Improving work-integrated learning experiences for Pacific students

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Aotearoa New Zealand has a significant population of Pacific students in the higher education sector although proportionally Pacific academic staff numbers are negligible. In social work programs students undertaking work-integrated learning (WIL) generally work with non-Pacific academic staff and are matched with agencies seen to be appropriate to their learning needs. This article draws on the perspectives of six Pacific graduates on elements that may enable the improvement of WIL experiences. The findings indicate that higher education providers should strengthen relationship-building with students and families; support host organizations to understand the unique needs of Pacific students; and develop systems of accountability and mentoring that promote Pacific student success in WIL. Drawing on a Pacific model of professional supervision and the findings from this study a model for supporting the learning of Pacific WIL students is proposed. The model encompasses three domains: personal, cultural, and professional.

Keywords: Work-integrated learning, Pacific, Indigenous, quality, social work, mentor

THE CONTEXT OF WIL

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a compulsory component of the social work curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand and students are required to complete a minimum of 120 days of WIL within the final two years of their qualifying programme. While WIL is an umbrella term for a range of experiential learning activities, for the purpose of this article, WIL refers to work-based placements (Smith et al., 2016). Social work placements occur in a variety of organizational contexts, including hospitals, non-government organizations, iwi or Māori organizations, government departments such as Oranga Tamariki (child protection and youth justice agency) and Police. The intention of the WIL experience is to enable students to learn in authentic work environments. Regular supervision with registered social workers, supports students to critically reflect on and integrate academic knowledge into their practice (Hay, 2020).

Educators from higher education institutions (HEIs) are responsible for the matching of students to appropriate host organizations, monitoring the placement, preparation and debriefing of the student, and assessment of the placement course. These educators also assure the robustness of WIL processes and student support systems (Winchester-Seeto, 2019). In addition, they are responsible for understanding the complex network of stakeholder relationships, including the student and the host organizations, who may hold differing perspectives and priorities about WIL (Jackson, 2018). WIL practices can, therefore, be conceptualized as occurring before, during and following the placement (Billett, 2011).

Several frameworks for ensuring good practice in WIL have been developed, both in Aotearoa New Zealand (for example, Martin et al., 2011; Lowe & Hay, 2016; Hay, 2020) and internationally (for example, Agnew et al., 2017; Bogo, 2010; Campbell et al., 2019; McRae & Johnston, 2016; Winchester-Seeto, 2019). These frameworks generally emphasize similar aspects of WIL including partnerships with stakeholders; preparation and debriefing of students; appropriate processes to ensure risks are

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mitigated or managed; assessment and pedagogy; skill and reflective development; supervision; meaningful learning opportunities and curriculum integration. Australian authors Campbell et al., (2019) summarized these aspects into the four areas of: student experience; curriculum design; institutional requirements; and stakeholder engagement. While these frameworks offer a starting point for considering student experiences of WIL, they do not specifically acknowledge cultural difference or Indigenous perspectives. This article addresses this gap in the literature by exploring how WIL for Pacific students may be improved.

WIL AND PACIFIC STUDENTS

Pasifika or Pacific are umbrella terms for diverse peoples who identify as part of ethnic groups Indigenous to Pacific Island nations. The Pacific population in Aotearoa New Zealand makes up 8.1% of the total population (excluding Māori who are Indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand), most of which are New Zealand-born (StatsNZ, 2020). In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, the main Pacific ethnic groups are: Samoan, Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Kiribati. Pacific students comprise just under 9% of the higher education student population in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2021), just under 4% of all Pacific tertiary students are international students, the rest are domestic students of Pacific ethnicities (Ministry of Education, 2021). Many of these students are the first members of their family to study at the tertiary level and as Passells (2006, p. 20) notes, academic learning is "…not necessarily followed through in the home/community lives of … students where family/community/church obligations and responsibilities take priority." At Massey University in Aotearoa New Zealand, just over half of the Pacific students are over 25 years and more than 40% choose to study part-time to accommodate work and family obligations (Massey University, n.d.). Pacific peoples are however significantly under-represented as staff in the academic environment (Naepi, 2019). For example, at Massey University 1.7% of the staff population have Pacific ethnicity (Massey University, 2018).

Many HEIs now have Pacific-focused learner success plans which emphasize the importance of educators understanding the learning needs and preferences of this student cohort. That said, non-Pacific staff are most likely to be engaged in the WIL enterprise and liaising with Pacific students and Pacific host organizations. Understanding Pacific values and beliefs may therefore be a new learning area for these staff. Existing WIL frameworks have largely been determined by non-Pacific academics and WIL practitioners and whether they are fit for purpose for Pacific (and other Indigenous) students should, therefore, be given closer attention.

