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**Work Integrated Learning (WIL) practitioners' perceptions of the value
of
Communities of Practice.**

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degree of**

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Abstract

Work integrated learning (WIL) practitioners design and deliver situated, experiential learning opportunities for a growing number of programmes within the New Zealand tertiary sector. Professional development opportunities for WIL practitioners' should lead to effectively designed and delivered WIL programmes for learners. Due to the limited availability of formal professional development opportunities, much of WIL practitioner development is through informal and incidental on-the-job learning (Lazarus, Oloroso, & Howison, 2011). Greater collaborative learning opportunities have been advocated as beneficial by the WIL community (Brown, 2010). In addition, professional development initiatives are increasingly focusing on Communities of Practice (CoP) to support situated learning for educators. The pressure on teachers required to design, teach, administer and manage WIL experiences, raises issues of how best to develop and support them in effectively fulfilling their roles.

This qualitative study explores and interprets the experiences and perceptions of WIL practitioners of the value of communities of practice. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. A recursive approach to the data collection and analysis stages (an adaption of the Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011) five cycles of value creation framework) was adopted.

The study findings indicate a lack of common understanding of WIL terminology, and that WIL practitioners want greater access to WIL networks, expertise, best practice and related policy information. The many and varied relationships of WIL practitioners, provide inherent values, upon which to benchmark and develop their practices. However, the invisible nature of many WIL activities, hidden within programmes, makes it difficult at times for WIL practitioners to identify each other, connect in networks and develop relationships. WIL practitioners want more collaborative learning opportunities and sharing of best practice resources. In spite of this, WIL practitioners are seeking out expertise that assists them to be more competent, knowledgeable and effective practitioners.

The study has highlighted that WIL practitioners are engaging in, and gaining value from, the very same process of learning within CoPs, that they co-ordinate for their students. WIL CoPs are valuable mechanisms for WIL practitioner development that should be acknowledged and encouraged.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vi
Glossary.....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to this study.....	1
1.2 Context.....	3
1.3 Research aim and questions.....	3
1.4 Outline of the methodology.....	4
1.5 Significance of this research.....	4
1.6 Overview of the thesis.....	5
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Work integrated learning (WIL) -Experiential learning.....	6
2.3 Defining WIL.....	8
2.4 WIL practitioners' development.....	12
2.5 Collaborative Knowledge Building in WIL.....	15
2.6 Learning in the workplace and Communities of Practice (CoP).....	17
2.7 Measuring value creation in COPs.....	21
2.8 Considering online CoPs.....	22
2.9 WIL Networks and Associations.....	23
2.10 Conclusions and research questions.....	24
Chapter Three Methodology.....	26
3.1 Introduction.....	26
3.2 Research Approach.....	26
3.3 Method of data collection.....	27
3.4 Ethical considerations.....	28
3.5 Research procedures.....	31
3.6 Data analysis.....	32
3.7 Trustworthiness of the research.....	35

3.8 Conclusion	35
Chapter Four: Findings from the practitioner interviews	36
4.1 Introduction to the participants and their WIL contexts	36
4.2 Key themes emerging from the interviews.....	38
4.3 WIL Terminology – common language	39
4.4 The WIL community of practice– relationships and value of involvement	42
4.5 The WIL domain-pedagogy and policy.....	52
4.6 The WIL practitioner- Personal and professional development	58
4.7 Conclusion.....	60
Chapter Five: Discussion	62
5.1 Introduction	62
5.2 WIL Terminology – common language	62
5.3 WIL community of practice – relationships and value of involvement	66
5.4 The WIL domain-pedagogy and policy.....	70
5.5 The WIL practitioner- Personal and professional development	77
Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations	83
6.1 Introduction	83
6.1 Conclusions from the study	83
6.2 Recommendations	84
6.3 Limitations and further research	85
References.....	86
Appendix A: Interview questions	94
Appendix B: Ethics Notification.....	95
Appendix C: Information Sheet.....	96
Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement	97
Appendix E: Request for participants	98

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: The main stages of the research process	27
Figure 4.1: Key themes emerging from participant interviews	39
Figure 4.2: Terms used during the interviews	40
Figure 4.3: WIL practitioner relationships and networks	44
Figure 4.4: Perceptions of value gained from the connections and relationships	47
Figure 4.5 The WIL Domain- pedagogy and policy	52

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Characteristics of CoPs	20
Table 2.2 Value creation framework	21
Table 3.1: First set of initial codes- value related	33
Table 3.2: Second set of initial codes- other themes and concepts	33
Table 3.3: Initial themes and sub-themes identified	34
Table 4.1: An overview of the participants and their WIL experiences	38
Table 5.1: Taxonomy of work integrated learning	65

Glossary

Community of practice (CoP)

A learning partnership including the collective intention to steward a domain of knowledge and to sustain learning about it; used interchangeably with community.

Cooperative education

A structured educational programme which combines classroom learning with productive, relevant work experience. Term inter-changeable with WIL.

Industry project

An academic assessment that requires the student to work on an industry related issue, in collaboration with an industry partner.

Internship

A temporary placement within a profession, normally as part of a programme of learning. Can be paid or unpaid.

Network

A set of relationships, personal interactions, and connections among participants who have personal reasons to connect.

Placement/Practicum

A type of work integrated learning that requires the student to be situated in the workplace

Value creation

The perceived worth of the learning enabled by community of practice and networking involvement

Work integrated learning (WIL)

An umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum

Work experience

Often used in the secondary system to denote time spend experiencing work as part of the career development process

Chapter One: Introduction

Work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences are increasingly offered within programmes of learning. Consequentially, teachers are increasingly required to design, teach, administer and manage WIL experiences. This raises issues of how best to develop and support WIL practitioners to effectively fulfil their roles. This study explores practitioners' perceptions of their experiences of communities of practice (CoP), in supporting their roles in work-integrated learning (WIL). This opening chapter provides a background to the research before presenting the research questions and an overview to the study.

1.1 Background to this study

Work- integrated learning is widely used by tertiary institutes to enhance graduate skills, attributes and employability. In fact, some tertiary institutes are rebranding their organisations around the WIL agenda (McLennan & Keating, 2008). Within New Zealand, the Tertiary Education Commission requires institutes to provide learning environments that simulate the workplace, involve project based learning on real problems, or to create internships, whilst also tracking post-study outcomes to inform further programme development (TEC, 2014, p. 12).

WIL falls under the field of educational theory classed as experiential learning (Orrell, 2011). WIL experiences are recognised under multiple guises (work placements, practicums, internships) internationally (Baker, 2014; Coll, et al., 2009), each of which have their own definition, causing confusion amongst practitioners (Brown, 2010; Patrick et al., 2008). WIL is commonly acknowledged as a structured student learning experience based on a tripartite collaboration between the student, the academic institute and an employer (Orrell, 2011; Martin, Rees, & Edwards, 2011a). Yet, due to the growth in the use of WIL to enhance graduate employability (Baker, 2014; Brimble & Freudenberg, 2010) an increase has been experienced in institute created terms and branding to differentiate WIL experiences (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011a). This complexity of terms is impacting on WIL stakeholders. The term *WIL* is now utilised as an overarching term that encompasses varying terminology and practices (Patrick et al., 2008). Defining features of WIL are:

“exposure to a professional and relevant workplace (community of practice), of a duration alongside practitioners long enough for enculturation to occur, where the tasks undertaken are authentic, relevant, meaningful and purposeful, where

students are able to learn the workplace norms, culture, and understand/ develop professional identify, and integrating that knowledge into their on-campus learning” (Coll & Zegwaard, 2012, p.43).

WIL practitioners operate at the interface between academia and industry requiring them to possess a wide range of technical and behavioural skills (McLennan & Keating, 2008). Professional development of skills for WIL practitioners is a critical element in effective WIL programme delivery (Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010; Patrick & Kay, 2011). Institutions normally do not provide professional development opportunities for WIL practitioners, instead relying on individuals to locate resources and colleagues to foster self-development (Lazarus, Oloroso, & Howison, 2011). However, on-the-job learning and collaborative knowledge building have been identified as particularly important to WIL practitioners (Patrick et al., 2008; Brown, 2010). Yet many WIL practitioners operate in isolation (Lazarus et al., 2011).

Informal learning from others has been acknowledged as a valuable mechanism for professional development. Wenger’s (1999) concept of situational learning is entitled *Communities of Practice (CoP)*. CoPs are “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 1999, p.4). The early educational examples are apprenticeships, newcomers learning from old-timers, as they are allowed greater participation in the community by undertaking greater and more complex tasks (Kimble, Hildreth, & Bourdon, 2008; St. Clair, 2008). CoPs are important to learning within all organisations. In essence WIL practitioners are designing and delivering situated learning experiences for their students.

Viskovic (2005) discusses the link between teacher professional development and situated learning within a community of practice (CoP), claiming that this style of learning is likely to be the future mainstay of tertiary teacher development. Learning within communities of practice provides a framework for integrating different levels and forms of support for tertiary teachers (Viskovic, 2005). In reality, WIL practitioners are also participants in the exact same situated learning process they manage for their students. This time the experiential learning experience is their own, as they participate in WIL CoPs. Little is known about the perceptions of WIL practitioners’ towards participation and learning in WIL CoPs. This exploratory study intends to provide further insight in this area.

1.2 Context

My interest in WIL and communities of practice stems from my experience teaching in a range of vocational institutes following a career as an industry immersed trainer within the food safety and hospitality management fields. My views are that student learning is more effective when contextualised and authentic tasks are provided. Instrumental to my view is that experiential learning should include a level of 'designed' reflection in order to maximise the effectiveness. This realisation led me to consider the context and content of many WIL experiences, and the knowledge base of those designing and delivering them. This thesis provides an opportunity to investigate further the value of learning from others for WIL practitioners within a New Zealand context.

The research takes place within two large urban Institutes of Technology, within New Zealand, offering programmes from NZQA level 3 Certificate to Masters Degrees. Both institutes advertise that they place substantial emphasis on offering *applied* and industry integrated qualifications. Many teaching staff join the institutes following, or in conjunction with, a successful career as an industry specific professional.

1.3 Research aim and questions

The aim of the study is to understand the benefits of communities of practice to WIL practitioners.

Main research question:

What are practitioners' perceptions of the value of communities of practice to support their role in WIL?

Sub-questions:

What are practitioners' experiences in teaching Work Integrated Learning?

What are practitioners' experiences of collaborating and learning with/ from others in relation to teaching WIL?

Where do practitioners go for guidance in relation to teaching WIL?

1.4 Outline of the methodology

This exploratory study, sought to interpret and understand the perceptions of practitioners towards their past experiences of WIL communities of practice. An interpretive approach was used, that acknowledges the researcher plays a role in the interpretation of the participants' perspectives, understanding the social realities of the individuals, and they too bring their own perspective as they try to make sense of the data (Bryman, 2008). This qualitative methodology, focusing on discovery and insight of the perspectives of others, offers great opportunities to add to the knowledge base of educational practice (Merriam, 1998). The study employed a recursive approach to the data collection and analysis stages, allowing these stages to proceed in tandem. This type of study approach allows the researcher flexibility. Patterns, commonalities and differences can then be taken into the field in the next wave of data collection (Punch, 2009), allowing the researcher the opportunity to be reactive to the unexpected, trends and data as it arises.

Semi-structured interviews, an appropriate data collection tool for understanding respondents' opinions and beliefs, were conducted with eight WIL practitioners from two tertiary institutes within New Zealand. The constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1998; Punch, 2009), assisted by an adaption of Wenger et al. (2011) five cycles of value framework, was used during the data analysis stage.

1.5 Significance of this research

There have been studies considering the benefits of collaborative activities for WIL practitioners (Brown, 2010; Patrick et al., 2008) and those that have outlined the benefits of situated learning (Wenger, 1999) for teachers within communities of practice (Viskovic, 2005). Yet, there have been no studies that have considered the perceptions of WIL practitioners towards learning within CoP. It is anticipated that this New Zealand study will contribute to knowledge about the role and value of WIL CoP. Increased knowledge in this area could impact how WIL practitioners and professional development teams consider learning within CoPs.

1.6 Overview of the thesis

The thesis is comprised of six chapters and the following overview reflects the process undertaken in implementing the study. This first chapter has introduced an outline to the study, overviewing the background and the methodological rationale, as well as including an explanation of the researcher's motivation for conducting the study. Chapter Two reviews the literature relevant to communities of practice, work-integrated learning, and professional development for WIL practitioners. Chapter Three describes the research methodology of the thesis which includes: research approach, methods of data collection, ethical considerations, recruitment procedures, data analysis and trustworthiness of the research. Chapter Four presents the main findings from the practitioner interviews. Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to the relevant literature. Chapter Six summarises the significant findings and presents recommendations and implications for further research which may promote the understanding of CoP as development mechanisms for WIL practitioners. Limitations of the study are presented in this final chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews a selection of literature as a background to the study into the perceptions of WIL practitioners on CoP, to support their roles within a tertiary institute context. As the study crosses the boundaries of educational, professional development and community of practice theory and practice, the literature was chosen to add depth to this study within a New Zealand context. The literature has assisted in the development of the key research questions and is referred to again in chapter five as the findings are discussed in relation to other studies. This chapter is structured under the following headings:

- Work integrated learning (WIL) -Experiential learning
- Defining WIL
- WIL practitioners development
- Collaborative knowledge building in WIL
- Learning in the workplace and communities of practice (CoP)
- WIL networks and associations

At the end of each section the key issues will be presented as they relate to the development of the research question. These issues will be summed up in the concluding section and the research problem and key questions will be presented.

2.2 Work integrated learning (WIL) -Experiential learning

Work integrated learning (WIL) is grounded in the discipline of experiential learning (McLennan & Keating, 2008). Learning that is from experience, or doing, immerses students in situations that encourages reflection in developing new knowledge, new skills and new ways of thinking (Jackson & Caffarella, 1994). Learning is more likely to be effective when it is related to a student's experiences, both past and present (Reece & Walker, 1997). Teachers are advised to encourage students to relate new information to past personal experiences. The importance that experience plays in learning has been well documented, with many educational theorists writing about the benefits and virtues (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Jackson & Caffarella, 1994; Kolb, 1984). There

is a renewed perspective on the role of taking the student out of the classroom and providing them with authentic learning that mimics 'real-life'. Experiential education is seen as a way to revitalize the curriculum and cope with the many challenges facing higher education (Kolb, 2014).

Historical perspectives on experiential learning can be attributed to the work of Piaget and Dewey, amongst others. Piaget's work in the 1920's, considered how intelligence is shaped by experience rather than being an innate internal trait (Kolb, 1984). One of the most influential educational theorists, Dewey (1938) made thoughtful articulations on the connections between experiences and learning, in an attempt to understand the growing conflict between 'traditional' and 'progressive' approaches to education (as cited in Kolb, 2014). Many of Dewey's ideas have found their way into 'traditional' education, in the form of apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education and work experience. In all of these, learning is experiential, in that the learner is directly in touch with the phenomenon being studied rather than just thinking about it (Kolb, 2014). Kolb (1984) identified critical reflection on the learning experience as an essential component in his four stage experiential learning cycle. Kolb's cycle includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. He states that, although judging whether experience has actually led to learning can be difficult, all experiences added to what has gone before, lead to some level of modification. Hence, learning experiences are not isolated events. Learners must connect their present learning experience, with their past experiences, in order for them to be meaningful (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's experiential learning cycle has had substantial impacts on education across all sectors; not only on how teachers design learning experiences for students, but also how teachers reflect and learn on their own experiences.

Engagement with the experience (Boud et al., 1993) and the contextualization or situated nature of the experiences (Usher, Bryant and Johnston, 1997) are also both identified as important aspects to be considered in the practice of experiential learning. Many subjects within the tertiary sector, due to well documented benefits of experiential learning, are taught by providing students with realistic work situations. WIL is a pedagogy that assists learners to develop professional competence and skills (Brimble & Freudenberg, 2010). The relationship between 'experiential learning', or WIL, and enhancing student graduate attributes and employability is another area that has been well documented by authors (Baker, 2014; Brimble & Freudenberg, 2010; Patrick et al., 2008). As a consequence, a growing number of WIL opportunities are being embedded into tertiary institute curriculums (Martin et al., 2011a). With this expansion arises a need for greater clarity of terms in use and consensus of definitions.

2.3 Defining WIL

A common understanding of WIL terminology is beneficial for practitioners and researchers to collaborate successfully. Coll and Zegwaard (2011a) and Eames and Cates (2011) identify issues with WIL terminology confusion, advocating that shared terms and understanding is vital to allow WIL practice and the research field to move forward. Patrick et al. (2008) explain that defining terms is important in an “endeavour such as WIL, which is relevant to curriculum and pedagogy across all disciplines” (p.9). A pertinent starting point is an overview of the confusing domain of work-integrated definitions, terminologies and types.

WIL is recognised under multiple guises internationally (Baker, 2014; Coll et al., 2009), each with their own definition, which can cause confusion amongst practitioners (Brown, 2010; Patrick et al., 2008). Orrell (2011) described WIL as a chameleon term. The common perspective of WIL is acknowledged as a structured student learning experience based on a recognised tripartite collaboration between the student, the academic institute and an employer (Orrell, 2011; Martin et al., 2011a; McLennan & Keating, 2008). This perspective is simplistic and doesn't reflect the varying contexts under which the term is presently used. To understand these complexities, it is important to consider some of the terms used historically. *Co-operative Education*, preceded the use of WIL and is commonly used interchangeably with WIL (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011a; Coll, et al., 2008). Coolbear and Hodges (1998) define co-operative education, with clarity, yet also providing an indication of where the term work-integrated learning may have begun to emerge.

“In a nutshell, co-operative education is any structured educational programme which combines classroom learning with productive, relevant work experience.

Co-operative education is learning integrated with work” (p.5).

Schneider is widely acknowledged as the founding father of ‘cooperative education’ and defined it as the integration of theory and practice within an educational setting (Sovilla, 1988, as cited in Groenewald, Drysdale, Chiupka, & Johnston, 2011). This term has been the pre-dominate term used within American contexts (Groenewald, et al., 2011). While from a British perspective, the integrated curriculum has its origins in the ‘sandwich education programs’ traced back to Sunderland Technical College in 1903 (Groenewald et al., 2011). Orrell (2011) states that the term WIL emerged in in the UK in the 1990's, in an attempt to differentiate it from the term ‘*work-based learning*’. WIL is classed as a higher educational institute practice in which “workplace learning was recognised and valued as a contribution towards an accredited degree” (Orrell, 2011,

p.5). This definition indicates that the term WIL is only used within degree contexts, which is not in fact the case, as it is being used under much wider contexts.

To assist in understanding WIL, it helps to consider some of the terms used to describe WIL experiences. Many have well established historical usage within subject sectors, such as education, business or health fields. Others refer to certain curriculum structures, such as *sandwich programmes* and *work placements*, particularly in UK and Australasia, which refer to the alternation of work and study (Lazarus et al., 2011). *Internship* is a term used in USA and Europe, referring to a period of post degree practice (Lazarus et al., 2011). There is an extensive range of other terms in use including *practicums*, *fieldwork*, *field education*, *service learning*, *placements*, *work-based projects* (Cooper et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2011a) *cadetships* and *community based learning* (McLennan & Keating, 2008). Many of the terms are common in certain geographical contexts, such as *capstone project* in Australia, which refers to a final trimester of work-related experience (Martin et al., 2011a). Types of experiences that are 'classed' as WIL are extensive, varied and growing. In situations when both students and teachers could be internationals shared understanding of WIL terms is vital.

In attempting to gain clarity of the use of the term WIL, it is possible to 'unpack' the term. WIL is based on the premise of classroom learning 'integrated' with work related experiences. Integration is a fundamental element of any WIL experience (Coll et al., 2009; Eames & Cates, 2011) and a topic that has created discussion in itself. Yet there is still uncertainty in the academic community about what is meant by the term, let alone how to achieve and measure successful integration (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011b). Coll et al., (2009) describe integration as the link between active work place learning and the next phase of formal academic learning. Coll and Zegwaard (2011b) go as far as stating the claim of integration tends to be more rhetoric than reality. Cooper et al. (2010) state without integration WIL does not actually exist. Understanding 'integration' has implications for effective pedagogy and curricula in WIL (Eames & Cates, 2011). For a type of experiential learning to be considered as *WIL* a level of critical consideration on the depth of 'integration' should be important. It is evident from the limited review of literature in this area that 'integration' is important to effective learning but it is not clear what level of integration would be an accepted minimum. More research could clarify what types of experiential learning should be classed as work 'integrated' learning. In addition to the process of dismantling of the term, in the search for clarity, authors have focused also on different contexts, which will be discussed next.

