Work-integrated learning through peer narratives about workplace experiences

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This article describes students' experiences of different activities arranged by a Swedish university in connection with their internship. The article presents two approaches for conducting seminars while students are on an internship. One student group attends formal, structured seminars while the other group attends seminars in the form of focus groups called huddles, where the theme of conversations is carefully selected and has its origins in students' narratives on their authentic experiences during the internship. The more 'traditional' formal seminars are perceived by the students as scattered, while the conversational approach based on personal experiences helps students to develop a professional identity. Conversational focus groups were perceived as the pedagogical measure that contributes most to students' development. This research emphasized the deep learning afforded students and the insights emerging from the conversations. The organic nature of the conversations enabled development in both intended and unintended learning outcomes.

Keywords: Work-integrated learning, seminars, huddles, workplace learning

Internships have long been a compulsory and integrated part of university education, including nursing, business, engineering, and education professional degrees. Internships in the Swedish higher education context requires students to participate in one or more 10-week period, based in industry to learn practical skills as part of their educational program. The purpose of the internship is for students to translate theoretical knowledge into practical contexts. Internships provide many benefits for students (Hergert, 2009). Students are given the opportunity to expand their professional networks, connect with different companies, experience the world of work, and understand how the work or service addresses customers' needs. Students can also observe the interaction of employees and recognize the unique competencies of different workers. Other benefits include experiencing diverse corporate cultures and becoming familiar with how tasks are organized in the workplace.

European universities are required to adapt internship programs to the Bologna Process and the educative Learning Outcomes (Council of the European Union, 2008; Veiga & Amaral, 2009). The Bologna Process is a series of meetings and agreements between ministers of European countries to create comparability in standards and quality of higher education in Europe. According to the Bologna Process, clear assessments related to learning outcomes must be stated. These learning outcomes are often related to theoretical knowledge and do not always link to experiences and skills that a student gains through internships (Jacobs & Park, 2009). According to The Bologna Process, learning outcomes related to theory and learning outcomes related to skills should be described separately and must be assessed in an equitable, comparable, and clear way for the students. Since course plans often describe discipline-specific theoretical knowledge and skills that must be assessable, students' experiences and professional development acquired during internships are difficult to grade. The formalization that takes place through course syllabi following the Bologna Process has its limitations, considering that learning outcomes must be comprehensible and observable, must also be linked to the assessment, and adhere to constructive alignment. Constructive alignment begins with clearly specifying the result and learning outcomes for the student. It is important not to focus on what the teacher should teach, but

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what the students will learn (Biggs & Tang, 2007). Concentrating on the learning outcomes of the syllabus, captures only a small part of the learning afforded by the work-integrated learning (WIL) experience. Highlighting only theoretical learning outcomes in the syllabus, the university does not always succeed in capturing and recording the personal and professional development created through the internship, because these tasks are not assessed and made visible (King & Sweitzer, 2014; Trede & Jackson, 2019; Trede & McEwen, 2012). Where learning outcomes are limited to theoretical knowledge, only a small component of the learning from internships is assessed (King & Sweitzer, 2014; Veiga & Amaral, 2009).

This article describes the changes that a Swedish university implemented where assessment of learning outcomes that meet Bologna requirements were separated from the learning that occurred during internships. This is also described as the difference between the university's expected curriculum and the enacted curriculum (Billett, 2016, 2017; Kurz et al., 2010).

Work-Integrated Learning and Integration

Many higher education institutions integrate various forms of WIL in their educational programs. When researching in the field of education with a focus on WIL, it is necessary to examine underlying concepts. Teaching activities, activities during WIL placements, and the experiential learning in which the participants engage, are not normally specified in the syllabus in Swedish educational institutions. Learning outcomes should be visible and transparent so both student and employer understand the purpose of the WIL placement (Fleming & Haigh, 2017). It is also necessary to enable personalized outcomes that cater to the individual's unique goals in order to achieve optimal integration between theory and practice (Bosco & Ferns, 2014). There are advantages to distinguishing between the personalized learning afforded through WIL, and activities facilitated by the university. Activities organized by the university include formal teaching, preparation before the internship and other associated activities (Billett & Choy, 2010; Johnston et al., 2016; McRae, 2014). While the university is responsible for the learning that emerges from the planned or expected curriculum (course plan), there is also unintended learning that emanates from the enacted curriculum (what students actually do), that is a consequence of WIL pedagogy. An advantage of WIL pedagogy is that learning activities explicitly focus on the integration of work and learning. Because of the Bologna Process, this is seldom described in the syllabus, which means that the integration between university and the workplace, between theory and practice, or what the student really learns is generally not integrated into the teaching and assessment (Björck & Johansson, 2019). The integration that resides in the acronym WIL is not clearly defined and thus the integration is not commonly recognized in teaching in the Swedish context.

