

# WatCACE Co-op Research Sampler

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**CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT  
OF CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION**

# 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

# OUTLINE

## **Subjective Well-being**

+ 5 minutes for questions

## **Unpacking the Supervisor Experience**

+ 5 minutes for questions

## **A Case Study**

+ 5 minutes for questions

## **Final Question Period**

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION  
INTERVIEWS AND STUDENT  
SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING**

# Subjective Well-being



- Subjective Well-being (SWB):
  - High satisfaction with life, high positive affect, and low negative affect
- Integrated framework: happiness comes from combination of pleasant and unpleasant moments and experiences; individual personality can impact perception
- Over 20% more first work term students unmatched after main round than total co-op students



## **Research Question:**

1. How does the main round job match effect SWB for first work-term students?
2. If there is an effect, what can be done?



## Participants

- **First work term students (Fall 2015)**
  - 2700 recruitment emails sent
  - 154 usable responses (~6% response rate)
  - 64% female, 36% male
  
- **First work term students (Winter 2016)**
  - 1741 recruitment emails sent
  - 119 usable responses (~7% response rate)
  - 40% female, 57% male

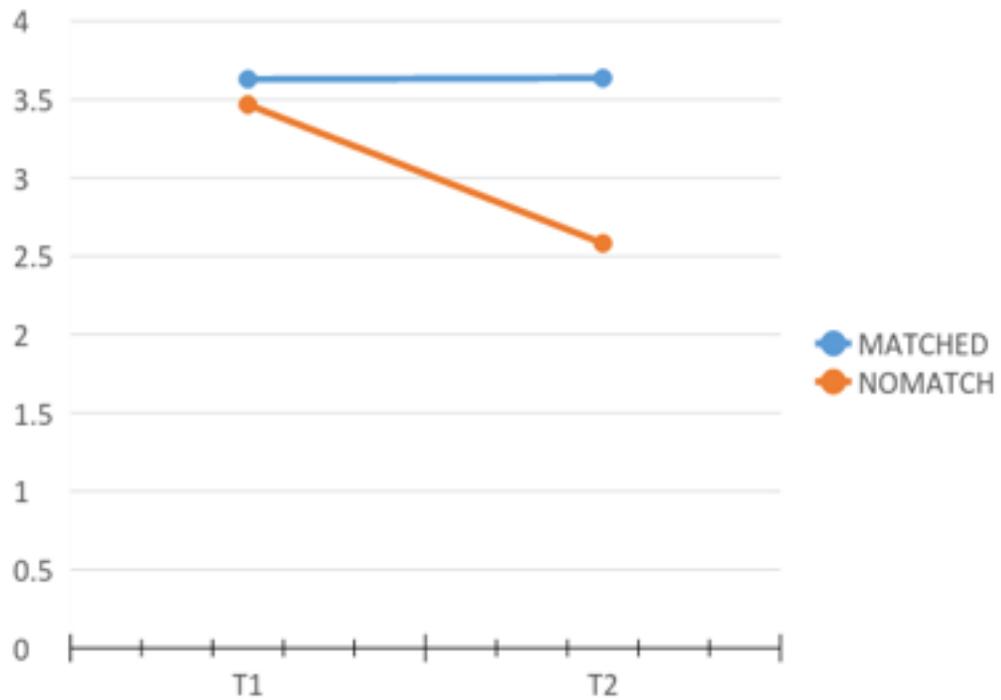
# The Study

## **Procedure: Five electronic surveys (self-report)**

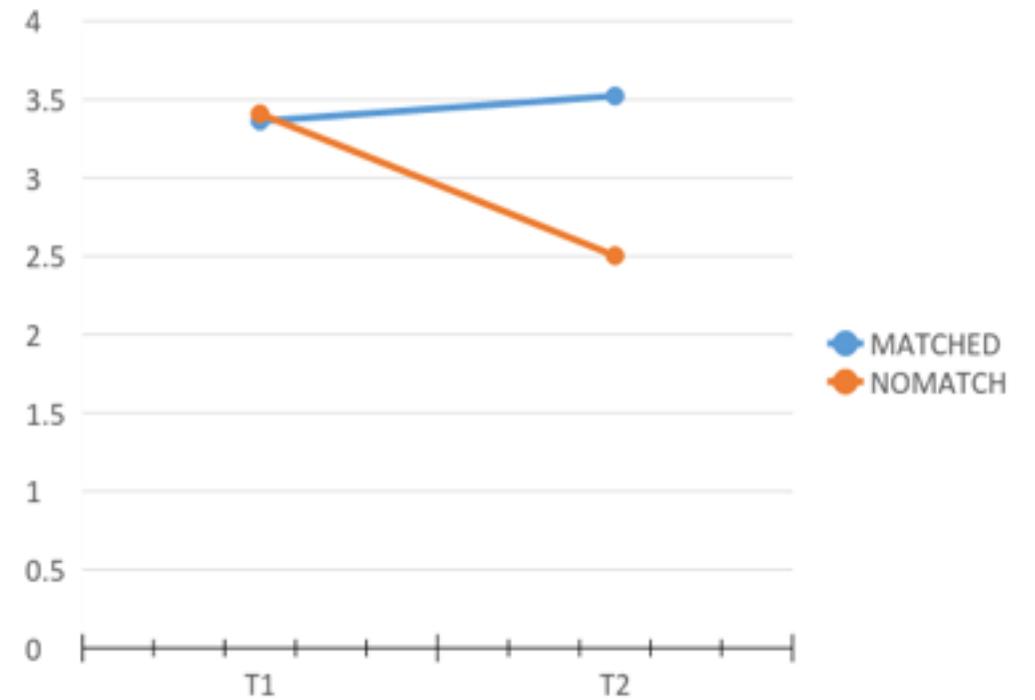
- T1: After main round interviews, before match
- T2: After match results
- Random assignment (intervention or control)
- T3: After being exposed to the intervention for one week (immediate post-test)
- T4: After having been off the intervention for one week (one week post-test)
- T5: After having been off the intervention for two weeks (two week post-test)