Casting a Pacific lens over WIL frameworks may assist with understanding how Pacific values are or are not acknowledged and supported in the WIL context. A cautionary approach however should also be applied as Pacific cultures, as with other Indigenous cultures, have unique histories, language and cultural norms (Johnson et al., 2012; Mooney et al., 2020). One of the espoused benefits of WIL is that it "…is more than just an opportunity to connect the learning within the university with the practice of the workplace, but it is also an opportunity to shape professional identity and develop a deeper understanding of the self" (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 21). If this is so, then educators have a responsibility to consider how they can facilitate this personal and professional development of their Pacific and other Indigenous students.

Devaluing and marginalizing Indigenous and local knowledge is a consequence of colonizing practices and can be evident in the teaching and learning practices in HEIs (Faleolo, 2013; Johnson et al., 2012; Mooney et al., 2020; Ravulo, 2016). For instance, the social work higher education curriculum in

Aotearoa New Zealand is founded on Eurocentric pedagogical concepts that may limit Pacific or other Indigenous student engagement and success in WIL (Chilvers, 2021; Crawford, 2018). Incorporating Pacific epistemologies into WIL has had limited application (Ravulo, 2016) however these knowledges offer students and WIL educators opportunities for learning about cultural humility, cultural validity and cultural responsiveness in different contexts (Faleolo, 2013).

Consideration of existing Pacific frameworks may shed light on how current WIL frameworks could evolve to incorporate Indigenous values, perspectives, and beliefs. For example, Pacific frameworks for social work practice and supervision highlight Pacific concepts of kinship, balance and harmony in relationships, community, collectivism, spirituality, and interdependence (Autagavaia, 2001; Mafile'o, 2006; Passells, 2006). In contrast, palagi (non-Pacific person) or Western supervision and practice frameworks are rooted in the values of individuality, secularism, independence, and rights of consumers (Autagavaia, 2001).

Drawing on findings from a research project in which supervisors and supervisees in social service agencies in Aotearoa New Zealand were interviewed, Autagavaia (2001) proposed a multi-dimensional approach to professional supervision that illustrates an interconnected process incorporating three domains: personal; cultural; professional. Although supervision is only one component of WIL, the model has considerable relevance for WIL generally, and in particular for Pacific students, as it acknowledges and incorporates dimensions of self in a way that is flexible in terms of context and discipline. In addition, it has a focus on practise and the learning of those involved in the experience. Within each domain different aspects of self can become evident. The personal domain lies at the heart of the model, encompassed by the cultural dimension with the professional domain as the outer layer. Autagavaia highlights that having an understanding of one's personal and cultural self is significant for enhancing the professional self. Many variables may be included in the personal and cultural domains including personal, social and environmental factors such as age, status, language, birthplace, attributes and capabilities (Autagavaia, 2001). As the author notes, "The sum total of one's personal and cultural resources is a critical force to be utilized in efforts to enhance professional practice" (Autagavaia, 2001, p. 50). A student's development of professional practice is an essential component of WIL (Higgs, 2014).

In the context of WIL, both educators and the host organization staff, including the field educator (practice supervisor in the host organization), need to understand the personal and cultural aspects of the Pacific student. The depth of understanding of the Pacific student will contribute to the quality of the relationship between them, their academic supervisor and their field educator. The supervisees in Autagavaia's (2001) research highlighted that there are differences between their perspectives and those of palagi. Again, in a WIL context, recognition of cultural difference may enable students to be better supported, educated and supervised.

This article explores the perspectives of six Pacific graduates on how WIL experiences can be improved. Autagavaia's model will be transposed without adaptation and then enhanced through connecting with the findings from this research. Consequently, an alternative approach to considering how WIL experiences for Pacific students can be improved will be presented.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study examining Pacific student's retrospective perspectives on their WIL experiences, employed a qualitative approach. The authors are both academics at Massey University and they intended to add

value to current processes, systems, and relationships within and external to the HEI, with the intention of strengthening Pacific student experiences of WIL.

Specifically, the aim of this project was to identify factors that affect the placement experiences of Pacific and Māori students. These two groups of students were focused on due to their Indigenous and minority positioning in the School of Social Work.

This article focuses only on Pacific graduate perspectives with the results from the study of Māori perspectives published in Mooney et al. (2020). Ethics approval was granted by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee in 2014 (Approval number 13/43). Ethical considerations included confidentiality of the participants, informed consent, participant rights, and the storage and use of data. A particular focus was on beneficence with the intention of the research being to strengthen existing systems and processes that enable Pacific students to have improved WIL experiences. Potential conflict of interest was addressed by the interviews not being conducted by staff from the School of Social Work, although minimal conflict was identified as the participants were all graduates rather than students at the university at the time of the interviews.

