

An abstract graphic featuring three circles of different sizes and colors: a large teal circle at the top right, a medium dark purple circle in the center, and a large orange circle at the bottom right. Two thin, light blue lines intersect diagonally across the upper half of the page.

Work Integrated Learning Adds Value! Student Insights of the Process

Andy Martin & Malcolm Rees

ISBN 978-0-473-42905-8



An Ako Aotearoa publication. This project output has been funded by Ako Aotearoa through the Regional Project Fund.



This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). Under this licence you are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work as well as to remix, tweak, and build upon this work noncommercially, as long as you credit the author/s and license your new creations under the identical term.

CONTENTS

THE ADDED VALUE OF THE WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE	4
1. Reinforcing Career Choice	5
2. Enjoyment & Achievement	6
3. Supervisor Gratitude	6
GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES	7
1. Self-Management	8
2. Enterprising Individuals	10
3. Effective Communication	12
4. Community of Practice	14
5. Leadership Responsibilities	16
DEVELOPING THE T-GRADUATE	19
1. Reflective Practitioner	19
2. Breadth	20
3. Depth	20
CONCLUSIONS	21

“The most beneficial and rewarding part of my university experience”

This resource highlights, from the student’s perspective, the Added Value of WIL. Increased *Self-Efficacy* and developing *Self-Management, Enterprising Individuals, Community of Practice, Effective Communication, and Leadership Responsibilities* are specific components, which when melded together, define an optimal WIL outcome through the tripartite partnership between the employer, the teacher, and the student.

“I have formed a number of social networks, determined my strengths and improved my weaknesses from being in new environments, obtaining various responsibilities and learning through my supervisor’s knowledge and experience.”

An additional outcome of the WIL experience is the development of the student as a *Reflective Practitioner*’ through the main WIL pedagogy of reflective critical thinking.

“The reflective practitioner model has shown me the link between what I have learnt and experienced in the past, and how completing other subjects has a direct bearing on the decisions that I make today.”

The added value of these experiences in terms of students’ future careers is highlighted by the following quotes.

“A successful [WIL experience] can have a significant influence on future prospective employment, as the skills that are demonstrated are relevant and valid in the current environment.

It is a privilege to be afforded the chance to work within an organisation, take the chance with two hands and make the most of it, this will be the most influential aspect of your university life, but only if you let it!”

“My [WIL] experience has been the highlight of my university studies. I believe this role has truly equipped me with the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently pursue a career in the industry.”

Reinforcing Employment Decisions

Key aspects

Reinforcing employment decisions

Reaffirmed the decision to follow this particular employment path

Enjoyment

Supervisor gratitude

“Overall, my [WIL] experience has been an extremely enjoyable one. It has opened my eyes to the fact that working in [the industry] is definitely what I want to do in the future.

Importantly I got a good opportunity to work within the industry in the exact role I one day would like to take up and at the same time learnt the ins and outs of many other jobs I’ll be applying for when I finish.

Although it has been stressful at times trying to balance other commitments, the experience has given me the skills, knowledge, confidence and understanding that this is the type of work I want to pursue with my future career.”

Key aspects

Reinforcing employment decisions

Enjoyment

Overall enjoyment in the placement process

Supervisor gratitude

Positive comments about the supervisor-student partnership

Enthusiastic participation

"Passion ultimately gives you the drive to perform all tasks to the absolute best of your abilities, and the experience helps you to bring forth new ideas or initiatives that will set you one-step ahead of the rest.

I have also learned that I really enjoy being in this industry. Being put into a real organisation helped me learn more about who I am as a person and that I would really enjoy working/managing in the industry.