It is useful to consider WIL from a stakeholder benefit perspective. WIL comprises educational programs based on multifaceted partnerships between employers, academia, students, institute management, professional bodies, careers departments and placement agencies (Baker, 2014; Orrell, 2004). Expectations are of mutual and explicit benefit, and use of contractual agreements are at the administrative heart of the success of the programs. Other authors (Martin et al., 2011a; Smith et al., 2009) have expanded their WIL definitions beyond the tripartite nature of the relationship, to include a focus on student or teacher or both skill level and career development. Martin et al., (2011b) describe WIL as the development of relevant professional skills in preparation for future career opportunities, “a bridge for the student between the academic present and their professional future” (Martin et al., 2011a, p.7). If WIL is to be incorporated into more programmes then it is essential to fully consider the justification for incorporation in the curriculum, the benefits and impacts for all stakeholders. If the benefit for learners is to enhance graduate competency and employability, then WIL experiences must be effectively designed with this in mind by competent practitioners.

A progression on the career development definition is presented by Smith, et al (2009). WIL is:

learning which is embedded in the experience of work: which may [include] work which is paid or unpaid; or full-time or part-time; or formally endorsed as part of a university course; or extra-curricular and complementary of studies; or totally independent of studies; in the past, present, or future; and which is made meaningful for a student when reflected upon in terms of personal learning and development occurring as part of a career development learning experience or course-related process. (p.9)

This definition goes beyond the relationship with a time and space of a single educational institute learning experience to a life-long learning perspective. It is also contradictory to the majority of authors who have specifically identified WIL as being fully integrated into a formalised learning experience with assessable learning outcomes. The common view is that WIL is a one-off assessable experience with a beginning and an end.

In many instances WIL is used as a broad umbrella term that encompasses the diversity in the range of WIL experiences. This is significant in the present climate when institutes are branding and differentiating their learning experiences. An Australian study of the use of WIL in 35 universities gathered information from 600 WIL practitioners. The study’s objective was to

identify issues, record the growth and identify ways of improving the student learning experience. In the process of the study, Patrick et al. (2008) identified that institutes and staff were utilising a diverse range of terms and models to describe WIL experiences across discipline sectors. WIL was found to be an “umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum”. (Patrick et al., 2008, p.iv). The study acknowledges that the intention was not to produce a national audit of terms and practices, however the diverse range was documented as an output. Additionally the study identified the pressure is now on institutes to differentiate their programs and, hence, new terminology is being utilized for course differentiation. Coll and Zegwaard (2011a) identified the growth in use of institutional created terms rather than established subject sector terms and they include “workplace learning, practice-based learning, industry engaged learning, career and technical education, collaborative education, industry-based learning, and work exchanges” (p.43). There is a trend within the tertiary sector to use other terms to differentiate WIL programs or emphasize a particular aspect of the approach to WIL. Hence the introduction of WIL-related terms such as ‘real world learning’, ‘professional learning’, ‘social engagement’ in attempts to differentiate themselves in response to emergent provisions of authentic learning, linked to graduate competencies (McLennan & Keating, 2008). It is somewhat understandable that tertiary institutes are using WIL as a mechanism to differentiate ‘offerings’ and that industry experiences are attractive attributes of a program for students. It is essential that clarity for all stakeholders is gained on the specific content of WIL experiences yet the changing terminology is making this difficult.

As a generic overarching term, WIL is useful because it does not denote a particular structure, duration or other features of the activity. According to Reeders (2000) “the term WIL was coined to encompass the increasing diversity in the modes of vocational learning” (as cited in Abeysekera, 2006, p.4). According to Patrick et al. (2008) WIL now appears to be the “current catch-all term adopted or recognised across many disciplines and used in recent government and industry reports” (p.9). There has been a progression to aligning WIL with institute strategic goals, branding and positioning (McLennan & Keating, 2008; Orrell, 2004; Cooper et al., 2010). McLennan and Keating (2008) in a study of Australian Universities’ websites and related policies, found that the term WIL seems to be commonly adopted as the overarching or generic term. This is a useful approach for institutions if well-defined practical terms are also used. One approach, is the Taxonomy of work integrated learning (TWIL) that has four distinct areas of practice which can serve as a guide for practitioners when considering appropriate terminology in an educational

setting (Groenewald et al., 2011). The four areas of WIL are *community or service focused learning and employment, Professional practice, Field and industry based work experiences and other work-integrated learning opportunities*. Each of the four areas are well defined and would go some way to alleviating confusion amongst practitioners.

There doesn't appear to be consensus on the meaning and use of the term WIL. There does however appear consensus that clarity of meaning and shared understanding for the WIL community is required. This is likely to guarantee it is a topic of research and conferences for a few years yet. In this thesis the view of Groenewald, et al. (2011) is accepted that despite a long history of work-integrated learning and cooperative education, the definitions and models are still evolving. The term 'WIL' is utilised as an overarching term that encompasses varying terminology and practices and that the characteristics or defining features, as outlined by Coll and Zegwaard (2012) are a valuable present perspective. WIL is:

“exposure to a professional and relevant workplace (community of practice), of a duration alongside practitioners long enough for enculturation to occur, where the tasks undertaken are authentic, relevant, meaningful and purposeful, where students are able to learn the workplace norms, culture, and understand/ develop professional identify, and integrating that knowledge into their on-campus learning” (Coll & Zegwaard, 2012, p.43).

There is also an expectation that market differentiation, institute branding and stakeholders' agendas will create pressures that have the potential to complicate the WIL terminology debate further. Therefore a glossary of terms that acknowledges the terminology used in different discipline areas could be beneficial to practitioners (Brown, 2010). The discussion surrounding proliferation, inter-changeability and definition of terminology is pertinent to the shared knowledge building of a WIL practitioner community. Whether WIL is described as a tripartite collaboration, career development or life-long learning strategy, used as a broad all-encompassing term, guided by a taxonomy, or based on characteristics, it is essential that shared understanding is reached for all stakeholders, including researchers, policy developers and practitioners. This study intends to add to the discussion and research in this field by identifying terminology, shared language and understanding in the context of WIL communities of practice.

2.4 WIL practitioners' development

The previous section discussed the history and meaning of WIL and affirmed its importance in effective education systems. The growth of WIL requires increased consideration of the support provided for these programs and the teachers that design and deliver them. Professional development for practitioners is a critical element of effective WIL programme delivery (Cooper et al., 2010; Orrell, 2004; Patrick & Kay, 2011). Increased competition among universities is intensifying pressure to ensure that WIL programs are effectively planned and coordinated by appropriately qualified and experienced practitioners (McLennan & Keating, 2008).

WIL programs exist at the interface between the world of academia and the larger community, presenting challenges for practitioner development. Practitioners are required to hold the skill set to bridge the cultural differences of the academic institute and industry. These involve balancing conflicting issues in the role of the program (such as providing stimulating and appropriate placements) and the academic institute (ensuring appropriate levels of integrated assessments that apply academic rigour). The skill base required by appropriately qualified and experienced WIL practitioners is diverse (McLennan & Keating, 2008). “They need to be able to cope with challenges, such as sourcing appropriate WIL opportunities, supervising and supporting students, managing high workloads with limited resources, communicating with a range of individuals, integrating coursework with workplace learning, and managing the often varied expectations of diverse stakeholders” (Brown, 2010, p. 296). In addition, Cooper and Orrell (1999 as cited in von Treuer, Keele, Sturre & Campbell, 2012) suggested:

“WIL teachers require high level organisational skills, knowledge of industrial policies, legal and ethical standards, knowledge of conditions for optimal experiential learning, knowledge of work practices and of a specific discipline, strong interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, credibility outside the university and advanced communication and negotiation skills. Also.....knowledge and skills related to management, ethics as well as entrepreneurialism” (p.296).

WIL practitioners are also required to hold a range of other skills that are often over-looked. They are required to possess leadership capabilities and change management skills (von Treuer et al., 2012) and an entrepreneurial ability may create positive outcomes for the university and industry through their skills in creating and maintaining strong relationships with industry representatives (Cooper & Orrell, 1999). Entrepreneurial skills, seem necessary for effective performance in a WIL role in identifying and leveraging opportunity. As such, WIL staff should be supported in

developing entrepreneurial skills that assist in the provision of successful WIL programs. There has been no empirical evidence offered that this is the case (von Treuer et al., 2012). The implementation and application of a wide variety of technological skills, from website development, learning technologies, digital media, social networking strategies, and other Web 2.0 applications has also been proposed as requisite skills (Lazarus et al., 2011). It has been accepted that WIL practitioners require a diverse range of soft and technical skills, and this was the topic of an empirical study that will be discussed next.

The diversity of skills required by WIL practitioners was the focus of a study at Deakin University. Von Treuer et al. (2012) conducted a competency and needs analysis which investigated the systems, processes and structures that optimise staff capability to conduct WIL. They explored the differences in the “competencies between academics who co-ordinate work placements programs and those who conduct less than 10% of WIL” (p.296). The study was conducted with 34 university faculty and a control group of 8 academics who had less than 10% WIL related activities. As hypothesized, the competency analysis revealed that the skill and behavioural requirements of WIL practitioners differ from those of the traditional/general academics. Additional findings of the study point to where practitioners look for guidance. It highlighted that participants enjoyed opportunities to meet with other WIL staff, and that this collaboration encouraged the sharing of ideas. The opportunity for administration staff and academics to meet each trimester has assisted the exchange of WIL information between schools (Von Treuer et al., 2012). The benefit in having a WIL expert, positioned at faculty or university level to offer guidance and knowledge was recognised. The findings also identified the importance of wider WIL networks for staff development, and that WIL is perceived as undervalued, lacked a clear priority within the university and was extremely resource intensive. This study reiterates that the WIL practitioner role is different from the traditional academic and points to the importance of learning from others. Although this study indicates the value of networks and meeting with others periodically to share ideas, it does not investigate the perceptions of the WIL practitioners involved towards specific values gained or developing relationships within the wider WIL community on an ongoing basis.

It is likely that informal learning from others whilst on-the-job constitutes much of the learning of WIL practitioners. Institutions normally do not provide professional development opportunities for WIL practitioners, instead relying on the individual to locate resources and colleagues to foster his/her own development (Lazarus et al., 2011). Lazarus et al. (2011) divided the requisite skills for this type of ‘self-directed’ learning into functional learning, behavioural learning,

organisational learning, professional learning and technical learning. Much of the 'on-the-job' learning of practitioners is through their own efforts, through a variety of informal learning methods and frequently in isolation (Lazarus et al., 2011). The challenge is to raise the visibility and importance of informal workplace learning to enhance the effectiveness and quality of work life (Boud & Middleton, 2003). WIL practitioners are the very "embodiment of the pedagogical strategies that they seek to implement: learning by doing and, ultimately, learning from experience", (Lazarus et al., 2011, p.343). Belonging to a WIL practitioner community is essential to learn the workplace norms, culture, and practices. These authors have discussed the importance of 'on-the-job' learning for WIL practitioners but identify there have been no empirical studies investigating which networks and relationships WIL practitioners identify as valuable for their self-development.

2.5 Collaborative Knowledge Building in WIL

In acknowledging the concerns about proliferations in terminology and models, Coll and Zegwaard (2012) suggest that collaborative knowledge building is important so that WIL knowledge is "compiled in a way that enables a better shared understanding, agreed upon by the whole co-op/WIL community." (p.44). They expand to say that possessing a shared understanding within the WIL community will help avoid recreating discussion and research around issues where there is already established understanding. Instead, knowledge and research directions can move to new areas and to new levels. Furthermore, allowing educators to come together encourages trust building required for meaningful collaboration (Booth & Kellogg, 2014).

Two studies that pinpointed the value of collaborative knowledge building within WIL were conducted by Patrick et al. (2008) and Brown (2010). Both studies highlight that isolation and lack of opportunities for collaboration and sharing are impacting the WIL community.

Patrick et al. (2008) undertook a large scale scoping study of WIL within 35 Australian universities, with 600 WIL practitioners, due to the increasing level of interest in WIL as a pedagogy. It identified one of the challenges and issues that could impact the quality of the student WIL experience as being that of collaboration and communication (Patrick et al., 2008). Data collected via a combination of interviews, focus groups and surveys, showed that WIL staff can feel isolated within their own discipline, within their own institute, and when distance was an issue, trapped also within their own state or region (Patrick et al., 2008). The report highlighted the importance of learning from others and having access to information about different approaches to WIL so

they can be adopted or adapted where appropriate. The study also acknowledged that staff enjoyed the opportunities to meet, collaborate and learn about other practices.

The 'round table' style study, at the University of Tasmania (UTAS), exploring the current status of WIL at the university, including cross-disciplinary collaboration (Brown, 2010); echoed many of the findings of the aforementioned study. The study attempted to define features of a successful WIL program, issues of supporting resources, address any current challenges and investigate the importance of building collaborative networks. The study, with 24 participants, found that a roundtable format provided opportunities to share and discuss WIL in a collaborative and cross-disciplinary event. This dedicated event was welcomed by staff as highly valuable to the exchange of ideas and WIL approaches across faculties (Brown, 2010). Significantly, it identified the need to share WIL knowledge within faculties, as well as between faculties. The study found that opportunities and a willingness to share both the successes and challenges of WIL practice were firm foundations to tackling WIL issues in a cross-disciplinary manner (Brown, 2010). As a consequence of the Brown (2010) UTAS study several institution-wide initiatives were actioned including establishing a WIL network to foster communication and to give a united voice to WIL-related issues. An important finding of the study was the acknowledgement that cross-disciplinary collaboration, leading to good practice development, has the potential to reduce individual staff workloads and send a more cohesive message to the wider community (Brown, 2010). Brown's study is significant in Australasia as it is the only study that investigates the impacts of cross-disciplinary WIL collaboration. Although both studies highlight that WIL practitioner collaboration is enjoyable and important for sharing, neither study investigates collaborative learning as a component of participation within CoP.

There have been no comparable WIL studies, to Patrick et al. (2008) and Brown (2010), within a New Zealand context. Martin et al. (2011b), based on prior empirical studies within a New Zealand university context investigating WIL curriculum development, developed the *WIL: a template for good practice*, series of guides. These 'best practice' guides advise WIL practitioners on design considerations that influence the student learning experiences. An additional study completed by Martin, Rees, Edwards, and Paku (2012) at Massey University, involved a qualitative case study of fifteen semi-structured interviews with academic supervisors from across a range of academic disciplines. The study focused on the practicalities of utilising WIL as a teaching pedagogy, such as placement requirements, risk assessments, student preparation and assessment design. The

findings provided useful suggestions for stakeholders to assist with the learning experience and achieving workplace competencies. Although the guides and the New Zealand study consider 'best practice' pedagogy neither discuss the role of collaborative learning, sharing experiences within a community with the intention of developing best practices.

Viskovic (2005) in her study of how people become tertiary teachers in New Zealand, makes one of the first published links between teacher professional development, and collaborative and situated learning in a community of practice. The study identified that for the majority of tertiary teachers learning about teaching and how to teach is mainly informal, on-the-job and experiential. Her study concluded that informal workplace learning is likely to continue to be common in tertiary teacher development (Viskovic, 2005). She felt that a fresh perspective towards personal and professional development was necessary and that learning within communities provides a framework for integrating different levels and forms of support for tertiary teachers. These studies have highlighted the importance of collaboration and learning from others within a community of practice. Although Viskovic (2005) conducted an extensive New Zealand study identifying the role of CoP to tertiary teacher development, no international studies have been identified, that considered the learning of WIL practitioners with communities of practice.

2.6 Learning in the workplace and Communities of Practice (CoP)

The principles of learning in the workplace that are central to designing an effective WIL experience for students can also be applied to the professional development (PD) of WIL practitioners. Professional development for WIL practitioners within a CoP has not been a consideration within the literature. A founding principle of WIL is that a component of learning occurs in the context of the workplace community. Learning from participation in work has substantial benefits to learners in developing work environment cultural understanding and professional skills. This is reflected in Wenger's (1999) *social theory of learning*, with its origins in the field of apprenticeships. Wenger (1999) disagrees with the perspective that learning is "an individual process that has a beginning and an end, that it is best separated from the rest of our activities, and that it is the result of teaching" (p.3). His perspective places learning in the context of lived experience of participation in the world, which he termed the legitimate peripheral participation (LLP). His view assumes that learning is a social and 'situated' phenomenon,

reflecting that humans have a deep capacity to develop knowledge (situated) socially within real practice (Viskovic, 2005). Situated learning is more than 'just learning by doing'. It is a paradigm shift from considering learning as an individual process involving the acquisition of knowledge from a teacher or an expert, to one in which active social participation, was in fact the vehicle for learning (Hughes, Jewson, & Unwin, 2007). This style of learning is likely to be familiar to many WIL practitioners.

Situated learning, according to Wenger (1999) is based on four premises: humans are social beings, knowledge is a matter of competence in relation to an enterprise, knowing is achieved from participating in the pursuit of this engagement, and meaning is ultimately the outcome of learning. Social participation is at the core of the theory, an encompassing process of being an active participant in the *practices* of the community whilst constructing *identities* in relation to these communities (Wenger, 1999). The core components upon which the theory is based are:

- Meaning: being an active participant changes individual and collective ability to experience life as meaningful.
- Practice: shared historical and social resources, frameworks and perspectives that sustain mutual engagement.
- Community: social configurations in which enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and participation is recognised as competence.
- Identity: how learning changes humans and creates personal histories of becoming, in the context of the community (Wenger, 1999)

The concept of *Communities of Practice (CoP)* Wenger (1999) describes is that learning can be described as experiencing meaning, as doing practice, as belonging to a community and as developing identity. He explains that not every community is a *community of practice*. CoPs are "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p.4). Three components are essential: domain (shared interest and commitment), community (member engagement/ learning together) and practice (shared repertoire of resources).

Learners may belong to many CoPs that are integral parts of their learning journey. These are everyday fluid learning experiences (Brandon & Charlton, 2011). Although they have existed throughout history, the term was first coined by Lave and Wenger in 1991, and only recently

entered business vernacular (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). The early educational examples were mainly apprenticeship based and in essence are the process of newcomers learning from old-timers, as they are allowed greater participation in the community by undertaking greater and more complex tasks, up to full participation (Kimble et al., 2008; St. Clair, 2008). CoPs are important to learning within all organisations. CoP and 'legitimate peripheral participation' arose out of a shift in thinking about 'situated learning' due to an overt commitment to collaborative working practices, that has had great influence inside and outside academia (Hughes et al., 2007). CoPs have invigorated interdisciplinary exchanges about knowledge and expertise. They are seen as an alternative to formal training and as a new vehicle for collaboration distinct from work-based teams (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). CoPs are important in WIL student experiences and in WIL practitioner learning experiences.

CoPs have attracted much attention by practitioners and researchers, within multiple contexts, that debate has arisen around what constitutes a CoP. Different authors have provided different definitions (Klein & Connell, 2008). Kimble et al. (2008) state that instead of trying to find an all-encompassing definition, it is preferable to explore characteristics of CoPs and regard the term "*community of practice*" as an umbrella term (herein a similarity to WIL). Kimble et al. (2008) describe the characteristics as:

Table 1.1 Kimble, Hildreth and Bourdon (2008) Characteristics of CoPs

Kimble, Hildreth, & Bourdon (2008) characteristics of CoPs
A CoP <i>grows informally</i> around a need, has voluntary membership and is not a formally constituted group, to the extent that the parent organisation might not even be aware of its existence.
Whether formed around a need, or formally created, for the group to become a CoP there needs to be a common purpose or common goal that motivates the members.
The CoP operates on common ground, as the knowledge, beliefs, and suppositions are shared by members. The common ground may include local jargon or local incidents.
CoPs are not static, there is an inherent level of evolution. The CoP may have evolved from a common interest of the group members or a formally created group evolved into a CoP due to the relationships of the members.
Relationships are the key to a CoP and are often what differentiates a team or group from a CoP. Informal relationships develop based on trust and are the key to the CoP identity.
A key defining characteristic is the internal motivation of the CoP. This, rather than externally imposed targets, is what drives the CoP and, along with relationships, contributes to the feeling of community and identity.

