

Post-practicum Project: Its Educational Purposes, Importance, and Roles

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Section One - Post-practicum educational and learning interventions

This first section provides an overview of the need to provide post-practicum interventions to promote student learning and to reconcile their experiences in both university and workplace settings, as directed towards developing the kinds of capacities required to practise their selected occupations. It comprises two chapters. The first is an overview of the post-practicum project – its educational purposes, importance, and roles in achieving the kinds of outcomes being requested of contemporary higher education. The second focuses on and discusses the kinds of institutional arrangements, including curriculum structures and partnerships with workplaces, that can promote these kinds of educational experiences. The implications for higher education provisions are central here.

Chapter 1

Post-practicum project: Its educational purposes, importance, and roles

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Providing and integrating workplace experiences in higher education

The practice of providing higher education students with workplace experiences has become increasingly common. This situation has arisen as the importance of graduate employability has become a central concern for universities, students and governments (Billett, 2015a; Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010). For some disciplines, these kinds of student experiences are long-standing and commonplace. Programs preparing graduates to be doctors, nurses, midwives and teachers have long provided workplace experiences and to do otherwise would be unthinkable. They even have specific names associated with them: clinical placements, continuity of care, internships, practicums etc¹. Indeed, many occupations with occupational licensing requirements demand periods of workplace experiences, as do professional bodies such as engineers. However, the provision of workplace experiences (e.g. practicums, placements, internships) is now no longer restricted to these occupations. Instead, there is a growing demand for students in all kinds of university programs to have access to workplace experiences as part of, and to be integrated into their degree programs across a range of programs (Patrick et al., 2008), and also how best these experiences can be optimised (Billett, 2011; Cooper et al., 2010; Orrell, 2011).

The optimisation of these experiences has become a key concern for higher education institutions in the contemporary era for a range of reasons (Billett, 2015a). Firstly, securing work placements and practicums has become increasingly difficult because of the demands being made on workplaces not only by universities but also vocational education colleges and high schools. Secondly, often, these experiences are not of the kind and duration that is ideal to develop the kinds of employability capacities for which they are being sought by higher education programs. Whereas there are accepted practices and arrangements to provide rich and supportive experiences within teaching hospitals that support medical and nursing students' learning, and the same in schools to support student teachers, these are less available in other sectors that do not have traditions of support. Thirdly, supporting the learning intended for students in higher education institutions is not a priority even for many of those workplaces with traditions of support and is a far lower priority in many others. Fourthly, there is a growing expectation now that universities will provide these kinds of experiences and students will directly benefit from them in ways that promote their employability. Indeed, some universities have practicum experiences as a central element of their marketing to attract students who are increasingly

¹ In this book we use the term practicum to refer to these workplace experiences, although appreciate and respect that occupational fields have their own well understood and established terms (e.g. clinical placements, internships et cetera).

concerned about securing employable educational outcomes by the time they graduate (Cain, Le, & Billett, 2019). In these ways, not just the provision of workplace experiences, but how these can be effectively utilised is becoming increasingly central to higher education provisions of all kinds and disciplines (Patrick et al., 2008). Therefore, there is a need for an educational approach that encompasses experiences in work settings to support that learning and adopt pedagogic practices to achieve those outcomes.

Central here is the concern to find ways of augmenting these experiences, particularly once students have engaged in workplace activities and interactions. This augmentation is important for a number of educational reasons. The difficulty in securing workplace experiences for higher education students, the variability of their duration and quality, and that they are not always neatly aligned with securing the kinds of knowledge required for university programs means that these experiences need to be augmented and extended. Consequently, finding ways to optimise these experiences has become an imperative for teachers in higher education, administrators of universities, higher education students and also addressing governmental priorities associated with the quality and outcomes of university education (Billett, 2019). This book seeks to contribute to achieving those goals. In this way, it engages with an issue that has immediate relevance to practices within and policies about higher education. This is an important goal for informing teaching and learning practices in higher education. But, in doing so, it also addresses broader concerns about how knowledge that students learn in higher education programs can translate or adapt to circumstances beyond them.

A key premise for the broad educational project, albeit in schools, vocational colleges or universities, is that the knowledge learnt within them needs to be applicable following graduation. These institutions have been established not to serve their own purposes, but to generate knowledge in students that has applicability beyond the activities of the institutions in which they are learnt (e.g. universities and workplaces) and to other practices and settings and into the future. This fundamental goal of the broad education project sometimes seems lost in the institutional practices and goals of educational institutions. It seems forgotten when there is such a key emphasis on primary education being a primer for secondary education, much of which is directed towards entrance into tertiary education (i.e. vocational and higher education). Indeed, relatively recently, initial theorising about curriculum defined it as serving the purposes of the institution in which they were provided (Tyler, 1949). This is not to suggest that educational institutions are and have become cloistered and inherently focused on themselves, but there is a risk that this can arise. For instance, it is often the case that the kinds of and focuses of assessment of student learning are those that are directed towards measures and performances that reflect institutional values and practices, not those beyond them. Yet, those basis for focusing efforts for intentional learning, providing experiences to achieve those learning outcomes and their assessment, may not always be well aligned with requirements outside of these institutions. With the governmental focus on ensuring the applicability of what is learnt in higher education to circumstances beyond it, and in particular, a smooth transition to work, these issues have become prominent, and also of interest to students, their parents and also those who employ upon graduation. The term often used here is about making graduates employable.