Participants were accessed through a process of purposive sampling of Pacific graduates who had completed the Bachelor of Social Work program internally at the Manawatū campus of Massey University. These graduates were approached by the Director of Field Education (Author 1) by telephone or email. An information sheet and the interview schedule were attached to the email or sent out to them if they indicated an initial interest in the project during the telephone call. All the approached graduates agreed to participate in the project. Two of the participants were raised in their Pacific island country and the remaining four had been raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. To protect the participant identities, their ethnic-specific identity is not conveyed here, but the six participants identified ethnically with at least three of the eight main Pacific ethnic groups in Aotearoa mentioned earlier. The semi-structured interviews with the six participants were conducted by a contracted interviewer who identifies as a Pacific person and who was known to some of the participants due to her active involvement in Pacific support systems at the university and her engagement in the local Pacific community. Having a Pacific interviewer who was not part of the School of Social Work staff encouraged participants to speak openly about their perspectives on WIL. A consent form was signed by each participant prior to the interview which were conducted in the participants' workplaces or homes as agreed to by the participant and interviewer. The interview schedule was developed by three field education staff in the School of Social Work, including one Māori academic. Prior to the interviews, the interviewer was invited to provide feedback on the interview schedule to contribute to the robustness of the interview process. Participants were asked questions related to how HEIs and host organizations could improve WIL experiences for Pacific students; specific needs or requirements of Pacific students; and factors that affect Pacific students' preparation and involvement in WIL. The participants reflected on their experiences as previous students and, when applicable, as field educators of students on placement. The recorded interviews were then transcribed by the interviewer before a process of thematic analysis (Babbie, 2013) was undertaken, initially by the Director of Field Education and then by a Pacific staff member). The qualitative responses were categorized in themes as discussed below.

FINDINGS

Themes are presented using the interrelated personal, cultural and professional domains identified in Autagavaia's (2001) Pacific Islands social work supervision model. In the model, the personal and the

cultural domains are "essential elements" and "critical forces" (Autagavaia, 2001, p. 50) to enhance the professional domain. Institutions and agencies collaborate with each other and Pacific students to foster the intersection of personal, cultural and professional domains during WIL. Using these domains as an organizing framework positions Pacific students' holistic development at the center of the WIL experience. Taken together, the themes from participant voices illustrate how HEIs and host organizations can offer good WIL opportunities whilst demonstrating cultural competency. Although there will be a range of perspectives given Pacific ethnic and other diversities, including amongst the six participating graduates, the themes are relevant across Pacific groups. Themes addressing considerations and actions within the personal domain are presented first, followed by discussion of themes aligning with the cultural domain and, finally, the professional domain.

Personal

Attending to Pacific students' "self-space" was highlighted as a part of what makes for effective WIL placements. One participant explained how validating the "personal" and "cultural" was a pivotal aspect of her own social work education experience and is now part of her approach as a field educator:

> It's that working on the personal level. They got us together over a weekend [for] a workshop around poetry writing, getting us to challenge who we are, getting us to know what it is we're going to bring to the table. And although I didn't take it on board at the time, those are the things that have stuck to me. Validating the cultural elements. The personal stuff that we bring are just as important as the academic stuff that is being taught. Validate your voice, your personal self, because that also contributes to the professional side as well. (P3)

Personal attributes of "good awareness of self" and "an eagerness to learn and to take on board" (P3) were seen by this same participant as more important to ensuring students' quality learning on placement than academic knowledge or previous practice experience.

Students being prepared mentally, physically and in terms of their broader responsibilities was also highlighted as contributing to good placements:

> I think they need to be prepared mentally, physically and emotionally, you know, because often our Pacific students are not exposed to a whole lot of stuff. Just be prepared or expect the unexpected. (P2)

> Really, really prepare in terms of management of health. Like myself, I was also a wife of a minister [of religion] . I also had to work as well and do my study. So, on placement you have to be mentally in the right place. When I was doing my placement. I think I almost had a mental breakdown. But I persevere . because I've got kids and I need to work to financially support ... and on top of that, all your other responsibilities ... Knowing them coming from Pacific families, they all have responsibilities as well. (P1)

The last narrative reflects Pacific cultural concepts of self, defined in relation to family and community. The narrative also suggests that Pacific students will often have significant roles and responsibilities they are attending to in addition to placement. Educators and field educators, therefore, need to know their students and to know how to support Pacific students to manage their different roles and responsibilities. They also should know, however, how to recognize and foster the skills and resources that the students bring because of their lived experience, as suggested by this participant:

> They may be young but, you know, some of these Pacific Island students [have] been brought up like when I was young. I used to go home, clean the house, make dinner while my parents were working. Come home, dinner's on. (P4)

According to participants, knowing students well assists with appropriate placement selection. One participant stated:

> It's knowing your students and the skills and the fit they will have and what they will be able to bring to the organization. (P3)

Similarly, participants maintained the importance of knowing students' interests and passions:

> There's no use sending a student to a placement if they have no interest in that sort of field. Just knowing the Pacific students and seeing what sort of direction they sort of want to look at. (P4)

> The gap is if you don't have the passion for your placement. (P2)

Finally, supporting Pacific student's transition after placement and after completion of a qualifying degree was suggested as something which would add value to the placement process.