In the study of CoPs it becomes evident that networks and community are equally valid but hold different meanings (Kimble et al., 2008). Wenger et al (2011) discuss the differences and relationships between networks and communities of practice. Where the *network* refers to the:

“set of relationships, interactions, and connections among participants who have personal reasons to connect. It is viewed as a set of nodes and links with affordances for learning, such as information flows, helpful linkages, joint problem solving, and knowledge creation” (p.9).

Community refers to the development of a “shared identity around a topic or set of challenges. It represents a collective intention – however tacit and distributed – to steward a domain of knowledge and to sustain learning about it” (Wenger et al., 2011, p.9). Networks are a component of a CoP, and both are valuable to WIL practitioner development.

2.7 Measuring value creation in COPs

Due to the tacit nature of learning within a CoP, the value of learning is difficult to measure. Yet it is important to be able to make judgments of the effectiveness of learning gained from CoP involvement, particularly when CoPs are used as mechanism for professional development. Wenger et al. (2011) developed a framework based on the idea that value creation can be explored in the context of both personal and collective narratives. The five cycle framework, which categorises distinct data streams with indicators that can be monitored, has been applied in a number of studies on measuring value in both online and teaching communities (Cowan & Menchaca, 2014; Bertram, Paquette, Duarte, & Culver, 2014; Yildirim, 2007). Data collection tools monitor indicators of value across the cycles (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Wenger, Trayner and de Laat (2011) Value creation framework

Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat (2011) five cycle framework for measuring value creation in communities of practice	
Cycle one 'Immediate value'	The most basic cycle, considers that networking and community activities and interactions can produce value in and of themselves, such as connecting to others, helping someone, the opportunity to ask someone else a question, passing on information, or giving input. These activities can be fun and inspiring.
Cycle two 'Potential value'	Refers to the fact that not all value is immediately realised. Activities and interactions can produce 'Knowledge Capital' that has the potential to be realised later. Knowledge capital can take different forms, a piece of information (human capital), a connection or social relationship (social capital), a resource (tangible capital), recognition or status (reputational capital), and finally a learning activity (learning capital).
Cycle three 'Applied value'	Indicates that there has been a change in practice and that the acquired capital has been applied to a situation. For instance, adapting and using a shared WIL document or resource.
Cycle four 'Realised value'	Indicates performance improvement from the application of the new practice. Evidence of reflection on the impact of the new practice on stakeholders is important.
Cycle five 'Reframing value'	May be created when engaging in networked learning activity leads to a redefinition of goals, values and the criteria of how success is defined or measured. This can happen at either personal, collective or organisation level. This stage is transformational and can mean leaving behind the existing values and structures in adopting a new definition.

The use of an existing framework can have benefits to studies that investigate the value gained from CoP involvement. Using the framework, "grounded in theory to ensure relevance and data-orientation to provide scientific validity and reliability", ensures study findings are both legitimate and trustworthy for stakeholders who take leadership in cultivating communities and networks (Wenger et al., 2011, p.7). Support or investment for the CoP, through the provision of resources

or negotiation of strategic alignment (Blankenship & Ruona, 2007), will be based on data that has been collected using a valid method.

Greater clarity is needed on the extent, characteristics and value created by CoPs used by WIL practitioners. Bertram et al. (2014) state that future research is needed to explore the value created through communities and networks, implementation and sustainability of CoPs in higher education. Practitioners are learning from others on-the-job. There is a high reliance on the WIL CoP in the professional development of the WIL practitioner. Of interest to understanding WIL practitioner's CoPs will be the perceptions of WIL practitioners towards any value gained from learning within their networks and community of practice.

2.8 Considering online CoPs

Online CoPs could play a part in reducing isolation felt by WIL practitioners. CoPs can assist in reducing the isolation felt by some educators (Brandon & Charlton, 2011). Kimble et al. (2008) state that both locally based and virtual CoPs are proving valuable for teachers to become involved in larger, distributed communities. 'Virtual community' is a term covering a wide variety of communities that make use of ICT to exchange information, build influence, or achieve a specific result (Van Aalst, 2003). Membership of virtual CoP's bring teachers, administrators and researchers together to collaborate, to develop new knowledge, and to develop and learn about new resources.

Ayling and Flagg (2011) discuss the role of the development of online teaching and learning communities for faculty. They describe an active community of 600 academics that come together to share within a virtual space to gain value from blogs, groups, live chats and resources. They describe how this space has evolved into the institute's "largest and most active online 'community of practice' - a place where teachers share resources, form their online professional identities, share ideas and experiences, join groups and announce events" (Ayling & Flagg, 2011, p.25). In explaining why wider adoption of online CoP should be encouraged, they state that the primary needs for social interaction, participation and collaboration have been made easier due to the greater availability of web-based infrastructure and social networking services. The happenings of the *village common* can now occur more easily in this online space (Wenger, White & Smith 2009, as cited in Ayling & Flagg, 2011). Online CoP have value in supporting teachers' professional development with real benefits in assisting learning, social interaction and the

development of digital literacies (Ayling & Flagg, 2011). One of the greatest benefits is in the membership of a positive professional community that explicitly shares teaching and learning values. Teachers have a place to share best practice, issues, and form smaller groups. Other authors have supported the idea that virtual CoPs are valuable mechanisms for developing teaching practitioners (Booth & Kellogg, 2014; Kimble et al., 2008; Nistor et al., 2014; van Aalst, 2003). However, no studies have been found which investigate the role that online communities of practice may play in WIL practitioner development.

2.9 WIL Networks and Associations

Just as online communities may play a role in WIL CoP development, more formal networks such as national associations could be significant in connecting WIL Practitioners. WIL networks and associations exist at a global, regional and national level. Many authors have advocated for the role of WIL networks, associations and conferences in enhancing collaborative learning, shared expertise and professional development opportunities in developing 'good practice' within the field (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011a; Lazarus et al., 2011; Orrell, 2004; Brown, 2010). Patrick and Kay (2011) stress "the existence and sustainability of national WIL associations is critical for advocacy and to enable WIL staff to access professional development in the WIL aspect of their roles" (p371). Lazarus et al. (2011) suggest that state, regional, national, and international organizations have a renewed responsibility to provide programs and resources that will move the practitioners from novice to professional.

At a global level the World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE), whose origins have been described as being 'social in nature', brings people together to share (Patrick & Kay, 2011). It facilitates and enables national and cross association collaboration. The links established through WACE have strengthened the global voice whilst also enhancing collaboration on WIL research, professional development opportunities and greater sophistication in the use of technology to members (Patrick & Kay, 2011). Within Australasia, the emergence of the national Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN), its branches and biannual conferences have made "enormous contributions toward the growth of shared knowledge and theory building in relation to WIL in terms of leadership, pedagogy, partnerships with industry and differentiating contexts" (Orrell, 2011, p.14). Of major significance is the emphasis that Orrell (2011) places on the role of the National Association stating "the institutional, disciplinary, state and national communities of practice that have grown up through ACEN's stewardship have enabled sector-wide critical and scholarly reflection on this practice learning to generate theories about, and

models of, WIL practice” (p.14). Orrell (2011) states that as a consequence the growing community within the Australian context has added immeasurably to the scholarship and advancement of disciplinary activity in WIL. This advancement could be a consequence of findings from the 2008 ‘WIL Report- A national scoping study’ that encouraged the development of a national framework for future projects to enable members of ACEN to work as a community to develop resources and practices (Patrick et al., 2008). ‘Good practices’ are significant to enable the sector to collectively respond to key challenges and issues. The report also proposes a communications structure for collaborative knowledge building and the dissemination of ideas, good practice examples, information and resources. It proposes websites and databases for sharing best practice in WIL curriculum development. It is acknowledged that within a New Zealand context, the New Zealand Association of Cooperative Education (NZACE) is an active national organization, but the role of the organization in enhancing the WIL community of practice has not been the subject of any study or publication.

It is hard to dispute that a collaborative approach to scholarly activity, conference attendance, journal publications and dissemination of good practice can play a part in enhancing WIL practice. As evident in the preceding discussion, practitioners meeting on common ground to discuss WIL specific issues has led to the growth in most countries of associations to provide expertise, support and professional development opportunities. What is open for discussion is whether national associations and networks are perceived as a part of the WIL CoP from which practitioners can collaborate with and learn from.

2.10 Conclusions and research questions

This chapter has looked at key literature on WIL, professional development and CoP. Of interest to this study is the value and role of CoP to WIL practitioners’ development. The role of a WIL practitioner requires a dynamic and extensive skill base and much of the learning maybe informal and on-the-job. Some studies of WIL practice have outlined the value of sharing and collaborative knowledge building to effective WIL practice. These studies fall short of considering the value that CoPs may play in learning together. It has also become evident that WIL terminology continues to evolve and shared understanding is still elusive. CoPs are based on shared understanding. It is important to include in any exploration of WIL practitioner’s perceptions of learning in CoPs the implications of terminology on shared understandings. Practitioners that share passion and commitment to a common purpose and learn together within a community can create a valuable

shared repertoire of 'best practices'. Both communities and networks, including virtual and national associations, can play significant roles.

The research problem

There is a strong theoretical framework for WIL discussed in the literature and reviewed in this section. What is not so evident from the literature, are the implications of shared terminology and practices upon WIL CoP, and the value of CoPs specifically to WIL practitioners within a tertiary educational context. Further investigation will enhance the research fields of understanding of how CoP can support practitioners in their roles.

The research purpose

The intention is to explore WIL practitioners' perceptions about their role in teaching and coordinating WIL relating activities, how they learn about WIL practices and how they develop as practitioners. A key purpose is to explore and explain the networks and communities to which WIL practitioners see themselves belonging and what value these networks and communities create for the practitioners. To do this a focus on WIL practitioners' perspectives in New Zealand will provide a picture of any issues or implications of learning within CoP. An outcome of the study will be an analysis of the conditions required to assist practitioners to maximize the opportunities of their *communities of practice*.

This has led to the development of the research questions for this study:

Key Question:

What are practitioners' perceptions of the value of communities of practice to support their role in WIL?

Additional questions:

What are practitioners' experiences in teaching Work Integrated Learning?

What are their experiences of collaborating and learning with and from others in relation to WIL?

Where do practitioners go for guidance, information or assistance in relation to WIL?

These research questions have guided the research approach and procedure to be discussed in Chapter three.

Chapter Three Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach underpinning the study and explains how this has guided the research methods chosen. Chapter two outlined the theoretical background that has informed the study, which is conducted in the context of the New Zealand polytechnic sector. Included in this chapter is a description of ethical considerations, research procedures, and approach to data analysis chosen in addressing the research questions presented at the end of Chapter two. The focus on exploring the views and values of the participants required a chosen approach to record and analyse individual experiences. The chapter will conclude with a section on the trustworthiness of the chosen methods.

3.2 Research Approach

Qualitative research focused on the discovery and insight into the perspectives of others offers great opportunities to add to the knowledge base of educational practice (Merriam, 1998). This study falls into the category described by Merriam (1998) of a generic qualitative study that draws from concepts, models and theories in education, and seeks to discover, interpret and understand the perspectives of the people involved. Interpretivism is an epistemological view that respects the differences between people and requires the researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2008). The interpretive paradigm acknowledges that the researcher plays a role in the interpretation of participants' perspectives, the social realities for the individuals, but the researcher also brings their own perspective as they try to make sense of the data (Bryman, 2008). It is therefore important to ensure the robustness of the theoretical framework of the study and the chosen methodologies.

The theoretical framework of a study can be pictured as three interlocking frames (Merriam, 1998). The outermost frame is the body of literature and discipline within which the study sits. This study is sited within concepts and theories of work-integrated learning, communities of practice and professional development within adult education. The second frame of the study is the problem statement. This study considers communities of practice from a work-integrated learning perspective. It investigates the literature within this area and asking "What are the perceived benefits of WIL community of practice participation for practitioners and in particular for the polytechnic sector?" The 'purpose of the study' is the third and inner-most frame. This

study seeks to explore and interpret the perceptions of WIL practitioners towards communities of practice and networks as social learning and professional development opportunities. The outcomes of the study could assist practitioners, leaders, managers and the larger WIL community on how best to support conditions or resource communities and networks that are used for social learning and professional development. Continuing professional development and new conceptions around types of professional development for educational practitioners has led to new types of involvement for teachers in research (Punch, 2009). Teachers as researchers has led practitioners to researching topics more directly related to their practice in a move to more evidence based practice.

Therefore the researcher needs to remain open-minded to concepts emerging from the interviews in a qualitative study. Merriam (1998) states that the design of a qualitative study should be flexible and responsive to changing conditions of the study. The data collection and data analysis stages, within this study, proceed in tandem. This type of study approach is recursive and allows the researcher flexibility (Bryman, 2008). A representation of the research process for this study in Figure 3.1 shows how it allows for patterns, commonalities and differences to be taken into the field in the next wave of data collecting (Punch, 2009).

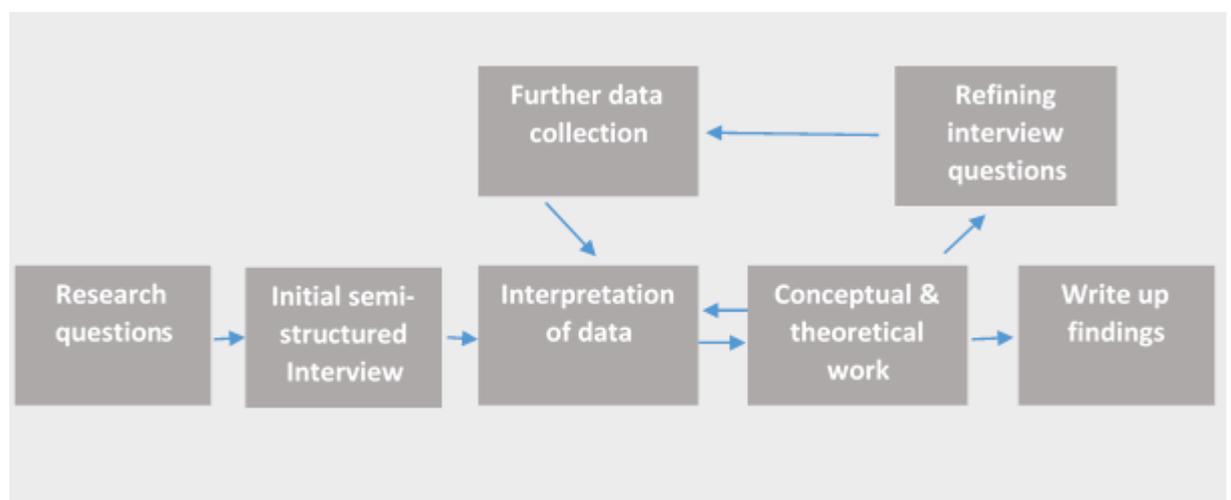


Figure 3.1: The main stages of the research process (based on Bryman, 2008)

3.3 Method of data collection

Semi-structured interview

Interviewing is valuable when the researcher wants to find out what is in or on someone’s mind. It allows us to enter into the other person’s perspective (Merriam, 1998). A semi-structured interview, the chosen data collection tool, is an appropriate format for understanding respondents’ opinions and beliefs due to its flexibility (Bryman, 2008; Martin et al., 2012). An

interview guide, that provides open-ness and flexibility, was used so that participants' views could be explored as they emerged within the context of use. Less structured formats allow for the fact that participants' responses define the world that is unique to them (Merriam, 1998). With this in mind, the largest part of the interview was guided by the list of flexible questions and topics to be explored (Appendix A). The order and exact wording was not determined ahead of time.

Interpretive style questions were used that confirmed understanding and provided opportunities for yet more information, opinions and feelings to be revealed (Merriam, 1998). This style of questioning prompted for further clarification, such as "when you say..." or "you mentioned earlier...".

Additionally, a structured section of questions was included to look for patterns and commonalities that relate to:

- Levels of teaching
- Course taught
- Length of teaching experience
- And length of time teaching WIL courses.

Interviews were audio recorded with two electronic recording devices and a professional transcription service used. Participants were asked to review the interview transcripts to ensure their comments had been recorded accurately and completed an interview transcript release form. This process of triangulation of data enhances data validity (Punch, 2009).

Researcher field notes were utilised to record significant and/or initial impressions during the interview process. They were expanded with more detail on immediate conclusion of the interview, providing added context to the data and assist in triangulation of data (Bryman, 2008).

3.4 Ethical considerations

Research in education inevitably carries ethical issues that require recognition and consideration. This is particularly an issue when conducting empirical research, because it involves the collection of data from people, and about people (Punch, 2009). As a consequence, the research planning process needs to consider the ethical aspects involved and how they will be dealt with. This study

complies with the requirements of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants* which was developed to ensure that research activities undertaken maintain research of the highest ethical standards and permits public scrutiny of the maintenance of those standards (Massey University, 2015). In order to minimise the risk of harm to participants, the ethical considerations for this study include, respect for persons, respect for privacy and confidentiality, informed and voluntary consent and consideration of cultural sensitivity. On completion of the online ethics application process and risk screening survey, the study was deemed as Low Risk. (Appendix B – MUHEC Ethics Notification- 4000015539). Under research and ethics processes for the polytechnics included in this study, approval of a research project through the MUHEC process is adequate to comply with internal institute procedures. The MUHEC approval was presented at research committee meetings at the institutes. Request for participants was approved by department heads who then recommended appropriate staff.

Respect for persons

It was anticipated by the researcher that participation in the study by WIL practitioners would be beneficial to their teaching and learning experiences. It was acknowledged that sharing their personal development stories, knowledge base, and understanding within this field may prove uncomfortable. “Respect for persons involves recognition of the personal dignity, beliefs (including cultural and religious beliefs), privacy and autonomy of individuals” (Massey University, 2015, p.7). The information sheet, consent process and confidentiality procedures were designed with this in mind (Appendix C). The cultural sensitivity consultations enhanced the researchers understanding within this area. These considerations are outlined below:

Respect for privacy and confidentiality

Participants were assured that privacy and confidentiality would be maintained throughout. In the interest of protecting the participant’s privacy and anonymity, participants emailed the researcher directly, pseudonyms were used, and details that could identify the participant such as programme title or institute were altered. The pseudonyms and broad descriptors were stored separately from the transcripts to protect participant privacy. Participants didn’t have to any answer questions if they did not wish and they felt could divulge information they class as private

(Appendix C). All data remained confidential to the researcher, supervisors and interview transcriber. A signed confidentiality agreement, covering the agreement to not disclose, retain or copy information, was obtained from the transcriber (Appendix D).

Informed and Voluntary Consent

Prior to involvement in the study, the participants were emailed the Information sheet. This outlined the background of the study, expected outcomes of participation, requirements, data management and participant rights. The participant's rights made clear that:

- Their participation was voluntary
- They retained the right to withdraw prior to data analysis commencement
- They could ask any questions at any time
- They could decline to answer any question
- Their privacy would be protected
- And they would have access to the project findings.

At the commencement of interviews, the information sheet was reviewed with each participant and the *Consent form* signed. A transcript of their interview was provided to each participant for editing and approval. Approval and release of the transcripts was confirmed through a signed *Authority for the Release of Transcripts form* (Appendix E).

Cultural sensitivity

Prior to commencement, the study was discussed with both a Maori and a Pacific Island representative, one from each institute, as part of the consultation process on appropriate cultural implications of the research. This also ensured that the project met with Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

In the interest of minimizing potential harm arising due to lack of understanding or information about the study, the above procedures assured participants were informed throughout the research process and also gained required consents.

3.5 Research procedures

The study was conducted in conjunction with two polytechnics (also known as institutes of technology) within New Zealand. More details on the institutes and participants are provided in Chapter 4.

Recruitment of Participants

An emailed request was made to departmental heads to identify potential participants that matched the following criteria (Appendix D):

- Academic staff members that were either teaching, co-ordinating or supervising a course with a WIL component (co-operative education paper, placement, practicum, internship or industry project)
- The WIL programme is at 500 level or above on the New Zealand Qualifications framework.