A focus on employability

Here, the concern is how students' workplace experiences can be optimised in terms of informing and being integrated with their overall programs of study to promote their employability. This educational process is often referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL), although whenever it is associated with the provision of experiences, more accurately, it should be described as work integrated education (WIE) (Billett, 2019). The overall objective of these educational processes is to provide students with experiences of the physical and social settings in which the occupations are enacted for which they are being prepared and they might find employment. This can and should include engaging in the activities and interactions that comprise the occupational practices that they are learning to enact. Importantly, the provision of these experiences is much more than orientation to those settings and the occupation or making these familiar. Instead, those settings (i.e. workplaces) and those experiences (i.e. activities and interactions) afford experiences of kinds and in ways that cannot be provided through educational institutions. That is, these experiences make particular and specific contributions to students learning and vice versa. Here, it is also important to note that educational institutions and the experiences they provide are often generative of learning that cannot be found in workplaces. So, each of these two kinds of social and physical settings (i.e. workplaces and educational institutions), and the activities and interactions they provide are helpful and, at best, complimentary in developing the kinds of knowledge that students need to learn and graduates and possess to move to find employment and be effective in their occupational practice.

In an earlier project that is focused on how the integration of these experiences could best progress, it was identified that there were curriculum, pedagogic and personal aspects to that integration (Billett, 2015a). The curriculum considerations included planning for and providing workplace experiences for students in ways that were enmeshed within the overall curriculum, rather than something which was in addition to it. Hence, considerations of the timing, sequencing, duration and purposes of providing work experiences is a central curriculum issue. Then, pedagogic considerations were identified as being those that might be enacted prior to students participating in practicum experiences, during them and then once they have been completed. Most compelling was the evidence from the earlier studies about the potency of engaging students once they have had work experiences and had a basis for engaging with other students and their teachers, in processes that permitted them to compare, contrast and critically appraise those experiences in terms of the knowledge that they need to learn. So, whilst it is important to prepare students for workplace experiences and provide them with support during their work placements, the findings suggest that the optimum time for structured interventions to integrate and augment these two sets of experiences were at the point when students had had all completed their workplace or practicum experience. It was also identified in the earlier study that it was important to account for the experience curriculum – how students come to experience, construe those experiences and learn from them. Considerations of the 'experienced curriculum' (what students come to experience and learn) needs to be considered within what is planned (the 'intended curriculum') and what experiences are being provided through these interventions ('enacted curriculum'). So, whilst the focus of this book seeks to emphasise interventions after students have completed their practicum – post-practicum interventions – those interventions need to account for, encompass and integrate students' experiences.

Post-practicum intervention: Augmenting students' workplace learning experiences

All the above suggests that a consideration of experiences in workplaces, how those experiences can be engaged with by students, how university educators can organise the integration of two sets of experiences effectively and then augment them through specific pedagogic practices has become a key priority for contemporary higher education (Billett, 2019). It is finding ways of augmenting those experiences that is central to what is presented and advanced in this book. Much of what is advanced here, and the project that is the source of the contributions, intentionally builds upon earlier work focusing on the importance of the student as an active or agentic learner and considerations for how to effectively integrate the learning potential of both sets of experiences in developing those students' knowledge. If that thinking and acting can be augmented in productive ways and can be directed towards the intended outcomes of students' experiences, these outcomes are likely to be richer and far more effectively directed towards achieving intended outcomes. In particular, the ability for students to articulate, share, compare and critique those experiences is likely to lead to informed and adaptable outcomes through means that are structured and focused, and can go beyond what can be achieved through students' own mediated experiences (i.e. their zone of potential development) (Grealish et al., 2019; Harrison, Molloy, Bearman, Ting, & Leech, 2018; Levett-Jones, Courtney-Pratt, & Govind, 2019; Noble et al., 2019; Rogers, Parker-Tomlin, Clanchy, & Townshend, 2019). Whether experiences alone or processes of augmentation are being considered, the learning process needs to be interdependent, rather than independent or dependent. Learners need to be engaging actively with, and being informed by, the contributions of activities and interactions in which they think and act. Ultimately, experiences provided by educational programs and in work settings are nothing more than invitations to change; it is the learners who decide how and for what purposes they take up that invitation. So, finding ways of engaging students, placing them in the driver's seat, supporting their construal and construction of what is provided for them will be central to the success of educational programs and interventions. It is for this reason that some studies have emphasised the importance of positioning a student in this way (Cardell & Bialocerkowski, 2019; Harrison, Molloy, Bearman, Ting, & Leech, 2019; Noble et al., 2019; Steketee, Keane, & Gardiner, 2019).