# Findings: Employment On Positive Affect

## Fall 2015

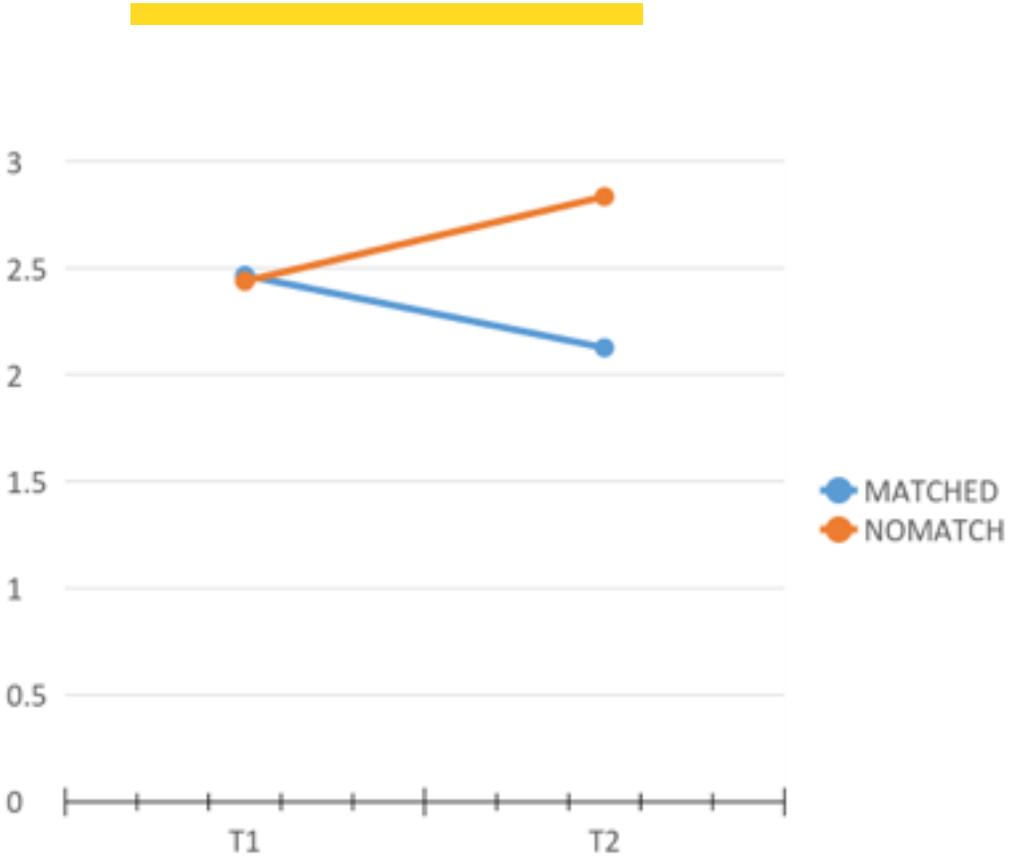


## Winter 2016

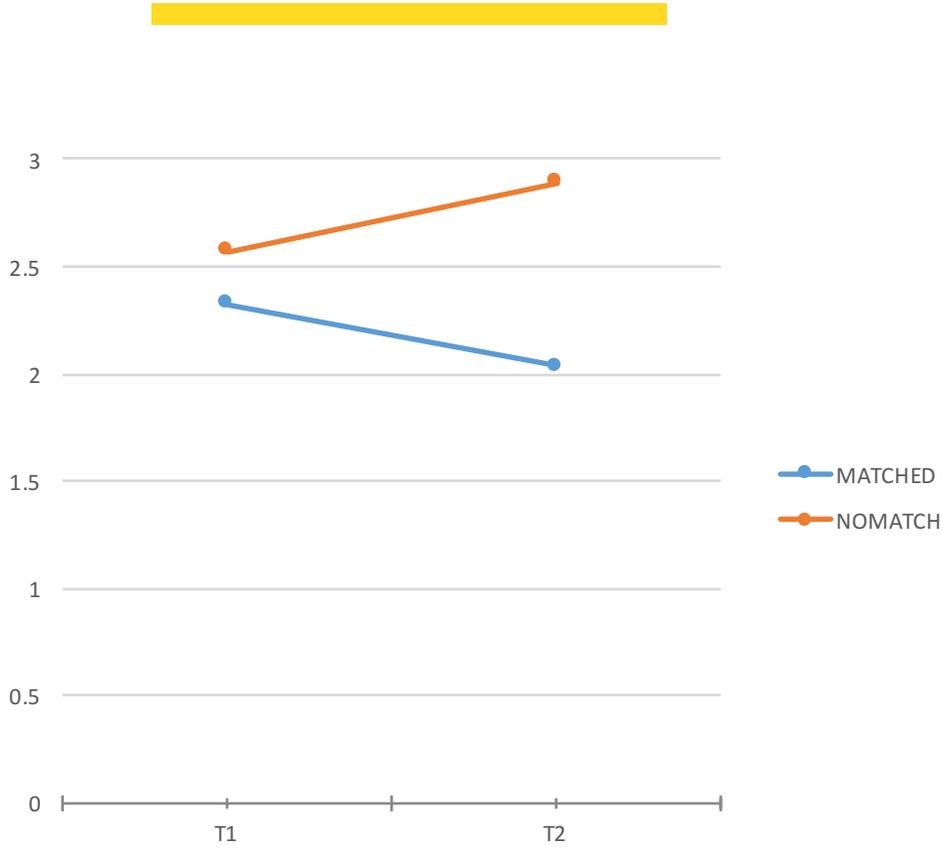


# Findings: Employment On Negative Affect

## Fall 2015

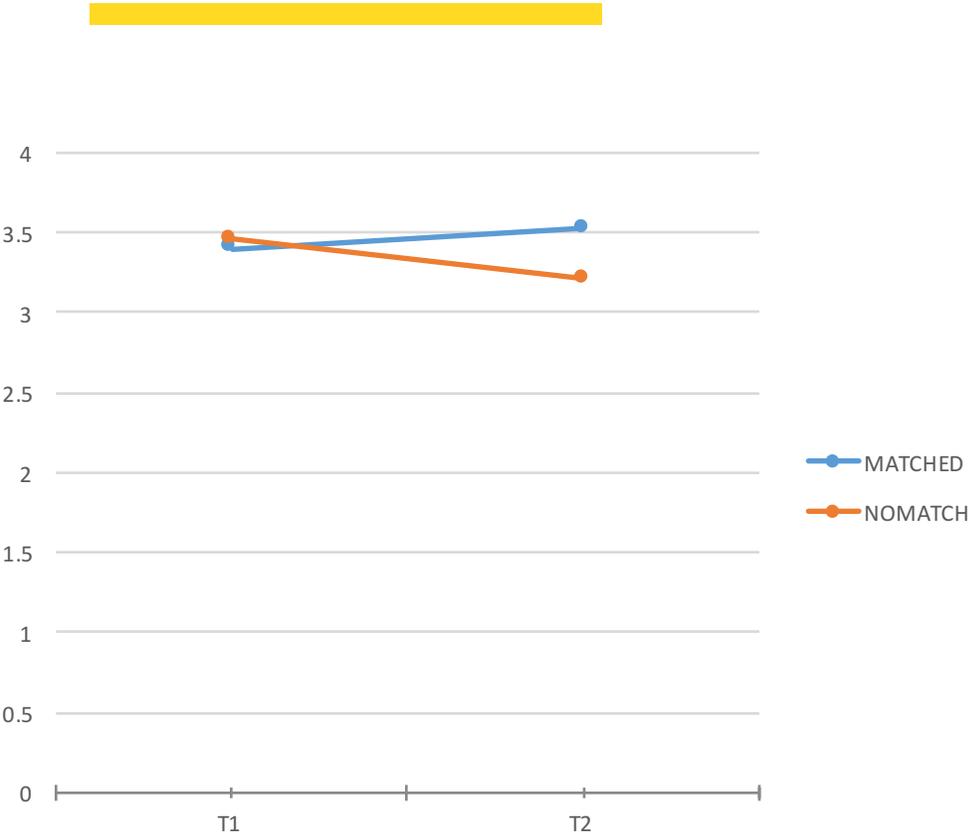


## Winter 2016

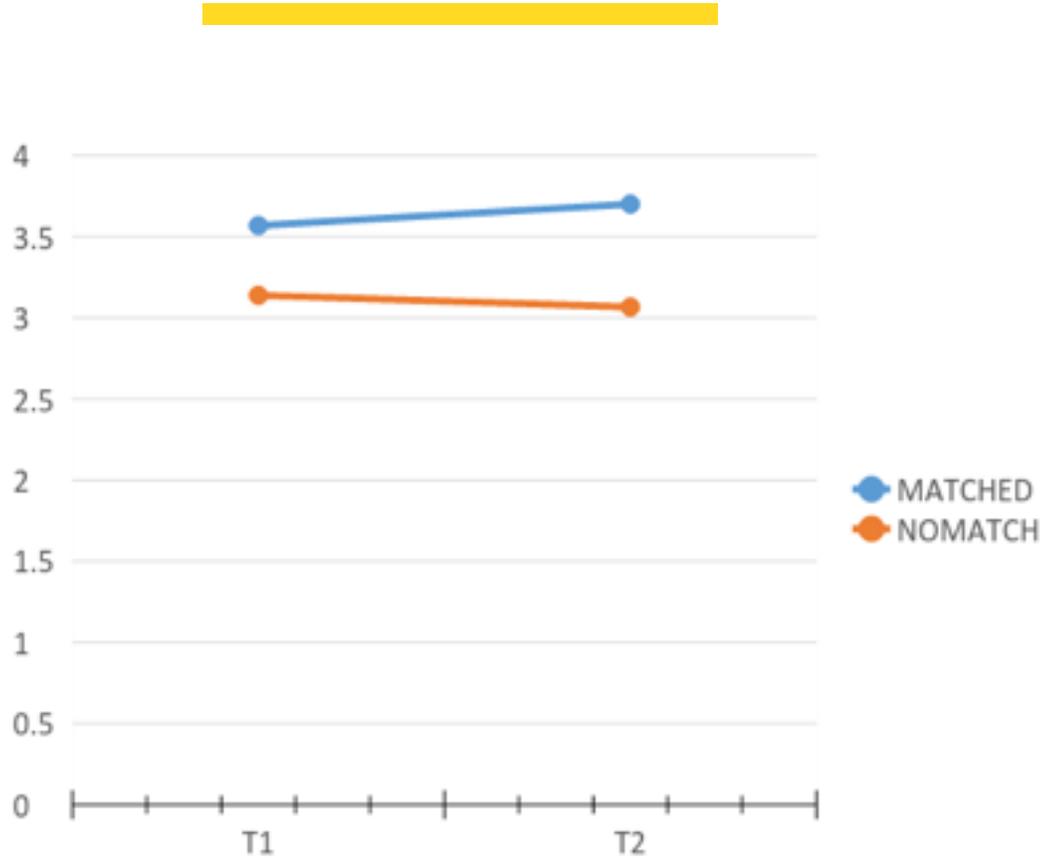


# Findings: Employment On Satisfaction With Life

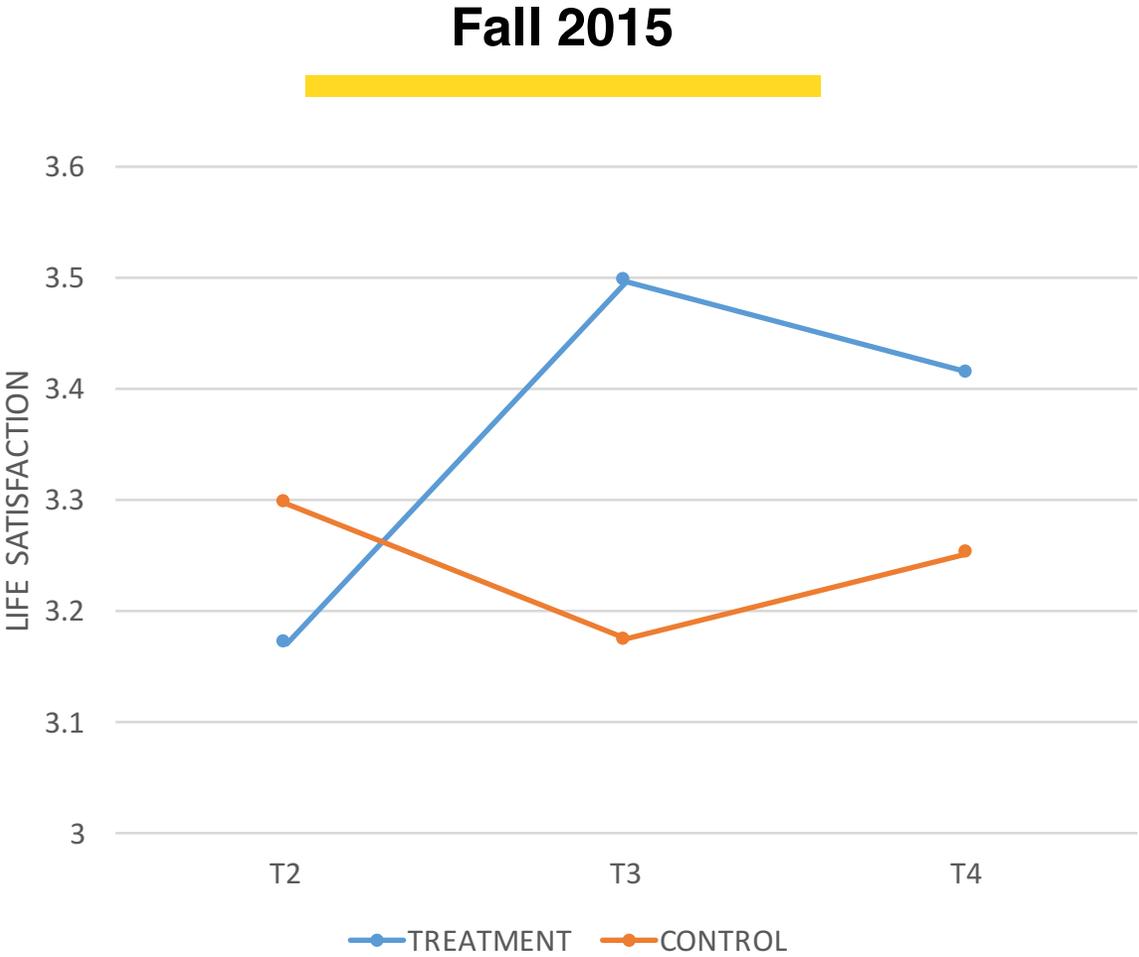
## Fall 2015



## Winter 2016

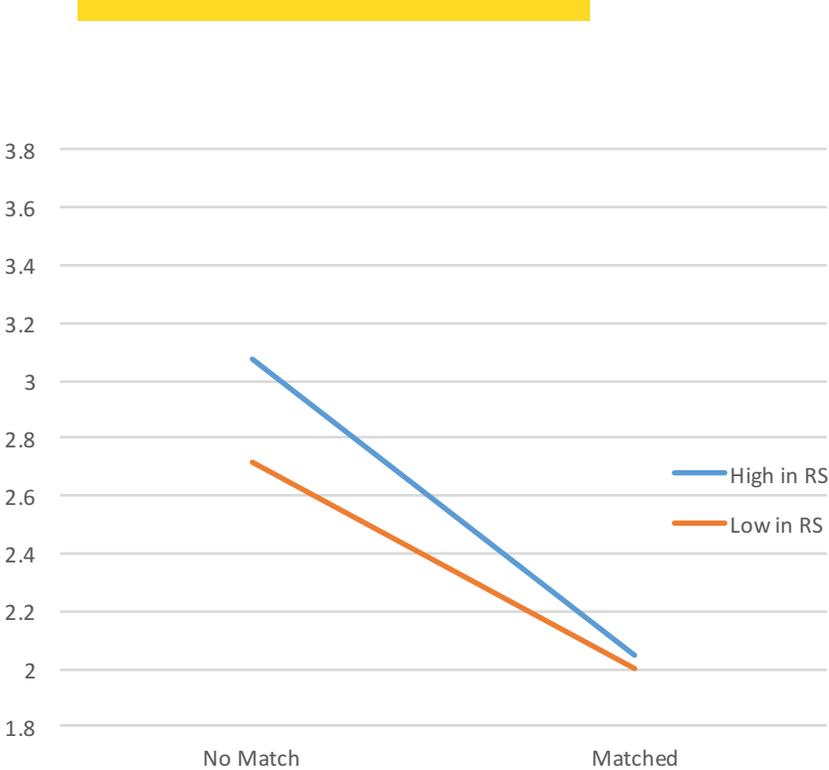


# Findings: Treatment On Life Satisfaction For Unmatched Students



# Findings: Rejection Sensitivity as a Potential Moderator On Negative Affect

## Fall 2015



## Winter 2016





## Implications

- **Unmatched students experience a drop in positive affect and life satisfaction, increase in negative affect**
  - Clear that this is an emotional experience