An invitation to participate, including an information sheet, was emailed to the prospective participants. Eight participants responded to the researcher and volunteered to take part in the study. Piloting of the interview questions was included as part of the first interview. Interviews were scheduled between April and June 2016 at mutually agreed times and locations. Interviews lasted between 30 and 65 minutes. A second 15 minute interview was conducted with one participant, following the completion of the first stage of interviews, to confirm the themes and sub-themes identified through the recursive analysis process with the participant and to seek clarification in a couple of areas.

Purposeful sampling as used in this study is based on the assumption that the researcher desires to investigate, discover and interpret, in order to gain insight and hence must choose a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). It was intended that the participants would be identified as those best meeting the requirements of the study and a sample size of 12 was chosen based on an expectation that reasonable coverage of the phenomenon would be achieved (Merriam, 1998). Ten academic staff were identified by heads of department, across both institutes, from the initial email request as matching the requirements of the study. Six of these volunteered to take part. Not all heads of departments responded to this initial request. A reminder email request to heads of department resulted in another 5 academic staff suggestions,

2 of these volunteered to take part. Although not the desired sample of 12, the 8 participants were from a cross-section of disciplines and faculties.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data. In qualitative research it is a complex process of consolidating, reducing and interpreting what has been said. The data is then related to abstract concepts in order to find meaning, understanding and insight that will constitute the findings of the project (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, Merriam (1998) emphasises that data analysis is one of the few facets of doing a qualitative project that has a right and a wrong way. Emphasising that the right way is in fact *simultaneous* with data collection. She states that without ongoing data analysis the whole process will be unfocused, overwhelming and potentially repetitious. With ongoing analysis the process can be explanatory and illuminating. Utilising the aforementioned research process, the initial qualitative interview was coded for early analysis.

Basic coding is the first part of analysis and preparing the data for further analysis. Coding is the process of attaching tags, labels or names against pieces of data (Punch, 2009). The labels are short-hand that assists in the process of summarising data, allowing for easy retrieval and for the identification of patterns in the data. The first level of coding is mainly descriptive and low inference (Punch, 2009).

In initial coding, two sets of codes were attached to the data. The first set of codes used Wenger et al. (2011) five cycles of value as a basis for identification of participants' perceptions of the value that they gained from community and network involvement. The codes are identified in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: First set of initial codes- value related

Code	Network or Identified Value
NETWORK	Significant people, teams and groups
C1IV	Cycle 1. Immediate value. Activities and interactions
C2PVH	Cycle 2. Potential value: Knowledge capital Personal assets (human capital).
C2PVS	Relationships and connections (social capital).
C2PVT	Resources (tangible capital).
C2PVR	Collective intangible assets (reputational capital).
C2PVL	Transformed ability to learn (learning capital)
C3AV	Cycle 3. Applied value: Changes in practice
C4RV	Cycle 4. Realized value: Performance improvement
C5RFV	Cycle 5. Reframing value: Redefining success

The second set of initial codes (Table 3.2) were for other themes and concepts, created as they emerged.

Table 3.2: Second set of initial codes- other themes and concepts

Code	Theme or concept
TERM	Terminology related
PED	Pedagogy related
ROLE	View / value of WIL as a teaching and learning strategy
RES	Resourcing /skill set
STUD	Student demographic
CHAL	Challenges
PD	PD generic
PDops	WIL PD opportunities
ASSOC	WIL groups & assoc
ONLINE	Online community experiences
VIS	WIL invisible
ISOL	Practitioner Isolation
STRUC	Institute structure issues
QUAL	WIL policy /quality issues
GOOD	WIL good practice resources

Memoing, the process of critical thinking, recording ideas and relationships, was conducted simultaneously with coding. The memos may be “substantive, theoretical, methodological or even personal” (Punch, 2009, p.180). These ‘observer comments’ assisted in trying out ideas and themes, as they related to the literature and wider theoretical picture in the process of analysis from descriptive to conceptual. Table 3.3 identifies the initial themes and sub- themes that emerged from the semi-structured interview transcripts after the first stage of coding.

Table 3.3: Initial themes and sub-themes identified

a	Extent of networks and communities in WIL
b	Value of Community- cycles 1-5
c	Professional development
d	Institute structure & support mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • terminology • Role of WIL • Resourcing • Organisation Culture • WIL PD opportunities • WIL visibility/ isolation • WIL policy & quality • WIL good practice

Moving from basic description to constructing categories or themes that capture recurring patterns is the next level of analysis. This is largely an intuitive process guided by the project purpose and researcher’s knowledge. Themes or categories are most commonly constructed through the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1998). Punch (2009) states that comparing, the central intellectual activity in analysis, is essential in identifying abstract concepts in empirical data. At the heart of this method is the continuous comparison of units of data, such as feelings or remarks, which represent recurring regularities. Comparing concepts at the first level of abstraction enables more complex concepts to be developed. The themes or categories will reflect the purpose of the project. Merriam (1998) suggests consideration of frequency, uniqueness, or the unexpected when developing categories. It was also important to avoid fragmenting the data too much or interpret the data out of context, hence ensuring holistic interpretation (Viskovic, 2005).

Through a process of data familiarisation, re-interpretation, incorporating field notes and memos, returning to the literature for clarity and reading for holistic interpretation, the following themes were settled upon:

- WIL terminology- common language

- WIL community- the value of involvement
- WIL domain - pedagogy and policy
- WIL practitioner - personal and professional development.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the research

Within a qualitative study the researcher is the main instrument for data collection and analysis. As a consequence of being human, researching a study on human perceptions and subjects, the potential for mistakes, missed opportunities and personal bias is high. Merriam (1998) points out that the personal characteristics of tolerance of ambiguity, intuitiveness and effective communication skills are areas for consideration for the researcher, just as a survey would be assessed for appropriateness of application. As a novice researcher, there was a level of acceptance of skills to be practiced and learnt throughout this study.

The criteria adopted to ensure trustworthiness of this study is credibility through respondent validation. Credibility relates to the plausibility of the findings (Bryman, 2008). Respondent validation was used at two stages during the research process. Firstly, participants were asked to review and amend the interview transcripts. This led to some valuable clarifications, contextual information and improvements to the data. Secondly, a brief follow-up interview with one participant was used as an opportunity to strengthen the robustness of the analysis and interpretation by the corroboration of the identified themes.

3.8 Conclusion

This study is situated in the interpretative paradigm. It adopts a qualitative methodology to explore and interpret the perceptions of practitioners towards their past experiences of WIL communities of practice. This chapter has outlines the rationale for the chosen methodology, the context, the ethical considerations, the data collection and analysis process, in ensuring that the findings are trustworthy.

Chapter Four: Findings from the practitioner interviews

The focus of the study was to explore and interpret the perceptions of practitioners towards their past experiences of communities of practice, in relation to supporting their role in WIL. This chapter presents the findings from data collected during semi-structured interviews in relation to the main research question and the following sub-questions:

What are practitioners' experiences in teaching Work Integrated Learning?

What are practitioners' experiences of collaborating and learning with/ from others in relation to teaching WIL?

Where do practitioners go for guidance in relation to teaching WIL?

The chapter begins with an introduction to the eight participants. The findings are reviewed as they relate to the key themes that emerged: WIL terminology - common language, WIL community - the value of involvement, WIL domain - pedagogy and policy and WIL practitioner - personal and professional development.

4.1 Introduction to the participants and their WIL contexts

Participants were drawn from two New Zealand polytechnics, offering programmes from NZQA level 3 Certificate to Masters Degrees. Both institutes advertise that they place substantial emphasis on offering 'applied' and industry integrated qualifications. Under the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF), educational institutes are required to develop and deliver "integrated and coherent qualifications that meet the needs of individuals, groups, industry and the community" in collaboration with a range of stakeholders (NZQA, 2016a, p.2). Collaboration with industry partners is identified by the institutes as enhancing the quality of teaching and learning opportunities for students, leading to better learning experiences and industry knowledge. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority describes Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) as delivering technical, vocational and professional education (NZQA, 2016a).

Eight participants responded to the request for WIL practitioners and took part in interview sessions. Their teaching specialisms included: funeral directing, business and management, nursing, early childhood education, event management, and cookery. All the participants discussed their past industry experiences as being important to their present views on teaching work integrated learning. Seven participants went as far as describing or referring to themselves in the present tense as being industry specific practitioners, such as being a chef, a HR manager,

etc. Participants in the main see themselves as practicing as both as educational practitioners and as industry specific practitioners. Sacha and Darcy both referred to the importance of their ongoing industry practice as being vital to their knowledge as an educator.

Teaching experience ranged from 2.5 to 19 years, with the majority of the participants having over six years teaching experience and three with over a decade of experience (Table 4.1). Gill was the newest to teaching with only 2.5 years' experience and Eden (a WIL placement coordinator) is not involved in any teaching aspect of WIL. From those involved in the practical aspect of teaching WIL, the majority had some knowledge of adult education principles and practice theory, with five holding adult teaching qualifications. Billie, didn't hold an adult education qualification, but had completed an early childhood education degree and felt as though she had a good understanding of teaching and learning principles. Most of the participants had been involved in WIL for several years, Darcy and Jamie have the longest experience (14 and 12 years respectively). Gill and Eden (1 and 0.5 year respectively) were the only participants still relatively new to a WIL aspect within their roles. Four of the participants have been involved with WIL for their whole teaching career.

The majority of participants were involved with WIL that they described as primarily industry based learning. Only Gill and Shirley described their WIL experiences as classroom or academic based learning. Both are teaching Industry Projects. Although Shirley was comfortable with the proportion of 'academic' versus 'industry' based experience within the industry project, Gill talked about the necessity and desire for greater industry experience for students. Gill believed the WIL experience of the industry project lacked the required level of industry immersion. Eden (nursing) and Billie (early childhood education) both identified the necessity for clinical learning and placements (respectively) as part of the industry specific registration process.

A variety of WIL experiences were being taught (Table 4.1). Six of the WIL experiences were stand-alone courses as part of a larger programme. Two work experiences, taught by Jamie and Darcy (both cookery), were integrated within a course within a wider programme. This integration was highlighted by participants as making it difficult to identify which colleagues taught WIL. Apart from identifying an approximate period of WIL experience, the structuring of the WIL experiences was not explored further (For example when WIL is delivered, duration, or frequency). The funeral industry programme taught by Hillary would normally be classified as a *Work-Based programme* rather than Work Integrated Learning experience. In work-based programmes *employees* learn through a combination of on-the-job learning and assessment interspersed with some block course learning and assessment.

None of the participants belonged to any WIL professional associations or had completed any formal professional development courses or training in relation to WIL.

Table 4.1: An overview of the participants and their WIL experiences

	Sacha	Hillary	Darcy	Gill	Shirley	Billie	Jamie	Eden
WIL course responsibilities (Weeks in industry if applicable)	Practicum (9 weeks)	Work based Clinical practice (25 weeks with 12 week block courses)	Work experience (4 weeks)	Industry project	Industry project	Placement and Practicum- (both 10 weeks)	Work experience(4 weeks)	Clinical learning experience (varying over degrees approx. 6 weeks)
NZQA level	7	5	5	7	6	5-7	5	5-7
Primarily Industry or Academic based WIL experience	Industry	Industry	Industry	Academic	Academic	Industry	Industry	Industry
Teaching duration (years)	6	7	16	2.5	19	9	12	N/A
WIL co-ordination duration (years)	6	7	14	1	5	9	12	0.5
Adult Teaching Qualification (level 4 or above)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N

In summary, the context of WIL for each participant is highly varied, unique and at times complex.

4.2 Key themes emerging from the interviews

The participants spoke about their broader experiences of teaching WIL, of collaborating and learning from others, and identifying where they would seek guidance or assistance for issues relating to coordination and teaching. Four key themes emerged during the interviews: *WIL terminology - common language*, *WIL Community - value of involvement*, *WIL Domain - pedagogy and policy* and *WIL practitioner - personal and professional development* (Figure 4.1).

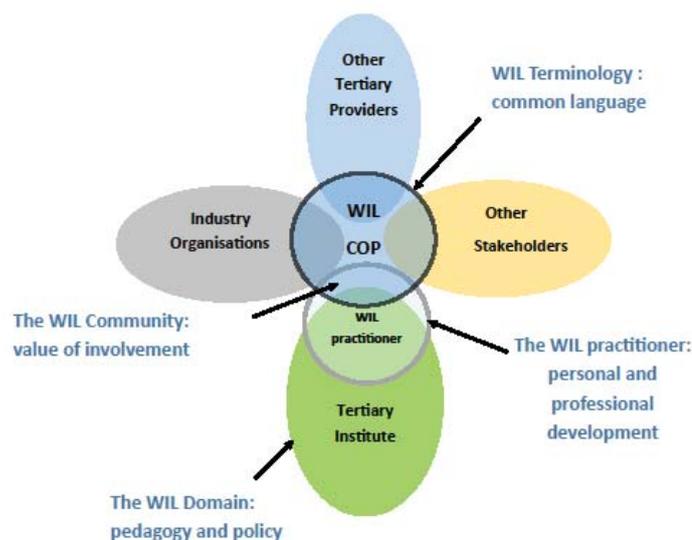


Figure 4.2: Key themes emerging from interviews

4.3 WIL Terminology – common language

Work Integrated Learning terminology - proliferation and inconsistency

This first section explores the commonalities, variations and implications in use of WIL terminology that emerged from interviews. The participants have many and varied relationships with WIL stakeholders within their different contexts. Stakeholders are both internal and external to the institutes. Internal stakeholders are students (domestic and international), colleagues (immediate and cross-faculty), management and policy developers. External stakeholders include colleagues within other institutes and industry personnel. These relationships and contexts appear to be influencing the terms being used to describe WIL experiences.

The type of WIL experience was not always obvious from course titles. Table 4.1 identifies the term the participants initially used to describe WIL experiences. For five of the participants the term used the official course title to describe the WIL experience. For the others there was a variation; for example one of the 'Industry projects' had the official course title of 'Applied Management' (*Shirley*). The variation in use of language was identified by participants as common practice, confusing to stakeholders and an issue when trying to identify colleagues teaching WIL.

Participants were not consistent with the terms they used. A variety of terms were used to describe the WIL experiences taught. During the interviews the majority of participants used more than one term to describe the same WIL experience. Sixteen different terms were utilised to describe the six different WIL experiences initially identified by the participants - namely practicum, industry project, placement, work experience, clinical practice and clinical learning

experience (Figure 4.2). The terms used can be categorised into: Overarching terms, those based on an academic component, those indicating knowledge and skills development, and those indicating time spent in industry. Shirley was consistent, referring to the WIL experience throughout the interview using the same term (industry project). None of the participants used the term ‘WIL in daily practice, although three participants appeared to adopt the term during the interviews. An adoption of the term during the interview could indicate a desire to belong to a WIL community of practice, demonstrated through the adoption of the jargon and language that would be common to community members.

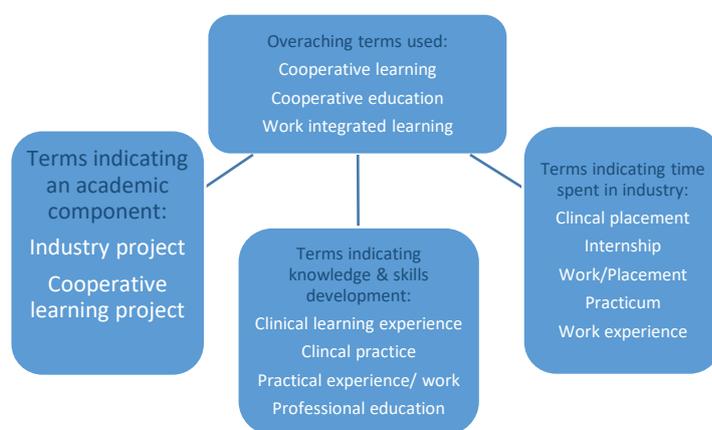


Figure 4.2: Terms used during the interviews

Some of the terms appeared to be more commonly used for industry sectors, such as *clinical experiences* within the health sector, *work experience* within hospitality and *projects* for business. *Placement* was the term used by the majority of the participants.

It is not clear if the participants were aware that they were being inconsistent with the use of terms, yet several admitted to confusion over the terms in use by their institutes.

Confusion over the meaning of ‘Work integrated learning’ and other terms

Several participants admitted to confusion over the meaning of some terms. Shirley required clarity and reassurance at the start of the interview that her role actually was encompassed by the term *Work Integrated Learning*. This term in particular appeared to be unfamiliar to some participants. Sacha described actively seeking clarity over terms:

I did some research around employability and practicum placementsBut there’s never been any instruction from the institution. If I hadn’t done that,

I wouldn't even know what the terminology was that you're talking about.

(Sacha)

Some participants admitted their own lack of understanding and confusion over terms, could have consequences on other stakeholders (students and industry). Gill described a situation in which she felt management lack of understanding of terminology was affecting student expectations and learning experience. Different interpretations of the term *placement* had led to changes in the delivery of the course that she felt was in essence 'watering-down' the WIL experience.

..... I struggle with that because, the course descriptor says placement, for me a placement means, and my ideal, is that each one of my [subject] students is in a business. It doesn't need to be a marketing business, but they are in a business, working in a business with their ear constantly tuned to "what are the marketing issues here?" ... with all of the inside information in that business... totally imbedded in that business...for thirty hours a week. (Gill)

As a consequence of the variation in interpretation of this term, the WIL experience was being delivered without students completing hours 'placed' within a business. Rather they were fulfilling the requirement at a distance in project work. Participants felt strongly that the students' learning experiences were being impacted as a consequence of interpretation.

Participants were also aware the proliferation and inconsistency of terminology in use within their institutes was exasperated by the changing nature of their courses and the student demographic.

Changing terms for the international student market or for course differentiation

Several participants discussed their adoption of terms specifically for international students. Asked if they had always used the term 'work placement' one participant commented:

No, it's a new term since we've had a couple of international students I've sought placements for. So again it's the terminology that's getting thrown around without thinking about the actual meaning. (Hillary)

Internship was a particular term that appeared to have been adopted for international students' understanding:

What we call work experience Well usually the internationals like to call it internships. (Darcy)

The adoption of different terms for different stakeholders appears to be problematic for participants, and the confusion was not limited to international students. Several of the

participants described situations when different terms were used for industry stakeholder understanding. Eden explained that a new term guided by changes from programme development, *clinical learning experience*, was being used within both a teaching context and to differentiate the programme to attract new students. Yet, the term was not being used for the nursing sector as it had caused confusion, so they continued to use the term *clinical placement*. It appears that within the different participants' contexts terminology is quite problematic.

Claiming a WIL community definition - developing shared understanding

There was a strong feeling, by participants, that further clarity, consistency and guidance from the institutes was required for the terms being used. For example:

Tidying up some of this terminology ... Because the guidance is not always there because people don't understand.... Wording needs to be described better so we use the right words in the right places. (Hillary)

The proliferation, changing use and admissions of confusion over terms, appear to be impacting the ability of WIL stakeholders to identify and connect with each other, develop shared understanding and expectations. Programme titles that differ to the WIL type appear to make it difficult for participants to identify and connect with other colleagues that are teaching WIL. Participants would like more clarity and consideration of the above issues by their institutes. The implications of terminology is impacting who the participants develop relationships with. Relationships is considered in more detail in the next section.

4.4 The WIL community of practice— relationships and value of involvement

This section presents the findings of the most important relationships and connections to the participants. The participants' perspectives of the value they attributed to these relationships are then presented. It reviews the data in relation to questions aligned to *communities of practice* (Chapter three).

Relationships and connecting to others

This first section reviews 'who' participants felt they had valuable learning relationships with; hence which people and teams they are using for collaborative learning. The participants were

asked to identify people who were significant in assisting them develop as WIL practitioners. All participants identified a varied and extensive range of people and teams that they recognised as relevant to providing guidance, support and in assisting them to do their jobs better. It included people or teams, of 28 different types, distinguished as either internal or external to the institute. Internal included: present students, colleagues (immediate/ within other faculties/ retired), management (line and senior), administrators and support departments (academic quality/ people capability / marketing/ human resource/ business development / ELearning/ learning support). The people and relationships external to the institute included two groups, industry relationships and academic relationships. Industry relationships included industry organisations and workplace supervisors, industry associations and economic development agencies, and graduates now working in industry. The external academic relationships included, WIL colleagues within other institutes, external moderators, Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), qualification awarding bodies and accreditation monitors. Each participant has an extensive network of connections and relationships.