So, once students have had workplace experiences, they can be engaged with and optimised through educational interventions – i.e. post-practicum experiences. That is, the kinds of pedagogic practices that can be used to assist students to articulate their experiences, what they learn from them and how they might come to share, compare and contrast their experiences with others so that the learning will not be restricted to what individuals alone have directly encountered and learnt from but through the sharing of experiences. All this puts considerable emphases on the organisation and implementation of pedagogic practices within higher education settings once students have had practicum experiences. This volume is a product of a large teaching grant that has generated a previous volume focusing on health and social care work that comprise the first phase of that grant (Billett et al.). Building on what is learnt in that first phase, the studies reported here address issues associated with the provision and integration of practicum experiences, including disciplines that sit outside of those with long-standing traditions of support for learners.

Having introduced the need for and importance of providing and augmenting students' workplace experiences, this chapter now progresses by overviewing the earlier work that has led up this emphasis on post-practicum interventions (i.e. augmenting or optimising practicum experiences after students have completed them) and the process and procedures comprising the practical inquiries that

were undertaken through the teaching grant. Then, four salient findings associated with students' participation in these activities are discussed. These comprise firstly, student readiness to engage in these interventions, secondly, managing the engagement of students who are time jealous, thirdly, considerations about whether post-practicum activities should be voluntary or compulsory, and fourthly, the importance of a safe social and psychological environment in which the sharing of experiences in post-practicum events occurs.

Students' integration of experiences in the workplace and higher education settings

As a means of explaining the importance of augmenting student's workplace experiences, this section, briefly describes the two earlier studies and the most recent study from which the contributions for this book are drawn. As foreshadowed, whether referring to work-integrated education or work-integrated learning, curriculum and pedagogic practices, there is a primary and central concern to place students centrally within these discussions. Throughout the considerations of educational provisions centred on curriculum and pedagogy that are progressed below, there is a need to consider how students come to engage in and learn through these experiences. The first project was about developing students to be agent learners to participate effectively in the workplace experiences and, thereby, prepare them for effective learning across working life. The second was a large multi-institutional and cross disciplinary project that sought to identify the bases by which work integrated learning could be effectively realised. That is, identifying the curriculum, pedagogic and personal practices students require to achieve this goal. The third project, again a multi-institutional and cross disciplinary project, sought to understand ways in which students' workplace learning experiences could be augmented to achieve the kind of educational goals identified.

Project 1: Developing agentic learners

Based on understandings about how people learn in and through work, in 2008 a pilot project was undertaken (Billett, 2009) to examine how higher education students' learning could be enhanced through the provision of experiences with a particular focus on engendering these learners to be agentic (Billett & Pavlova, 2005). That is, generating the capacities of higher education students to be proactive, focused and directed in their engagement with workplace experiences and to secure effective learning outcomes. The overall consideration here is that students need to be agentic in their practicum experiences as they ultimately have responsibility for organising, directing and securing their learning in workplaces. This capacity will be the premise for how they will come to engage in and learn across their working lives (Billett & Pavlova, 2005). This project was quite small involving four discipline areas (i.e. nursing, physiotherapy, human services and midwifery) across five university programs that focused on the integration of students' experiences in the workplace into their programs of study. The key premises were that effective work-integrated learning is required to develop the kinds of knowledge required for graduates being effective within occupational practice and that learning was premised upon the actions of the learners (i.e. students). It also focused on how students might come to take up the educational invitation that has been provided to them through the organisation of workplace experiences. In particular, and as the title suggests it focused on examining how best to develop the agentic qualities of students when engaged in work-integrated learning.

The key findings from this study were identifying the importance of preparing students before they engaged in practice settings to permit them to participate effectively and learn. That is, to promote their readiness to engage in these learning experiences. Here, there was a combination of the kinds of capacities they would need to participate effectively in their placements, as well as strategies that they might engage to learn effectively. It was also identified that having other forms of support during engagement in practicum activities and in practice settings was helpful in a multitude of ways. This included overcoming isolation, having-bases for mediating their experiences and learning on the basis of what others had experienced and learnt, peer interaction as a form of discrete but trustworthy interaction and the need for some structuring to achieve those outcomes. In all, when students could identify the direct benefits of developing and enacting such dispositions and procedures, they appreciated and valued the worth of being agentic. However, being able to exercise agency was differentiated across students and circumstances of their practicums. Finally, it was reported that when students have the opportunity to share, reflecting critically appraise their experiences this was helpful in developing professional capacities and maximising their learning.

Project 2: Integrating students' workplace experiences in higher education programs

The second project comprised a large national teaching fellowship that sought to identify the curriculum and pedagogic practices required for effectively integrating practice-based experiences within students' programs of study (Billett, 2011). Here, the consideration of curriculum and pedagogies were about those that would assist with the provision of practice-based experiences and how they might come to be effectively applied. This project comprised 20 projects across 6 universities in a range of disciplinary areas and involved individual projects that sought to trial curriculum and pedagogies to support that integration. This fellowship was premised upon a collaborative model of development in which the participating project shared their processes and outcomes in a professional environment and the sharing of those through with face-to-face meetings, videoconferences and a dialogue forum (i.e. were participants presented, shared and critique their findings). One of the key outcomes of this fellowship was the identification of the range of different educational purposes to which work integrated education might be directed (Billett, 2011, 2015a). These range from: learning about an occupation; learning about some of the various forms of that occupation; extending the knowledge learnt in university settings; orienting to the kinds of settings where the occupation is practised; building the actual occupational capacities required to be an effective practitioner; developing specific forms of knowledge associated with the particular occupation and also those more broadly associated with engaging with others, solving problems and responding to new challenges, as well as securing occupational licensing. Other key findings from this study included that just having workplace experiences alone is insufficient: they needed augmenting and mediating by specific kinds of experiences to optimise the learning. Building upon the previous study, there was an emphasis on, firstly, preparing students for supporting during, and assisting them connect experiences after work placements were completed.

