

Recognizing and resolving the challenges of being an insider researcher in work-integrated learning

JENNY FLEMING¹

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

Insider research studies are common in work-integrated learning (WIL) research, yet little has been written about the methodological and ethical dilemmas that WIL researchers face. Using a case study narrative, the position of an insider researcher is justified, and the challenges faced, when a researcher undertakes an in-depth study of their own WIL program is examined. The unique perspective of the history and culture of the researcher's program was the most significant advantage, enabling a deep level of understanding and interpretation. Key challenges included: minimizing the potential for implicit coercion of the participants; acknowledging the desire for positive outcomes; ensuring tacit patterns and regularities were not taken for granted; and awareness of the potential conflicts of being an academic and researcher within the same context. In this paper, strategies to assist WIL researchers minimize these challenges are suggested. Insider research provides a valuable contribution to the theory and practice of WIL from a different perspective than may be obtained by someone not deeply embedded and involved.

Keywords: Insider research, ethics, work-integrated learning, cooperative education, research, case study.

Faculty or academic staff members involved in work-integrated learning (WIL) are often well positioned to gain an in-depth understanding of the program situated within the organizations where they are actively involved and currently employed. As such, this type of research can be described as endogenous research (Trowler, 2011) or the more commonly used term, insider research. Insider research has been described as research which is undertaken within an organization, group or community where the researcher is also a member (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Hellowell, 2006; Hockey, 1993; Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011). However, it is also argued this definition is too narrow and insider research can be undertaken by someone that has 'a priori' intimate or familiar knowledge of the group and may not necessarily be a member of that group (Hellowell, 2006; Merton, 1972).

The notion of insider research is often contrasted with research undertaken by an 'outsider' who is not a member, or have a priori knowledge of the organization or group in which the research is being conducted. Drawing from a positivist perspective, research conducted by an outsider was once considered to be the only form of 'objective' research (Chavez, 2008; Hellowell, 2006). It was not uncommon for insider research studies to be criticized for not conforming to the same standards of rigor because of the researchers' personal position being 'too close' for objectivity (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), as some researchers consider 'distance' is necessary for valid research. However, both outsiders and insiders have to contend with methodological issues of identity and the situated knowledge they possess as a result of their position and it is argued "the insider-outsider distinction is a false dichotomy" (Chavez, 2008, p.474).

Insider research is said to exist on a continuum that is dependent on the closeness of the researcher to the aspect being researched (Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011). A researcher may be investigating parts of the organization previously unknown to them and collecting data from complete strangers, even though they are members of the same organization. The other end of the continuum, where many WIL researchers are situated, is where the researcher is collecting data from their close colleagues or examining their own practice. The boundaries along the continuum are often blurred and the

¹ Corresponding author: Jenny Fleming, jenny.fleming@aut.ac.nz

positioning of the researcher depends on “the aspects of an insider researcher’s self or identity which is aligned or shared with participants” (Chavez, 2008, p. 475). The position of the researcher may not be static, and in some situations, it is possible for the researcher to move along the continuum during the course of their research (Hellowell, 2006). The researcher may become more familiar with the organization or group they are researching, they may research different aspects of the group that they are more or less familiar with, or their roles within the organization may change during the course of the study.

Historically, insider research was undertaken in ethnographic studies in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology (Hellowell, 2006). However, in the field of education, as more researchers have engaged in examining their own practice, insider research methodologies have become more common (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Floyd & Arthur, 2012; Mercer 2007). A range of methodologies can be used for conducting insider research and these include, but are not limited to, case studies, action research and ethnography. The insider position of the researcher will often determine the research design, the type of data collected and the way the data is analyzed. Many of the issues or challenges that an insider researcher will face are common across different methodologies. However, it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss the specific details for each methodology and other articles in this issue of the journal (or books on specific research methodologies) are able to provide more detailed discussion.

Insider research within higher education contexts carries many benefits, yet confronts the researcher with multiple challenges. The aim of this paper is to examine the benefits, issues, dilemmas and challenges in relation to the design and implementation of insider research in WIL. The insider research process will be analyzed and a case study narrative will provide a reflection on being an insider researcher for a Doctoral research project in WIL.