Professional and personal learning are terms that describe the knowledge and authentic experiences that often do not have a clear connection to learning outcomes in the syllabus informed by the Bologna standards, that focus specifically on theoretical knowledge goals and skills, but rarely the significance of experience for professional development obtained through internships (King & Sweitzer, 2014). King and Sweitzer (2014) describe four dimensions and orientations of learning during an internship. Firstly, the professional dimension is when students focus on understanding how the theoretical knowledge from their studies works in a practical context. Secondly, the academic dimension means that a student applies critical thinking, reflects on what is happening from diverse perspectives, and applies concepts from academic studies in a practical context. Thirdly, the personal dimension is where a student is open to differences and understands the importance of being able to act with flexibility. The fourth dimension, the civic dimension, gives students the opportunity to create knowledge and skills to function as a productive employee and as a person in a democratic society (King & Sweitzer, 2014).

Learning outcomes described in syllabi concern only formal learning (Jacobs & Park, 2009) and the academic dimension (King & Sweitzer, 2014; Sweitzer & King, 2013). Adjustments in the syllabus and other teaching methods are needed to cover the entirety and variations in learning outcomes during an internship.

Learning can take two forms – formal and nonformal (Colley et al., 2003). Non formal learning is defined as what an individual learns outside of a teaching system, and from experiences in real life. Formal learning is often based on policy-driven learning outcomes, with links to a teaching institution and is generally assessable. Formal learning is determined by others or a regulator, while non-formal is self-directed based on experiences. Johnston et al. (2016) highlight that formal learning is a part of WIL, but it is important to distinguish between activities arranged by a university and the student's holistic learning outcomes from the internship (Billett, 2012; Billett & Choy, 2010; Johnston et al., 2016). WIL is described as an umbrella concept for different types of activities that incorporate both aspects to facilitate a holistic learning approach (Patrick et al., 2008). It is also important to allow students to recognize and apply the connection between theory and practice, in practice-based situations to enable deep learning through the integration of theory and practice.

A central premise of WIL is the concept of integrating theoretical knowledge students gain at a university and the practical skills obtained in the workplace, to ensure students gain real-world experiences. In a previous study (Bernhardsson et al., 2018), students expressed the need to highlight the effects of learning that occurs in the workplace. The design of learning experiences organized by and conducted at the university, need to balance the theory-practice divide to ensure stronger integration with practice and optimize student outcomes. Learning outcomes stated in the university syllabus are focused on theoretical knowledge, whereas the company's goals and benefits for customers, are the focus of learning outcomes during an internship in professional and creative contexts (Bernhardsson et al., 2018). When teaching activities are planned and implemented in higher education, the focus is often on how students acquire new skills and abilities through the experience they gain in a workplace. The combination of theory and practice generates a synergistic effect. It is crucial to focus on the 'I' in WIL, i.e., integration, to understand how to optimize the potential of this synergy (Bernhardsson et al., 2018).

Educational researchers (Conrad & Serlin, 2011; Pring, 2015) discuss the importance, value, and necessity of clearly defining concepts in relation to the area being researched. There are many different aspects and angles within educational research i.e., teaching, learning, administration, or pedagogy. For this research, it is therefore important to clearly differentiate between the teaching activities performed at the university, which focus on Bologna learning outcomes, and the acquisition of practical skills that occur during the internship but are not reflected in learning outcomes.