> [The institution] have the power to talk to the organization. If there is a possibility for the student to have a job I believe that they still need to be supported by [the institution] even though you finish your degree. (P2)

> Seeing if they're interested in certain areas of further study. It's quite a big milestone for them and their family, so for them to carry on with that, 'cos they're always wanting to learn, and always wanting to give back, so I think maybe [the institution] looking at what they can do further for them, after. (P5)

In summary, ensuring good placements for Pacific students are explained by these participants as including a holistic engagement and harnessing of the personal domain. This engagement means there are intentional processes to facilitate students to locate themselves and to validate and draw on their lived experience. Both educators and host organization staff need to know Pacific students in the context of their families and communities and to understand how their broader context impacts on their skills and resources to undertake a placement. Students' interests in different practice areas is another aspect for them to seek out. Finally, the participants suggest that improving the placement experience extends beyond the end of the placement itself, to include supporting the transition from placement to employment options or further study. The next section focuses on the cultural domain and how institutions, host organizations and educators can harness cultural factors to improve WIL experiences.

Cultural

Participants identified cultural factors which contribute to ensuring good WIL for Pasifika students. At a basic level, educators need an awareness of and responsiveness to ethnic specific and Pacific diversities. Participants stated:

> Just because we're Pacific Island doesn't mean we have the same views, so it's just understanding that. Yeah, I'm Pacific Island, but I'm Samoan. He's Tongan. (P4)

> Understand a little bit about the cultural context of things like small mannerisms. (P5)

> Cultural awareness. Don't expect me to look you straight in the eye ... and if I'm just sitting there quietly or silent, it's not because I don't know anything, I'm just listening. (P4)

Recognizing and utilizing cultural strengths of Pacific students, such as relationship-building and working collectively, is another noteworthy theme related to the cultural domain. A participant explained how this might be provided for in WIL:

> You work collectively with other students, and that was really good for us, helping and sharing resources was really important 'cos as you go out in work you have to know each other; you have to build up networks outside. (P1)

A strong relationship between higher education institutions and Pacific communities was posited by participants as a precursor to quality placements for Pacific students:

> I think one of the gaps [is] there's not a strong relationship between [the institution] and our Pacific community. If we're wanting to advance the quality of social work field education for our Pacific students, then [the institution] would benefit from strengthening their relationship with Pacific communities. (P6)

Other participants commented:

> Have some more Pasifika-directed type placements. When I came here they had a Samoan, so it was kind of nice to go somewhere where you could already have a connection with them. (P5)

> Most agencies are quite reluctant to have student placement. And I think that's where the institute probably need to really focus about developing that relationship with these agencies around in their area. (P4)

Building on the theme of institutions strengthening relationships with Pacific ethnic communities and services, the participants shared substantively about the importance of having teachers, field educators and mentors who are of Pacific ethnicities. For example, participants stated:

> It's just important to have Pasifika staff in there. It just brings more to the table. (P5)

> I really benefited from a Pacific field educator. It wasn't even about my field educator being qualified and registered, it was because I was able to relate to her ... about certain cultural values and how my personal values reflected in the work that I did as a student social worker. Having a Pacific field educator really helped. (P6)

> I think that [University] having a Pacific Island tutor in place and also the Māori tutors … for me and other Pacific students at the time, we call them God-sent. They encouraged me to stay on. (P1)

> I was quite lucky 'cos we had that Pacific Island support. I credit my stuff to those guys for me getting to where I am in regards to study. (P4)

Connecting with other Pacific people in the host organization was also identified as something which could improve the placement experience for Pacific WIL students:

> Find out if there are Pacific people within that organization to get the student to kind of just touch base with. That would make the student then feel comfortable. It kind of drops the anxiety

> level. Even if that person is not going to be the field educator, at least link the student to someone more like a buddy. (P1)

Cultural supervision was identified by one participant as contributing to quality supervision for Pacific WIL students:

> I think that's a missing piece there in any organization, is for students to have cultural supervision someone within your own culture that you can talk to. (P1)

Engagement with Pacific students' families was another cultural domain theme related to improving WIL. It was suggested that the HEI could share information about placements with families so those family members would be better prepared to support the student given the impact placement will have on their contribution to family life. A participant stated:

> If it's a young student, maybe meeting with the support people of the student, might be the parents, might be an aunty. If my daughter, or my niece in placement, what are my role that I need to support her go through her placement? So that the student will have the support. (P2)