In most instances, insider research in higher education involves academic staff who are, “immersed, embedded and strongly connected with both the setting and those being ‘researched’ in a shared setting where they operate together in an ongoing basis” (Smyth & Holian, 2008, p. 34). More specifically, insider research in WIL is often done in an attempt to improve practice through understanding, influencing and changing the direction and position of others. Where an academic staff member is undertaking research in WIL, the dual roles of being an academic staff member or faculty and insider researcher opens up numerous opportunities that can have a significant impact on the individuals involved, whether that be students, other staff or higher education institution. Such opportunities enable contributions to knowledge, meaning and understanding that is directly related and relevant to practice.

INSIDER RESEARCH PROCESS

There are divided opinions as to what extent an insider researcher impacts-on, or alters the research process. The following section will analyze aspects of the research process from an insider research perspective.

Research Questions

A key advantage of insider research is said to be the ‘pre-understandings’ the researcher brings to the design of the study (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). With their knowledge of the present situation, insider researchers can often develop research questions based on rich understandings of the issues needing investigation, providing information about what an organization is really like and what is significant.

Such insights may not be as easy to uncover by an external researcher or 'outsider' (Smyth & Holian, 2008). In WIL research, an insider perspective provides opportunities for research questions to be developed that directly relate to improving practice within a specific WIL context.

However, insider researchers need to be mindful of 'researcher bias', when the researchers' personal values and experiences influence the research questions, design and data collection procedures (Chavez, 2008). Researchers need to take steps to minimize this potential bias through the different stages of the research process.

Research Design and Data Collection

One of the initial challenges of conducting insider research is to ensure that the research design has rigor and transparency in the methods of data collection. Being an insider researcher, it is important to minimize any likely criticism about being biased. One such criticism is there is inherent subjectivity associated with the researchers being positioned within the organization and having knowledge about the organization which could be perceived to be 'contaminating' (Mercer, 2007). However, this view is challenged by those who believe there is no real pure objective observation of practice in the context of higher education, regardless of whether the research is conducted by an 'outsider' or not (Smyth & Holian, 2008). Merton (1972), justifies the position of insider research by arguing the limitations inherent in external research are namely that an outsider:

has a structurally imposed incapacity to comprehend alien groups, statuses, cultures and societies. Unlike the Insider, the Outsider has neither been socialized in the group nor has engaged in the run of experiences that makes up its life, and therefore cannot have the direct, intuitive sensitivity that alone makes empathetic understanding possible (p. 15).

A common method of data collection in insider research involves interviews with members of the organization. However, the insider researcher must be aware of the potential for 'informant bias'. What participants share in an interview may be influenced by how the researcher is perceived and their relationships with the researcher outside of the research context (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Participants may be willing and comfortable to share detailed or personal information and to discuss issues with someone who 'understands'. The converse may occur where the participant may not share information for fear of being judged, or the impact on their ongoing relationships (Chavez, 2008; Mercer, 2007). Ethical issues related to 'power' are addressed in the next section.

During an interview, it is commonly advised for researchers to remain in a neutral position and to resist the temptation to share their own experiences. However, in insider research it not uncommon for the participant to asks questions of the researcher as they would in an everyday conversation, and for the researcher to share their own experiences. In doing so, a level of trust and rapport with the participant is developed (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Mercer, 2007). Interview questions may also cover aspects that have previously been discussed in workplace conversations. Therefore, a key strategy insider researchers may need to use is to begin the interview with a disclaimer, indicating that although the topics may have been discussed previously, they need to respond as if they were discussing this for the first time (Chavez, 2008). During the interview, greater familiarity may mean less probing and assumptions are not challenged or sometimes the exact opposite, where the level of pre-understanding means that lines of questioning can be developed further leading to richer description and detail, (Brannick & Coghlan, 2008; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, Hellowell, 2006). Researchers need to be wise to the

impact their position, as an insider, has on the interview process and prepare and plan appropriately to ensure that any bias is minimized.

Insider research is often open to criticism and subjected to scrutiny, so it is particularly important to establish 'trustworthiness' in the research design. Trustworthiness parallels the concepts of validity, reliability, and objectivity, (Creswell, 2013). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that credibility replace internal validity, dependability replace reliability, and transferability replace external validity. Techniques to enhance credibility include prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Insider research designs can provide opportunities to address issues of credibility as the researcher, through their direct involvement in the organization or group, is more likely to have built a rapport with the participants over time, and they will have a deeper understanding of contextual factors and influences. Dependability refers to establishing that the, "process of the research has been logical, traceable and documented" (Patton, 1990, p. 294). To enhance dependability, it is critical that researchers fully acknowledge and describe their own position as an insider researcher situated within the context of the study. However, this can create some ethical dilemmas related to privacy and confidentiality, which are discussed in more detail in the next section. Transferability is the ability to apply the findings to a different context and this is enhanced through the researcher presenting detailed, descriptive data, "in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations" (Patton, 1990, p. 375). While credibility, dependability, and transferability are important to consider in insider research, the same applies to qualitative research methodologies in general.