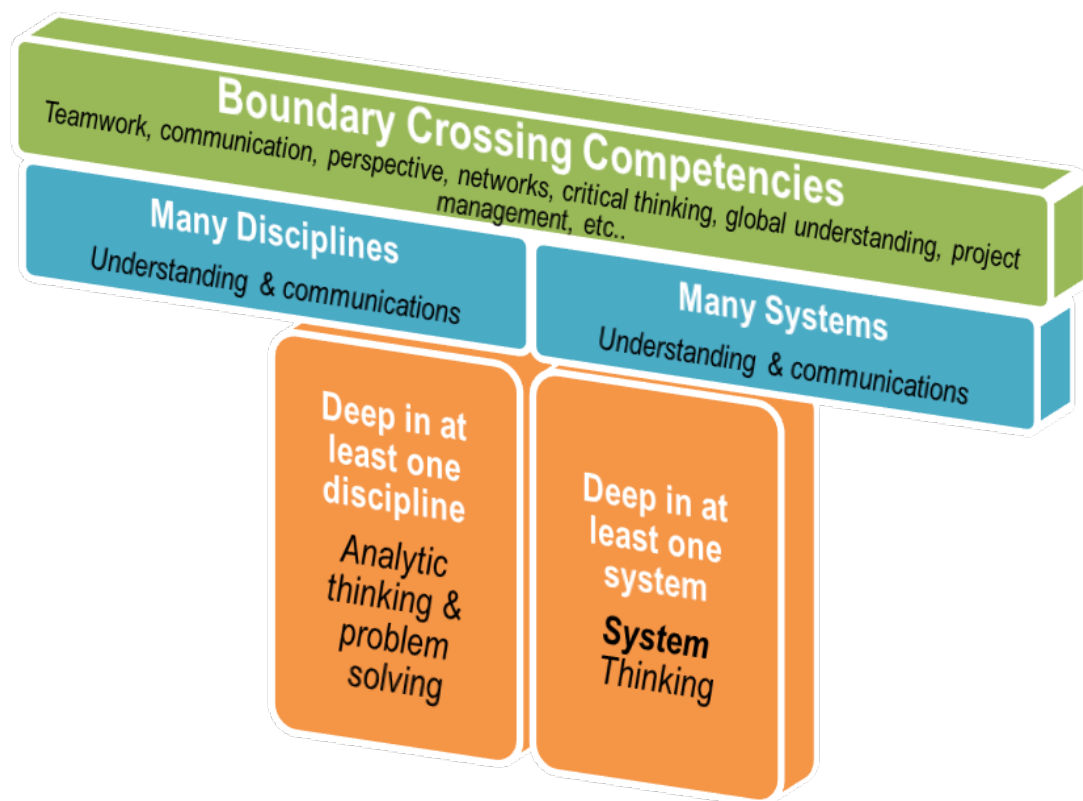
Overall, it has been a fun learning experience for me, an experience that I will always reflect back to as a direction of where I am going in the future."

Supervisor relationships

"My [WIL] experience was exciting, challenging and rewarding. The environment that was provided by my supervisor, and the entire organisation made for a great learning experience that I believe has set me up well for the working world."

“I am excited about gaining employment in the industry, and feel that the [WIL] experience has enabled me to enter the industry prepared and ready for an exciting and stimulating role.”

Student feedback supports the development of a T-graduate who has developed a depth of understanding and boundary spanning capabilities (<http://tsummit.org/t>).



“Through this experience I have gained many new skills. The one that stands out for me is my confidence.”

Self-confidence

Key aspects

Self-confidence

Gaining confidence through independent responsibility

Self-awareness

Self-sufficiency

“Increased confidence has seen me grow as an individual, making tasks I found challenging at the beginning, such as phone calls and meetings, a more enjoyable achievable experience. I have learnt that I am effective communicator.

I have gained a great deal of confidence in how I interact with people, how to make judgement calls under pressure. Ultimately, I now have a lot more faith in my own abilities and find it enjoyable to adopt roles and experiences, which place me outside of my comfort zone.

I have learnt a great deal about myself this year, not all of it has been positive, but the confidence I have gained in my public speaking, planning and time management have been invaluable and will put me in good stead for my move into the workforce and has definitely aided me in my development.”

Key aspects

Self-confidence

Self-awareness

Awareness of one's own contribution

Self-sufficiency

An individuals' application of skills

Self-awareness

"I found this [WIL] experience extremely beneficial to my development as an overall person in the sector. I have been able to progress in key areas such as communication, leadership, planning and organisation.

This [WIL] experience has allowed me to grow as an individual and gain the necessary skills required to add value to any organization in the industry I may be a part of in the future."

Self-sufficiency

"I learnt that by setting a plan early and making these deadlines at the start it makes it a lot easier to manage my time and meet these deadlines.

I have struggled with time management and this has been a major area for development. I have learnt skills and strategies that help improve this area, such as prioritisation and this is going to be largely beneficial when I move into the workforce."

Enterprising Individuals

“When managing a project, the ability to adapt and change when it is required may be something that needs to happen to ensure a successful outcome.”

Key aspects

Organisational awareness

Developing an awareness of the organisation, its people and the role it plays.

Achievement

Initiative & creativity

Organisational Awareness

“This [WIL] experience has allowed me to gain a real appreciation for the industry, including many of the challenges that fall within non-profit organisational operations.

It has given me both contacts and great working relationships that will be highly useful in future as I pursue a career in the industry.