Finally, opportunities to develop Pacific cultural knowledge and skills for social work was a contributing factor to improving the WIL experience. The quote below illustrates this theme:

> If there are any model or theories in regards to working with Pacific people, it's really good for them to learn that as well. If you have to work with your own people, you need to at least have something. If there are any [referrals]… to Pasifika families, I think it would be really good for them to be part of that, so that they can get a feel of how to work with their own people in a more formal professional way. (P1)

In summary, there are several themes which could be considered part of the cultural domain which could improve WIL for Pacific social work students. Educators' awareness of Pacific ethnic specific diversities was considered important. Appreciation of cultural strengths such as working collectively and relationship-building was also seen as contributing to a positive placement experience. Beyond working with Pacific students, the participants suggested the importance of HEIs establishing strong networks with Pacific communities, which could provide more placement opportunities but, more importantly, is part of an ongoing mutually enhancing relationship between the institution and community stakeholders. Further to this, having Pacific ethnicity teaching staff was another institutional response which makes a difference for Pacific students. Engaging families of Pacific students for information sharing about what is involved in WIL would support families to provide the support to Pacific WIL students. Finally, the opportunities to develop the application of Pacific theories and models in a professional context in working with Pacific families was also identified as a characteristic that could improve WIL experiences.

Professional

The participants identified several factors for ensuring good WIL experiences in the professional sphere which are not dissimilar to what is already known about WIL. Themes included preparation and clear expectations, practical application, and coaching/mentoring.

Good preparation, establishing clear roles and appropriate learning goals at the outset, was identified as positively contributing to the WIL experience. Three different participants commented:

> In terms of the quality of the placement, there are clear goals and learning objectives that have been negotiated prior to placement occurring, so that there's no surprises. Making sure that the connections between the three parties – the tertiary provider, the student, and the organization - is very clear and that's been communicated right through ... what everybody is doing in terms of roles and responsibilities. (P3)

> Ensuring the objectives, learning objectives and I guess schedules for the weeks is sorted and that everyone is kind of aware. That for me is big. (P6)

> I think for not only a Pasifika student but any student, is having a placement that's set up well and it is safe, like doesn't expect them to go outside their skill set. (P5)

The opportunity for practical application of theory and to work out how to fit into the practice environment were considered to contribute to the learning experience:

> When you begin your placement, that's when you apply your knowledge to practice you learn first-hand. A quality placement for Pasifika would be … [to] apply knowledge to practice. (P2)

> They need to have the opportunity to engage in the whole visits and gathering information, assessment, and making analysis on the cases. (P1)

> Placement is about learning the practicalities of social work practice and learning how they will fit within that environment. (P3)

Another participant elaborated with an example, in their role as a field educator, of giving a student a project to create an induction manual, so they moved beyond observing to doing.

Supervision, coaching, and mentoring was also identified by participants in this study as central to WIL.

> It's one thing to supervise a student. It's another to teach, to coach. How do we give constructive criticism, critiquing back to students, that doesn't come across as if it's, 'You're bad, bad, bad. You don't know what you're doing,' kind of thing. At the same time, if there is concern about students, being able to voice that. (P3)

> Learning comes from people talking to each other all the time, you know, around resources, around the bigger picture, around the impact that, I guess, funding has, or policy has in terms of trickling down to grassroots ability to deliver services. So, it's someone being able to teach a student all those things. (P3)

Supervision, coaching and mentoring included good support, appropriate scaffolding and recognizing how culture informs the construction of the student-educator roles. Comments regarding support included:

> Support is probably the biggest thing for Pacific Island students. (P4)

> A good quality placement also would be if you have good support, mentor, during your placement. You need to have a mentor there that's going to look after you. (P2)

Referring to scaffolding the learning, a participant explained regarding the field educator role:

> Taking a step-by-step [approach], break everything down, for the students to be able to unpack … teaching the students [to] get good at asking the questions that will allow the students to unpack. (P3)

The field educator in the host organization also needs to understand how the student experiences their learning context and how they construct the supervisory relationship in terms of respect. As a coach and mentor, the field educator needs to initiate a response which enables rich engagement and learning.