Teaching Practical Knowledge

Teaching and preparation for an internship are arranged by the institution and governed by learning outcomes stated in a course syllabus, which in turn addresses the learning outcomes of the entire educational program. These learning outcomes must be measurable and feasible for the student to demonstrate. Teachers design learning activities that increase the likelihood of students achieving the learning outcomes. A lecture may be the best method for teaching disciplinary knowledge while experiences that reflect the real world are more suitable for integrating theory and practice. In some learning scenarios, seminars may be the optimal way of instilling knowledge. When imparting knowledge and skills that relate to a specific workplace-related task, the best method may be in the

context where the knowledge can be applied. Placing a student in a workplace to acquire practical skills described in the syllabus is a form of pedagogy explicitly designed to enable authentic experiences for students. In the Swedish context, the students learn additional skills in connection with the internship that are not specified as learning outcomes, but are important for the student's personal development.

Workplace Learning

Learning in the workplace is dependent on the student's level of engagement and initiative while being intertwined with the actual context in which the internship and learning takes place. Learning that takes place in a collaborative context where the input from other people impacts on the learning outcomes is described as social constructivism (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Personal learning cannot be reflected in a course plan as it needs to be described in an abstract way and can therefore be difficult to measure and validate. Learning as a concept is an individual cognitive process in which the individual constructs their knowledge. Learning is dependent on the individual's attributes and attitudes and can include both knowledge that is described in a syllabus, and the student's personal goals for the internship. It does not exclude the stated learning outcomes that are in the syllabus, but complements these with the student´s own expectations from the workplace experience and the subsequent personalized learning such as expanding their professional network and understanding the dynamics of a professional setting.

Collectively, the planned learning described in the syllabus, personal expectations, and unintended learning outcomes described as the enacted learning (Billett & Choy, 2010; Kurz et al., 2010) provide a holistic learning experience. This in-depth and meaningful learning becomes clearer to students through reflection and sharing narratives about their experiences with peers.

Sociocultural Perspective

Vygotsky describes the sociocultural perspective on human learning as a matter of gaining access to culturally developed knowledge, i.e., learning from and with other people in a specific context or culture (Ivic, 1994). Learning from other people's experiences and perceptions in combination with experiences of different contexts and corporate cultures is regarded as socio-cultural learning. In activities where students gather together and share their experiences and knowledge, an environment for learning is created (Wang, 2007). Huddles are described by Trede and Jackson (2019) primarily as a method of gathering students' experiences as a way of debriefing after the internship. Trede and Jackson (2019) also describe huddles as a concluding peer reflection seminar with purposefully semi-structured questions that focus on strengthening the development of a professional identity. "The huddle is a safe, peer learning activity that provided an opportunity for participants to learn from each other's perspectives and firm up intentional, thoughtful and action-oriented commitments for future practices in self and peers." (p. 13)

Normally, huddles are carried out immediately after completing the internship, but in this study, huddles were carried out continuously throughout the internship period. This approach creates an opportunity to bring together experiences from different students in different places as the students are part of a situated community of practice (CoP) (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 2010) where different kinds of knowledge from diverse communities are gathered in huddles and become what Wenger calls landscapes of communities (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014). Before each huddle, students write short stories about their experiences that are read by fellow participants. The short stories communicate students' experiences and inform the in-depth conversations that take place between the students during the huddle. These conversations develop students' understanding of different concepts learned

in the workplace described by Säljö (2014) as a sociocultural perspective for learning. Socio-cultural activities organized by the university in connection with the internship, such as the concept of huddles (Trede & Jackson, 2019), are joint and thematic reflections in peer groups, where students compare their own experiences with other students' descriptions apparent in their narratives. While the stories are intended to describe students´ experiences during the internship with explicit links to learning outcomes, the conversation is free-flowing and informed by students' immediate concerns. Huddles allow students to share and reflect on experiences to enable personal development. There is a lack of research where the students' experiences contribute to both developing professional identity and bridging the gap between theory and practice by using huddles regularly. This study reports the results of a major change to a course with a focus on WIL where huddles were introduced during an internship.

METHODOLOGY

Methods adopted for this study were qualitative (Bryman, 2016), but the datasets and data collection methods differed slightly between the two cohorts. For cohort one (no intervention), data collection included recorded observations during seminars, interviews with teaching staff, a focus group with students, and students' reflections. Data collected for cohort two (with intervention) included recorded observations during huddles, a focus group with students, and students' reflections. A brief digital survey that explored the students' perspectives on learning conditions during the internship and the value of activities administered by the university was also distributed to cohort two. All participants gave informed consent, and the study was approved by the vice chancellor responsible for research. As per Swedish regulations, no further ethical approval was needed. Students' approval was obtained prior to the study and transcriptions of the focus groups were approved for accuracy by the participants. Participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity and informed that they could suspend their participation in the study at any time (Bryman, 2016).

