

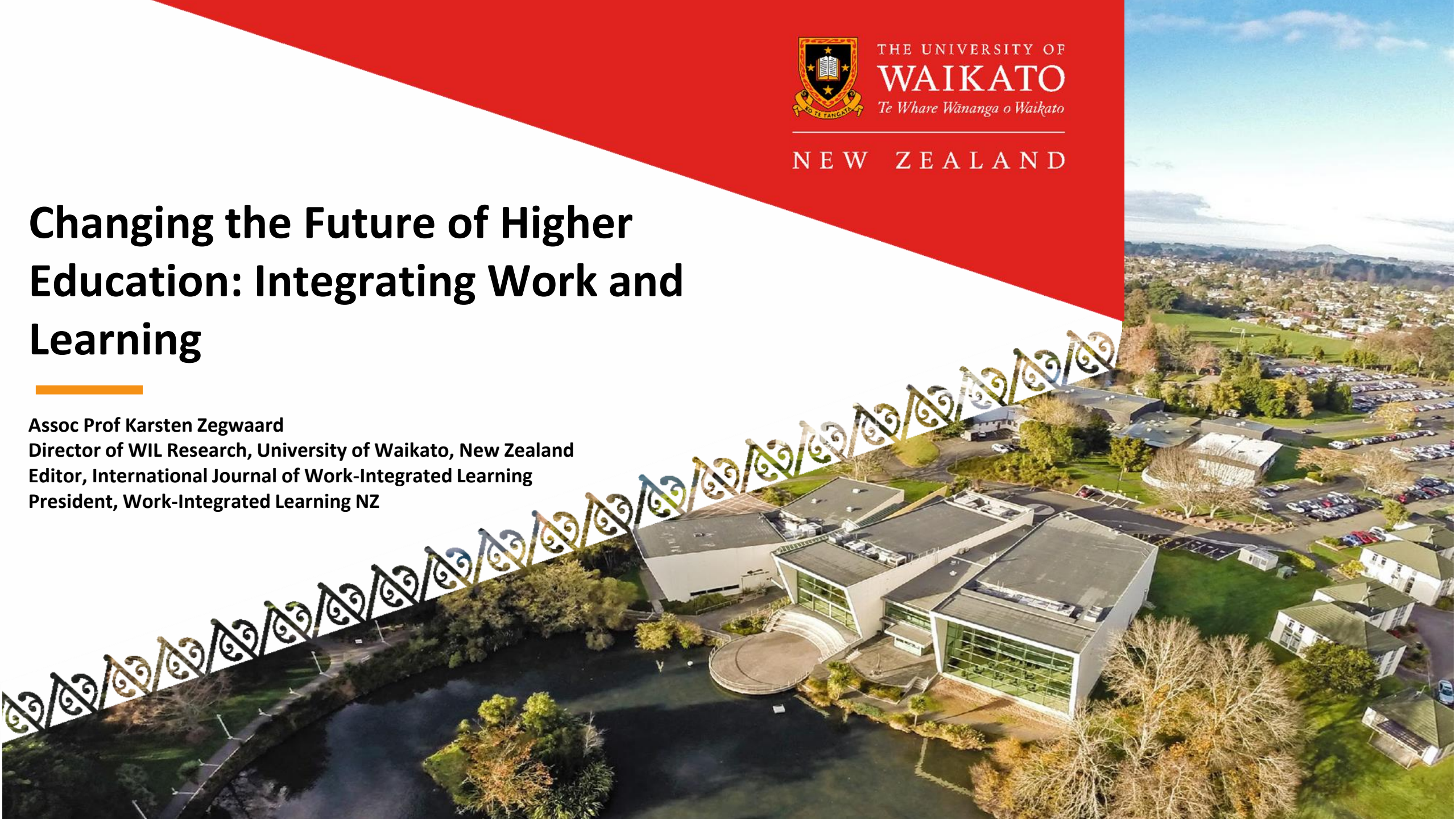


THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

NEW ZEALAND

# Changing the Future of Higher Education: Integrating Work and Learning

Assoc Prof Karsten Zegwaard  
Director of WIL Research, University of Waikato, New Zealand  
Editor, International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning  
President, Work-Integrated Learning NZ





# Overview

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- Background of work-integrated learning (WIL)
- Defining WIL
- Theories of learning
- Models of WIL
- Current focus areas
- Resources