Ethical Considerations

All research needs to be conducted in an ethical manner. However, insider research has some key ethical issues that need to be considered that are different from those faced when the researcher is an outsider. The relationships and activities, which are normal to the everyday functioning of an organization or group, when part of a formalized research process, may take on different perspectives. An insider researcher within a group or organization has to be aware of, and manage, the inherent risks where the researcher is in a role of either formal or informal power. The perception of implicit coercion during recruitment must be addressed where any power relationships exist. In insider research this can often be difficult when the researcher is working alongside, or closely involved, with the potential participants and they are aware of your role as a researcher. Different strategies for recruitment (e.g. using systems that do not involve the researcher directly in the process) should then be considered. The researcher also needs to be sensitive towards colleagues that are not invited or eligible to participate, or those that choose not to participate in the study, as all parties need to be comfortable in their current or future roles within the organization or group.

Being a member of an organization or group does not automatically mean the researcher has access to all aspects of the organization for research purposes. An insider researcher may have restricted access to important information due to their relationship with the participants (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Ethical and methodological issues arise for the insider researchers when collecting data from those who lack power relative to the researcher (e.g., where the participant is a student), are more powerful than the researcher (e.g., higher levels of management) or are their peers. However, the converse can also apply, as the insider researcher may actually be able to gain more through having a rapport with the participants being comfortable to 'open up' (e.g., during an interview), so that there may be greater depth to the data gathered (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The researcher may also be able to 'see more' due to their personal relationships (e.g., observations within their own class setting in action research).

However, at all times the ethical principles of informed consent must still apply if the data gathered is to be used for 'research', regardless of whether the activity is a normal part of everyday practice.

In methodologies where the insider researcher is also a participant (e.g., in participatory action research), the participants and researchers are working closely together as co-participants, and as such the boundaries can become blurred. It is critical the mutually beneficial relationships, which are the foundations for the methodology, are not compromised and that any potential for harm or exploitation is identified, limited or controlled (Parsell, Ambler, & Jacenyik-Trowger, 2014). Continuous monitoring by the researcher throughout the research process is needed to ensure that ethical practices and commitments are maintained.

Another ethical challenge relates to privacy and confidentiality. Even if the researcher does not specifically identify their organization, through publication of the authors details (which normally includes their organization), in insider research studies it is often easy to make the connection to where the research was undertaken (Floyd & Arthur, 2012; Smyth & Holian, 2008). In addition, there may be issues related to maintaining institutional anonymity when citing information from an organization's reports or including the full reference for such documents (Trowler, 2011). These issues need to be acknowledged and the impact on privacy and confidentiality considered. However, not all insider research studies require institutional anonymity, as disclosing the organization may be relevant to the research approach and justified within the ethics approval process.

Individuals also need to have their identity protected as they would in any research methodology. Pseudonyms can be used, and in addition to these, it is often necessary to change small details or characteristics to protect the identity of the participants. The researcher/author must ensure that the reader is aware of this and why this has been done (Trowler, 2011). As mentioned above, if the organization can be identified through the author, caution is needed to ensure that demographics and descriptions of the context of the study do not reveal the identity of the participants (Floyd & Arthur, 2012; Trowler, 2011). This can cause a dilemma for the researcher, as providing a rich description of the context helps transparency of methodology (Trowler, 2011) and transferability of the findings.

An insider researcher may have access to privileged information (some of which may be personal or incidental), which may not necessarily be available to an outsider. Therefore, it is critical to ensure confidentiality is maintained and unlike outsiders, insiders need to consider whether it is ethical to use their 'inside knowledge' for research purposes or not (Floyd & Arthur, 2012). In research conducted by an outsider, once the research has been completed and published "ethical concerns fade naturally into the background" (Floyd & Arthur, 2012, p. 174). However, in insider research where the researcher and participants continue to work for the same organization or remain members of the same group, challenges can occur. The participants may have shared information about other members of the group or situations which may impact on future activities or relationships. The researcher needs to understand the impact of undertaking the research may have longer implications beyond the life of the research study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The past, present and future roles of an insider researcher, as well as their personal relationships and alliances within the organization can shape their perceptions and behaviors. The impact this may have on the interpretation of the research needs to be acknowledged. Yet, a real advantage of being an insider researcher is during the analysis and interpretation phase of the research process. As an insider, the researcher does not need to spend time getting to know the nuances of the context of the research.

