Developing on-campus work-integrated learning activities: The value of integrating community and industry partners into the creative arts curriculum

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Work-integrated learning (WIL) is increasingly identified as essential to helping creative arts students' transition from university into the creative industries workplace. Off-campus activities, such as work placements, play a major role in educating work-ready graduates. At the same time, increasing enrolment numbers in creative arts education put pressure on institutions, in particular on campuses in regional areas where the local creative industry sector is usually small and unable to provide enough relevant work placements. Viable alternatives were explored by investigating on-campus WIL activities in creative arts education and how to offer students the opportunity to develop work-ready skills on-campus. Consequently, community and industry partners in various roles (e.g. client, industry advisor/mentor) were directly integrated into the creative arts curriculum and trialed over a period of two years. The benefits and insights gained by students through undertaking a client-based project and contact with industry professionals were investigated and are discussed in this exploratory study. *(Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 2015, 16(1), 25-38*

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Work-integrated learning (WIL) in higher education provides students with an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge and skills in a practical context in an academic program. WIL is "seen by universities both as a valid pedagogy and as a means to respond to demands by employers for work-ready graduates" (Patrick et al., 2008, p. v). Certain disciplines in higher education (e.g., nursing, education, engineering) have great experience with WIL, as students are required to undertake work placements (e.g., internship, practicum) as part of their degree (Patrick et al., 2008; Daniel & Daniel, 2013). In higher creative arts education, learning activities under the umbrella of WIL have rather recently been adapted but have been identified as effective strategy towards aligning creative arts education more closely with industry expectations. Various studies revealed that current creative arts education fails to equip students with expertise and skills for requirements of the creative industries (Ball, 2003; Design Council and Creative & Cultural Skills, 2007; Whyte & Bessant, 2007). In Australia, employability reports showed that creative arts students are not sufficiently prepared to bridge the gap between university and industry (e.g., Haukka, 2010; Kirchmajer, & Rowley, 2012). Therefore, WIL activities are increasingly developed and integrated into creative arts degrees.

Engaging creative arts students in work experience in the creative industries appears currently the prevalent solution to provide them opportunities to apply theory to real life practice. This off-campus WIL approach, however, poses some challenges for institutions, for example, providing enough placements to satisfy all creative arts students. Other challenges emerge when considering the changing workplace environment, with virtual workplaces becoming more common in the creative industries. This makes it difficult for students to observe workplace culture face-to-face in real time. Another consideration might

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be the online delivery of creative arts education, which will raise interesting questions about managing work placements.

Although some authors argue that "workplace as the context of practice provides for authentic learning not able to be fully simulated in the university campus environment" (Davis, Franz, & Plakalovic, 2009, p. 2), it is nevertheless inevitable to look at alternatives that offer students similar experiences on-campus. WIL encompasses off-campus and on-campus learning experiences, including service learning and project-based learning (Smith & Smith, 2010). Nevertheless, Coll et al., (2009) argue that there is often "little evidence of direct *explicit* attempts to integrate on- and off-campus learning" into one curriculum (p. 5). The need to develop a stronger on-campus WIL portfolio is argued by Daniel and Daniel (2013), who suggest that a staged approach of on-campus WIL activities, such as observing industry practice, educator-led on-campus internship-style experiences, and a student-led project work, "could lay the platform for a much more successful transition to the creative arts industry sector"(p. 150).

Various questions, in search for viable alternatives of on-campus WIL activities that could substitute or complement work placements, were explored: What do students learn when undertaking a work placement? Are there other ways to bring theory and practice together? Can on-campus WIL activities create similar experiences for creative arts students? Which on-campus WIL activities would be suitable? This paper presents some insight from the literature and reports on strategies that have been trialed in a creative arts learning environment.