Again, and as foreshadowed in the pilot study, students' readiness (i.e. their interest, capacities and disposition) to participate in the workplace and learn from it was central to the kinds and qualities of learning outcomes. That also realised the importance of students' 'time jealousy' (Billett, 2015a). That is, whilst they often refer to students as being time poor, this does not adequately capture many of the

students bases of engagement. Whereas being 'time poor' suggests that students do not have enough time, time jealousy refers to the actions by students in prioritising and being selective about the activities they engage with to meet the needs of competing demands upon their time. Also, teachers' attitudes and actions, the degree by which they valued students work experience and the need to integrate those experiences into their programs of study, varied widely. Again, the importance of how students come to engage in activities, construe meaning, procedures and dispositions from them and ultimately come to practice, emphasise the importance of the experience curriculum, namely, what students experience and how they respond to it. Students also reported that as neophytes or novices they preferred a gradual or incremental process of engagement in practice-based experiences and support. This fellowship also reinforced what was identified in the initial study, namely, that preparation for their practicums followed by assistance in reconciling their experiences after their practicums were key focus of effective educational intervention.

From this fellowship, a series of findings about the intended enacted and experienced curriculum were advanced. The intended curricular is what is planned for and anticipated would be the outcomes of the experiences provided for students. The enacted curricular is what happens when it is enacted, and students engage in the activities provided for them. The enacted curricular is what students experience and it is a product of a range of factors including the teacher, their interests and present work, the kind of practice setting in which they are engaged, and the kinds of support that they are able to secure or within the work settings and experiences provided for two reconcile what they had experienced and learnt. This study led to the development of a range of premises for organising and enacting work integrated education, including how students might come to engage effectively in these learning experiences (Billett, 2015a).

Project 3: Augmenting students' post-practicum experiences

The third project - Augmenting students' post-practicum experiences - and the contributions reported here (Australian government, 2019) arose from that second study – the fellowship. It was found in that fellowship that, on balance, that, the point at which students had completed their workplace experience, was the optimum moment for educational interventions. That is, to engage with them in articulating, sharing, comparing and, the experiences they had in workplace settings. This is not to negate the importance of preparing students for workplace experiences or supporting them throughout. However, it is only when the students have had workplace experiences, engaged in the activities and interactions that comprise their target occupations that they have a strong foundation to understand what that occupation comprises, its requirements for performance and having a basis by which they can align and organise their knowledge accordingly. This project comprises two rounds of post-practicum interventions over a three-year period. The first was through 14 projects in the health and social care sector (Billett, Newton, Rogers, & Noble, 2019). At the end of those projects these 14 projects were presented to the organisers of 30 additional projects that were enacted across 19 Australian universities. This book reports the processes and outcomes of those projects. There was no single preferred approach for organising these post-practicum interventions and each project that devised a process that was germane to its circumstances and students. Here, two forums were provided to assist the process of learning from, and sharing across, these projects. In addition, a survey was undertaken to

gather information from a larger body of students about the kinds of purposes and practices to which work integrated education was being utilised and, to identify in what ways all of this could be effective.

The first round of projects from health and social care sector utilised a range of interventions to engage students' post-practicum. The processes and outcomes of these 14 projects were made available to the second round of projects for them to learn from and perhaps adapt or adopt particular approaches and were published in an earlier volume with a focus on health and social care (Billett et al., 2019). The findings of the survey provided patterns of responses that were helpful in considering how post-practicum interventions could be used, and for what purpose (Cain et al., 2019). A range of findings came from the survey including students' preference for such a provision to assist them be effective. Interestingly, and against some expectations, it was found largely necessary for their post-practicum processes to be guided by more informed partners. Students were particularly interested in judgements of their development when made by experienced healthcare practitioners. So, against expectations about students needing and wanting to be agentic, they had a preference for engaging with more expert partners who could advise about their progress and assist them to align their learning with employment beyond graduation. In many ways, this is not surprising given the importance for students to receive informed feedback by those who are most credible and expert. Perhaps also, the health sector, with its hierarchical organisation, may well prevent such arrangements. Yet, a recurring concern is that students were less interested in leading and organising post-practicum interventions.

