University of Huddersfield Repository

Ward, Lisa J., Bravington, Alison, McAdie, Tina M. and King, Nigel

Challenges of Developing and Sustaining a Research Partnership for Work Integrated Learning

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/18211/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Developing and Sustaining a Placement Research Partnership for Work Integrated Learning
Overview

- Why research WIL?
- Early approaches to WIL research
- Our research journey – getting started through to building knowledge
- Discussion: Research design, developing resources, cross boundary working
- Conclusions
Why research WIL?

• Work Integrated Learning (WIL) broadly defined as educational activities that integrate theoretical learning with its application in the workplace (Cooper et al., 2010)
• UK context tuition fee reforms (Browne, 2010)
• Universities challenged to design programmes which give the skills, knowledge and experience to increase employability (Bates, 2008)
• UK CIM Survey 75% failures in education contributing to a skills crisis (Woodman & Hutchins, 2011)
Early approaches to WIL research

• I first encountered WIL research in 2007 WACE Singapore.
• Zerwaard reported, up to 1997 WIL research had been ‘limited, uncertain and sparse’ (Zegwaard & Coll, 2007)
• ‘What has been published is good’ (Bartkus & Stull, 2004)
• WIL research now diverse and multidisciplinary, recognition for the potential of WIL as pedagogical philosophy, rather than model of links between education and work (Kjellen, 2010)
This Millennium

- Choices of methodology: demonstrable quality and potential conflict with practitioner researcher
- And articulating the philosophical underpinnings and appropriate research design (Coll & Chapman, 2000)
- Beyond the JCEI, main problem lack of quantitative research, accuracy in methods (convenience sampling) (Bartkus, 2007)
- Coll & Kalnin (2009) reinforced that research should be grounded in theory
The Future

- Two re-invigorated journals
  - JCEI
  - APJCE
- WACE Research Communities
- National Research Communities
  - UK ASET Practice and Research Network
Our research journey – my journey

- Systems engineer, operational and service management in public and private sector, different careers
- Salaries, jobs, degree classifications (Ward, 2006)
- Student Placement Journeys: students, employers and tutors (Ward & Gaffikin, 2007 to 2009)
- Meet with Drysdale, WACE 2010, Graz. Subsequently joined the international research project
- 2010 Director of ASET – International Placements and Collaborations
- 2013 Co-chair ASET Research and Practice Group
The UK Research Team

Prof. Nigel King
Director of CAPR HHS

Lisa Ward
Head of T&L Institute

Dr Tina McAdie
Senior Lecturer in Psychology, HHS

Fiona Purdie
Research Assistant, HHS

Alison Bravington
Our research journey – UK Research Team

- Literature on limitations of practitioner researchers
- Find experienced local research partners
  - Professor - with expertise in Qualitative Methods
  - Senior Lecturer / Researcher with expertise in Quantitative Methods
  - Note, no tenure in UK universities
- Successful bid to Innovation Fund
  - RA for 40 days ‘Are placement students better psychologically prepared for life and work?’
Our research journey
Challenges

- University bureaucracy – 6 months for approval to start
- Strong field
- Short term contracts -> staff turnover -> RA leaving
- Steering group: careers and SU
- Research ethics, delays
- On-line survey design, marketing campaign balanced with lit review – multi-tasking
- Analysis very tight
- Publication simultaneous (condition of funding)
First Phase – Quantitative Study Results

- 716 undergraduate responses to on-line study
- UK Students who pursue WIL compared to non-WIL peers have
  - Sig higher hope
  - Sig higher confidence in attaining goals
  - Lower test anxiety
- Multiple experiences of WIL
  - As above plus academic self-efficacy
Second Phase – Qualitative Study

- Innovation Funding, ‘The More the Merrier: A qualitative examination of the contribution of multiple WIL experiences to student learning, personal development and preparation for employment.’

- A new RA for 40 days, project underway.
Discussion: Research design

- Mixed methods. The first and second stages of our project fit neatly together
- The quantitative study informs the qualitative study
- Quantitative study – overview of psychological factors
- Large sample size in UK
- Trial interviews developing methods
- Current research underway
Discussion: Developing Resources

• Sustainability of the project is a major issue
• Busy day jobs
• Continuity of team members
• Efforts to find further sources of funding
• Bid writing – matching criteria
• Research Assistants
  – Helps publications
  – Knowledge goes away with them
  – Stop / go project

Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>Year Two</th>
<th>Year Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Phase 1 RA recruitment</td>
<td>ASET bursary application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Phase 2 bid-writing &amp; review</td>
<td>Await Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Internal recruitment processes</td>
<td>Internal recruitment processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Phase 2 RA recruitment</td>
<td>PHASE 1: SURVEY STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>PHASE 2: INTERVIEW STUDY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1:** Developing and sustaining the research project.
• ‘Boundary spanning is an area of theory and practice with great applicability to a better understanding of the activity of WIL departments’ (Peach et al., 2011)
• Boundary spanning can be applied to research partnerships bridging local and international boundaries
• Reflects importance of collaboration and dissemination
• Towards shared understanding and new ideas
Conclusions

• Taken on board the lessons from the literature
• Multi-disciplinary, multi-method nature of WIL research
• Heart of the process
  – Research quality
  – Partnerships
  – Dissemination
• Sustainability – challenges
  – RA turnover
  – Bidding for funding
ACEN Conference October 2012

Designing a Qualitative Study into Multiple Work Integrated Learning Experiences


Selected References (2)

Lisa Ward BSc MSc FHEA
Head of Teaching and Learning Institute
University Teaching Fellow
University of Huddersfield
Room CS10/19
Tel: 0044 1484 47 1578
Email: L.ward@hud.ac.uk