WIL IN CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION: LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE

Learning in the workplace is one of the most prominent WIL approaches discussed in the literature across disciplines. Although there is comparable little literature about WIL in higher creative arts education in general, most focuses on off-campus activities, labeled work placement, internship, work-based learning, practicum placement or industry training. WIL in creative arts education has a young history (Franz, 2008; Patrick et al., 2008). For example, according to Collis (2010) "there is little professional tradition of internships" in the creative industries (p. 3). Many creative arts academics and also industry professionals who offer internships have not experienced WIL and are unfamiliar with such formal for-credit work placements (Collis, 2010). Nevertheless, work placements under WIL have been increasingly considered and implemented in the creative arts curriculum (Daniel & Daniel, 2013).

Work placements in creative arts education are usually offered towards the end of a student's degree (Davis, Franz, & Plakalovic, 2009). They can vary in length, ranging from 20 hours to four-week placements (e.g., Collis, 2010; Daniel & Daniel, 2013). Some institutions provide a 12-month paid placement, which extends a three-year bachelor degree to four years (Naylor, Bhati, & Kidd, 2010).

Various learning outcomes for creative arts students who engage in learning in the workplace are highlighted in the literature. Coll et al. (2009) argue that "skills gained in off-campus learning are mostly behavioral/soft 'people' skills such as communication, time management along with an understanding of workplace culture, treating others with respect, a good work ethic, and developing a sense of professionalism'"(p. 4). Franz (2008) argues that learning in the workplace "enables students to experience multiple roles and

perspectives, to work collaboratively and reflectively, to apply theory in 'real' situations, and to begin to learn the discourse of the profession" (p. 2). Savage (2005) points out that students learn "in the slipstream of general engagement with practice in the company of experts" (p. 8).

Daniel and Daniel (2013) investigated the value and impact of industry-based internships in the creative and performing arts and found them significantly beneficial for students, who can develop industry insights and a range of new skills during the work placement. Students are able to experience the "live nature of working with clients [and] meeting strict deadlines" (Daniel & Daniel, 2013, p. 148). In some cases, however, experiences were seen as challenging and "indicative of the differences between the worlds of study and work"(Daniel & Daniel, 2013, p. 148).

Although there is a growing number of creative arts degree programs in Australia offering work placements with student learning programs (Clements & Cord, 2011; Daniel & Daniel, 2013), it is not yet mandatory for creative arts students to undertake work placement before entering the profession. Challenges that students and educators encounter in connection with learning in the creative industries workplace may account for this situation. Collis (2010) argues that "many positions in the creative industries are project-based rather than organization based" making each experience different and positions are in flux. This leads to Clements and Cord's (2011) argument that different work-place experiences are challenging when developing assessment strategies. Some authors (e.g., Patrick et al., 2008; Naylor, Bhati, & Kidd, 2010) even argue that all students are not suitable to be placed in a work setting, for various academic or professional reasons.

A challenge for creative arts education is to offer relevant workplace experience as an integral part of the curriculum. These sectors include music and performing arts; film, television and radio; advertising and marketing; software development and interactive content; writing, publishing and print media; and architecture, design and visual arts (Higgs, Cunningham, & Pagan, 2007). Although "governments worldwide recognize that creative industries are a significant force in the modern economy" (Australian Government, 2011), the industry consists mainly of micro and small-to-medium enterprises (Lennon, Hearn, Higgs, & Ninan, 2005; Design Council, 2010). In Australia, for example, "98% of creative businesses employ fewer than 20 employees [and] a large proportion of creative businesses are turning over less than $200,000 a year" (Creative Industries Innovation Centre, 2013, p. 44). Therefore, many creative businesses lack the resources to develop workplace learning positions (Patrick et al., 2008; Smith & Smith, 2010). An Australian metropolitan university reported that "over a year there can be up to 200 industry partners involved in supporting creative industries students on internships", which are not enough partners to provide the work placements (Smith & Smith, 2010, p. 4). Draper and Hitchcock (2006) confirm that students are not guaranteed work placements but need to apply to the competitive placements (Draper & Hitchcock, 2006).