In the first round of projects, a range of post-practicum strategies were trialled in health and social care disciplines. These included: oral assessment tasks, professional exchanges, reflective writing, structured learning circles structured clinical debriefings, workshops, face-to-face reflective debriefs, personalised feedback and students generating videos to capture their work experience and analyses of it (Billett et al., 2019). The findings from this first round of projects informed the subsequent round of studies that are the focus and content of this publication. They discussed purposes, principles and practices associated with curriculum and pedagogies, and their interrelationships, to understand how to effectively and purposefully utilise information about post-practicum experiences. In doing this, a concern is to identify and evaluate the specific educational purposes that these interventions have sought to achieve using specific curriculum and pedagogic practices.

The second round of studies, thirteen of which are reported here were not restricted to the health and social service fields, but were far more broadly arrayed. there are a range of educational purposes to be achieved through integrating and augmenting students' workplace experience within the overall course of study. In these projects, some focused on broader educational purposes, such as the broad development occupational identity and capacities in their assessment, whilst others focused on more specific purposes. For instance, Edgar et al. (2020) this aim to provide experiences that would make students aware of and more ready for the requirements of physiotherapy work beyond graduation, through the provision of targeted experiences. Gribble and Netto (2020) aim to identify and validate means by which students could critically appraise their and others' practice is devised to improve their effectiveness as occupational therapists. Heck et al. (2020) are concerned to provide a framework for teachers to, similarly, appraise their and others' practices teachers with a focus on improving their self-efficacy and capacity to address novel challenges that they might face in classrooms. Following this trend, Murray et al. (2020) focus on promoting professional identity and efficacy in healthcare students through fostering critical appraisal of their and others' experiences. Similarly, Palesy

and Levett-Jones (2020) focus on developing professional dispositions within cohorts of student nurses. As with those above, there was often an implied concern about students being ready to face the challenges of practice. This was evident also in Wake's (2020) focus on resilience for journalism students who might be find themselves in confronting situations and, the evidence suggests that there may be little support for them in or from their workplaces. In a different but also broad focus, Patrick and Webb (2020) seek to generate student efficacy through promoting work ethic and focus on service, that is intended to be broadly applicable across a range of occupations.

Some projects have more specific objectives. Antwertinger et al. (2020) are concerned about developing students' ability to utilise and benefit from feedback, its role and how it can support their efficacy and resilience, including responding to negative feedback. Boag-Hodgson (2020) seek to develop and validate an instrument to assist provide valid assessments associated with students learning from practice and have that assessment process based on occupational expectations that would be developed across a series of placements. Valencia–Forrester (2020) uses a group debrief process that specifically focuses on developing informed or wise practice, by highlighting and discussing instances of those practices that were evident in journalism students' placement in major events. Hains-Wesson and Ji (2020) focus on developing team-based work capacities through the use of projects and assessments to develop collaborative capacities for business students. Jackson and Trede (2020) seek to develop the capacities for self-authorship through explicitly engaging students in processes that seek to reconcile personal and professional dispositions.

It can be seen that through this array of educational purposes that were selected as the imperatives for the projects there are both broader and more specific focuses. It is perhaps noteworthy that the imperatives selected by these educators have some similarities. There is a clear focus on student readiness, assisting them develop and sustain the occupational identity as they engage in work activities and assessments and that concerns about occupational competence and capacity building are underpinned by strong dispositional elements (i.e. identity, self-efficacy, resilience).

However, to proceed the reporting of these chapters, in the following section, some key issues emerging across the entire cohort projects (i.e. Phase 1 and Phase 2) are advanced as a means of identifying factors that are central to the effective augmentation of practicum experiences after they have been included. Those factors include understanding and responding to learner expectations; readiness; student engagement; engagement interventions; having a safe environment in which to share; and the importance of designing and enacting effective interventions. The following section discusses these issues.

Implementation issues for post-practicum interventions in higher education

The two phases of projects identified specific issues to be addressed and imposed practicum interventions, which they then enacted and evaluated those interventions, providing a series of project-specific and more general outcomes. Crucial implementation issues emerged during the implementation and evaluation of the post-practicum strategies. Identifying such issues is important as it is necessary to understand how best such interventions should be enacted and what factors shape their enactment in higher education institutions. Factors that either support or inhibit the enactment of these interventions need to be delineated and understood to assist them be enacted effectively. Through reviewing these chapters, four sets of issues were delineated:

- students' readiness to engage in these interventions
- managing student engagement
- considerations about both voluntary and compulsory activities
- having a safe social and psychological environment in which students can share and compare their experiences.

Readiness

Readiness comprises learners' abilities and interest in engaging and learning productively from particular experiences (Billett, 2015b) – in this case that is, whether students have the existing conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge to productively engage and learn from the experiences they encounter in work and educational settings. This set of conditions is central to them realising the outcomes intended to arise from these experiences. For instance, if students are unfamiliar with a work environment or what comprises the roles and activities of their selected occupation, and their practicums are at the commencement of their studies, then they may lack the readiness to learn through these experiences fruitfully. Instead, rather than learning what is intended, these experiences might be overwhelming and lead to dissonance (i.e. being confused), rather than to effective learning. Hence, there are factors associated with student readiness and the kind of experiences provided for them. A way of addressing this issue is to provide students with opportunities for learning that are commensurate with their level of readiness (i.e. their conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge), and that offer experiences to build on that level. For instance, an opportunity in which they might initially observe practice in action (e.g. in classrooms, wards, simulations), or attend meetings where the occupational practice is discussed first (e.g. handovers), may assist them to develop a level of readiness to engage in more demanding activities. Without having adequate concepts associated with what is being discussed or experienced, the procedures to helpfully utilise those interactions and the interest to do so, immersion in authentic work activities in busy healthcare settings may simply be too much, too soon (i.e. leading to dissonance). That readiness is particularly important when it is anticipated that the students will learn specific knowledge from experiences, albeit in education or workplace settings. It also needs remembering that in work settings, students will likely mediate their own learning, because there can be no guarantee that others will be available or in a position to mediate that knowledge for them via explanation or modelling. Hence, their readiness to engage in activities where there is unlikely to be adequate support is crucial to worthwhile educational outcomes.

