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The Process of Designing and Analysing a Qualitative Study into Multiple WIL Experiences
Overview

• Background research
• Evolvement of the design process
• Analysis process
• Implications for the facilitation of Teaching and Learning
• Conclusions
The Research Team

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Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
The Search for Perfect WIL Model

Researchers sensitive to range factors
• Model that dovetails with ever changing student needs
• Best chances of subsequent employment
• Reasonable administrative overheads
Baseline Research

• Drysdale’s major International study explores psychological factors related to WIL (Drysdale et al., 2011).

• University of Huddersfield formed part of this study.

• Our initial analysis suggested, the more WIL experiences, the more hope, agency and intrinsic goal motivation reported (Purdie et al., 2011)

• This study aims to tease out experiential details of learning on placement, draw strategic implications for the sector.
UK Models of WIL

- UoH ‘all course have work related elements’ (UoH, 2008)
- UK fees now £9000
- Sandwich fees viable – Wilson suggests £1000
- Sandwich degree
  - work experience sandwiched inside academic studies
- Short placements: History, Community Studies
- Professional placements
  - Workplace mentor
  - Match student learning outcomes with available placements
The Qualitative Project

- Most qualitative research discipline specific
- This research over a range of disciplines
- Not role specific placement
- Aim broad aspects of
  - Personal development
  - Learning
  - Sense of progression across work placements
Design Process – Focus Group and PCP

• Aimed focus group, identify common issues
• Project objectives incompatible with RA short contract
• Instead Kelly’s Repertory Grid (Fransella, 2005) based on Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1995)
• Investigates how individuals make sense of the world and their identity. Participants asked to consider:
  – Work characteristics of colleagues
  – His/her own characteristics
  – Points along placement journey
• Outcome: few links made, little about relational aspects
Design Process Salmon Line to Placement Timeline

- Salmon Line (King & Horrocks, 2010)
- Single line between 2 concepts to facilitate reflection on how progression occurs from one concept to another.
- Developed this to include temporal aspects of learning from multiple placements: a line labelled ‘before placement’ and ‘after placement’
- Called ‘Placement Timeline’
- Successful in eliciting data addressing the project aims.
PLACEMENT TIMELINE

Method

Significant moments in learning and personal development

Episodes of work experience/placements, in chronological order

Before placement(s)

After placement(s)
What does the placement timeline do?

- **Before placements**: Allows the consideration of work experiences outside of the university degree.
- **After placements**: Helps students think about how they have changed.
- **Facilitates comparing/contrasting of different work experiences, and making links between them.**
- **Encourages elaboration on aspects of learning and personal development.**
- **Facilitates thinking about the progression of skills and abilities across time.**
- **Helps students think about the bigger picture, and how their experiences fit together.**
Analysis

- Semi-structured interviews can yield large volumes of textual data
- Thematic analysis, looks for patterns
- Template analysis (King, 2012)
- Accommodates a priori focus i.e.
  - overarching issues of learning and personal development
  - Shared by students across diverse subject areas.
Template Analysis

- Develop coding structure (template) from initial transcripts
- Applied to subsequent interview data
- Modified as new themes or subtleties come to light
- Focus on overall issues – not job specific roles
- Details coded as low level themes
- Subsumed in higher level themes as analysis progresses.
- Allows research teams to share early findings.
Example Templates

- Show in word
Implications

• Purpose: explore how multiple WIL impacts on the student learning experience.
• Soft skills development on WIL
• Findings now about advocating change to WIL models
  – Principles and practicalities developed over many years
• Challenge teaching and learning practitioners to consider our research when planning WIL delivery


We are grateful to Dr. Maureen Drysdale at the University of Waterloo, Canada for conceptualizing the quantitative project, providing the compiled questionnaire with their research design, and for our inclusion in the international Work Integrated Learning project of which our previous study forms a part.
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