Reflections on Implementing a new WIL Programme

-in a provincial NZ Tertiary Institution

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Centre for Business, IT and Enterprise (CBITE), Wintec
Background to WIL at Wintec

- CBITE Business Programmes
  - Bachelor of Applied Management
    - 46% International Students (50 placements across 2016)
  - Graduate Diploma in Applied Management
    - 86% International students (156 placements across 2016)
  - Part of a national consortium of polytechnics
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- Hamilton
  - Population of 150 000

- Wintec
  - Competition for placements
  - International agreements
Co-operative Education Project (CEP) and Industry Project (IP) involve:

- a work placement organised in collaboration with the Industry Relationship Manager
- a research project under Academic Supervision

CEP and IP form 3 or 4 papers in the final semester of academic study.
WIL Theoretical Underpinnings
- 3 way cooperative partnership that gives rise to

Benefits to students:
- Soft and generic skill development
- Workplace awareness (career path confirmation)
- Improved motivation and satisfaction with studies

Benefits to Employers:
- A reduction in the expectation gap (skill set required v skill set demonstrated)
- Potential lower staff turnover
- Access to new graduates

Benefits to Academic Institutions and Staff:
- Engagement with industry - currency
- Positive influence on student recruitment, retention and satisfaction
- Research opportunities
Student issues that have arisen

- Ethnic diversity in student population
  - 3 cohorts - different cultural backgrounds and awareness of the WIL process & what work means
  - Different academic backgrounds (often with little understanding of research)
  - Expectations of a job at end / “working visa”
- Difficulty in finding a placement
- Difficulty in adapting to an Independent learning environment (workload/time)
- The dilemma of low achieving students
Employer Issues:

- Insufficient number of employer providers
- Reluctance to hire given levels of English language
- Cost of the time commitment
Educational Institution Issues:

- Under-estimation of teacher workloads
- Teaching space requirements
- Requirements for high levels of planning
- Teaching confidence/uncertainty around
  - WIL theory
- New teaching practices [scheduling, student engagement, assessment (relative level & size), moderation, operating outside discipline comfort]
- Institution co-operation with consortium WIL partners
Strategies used to overcome issues:

Students

Independent learning:
- Delivery style and assessments in previous courses

Academic background:
- Separating the paper for the Graduate Diploma students:
  1. Building work readiness and research skills
  2. Placement and project

Work experience
- Conducting formal Interviews with all students
- Broadening opportunities by allowing students to complete the placement in any organisation
Strategies for employer relationships

- Overcoming reluctance
  - Developing relationships
  - Using Employer Partnership Groups

- Showing language skills
  - Creating a student conference
Strategies for CBITE and staff

Rooms and workload are an ongoing issue

- **Developing confidence**
  - Best practice sessions
  - Moderation

- **Planning**
  - Brief fortnightly meetings
  - Workshops at the end of the semester
Reflections: Students

- As the theory suggests, we see evidence of student growth
  - Engaged, hard working students
    - “I’ve never worked harder in a paper”
    - “I just didn’t realise the size of the project”
  - Improved soft skills – communication/confidence
  - Career path confirmation
  - Uptake of reflective practice techniques
  - Employment opportunities/rewards have arisen for students
Reflections: Employers

- Repeat uptake of students by employers
- Some flattering comments
  - Acceptance of Wintec as an organisation of value
  - Admiration of students
- Time requirement for wider staff engagement with employers
Reflections: Academic Institutions and Staff

- Increased engagement and collaboration amongst staff and across Wintec support services
  - Constant engagement in discussion around
    - Teaching Practice/Research/Assessment/Reflection and Review
    - Meetings attended with enthusiasm
- Taking our experience to the classroom
- Opportunities for research
Where there's a WIL there's a way

Greater collaboration in future

Willingness to listen and share

Engagement of students, staff and industry

Engagement with staff

Collaboration among staff
References:


