insights to inform research direction for WatCACE

Dissemination

- Presentations on and off campus
- Publications
- Research seminars
- Website, Daily Bulletin
Currently conducting research in the following areas:

- Examining Quality in Work Term Experiences from the Student Perspective (OHCRIF grant received)
- Lifelong Learning and Co-operative Education (WACE grant received)
- Subjective Well-Being and the Employment Search
- Unpacking the supervisor experience (OHCRIF grant received)
- Investigating key factors in sustainable partnerships (ACEN grant received – collaboration)
- Evaluation of first work term pilots for Experiential Education theme
Thought Leadership

- Research Committee of Canadian Association for Co-operative Education
- International Research Group of the World Association of Co-op
- Annual Meeting of Co-op Directors from Large North American programs
- World Association for Co-operative Education Assessment Institute
- uWaterloo Co-operative Education Council
- Evaluation plan for the WatPD program
- Experiential Education theme of uWaterloo strategic plan
Most Recent Presentations:
• WatCACE Co-op Research Sampler, CAFCE (Moncton, New Brunswick)
• Unpacking the Supervisor Experience, WACE (Japan)
• Lifelong Learning and Co-operative Education, WACE (Japan)

Most Recent Publications:
• Lifelong learning characteristics, adjustment and extra-role performance in cooperative education (Journal of Education and Work)
• The influence of cooperative education and reflection upon previous work experiences on university graduates’ vocational self-concept (Education + Training)
• Examining the effects of perceived relevance and work-related subjective well-being on individual performance for co-op students (Asia Pacific Journal of Co-operative Education)

Research Seminars:
• The impact of co-op students on team dynamics in the workplace (Dr. Jenny Fleming, Auckland University of Technology)
• Research Trends in Work-Integrated Learning (Dr. Karsten Zegwaard, University of Waikato, New Zealand)
• The Co-op Workplace Support System (Dr. Antoine Pennaforte, CNAM, Paris, France)
Creating Meaningful Co-op Experiences

Waterloo Centre for the Advancement of Co-operative Education

Research supported by an Ontario Human Capital and Innovation Fund
Purpose

• The creation of meaningful work is an important goal for organizations

• Meaningful work is a key component of integrated work-integrated learning programs

Challenge

• Little research has been conducted in order to examine how meaningful work can be created for students

• What makes work meaningful?
Methodology

• 1,937 co-op students were surveyed

• The survey measured the following constructs
  • Learning environment
  • Relatedness to academics
  • Relatedness to career
  • Meaningfulness of experience

• Mediation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS to examine the theoretical model
Results

- The learning environment had a significant positive effect on relatedness to academics and career goals.
- The learning environment also had a positive influence on meaningfulness derived from a work term.
- Both academic and career relatedness had significant positive effects upon perceived meaningfulness of a work term.
- Relatedness partially mediates the influence of a learning environment on meaningfulness.
Potential Uses in Practice

It is important to foster a learning environment in order to fully engage co-op employees

By increasing the meaningfulness of students’ experiences, this will result in greater engagement of the student, higher productivity, and greater performance

Students can play a proactive role in enhancing the meaningfulness of their work term experiences

Finding meaning in their employment experiences will increase your students’ job satisfaction, productivity, and performance
Unpacking Supervisor Experience

RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY ONTARIO HUMAN CAPITAL AND INNOVATION FUND (2015-2016)
Context

- Tripartite co-op stakeholder model (see Coll & Zegwaard, 2006; Ferns & Zegwaard, 2014; Fleming & Martin, 2007)

- Benefits & challenges for stakeholders (Dressler & Keeling, 2011; Braunstein et al., 2011)

- Less research focusing on supervisors despite
  - Influence students’ learning and experience
  - Receive less formal training
  - Manage multiple demands

- How are supervisors experiencing WIL?
Methodology

• **Grounded Theory** (Charmaz, 2003, 2014)
  - Gather data ➔ code, classify & theorize ➔ review literature

• **Semi-structured interviews** \( n = 14 \) co-op supervisors

• Explored (1) perspectives, (2) challenges and obstacles, (3) success strategies
Emergent Themes

Onboarding & Training

Organizational Citizenship Behaviours

Perspectives:

(1) Pragmatic/functional

(2) Learning & development

(3) Mixed

Person-Organization Fit
Strategies

1. Use outgoing co-op students to support the onboarding of incoming co-op students.

2. Use *End of Term Presentations* to highlight students’ learning & development, and to identify areas for improvement.

3. Raise students’ awareness of: (1) employers’ perspectives on ROI, (2) the importance of OCBs, and (3) the importance of person-org “Fit”
Limitations and Future Research

• Limited generalizability across industries and types of work-integrated learning (WIL) – should expand

• Little previous research about supervision in WIL – should continue & confirm

• How might supervisors’ characteristics influence perspectives (i.e., learning vs. pragmatic) and how might this impact students’ experiences?
Ongoing Outreach

- Work-Integrated Learning Research Portal

- Monthly newsletter: Co-op Research Matters – email “subscribe” to watcace@uwaterloo.ca to get on our mailing list

- Research projects:
  - Universities as Talent Pipelines
  - Co-op and Entrepreneurship
  - Co-op Student Impact on Team Dynamics
  - Sustainability and WIL partnerships
CONTACT JUDENE PRETTI
Director
tjpretti@uwaterloo.ca