# Background of Work-Integrated Learning

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- The term 'work-integrated learning' first appeared early/mid 1990's, became widely used early 2000's (Zegwaard et al., 2023)
  - First discoverable mention is WACE's mission statement (Bradford, 1995)
- WIL is an umbrella term used to describe a range of similar educational practices (Patrick et al., 2008)
- The educational approach is not new
  - Co-op started in 1906 (borrowed from Law studies)
  - Sandwich degrees probably around 1840
  - Apprenticeships traced back to Imperial Rome
- Work-integrated learning and work-based learning



# Defining work-integrated learning

- There have been many descriptions of WIL for a particular disciplinary or local context, practice, and research purpose.
- National associations and educational institutions have also developed their own definitions.
- Broadly, there are two forms of WIL
  1. Work placement WIL - full immersion into a workplace, Co-op, practicums, internships, etc
  2. Non-placement WIL - mostly campus-based but with an external partner, consultancy project, product design and/or creation, investigation, performances



# Common elements

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Commonalities of the definitions:

- Integrating theory with practice
- Intentionally within the curriculum
- Authenticity of the learning context
- Meaningful practice of work-focussed tasks
- Relevant to the students' study and/or career goals
- Involving an external partner

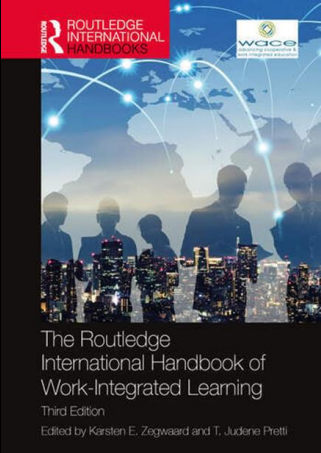
These elements are interconnected and need to be considered together

Reciprocity is inherent for all three stakeholders (the win-win-win)



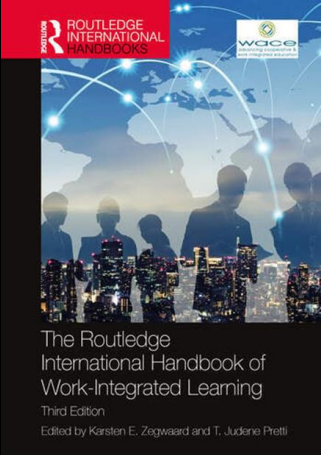
# Definition of WIL

An educational approach involving three parties - the student, educational institution, and an external stakeholder - consisting of authentic work-focused experiences as an intentional component of the curriculum. Students learn through active engagement in purposeful work tasks, which enable the integration of theory with meaningful practice that is relevant to the students' discipline of study and/or professional development.