If students lack readiness to engage in work activities, what was intended is unlikely to be achieved. Problem-solving activities might become guessing games; group activities might become individually-focused attempts to contribute; activities based on assumptions about students' existing knowledge may become flawed. Consequently, and particularly in circumstances where students are positioned as solely mediating their learning, the degree of readiness to engage in the activities is crucial. For instance, the assessment tasks set for nursing students (Levett-Jones et al., 2019) were similar to those in which they had previously engaged. Consequently, students familiar with these activities, and the assessment tasks were provided fresh scenarios and prompting by teachers that added novel dimensions to this way of augmenting the students' practicum experiences. This is referred to as managing the cognitive load of educational experiences (Kirschner, 2002) to facilitate effective learning. Hence, because the students were familiar with part of the task, they were able to effectively manage novel aspects of those tasks and, thereby, build upon what they knew, could do and valued (i.e.

learning). The new requirements were not, therefore, overwhelming, as might have been the case if students were unfamiliar with this process; rather, they sat within their zone of potential development (Cole, 1985).

Differences in readiness were evident in a project in which students from two universities were engaged in reflective writing tasks, yet only one of these universities had provided similar experiences to these students earlier (Sweet, Graham, & Bass, 2019). Therefore, this task was quite unfamiliar and was a challenge for students from the second university, compared with those from the first. In the first university, it was a requirement that all students had to engage in a reflective development process that was used to prompt and structure their reflective writing activities. Therefore, the students at this university could manage this task quite successfully and productively, and their cognitive resources could be directed towards engaging in learning through the novel aspects of the task in which they engaged. However, students at the other university had to engage in an entirely new pedagogical process (i.e. reflective writing) whilst also seeking to engage with the intended focus of the intervention. Because of this lack of readiness, support was required for these students, so that they could come to engage effectively in the critical writing task. The point is that for students to effectively use this kind of intervention, they must have the capacity to utilise it before engaging with it. So, when students were asked to engage with two new tasks simultaneously, one of which was the focus of the intended learning outcomes, these may not have been realised as effectively because the students were not ready to engage in the process focused on that activity. In this way, familiarity and competence with the actual pedagogic process was a prerequisite for effective learning.

Similarly, interventions trialling the use of feedback (Noble et al., 2019) also found that students' ability to engage effectively with feedback was quite limited and that teachers and clinical supervisors cannot rely on it. Students were not ready to engage in appraising feedback. This group of researchers concluded that students should have the capacity to engage in these processes, and the processes should not be merely integrated into their programs without support and guidance. It follows, they enacted an intervention which students were provided with experiences in how to engage effectively with feedback prior to participating in the intervention itself. Student readiness, therefore, stands as an important basis for the successful use of these interventions. If a particular kind of intervention is being used to promote learning, as was the case in the intervention by (Newton & Butler, 2019) where students had to prepare videos of community nursing. Unless the students were competent with the required presentational media (e.g. making videos, reflective logs) then the engagement in and learning from this intervention associated with the intended outcomes was limited. This is because students have been directing their efforts to learnings not directly associated with the course. However, as with the oral assessments and reflective processes, these presentational capacities are required to be learnt either prior to or during these interventions in addition to those learning associated with course content.

All this suggests that not only should something of students' readiness be understood, but also consideration should be given to how that readiness is aligned with the kinds of educational experiences provided, what is intended to be learnt and the means selected to promote that learning. Aligned with these concerns about readiness is the degree by which students want to commit to engaging in these activities. A key aspect of this is discussed in the next section.

Managing student engagement ('time-jealous' students)