This research can be described as abductive as the researcher has several years of experience in education which includes supervising students during an internship. With the introduction of huddles, the researcher developed a hypothesis about how seminars can contribute to optimizing the students' learning from their experiences (Jason, 2022). Abductive research means that the researcher removes previous understandings about seminars in relation to the research and starts over with a new hypothesis about how seminars can be conducted to provide a better understanding of the results. The Latin description of abductive is discover (ductive) and draw from (ab). "An abductive approach is fruitful if the researcher's objective is to discover new things — other variables and other relationships" (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 559).

The first step was to replace the traditional seminar at the beginning of the internship for cohort two with a huddle to test the concept of student-driven questions. This intervention was well received by both students and teaching staff, so it was decided to replace all scheduled seminars for cohort two with huddles. It provided a new perspective on outcomes and how seminars can be conducted. This study explored an intervention with the introduction of regular huddles, which thereby changed both the content, the method, and the conversations with students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed:

- How do huddles where students share experiences from internships, develop students' self-awareness of their abilities?

- How do huddles optimize students' learning outcomes from an internship experience?
- How do huddles close the gap between theory and skills?

Two Cohorts

Two cohorts of students from a Swedish university participated in this study. Participating groups were chosen based on their involvement in internships and university seminars conducted during the internship. Both cohorts participated in a 10-week internship where several graded seminars were conducted throughout the workplace experience. Cohort one consisted of 30 students studying an undergraduate social sciences program which included a mandatory internship. Seminars focused on the learning outcomes in the syllabus. Cohort two comprised 15 students in the Digital Media program who had completed an optional 10-week internship with an opportunity to extend the internship by another 10 weeks. The intervention where seminars were changed to huddles, was implemented for this group.

Data Collection

Observations were documented during one seminar for cohort one, and six huddles for cohort two. Focus groups were recorded and transcribed for both cohorts. Notes were also taken during focus groups and verified by the participants as accurate descriptions of the conversations. Focus group participants provided written personal reflections about the focus group conversations.

In cohort one data were collected through participatory observation at seminars where notes were based on a pre-determined observation scheme drawing on learning outcomes stated in the syllabus. The observational scheme was used to analyze observational notes from seminars. The themes derived from the course syllabus included: supervisors in the workplace, socialization in the workplace, personal and professional learning in the workplace, and learning from other students' narrative stories The frequency with which students discussed the learning outcomes for the course was also noted. The focus group with cohort one was recorded and transcribed. Students' reflections describing the personal learning objectives were also collected and analyzed. A short interview with the responsible teacher about the structure of the internships, learning experiences, students' expectations and seminars was conducted to ensure the researcher was well-informed. The interview explored the structure of the course for cohort one.

In cohort two (the intervention), data were obtained through written observations during huddles, notes and transcriptions from the focus groups, and students' reflections on the huddle experience. Data collection also included a digital survey to verify what students considered to be the most important contribution from the institution to support their learning during the internship. The digital survey comprised six questions that explored students' perceptions of huddles, teaching quality, and supervisory support.

The Intervention for Cohort Two

The intervention involved a different format for the seminars for cohort two. The first group, cohort one, attended seminars that focused solely on the students' presentations that demonstrated how they fulfilled the learning outcomes described in the syllabus, while cohort two attended organic discussions described as huddles that did not focus on assessments. Cohort one (no intervention) thus became a control group to enable comparison of the students' experiences of the seminars versus huddles and determine the impact of the organic discussion huddles (the intervention) on student outcomes.

The intervention and the methods used also aimed to implement huddles that mimic a four-step model for reflections described as reflection-before, reflection-in, reflection-on and reflection-beyond action (Edwards, 2017).

Meetings With Students

In both groups, seminars/huddles with students were normally held at two- to three-week intervals throughout the internship. The seminars for cohort one allowed students to report on how they met the goals for the course and the internship. Student presentations and discussion at the seminars contributed to the students' final grade for the course.