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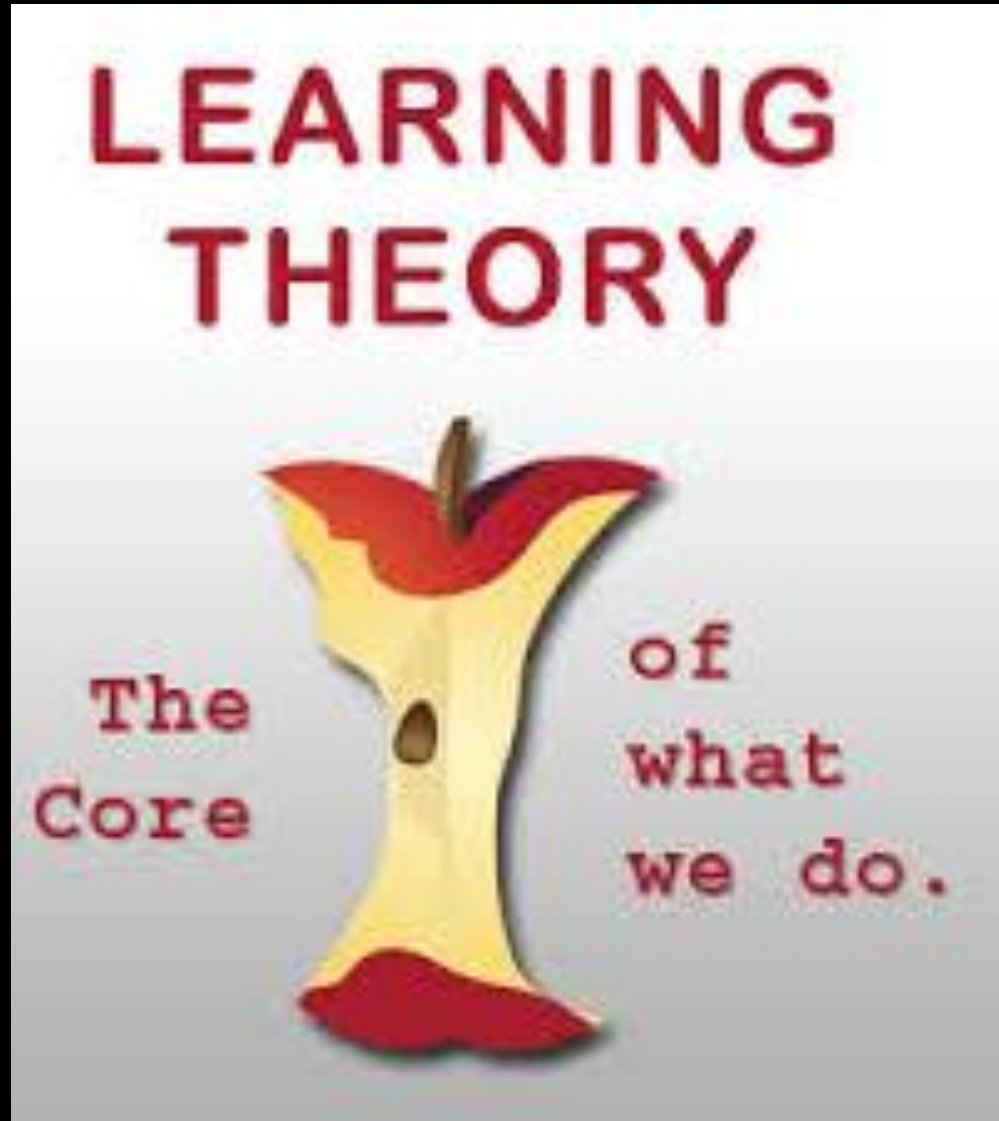


- An educational approach...
- involving three parties - the student, educational institution, and an external stakeholder....
- consisting of authentic work-focused experiences...
- as an intentional component of the curriculum.
- Students learn...
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- in purposeful work tasks...
- which enable the integration of theory with meaningful practice...
- that is relevant to the students' discipline of study and/or professional development.

# WIL underpinned by several learning theories

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- Cognitive development theory by Piaget (1985)
- Social culturalism by Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Engestrom, 1999
- Learning through experience by Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984)
- Reflective learning to enhance learning from practice (Schon, 1983; Gibbs, 1988)
- Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977)
- Situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991)





# Key focus: Employability

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- The core driver of the expanding practice of WIL (Jackson, 2015; Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017)
  - Government see it as a KPI (Cheng et al., 2021)
  - Economic growth, return on investment
- University strategic goals focus on employability and community engagement
- Much research has focused on it
  - Most is inherently employability research
- Many conference themes mention employability
- Employability will remain a key driver
  
- WIL gives students an employability competitive edge (ACEN, 2020)
- Institutions increasingly shifting to all students doing WIL
- If all students do WIL, the competitive edge becomes the norm
  
- Future focus: WIL beyond employability (Zegwaard & Pretti, 2023)



# Key focus: Quality WIL

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## Quality frameworks

Campbell & Pretti, 2023

Campbell et al., 2019

Lowe & Hay, 2016

Martin & Hughes, 2011a,b,c

McRae et al., 2017

Sachs et al., 2017

Smith et al., 2022

Stirling et al., 2016

WACE, 2024

Walker-Martin et al., 2022

Winchester-Seeto, 2019

- Ensure and evidence quality (Campbell & Pretti, 2023)
- Lessons from the past (Sovilla & Varty, 2023)
- Quality across the whole programme
  - For all stakeholders, at all stages
- Quality frameworks
  - Student experience
  - Student support
  - Curricular design
  - Institutional requirements
  - Stakeholder engagement
- Authentic assessment (Ajjawi et al., 2022)
- Programme reviews (Marlow et al., 2022)
- Increasing focus on accreditation/certification of WIL (Ferns & Arsenault, 2023)