> Pasifika students feel like a minority within a big institution. They need to kind of [be] wrapped around. (P5)

> Pacific students tend to observe a lot more, they're not as vocal. So it's having a teacher or a team of teachers who are mentoring, coaching and drawing that information. (P3)

> [The field educator is] still in a space where the power is. When we have to be fa'aaloalo [respectful] to somebody who is in a position of power there is going to be that space. So the power is always going to be sitting with whoever the supervisor, the teacher [is]. So, I guess it's having that awareness, that responsibility sits with the teacher. (P3)

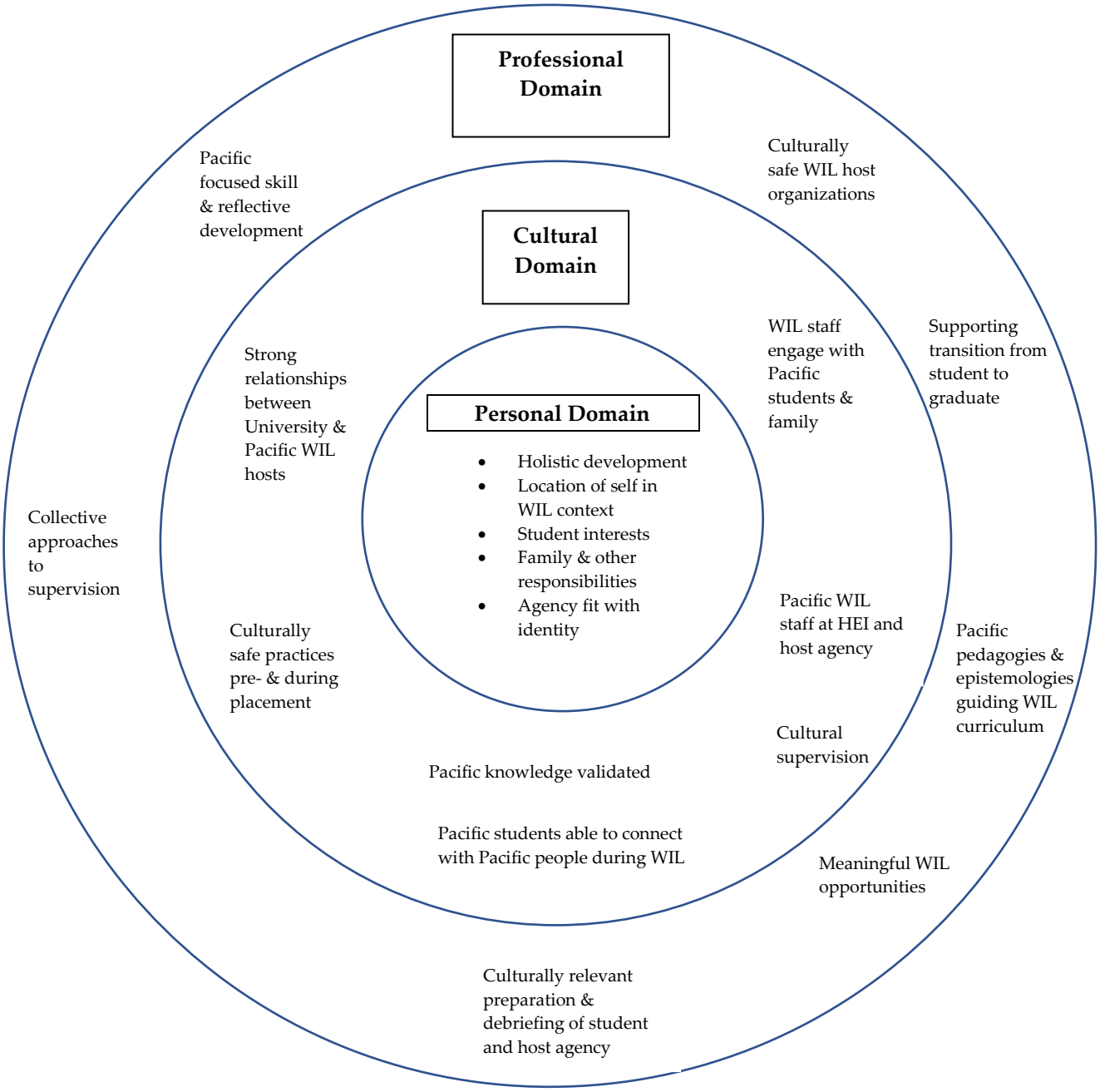
In summary, aspects of improving WIL generically also apply to Pacific students, but there can be some elements that require a nuanced response. Preparation for WIL and ensuring all parties are clear of their roles and that of others, as well as preparation of appropriate learning goals, was identified by participants as contributing to a positive learning experience. Opportunities for practical application of theoretical knowledge was similarly highlighted as important. Coaching and mentoring which provides support but also scaffolds the learning customized to the particular student was also identified as necessary. Further to this, the need for the field educator to understand how students construct the working relationship in terms of 'respect' was identified, so their engagement both recognizes and maximizes the learning of their Pacific students.

DISCUSSION

HEIs in Aotearoa New Zealand have a responsibility to provide appropriate education and support to Pacific WIL students. Historically these institutions have been founded upon Western pedagogies and epistemologies, sidelining Indigenous knowledges (Chu et al., 2013; Crawford, 2018; Mooney et al., 2020). The findings from this study resonate with what other research show constitutes quality and success for Pacific tertiary students in Aotearoa New Zealand (Chu et al., 2013; Chu et al., 2021). This study, however, offers an additional perspective on how WIL can be improved for Pacific students, not only in social work but also across other disciplines.