Prior to the internship, cohort one was divided into smaller groups to discuss expectations for the internship. In preparation for the seminars, students were encouraged to create diary entries to summarize their internship expectations. This cohort of students participated in three mandatory seminars, each with a different theme that related to the learning outcomes in the syllabus: internship and learning; ascendancy and ethics; intervention, and collaboration. In the first of these seminars on learning in the workplace, the researcher carried out participatory observations and noted the frequency of students' references to learning goals related to the course objectives. When the course ended, a focus group was held where the seminars were discussed.

Cohort two attended seminars which featured the intervention where discussion was more organic and driven by students' narratives to emulate the ideas of huddles. Students were not assessed on their contributions at these seminars thereby removing stress associated with grading and enabled a more free-flowing conversation. Seminars were structured as huddles where content focused on students' experiences instead of how well they met the learning outcomes described in the syllabus. Six huddles (seminars) were conducted, and students were required to do a final ungraded presentation on their personal and professional development. The main purpose of the intervention was to improve the integration of theoretical knowledge and workplace experiences by introducing huddles (Billett, 2012; Trede & Jackson, 2019; Trede & McEwen, 2012). One purpose of huddles was for students to ascertain their personal aspirations and expectations and clarify career goals. The conversations in the huddles and reflections helped students develop agency as a future employee, make conscious career choices, and develop awareness of their professional identity (Trede et al., 2012).

The huddles for cohort two were designed and inspired by a socio-cultural perspective on learning and peer-mediated discussions (Khanahmadi & Sarkhosh, 2018). The intent was to highlight students' experiences of professional development and make non-intentional and enacted learning visible. The described intervention was conducted during the autumn and winter of 2019-2020.

Data Analysis Cohort One

Eight students from cohort one registered interest in participating in the focus group with five attending. The focus group was carried out digitally via Zoom and recorded. The recorded video was transcribed verbatim, and the text was processed through manual thematic content analysis, by comparing the students' statements against themes that were in the syllabus. Phrases and themes in the transcribed text that did not match the keywords were also noted and counted.

After the focus group, the five participants were asked via email to submit a personal written reflection on the seminars and focus group conversations. A total of eight documents including observation notes, focus group transcription, notes from the focus group and the five personal reflections were analyzed.

This is considered a powerful technique for reducing a large amount of text to interpretable data (Stemler, 2000). Categories and themes were created and adjusted through several readings of the documents. This approach is described as a structured approach to thematic analysis (Bryman, 2016). Data captured during the staff interview focused on how the learning was structured and was compared with the learning experiences for cohort two.

Data Analysis Cohort Two

The huddles for cohort two were based on a theme but progressed organically and were guided by students' narratives. The six huddles were recorded and the content relevant to the research questions transcribed. Frequently used keywords were noted and counted. These keywords were then used as a basis for analysis of reflections. The most frequently occurring keywords were categorized and used for designing the digital survey and as triggers for focus group conversations. A total of eight focus groups were conducted with 8-10 participants at each (a focus group was conducted following each huddle and prior to and after the internship). These focus groups concluded with students submitting individual reflections. A total of 111 student reflections were analyzed using key words to categorize emerging ideas. Responses to the digital survey were entered into the statistical program SPSS for descriptive statistical analysis.

The huddles were held at two-week intervals throughout the internship and began with the students answering and reflecting on pre-set questions in a shared document. This approach adopted a flipped classroom methodology (Bernhardsson et al., 2019; Gilboy et al., 2015) because students shared thoughts and reflections digitally prior to face-to-face seminars. This enabled students to prepare for the seminars in advance and explore perceptions of their peers in preparation for the huddles. The questions addressed topics such as introductions and inductions, how they were treated by employers, involvement in teamwork, connections with customers and clients, and approaches to problem-solving during the internship.