# Key focus: Non-placement WIL

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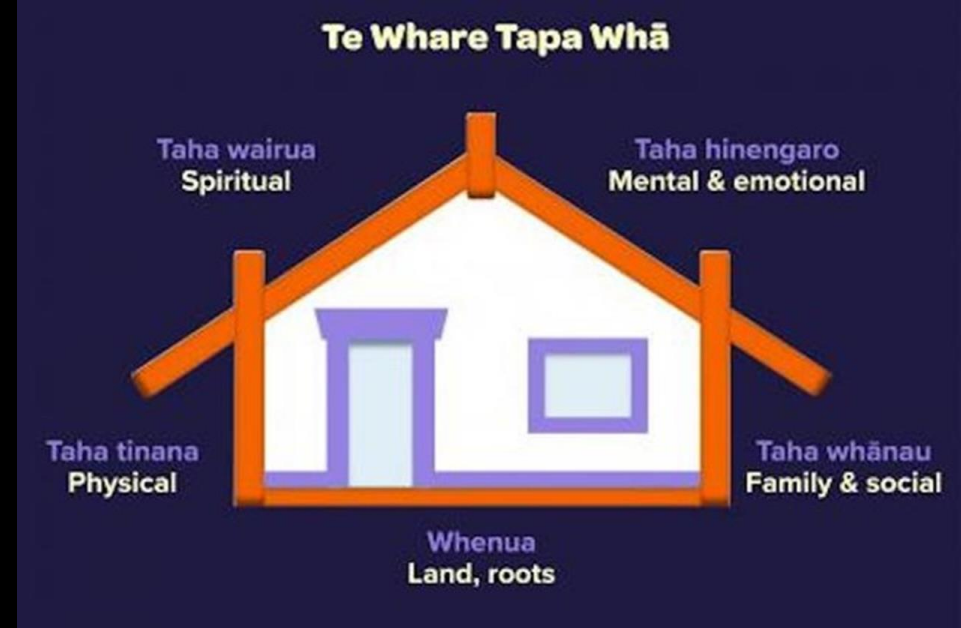
- Until recently, little focus on developing and researching non-placement models of WIL (Dean et al, 2020; Rowe et al. 2022; Zegwaard, 2015)
- Became default model during COVID (Zegwaard et al, 2020)
- Different models been developed (Rook & Dean, 2023)
  - Consulting
  - Creative studio
  - Incubator/start-ups/enterprise/entrepreneurships
  - Community projects
  - Practice clinics
  - Performances
  - Commissioned works
- Lower resource requirement, easily scalable
- Increasing literature and research on NPWIL



# Focus: Student Wellbeing

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- Topical across the wider community
- Higher education has challenges (Office of the student, 2021)
  - Student more self-reliant on finances and learning progress. Greater responsibility of self, new experiences
  - Legal requirements for institutions to ensure student wellbeing
- WIL has some unique additional challenges (Konstantinou et al., 2023)
  - Rejected applications, moving location, costs, new environments, real tasks and real consequences
- Supporting students with additional support requirements
  - Neurodiverse, mental and physical health issues
- Unpaid work placements
- Designing support structures
- Not just students, WIL staff also (Wheeldon et al., 2023; Zegwaard & Pretti, 2023)
- Special issue in IJWIL, 2025 publication