They are normally familiar with the language, jargon and acronyms used by the participants (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), and it is less likely that the participants' responses are misunderstood. An outsider researcher is potentially at risk of not noticing interesting data because of a lack of understanding of the specific context that the comments are related to.

At times, there is a risk of a premature conclusion being reached if the preconceptions of the outcomes appear to be confirmed. Insider researchers need to ensure the data is rigorously interpreted to ensure credibility. Yet, there are sometimes criticisms that an insider researcher can be 'too familiar', and take for granted the tacit patterns and regularities they expect are present in the data. Mercer (2007) considers insider research as, "like wielding a double edge sword" (p. 7), as what can be gained in terms of extensive knowledge and familiarity with the context may be lost in terms of an insider's inability to "make the familiar strange" (p. 7).

Premature conclusions that are based upon preconceived ideas and the desire for positive outcomes are not unique to insider research, but there is more potential for this to occur when the researcher is closely linked through the nature of the insider position. A useful solution is to use a 'critical friend' who can interrogate and challenge your assumptions. What is perceived as routine and familiar and 'as expected' from the researchers' point-of-view, can be new and unfamiliar to a third party.

When writing up the findings, for credibility it is important that insider researchers acknowledge who they are and how they may have influenced the research process. However, as mentioned earlier this disclosure may impact on ethical issues of privacy and protecting the identify participants (Floyd & Arthur, 2012) and the researcher needs to be cautious with the information they choose to disclose. Interestingly, external researchers or outsiders do not normally describe their own position or how they have interacted with members of the organization being researched, and typically write their reports in the third person. However, this does not mean the research conducted by external researchers is objective. Indeed, the very assumptions accompanying the position of an 'external researcher' make it difficult for personal bias and influence to be assessed by the reader.

Overall, it is important to recognize and manage the risks, challenges and tensions during the research process in order to ensure ethical and trustworthy insider research is conducted to achieve the desired outcomes.

CASE STUDY NARRATIVE: REFLECTIONS ON BEING AN INSIDER RESEARCHER FOR A DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT IN WIL

At the time of my doctoral study I was in a senior academic management role in a university. I was an active member of the academic team developing the degree curriculum from its inception. Since the initial cohort of students enrolled in the degree more than a decade ago, I have been responsible for leading the cooperative education component. Cooperative education is a model of work-integrated learning where students spend time in the workplace (in this context, generally 2 days per week) along with studies back in the university during their final year of their degree.

As an academic staff member within the university, I have a vested interest in ensuring the success of the cooperative education program I have shaped over time. When embarking on my doctoral journey I was in a privileged position with allocated time given to me in my workload and support from my supervisor to be able to conduct research extending well beyond the usual superficial course evaluations. In the process of developing the research questions a senior colleague advised that before you can improve what you do, you first need to really understand what you do. Taking on board the

advice, the intent of my research then became to gain an in-depth understanding of the practice of cooperative education within the context of sport and recreation at my university. A wide diversity exists in the nature and structure of cooperative education or work-integrated learning programs globally, even within the sport and recreation discipline, (Fleming & Ferkins, 2011). Hence, the research existing in other contexts is not necessarily generalizable from one context to another and this provided a sound justification for conducting research within the program I was involved in.

There was only one logical approach to achieve the desired outcomes, that of *insider* research. Consistent with my own constructivist view of learning, the idea of insider research aligned well with the notion of knowledge being socially constructed and situated within a specific context. As mentioned earlier, insider research exists on a continuum that is considered dependent on the 'closeness' of the researcher to the aspect being researched (Mercer, 2007). The end of the continuum where this research was positioned, was that of direct relationships and deeply embedded within my organization, with data collected from academic colleagues, my students and their supervisors from the industry.

