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Lisa Ward, Head of Teaching and Learning Institute

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

Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
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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Prof Nigel King  
Director of Centre for Applied Psychological Research

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Senior Lecturer Psychology

Research Assistants
Fiona Purdie (Phase II)
/Alison Bravington (Phase II)
Background

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
• 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.
Significant moments in learning and personal development

Episodes of work experience/placements, in chronological order
What does the placement time do?

- **Encourages elaboration on aspects of learning and personal development.**
  - Before placements:
    - Work self-oriented only.
  - After placements:
    - Encourages thinking about the progression of skills and abilities across time.
    - Helps students think about how they have changed.

- **Facilitates thinking about the progression of skills and abilities across time.**
  - Before placements:
    - Work self-oriented only.
  - After placements:
    - Helps students think about the bigger picture, and how their experiences fit together.

- **Facilitates comparing/contrasting of different work experiences, and making links between them.**
  - Helps students think about the progression of skills and abilities across time.
  - Encourages thinking about the progression of skills and abilities across time.

- **Allows the consideration of work experiences outside of the university degree.**
  - Provides a platform for students to reflect on their experiences in a broader context.
  - Helps students integrate their learning from various placements.

- **I think it's where I begin to learn to manage patients, and learn to manage myself, rather than just strings back... and just wanting. Just wanting to take a step, really. It's what you have to do.**
  - Helps students reflect on their learning processes.

- **I've got fantastic feedback. I think its the best one is the aid it was hardening, that's what he called me, refreshing, it was an assistant that was unwise and I needed to, and I asked the hard questions about my feelings.**
  - Helps students reflect on their feelings and experiences.

- **I'd sort of worked as a carer before, I was sort of ready for something.**
  - Helps students think about their past experiences and how they relate to their current placements.

- **My community placement showed me the reality of what I didn't like.**
  - Helps students reflect on their preferences and values.

- **Ward 10 Surgical, Ward 10 General.**
  - Helps students think about the different environments they work in.

- **Intensive Care Unit, Ward 10 Surgical, Ward 10 General.**
  - Helps students reflect on the diversity of healthcare settings.

- **It's only now that I'm a student that I realise that it didn't really work historically, it wasn't very task-oriented.**
  - Helps students reflect on the evolution of healthcare practices.
• Semi-structured interviews can yield large volumes 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


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