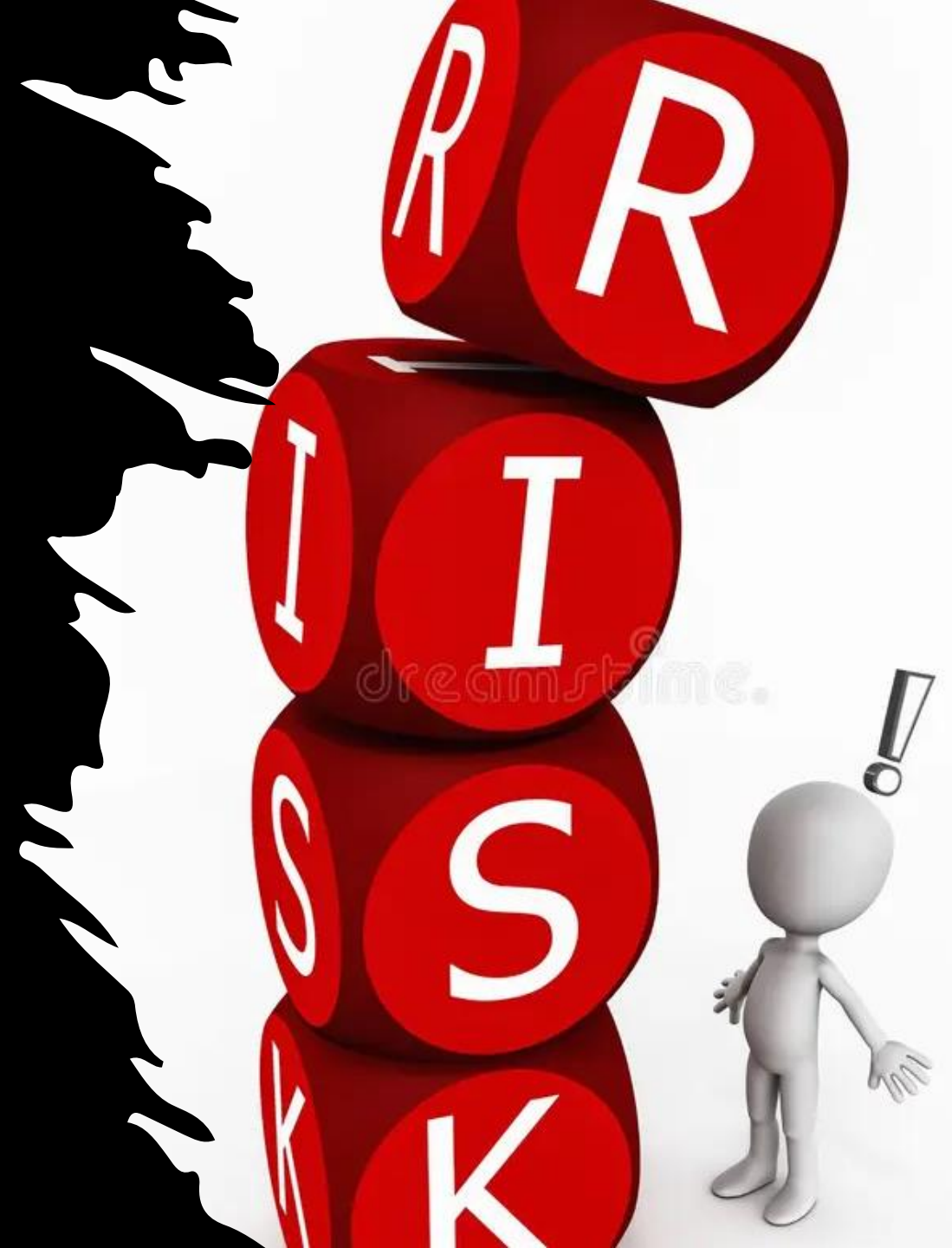
# Focus: Equity, access and inclusion

- Equitable access to higher education is ongoing work
- Some WIL practices creates inequity
  - Find your own placement model (Harrison & Ip, 2013)
  - First in family to university
  - International students (Jackson & Pham, 2022)
  - Students from remote regions
  - Minority groups
  - University structure (Hicks & Swain, 2007)
- Resourcing
  - WIL coordinators
  - Support structures
  - Communication pathways
  - Transparency on needs
- Special issue in IJWIL, 2024
- IJWIL 2022 cultural perspectives



# Focus: Managing risk

- Institutions are inherently risk averse
- .....WIL is inherently risky
- Risk is not necessarily all bad
  - Authentic
- Identifying and tracking risk
  - Institutions need to know the risk
- Assurances
  - Institutions need to know the workplace has safe practices
- Managing and reducing risk
  - Policy, procedures and tracking
  - Careful not to stifle WIL
- Be quick to respond
- Craig Cameron (Cameron et al., 2023; Cameron et al., 2019 a&b; Cameron & Orrell, 2022; Cameron, 2017a&b, 2018)



# Some focus: Resourcing and technology

- WIL is complex and needs good resourcing
- Research investigating WIL staff workload
- Use of technology
  - WIL platforms: SONIA, InPlace, Simplicity, Orbis, PlaceTrack
  - Simulated work placements
  - Remote work placements
- Tracking workflow, external relationship, and student locations (Bayerlein et al., 2022)
- Much more research needed!