Students read peers' reflections and identified similarities and differences evident in the reflections. Personal reflections and themes identified by students were used to initiate conversations during huddles. Questions from the students' stories and narratives were carefully selected in advance both by teachers and students collaboratively. Reasons for differences were collated to guide discussion during huddles and assist students in navigating challenges in the workplace. Examples of starting points for these huddles could be about how to drink coffee at the company? Is this done as a group or does everyone pick up their coffee and drink it at their workstation? What does this say about the corporate culture? What do you prefer? Other issues that were touched on were differences in how the individual was involved in the creative process and how informed the students felt about active projects in the company. The huddles were part of the activities undertaken by the university to leverage and highlight student learning in the workplace as an attempt to integrate theory and practice for the WIL activity. It is important that teachers in higher education enrich students' experiences in the workplace (Billett, 2012) and thereby help them, not only to develop agency but also to see how other students use knowledge and skills from their studies in the workplace.

FINDINGS

Cohort One

During the observed seminar (180 minutes with the theme workplace and learning), comments were made about the course goals on 89 occasions and the students' personal goals related to the profession,

were mentioned on 49 occasions. Writing before and during the internship as part of learning was mentioned on four occasions.

During focus groups, cohort one described the traditional seminars conducted by the university as "scattered" (Student 1) and disconnected. Students said that the seminars had no interrelation and were entirely focused on grade requirements in the syllabus, and perceived by students as not informative for their development and progression. Student participation was focused on assessment requirements rather than discussion around career aspirations and professional identity and was of minimal value to student learning outcomes. They also expressed that this form of traditional seminars with grading tasks made it possible for students to copy, thereby compromising the integrity of grading students and providing "an easy way out for some students" (Student 1). The personal reflections contained perceptions similar to those that emerged in the focus group. Students emphasized that the methods to prompt discussion in this focus group should be used for seminars. One student considered the focus group method valuable for increasing learning and "allowing others to reflect on what I had seen and written about."

Cohort Two

For cohort two where conversations replicated the huddle model, students described themes that arose in the conversations around personal narratives, as the activities that contributed most to their learning. Reflections on other students' stories highlighted similarities and differences between the companies' students attended for internships. For example, conversations about various events during internships resulted in in-depth reflections on different company cultures. This in turn gave students insights into their future careers. Other conversations included how the workplace handles customers. These conversations expanded to be about how students at the company were involved in creative work and generating ideas and suggestions for the customer. The different cultures that the students mentioned were either where students were instructed to follow orders with little independence, or where students participated in the creative process and were able to act more autonomously. These conversations also provided clear insights for students about their preferred workplace culture and choice of career.

The results of the digital survey showed that the quality of tutors and conversations in huddles were most important for the students' learning and insight into their future professional careers (Bernhardsson et al., 2020).

The summary meta-reflections students submitted after completing internships, resonated similar perspectives as the focus group and digital survey on the value of huddles. The students' personal reflections on their learning during the internship described huddles as a contributing factor to seeing the connection between the theoretical knowledge and the practical work during the internship.

A student wrote:

> Through the seminar conversations, I have learned that you get quickly into the culture you have around at the workplace i.e., when new words came into the vocabulary at every seminar we had. The huddles have also provided a perspective that has broadened my thinking.

Comparing Cohort One and Cohort Two

When comparing the results from both cohorts, it appears that grading seminars alone (Cohort one) do not contribute to personal development. The questions are given in advance and aim solely to demonstrate knowledge that is described in the syllabus and are perceived as an easy way to achieve a

grade. When, in huddles, questions discussed are drawn from the students' own experiences from internships, a deeper understanding of the profession and personal insights and preferences in career choices develops. Participants in cohort two described the role of the supervisor as important for learning on eight occasions, while cohort one referred to supervisors on 32 occasions. The personal responsibility to make the internship an opportunity for learning and knowledge exchange between the students was not discussed at all during the traditional seminars for cohort one. The personal responsibility to make the internship an opportunity for learning and knowledge exchange between students, was the focus of the conversation on 19 occasions in organic discussions in huddles with cohort two. When comparing the different compilations, it was predominantly statements from cohort one students focused on the learning outcomes rather than the professional development afforded through internships and discussion. In the analysis of both the transcribed text and the students' reflections in cohort one, the same categories were used to make it more systematic and to look for similarities in the answers and the conversation. The conversations in the cohort one focus group concerned differences between course objectives and personal learning objects. In the cohort two huddles, the learning outcomes specified in the syllabus were not discussed at all.