In regional areas of Australia, an additional challenge emerges as creative industries are fewer than in metropolitan areas (Creative Industries Innovation Centre, 2013), while at the same time, enrolment numbers in creative arts degrees are rising in Australia (STP, 2009). At the author's institution, creative arts students increased from 50 in 2007 to over 130 in 2014. While this is a positive development, the regional creative arts industry has grown only

slightly between 2006 and 2011 (Daniel, Welters, & Fourie, 2013) and will most likely not be able to provide enough suitable work placements for students in the future. Therefore, it is timely to look at other WIL approaches to be integrated on-campus and explore to what extent they offer a viable alternative to learning in the workplace.

CAMPUS-BASED WIL IN CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION

Some evidence exists of utilizing on-campus WIL activities in creative arts education. For some time, creative arts educators have offered learning activities with authentic intent (e.g., McCoy, 1998; Drew, 2007; Shreeve, 2011). A typical example is project-based learning—students work individually or in groups on projects, which simulate real world challenges—which introduces students to problem solving and decision making when generating a finished product. Authenticity of such projects could be increased through inviting industry and/or community partners as real-world clients to the learning environment. Many creative arts disciplines (e.g., design, illustration, photography) do provide a service to clients, and introducing students to this client-service relationship on-campus could be one way of creating an experience for students. According to Wodehouse (2008); Butcher and Schaber, (2011); and Canniffe, (2011), students gain valuable experiences through being engaged in real-world projects to develop commercial understanding and perceive social responsibility. Choi (2009) and others (e.g., Rothstein, 2002; Innes, 2006) see many benefits for clients providing real-world projects for students to experience practical design constraints and deadlines. Ghory-Goodman (2010) sees the benefits of engaging students in real-world projects, however, points out that "teachers have to balance the value of problems with the necessity of choosing assignments that are meaningful and appropriate within the sequence of the curriculum".

Fassbender, Taylor, and Houtmeyers (2012) describe a practical example of such on-campus WIL approach. Students worked in teams on video productions for real-world clients. This particular approach was chosen to teach students about project management and collaboration skills, which would possibly develop during a work placement. The real-world clients were asked to frequently join the class to ensure communication between student and client. According to Fassbender, Taylor, and Houtmeyers (2012) results were satisfactory in regards to the capacity of the WIL unit to facilitate the development of workforce-ready students. These students were able to develop problem-solving skills, work with a team, sharpen analytical skills, develop a stronger ability to plan and organize, and feel confident about tackling new problems. Overall, students were highly motivated, despite an increased workload in the WIL unit compared to traditional study units. Fassbender, Taylor, and Houtmeyers (2012) concluded this "approach proved highly effective and was praised by students and the clients" (p. 7).

Another crucial part of work placement is the mentoring of students by creative arts professionals (Coll et al., 2009; Smith & Smith, 2010). Learning activities where students interface with industry professionals during their studies and on-campus activities would be desirable. Indeed, contact with, and input from, creative arts industry professionals is key to closing the gap between industries and universities. The Design Skill Advisory Panel (Design Council and Creative & Cultural Skills, 2007) conducted a major study into planning for the future of the design industry in the UK and recommended that universities and colleges set up "a network of visiting design professors [practicing designers and design managers] to better connect higher education with professional practice" (p. 42).

At Whitehead's (2012) institution, this recommendation was put into practice in innovative ways. Whitehead introduces the approach as 'work-informed learning', a student-led plan for interior design students that aims "to increase a student's potential professionalism and employability through the acquisition of 'transferable' skills that bridged the gap between the world of university and the world of work". Students are asked to recruit a design professional who would mentor them for 12 months. The mentor would meet with the student four times. According to Whitehead (2012), the mentor scheme "is viewed by industry as less onerous on their time than a formal work experience because of its inherent flexibility". On the downside, Whitehead (2012) points out that that it "takes a degree of perseverance to successfully gain a mentor and build a relationship with them". While trials are in their early stages, interim feedback from students revealed that the industry mentor process helped make students "more aware of the industry and how it works beyond university". It provided students with a professional view of their work and supported the development of transferable skills, for example, students practiced networking and self-promotion.