Developing a large range of contacts through networking with people from both within and outside of the industry has helped me to gain a great base of solid connections for when I start my career.”

Enterprising Individuals

Key aspects

Organisational awareness

Achievement

Making a contribution

Initiative & creativity

Using initiative and creativity to solve problems

Achievement

"My [WIL] experience has been amazing, stressful, challenging and worthwhile and has given me a great first experience of the industry.

All in all, seeing countless hours of planning coming together on match day makes this role one that can be very rewarding. It will be one that I will treasure forever on a professional and personnel level.

It has allowed me to achieve tasks I thought were once out of my comfort zone such as making phone calls to sponsors, staff and contributing in meetings therefore making a more enjoyable experience."

Initiative & Creativity

"Being proactive with all practical work is more beneficial than being reactive

Most of my work was done by myself, so it was important for me to be independent and to use initiative when it was needed."

"I feel the most important aspect that I learnt from my [WIL] experience is the importance of effective communication."

Oral Communication

Key aspects

Oral communication

Communication including speaking, meeting attendance, interviews

Digital communication

"The most important thing I have learnt from this [WIL] experience is how essential good communication and strong relationships are with people not only in the industry but also within the community."

I learnt about communicating with different types of people and often you have to change the way you communicate to suit the different people or situation."

I have learnt that communication is one of the most essential skills to have and hone in the industry. On a near daily basis, I was required to communicate clearly to a diverse range of people."

The importance of professional interpersonal communication, effective public speaking, sponsorship management and planning of events are among the important aspects of marketing in the industry that I have been exposed to."

Key aspects

Oral communication

Digital communication

Any form of online communication including database management, social media, email, Facebook and web pages

Digital Communication

A variety of digital communication skills have been developed using the following tools:

Web pages: *“Created web pages within an organisation’s homepage.”*

Computer programmes: *“Learnt to use Excel, Project Management and Accounting software Xero.”*

Social media: *“Helped promote the organisation and the event.”*

Database management: *“Learnt to use administration software: e.g. Goalnet, New Zealand Football and Fifa’s online database.”*

“It has allowed me to operate within a legitimate organisation, gain an understanding of an industry environment, develop network opportunities, and gain skills that I can take with me as I move into the work force.”

Key aspects

Networking

Networking and other relationship building

Volunteer & community contribution

Diversity of participants

Networking

“The challenges of working with a variety of stakeholders at all levels created many learning opportunities – from volunteer staff at competitions to some of the most influential people in NZ and globally.

Working with people who volunteer their time gives insight into how motivating, frustrating, enthusiastic, testing and yet inspiring people can be to work with, and how I interact with them all will have an effect on the outcome.

I have also gained significant networks throughout my [WIL] experience within the community that will allow me to advance my career in the industry.”

Key aspects

Networking

Volunteer & community contribution

Any activity relating to the contribution that volunteers make to our communities

Diversity of participants

Working with different groups and different ages

Volunteer & community contribution

“The amount of time and effort that goes into planning and running these types of events is amazing. They would not be as successful without all of the help from volunteers and sponsors.

I always had a good understanding of volunteers and their positive impacts, but it’s not until you witness them first hand volunteering their time to your own event is when you really appreciate them even more.

Working with people who volunteer their time gives insight into how motivating, frustrating, enthusiastic, testing and yet inspiring people can be to work with, and how I interact with them all will have an effect on the outcome.”

Diversity of participants

“The challenges of working with a variety of stakeholders at all levels created many learning opportunities – from volunteer staff to some of the most influential people in NZ and globally.

This [WIL] experience offered me the opportunity to network with different people in the Industry that could be valuable contacts in the future, from CEO’s to New Zealand and [Regional] Board members.

Leadership Responsibilities

"I have developed my leadership skills to a level where I can efficiently lead a wide variety of different people ranging from highly experienced adults to young children with no experience in volunteering."

Key aspects

Leadership

Demonstrating leadership through activity management and other opportunities

Teamwork

Professionalism

Leadership

"Being proactive with all practical work is more beneficial than being reactive. Most of my work was done by myself, so it was important for me to be independent and to use initiative when it was needed."

I have been given great responsibility that has given me an opportunity to develop my leadership and communication skills."

I have a better understanding of what makes a good leader and how critical this is to make for an effective and cohesive team."

Development as a leader: It was very pleasing for me to find [from a post-season survey] that the whole team thought I had developed over the season as a leader."

New knowledge developed regarding leadership, leadership styles and organisational outcomes related to these styles."