DISCUSSION

Benefits of Flipped Classroom Methodology

The students in cohort two (Intervention group) report and reflect on their most recent workplace experiences one week prior to huddles so conversations focus on the themes evident in students' experiences. This can be compared to the flipped classroom method as the students use a digital platform in advance to write and read other people's reflections. This approach allows time in each huddle to address students' concerns,' increases time for personal connections, and enables student interaction and collaboration. Students' reflections, and conversations about workplace similarities and differences during internships, contributed to gaining a clearer picture of their future professional careers. The flipped classroom method strengthens the value of cooperative reflections in huddles. It also stimulates reflection as the conversations touch on real and personal experiences and thus contributes to learning. The implementation of flipped classroom method and huddles as a replacement to grading seminars, is described by students as a major contribution to their learning. The flipped classroom method whereby students prepare prior to a face-to-face session (huddles) (Bernhardsson et al., 2019; Gilboy et al., 2015) supports meaningful questions to reflect on and discuss. Through students sharing personal experiences in advance, focus during the huddles can be placed on the interaction between students and personal reflections, which enhances student engagement (Gilboy et al., 2015). The huddle can develop knowledge and insights about similarities and differences between workplaces, thereby clarifying their own preferences on the type of workplace they want for their future career. The integration between theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and understanding of different corporate cultures is considered important by the students (Bernhardsson et al., 2019).

Benefits of Huddles

Formulating personal thoughts and reflections before the huddles in the form of your own story helps to provide an understanding of professional identity (Bowen, 2016). According to Trede (2012, p. 1) "Every professional has a professional identity, the question is how conscious and purposefully chosen it is." Huddles concentrate on issues relevant to the students, based on students' stories of professional experiences, and allows them to identify and relate to perceived principles and values in the workplace.

Huddles create opportunities to transition from a silent knowledge to a shared and overt knowledge, and together with others, reflect on experiences significant to their potential career choice (Trede, 2012).

The organic conversations conducted as huddles provided an insight into other students' experiences that can be compared with their own and facilitate reflection on preferred future careers. In addition to company culture, hierarchies, customer meetings and more, the conversations often concerned how knowledge and skills from university studies are applied in the companies where the internship was carried out. Comparison between own and fellow students' reflections on the connection between theory and practice enables a deeper understanding of the importance of applying theoretical knowledge into practical work. These conversations were also perceived as a contribution to one's own learning and understanding of the theoretical knowledge and how it can be translated into skills in different contexts. The conversations about each other's narratives are perceived by the students as a bridge between theoretical knowledge from the university and the practical skills they gain from experiences in the workplace.

Frequency of Huddles

Huddles are typically used as a closing and debriefing activity after practice. Regular huddles during internships as an activity arranged by the university is appreciated by students. The regularity also provides the opportunity to create in-depth conversations between the participants as a conversation can build on what was discussed in previous conversations and at the same time, combine with new experiences from the workplace. A challenge highlighted during huddles can be used by the students for observations and reflections on workplace experiences and then raised in connection with subsequent meetings with the fellow students.

Grading Seminars Versus Huddles

Cohort one focused on addressing learning outcomes set out in the syllabus in their seminars. Students perceived that the seminars did not contribute to their professional learning. The seminars were structured more as meetings where it was important to allocate grades and listen to students' reports. However, the structure of the seminars increased the likelihood of students copying from their peers to attain a grade with little effort. Cohort one perceived seminars as sprawling and did not facilitate in-depth understanding of knowledge created through active participation in the workplace. In comparison, Cohort two perceived the reflective conversations in the form of huddles (Trede & Jackson, 2019) as knowledge-generating. The organic conversations focused on personal development and the development of a professional identity. When a student steps into the professional world at the workplace, internship or in a new job, the individual needs to imagine different identities that are relevant to the particular workplace where the internship or employment takes place. Internships give them the opportunity to both discover and evaluate such roles and identities and thereby prepare them for a better start to employment (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Huddles with well-chosen conversational questions provide great support in developing awareness of those professional identities (Trede & Jackson, 2019; Trede et al., 2012). The difference between the experiences of cohorts one and two are evident.

Expected Curriculum Versus Enacted Curriculum

The students in Cohort one expected the seminars to contribute to their learning, but the focus was solely on assessments and thus only met the university's expectations. The results of the seminars meet the university's expected curricula but not the students' personal expectations. The students in Cohort

two felt that huddles gave them insights and skills that were not assessed for university grades but were personalized and valuable for future career choices.