During interviews, participants discussed at length and repeatedly, the importance of certain people and teams that were making significant differences in assisting them with personal learning opportunities, and enhancing their ability to fulfil their roles as WIL practitioners. All the participants stressed the importance of these relationships. Not only in enhancing performance, but significantly noting, that without the guidance and assistance they felt they would not be able to perform at the required standard for the WIL practitioner role. It appeared the majority of participants felt ill-prepared for their will roles. They hadn't received specific WIL institute guidance or training and hence, were seeking this from those already within 'expert' roles, both within and external to the institute. Each participant placed slightly different importance on the relationships, yet some commonalties appear and are presented in Figure 4.3.

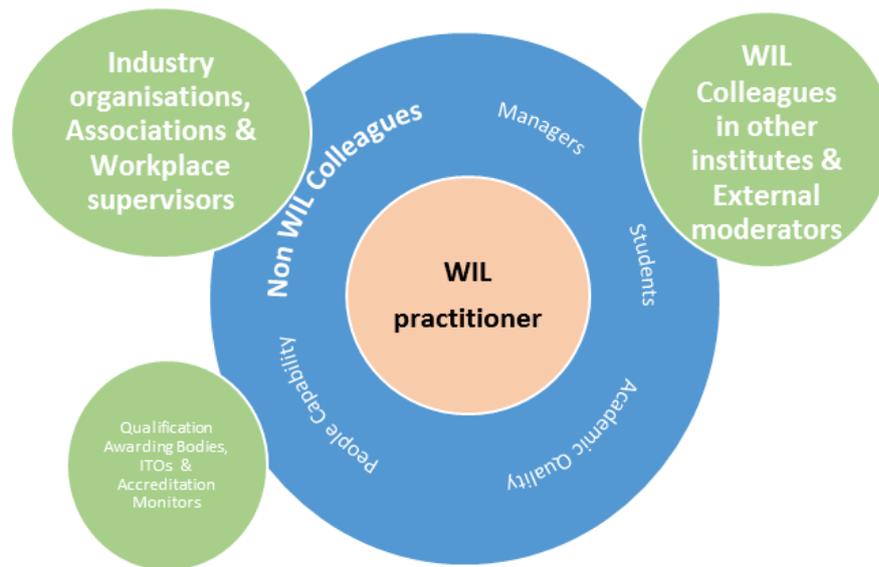


Figure 4.3: WIL practitioner relationships and networks

A significant finding was that all participants described discussions with immediate colleagues (non-WIL practitioners) as vital to assisting them. Not because participants felt their colleagues' perspectives were more valuable over WIL colleagues, but due to the fact that participants were not aware of others teaching WIL. For example:

To be honest I wouldn't even know which departments were doing placements
(Jamie)

It's hard to share anything because, where do we share it from, I don't hardly know
anyone from engineering (Darcy)

All participants expressed their reliance on immediate non-WIL colleagues for guidance and support as a consequence of feeling isolated from other WIL practitioners. Although all expressed a desire to collaborate and learn from colleagues who were teaching WIL, they did not know how to go about identifying and connecting with these staff. Half of the participants were the only person teaching WIL within their immediate team and/ or faculty. Two of the participants, in the same faculty, were not aware that each other had a WIL teaching component. Both reported themselves as the only one teaching an Industry Project within the faculty, which was not in fact the case. This 'invisibility' element to WIL appears to be hindering internal connections, relationships and community.

Participants discussed the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with people they felt had superior knowledge and expertise in teaching WIL (Figure 4.3). Some WIL 'experts' were internal to the institute. Eden described the faculty administrator who has 25 years of

historic knowledge on how WIL is managed for the nursing field, but this appeared to be an exception. For the majority of the participants the WIL 'experts' were external to the institutes, they were WIL colleagues in other institutes teaching on the same programme, external moderators, industry organisations and associations, qualification awarding bodies and ITOs.

Seven of the eight participants described having exceptionally strong and valuable relationships with WIL colleagues in other institutes. Email and phone conversations were used to seek feedback, reassurance, brainstorming, confirmation of values and sharing predicaments. In some instances the WIL practitioner in the other institute had originally been allocated by the institute as the external moderator for the participant's programme. This administrative connection had developed into a longer term collaborative relationship that was now not centred on just the moderation process. Sacha described multiple relationships with WIL practitioners and moderators in other institutes as central to her performance, visiting them annually with professional development funds as part of her personal development as a WIL practitioner:

I've had good contact with my peers in other institutions that are teaching event management; there's only four so it's easy for us to have a little network. And we're all in complete agreement that we should just not reinvent the wheel, work smarter not harder, and you know just share as much as possible. We're not in competition with each other, but we all have a different approach. There's been no formality, I've just learned on the go, I listen, the ad hoc conversations ... (Sacha)

No other participant described having developed the relationships to this extent. In this instance Sacha collaborated with this external network of colleagues before considering using immediate colleagues. These relationships appear to hold more value for her, this may be related to Sacha being the sole teacher of a programme.

Industry relationships were also of particular significance to all the participants (Figure 4.3). They described these as 'strong', 'robust', 'ongoing' and 'daily communications'. Participants outlined the time factors involved in maintaining these relationships, but also stressed the importance of maintaining them:

The most important thing is having strong connections with that community, with the early childhood centres ... to keep that network running smoothly and ... make sure that there's enough communication between everybody. I'm passionate about that, I think it's important to have somebody that cares to nurture those relationships (Billie)

The participants felt that industry was a key stakeholder in designing and evaluating the on- job learning and hence had a valuable point of view. They felt this needed to be expanded, and there were still opportunities to expand collaboration with industry but acknowledged that it was time intensive. Qualification awarding bodies and ITOs were also identified as sources of WIL expertise:

I've got a very good relationship with the members of the ITO I'm free to call them at any time to talk to them, so that's very valuable. (Hillary)

Although participants identified line management as providing significant support, only Eden had access to a senior manager with WIL specific accountabilities. Overall, there appears to be a higher than expected collaborative learning with people external to the institutes and lower than expected internal to the institutes. This section has reviewed the findings of 'Who' the practitioners are learning from, the next section explores what they gained from these connections, relationships and collaborations.

Perspectives of the value gained from the relationships

In some instances, participants were aware of and explicitly stated what they felt they gained from the relationships. In other instances the value gained was implied; both examples have been included in this study. In order to provide clarity and structure during the analysis process, the Wegner et al. (2011) five cycle value creation framework was used to identify and categorise the values gained from network and community of practice involvement. An adaption of this conceptual framework is used to present the values (Figure 4.4).

The participants described a wide variety of past experiences and examples related to each of the five cycles presented in Figure 4.4. Yet the majority of these experiences relate to the first three cycles - activities and interactions that provide immediate value, potential value and application value.

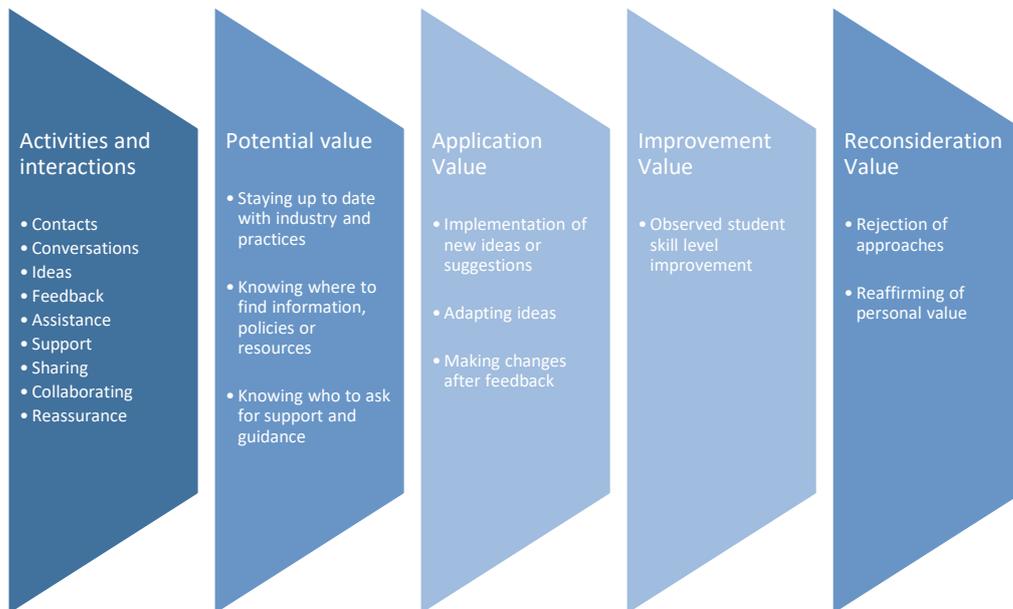


Figure 4.4: Perceptions of value gained from the connections and relationships (adapted from Wegner, Trayner and de Laat, 2011, p.34)

Activities and interactions

Participants provided examples of the value gained from making the connection with others, and out of connecting with others. It appears the act of connecting with someone in itself is valuable. The majority of the participants placed emphasis on the act of creating a network of people that they can learn from, go to with problems, get reassurance from, or that assists them to do their jobs better, as extremely valuable to them. Shirley describes the act of connecting and networking with others both in the institute and in industry as really important in being able to fulfil the WIL role effectively:

I work with industry, students work with industry. So through the years I've had connections with [Economic development agencies] They were the ones who really connected me with small businesses around... [Business development officer] works with industry he links me up with all the businesses that he's working with, so that's how I get some of my projects. (Shirley)

Participants appear to place high emphasis on building and maintaining connections, networks and relationships, particularly with industry organisations, industry associations and WIL practitioners in other institutes.

All participants described experiences of what they immediately got out of the connections such as useful conversations, gaining or giving feedback, passing on contacts, liaising, picking up ideas and tips. A couple of activities appeared strongly in the interviews. Firstly, seeking reassurance from other WIL practitioners that their performance was effective by bench-marking their practices against the practices of others. Secondly, seeking feedback from industry that the student WIL experiences were relevant, appropriate and assessed accordingly.

Although none of the participants had actually taken part in any professional development courses directly relating to developing WIL expertise, several participants explained attendance on other cross disciplinary courses within the institute helped to create cross- disciplinary contacts and relationships useful in teaching WIL.

Overall the participants were unanimous in their feelings that they could not fulfil their roles effectively without connections, networks and relationships with many others. The act of connecting in itself appeared extremely valuable and many types of conversations, assistance, passing on information and feedback were useful, but in particular, seeking performance reassurance was important to the practitioners.

Potential Value

Participants described examples of experiences where the value from activities and interactions has potential for realisation in the future. Examples of gaining access to resources, knowledge or contacts that would be useful were identified. At times it was difficult to distinguish if the participant meant that something provided immediate value (as in Activities or interactions) or for future use, or both. This is not necessarily important for this study, of importance is any particular trend amongst the participants' perspectives.

Wegner et al. (2011) identify potential value as taking different forms; a piece of information (*human capital*), a connection or social relationship (*social capital*), a resource (*tangible capital*), recognition or status (*reputational capital*), and finally a learning activity (*learning capital*). This structure was used to identify the value based experiences as they emerged in the interviews.

Experiences of gaining fresh perspectives or keeping up to date, from community and network involvement (*human capital*) were described by participants. Darcy explains the value of being on chefs' industry associations' committees:

I'm kept in touch with what's actually going on in the world. (Darcy)

The majority of the participants stressed the value of their industry relationships in keeping relevancy with the 'real' or present day industry practices and expressed how essential this understanding is to their teaching practice. Examples were provided of how industry knowledge was incorporated into their teaching, used in designing assessments and had impacts on the student learning experiences.

Of significance were the comments relating to 'knowing who to ask' (*social capital*). Participants expressed their frustrations in not knowing who to ask for help with certain concerns. These appeared to relate particularly to internal institute concerns such as policies and procedures. There was a pattern also of seeking out 'experts' for guidance and knowledge:

She's been here about twenty years ... really knows her stuff around clinical placements.....guidelines, policies and procedures. (Eden)

He's got the previous teaching experience, and he's also got 40 years in the industry so he's my sort of go to person for advice. (Hillary)

There was a general feeling amongst the majority of the participants that there wasn't necessarily one person to go for all WIL related information or resources (*tangible capital*). Very few participants mentioned gaining access to WIL generic resources, such as assessments, documents, tools and procedures via their networks and relationships. In fact, several of the participants mentioned the difficulty in accessing shared resources. Gill mentioned:

So I had no resources, no anything, it was all entirely out of my head. (Gill)

The lack of access to shared policies, procedures and resources appears to be a common concern. Another common concern that emerged was that all participants felt very strongly about reputation - the potential shared assets of the group or community (*reputational capital*). The reputation of both the institute, the programme, the profession and self, appear to be very important to all the participants. The participants see themselves as representing the institutions, at the forefront of the industry/ academic divide. They see themselves representing the industry profession to which they either belonged, or still belong, as many still practice professionally. Lastly, they appear to see themselves as representing the reputation of the qualification for which they are responsible:

When it comes to really maintaining positive relationships with external stakeholders, you want to maintain a good reputation for [the institute]. (Shirley)

In this vignette from Sacha, it is possible to feel the complex nature of the role of a WIL practitioner, but also the inter-relationships between the value placed on WIL, reputation, and the autonomy required:

It's about promoting my students and it's promoting our relationships with industry. So if something good has happened with a student who worked at [organisation]. I will call marketing, I will write a media release, I will connect the student, and I will look for those opportunities before someone asks me. That is work that I'm not instructed to do by the institution, but it's work that is valuable, it's a win-win-win. It's a win for the institution, it's a win for the student, and it's a win for the host organisation. (Sacha)

As outlined by Sacha, the role of a WIL practitioner is more than just classroom teaching. The participants in this study take their roles seriously and with passion to perform well. However with this comes a 'weight' upon their shoulder to perform to uphold the reputation of the many stakeholders. Potential value is important to practitioners in staying up to date, knowing who to ask, accessing useful resources and maintaining professional reputations.

Application Value

The participants provided examples of how they gained value from applying the knowledge or information that they had acquired from the interactions and relationships (Figure 4.5). Their comments indicate there had been a change in practice as they applied the new found knowledge to their situation. Participants talked of implementing new ideas, incorporating industry feedback or making changes to the assessments.

Improvement Value

Several participants inferred that performance was better as a consequence of involvement. Although it would be expected that changes in practice could improve performance, possibly observed in better designed learning tasks or assessments and consequential student achievements; the participants did not explicitly identify this in the interviews.

Reconsideration Value

The last cycle of value is reconsideration value (Figure 4.4). Several of the comments infer participants have reconsidered their values through community involvement. Some participants explain their interactions with others assisted them to reject or reaffirm their reasoning for the use of certain strategies or for identifying their underlying beliefs. Working alongside another practitioner assisted Sacha to reaffirm her beliefs:

I've seen the assessments that [another institute] used around their practicum, and they leaned heavily on the host to assess the student, there were a number of interviews with the student and they had to meet certain criteria and I really reject that kind of approach because I feel the host has no experience on assessment necessarily and a lot of things are subjective, just didn't feel like there was fair on the host or the student. (Sacha)

Yet you're actually not in course for thirteen weeks, you're in the industry working for free. If I was one of those students, I'd be questioning it. (Darcy)

Gill was reconsidering the whole WIL framework as it applied to them:

No if I redesigned, not just redesign the industry project paper, I want to redesign the entire degree. I want the industry project to be a practicum and to be the whole degree. This is for me how education works ... you know it's an apprenticeship model. Rather than me working alongside you like in an apprenticeship, I'm working alongside this bunch of students who've set up a business. (Gill)

This section presented findings on relationships important in assisting the participants to perform more effectively, and, secondly, the value they got from these relationships. Both internal and external institute relationships are many and varied, and participants seek out and place high value on maintaining relationships with people they see as having WIL expertise; mainly with WIL colleagues in other institutes, moderators, Industry organisations, associations and workplace supervisors. They believe these relationships require strengthening and nurturing. Participants utilise the knowledge of close non-WIL teaching colleagues because they are unaware of the 'whereabouts' of WIL colleagues due to the hidden nature of the WIL experience within their organisation's programmes. The act of connecting, in itself, appeared extremely valuable and many types of conversations, assistance, passing on information and feedback were useful but in particular seeking performance reassurance. Potential value is important to the practitioners in staying up to date, knowing who to ask, accessing useful resources and maintaining professional

reputations. The application of their collaborative learning leads to changes in practices, possibly performance improvement and reconsideration of beliefs and value systems of WIL practice. This leads into the next section which explores the participants' perspectives of the wider institutional context and role and benefits of WIL.

4.5 The WIL domain-pedagogy and policy

This section reviews the data in relation to the research questions relating to *Work integrated learning- pedagogy and practice* (Chapter three).

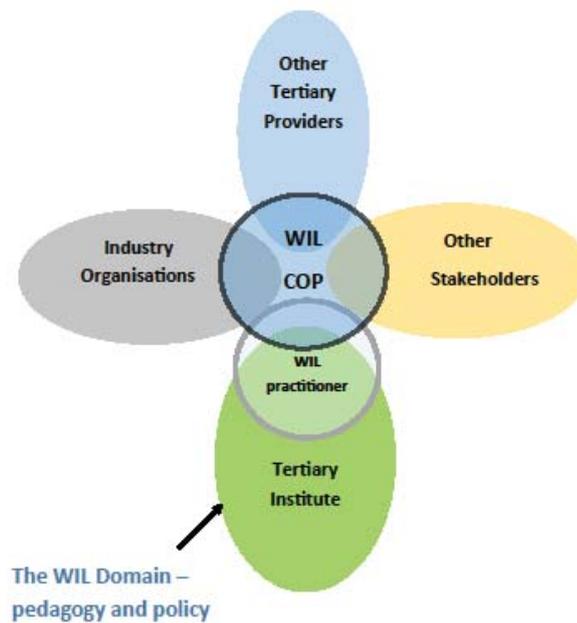


Figure 4.5 The WIL Domain- pedagogy and policy

The first section reviewed shared terminology and language. The second section reviewed recognised relationships and the value of these to participants. This section will review how the participants perceived their collaborative learning relationships are impacted by institute practices (Figure 4.5). This section is divided into two parts, the role of WIL as a pedagogical strategy and institute policy and practices.

WIL Pedagogy

Participants were emphatic about the value of using WIL as a teaching and learning strategy, and of its benefits to students. They saw WIL as valuable experiential learning in real life environments

and often the best way for practical learning of relevant industry skills. Comments referred to reflection activities making connections between theory and practice, for example:

So it's really about linking their academic experience and their learning with industry. (Shirley)

Participants value WIL as a learning strategy for the industry awareness and employability aspects, for example:

I appreciate it as the most crucial role in any programme ... we're teaching teachers, and they don't know exactly what they're getting themselves into until they step foot into an early childhood centre ... it as such a critical part of the programme. (Billie)

It gives the students an opportunity to say "ooh, maybe this isn't for me", or "wow, what a fantastic experience, I love it". It actually often leads to a job, they've got a little foot in the door...at least 60 to 70 % of studentsgot work. (Darcy)

Overall, the passion for WIL as a pedagogy with multi-faceted benefits was evident. None of the participants queried the benefits and many felt it should be utilised more widely. An area of concern raised was whether the institutes also valued the pedagogy as much as them.