Reflecting on the experience, being an insider researcher, as a doctoral student as well as an academic staff member within a university, had many advantages, yet multiple challenges resulting in a number of compromises. A key advantage of being an insider researcher was the understanding of the cultural environment in which the research was conducted. Through extensive experience as an academic staff member in sport and recreation, I had valuable insights and background information on how cooperative education had developed within the degree and the university over time. My knowledge of historical as well as current practice enabled the development of specific research questions where the findings could then be directly applied and would be beneficial to my academic role, as well as, the wider university and potentially beyond.

Initially one of the challenges was to ensure the research design was rigorous and to minimize any likely criticism about being biased. I was reassured by the argument made by Smyth and Holian (2008), there is no real pure objective observation of practice in the context of any organization regardless of whether the research is conducted by an 'outsider' or not. In response to concerns around inherent subjectivity, a key strategy is for insider researchers to identify who they are. In my doctoral thesis, my experience and history that shaped my positioning as an insider researcher were clearly described.

A major ethical challenge of being an insider researcher was the potential for implicit or perceived coercion during the recruitment of participants for my research. As an academic staff member, it could be perceived that the students lacked power relative to me. In my senior management role, I was part of the annual professional development review process and involved in allocating workload. Given my management responsibilities it could be perceived that academic supervisors were also in the position where there was a power imbalance. Gaining access to participants then became an ethical dilemma that needed to be addressed. After consultation with the faculty representative on the university ethics committee, it was recommended that I was not involved with recruitment or data collection with students or academic staff and an 'outsider' needed to take this role. The potential for implicit coercion was considered to be high, and there were concerns raised about issues of privacy and confidentiality. The recommendations from the ethics committee were taken on board and approval was gained to conduct the study.

The recruitment process was facilitated by an administrator that was not directly involved with any of the potential participants. The administrator was used for distribution and return of the student,

academic staff and industry questionnaires. Response rates for the questionnaires across all three groups were well within expectations. The administrator organized the interview appointments for the students and academic staff from those who had responded to the invitation to participate, distributed at the same time as the questionnaire (with a separate return addressed envelope). This process meant I was not aware of the identity of the student or academic staff interview participants at any stage in the process. The number of participants who volunteered to take part in the student and industry interviews well exceeded what was needed, while the academic staff numbers were the minimum I wanted to achieve. It is important to highlight, although not involved in the actual recruitment process, the participant information sheets identified my involvement in the project. Although I was not placed in a position to 'coerce' the participants, the relationships developed over time and the disclosure of the project as being of benefit to the university, as well as, forming part of my doctoral studies may have influenced recruitment.

The biggest compromise was not being able to undertake the student or academic interviews, or to listen to the tape recordings. While maintaining anonymity of the participants by not disclosing the voices was important, just reading a transcript did not allow me to get a feel for the 'tone' of the conversations. The transcriptions included comments such as laugh or pause, but this certainly was not the same as having witnessed the unspoken body language.

A critical factor was the 'outsider' interviewer was from another university, experienced in WIL research, in a similar discipline. In some ways, he could be considered as sitting on the other extreme of the continuum. Although he was a stranger to the participants, he was within a similar role in a university context and could bring this inside experience with him into the interview situation. He was sent the interview guide in advance and I conducted a briefing with him to try to ensure he had a sound background of the intent of the research. Reading through the transcripts, in many instances it was evident he had probed for further expansion on comments made, but there were several instances where I would have liked more depth and possibly taken the interview in a slightly different direction. On the positive side, by using an interviewer who was not known to the participants it was possible they did not expect him to know the answers to the questions and therefore expanded on their views. The participants may have been more comfortable to make critical comments (which a few of them did) and less likely to make the comments they felt I would have wanted to hear. However, the converse must also be considered where the unfamiliarity might have made it more difficult for the participants to develop rapport and a level of trust where they were comfortable to share more sensitive opinions. From reading the transcripts, the latter was less likely as honest and comprehensive responses were obtained.

A real advantage of being an insider researcher was during the analysis and interpretation of the data. Undertaking case study methodology, it was not necessary to spend time getting to know the nuances of 'the case' itself. I was familiar with the different roles and responsibilities of students, academics and industry supervisors and the specific jargon and the acronyms used. My knowledge of the industry enabled me to interpret what they said in relation to the situated nature of their individual experiences. It was less likely what they had said was misunderstood or taken out of context. An outsider researcher is potentially at risk of not noticing interesting data because of a lack of understanding of the specific context that the comments are related to. Yet, I was also aware of the criticisms of an insider researcher being 'too familiar' and taking for granted the tacit patterns and regularities they expect.