Drawing on Autagavaia's (2001) model of Pacific islands supervision, Figure 1 shows a proposed model of WIL for Pacific students.

FIGURE 1: Model of work-integrated learning for Pacific students.



The model is structured around three domains: personal; cultural; and professional and includes elements highlighted by the Pacific participants. The following sections offer ideas as to how the model can be applied across disciplines and in a range of WIL contexts.

Personal Domain

The personal domain emphasizes the importance of Pacific students having a strong sense of their own identity and that their cultural and ethnic identity is validated within the higher education space and in the WIL host organization. A focus on the holistic development of the student will support successful WIL (Faleolo, 2013; Walton et al., 2020). Prior to placement this may involve intentional learning opportunities for Pacific and other Indigenous students to gather collectively and undertake culturally relevant preparation.

The personal domain establishes that HEI educators should gain an understanding of who students are both individually and collectively and their family and wider responsibilities. Further, they should have a close understanding of the placement context in which they are placing the student (Hay, 2020). A cultural audit of host organizations and a check on the cultural suitability of field educators has been suggested elsewhere (Gair et al., 2015). Marat et al. (2008, p. 58) propose that "students' self-efficacy, personal and collective agency in knowledge, skills, achievement, success, and community participation" should be incorporated into any strategic curriculum developments. The implications for educators in improving WIL for Pacific students are considerable, especially as many will not be of Pacific ethnicity. Matai'a's (2006, p. 40) reflection on social work practice is also relevant for the academic context, and across disciplines: "It is pivotal for non-Pacific practitioners to understand their own limitations and recognize the value of collaboration. Collaboration in this context implores practitioners to locate the influential players of the family." Although establishing culturally appropriate relationships with family members or other people significant to the students may be time-consuming and resource intensive (Matai'a, 2006) they may also be pivotal for a successful WIL experience. In addition, these connections can be utilized post-placement and at other transition points to convey key messages around student achievement or future support as the student enters employment or further study (Marat et al., 2008).

Cultural Domain

Conceptions of interdependence, collectivism and community are common in Pacific educational frameworks and were emphasized by the participants in the cultural domain. A reconceptualization of current WIL practices to incorporate these concepts requires further consideration in all disciplines. Faleolo (2009) discusses the concept of cultural validity and suggests that to honor and preserve Indigenous identities and culture then the largely Western-based HEIs should accept Pacific "ways of thinking and doing things as credible and valued contributions" (p.149).

Cultural supervision was identified as an important contributor to improving WIL for Pacific students. "Cultural supervision begins to address the marginalized position of Pasifika within social work by facilitating Pasifika supervisees' critical awareness of culture" (Su'a-Hawkins & Mafileo, 2004, p. 12). This type of supervision also facilitates a student's cultural development through reflection (Su'a-Hawkins & Mafileo, 2004). Importantly, it can support Pacific WIL students, within any discipline, to operate and learn in predominantly non-Pacific contexts but in a culturally safe space. Opportunities for Pacific students to undertake WIL in Pacific organizations or with Pacific field educators may be limited although should be specifically targeted. Having appropriate cultural supervision and support external to the organization may also optimize both personal and professional learning.

The cultural domain also focuses on educators having relationships with a student's family so that there is an understanding of what is required of the student during the WIL experience. If families have an appreciation of the expectations of the WIL student, then students may experience greater flexibility

around their usual familial responsibilities. Research in educational practices that benefit Pacific learners in tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand included the recommendation for institutions to demonstrate commitment by engaging Pacific families and communities in their students' education (Chu et al., 2013). An Australian survey of 2,320 social work students highlighted that the compulsory placement was viewed as a burden by a majority of students (Gair & Baglow, 2018). The recommendations emphasized policy reform, including increasing government financial support for tertiary students, flexibility in the WIL curriculum, and increased understanding from the sector as to many students' current realities (Gair & Baglow, 2018). The commentary from the Pacific participants in this study resonates with these recommendations, and in addition, suggests the need for a collective approach to a student's WIL experience, although with understanding of ethnic-specific diversity. Mainstream host organizations, for example, could be proactively enabling culturally safe practices during the WIL experience, such as recognition of additional responsibilities, or longer funerals/grief and loss practices (Johnson et al., 2012). Beginning placement with culturally appropriate welcoming processes has also been highlighted (Chilvers, 2021; Mooney et al., 2020). Field educators could build stronger relationships with students by connecting with their support people before or during the placement in appropriate ways such as over a meal.