Common Purpose

There was a perception from participants that their institutes didn't share the same commitment, shared interest or passion about the value of WIL as a pedagogy. Recurring themes in participants' comments were that WIL is possibly undervalued by the institutes, used for cheapness or to free up teaching staff. Sacha summed up many of these feelings when discussing the cost implications of WIL to institutes:

I feel like that's the underlying rationale from the institute's perspective, it's not because there's so many great things about work integrative learning so I'm not questioning that they should be in the programme, there should be more of them in fact, but the institution just looks at it like, you hardly have to teach, it's a bit of monitoring, it's all happening off site. If it's handled well it could have great media outcomes, great employment outcomes, there's so many things that come from it. ...but the institution's driving interest in those placements is that they don't really cost anything. (Sacha)

There appears to be strong feelings around *pedagogical changes* to WIL courses that threatened or impacted the value of WIL to stakeholders, and in particular the learning of students. Several participants were quite vocal about recent or impending changes that reduced the time immersed in industry. Gill was upset that a practicum had been replaced by an academic research based project:

We brand ourselves and purport to be producing *work ready graduates* and so by replacing a work integrated learning element with a research driven element as the main part of the study, you've just stomped on the prime employability influencer. (Gill)

Internationalisation and the consequential changes in the student demographic, for some programmes, was raised as one of the issues impacting the way that WIL was now being approached by their institutes. The participants identified difficulty in finding meaningful placements for international students. As a consequence it was perceived that the practical aspects were being replaced with research projects, in some instances at the expense of the benefits to domestic students:

It [the changes to the curriculum] got agreed and they openly said, it's easier to get international students through. They have no interest in the domestic market, they have no interest in industry, and they have no interest in really what was best for the students. Giving international students practical experience is very difficult. (Gill)

This section explored the shared commitment to using WIL within the curriculum. Some participants expressed their concerns that WIL was undervalued and others concerned it is used for cost economies by the institutes. Several expressed concern that the growing international student demographic could further impact utilisation of WIL. This next section explores the role of shared practices to the participants.

Common practices

A core element of a community of practice is the shared practice, frameworks and perspectives that guide the community on the best way forward. When discussing access to 'best practice' resources to assist with course design and the practicalities of teaching WIL, none of the participants were aware of any such documents, for example:

Honestly, completely nothing, none at all. Where do you get resources? (Gill)

During the interviews several participants mentioned *integration* between learning in industry and learning in the classroom, as central to the design of experiences and assessments, which required shared practice or consideration. Two varying perspectives were presented by Sacha (event management) and Billie (education):

No there's no integration in the assessments. The actual assessments couldn't be more far removed ... from the practical experience. So there's nothing around how well that they've done their placement, there's no feedback from the host, it just comes down to a big chunky report. So there's a lot of flaws in it, so there's a massive gap between what the programme asks you to do and what the assessments require you to do. They actually don't have anything in common in a way. (Sacha)

In education I think it's just a natural integration anyway, because it's all about being a reflective practitioner... lots of our assessments do have [integration] ... it's such an important part of being a teacher. (Billie)

There are valuable practices and resources that could be shared from those teaching WIL in education, where the design of the delivery and assessments should have been more considered from an educational perspective. Overall, the participants desired greater access to shared resources and felt that institute guidance 'best practice' and curriculum development could be stronger. This section has reviewed the participants perceptions on shared commitment, purpose and practices for WIL pedagogy, the next section will look at the wider institute policy issues that were raised.

WIL policy and practices

This section investigates participants' perspectives of the role that institutes can play in leading and guiding with conversations around WIL formal support networks, policy frameworks and resourcing.

Institute support networks

Institute created WIL networks do not appear to exist. When discussing the internal institute WIL networks and community the majority of the participants identified feelings of disconnect and isolation that impacted their performance as a WIL practitioner. Comments related to being unaware of who could assist them in teaching WIL, not knowing who else was teaching WIL, both within the department and cross-disciplinary, and feelings of being the 'one and only course'. For example, Hillary states:

I am not only the tutor I am the programme manager, so therefore I am the only person on the programme. so you're sort of isolated as well. (Hillary)

All participants made comments indicating that the strengthening of the institute WIL community would be extremely beneficial to them, particularly cross- disciplinary. They provided multiple examples of how they could learn from each other in getting together, from new perspectives, stories, sharing resources, challenges, exchanging contacts or assessments:

Could you imagine what putting us in a room together would be like, everyone bringing their riches to the table, it's only going to be great. (Sacha)

See how the people operate and what we do, get some ideas ...do they visit while the students are at work experience, do they do it on a daily basis, or a weekly basis. (Darcy)

The way we allocate placements perhaps, or the database that we use, or we actually use software to allocate placements, that concept could definitely be shared throughout ...certainly finding out who else could utilise that system might be helpful. (Eden)

Overall, the participants felt that the present internal institute WIL community was difficult to identify and that formal support networks for WIL practitioners did not exist. They expressed an enthusiasm and desire to connect in order to collaborate and share practices. When asked what form an institute WIL network might best look like, there was an even split of preference for online against face-to-face, some acknowledging they are comfortable with both styles. None of the participants were aware of any institute-led teaching and learning online forums, either WIL specific or generic, presently operating within their institutes.

WIL advocacy

Bridging the academic and industry divide can raise operational and legal concerns that require guidance, legal expertise and institute policy and systems. Many of the participants identified the lack of and benefits of a central advice office and, in particular, an advocate for WIL:

I think that the institution should have some kind of stakeholder management or advocacy role orsome kind of umbrella support, for everyone who has to implement these kind of things into their programmes. No one knows what's going on. (Sacha)

Several participants mentioned the lack of a central management system for WIL that could provide expertise and policy guidance in relation to managing students in industry, such as standard contracts, procedures and industry contact management. Although participants (nursing and education) mentioned having robust procedures in place there is an overall feeling amongst the rest of the participants that there are a lack of WIL policies and guidance.

I didn't have any kind of contract with these people, it was purely ad hoc and it was purely just a gentleman's agreement. (Gill)

I'm sure there's like a strict guideline that you're supposed to vet the area first and make sure it's safe for our students, which we haven't done in the past... I'm sure now there's this new health and safety guides out, that we've got to follow. (Jamie)

Several comments discussed feelings of vulnerability in areas of health and safety and risk management, for example:

...make sure those policies are in place. If we are teaching, or expecting people to teach this stuff, then it's our responsibility. ... it'll be their butts on the line if something happened to one of our students in a workplace situation, ...you know what are our insurance responsibilities, what, where, how do we manage this alternative that it is a safe workplace, who goes in and checks it out, who does the police checks that we're not actually sending them into some kind of front shop for a gang. There isn't a culture of risk management. (Gill)

There were a few comment that highlighted the complexities of WIL and participants felt further conversations were required around the status of 'employee' versus 'student', this was posing issues for participants and industry and required flexible policies, for example:

All my students are employed and they do their placement in the place of employment. Therefore when they're back at work, are they employees or are they students? (Hillary)

Participants felt more guidance over contractual, legal, health and safety and out-of-hours emergency concerns was required. Several would like to see some kind of centralised leadership, advocacy and management for WIL. It appears that conversations, consultation and engagement around policy development is an area of potential collaboration and shared learning. Those with developed process could have much to share. The last part of this section relates to the allocation of resourcing by the institutes.

Resourcing WIL

Resourcing WIL was a recurring trend throughout the interviews. The time intensity of relationship building, visiting students and recruiting workplace supervisors was raised, for example:

Often takes a whole afternoon to talk to one chef for instance. (Darcy)

Finding supervisors for people is taking up a heck of a lot of time. (Hillary)

Participants felt that management were unaware of the skills required and the time intensity of the role. Yet it appeared, some participants perceived the extra work to be worthwhile to the overall learning experience for students. A vignette that wonderfully sum up the emotions and passion that the participants brought to the interviews is

that's kind of why it's undervalued as well, my role, because my manager sees this role as an administrative role, <laughter> and I've said "well fine if that's what you want to do, but you know, good luck placing students with somebody who has no idea and doesn't have the relationships and doesn't understand how practicums work". (Billie)

Practitioners are feeling undervalued and at times under resourced. Overall, this section has explored practitioners' perceptions of communities of practice that relate to their institutes. The practitioners would like stronger institute support networks, centralised control and management of WIL, advocacy and leadership of WIL, and a greater understanding and recognition of the time intensity of the role by the management.

4.6 The WIL practitioner- Personal and professional development

This section of the findings reviews the data in relation to the research questions on *personal and professional development in relation to WIL* (Chapter three). As the aim of this study was to investigate perceptions of situated learning within communities of practice, personal development has been touched upon in many of the other sections.

The participants were asked how they had prepared themselves for teaching WIL and if their skill set has changed as a consequence of teaching WIL. Participants felt the WIL role required a more extensive set of skills to someone only involved in classroom teaching. This included industry expertise, soft skills and teaching competence. Participants described possessing a range of industry specialist and technical skills or clinical practice, including culinary arts, nursing,

expertise, etc. Participants also related the importance of soft skills and teaching competence, for example:

I think it's a different set of skills... a wide range of knowledge, the projects have different topics... to be able to guide the students properly ...I have to have some understanding of how industry works, and my industry background really contributes a lot to that ... technical expertise and then a lot of patience. (Shirley)

It helps to know the industry, to know what to expect ... what it looks like from the other end, to have industry experience is key ... a confident communicator and being able to build relationships is absolutely key as well because that's what it's all about when you're placing students and, ... come up against some difficult situations, you need to be able to resolve those in a positive way. (Billie)

Several comments referred to the perception that teaching and learning professional development as being undervalued by the institutes. Many comments demonstrated a strength of conviction and personal passion to develop as an educator:

I love learning, love learning, love being pushed to be the best I can be. (Gill)

Every year I do go to the teaching and learning forum ... symposium, national conferences I've been to several, and ... Workshops run by Ako Aotearoa. I write my own professional development basically, I love learning, I love developing myself. So it was more a self-driven [process]. (Shirley)

Others echoed Shirley's feelings that personal development required self-drive and autonomy. Others felt more guidance would be beneficial. There was an element of 'ad-hoc' to some of the personal development, for example:

No one's actually sat down with me and said let's make a plan. It's just kind of happened on the go... accidentally. (Sacha)

In general, there was quite a range of comments in relation to professional development. One participant was not aware of the existence of a professional development department; one commented he didn't participate due to the poor quality of opportunities presented. Several participants commented on the limited value they gained from formalised workshop style training courses, for example:

We go to a lot of workshops and walk away with a folder of stuff that we just file. (Sacha)

None of the participants had attended any formal professional development relating to WIL or been made aware of the learning theories underpinning the role of work integrated learning. Every participant said they would find such training beneficial. This vignette from Sacha, summed up many of the comments relating to personal and professional development:

I don't know why it's not more thought through. Especially when you're dealing with a very new teacher, you can shape and mould that person so easily to be in good habits and producing quality outputs ... so I think a lot of it's come from myself. I've had zero obstacles as far as my development, but I've been the driver, probably for eighty percent of my development. Who's driving it, there hasn't even been like a co-piloting, there's been an accidental, a serendipitous co-piloting of my development as a teacher or academic. (Sacha)

This section has identified that there was consensus over the feeling that a wide variety of skills were required to fulfil the WIL practitioner role. Participants would welcome greater guidance from the institutes in developing as WIL practitioner. The majority perceived that educational professional development was under-valued and there were also mixed views as to whether formal training course attendance was the best way to acquire educational knowledge and skills.

4.7 Conclusion

The majority of the participants have similar perceptions on the value of collaborating and learning from others within their WIL networks and community of practice. The variability in WIL terminology does appear to be causing some concerns. Participants would like more clarity and guidance of these issues from their institutes. Participants are developing extensive networks, both internal and external to the institutes, as they reflect on their WIL teaching practices and seek out those they identify as holding expertise, to assist in their development. These relationships require strengthening and nurturing. Values gained from their collaborative learning relationships are varied and many. The act of connecting with others and seeking performance reassurance is extremely valuable. Staying up to date, knowing who to ask,

accessing useful resources and maintaining professional reputations is also important. Sharing practices was acknowledged as valuable yet limited internally.

Overall, the participants desired greater access to institute guidance, shared resources and 'best practice'. A wide variety of skills are required to fulfil the WIL practitioner role and greater guidance from their institutes is welcomed. On-the-job learning within a community of practice, although not always conscious, was the default development strategy. Possibly more out of necessity rather than choice. Learning from others is identified as exceptionally valuable and participants would like institute assistance to develop stronger networks. The participants in this study are passionate educators, who believe that WIL is a pedagogical strategy with multi-faceted benefits for all stakeholders.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This study has explored the perceptions of eight WIL practitioners across two polytechnics on their perceptions of participating and learning within communities of practice. The study also considered their experiences of teaching WIL and where they go for guidance. The findings point to WIL practitioners relying heavily on learning 'on-the-job'. The participants are passionate educators, who believe strongly in the role of WIL as an effective teaching strategy and would like to develop further as practitioners. As a consequence, they are seeking out relationships and expertise, often outside of their institutions, as they benchmark their practices against others. Connecting with others is a process they identified to be extremely important to them. Participants did however struggle to identify fellow WIL practitioners within their own institutes. The hidden nature of WIL and the range of terminology being used to describe the WIL experiences is causing issues of identification and hindering networking. Participants would like greater institute guidance in networking with others, and in developing standard terms, practices and policies for WIL. This chapter will discuss these findings in greater detail in relation to the reviewed literature. The discussion is structured under the following four sections, *WIL terminology - common language, WIL community - value of involvement, WIL domain - pedagogy and policy, and WIL practitioner - personal and professional development.*

5.2 WIL Terminology – common language

The participants in this study identified issues in relation to terminology in practice. They identified their confusion at the proliferation of terms in use and the lack of clear definitions. They used a multitude of terms, sometimes interchangeably, during the interviews. Several authors have indicated the importance to the WIL community of developing a shared understanding of terms and definitions in common use (Patrick, Peach & Pocknee, 2008; Orrell, 2011). This study would echo that sentiment and agree with Coll and Zegwaard (2011b) who are concerned that there is still little agreement on WIL definitions. If a stronger WIL community of practice is to develop both internal and external to the institutes, shared language and understanding is essential. CoPs are groups that interact regularly and share a concern, commitment and a passion for learning and doing things better (Wenger, 1999). Shared repertoire of language, practices and

understanding play an instrumental part in the development of a CoP (St. Clair, 2007). Some of the issues and implications of terminology are now discussed in greater depth.

Different terms for different stakeholders

This lack of consistency of use of WIL terminology echoes the findings of both Brown (2010) and Patrick et al. (2008), who state that different perspectives and imperatives can cause confusion for stakeholders. Inconsistent use of terms has multiple consequences including mixed expectations for students, industry partners and internal stakeholders, such as management. When terms are interpreted differently by senior managers they lead to changes in delivery style and resourcing that impact on the student experience. Patrick et al. (2008) state that different terminology can also affect educational institute senior management engagement with WIL as a concept and as a process, with responses varying from “confusion or enthusiastic adoption, through to effectively ignoring it and adopting a ‘steady as she goes’ approach” (p. 10). It is important all stakeholders are considered when deciding which WIL terms to use and that shared understanding is achieved.

Changing demographic and WIL branding

Several of the participants reported recent changes in terminology as a consequence of the changing student demographic. The use of the term *internship* has been used to appeal to the growing international student market. Both Groenewald et al. (2011) and McLennan and Keating (2008) noted as pressures increase on tertiary institutes to attract students, particularly international students, programme differentiation and branding may include changing and new terms. Eden noted the adoption of *clinical learning experience* as a strategy to differentiate and brand the practical element within the programme to prospective students as ‘different and better’ from that of competitor institutes. However, it was evident that several participants had recognised the risk to the institutes to continue to use terms without clarity for all stakeholders. They identified risk to the industry reputation, the quality of the student experience and the ability of staff to collaborate effectively. With the expectation that the international student market will continue to grow this needs to be addressed. The dilemma then for institutes is agreeing on terms that are understood by the stakeholders, yet flexible enough to make programmes appear attractive to students who lack explicit understanding of the terms. Smiegel and Harris (2008)

state that students, as stakeholders, should be provided with a clear understanding of the objectives and expectations of the WIL curriculum in which they engage. Clarity of terms for all stakeholders is essential to avoid confusion, mixed expectations and to ensure WIL is effectively used as a teaching and learning strategy.

Defining WIL

Although there is a global shift to the use of WIL as an overarching and encompassing term (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011b; McLennan & Keating, 2008; Patrick et al., 2008) this study showed that WIL practitioners are not using the term in practice. It was expected that the term will become more familiar to WIL practitioners and other stakeholders in the future. Coll and Zegwaard (2011b) state that researchers and academics may use the term 'WIL' whereas other stakeholders may use more practical terms such as practicum, placement or internship. In this study all of the participants were using practical terms. The use of the term WIL and the range of other terms to describe the variety of learning experiences is based on lack of prior knowledge, guidance from the institute and the practitioner community. Kimble et al. (2008) state that adoption of the shared language and jargon would be expected when joining a CoP. In this study participants may have considered the interview experience as a part of joining or belonging to the wider academic WIL CoP.

Participants indicated a desire for greater institute guidance and some had even sought clarity of terms through personal research. Institutes could look to providing the WIL community with greater engagement and consultation on which terms are appropriate for which context and whether WIL will be adopted as the over-arching term. Institutes could consider the adoption of a structure such as the Taxonomy of work integrated learning (TWIL) that has four distinct areas of practice (Table 5.1), which can serve as a guide for practitioners when considering appropriate practice in an educational setting (Groenewald et al. 2011). This taxonomy appears to be a significant stage in the global interrelationship of terminology and the four areas include:

Table 5.1: Taxonomy of work integrated learning

Taxonomy of work integrated learning (TWIL) (Groenewald, Drysdale, Chiupka, & Johnston, 2011)
Community or service focused learning and employment -to develop employment understandings of civic responsibility.
Professional practice includes all academic work experiences in which a student must participate to complete their academic programme. The intentional learning outcomes of the work integrated learning experience are targeted towards the student developing workplace competency. Included in this category are apprenticeships, internships, professional practicums and some forms of cooperative education; which provide an environment for learning from observation, modelling and coaching from professional supervisors in the workplace. The focus is on the student developing professional skills and career development within a particular trade or field.
Field and industry based work experiences , whilst not mandatory for the completion of the academic programme, focus on allowing the student to explore various career options within their field of study. These experiences provide unique opportunities to develop workplace skills and gain a sense of career direction.
The last category in the WIL taxonomy includes other work-integrated learning opportunities . This category incorporates work related experiences that the student, applies for without the academic supervision of faculty and that are not tied or incorporated to the curriculum or programme. These experiences include work studies, work exchange, leadership programmes, teaching assistantships and research assistantships.

Awareness of the above TWIL would go some way to providing a framework for engaging discussion within WIL CoPs around the terminology presently in use. The global perspective may require consideration due to the issues raised in relation to the changing demographic and the growth in international students.

If, as is predicted, WIL is likely to continue to be integrated into more curricula in order to enhance employability of graduates (Baker, 2014; Brimble & Freudenberg, 2010; Martin et al., 2011), and that WIL programmes may be used to brand and differentiate institutes further (Patrick et al., 2008); this would validate the need to agree on shared understanding of terminology. Brown (2010) suggests that institutes should develop a glossary of terms that acknowledges the terminology and definitions used in different discipline areas. Better still institutions could engage WIL stakeholders and communities to discuss the common terms and WIL types in use, to find agreement and a common set of terms or glossary for all its programmes.

The issues identified in this study with terminology are an unexpected outcome, but not one to be overlooked. The study did not set out to investigate the implications of WIL terminology in use but has identified that shared language is a basic but core element of a Community of Practice. For community members to work together they need to share language and interestingly the participants were very aware of this being an issue and a hindrance. They would like clarity.

5.3 WIL community of practice – relationships and value of involvement

This section will discuss communities of practice (learning partnership) and networks (set of connections or relationships) as perceived by participants in relation to their role as a WIL practitioner. This section is assisting to answer the additional research question of where WIL practitioners go for guidance in relation to teaching WIL.

Networks and community- a social activity

The participants within this study were able to easily identify the people, teams and departments that provided them with information, advice, support and guidance to more effectively fulfil their WIL roles and develop as practitioners. They identified an extensive range of relevant networks, connections and learning partnerships. These networks were identified as critical to their development and performance. Networks can be viewed as a set of nodes and links which assist learning, such as information flows, helpful linkages, joint problem solving, and knowledge creation (Wenger et al., 2011).