In the analysis and interpretation of the data, it was important not to be biased through my own preconceived ideas and passion, and the desire to show the program in a positive way. As mentioned

earlier, an insider needs to “make the familiar strange” (Hockey, 1993, p. 208). This is not unique to insider research but there is more potential for this to occur when you are so closely linked through the nature of the insider position. As a doctoral student, I was able to minimize this issue through the critique and feedback as part of the supervision process. What was perceived as routine and familiar and ‘as expected’ from my point of view, was generally new and unfamiliar to my supervisor. It was a valuable experience being able to introduce and explain the intricacies within the model of cooperative education to my supervisor and share with him something I am so passionate about.

Brannick and Coughlan (2007) raise the concern of ‘role duality’ of insider researchers. When a researcher is an outsider they have a clearly defined role, often tightly confined to the scope and life of the project. As an insider, I have past, present as well as future roles deeply intertwined with my doctoral research, through the personal and professional relationships with the academic staff and industry involved. It was quite conceivable the dual roles as researcher and leading the program which was the focus of the research, could have resulted in personal or professional conflicts. Although I did not consider it a conflict, during the industry interviews I experienced some blurring of the boundaries. At times the industry participants were keen to discuss student issues or administrative concerns that were not relevant to the research focus. Part of the motivation for them volunteering to participate was possibly the opportunity this gave them to address their own concerns directly and so I was supportive in giving them the opportunity to do so. In reflection, neither of my positions were compromised during the research process. Being a doctoral student rather than just conducting the research as part of my academic role may have contributed towards differentiating the two roles but still allowing them to complement each other. The dual roles definitely had a positive influence on my motivation to complete the research as the outcomes had mutual benefits.

The reflections presented in the case study affirm that conducting insider research although not without some challenges provided a valuable and potentially different perspective on the research findings than may have been obtained by an outsider.

SUMMARY

Within WIL, a wide range of models and modes of delivery exist. WIL researchers are encouraged to put aside the arguments from the positivist perspective of objectivity and to use their strength as an insider to conduct research which addresses questions and develops knowledge within their own unique contexts. Insider research in WIL should be considered when seeking to improve practice through understanding, influencing and changing the direction and position of others. Clearly evident in the case study presented, the most significant advantage of insider research in WIL was the unique perspective of the history and culture of the program, enabling a deep level of understanding and interpretation, which objective approaches may not be able to uncover. Other advantages of undertaking insider research in WIL include: having access to participants that you already have a relationship or rapport with (e.g., industry partners); ability to draw on understanding and experience when asking questions or probing in interviews; access to inside knowledge; a pre-existing understanding that assists in analysis and interpretation of data; and the knowledge generated is intended to be useful or relevant to the researcher’s own practice in WIL.

However, it is important for researchers to be able to recognize the challenges they face using an insider approach and attempt to resolve or minimize the impact of these. Key challenges for insider researchers include: minimizing the potential for implicit coercion of participants; privacy and confidentiality; identifying potential biases and ensuring trustworthiness, transparency and rigor; acknowledging

preconceived ideas and the desire for positive outcomes; ensuring tacit patterns and regularities were not taken for granted and examined more closely; and being aware of the potential of professional conflicts in the dual roles of being an academic and researcher within the same context. If these challenges are addressed, then credible and trustworthy research can be achieved that will make a valuable contribution towards advancing the theory and practice of WIL.