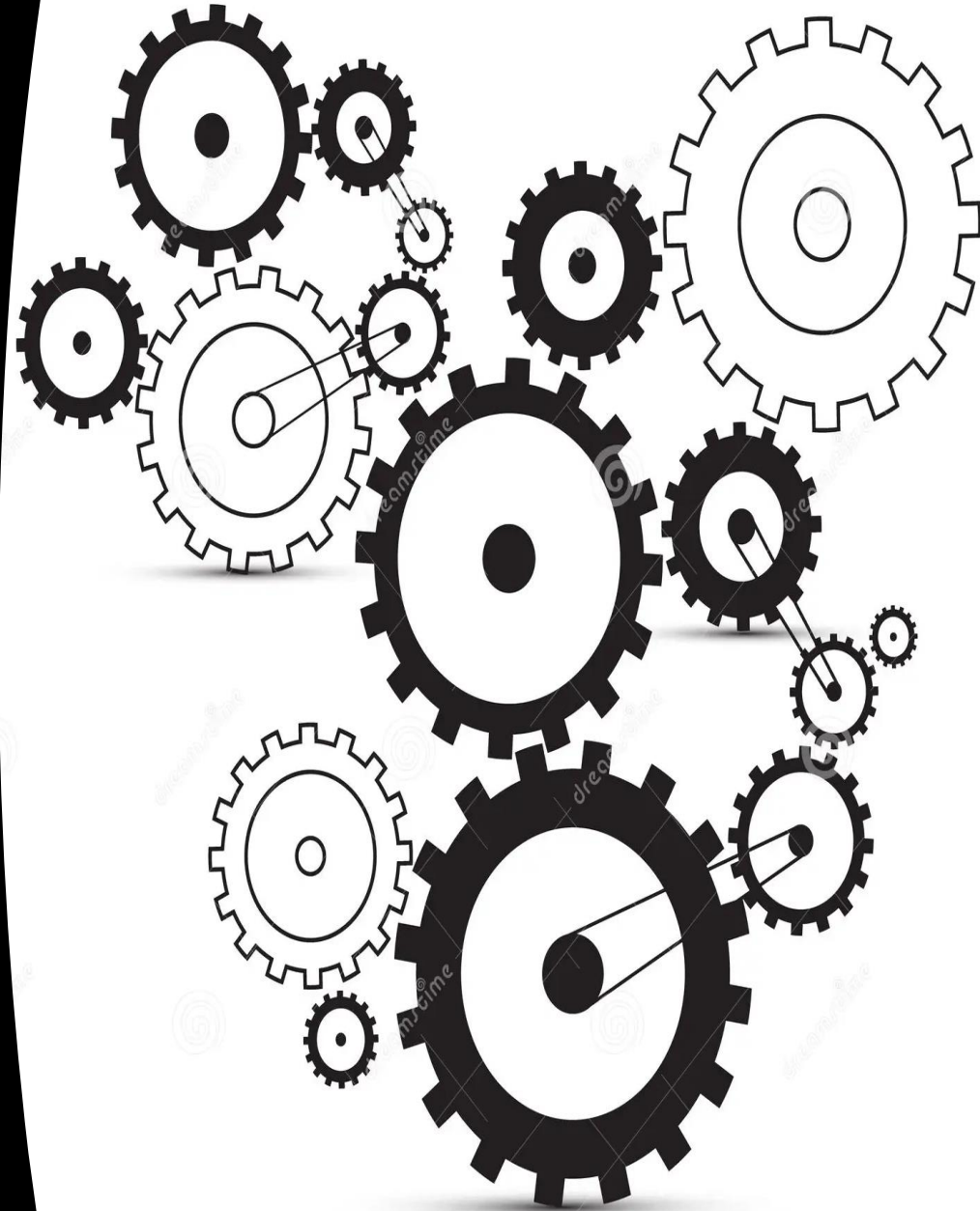
# Increasing focus: Maximising from WIL

- WIL represents significant external engagement and networking
- How are these levered?
  - Funded research collaborations
  - Employer advisory panels, sponsorship
  - Quest lecturers, mentors
  - Media events and profile
- Data mining
  - Work performance evaluations
  - Employer types and locations



## Focus (again): Integration of WIL within the curriculum

- WIL integrated into curriculum (Ajjawi et al., 2022)
- Linking learning in other courses into WIL activities and visa versa (Campbell et al., 2022)
- WIL also needs to be integrated into the curriculum
  - Scaffolding WIL across the years
  - Employability education (pre-WIL → WIL → post-WIL)
  - University of Wollongong (Dean et al., 2019)
- Explicitly linking employability outcomes to WIL



# Upcoming focus: WIL in graduate degrees

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- Sporadic mentions in the older literature
- Some recent insightful publications (O'Connor, 2023; Olsson & Bernhard, 2023)
- Australian PhD programmes
- Defining WIL in graduate programmes
- Probably more widely practiced than recognised