When reviewing how WIL is implemented in creative arts education, it became evident that great focus is placed on learning through work placements. On-campus WIL approaches are less well-represented in the literature but appear to simulate the workplace experience, offering students similar learning outcomes. In context of the challenge to offer suitable work placements to creative arts students at the author's institution, it was necessary to explore viable on-campus WIL alternatives to work placements.

INTEGRATING COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The author teaches at a creative arts school at a medium-size regional Australian university, which offers a bachelor of new media arts degree. *Introduction to Web Design* is a second-year subject about website design and production. It was selected to implement on-campus WIL activities and the following activities have been implemented:

1. project-based learning structured around a real-world project, which introduces a community or industry client to the classroom;
2. mentorship and guidance through creative arts industry professionals by inviting them to the classroom and providing feedback on students' work; and
3. creative industries observation and networking, which requires students to contact design professionals to explore current practices, analyze creative arts industry businesses and explore employment prospects.

This was set up so that student teams worked on a not-for-profit real-world project provided by a community client who required help in the creation and production of a website. The client delivered a project briefing during a lecture, was available to answer questions throughout the seven-week project, attended final project presentations by students and provided feedback on project outcomes to students.

In addition, a creative arts industry professional from a regional web design business (different each year) was invited to share industry experiences via a lecture. Students then presented their website projects at a developmental stage (five weeks into the project) to the web design industry expert and were given feedback.

Each student was also required to contact at least two web or multimedia design businesses in Australia to explore current practices via an interview-style conversation using phone, Skype or email. Students were given the same set of questions and encouraged to add their own questions in areas of interest. Students asked questions, such as, "How many people work on a website project?" "What disciplines are involved in creating a complex website?" "What kind of graduate would you employ in your web design business?" Students shared their findings with the class in a presentation.

METHOD

This study reports on a two year trial in which the research focused on exploring the extent to which the on-campus WIL activities were viable alternatives to work placements, specifically to the extent that students had the opportunity to gain insight into industry realities and forms of practice. The research aim was to explore student perceptions of the benefits and insights gained through undertaking a client based project and contact with industry professionals. A pragmatic research paradigm, which enabled the researcher to choose methods that suit the real-world nature of the situation (Creswell, 2008; Punch, 2009), was adopted in this study. The general approach was inductive and had an overall drive of exploration and discovery (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). To evaluate the effectiveness of the on-campus WIL activities implemented in the subject *Introduction to Web Design*, views from stakeholders, about benefits and challenges on integrating community and industry partners in various roles (client, network opportunity, to share professional insights and act as industry advisor/mentor) into the learning environment, were explored.

Feedback from two stakeholder groups (students and educators) was investigated to enable triangulation, therefore allowing comparisons of multiple data sources to provide for validation and a more complete picture of the problem (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In two iterations of the subject, 52 undergraduate creative arts students (20 in Trial 1 and 32 in Trial 2) and two educators were surveyed. Students were surveyed anonymously, using online questionnaires in the final week of the class. The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions with multiple-choice answers, which were used to generate an initial overview of a situation. A closed-ended question was usually followed by an open-ended question, which explored rationales for answer choice. Questionnaires would not only return data on measurable indicators (e.g., how many students experienced feedback from industry professional as beneficial?) but would also provide deeper insight into the researched phenomena (e.g., why did you find the experiences beneficial/challenging? please explain) through collecting qualitative feedback with open-ended questions.

Perspectives from educators were explored by using face-to-face interviews, which took the form of semi-structured conversations (Kvale, 2007). The direct verbal interaction with educators allows probing, clarifying and reacting to responses to gain deeper insight (Bouma & Ling, 2004). For example, a typical line of questioning was: "Do you see benefits in engaging creative arts industry professionals into the learning environment? If yes, how do think students benefitted? If no, why not?"

Data analysis was conducted as follows: For quantitative data obtained using online questionnaires, the survey platform (Survey Monkey) automatically provided basic statistical data, such as the tally of response totals, percentages and response counts. Qualitative data obtained from responses to open-ended questions in questionnaires from students and

interviews (duration from 20 to 60 minutes) from educators were coded using the research analysis software NVivo. Prior to starting the analysis, two broad coding categories existed as a consequence of the areas explored. These were perceived 'benefits' and 'challenges'. The text was first segmented into these categories. Within these broad coding categories, meaningful subcategories often emerged early in the analysis, e.g., advantage, gain industry insights.