- **Unmatched students can be targeted more directly**
- **Interventions can be effective – more research to determine best path to take**
  - Test coping interventions to improve SWB after rejection/failure or buffer against low SWB after rejection/failure
- **Test effects of other possible moderating variables**
- **Improve awareness of counselling services/increase social support**

# QUESTIONS?



5 Minute Question Period

# UNPACKING SUPERVISOR EXPERIENCE\*

\* RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY ONTARIO HUMAN CAPITAL AND INNOVATION FUND



## Overview

- **Context**
- **Literature Review**
- **Methodology**
- **Themes Identified**
- **Implications and Next Steps**

# Context



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3 key stakeholder groups in a co-op system



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Significant research on benefits, challenges, and outcomes for students



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Some research on benefits and challenges for employers

# Literature Review

- **Within the co-op literature**
  - Abel & Love, 1988
  - Bartkus & Stull, 2001
  - Vaughn, 2014
- **Within the OB literature**
  - Beehr, 2006
  - Beehr, 1987



## Methodology

- **Semi-structured interview with 14 co-op supervisors**
- **Grounded theory approach Charmaz**
  - Transcripts reviewed separately by two RAs and the primary investigator
  - Concepts identified and grouped together which formed four main themes

# Employer Orientation Towards Co-op

**Pragmatic/functional**

**Learning/developmental**

**Mixed**



## 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

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End of Term  
Presentations  
(developmental  
perspective)

# 2

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

# 3

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Raise students'  
awareness of

- ROI for employer
- Importance of OCBs
- Connecting with  
colleagues (person-  
organization 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)

# QUESTIONS?



5 Minute Question Period

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION  
STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE AND  
SUCCESS: A CASE STUDY**

# Context

- Success of co-op depends upon mutual benefit to the student and the supervisor
- Certain workplace characteristics influence student satisfaction, performance, and learning (Crebert, 1995; McRae, 2015)
- Little work has been done on how the supervisor can modify the environment to maximize benefits for the student and the supervisor
- The current case examines a particularly successful co-op workplace



## THE CASE

- Health-related organization that hires co-op students from the University of Waterloo
- Students are hired in their first or second work term and remain there for all of their remaining work terms
- A junior and senior student work together concurrently
- While working there, students conduct research and have the opportunity to publish research articles, book chapters, and textbooks, and attend conferences
- The vast majority of these students go on to medical school

# Themes



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## Motivation and internalization

“He expected a lot from us even though we were just students. That meant a lot because you knew someone was trusting in the work you were doing and saw that you could actually contribute something”