## Upcoming focus: Multidisciplinary Interdisciplinary

- Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary
- Future workplaces will be more multidisciplinary than now
- Multidisciplinary teams working on multidisciplinary projects
- Students learning often restrained within set disciplinary contexts (Ferns et al., 2022)
  - Universities tend to be departmentalised
- The Impact Lab (Adams-Hutcheson et al, 2023)



# Upcoming focus: UN Sustainable Development Goals

- 17 far reaching, ambitious, and important goals
- Impacts access to education
- Will change/disrupt workplace focus (McRae et al., 2023)
- How are we preparing our future leaders?
- How are our activities mapping onto the SDGs?
  - Universities actively doing this
- We need sustainable solutions for our future.



## — Where to from here?

- Continue to expand our good practice
  - Evidence the quality
- Develop more non-placement WIL
- Entrepreneurships, enterprise and start-ups
- Develop local examples of good practice
- Connect with the international WIL community
  - ASET, WACE
  - CEWIL, ACEN, CEIA, WILNZ
- Read, research and publish

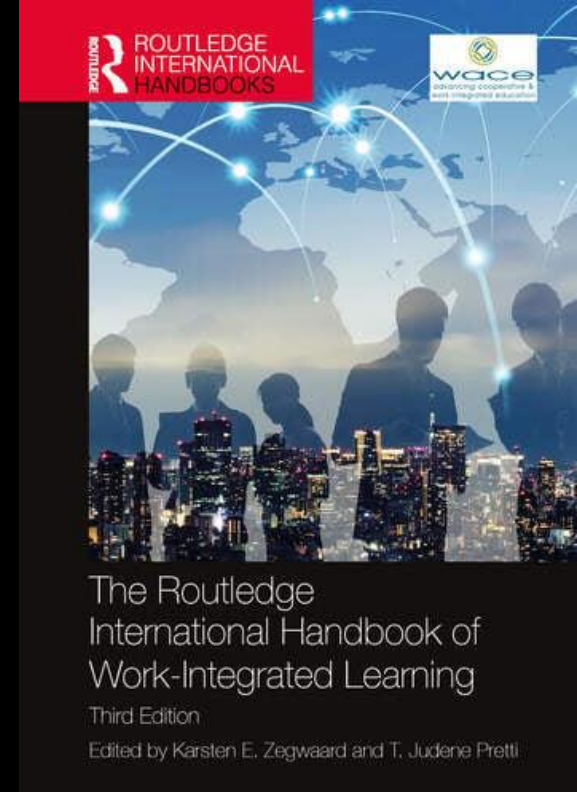


An open book with text on the pages, resting on a stack of other books. The pages are aged and yellowed. The text is dense and appears to be a classic literary work. The book is open to a page with a large block of text. The background is a light, textured surface.

# LITERATURE

# The Routledge International Handbook of Work-Integrated Learning (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)

- Compilation of established knowledge and critical discussion of the practice of WIL
- A 'go to first' book for WIL practitioners, educators, and researchers
- 37 chapters, 96 authors, 644 pages
- Five sections:
  - 1) *defining and theoretical background*,
  - 2) *benefits*,
  - 3) *models of WIL*,
  - 4) *developing and managing WIL*, and
  - 5) *topical issues*
- Available in hardback and eBook – paperback/softback later this year.
- [www.routledge.com/9780367741761](http://www.routledge.com/9780367741761)
- University libraries likely to have ebook access already



**Watch for  
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common.**



# International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning

ISSN: 2538-1032

[www.ijwil.org](http://www.ijwil.org)

- Central journal for WIL, commenced 24 years ago
- More than 600 published articles
- Open access, double blind reviewed, 50-member international review board
- Indexed on Scopus, EBSCO, ERIC, DOAJ, Cabells, ESCI
- Q2 journal (71 percentile)
- Special issues:
  - Assessment
  - Employability
  - Research methods
  - Impact of COVID (double special issue)
  - Cultural perspectives
  - Equity, inclusion and access
  - WIL and wellbeing (*to be published start of 2025*)

[www.ijwil.org](http://www.ijwil.org)