Managing student participation and engagement with these interventions proved to be a key challenge for some of the sub-projects, in ways that are quite instructive. Put simply, engaging students in activities that they might view as being extracurricular and not part of their assessable program of study is an increasing challenge for those teaching in higher education. The key issue is that contemporary higher education students are often 'time jealous' or 'time precious'. They have a range of conflicting demands upon their time, which include paid part-time work, friend and family commitments, along with their studies (Billett, 2015a). Therefore, they are often highly selective about how they direct their time and energy. Programs with work placements add another element that consumes their time and resources. Sometimes this element of the program is not part of their assessment or is not seen as being central to students' progress within their courses. Consequently, they may view a work placement as being a lesser priority than course elements that are assessed. Of course, it is these kinds of programs that these sub-projects represent and in which interventions of different kinds were being piloted. Most of those interventions that sit outside of directly assessable items encountered difficulty in encouraging engagement by students. Even some interventions that were deemed to be highly successful (Harrison et al., 2019), but that were voluntary, had difficulty securing and sustaining engagement by and interaction with students. A factor here is how students perceive these activities. Hence, a different term was used in the Harrison intervention to describe these essential interventions, avoiding the terms 'reflection' and 'learning circles'. Interestingly, the processes used in this sub-project, although having similar qualities to the above-mentioned processes, were deemed by students to be highly effective. However, even feedback from students who deem these processes as highly effective does not necessarily guarantee that they will engage in them subsequently. For instance, despite the processes used in the intervention of (Cardell & Bialocerkowski, 2019) being judged as highly satisfactory by students, less than half of them indicated that they would engage in a subsequent activity of the same kind in the future.

Other interventions (e.g. those of Grealish et al., 2019; Newton & Butler, 2019), reported considerable difficulty in securing student participation, even when incentives were offered. For instance, Newton and Butler (2018) report repeated efforts to engage with students were frustrated, and students had many queries and questions about the approach. There were also some technical difficulties associated with students' access to the website. Students were given an incentive (\$50 gift card) to participate. A total of six (ultimately, eight) students out of 54 engaged in this activity. Even those accepting the incentive were sometimes parsimonious in the kind and extent of their engagement in this task. Forced or reluctant participation is unlikely to lead to students engaging in the kind of thinking and acting that is conducive to the higher-order outcomes (i.e. deep conceptual knowledge, strategic procedures) that can potentially be realised through such experiences.

Not all issues associated with student engagement were negative. Many sub-projects referred to successful engagements and outcomes from students' participation. Indeed, in one intervention (Cardell & Bialocerkowski, 2019), the concern was that students were progressing too quickly and in ways that were difficult to manage. This was particularly the case when there was a sharing activity with the entire group. This caused problems with timing, organisation, and advancing experiences in intended ways. Yet, given the demands upon students and their strategies to manage these demands means that the risk is that only tasks associated with assessment are likely to attract the kinds of

engagements required by students to deeply learn. This concern leads to a consideration of whether these activities should be voluntary or compulsory.

Voluntary or compulsory activities

A conundrum is whether educational interventions such as the ones outlined above should be compulsory or voluntary so that students engage only of their own volition and as motivated by their interests. Whilst making activities compulsory means that students engage with them, the basis of the compulsion is usually that they are assessed. Whilst this is often helpful and constructive, the great concern is that students will respond to the tasks in ways shaped by the assessment and, ultimately, this may well constrain the potential of their engagement and learning. With processes such as providing reflective logs, responses to feedback and critical accounts, students may elect to respond to the assessment criteria more than what they experienced, concluded or actually believed to be the case (Sweet & Glover, 2011). If the activities are voluntary, then not all students will engage with them and, indeed, small numbers may take up these invitations. Again, participation in these circumstances might also be influenced by students who volunteer, seeking to curry favour with their teachers. Also, if experience is deemed necessary, it should be included for all students. For instance, (Clanchy, Sabapathy, Reddan, Reeves, & Bialocerkowski, 2019) used a process that involved the entire year cohort (albeit only 20 students) because the interventions they provided were essential for all the physiotherapy students to be prepared for practice after graduation. Similarly, (Rogers et al., 2019) and (Levett-Jones et al., 2019) made their interventions compulsory because they were part of the student assessment activities, and both of these studies reported that students positively engaged.

Perhaps the best option is to have activities that students find inherently interesting and would wish to engage in, either as part of assessment or outside of it. For instance, medical students are deemed to be very time jealous, and in previous activities were seen to only engage in those they were pressed into. Nevertheless, Harrison et al., (2019) enjoyed considerable success with their intervention because the students found it worthwhile and interesting, and they were provided with a safe and secure environment in which to discuss the aspects of their clinical experience that they found interesting and others found worthwhile. In this circumstance, as the teachers were not directly involved in the students' discussion, the students reported that they could share stories about errors that had made or seen, and that were of interest to the other students within a group of confidants. Even in this seemingly successful intervention, not all students volunteered to engage, and some who did were not particularly supportive of the intervention; however, the majority were. Importantly, it is unlikely that an educational intervention that all students are willing to engage in and find helpful and express appreciation for will ever be identified and enacted. Another example of a compulsory, structured intervention in which students engaged effortfully was the structured case presentation that (Steketee et al., 2019) enacted. In this intervention, there was a high level of student involvement; they identified and enacted the structured case presentation as identified by themselves, and they engaged in generating responses. Beyond the case presentation was an opportunity for students to compare and contrast their experiences and discuss them with peers.

It can be concluded that, under any circumstances, offering activities that students find relevant and can contribute to may secure the best and most effortful kinds of engagement. Similarly, compulsory activities associated with assessment may need criteria that are carefully crafted to align

with the kind of outcome intended, and being open to the likelihood of students being most influenced in their responses by that criteria.