FINDINGS

On-Campus WIL Activities: Student Perspective

Table 1 presents creative arts students' reflections on the involvement of a community client providing a real-world project in the two subject trials where this was employed as a core strategy.

TABLE 1: Creative arts students' reflections on the process of engaging directly with a real-world client

Question	Response options	Response percent and number of student respondents (x) in relevant subject trials		
If you have a choice when developing a website project at university, would you prefer?	working on a real-world project for a real client?	Trial 1 Trial 2	80% 72%	(15) (23)
	working on a fictional project?	Trial 1 Trial 2	20% 28%	(4) (9)

Four key themes emerged in the qualitative feedback received in questionnaires in both trials (38 comments); students identified the following benefits in working on real-world projects:

- introduces students to real-world requirements and makes them ready for the world of work;
- students take projects more seriously and work harder to produce a better result;
- students equate learning to an actual experience in the web design industry; and
- feedback that students received was considered 'real feedback'.

Although findings from questionnaires returned positive results about students' engagement with real-world clients, 13 creative arts students across both subject trials (25%) would prefer working on a fictional project. The reasons were twofold: first, some students perceived a real-world project as too stressful; second, some students preferred first practicing on a fictional project, feeling that they would be more creative before advancing to the constraints of a real-world project. The following comments illustrate these perspectives. "There isn't as much pressure to get it perfect. We can make mistakes and learn from them and it doesn't feel like it's a 'life or death' thing" (Creative Arts student 4) and Creative Arts student 11 stated that "with a fictional project we can experiment with different things to start to create

our own style, then move up to a real client when we have learnt a lot about web and design".

Findings about students' reflections on the process of engaging directly with creative industry professionals by contacting multimedia design companies are presented in Table 2. Students' reflections about feedback from creative industry professionals in the classroom are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 2: Creative arts students' reflections on the process of engaging directly with creative arts industry professionals in the industry

Question	Response options	Response percent and number of student respondents (x) in relevant subject trials		
You were asked to contact and research multimedia design companies in Australia. How did you like the assignment?	I think it is good to engage with the industry.	Trial 1	79%	(15)
		Trial 2	74%	(23)
	I can't see the benefits.	Trial 1	21%	(4)
		Trial 2	26%	(8)

More detail about students' reasoning was provided in 37 comments via questionnaire in both trials. Students identified the following benefits in directly contacting creative industry professionals, in that they gained insight into:

- the diversity of businesses they could work for and forms of employment available;
- abilities and skills to develop to secure employment in the creative industries; and
- the importance of self-promotion.

Some students said that it helps them to make contacts and to establish network opportunities within the creative industries. Creative Arts student 7 noted that "it did shed some light on what kind of skills employers are looking for when we enter the workforce. I was surprised by how many different [software] programs we are expected to know" and Creative Arts student 23 wrote that "I learned that you have to sell yourself better than others". Another student provided insight by saying:

> It was a good way for understanding what it takes in the industry and what was really interesting, how many people work in each company, some were just one person and they hire freelancers. This was interesting to me as it made me think about employment opportunities at the end of my degree. (Creative Arts student 2)

From a total of 37 comments across both trials, students identified these benefits in engaging directly with creative industry professionals in the classroom environment:

- students gain industry insights and understand professional practice;
- input from professionals was valuable and helped understanding industry requirements; and
- prepares students for real life.

TABLE 3: Creative arts students' reflections on the process of engaging directly with creative arts industry professionals in the classroom

Question	Response options	Response percent and number of student respondents (x) in relevant subject trials		
Did you find the feedback from the creative industry professionals helpful?	Yes	Trial 1	70%	(14)
		Trial 2	94%	(30)
	No	Trial 1	30%	(6)
		Trial 2	6%	(2)

The following comments illustrate typical reasoning of creative arts students:

"It is very helpful and constructive and prepares us for the real world" (Creative Arts student 13). While Creative Arts student 18) stated: "It was a good way for understanding what it takes in the industry and how many people work in each company and in what kind of jobs. This was interesting to me as it made me think about employment opportunities at the end of my course".