# Resources: Books and good practice reports

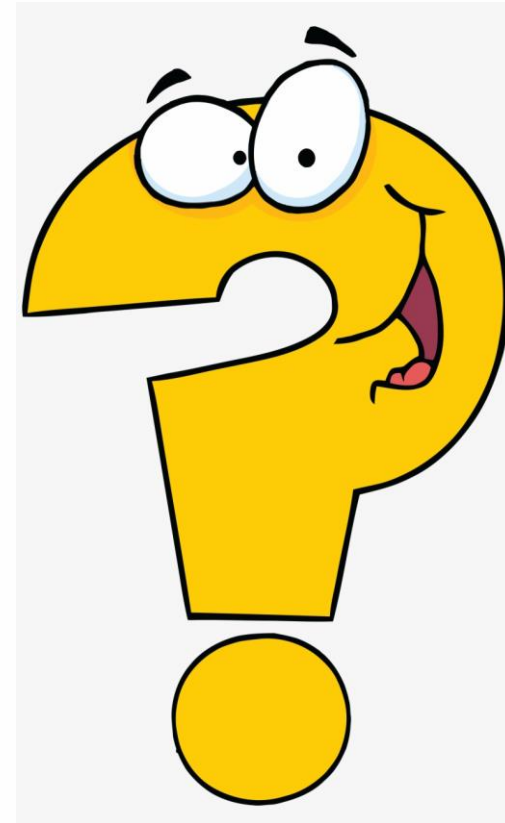
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# Any Questions?



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

NEW ZEALAND

WIL in practice  
and assessment

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THEORY

PRACTICE



# Types of Assessment

- Performance-based
  - Work/task performance
  - Skill tests
  - Observations (e.g., classroom observations)
- Reflective tasks
  - Reflective essays
  - Reflective report
  - Journaling
  - Dairies
  - Learning goal settings and reflection (co-design)
  - Career statements (current and future directions)
- Portfolio
  - Compilation of evidences
  - Portfolio approach is best across the whole degree
- Work-related
  - Health and safety assessments
  - Technical reports (co-design)
  - Consultation reports (co-design)
  - Oral presentations (co-design)
  - A product (co-design)

## Weightings

- 100% work performance
- 100% assessments
  - Work performance is 0% weighted feedback
- 50:50 work performance, assessment
- <50 : >50 work performance, assessment
  - E.g., 25% work performance, 75% assessments

# Example: Work placements (30pts – double paper)

- **Workplace health and safety (5%)**
  - Template. Risk assessment, evidence of induction
- **Placement brief (5%)**
  - Template. Scope of placement, key contacts
- **Setting of learning goals (0%)**
  - Technical, behavioural/professional, knowledge. 2 goals for each using SMART
- **Reflection on applying a taught concept in the workplace (20%)**
  - E.g., a principle, set of knowledge, lab tests
- **Reflecting on learning goals (10%)**
  - Progress to achieving learning goals
- **LinkedIn update (5%)**
  - Need to see evidence of a bigger network, work history updated
- **Technical report (30%)**
  - Technical writing with a focus on the work done, not reflection of learning
- **Work performance (25%)**
  - Completed by the workplace supervisor



# Example: non-work placement WIL

Vary significantly. A mix of group and individual assignments

- **Planning assignment (group, 5%)**
  - Template. Project name, scope, purpose, timeline, measures of success, resource needs, deliverables
- **Midpoint update (individual, 5%)**
  - Template. Update on progress on timeline and deliverables. How the team is functioning
- **Reflection assignment (individual, 20%)**
  - Identify 1 technical skill and 1 behavioural skill learnt and explain. Reflect on teamwork
- **Oral presentation (group, 20%)**
  - Of the work completed, recommendation. Content similar to final report.
- **Final report (group, 20%)**
- **Professional engagement (group and individual, 30%)**
  - 15% peer assessment (individual), 15% external stakeholder (group)



# Example: Multidisciplinary projects (The Impact Lab)

## Structure

- Multidisciplinary projects, based around the UN SDG
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Centrally run
- Two modes of delivery
- Individual group projects
  - Each group has their own project
  - Project is well defined
  - Likely each project has a different stakeholder
- Competition mode
  - One problem proposition
  - One stakeholder
  - Many possible outcomes/solution
  - Best outcome/solution wins

## Assessment

- Professional profile (individual, 15%)
  - CV, cover letter, LinkedIn
- Project plan (group, 15%)
- Midpoint update (individual, 15%)
- Oral presentation (group, 20%)
- Final report (group, 25%)
- Project contribution (individual, 10%)

(Adams-Hutcheson et al, 2023)