Key aspects

Leadership

Teamwork

Benefits of working with others in the group

Professionalism

Teamwork

"[I learnt] the value of a positive team culture and how important this is to the development of a team. When this is implemented correctly and expectations and values are at the heart of a team, the results will follow.

Working within the team was a fantastic opportunity I looked forward to each week. They were very accommodating and welcoming to me, and it wasn't long until I felt like a member of the team.

I have furthered my delegation skills and learnt the art of prioritising which tasks should be handled immediately, by myself, senior staff members or by a volunteer.

I learnt about the importance and great help that delegation can provide, and the importance of utilising resources and research to achieve a goal more effectively and efficiently."

Key aspects

Leadership

Teamwork

Professionalism

Maintaining high standards and professional attitude

Professionalism

"[I learnt] the value of a positive team culture and how important this is to the development of a team. When this is implemented correctly and expectations and values are at the heart of a team, the results will follow.

It is a small team with tight budgets just like most other organisations. It is a team environment that is easy going and looks out for each other. It is an organisation that is always challenging itself to expand and develop the game. The staff endeavour to live by their values, passionate, professional, integrity, unified team and welcoming.

Professionalism needs to be portrayed through every aspect of the working environment and how to effectively deal with problems that occur.

I have enjoyed my time in [the industry], it is a whole new level of professionalism and I have learnt much about client satisfaction and organisations.

The staff endeavours to live by their values, passionate, professional, integrity, unified team and welcoming."

“There are so many elements that are incorporated and we have to understand these elements for our organisations to be successful and for our people using our services to be happy.”

Key aspects

Reflective Practitioner

*Evaluation or monitoring
progress of activities or
evaluation effectiveness*

Breadth

Depth

Reflective Practitioner

“The environment I am working in and the varied nature of the tasks that I have been fortunate to be involved in has provided me ample opportunities to reflect on how effect management theories can be applied to achieve progress and effect change.

It takes persistence, patience and communication with people to organise any aspect of an event. Volunteers are heavily relied on to make an event successful.

Applying theory and different principals to a practical situation has made me appreciate why some things happen and how by using theory and principals you can control some processes.

Throughout my [WIL] experience many difficulties arose. I was able to find a way to get around these difficulties by problem solving and communicating.”

Developing the T-Graduate

Key aspects

Reflective Practitioner

Breadth

Developing a range of competencies from the various activities

Depth

Developing a depth of understanding in a specific area

Breadth

"The industry is very diverse, where those working within it are often involved in many different departments and find themselves switching between different roles quite often.

This [WIL] experience involved many tasks with high responsibilities such as marketing, promotion, management, sponsorship/partnership liaison, and budgeting.

During my [WIL] experience I developed a number of different skills, many surrounding financial planning, in particular the importance of budgeting."

Depth

"It has helped me to clarify and apply the skills required to host a successful event.

I have gained a much more practical understanding of the tasks involved in managing tournaments, and in reflecting on learning experiences.

I have learnt a lot about organising and the need to pay attention to every detail when planning for an event."

Conclusions

“What has driven me the most in the [WIL] experience can be described by this Māori proverb: He aha te mea nui? He tangata, he tangate, he tangata. What is the most important thing? It is people, it is people, it is people.”

The Added Value of WIL: Increasingly, the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experience is providing a point of difference for students in enhancing their employability from tertiary education institutions. Overall feedback consistently pointed out the added value of the WIL experiences for the student, mentor or organisation, specifically in terms of achievement, reinforcing employment decisions, enjoyment and positive supervisor relationships. Increased **Self-Efficacy** and the development of personal attributes involving **Self-Management** (self-awareness and self-confidence) and **Effective Communication** (particularly oral and digital) were important learning outcomes, along with development as **Enterprising Individuals**. Professional development of a **Community of Practice** (increased organizational awareness) and *Leadership Responsibilities* were also highlighted.

“Another major component of the learning aspect was what I was able to learn about myself. At first I was tentative, apprehensive and unconfident in my abilities. However, as time progressed and my knowledge base increased I began to believe in myself and my abilities a lot more. I became more independent in my duties, more confident in what I was saying, and was able to use my initiative to get projects started/finished.”

Developing the T-Graduate: The **Breadth** and **Depth** of WIL activity reinforced the notion of developing ‘T-shaped professionals’, who are characterized by their deep disciplinary knowledge in at least one area (e.g. event management), and their ability to function as ‘adaptive innovators’ across boundaries between disciplines (e.g. various business activities). Their development as a **Reflective Practitioner** requires analytical, systems and critical thinking to solve problems. Successful project management involves boundary-spanning competencies such as teamwork, communication, organisational perspective and networks.

“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.”