Safe environments in which to share

An issue identified across some of the sub-projects was the quality of the environment in which students could come together to share, compare their experiences. Having a safe (confidential) environment was an important factor, not only to encourage and engage students but also to shape the progress of interventions. For instance, in the circumstances in which medical students wanted to discuss learning through errors (Harrison et al., 2019), it was important that they had a safe and supportive environment that included minimal intervention by teachers. It was organised by the students and involved small-group participation. These groups appeared to permit a diversity of levels and kinds of engagement by the students and were able to accommodate different student needs, at least to some degree. The environment and the activities of the student-led component of the intervention were shaped by the scope of what students wanted to discuss, and how those discussions would progress.

Similarly, with the dietetics program (Williams, Ross, Mitchell, & Markwell, 2019), a series of small-group interactions was provided for initial debriefing sessions and discussions of two or three critical incidents. Quite deliberately, these groups were structured to be small and intimate to assist students in overcoming the difficulties they faced in being relatively socially isolated within their practicums. The concern was to have a supportive environment that would allow them to share their experiences in a way that would be conducive for that sharing and the provision of responsible and responsive feedback. The imperative for the educators was to provide participant comfort and an environment in which openness was exercised by the students. In another medical education intervention (Steketee et al., 2019), effort was similarly exercised to ensure the small-group activities were collegial and supportive, and this was the key role undertaken by the teachers, rather than intervening in the discussions students were having about cases.

When students lead processes, there may well be potentially adverse outcomes for some or all students. Hence, there is a need for careful management of these experiences. In the speech therapy intervention (Cardell & Bialocerkowski, 2019), the process of managing the student engagement of this kind was almost compromised by students themselves wishing to press on with the activity. The idea was for small groups to hold intimate discussions, and then for issues to be advanced and made available to the entire group. The teachers' concerns arose when students want to move too quickly into open disclosure of experiences, which for some students may have been too quick and potentially confronting.

In all, readiness, engagement, having voluntary or compulsory activities, and the quality of the environment were identified as being salient for the effective implementation of these interventions. What constitutes a post practicum experience varies in form, structure, and student participation. Models ranged from small group sessions to whole of student cohort workshops, with both structured and unstructured elements. The range of face to face formats included 'listening circles', 'huddles' and 'peer group exchanges'. Other post-practicum experiences included individual and group scenarios involving surveys, written reflections, video reflections, student presentations of portfolio's, and face to face interviews with students. All the approaches were centred around creating opportunities for students to reflect on their practicum experiences and process what they had learned. Opportunities for

students to consider integration of theory and practice, engage in critical thinking and peer learning were also key design elements. Activities to support critical reflection and evaluation of the students' performance while on placement were also identified by both students and academics as important for post-practicum interventions. Contextually, positioning the student experience in relation to developing employability was also a significant framing device for each of the models.

The educational purpose of the post-practicum's purpose lies in its function to provide students with a solid bridge between what they have learnt, at university and about them themselves, and life beyond the institution including employability and future work. Importantly, post-practicums help students contextualise the knowledge and understanding they have gained through their experiences. Jackson and Trede (2020) see them as providing a useful platform for deliberate reflective peer activities that allowed for complex meaning-making of their learning experience Edgar et al (2020) see their purpose in linking post practicum experiences of physiotherapy students with the development of employability. Significantly, the "inclusion of post-practicum strategies [] improves students' abilities to recognise the skills and knowledge they need to develop, prior to entering the workforce" (Edgar et al. 2020) and ensure the outcomes being requested of contemporary higher education. As such, post-practicum interventions have particular importance in contemporary tertiary education because they not only encourage students to connect theory with practice, but the interventions allow students to take what they have experienced during the placement, and contextualise that understanding in the context of their peers experiences, identify links to employability, and an appreciation for the wider application of that knowledge in their future careers.

Conclusion

How students come to engage in post-practicum intervention and for what purposes, is central to their learning, as reported earlier (Billett et al. 2017 and elaborated in Cain et al., 2019). The bases of these engagements – what is referred to as students' personal epistemologies – are central to how students come to participate in, and learn through, activities and interactions in which they engage at work and through their tertiary studies. This includes how they reconcile those two sets of experiences, which is so central to their learning from both of these sets of experiences, and how, together, these experiences contribute to individual learning. The considerations advanced in this edited book are about the role that post-practicum interventions can be used to reconcile, integrate and augment learning derived from experiences in both practice and educational settings. The 13 chapters in this volume that report specific interventions set out particular purposes, processes and outcomes that can or might be achieved through such interventions. Yet, throughout, a consideration of good educational practice in terms of the sequencing and organising of experiences, the readiness for students to engage in them, and then the enrichment and augmentation of these experiences through the use of specific pedagogic strategies. All of this is helpful. Yet, as noticed in the four key points above derived from these studies. There is also an underlying concern about students' engagement in these activities and the degree by which they participate actively and in ways likely to develop the kinds of knowledge that is intended through these programmes. So, beyond a consideration of the organisation, sequencing and enactment of educational experiences and their enrichment through even the most targeted instructional pedagogic strategy, it is important to emphasise those strategies and approaches that most engage

students in the kinds of effortful thinking and acting that are required to develop these forms of knowledge.

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