Implications of Findings for the Higher Education Sector, What it Means for Practice

Knowledge and understanding of the differences between grading seminars and huddles are important considerations for university educators who conduct internship programs. This research highlights the value of separating formal assessment from shared conversations and debriefing following workplace experiences. Curriculums? need to be reconceptualized to incorporate learning outcomes that articulate and emphasize capabilities fostered and personal development afforded through workplace experiences. Curriculum design should embrace shared learning and provide opportunities for students to discuss experiences as sources of information that other students can learn from. It is also important that students have the opportunity to report both the expected learning and the enacted, which is often a combination of their own goals and the university's goals. Highlighting the experiences that students gain when participating in internships through conversations in huddles also improves the integration between theory and practice.

When the focus is on making the students' experiences and learning visible in connection with their internship and elevating them to peer reflections, the opportunity is created for the students to make personal reflections on how they want to shape their future careers. Instead of focusing on formal knowledge goals in the syllabus, choosing to start with experience stories in conversations and reflections, gives students a more valuable experience.

Huddles need to be conducted with regularity throughout the internship to ensure progressive and connected conversations. Such seminars and talks can be important activities, initiated and carried out by the university in connection with courses that include internships for students. The regularity and carefully chosen themes that have their origin in the conversation itself are appreciated by the students and at the same time contribute to knowledge that the students use to develop a professional identity. There is great value for students to reflect before and after an internship (Billett & Choy, 2010) and this can be combined with reflections during the internship (Billett, 2009).

Seminars in the form of huddles mimic a four-step model for reflections including reflection-before, reflection-in, reflection-on, and reflection-beyond-action (Edwards, 2017). Huddles provide opportunities for reflection where meaningful questions for students are addressed. Through regular huddles, the integration between what is learned in lessons at the university (formal learning), and the personal development and learning that is made possible through the internship (non-formal learning) is strengthened. Regular huddles support and facilitate the 'I' in WIL.

CONCLUSION

Regular seminars, similar to focus groups, with discussions based on carefully selected themes, that Trede and Jackson (2019) call huddles, make a major contribution to students' learning, especially when the issues that the conversations address are considered important by the students (Flyvbjerg et al., 2012). Seminars with themes that develop self-awareness and starting points for making conscious choices about a future workplace are preferable to grading presentations. This type of seminar also contributes to professional development for future conscious career choices. In contrast, simply focusing on presenting knowledge that is established in the syllabus is called formality (Colley et al., 2003; McRae, 2014). Such seminars are perceived by the students as scattered and lacking in progression and context. The students in cohort one perceived the formal seminars as solely focusing on grades and

assessment rather than peer learning and sharing of experiences. They expressed that it was too easy to copy other students' answers and presentations and thus pass assessments. In contrast, huddles are designed to promote rich conversation and deep, personalized learning, and do not focus on assessments. The four motives for students to take part in an internship (King & Sweitzer, 2014) need to be considered and can be incorporated into the various issues discussed during a huddle. Through the use of huddles with a focus on informal learning, the students developed in all motives for participation, the professional, the academic, the personal, and the civic dimension (King & Sweitzer, 2014).

Knowledge that is not defined in advance, for example in the syllabus, but is created in the form of co-creation with students and informed by real world experiences, is perceived as important for students' learning and progression. Such knowledge is referred to by Colley et al. 2003, and McRae 2014 as informal and can be developed through huddles. This is consistent with results obtained from a web-based survey where students indicated that huddles, which were conducted by the university during the internship, contributed the most to new knowledge and to their personal learning (Bernhardsson et al., 2018).

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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).

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. Defining elements of this educational approach requires that students engage in authentic and meaningful work-related task, and must involve three stakeholders; the student, the university, and the workplace"*. Examples of practice include off-campus, workplace immersion activities such as work placements, internships, practicum, service learning, and cooperative education (Co-op), and on-campus activities such as work-related projects/competitions, entrepreneurships, student-led enterprise, etc. WIL is related to, and overlaps with, the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training.

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.

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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 good 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.

Good practice and program description papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of good practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or was 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.