Participants' connections could be separated to those internal to the organisation and those external to the organisation. Interestingly, most participants found it easier to connect with WIL practitioners in other institutes than within their own organisations. This relates back to the hidden nature of many WIL courses, lack of identified organisational WIL networks and the ease of identifying an equivalent faculty member in another institute offering the same program. Much of this network development by participants was identified as self-driven. The majority of participants felt they went beyond the 'call of duty' to develop their network and relationships. Developing these relationships, although beneficial to both themselves and consequently the student learning experience, are labour intensive. Although they were aware of learning from these connections and partnerships it was evident that they did not identify with these as *Communities of Practice*. Wenger (1999) states that this is common place and that other

characteristics help identify the existence of communities of practice, such as collaboration, learning on the job, helping others, sharing practices and resources, and developing shared understandings. The predominant terms used by the participants were *connections* and *relationships* to describe the concepts of networks. All participants discussed the importance of making social connections and maintaining relationships with people that are beneficial to them now and in the future. This reflects the literature on social learning theory that highlights social connection and participation at the core of the process (Wegner, 1999). Of significance was the recurrence of the importance to develop connections with 'experts'.

Seeking expertise

In this study participants were actively reaching out and engaging with others, with the desire to enhance competence and WIL expertise. Participation in a network or a belonging to community, active engagement will normally have a specific purpose (Van Aalst, 2003). Participants related to their need to connect with others whom they recognised as having higher levels of knowledge, expertise or access to resources. This included administrators, managers, academics and external education and industry authorities. Eden described how she learns from an institute administrator, with 20 years' experience of managing placements, and Hillary discussed learning from a funeral director with 40 years' industry experience and a teaching background. Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning suggests that a learner acquires expertise by engaging, or co-participating, in social situations. Van Aalst (2003) expand further stating that practitioners seeking guidance to develop, actively identify those with the knowledge to address their issues. Although there have been many studies investigating expertise (Dunkin, 1995; Eraut, 1994; Glaser, Chi, & Farr 1988) and some investigating the wide skill set required by WIL practitioners (Cooper & Orrell, 1999; Lazarus, et al., 2011; Von Treuer et al., 2012) there are no studies defining WIL practitioner expertise. For the WIL CoP, understanding what constitutes WIL expertise would be of immense practical and community value. Expertise, and identifying those who hold it, are valuable resources for CoPs. Learning from those with expertise and knowledge, is part of the process of acculturation and engagement into a CoP.

It also appears that participants primarily identified their team or immediate colleagues as their main community of *teaching* practice. Belonging to a group, such as immediate colleagues, is significant in developing identity as a teacher (Viskovic, 2005). It is significant to note that all the participants mentioned at some point that they were the only staff member fulfilling WIL tasks

within their immediate teams. In some instances, that was not correct. The participants felt isolated from other WIL practitioners yet did not know how to go about identifying them.

This section has highlighted the value that the participants placed on connections and collaboration with people, particularly experts, both internal and external to the institutes. The next section will discuss the values gained from the relationships.

Values gained from community involvement

This section considers the main research question, investigating the perceptions of the participants of the value gained from CoP involvement. The study utilised the Wenger et al. (2011) five cycles of value creation to assist in the data analysis stage. It was used in categorising the value that the participants perceived they gained from network and community involvement. The examples of value gained by the participants could be classed as activities and interactions (immediate value) or knowledge capital (potential value). There was a lot of discussion around the *immediate value* of conversations, information provision, guidance, feedback received and connections made. This finding is compatible with the literature on the benefits of collaborative knowledge building for WIL practitioners (Brown, 2010; Coll & Zegwaard, 2012; Orrell, 2011; von Treuer et al., 2012). The participants also identified the importance of having fun, relaxing and enjoying themselves with others in a similar situation. It has been widely acknowledged that educators enjoy opportunities to meet and collaborate with other educators. Studies by Von Treuer, et al. (2012) and Brown (2010) acknowledged WIL staff, enjoyed meeting with others across disciplines; this encouraged the sharing of ideas and assisted with feelings of isolation (Lazarus et al., 2011; Patrick, 2008). It should be noted the examples of value provided by the participants crossed all the groups of people (networks) identified but more examples were provided in relation to immediate colleagues (non-WIL), WIL practitioners in other institutes and industry networks. Again this links back to accessibility to certain colleagues and inaccessibility to other WIL practitioners. Consideration is required of the available networks for WIL practitioners.

The examples provided of knowledge capital (potential value) included gaining fresh perspectives or staying up-to-date with industry practice (human capital), and the feeling of belonging or knowing who to ask (social capital). Interestingly there were limited examples that could be categorised as resource sharing (resource capital), although many instances were provided of the desire to have access to shared resources, such as programme documentation, industry contracts

and policy documents. There appears an awareness amongst participants that standardisation and shared repertoire of documentation and resources is required. Many examples were provided of participants creating their own resources and policy style documents such as contracts. Many of the activities described as CoP activities, appeared to be related to assisting with practice. Klein and Connell (2008) discuss the role of strategic intent of a CoP and classifies CoPs into four types, helping communities, Best-practice communities, Knowledge stewarding communities and Innovation communities. Most CoPs are likely to exhibit mixed characteristics (Klein & Connell, 2008). Much of the activity described by the participants would suggest 'helping communities' are likely to be operating. These focus on facilitating members in seeking and receiving help, discussing and sharing knowledge about common domain related issues.

There also appears to be evidence of 'best-practice communities' (to identify, verify, establish and distribute domain-related best practice). Participants described the importance of maintaining and protecting personal, institute and sector reputations, providing examples that could be classed as reputational capital (Wenger et al., 2011). Darcy highlighted the importance of whole sector reputation, in relation to chefs' training, and the impact that student professionalism and skill had upon sector impressions of teachers and the institute. Personal and professional reputation was vitally important to all participants. WIL practitioners, at the academic and industry divide, see themselves as both specialist industry practitioners and WIL educators. It is natural to expect that the WIL practitioners are operating within many CoPs. Practitioners are performing the role of a WIL educator, relating to the WIL domain (Helping CoPs). They also identify as an industry professional (chef, event manager, funeral director, etc.) relating to the subject specialism within a CoP that may be operating at a different level (For example, Best Practice CoPs). Belonging to and learning from multiple CoPs can have many benefits to these practitioners who are not confined to the classroom. Integrating with industry professionals is not only enhancing the knowledge of the WIL practitioners but also appears to enhance the feeling of professionalism and self-worth.

Participants explicitly mentioned that the benefit of collaborating and learning from others led to changes to their resources and practice, categorised as *Applied value- changes in practice* (Wenger et al., 2011). The external moderation process played a significant role for the participants in the study. Patrick et al. (2008) acknowledged the importance of collaborative knowledge building that encouraged "access to information about different approaches to WIL so they can be adopted or adapted where appropriate" (p.45). The desire for greater opportunities to benchmark their WIL practices against the practices of others was raised many times by participants. Lastly, a few instances of Reframing value (Wenger et al., 2011), were evident as

participants in the study redefined the criteria upon which success is judged, confronting the value and role of WIL practices. These instances were explained with passion from the participants and are vital for communities to confront the status quo and encourage change. Throughout the interviews there was evidence of previous reflections on past experiences as the participants described examples of gaining value from CoPs. Deliberate reflection on practice is part of the process in developing professional competency or expertise (Eraut, 1994).

This study has identified that WIL practitioners in this study place high value on developing and maintaining certain relationships, both internal and external to their institute, and that strong emphasis is placed on relationships that assist them to do their jobs better. In particular, significant relationships, to the participants in the study, are those that they see as possessing expertise, knowledge and competence. These relationships include industry relationships, WIL colleagues in other institutes, moderators and others they can learn from. Participants appear to believe these relationships require strengthening and nurturing. Yet, there appeared to be a distinct lack of sharing of WIL resources; but a strong desire for this to happen. The participants, who are passionate and learning-on-the-job, place great emphasis on developing their skills, competence, and WIL practices; for the benefits of students, and institute and personal professional reputation. There is great enthusiasm amongst the WIL practitioners to make the most of CoP learning experiences. It does appear though that some guidance from institutes may be necessary to assist in the WIL CoP development. This will be discussed next.

5.4 The WIL domain-pedagogy and policy

This section explores the findings in relation to the research question that asked the practitioners about their experiences of teaching WIL. CoPs each have a domain, the shared interest or passion. WIL is the domain in discussion, the shared interest, and yet is influenced by wider institutional policy and curriculum development decisions. This section will discuss the role of common purpose, and common practices in teaching WIL. These areas were raised by participants as significant. It is also important to consider that not all CoPs are informally developed. A formal network or group has the potential to develop into a CoP (Kimble et al., 2008). Tertiary institutes have the ability to influence WIL practitioners' participation within CoPs.

WIL as a pedagogical strategy

All the participants came across as passionate educators who placed extremely high value on WIL as a pedagogical strategy that assisted students to develop practical competence, industry awareness, networks and ultimately gain employment. It is important to note that all the participants primarily described themselves as industry practitioners and placed high value on the multi-faceted benefits of WIL. This is unsurprising as there have been numerous studies on the benefits of WIL to stakeholders and the literature in this field is extensive, in the main all supporting the multi-faceted benefits of well-designed WIL experiences (Coll et al., 2009; Cooper et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Unfortunately the participants didn't feel that the commitment to the role of WIL on the curriculum was shared by all stakeholders.

Common Purpose

Commitment to a common purpose, shared interest or passion is an essential component of CoP (Wenger, 1999). A recurring theme in the interviews indicated that participants perceived that the 'passion' they shared for WIL was not reflected by their institutes. Participants perceived that their institutes undervalued WIL as pedagogy. This reflects the findings of Von Treuer et al. (2012) who also expressed their concerns that WIL programmes were being undervalued by institutes. Several of the participants, particularly Sacha and Gill, felt the lack of common purpose was evident when the core benefits were threatened by programme changes. They felt the 'real' benefits of WIL could be lost. Sacha was particularly passionate about recent programme changes.

I feel like you are taking away all the good bits, the bits that get you the job, that give you a reason to engage with industry meaningfully as an institution, any kind of great media leverage you can get from the successes of those students, saying 'Student works on Rugby World Cup' ...is a much better story than 'Students do research project on Rugby World Cup'. We brand ourselves and purport to be producing work ready graduates and so by replacing a work integrated learning element with a research driven element ... you've stomped on the prime employability influencer. (Sacha)

It appears that the institute agendas for the objective of WIL in the curriculum may not been clearly communicated. As a consequence there is confusion and frustration over changes in curriculum design that threatens the well-researched and documented benefits of WIL. There appears to be a lack of common purpose. Kimble et al. (2008) state whether formed around a

need, or formally created, for the group to become a CoP there needs to be a *common purpose or common goal* that motivates the CoP members. Any WIL CoPs are likely to have participants both internal and external to the institutes. Yet it is important to consider the influence of decisions and actions by institute management upon the practices of WIL, WIL practitioners and WIL CoPs. Wegner (1999) talks about one of the indicators of a community being shared perspective. As the literature on CoPs purports, groups of people or communities share meaning and a common goal (Hara, 2009; Wegner, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, et al., 2011). It is also significant to consider the influence of membership within WIL CoPs of management or those that have influence over policy decision-making and the outcomes on WIL practices.

Common practices

Another core element of a CoP is shared frameworks and perspectives. Based on historical practice, these guide the community on the best way to develop future practices. When discussing access to 'best practice' resources to assist with course design and the practicalities of teaching WIL, none of the participants had been provided with or were aware of any institute guidance or resources for designing, delivering or assessing WIL. Participants felt that guidance should be provided to ensure the WIL experiences optimised learning. The experiences of study participants appear to be consistent with other WIL practitioners in NZ: In a 2009 New Zealand study, Coll et al., expressed concern over the lack of consistent mechanism by which WIL practitioners seek to develop pedagogies to foster learning and the integration of knowledge. The literature on WIL curriculum design focuses on the efforts to design learning experiences that are integrated (Billett & Choy, 2011). Although the majority of the participants identified they felt integration would and should occur, they stated that there was little evidence of explicit attempts to integrate on- and off-campus learning. An exception to this came from Billie, coordinating an early childhood education WIL experience, who explained that working in the field of education, curriculum was designed with reflection and integration in mind. Dewey (1938) claimed the importance of integration relied upon well-designed learning opportunities that encourage the students to reflect upon both institute learning and the workplace experiences (as cited in Coll, 2009). The 'integration' studies literature that investigates how one 'integrates' skills and knowledge learned during workplace experiences with on campus learning (and vice versa) is stated as still poorly developed (Coll et al., 2009; Zegwaard, 2015). Curriculum design knowledge is acknowledged by the WIL practitioners as important yet for many is weak. The participants appeared to be indicating that this guidance should come from their institutes, when in fact it could come from other CoP members. WIL practitioners within the education field, are potentially a level of

untapped WIL knowledge and expertise within CoPs that could be shared. Access to this expertise is the key.

There is a wealth of international WIL 'best practice' guides available for practitioners. The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) commissioned a report in 2011 to identify good practices in work-integrated learning (WIL), publishing the *Good practice report* (Orrell, 2011). Within New Zealand Martin et al. (2011) in conjunction with Ako Aotearoa published the *Work integrated learning: a template for good practices* and the series of guides *How to make the most of work-integrated learning for Academic Supervisors, Workplace Supervisors and Students*. These guides, targeted towards tertiary providers, are based on feedback from academic supervisors supported by literature and research (Martin et al., 2011). These practical guides provide advice on organisation, student preparation, supervision, competencies, pedagogies, assessment and resourcing. Participants expressed their desire for shared practices. Access to best practice guides by participants of WIL CoPs could instigate scholarly debate and assist in the feeling of belonging by members as they debate 'best practice'.

This section has discussed the elements of common purpose and common practices in relation to WIL CoPs. There appears a need for deeper discussion within the WIL community around the future role and value of WIL. Developing a shared commitment could lead to the development of shared practice and access to community 'best practice'. It is believed that the next section on WIL policy could be instrumental in developing a way forward for these conversations to happen.

Institute role in network and CoPs

Many of the benefits of situated and social learning through a community, begin with connections and networks. CoPs can develop from a pre-existing or created group, and institutes could support CoP development by instigating *formal* WIL networks. It became apparent that none of the participants were aware of any formal WIL groups, networks or online activity. Formal networks can offer flexible yet a stable base for coordinated and interactive learning, a mechanism for accessing tacit knowledge (van Aalst, 2003). Kimble et al. (2008) affirm that although it is difficult to create a CoP, a better approach is to coach and nurture a group and provide the right environment so that it can be helped to develop into a CoP.

All the participants mentioned at some point feeling isolated in some form, feeling disconnected to others who teach WIL, and several participants described being unaware of which faculties, programmes or courses include a WIL component. WIL course title ambiguity appeared to be a

particular issue. Lazarus et al. (2011) in their study on the skills required of WIL practitioners identified that much of the 'on-the-job' learning of practitioners is through their own efforts, through a variety of informal learning methods, often unknowingly, and frequently in isolation. Some participants mentioned issues of geographical isolation or operating in silos as affecting their ability to collaborate with others. A quote from Cooper et al. (2010) sums up many of the participant concerns raised in the interviews:

It needs to be recognized that the task of work integrated learning programme coordination has often been an isolated responsibility within a department; a 'short straw job' that was learnt 'on the job' with little or no induction or mentoring....Furthermore, there have been few opportunities for forging connections and sharing 'wisdom of experience' between coordinators in other disciplines with similar responsibilities (p.2).

During the interviews, the participants mentioned the desire to meet with other WIL practitioners and for more cross-disciplinary collaboration to support their practice. Two studies, that echo the feelings of participants in this study, were by Patrick et al. (2008) and Brown (2010) who identified that practitioners enjoy meeting to share stories and learn from each other. They state that collaborative knowledge building is important to developing WIL community. The passion and belief in WIL as a pedagogy and the level of disclosure of the participants in interview, demonstrated a willingness to and an enjoyment from collaboration. They provided examples of how the value gained could be expected from sharing stories, resources and contacts, new perspectives, reassurance or confirmation of practices.

In order to assist WIL practitioners to network, within disciplines, cross-disciplinary and across institutes, a communication and support structure is an integral element. Patrick et al. (2008) suggests ways to improve communication and coordination, include greater inter-disciplinary networking, ensuring all areas of institutes work collaboratively in regards to WIL, and establishing networks across faculties and institutes. Some participant comments indicated that although they felt they have WIL learning relationships, they didn't recognise these as a WIL practitioner 'community'. This echoes the findings of other studies that have advocated for stronger WIL community involvement and collaboration (Brown, 2010; Coll & Zegwaard, 2012; Von Treuer et al., 2012). The perception of teaching WIL for the participants, irrespective of the significant value they place on it as a teaching and learning strategy, is that it is an isolated and labour intensive role. Participating in a WIL CoP could be assisted through the use of virtual networks and online communities that possess benefits for collaborative learning due to their socially inherent nature.

Virtual Community

It is acknowledged that the 'invisible nature' of many WIL programmes has made it difficult for practitioners to connect in networks and develop community and yet there is a desire to collaborate. None of the participants had access to a dedicated WIL online space or network. When discussing whether preferred 'collaboration' would be online or face-to-face, there was an even split of preference; some participants stated a preference for both online and in person. With this in mind it is expected that a virtual space could assist with network development. Ayling and Flagg (2011) suggest wider adoption of virtual communities as "a place where teachers share resources, form their online professional identities, share ideas and experiences, join groups and announce events" (p.25). They state that the primary need for social interaction, participation and collaboration have been made easier due to the greater availability of web-based infrastructure and social networking services. This is supported by Patrick et al. (2008) who note that "online resources would be an important way of improving collaborative knowledge building and the dissemination" (p.45); mentioning that having access to a common and central website and a wide variety of WIL information including online refereed journals and a database of resources would be beneficial. Importantly all stakeholders should be classed as community members and consideration should be to include all those involved within WIL.

A WIL advocate

The commitment and passion to the practice of WIL has been evident amongst the participants. Yet, when describing their perceptions about experiences of teaching WIL, felt that this is threatened by the lack of centralised advocacy and support mechanisms within their institutes. Several of the comments relate to WIL leadership that could assist with advocacy issues and encourage the growth of WIL, as a valuable teaching and learning strategy. They wanted someone to love WIL as much as they do, and the vignette from Sacha sums up many of the participants' feelings:

Work integrated learning needs to fit into somebody's portfolio. Who owns it, like who cares about it? ...it needs to live somewhere. If it does, I don't know about it. It needs to be loved, it needs to be treated with the respect and reverence I think that it deserves, because you can't have work ready graduates without a proper work integrated learning system. I feel that by not having an overarching person

who cares about all of these placements in the institution, it's also opening up a massive area of risk. (Sacha)

In USA and UK WIL is supported via centralised institutional structures, in NZ and Australia the normal environment for growth of WIL is through a dispersed discipline approach (Patrick & Kay, 2011). The need for a central advice point for WIL related concerns, such as policy advice, documentation, health and safety related issues, risk management, and emergency situations is a recurring theme within many of the comments from participants. In light of the recent changes to the Health and Safety legislation in New Zealand, participants disclosed feeling vulnerable, concerned about procedures and the reputation of the institute. Interestingly, Billie (early childhood education) and Eden (nursing) were the only participants that felt robust procedures were in situ, identifying standard contracts, police checks and vetting as part of the process.

The fields of education and nursing have been involved in WIL for many decades as part of the professional registration requirements to practice in the field. This is not the case for many other sectors. Valuable lessons can be learnt from sharing the information and expertise of many years of practice in operating WIL in high risk environments. Von Treuer et al. (2012) claim the benefits in having a WIL expert(s), positioned at faculty or institute level to offer guidance and knowledge is a valuable asset. For practitioners to optimise their performance to conduct WIL good practices institutes needs to provide clear priority towards WIL and the required systems, processes and structures. Von Treuer et al. (2012) state that three categories are critical for WIL sustainability: recognition, resources, and stakeholder engagement. Engagement of all WIL stakeholders in discussions surrounding policy, procedures and risk would go some way towards encouraging participation of WIL practitioners within a WIL CoP.