REFERENCES

- Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In defense of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(1), 59–74. doi:10.1177/1094428106289253
- Chavez, C. (2008). Conceptualizing from the inside: Advantages, complications, and demands on insider positionality. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(3), 474–494. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-3/chavez.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dwyer, C. S., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54–63. doi:10.1177/160940690900800105
- Fleming, J., & Ferkins, L. (2011). Cooperative and work-integrated education in sports studies. In R. K. Coll & K. E. Zegwaard (Eds.), *International handbook for cooperative and work-integrated education: International perspectives of theory, research and practice* (2nd ed., pp. 179–188). Lowell, MA: World Association for Cooperative Education.
- Floyd, A. & Arthur, L. (2012). Researching from within: External and internal ethical engagement. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 35(2), 171–180. doi: 10.1080/1743727X.2012.670481
- Hellawell, D. (2006). Inside-out: Analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11(4), 483–494. doi:10.1080/13562510600874292
- Hockey, J. (1993). Research methods - Researching peers and familiar settings. *Research Papers in Education*, 8(2), 199–225. doi:10.1080/0267152930080205
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(1), 1–17. doi:10.1080/03054980601094651
- Merton, R. (1972). Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (July), 9–47. doi:10.1086/225294
- Parsell, M., Ambler, T., & Jacenyik-Trawogger, C. (2014). Ethics in higher education research. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(1), 166–179. doi:10.1080/03075079.2011.647766
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Smyth, A., & Holian, R. (2008). Credibility issues in research from within organisations. In P. Sikes & A. Potts (Eds.), *Researching education from the inside. Investigations from within* (pp. 33–47). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Trowler, P. (2011). *Researching your own institution: Higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.bera.ac.uk/resources/researching-your-own-institution-higher-education>



About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues dealing with Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE). Since then the readership and authorship has become more international and terminology usage in the literature has favored the broader term of WIL. In response to these changes, the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning in 2018.

In this Journal, WIL is defined as "*an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum*". Examples of such practice includes work placements, work-terms, internships, practicum, cooperative education (Co-op), fieldwork, work-related projects/competitions, service learning, entrepreneurship, student-led enterprise, applied projects, simulations (including virtual WIL), etc. WIL shares similar aims and underpinning theories of learning as the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training, however, each of these fields are seen as separate fields.

The Journal's main aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL is primarily of two forms; 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of work-integrated learning and, 2) *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider best practice submissions.

Research publications should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed description and justification for the methodology employed. A description of the research findings - tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data. And a conclusion preferably including suggestions for further research.

Topical discussion articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical and scholarly discussion on the importance of the issues, critical insights to how to advance the issue further, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.

Best practice and program description papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of best practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or is situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.



EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Karsten Zegwaard

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Associate Editors

Mrs. Judene Pretti

University of Waterloo, Canada

Dr. Anna Rowe

University of New South Wales, Australia

Senior Editorial Board Members

Prof. Richard K. Coll

University of the South Pacific, Fiji

Prof. Janice Orrell

Flinders University, Australia

Prof. Neil I. Ward

University of Surrey, United Kingdom

Dr. Phil Gardner

Michigan State University, United States

Dr. Denise Jackson

Edith Cowan University, Australia

Copy Editor

Yvonne Milbank

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning

Editorial Board Members

Assoc. Prof. Erik Alanson

University of Cincinnati, United States

Mr. Matthew Campbell

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Dr. Craig Cameron

Griffith University, Australia

Prof. Cheryl Cates

University of Cincinnati, USA

Dr. Sarojni Choy

Griffith University, Australia

Prof. Leigh Deves

Charles Darwin University, Australia

Dr. Maureen Drysdale

University of Waterloo, Canada

Dr. Chris Eames

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Mrs. Sonia Ferns

Curtin University, Australia

Dr. Jenny Fleming

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Dr. Thomas Groenewald

University of South Africa, South Africa

Dr. Kathryn Hays

Massey University, New Zealand

Prof. Joy Higgs

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Ms. Katharine Hoskyn

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Dr. Sharleen Howison

Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand

Dr. Nancy Johnston

Simon Fraser University, Canada

Dr. Mark Lay

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Prof. Andy Martin

Massey University, New Zealand

Ms. Susan McCurdy

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Dr. Norah McRae

University of Victoria, Canada

Dr. Keri Moore

Southern Cross University, Australia

Prof. Beverly Oliver

Deakin University, Australia

Dr. Laura Rook

University of Wollongong, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Philip Rose

Hannam University, South Korea

Dr. David Skelton

Eastern Institute of Technology, New Zealand

Prof. Heather Smigiel

Flinders University, Australia

Dr. Calvin Smith

Brisbane Workplace Mediations, Australia

Dr Raymond Smith

Griffith University, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Judith Smith

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Prof. Yasushi Tanaka

Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan

Prof. Neil Taylor

University of New England, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Franziska Trede

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Ms. Genevieve Watson

Elysium Associates Pty, Australia

Dr. Nick Wempe

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre, New Zealand

Dr. Marius L. Wessels

Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

Dr. Theresa Winchester-Seeto

University of New South Wales, Australia

International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL)

www.ijwil.org

Publisher: New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education (NZACE)