

## Workplace Learning and Assessment

Providing, enriching and integrating students' workplace experiences into VPET programs stand as worthwhile educational process to promote employability.

Particular curriculum, pedagogic and assessment practices are required for preparing, and engaging students in work settings.

These arrangements may prompt new roles for teachers and stronger relations with workplaces and workplace supervisors.

Progression:

Need for workplace experiences and their integration  
Curriculum, pedagogic and epistemological practices  
Assessment practices and approaches



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## Workplace learning experiences



Workplace provide access to:

- authentic activities and interactions;
- richly contextualised experiences (i.e. engages multi-sensory processes, provides clues, cues etc);
- purposive activities (i.e. directed to goals, engages in decision-making);
- practice (i.e. engage, refine, hone);
- episodic experiences (establishing causal and propositional links); and
- monitoring progress and outcomes (i.e. appraising and evaluating performance).

But they need to be integrated with experiences in tertiary education institutions that also make important contributions.

Such integrations exercise curriculum, pedagogic and learners' personal practices

## Curriculum considerations

What is the optimum ordering and sequencing of those experiences?

How should they be integrated?

Drawing on a study across 20 projects in Australian tertiary education



## Curriculum considerations (see Table 1 in handout)

Intended curriculum – what is planned	Enacted curriculum – what is implemented	Experienced curriculum – what students experience and learn
being clear about what is to be learnt through workplace experiences	augmenting or maximising available opportunities (e.g. appropriate settings)	students' interest and readiness central to their engagement and learning in practice settings, and reconciling it with their coursework
aligning experiences provided for students with the intended learning outcomes	considering options other than supervised placements to secure experiences	immediate concerns (e.g. performing in practicum) focus of students' interest
aligning the duration of experiences with educational purpose (e.g. orientation vs skill development)	accounting for students' readiness (e.g. interest, capacities, confidence) when selecting and enacting experiences	early and staged engagement in practice settings boosts many students' confidence to re-engage and learn effectively
intentionally sequencing preparatory experiences to secure, consolidate and reconcile learning from practice experiences	additional or specific experiences may be needed for particular student cohorts (e.g. overseas students)	challenges to personal confidence and competence can be redressed by effective group processes, including sharing of experiences.

## Educational institution-based experiences

Making activities ‘authentic’ - promoting engagement and interdependence (e.g. grading classes) - support indexing, recall, rich simulations

Verbalisation of knowledge - story-telling – narratives as mnemonics

Collective and shared projects (e.g. information technology) – sharing experiences

Individual projects (e.g. fashion) – guided by teacher, sharing experiences

Developing adaptable understandings and practices (i.e. informed principles and practices) – (fashion, cooking) to promote adaptability

Sharing and justifying approaches - opportunities for students’ engaging, sharing, comparing etc - Discussion and dialogue

## Pedagogic practices (see Table 2 in handout)

Before internships	During internships	After internships
orient students to requirements for effectively engaging in work practices	direct guidance by more experienced practitioners (i.e. proximal guidance)	facilitate the sharing and drawing out of students’ experiences
clarify expectations about purposes of, support in and responsibilities of parties in practice settings etc.	active engagement in pedagogically rich work activities or interactions (e.g. handovers)	make explicit links to, and reconciliations between, what is taught (learnt) in the academy, and what is experienced in practice settings
prepare students to engage as agentic learners (e.g. importance of observations, engagement)	effective peer interactions (i.e. students’ collaborative learning)	emphasise the active and selective qualities of students’ learning through practice
develop procedural capacities required for tasks in workplace	active and purposeful engagement by the students as learners in workplace	generate students’ critical perspectives on work and learning processes
prepare for contestations that might arise		

## Interventions: Augmenting post-work experience

Intentional interventions after students completed their work placements/experiences

Particularly strong learning potential

Opportunities to share, compare, contrast .....

Group activities, sharing with others, assessment tasks, debriefs, structured feedback, workshops, learning circles

Can be teacher or student-led

Australian healthcare students prefer to engage with teachers or practitioners (i.e. authoritative others) to secure feedback about performance and seek clarification about progress (Billett, Cain, Le in press)

## Assessing students through work

### Validity and reliability

Validity – performance has to be understood in the circumstances of practice

Reliability – need some bases to assess across quite different kinds of activities and requirements

### Characteristics of assessment processes

- Focus (canonical – situational)
- Particular interludes (e.g. routine or novel activity)
- Particular moments (e.g. busy day)
- Modes of assessment (e.g. observation, scenario-based assessment)
- Assessors and other informants (e.g. peers assessment; supervisor)