Resourcing WIL

Participants, in describing their experiences of teaching WIL, highlighted the complexities of skill set required and time intensity of the role. Bridging the academic and industry divide requires WIL practitioners to possess a skill set that requires both industry specific expertise and a sound pedagogical knowledge base. Every participant raised the concern over time intensity and high workloads. This finding reflects the extensive studies and literature on the role of WIL practitioners and the time intensity of many of the tasks (Cooper and Orrell, 1999; Patrick, 2008; Lazarus et al., 2011; Von Treuer et al., 2012). One of the findings of the Brown (2010) study was the acknowledgement that cross-disciplinary collaboration has the potential to reduce individual staff workloads and send a more cohesive message to the wider community. Despite the acknowledged high workload, it was heartening to hear participants discuss that their passion for

WIL was not impacted as a consequence. They felt that this aspect was possibly the most rewarding aspect to their teaching.

WIL community discussions around WIL networks, and possibly, institute centralised advocacy of WIL, could go some way towards alleviating the concerns of participants around isolation, invisibility of WIL, lack of collaboration opportunities and risk. The key is who instigates these discussions and brings WIL practitioners together.

5.5 The WIL practitioner- Personal and professional development

Learning on-the-job is commonplace for WIL practitioners. Belonging to a WIL CoP that values personal and professional development is important. The participants have described many aspects of their personal and professional development in relation to participating within CoPs. Much of this has already been discussed in other sections. This section will discuss topics raised that have not been covered in other sections: formal professional development, professional identity and the role of WIL associations.

Professional Development

Professional development in WIL is important to practitioners. This study highlights the participants' passion for experiential learning both for their students and themselves. They are enthusiastic to develop as WIL educators. It appears that much of the participants' learning is self-directed and on-the-job within their communities. What is not so evident is how much of this is conscious to the practitioner, and related to their personal perception of expertise and identity as a WIL practitioner.

The findings acknowledge the diverse range of industry specialist, technical skills or clinical practice required. The majority of staff reflected upon their ongoing industry relationships as vital in staying up-to-date with industry developments and maintaining a level of industry expertise. The participants see themselves as practicing as both as educational practitioners and as industry specific practitioners. This close proximity to industry is likely to be beneficial to their identities as industry practitioners and valuable to subject specialism teaching. Students within all classes of these WIL practitioners are likely to be gaining from the close industry relationships that often elude many classroom academics. The participants also related the importance of soft skills

(communication, relationship building, time management, etc.) and teaching competence as essential to effective performance. There have been a number of WIL practitioner competency studies that have revealed that the skill set and behavioural requirements of WIL practitioners is diverse, unique and differs from those of the traditional or general academics, often requiring leadership, change management and entrepreneurial skills. (Brown, 2010; Lazarus et al., 2011; McLennan & Keating, 2008; von Treuer, et al., 2012). The findings from this study reflect the diverse skill set and autonomy required of WIL practitioners. As a consequence, WIL practitioners are likely to have higher professional development requirements than traditional academics.

Critical consideration is required on the optimum approach for WIL practitioners to develop. It is evident that the learning relationships within CoPs are providing the participants in this study with knowledge and skills for practice. It is also important to note that none of the participants had had the opportunity for any formalised professional development in relation WIL practices. This is compatible with the findings of Onyx (2011, as cited in Lazarus et al.) who suggest that institutes have not recognised the importance of adequate staff development of WIL practitioners. Cooper et al. (2010) highlight the importance of providing professional development opportunities to practitioners as leading to effectively designed WIL programmes. Lazarus et al. (2011) provide insights into the challenges of designing professional development for WIL practitioners, reiterating also that there is a serious void in the literature relating to skills and content of professional development within this field.

A knowledge of experiential learning theories and relationships to WIL appropriate pedagogical strategies, or appropriate professional development opportunities, would be an expectation for practitioners. In the main the participants didn't discuss their role and practice as if they were familiar with the literature on the experiential learning cycle, commonly attributed to authors such as Dewey (1938 as cited in Kolb, 2014) or Kolb (1984), but some of their attitudes and behaviour reflected the ideas from the literature.

The majority of the participants in the study explained that their development was self-driven and self-directed, yet some expressed the desire for greater institute guidance. This reflects the findings of von Treuer et al. (2012) who state that WIL practitioners are autonomous in relation to professional development planning and Lazarus et al. (2011) who state that staff are often left to foster their own development yet desiring greater guidance within this area. Some level of professional development planning that acknowledges the complexities of the WIL role and considers the opportunities of both formal and informal learning opportunities would be

beneficial. Learning and developing within a CoP needs to be acknowledged as a valuable mechanism of WIL practitioner development.

Learning about being an effective WIL practitioner may be conducted in a workshop setting or through engaging with others in an informal setting. Personal preference will vary. Importantly, an element of conscious PD planning in relation to WIL will be valuable to the feeling of worth for the practitioners. In relation to workshop style educational professional development, only one participant actively attended and gained substantial benefit from formal workshops. The majority of the participants found this style of learning to be counterproductive and time intense. This could reflect the time intensity of many WIL related tasks. From this perspective informal learning within a CoP is likely to be less time intense once initial relationships have been developed. Teachers' professional development initiatives are increasingly focusing on CoPs to support situated teacher learning (Van Amersfoort, Nijland, & de Laat, 2012) as inexpensive alternatives to training (Hughes, Jewson, & Unwin, 2007). The interviews identified that the majority of participants gained more from informal and incidental learning, engaging within work related activities, than from formal workshops and training. This echoes with the finding of Viskovic (2005) in her study on how staff become and develop identity as tertiary teachers.

Although the participants of the study were not questioned on how they defined or perceived their 'professional identity', some of the themes in the study, such as seeking out and learning from those with expertise, referring to themselves as industry practitioners (i.e. chef) and the importance of their professional reputation suggest that it is important. Operating on the bridge between industry and academia, WIL practitioners are likely to hold dual or multiple identities, of industry specialist and teacher. In the context of CoPs, Wenger (1999) describes identity as "how learning changes humans and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of the community" (p.i) and explains that identity is in relation to the community and is fluid. Becoming a member of a CoP would involve exposure to and learning within the community. WIL practitioners are interacting with and learning from multiples communities, the industry sector and the WIL field. Both communities, amongst others to which they will belong, hold value to the practitioners. Reflecting on a definition of WIL, from the perspective of Coll and Zegwaard (2011) it is possible to see the close relationship of experiential learning of a WIL practitioner to that of their students. They describe WIL as:

"exposure to a professional and relevant workplace (community of practice), of a duration alongside practitioners long enough for enculturation to occur, where the tasks undertaken are authentic, relevant, meaningful and purposeful, where

students are able to learn the workplace norms, culture, and understand/ develop professional identify, and integrating that knowledge into their on-campus learning” (p.388). (Coll & Zegwaard, 2012, p.43).

In essence, WIL practitioners are to be engaged in the very same process as they develop or maintain identities as both industry professionals and WIL practitioners. No easy feat and one that requires support of other CoP members, institutions, capability departments and even possibly National WIL associations. All are potential participants in WIL CoPs.

WIL associations

WIL networks and associations exist at national, regional and global levels. Many of the aforementioned authors have advocated for the role of these associations, and conferences, in enhancing ‘best practice’ for practitioners through collaborative learning, shared expertise and professional development opportunities. The national WIL association is the New Zealand Association of Cooperative Education (NZACE) a “non-profit organisation that promotes cooperative education/work-integrated learning to education providers, workplaces and government in New Zealand” through the initiation, support and publication of research and the provision of guidelines to institutions (NZACE, 2016, para 1). NZACE are in an influential position to disseminate good practice at an institutional level through conferences, journal publications and available resources. They are the link between what is construed as good practice within a New Zealand context and the connectivity of members. Instrumental to this will be the value that institutions place on association membership, active participation, conference attendance for practitioners and dissemination of resources within the institutes.

The findings of the study indicate that this may not be happening, as none of the participants were aware of the association or its outputs. Patrick and Kay (2011) stress that “the existence and sustainability of national WIL associations is critical for advocacy and to enable WIL staff to access professional development in the WIL aspect of their roles” (p371). Reeve (2004, as cited in Patrick & Kay) identified that the need for teachers to meet on common ground to discuss WIL specific issues has led to the growth in most countries of associations to provide support and professional development opportunities. It is also worthy of note that although national associations in other countries offer regional events, accredited programmes, bespoke sessions, mentors and forums (Patrick et al., 2008; Patrick & Kay, 2011), these professional development opportunities are limited within a New Zealand context. It is helpful to reconsider Nolan’s (1988) recommendations for WIL practitioners’ professional development:

- Assess professional development needs
- Identify personal/ professional development opportunities
- Participate in professional organisations
- Identify/ participate in networking opportunities
- Attend/ present at conferences and/or workshops
- Take programmes
- Serve on college committees
- Participate in community organisations
- Research, write and contribute to professional journals
- Read relevant literature (Lazarus et al., 2011, p.342)

More recently, Patrick et al. (2008) recommendations, with the aim of sharing and promoting quality WIL practice, include:

- Build a collaborative national, institutional and/or discipline-based database/s of quality practice, including case studies, policies, flexible curriculum approaches, and unit outlines etc.
- Create a national professional development approach through conferences, websites, journals, workshops, grants and scholarships.
- Implement WIL leadership programs at the institutional and employer level and across the sector to build staff capacity and capability in WIL.
- Build a web-based interface to enhance communication with employers and the professions.
- Identify costs and benefits associated with centralised and decentralised models of support for WIL.
- Review institute policy to map WIL curriculum across individual institutions with a view to providing adequate resources and support. (Patrick, et al., 2008, p. 50).

Although some of these strategies are happening within New Zealand, it appears that some opportunities may not be filtering down to an institute, faculty and practitioner level within a New Zealand context. It is important to consider the role and influence of the national WIL community and networks in the participation of WIL CoPs and on practitioners' participations within WIL CoPs.

In summary

This study has identified that the participants, passionate educators, place high value on developing and maintaining networks and relationships, both internal and external to their institutes, that assist them in learning 'on-the-job' to be more competent, knowledgeable and effective practitioners. In particular, they seek out, maintain and nurture relationships with those that they see as possessing expertise, knowledge and competence that will strengthen their own WIL practices for the benefits of students, the institute and personal reputation. Yet the participants also mentioned feelings of isolation, lack of shared terminology, WIL 'good practice' resources, and guidance. Despite most of the participants having been within a WIL role for over 5 years the fact that participants are not feeling engaged within a WIL community is somewhat disheartening. Ayling, Owen, and Flagg (2012) state that due to the environment of continual change and pressures there has "never been a greater need for teachers to be supported by like-minded educators and leaders, who are connected in networks" (p.1). Particularly with the growth of WIL experiences integrated into the curriculum and the growing network of staff involved, an awareness of the need to identify challenges and opportunities as a community is vital (Brown, 2010). This study has explored the perceptions of WIL practitioners to learning from others within a CoP. It has highlighted the importance of common terminology, common purpose and common practices. It has highlighted that CoPs and networks are valuable mechanisms for WIL practitioner development that should be acknowledged and encouraged.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions reached in exploring the research questions of the study:

What are practitioners' perceptions of the value of communities of practice to support their role in WIL?

Sub-questions:

- What are practitioners' experiences in teaching Work Integrated Learning?
- What are practitioners' experiences of collaborating and learning with/ from others in relation to teaching WIL?
- Where do practitioners go for guidance in relation to teaching WIL?

It draws together researcher understandings of the perspectives of eight practitioners from two New Zealand polytechnics. It suggests areas that WIL practitioners, management, capability departments and policy makers could consider for strengthening WIL Communities of Practice (CoP) as a mechanism for WIL staff personal and professional development.

6.1 Conclusions from the study

- The proliferation of terminology is causing confusion for both internal and external stakeholders. Participants identified that terminology use is affecting their ability to identify, connect and develop learning relationships with other internal WIL practitioners. It is also a potential risk to student WIL experiences due to lack of shared interpretation and understanding, in particular for international students.
- Participants are actively seeking sources of WIL expertise. They place high value on developing, maintaining and nurturing connections and relationships that assist them to do their jobs better. In particular, WIL colleagues in other institutes and those they identify as possessing expertise, knowledge and competence that they can learn from are their priority relationships. There are people that have many years' experience and

practice of managing WIL curricula in high risk environments that could be shared. Defining WIL expertise is an area of potential further research.

- Wenger et al. (2011) framework for value creation was extremely beneficial in evaluating the participants' perceived value of learning in *communities of practice*, particularly through the first three cycles. Value appears to be inherent in most of the connections and learning relationships described. Of particular importance is the act of connecting itself, gaining new information or ways of doing something, staying up-to-date, and identifying those who can assist in the future. A further study using the frameworks *Narratives and storytelling* methodology, or similar, could expand and deepen these findings.
- Participants had limited access to formal WIL related professional development opportunities and a preference for informal and incidental learning, through engaging within others in work related activities. A further study investigating both informal and formal WIL professional development opportunities in New Zealand could be beneficial.
- Participants identified that overall institute objectives for WIL are not articulated and accessible to them. Centralised advocacy of WIL was pointed to.
- Participants desired greater opportunities to benchmark their WIL practices against the practices of others. They identified a lack of awareness of shared resources or best practice guides. Further research investigating accessibility of best practice resources would be required to confirm this.
- Participants sought greater accessibility to WIL policy advice, procedures, and documentation.
- The qualitative approach taken in this study has allowed the researcher the opportunity to be flexible, and deepen their perspective and understanding of the wider WIL practitioner perspective of communities of practice. This differed substantially from the researcher expectations in particular on the implications of lack of common understanding of WIL terminology and its use.

6.2 Recommendations

The wider implications of the lack of common understanding of WIL terminology, WIL practitioner accessibility to WIL networks, expertise, best practice and policy information suggest there are propositions that should be considered at practitioner, community, institutional and national level. Conclusions from this study suggests there needs to be:

- Engagement of stakeholders in the consideration of terminology in use. Adoption of an appropriate glossary for institutes.
- Development of institutional, and cross-institutional, WIL networks for all staff engaged in the delivery, coordination or management of a WIL programme. Recognition that networking and *communities of practice* enhance practitioner performance and expertise.
- Development of a space for sharing of 'best practice' templates and documentation, resources, curriculum approaches, national association contacts, WIL research, academic journals and articles and a discussion forum.
- Consideration of WIL practitioner accessibility to WIL management policies and procedures.

6.3 Limitations and further research

This study has provided a glimpse of the perspectives of eight practitioners on the value of collaborating and learning from others in communities of practice to support their role in work integrated learning. The research process incorporated semi-structured interviews which gave valuable insight into the values held by WIL practitioners and suggests some areas for further research:

- A study of WIL terminology within a New Zealand context.
- A more extensive study of 'value creation' from WIL CoP involvement utilising the Wenger et al. (2011) Framework Narratives and Storytelling or similar methodology.
- A study on what WIL practitioners perceive as expertise.

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Appendix A: Interview questions

Questions	Literature themes
<p>Describe your experience/s in teaching Work Integrated Learning? Describe your understanding of WIL as a teaching and learning strategy. Tell me about who and what has influenced this perspective. Describe the differences and similarities you have experienced in teaching WIL from your other teaching. Tell me about a particular example that comes to mind. Tell me about any WIL resources you have shared with others or been provided with by others. Tell me about any WIL teaching resources (good practice guides, exemplars, etc.) that have been provided by your institute or that you have acquired.</p>	<p>Work integrated learning- pedagogy and practice</p>
<p>What is your experience of collaborating and learning with/ from others in relation to teaching in general? What is your experience of collaborating and learning with/ from others in relation to teaching WIL? Where would you go for guidance if you need information (or help) teaching WIL? Describe an experience when you have taken advice from someone else in relation to a challenge/ issue in teaching WIL. Tell me more about the challenge or issue you were facing. Online sharing and forums are becoming popular, tell me about any experiences you have of participating. Tell me about any teaching or WIL groups or associations you have participated in.</p>	<p>Communities of practice in WIL</p>
<p>Tell me about if and how you feel your skill set has changed as a consequence of teaching WIL. Describe how you have met this challenge. Describe how you have prepared yourself for teaching WIL. Describe how the institute prepared you for teaching WIL. Describe any experiences of participating in professional development activities for WIL.</p>	<p>Professional development</p>

Appendix B: Ethics Notification



Date: 22 February 2016

Dear Leanne Nicholas

Re: Ethics Notification - 4000015539 - Practitioners' perceptions of the value of communities of practice to support their role in Work Integrated Learning.

Research question: "What are practitioners' perceptions of the value of communities of practice to support their role in Work Integrated Learning?"

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please go to <http://rims.massey.ac.nz> and register the changes in order that they be assessed as safe to proceed.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 95106840
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz; animaethics@massey.ac.nz; glc@massey.ac.nz

Appendix C: Information Sheet

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]
[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

PROJECT: Communities of Practice for Work Integrated Learning

INFORMATION SHEET

I am Leanne Nicholas, a senior lecturer at XXX and a student at Massey University in the Masters in Education programme. I would like to invite you to take part in a research project I am undertaking as part of my Masters thesis.

What's the project about?

The study will explore the perceptions of academic staff of the value of collaborating and learning from each other within communities and networks to support their role in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes (for example, co-operative education, placements, practicums, internships or industry projects).

Why get involved?

The project will give you an opportunity to share your experiences of collaborating with and learning from others, in developing your WIL teaching practices. The study findings will tell us more about the opportunities for developing communities of practice to better support to better support WIL staff.

Why me?

The project needs academic staff members who are teaching, co-ordinating or supervising a course with a WIL component that is at 500 level or above on the New Zealand Qualifications framework. Your name has been provided by your Associate Head of School or Associate Dean as meeting this criteria.

I would like to invite you to take part in the study.

What would be required of you?

- Take part in a semi structured interview of about 45 minutes duration at a time and place to suit you.
- You will be asked for your views and experiences of collaborations and networks which support your WIL teaching practise.
- You will be given the opportunity to review the interview transcript (approximately 15 minutes).
- A brief follow-up interview (15 minutes) is possible if clarification is needed.

Data Management

All data gathered will only be used in relation to this project. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed by me or a professional transcriber. You will be sent and asked to review the interview transcript to ensure your comments have been recorded accurately. You will be asked to sign a Transcript release form. Throughout this project your confidentiality and privacy will be protected. No real names will be used in the final report and pseudonyms used will only be known to the researcher. Data will be stored securely and disposed of in five years.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;

Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]
[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

PROJECT: Communities of Practice for Work Integrated Learning

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will keep the recordings and transcription documents secure while they are in my care.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix E: Request for participants

Date

Dear

PROJECT: Communities of Practice for Work Integrated Learning

I am Leanne Nicholas, a Senior Lecturer at XXX and a student at Massey University in the Masters in Education programme. I am presently completing my thesis research project, which will explore the perceptions of academic staff of collaborating and learning from each other within communities to support their role in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes.

As Associate Dean, I would appreciate your assistance in identifying participants for this important cross-disciplinary project. Due to the somewhat hidden nature of WIL learning courses within programmes, it is difficult for me to identify them and the respective teaching staff. It is critical also to the success of the project to capture a range of perspectives. Hence I stress the importance of your role in identifying and providing details of potential participants who meet the following two criteria:

- Teaching, co-ordinating or supervising a course with a WIL component (for example, co-operative education, placements, practicums, internships or industry projects).
- The course is at 500 level or above on the New Zealand Qualifications framework.

The participants will be required to take part in an interview (and possible brief follow-up interview) and review the interview transcript; the whole process will require approximately an hour of their time.

The project will give academic staff an opportunity to share their experiences of collaborating with and learning from others, in developing their WIL teaching practices. The study findings will tell us more about the opportunities for developing communities of practice to assist tertiary institutes to better support WIL staff.

I would be grateful if you could provide me with a list of potential participant email addresses. If you would prefer that the recruitment email was sent from a representative within your school/ department or if you feel you cannot assist further, please email me.

This project has been evaluated and judged to be low risk under the Massey University Human Ethics process and approved by XXXX Research & Ethics Committee.

Please contact me or my supervisors if you would like any more information prior to making a decision to participate. Details can be found below.

Project information sheet is also attached.

Yours faithfully

Leanne Nicholas

Researcher Leanne Nicholas 04 9202681	Supervisors Linda Rowan Institute of Education, Massey University 06 3569099 extn 84469 L.M.Rowan@massey.ac.nz Dr Daniela Rosenstreich Schl of Communication, Journalism & Marketing, Massey University 06 356 9099 ext. 83979 D.Rosenstreich@massey.ac.nz
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