Some students argued that they did not benefit from the feedback from these professionals, especially in Trial 1. The following reasons were given:

- industry professional does not understand what kind of feedback is required to guide learning process;
- adds stress and pressure; and
- the feedback was ambiguous.

Typical of the students reasoning are the following comments. "She really didn't give us much feedback at all. Lots of nodding and a few compliments. Nothing really helpful" (Creative Arts student 7) and "I received feedback from the industry professional, but then the lectures had opposite views so it became confusing" (Creative Arts student 3).

The feedback from students about engaging with professionals directly shows that while the industry research project yielded similar feedback distribution across both trials, the satisfaction of students in receiving feedback from creative industries professionals varies greatly in both trials (30% in Trial 1; 6% in Trial 2). One reason may be that different professionals were invited in each trial.

On-Campus WIL Activities: Educator Perspective

Educator reflections on the extent to which creative arts students had the opportunity to develop an understanding of industry realities and practice through engaging community and industry as clients and advisors was positive. Educators pointed out that students are provided with an additional 'real' perspective: "having an actual person from industry talk about what they do [in the web design industry] is definitely valid….There is a second

opinion in there…giving students specific feedback was good" (Educator in Trial 1). Another one said:

> There's a sense of the external…students respect the clients, it's somebody other than us. It's an actual audience that they're dealing with. Then the feedback at the end is from the person who wanted the website in the first place... Some of the things in the feedback were particularly important, because it shows what an actual client thinks, which some of it was quite different from us (Educator in Trial 2).

Educators saw both the interaction with real-world clients and creative industry professionals as beneficial to students' development. Students were able to gain real-world experience and insight into industry practices, which educators felt prepares them for professional practice.

On further exploration, educators stated that no major challenges were presented through the involvement of industry and community in the learning environment. One educator acknowledged that engaging students with industry might take them out of their comfort zone but argued that such an experience is critical.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Engaging creative arts students in real-world, project-based learning has created positive outcomes. Over 70% of students in both trials would prefer working for a real-world client on projects. Creative arts students felt they were exposed to real-world requirements; they were able to experience a strict deadline, which required a presentation of their work to the client. Students also needed to interact with the client and experienced the difference between a client-service relationship and student-educator relationship. For the former, that included added pressure to produce a high-quality outcome to the client's satisfaction, which some students experienced as stressful. However, this simulates quite authentically a workplace situation with which professionals are often confronted. Engaging with the real-world client allowed creative arts students to experience real-world constraints, such as budget limitations, technological limits or end-user expectations. In comparison students in work placements experienced this situation as 'dealing with difficult clients' (Daniel & Daniel, 2013). Indeed, experience in interacting with real clients in the workplace is seen as a critical factor to the development of students' understanding of professional practice (Daniel & Daniel, 2013). The qualitative feedback from creative arts students suggests that exposure to real-world projects and interaction with real-world clients in the classroom can contribute to achieving similar learning outcomes.

What is notable from the data presented is that the majority of creative arts students and educators reflected positively on the experience of direct engagement with creative industry professionals, despite the format of such engagement (i.e., direct feedback or research industry). The positive outcomes of mentoring of creative arts students directly in a workplace (e.g., Coll et al., 2009; Daniel & Daniel, 2013) or through an on-campus mentoring program (Whitehead, 2012) have been highlighted in the literature. While the duration of work placements appears to vary greatly, it can be argued that one interaction with creative industries professionals can hardly substitute for a long-term mentorship, such as mentioned by Naylor, Bhati and Kidd, 2010. Nevertheless, on-campus activities (direct feedback,

contacting professionals) as trialed in this study can give students exposure to the professional world, its expectations and opportunities about employment.