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## Commitment

“After my first term I was like, ‘I don’t think there’s a better place or a better coop job to have where I would be getting the kind of experience that I wanted to get’”

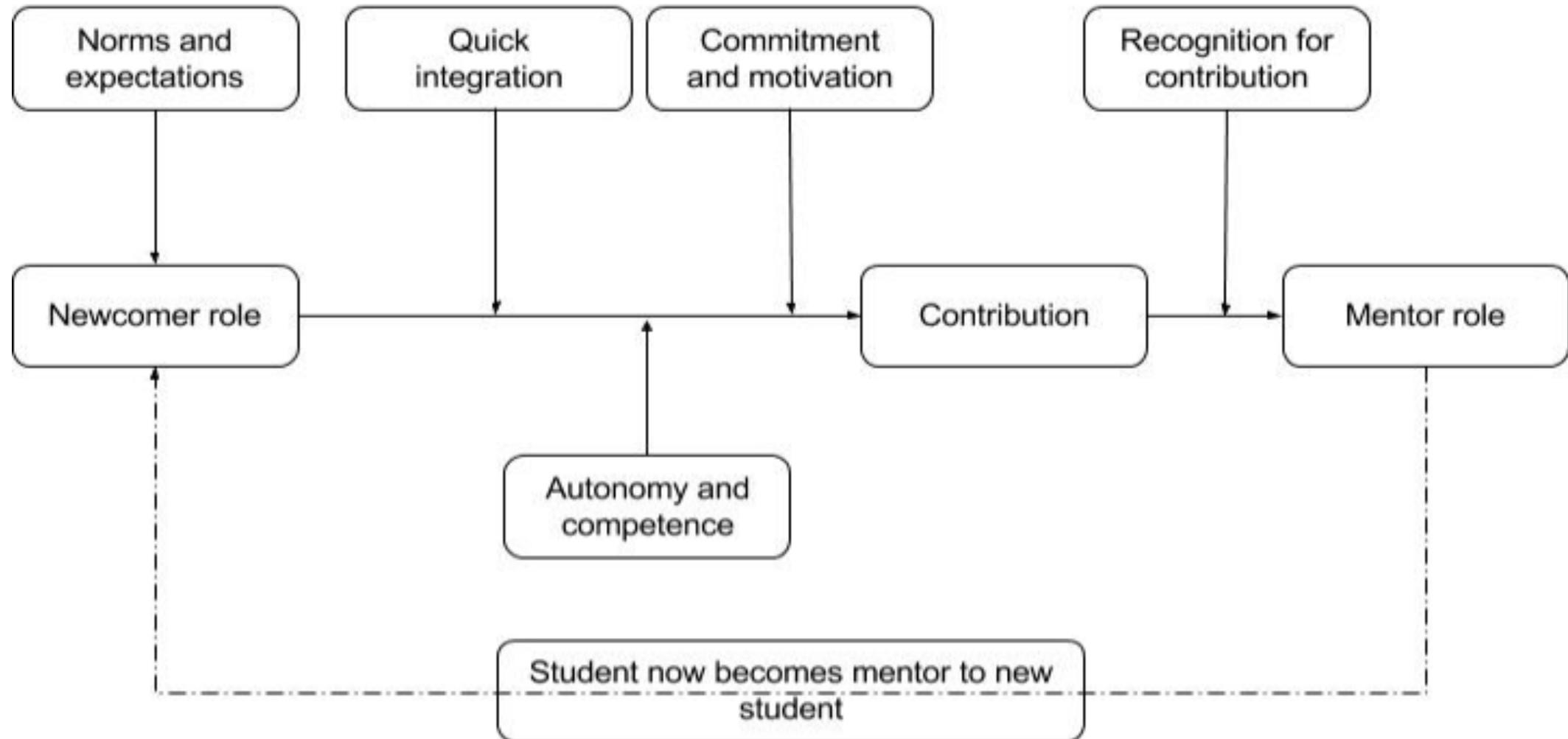


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## Mentorship

“I would describe [supervisor] as my mentor and I always say this but I don’t believe I would be where I am right now if I didn’t have that mentor and my relationship with him”

# Model



# QUESTIONS?



5 Minute Question Period

# YOUR FEEDBACK



## WITH THE PERSON BESIDE YOU:

- What would you like to know more about?
- What surprised you?
- What are the implications for your institution?

# THANK YOU!

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