

Reflections on Implementing a new WIL Programme

-in a provincial NZ Tertiary Institution

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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

WIL options at Wintec

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

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- 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 a 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:

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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

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- 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

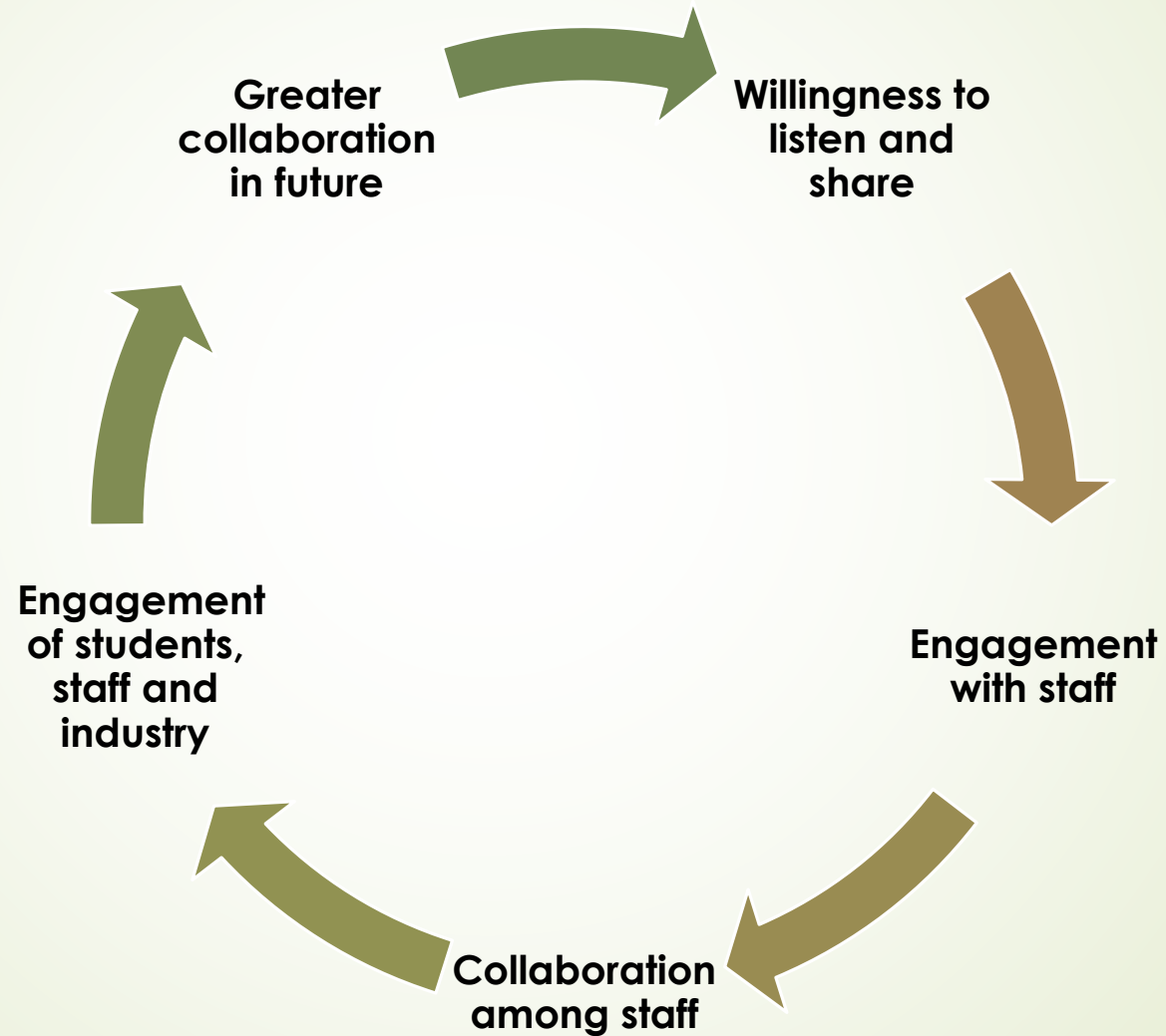
Reflections: Employers

- 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



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