Certainly, some students found it difficult to contact and interview design professionals directly, although this could partly be influenced by the fact that it required students to step outside their comfort zones. In this situation, students had to initiate engagement as opposed to professionals coming to them.

Regardless of the ways that creative arts students interacted with creative industry professionals and real-world clients, it did require them to test their communication skills, present themselves competently and learn about professional behavior. The project required students to work towards a real deadline, and they needed to engage in time and project management to handle the group work and individual member contributions. It appears that introducing real-world projects provided by a client from industry or community allows students to develop skills similar to those developed in off-campus learning situations, as argued by Coll et al. (2009). Students also had to engage with multiple perspectives about their project, provided by peers, creative industries professional, client and educator, described by Franz (2008) and Whitehead (2012) as a desirable learning outcome of students engaging in work placements. Indeed dealing with ambiguous feedback was considered as challenging by some students in this study. Nevertheless, navigating such feedback constructively will be part of most creative arts graduates' future workplace.

Findings suggest that creative arts students were able to gain insight into industry and forms of practice that can help to develop a better understanding of industry realities. It is positive that these on-campus WIL activities contributed to their preparedness for 'real life' and hence support the development of work-ready attributes. Developing the ability to start building networks with creative industry professionals, a conclusion discussed by Whitehead (2012), is an additional beneficial outcome of these trials contributing to students' readiness for work.

Reported challenges relating to students' interaction with industry and community partners could be a consequence of different stages that each stakeholder group was at. Professionals were from a deadline-driven industry, a high-expectant community; while students were from an undergraduate academic environment, learning skills and developing knowledge.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In search for viable alternatives of on-campus WIL activities that could substitute or complement work placements in the creative arts curriculum, the effectiveness of integrating community and industry partners in the subject *Introduction to Web Design* was investigated in a two year trial. Views from students and educators about benefits, challenges and insights gained through integrating community and industry partners in various roles (client, network opportunity, to share professional insights and act as industry advisor/mentor) into the learning environment were explored.

While the involvement of external stakeholders requires time and effort in the establishment of projects and trust among the parties, the benefits propose that this practice could form an ongoing part of the learning environment for creative arts students. Providing these students with the opportunity to interact with real-world professionals on-campus allowed creative arts students to experience real-world demands, such as working towards deadlines,

presenting and negotiating ideas and communicating with a range of audiences (e.g., peers, client, educator, end user). Students gained insight into requirements of their future workplace and were able to develop relevant skills. Similar outcomes emerged as a result of integrating creative professionals into the learning environment (on-campus and through research exercises) with students interacting and networking with these industry experts.

Certainly relationship between industry/community and university can create their own set of complexities that require careful managing to make them mutually beneficial to all partners, but most importantly for students. Challenges experienced by some students need monitoring and further research. Although community client and creative arts industry professionals involved in this two year trial were overall positive about the outcomes, a more in-depth study exploring their perspectives will be conducted in future iterations of this subject.

"While there are still benefits to be gained from a once in a course experience of work" (Davis, Franz & Plakalovic, 2009, p. 2) there is a trend emerging with institutions working towards integrating off- and on-campus WIL in complementary ways to provide an overarching framework for a degree. Implementing WIL approaches in a sequential design in the creative arts curriculum are under discussion (see Davis, Franz & Plakalovic, 2009; Daniel & Daniel, 2013). Findings from these trials contributed to formalizing project-based learning and client involvement into a sequential WIL framework at the Faculty of Law, Business and Creative Arts at the author's institution. On-campus WIL activities integrated across three degrees in the faculty (including creative arts) are intended to supplement a voluntary chosen workplace experience. On-campus learning activities include learning through observation, simulation and reflection on a foundational level (year 1); real-world, project-based learning with external clients via an internally managed project on a developmental level (year 2 or year 3); and culminating in adopting a leadership role in year 3 final semester capstone experience/project (Daniel & Shircore, 2012).

The implementation of the WIL framework has started in the faculty. More research needs to be undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of these WIL strategies and to continue to evaluate learning outcomes for students' on-campus engagement with real-world clients and creative industry professionals across all schools of the faculty.

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