Professional Domain

The professional domain incorporates many aspects of WIL identified in previous literature such as the provision of meaningful learning opportunities (Smith et al., 2016). Importantly, casting a Pacific lens over this domain reveals that consideration of Pacific concepts and expectations are also valid. Preparation of Pacific students, for example and as mentioned above, may differ to that of palagi students as inclusion of family members may be appropriate. Involving community Elders in the development and teaching of curriculum, including WIL, may also add value to current practice (Johnson et al., 2012). Application of theoretical knowledge into practice tasks may also differ as opportunities for Pacific models and approaches to be applied should be provided. This may however challenge non-Pacific field educators if they are unfamiliar with Pacific concepts, models and theories. The inclusion of Pacific pedagogies in WIL also requires ongoing examination. Assessment for example, may currently prioritize an individualized approach and so creating opportunities for alternative collectivist methods could better validate Pacific cultural knowledges (Faleolo, 2009; Higgs, 2014).

Training opportunities for field educators could incorporate Pacific ways of knowing and being and guidance on supporting, teaching and supervising Pacific students. Coaching and mentoring within a culturally safe environment requires negotiation between the student and the field educator so that cultural understanding occurs (Chilvers, 2021). Educators may need to support field educators with training in mentoring and developing relationships with Pacific and other Indigenous students (Mooney et al., 2020). Similarly, communicating understandings of respect and how these manifest in a professional environment may also differ between Pacific and non-Pacific students.

Underpinning the elements in each of the three domains is the concept of self and the importance of the educator and host organization staff understanding the student and ethnic-specific concepts. Open and trusting communication across the WIL stakeholders is therefore vital to ensure positive relationships are formed that enable positive WIL experiences (Campbell et al., 2019; Ravulo, 2020). A partnership approach is the foundation of WIL (Agnew et al., 2017), however, the way it develops and is sustained may differ according to cultural norms (Mooney et al., 2020). For Pacific students, a collaborative and collectivist approach to WIL is necessary to ensure not only their individual success

but also that of their family and wider community. Such approaches reflect the appreciative pedagogy recommended by Chu et al. (2013; 2021) for Pacific tertiary education success which involves understanding the student's context and enabling factors related to prior learning through culture and family.

Limitations and Further Research

A limitation of this research lies in the recruitment of participants and small-scale approach to the study. Only a few Pacific graduates from one university were invited to participate in the research. The findings therefore are not generalizable but do offer insight into their perspectives. The graduates were also from only one discipline, that is, social work. The findings however can be considered across disciplines as the nature of the WIL participants reflected on are similar to other work-based placements.

There are many opportunities for future research including an exploration of Pacific host organizations' perspectives on how WIL can be improved for Pacific students. Pacific students from other disciplines in Aotearoa New Zealand could also be invited to discuss their views on WIL. Development of the model of WIL for Pacific students and evaluation of its implementation would further add to the current literature on WIL.

CONCLUSION

While collaborative approaches have been identified as relevant for Pacific students (Faleolo, 2013), consideration of how these are integrated into WIL curriculum and activity requires ongoing thought. Previous WIL frameworks have centered on the student experience, curriculum design, institutional requirements and stakeholder engagement, elements also highlighted by the participants in this study. The proposed model of WIL for Pacific students provides an alternative structure for incorporating concepts and approaches that can improve WIL for Pacific students by focusing on the three domains: personal; cultural; and professional. Situating the student at the heart of the WIL enterprise, and recognizing their unique ethnic and cultural identity, presents educators and host organization staff with an opportunity to reflect on how they prepare for and engage with Pacific students. Inclusion of Pacific concepts in WIL such as interdependence and collectivism also raise questions as to the validity of individualized approaches for all WIL students and presents an opportunity for developing new ways of organizing, assessing and supervising WIL in the future.

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Mālō e ngāue lelei.

STATEMENT OF PLACE

Kathryn Hay

I acknowledge Māori as Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa. My ancestral roots are located across the seas far from Aotearoa New Zealand. My maternal and paternal great-grandparents left their homelands in Scotland and England and settled in Aotearoa New Zealand in the late 1800s and early 1900s. On my father's side I have Scottish and English heritage, with the Hay clan being a notable clan in Scotland.

My mother's ancestry is French and English. As Pākeha, I am on a continual journey of learning about being an ally in Indigenous spaces, both in my personal and professional life.

Tracie Mafile'o

My cultural heritage originates in both the global north and global south, but I identify as someone with Indigenous roots in moana-nui-a-kiwa, in Oceania. On my father's side, I have Tongan heritage, from the village of Te'ekiu in Tonga, and also heritage to Nukulaelae, Tuvalu. From my mother's side, I am Pākehā, with English, Scottish, and Irish ancestry. I was born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand, but have lived in different parts of Oceania over my lifetime.

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