Disrupting oppressive practices in work-integrated learning

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This article highlights the disparities between socially advantaged students and those who identify as equity-deserving while accessing work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities. While governmental investments have aimed to broaden WIL access, persistent inequities have emphasized the need for a critical examination of oppressive systems within WIL. Using an anti-oppressive pedagogical lens, this article proposes actionable strategies to enrich WIL programs, with a particular emphasis on students facing systemic oppression. WIL educators, as key change agents, are uniquely positioned to engage in critical action that disrupts deep-rooted inequities. As further presented in the article, disrupting oppressive WIL practices may include 1) discovering one's positionality as a WIL educator; 2) exposing and addressing workplace discrimination; and 3) facilitating critical reflection in the classroom regarding students' WIL experiences. Recognizing the intersection between WIL and anti-oppressive practices offers a path toward greater access for all students, thereby fostering enhanced programs within higher education institutions.

Keywords: equity, access, anti-oppression pedagogy, positionality, critical reflection

In the past decade, high-impact practices such as experiential learning and work-integrated learning (WIL) have received considerable attention and have become increasingly popular pedagogical approaches. WIL is defined as the pedagogical practice of integrating educational experiences in workplace settings (Billett, 2009), which includes internships, co-op programs, and applied research projects, among other forms of applied learning. Since 2015, the Government of Canada has invested over CA$1.1 billion with the intention of providing every young Canadian an opportunity to engage in WIL by 2029 (Government of Canada, 2019). The Government's 2023 budget committed another CA$98 million towards WIL (Department of Finance Canada, 2023), signaling Canada's ongoing support of WIL. Despite these well-intentioned action plans and recognition, there is a gap in acknowledging the profound need to support students who continue to experience inequitable access to WIL (Hora et al., 2020). Educators across disciplines have acknowledged the disparity between the advancement of socially advantaged students and those who identify as equity-deserving. Equity-deserving groups is a term often used in Canadian literature to describe communities that experience disproportionate societal barriers (Human Rights and Equity Office, 2017).

In recognizing these significant disparities, educators are further considering ways to engage in critical dialogue and action that disrupts the status quo of various systems of oppression. Oppression has been defined as a circumstance or dynamic where particular identities are privileged in society and thus may impose unjust or cruel behaviors of authority or power relative to those who are marginalized and systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural or social degradation (Charlton, 1998; Kumashiro, 2000). While oppression may refer to a tyrannical ruling group, the meaning has shifted to include the structural or systemic practices of well-intentioned liberal society (Young, 1990). Its causes are embedded in and legitimized by norms and everyday practices. Exploring and recognizing

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the systems of oppression within high impact practices are key to actively disrupting these systems (Kumashiro, 2000).

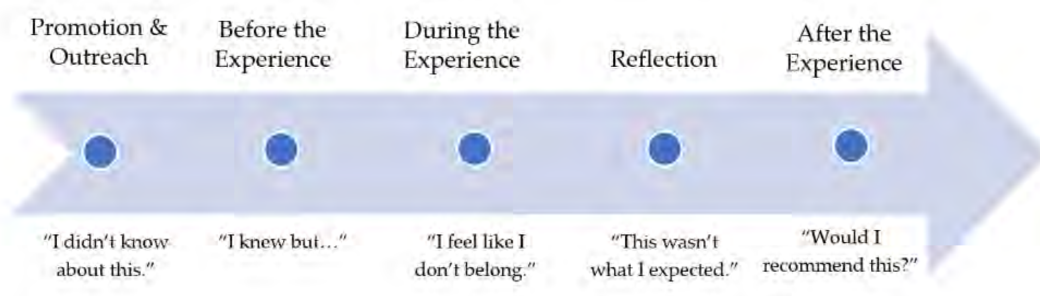
This article examines the disproportionate barriers that equity-deserving students face when accessing WIL and provides a brief overview of anti-oppressive pedagogies and makes a case for understanding and using these approaches. More specifically, this article explores the following three actionable strategies for disrupting oppressive and discriminatory practices in WIL: 1) discovering one's positionality as a WIL educator; 2) highlighting and addressing workplace discrimination; and 3) implementing critical reflection within the classroom. Engaged learning practices, such as WIL, require educators to commit to internal self-work and to reassess the lens through which they approach teaching and learning, starting with gaining a strong understanding of how inequities arise in WIL.

BARRIERS WITHIN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Among the many benefits to pursuing higher education, participating in WIL is associated with higher student retention and increased employability skills and incomes (Beltran et al., 2020; Jackson, 2013; Wyonch, 2020). Despite these benefits, students who identify as Black, Indigenous, and Racialized (BIR), international, first-generation students, students with disabilities, students with a low income, and students with lower grade point averages are disproportionately disadvantaged when it comes to accessing WIL programs (Dunn et al., 2016; Hora et al., 2020; Mackaway et al., 2013; Najmabadi, 2017; Peach, 2015; Rose & Paisley, 2012; Stirling et al., 2021). In recognizing the barriers, the effects of intersectionality cannot be understated and will be discussed further in this article.

While there are many barriers to accessing WIL, Figure 1 visualizes the journey for equity-deserving students engaging in WIL and suggests that barriers exist throughout the experience. These systemic barriers may prevent students from getting the most from the WIL program at various stages of their participation.

FIGURE 1: An example of the experiences and barriers that students from equity-deserving groups may encounter when participating in WIL programs.



Note. From "Applying principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in work-integrated learning" by A. S. Goldman, G. Mackay, V. L. Lowes, L. Henville, J. Gillies, C. Jairam-Persaud, S. Soikie, N. J. M. Koffi, N. Sah, and J. Walchli, in K. E. Zegwaard and T. J. Pretti (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of work-integrated learning* (3rd ed., pp. 510-532), 2023, Routledge. Copyright 2023 by Routledge. Reprinted with permission.

In the promotion & outreach stage, many students are unaware of the WIL opportunities offered at their schools (Malatest, 2018). For example, first-generation students may be less aware of WIL programs. As a result, students may be excluded before even attempting to engage in WIL. When WIL

programs are not promoted in a variety of ways, there is a risk of excluding equity-deserving groups. Another consideration in this stage is recognizing the impact of exclusive or biased phrasing while promoting an opportunity that may discourage qualified students, who feel underrepresented, from applying for a position (Frissen et al., 2023). For example, gendered language in job postings affects the number of women who might apply to a position (Gaucher et al., 2011).

Before the experience, students may be aware of the WIL opportunities but experience barriers to participation. For example, international students can face intersectional barriers that include visa regulation, limited social capital and access to networks, discrimination, lack of recognition for skills and experience developed internationally, and claims that they are not suitable for organizations (Felton & Harrison, 2017; Harrison & Felton, 2013; Jackson et al., 2017; Tran & Soejatminah, 2017; Wall et al., 2017). Students who identify as international, BIR, 2SLGBTQIA+, with a non-visible disability, mature students, and students with caregiving responsibilities may be more likely to opt out of WIL due to anticipated concerns about discrimination or harassment in the workplace (Stirling et al., 2021). Black students may also opt out of participating when there is not representation from other Black students (Lake, 2021). 2SLGBTQIA+ students may choose not to participate in international WIL to avoid hostile legal, cultural, or social contexts of other countries (Budd, 2019).

Even when a student is enrolled in WIL, they may be exposed to barriers during the experience. There is troubling evidence that WIL host environments can have negative effects on students by perpetuating discriminatory behaviors (Bowen, 2019). For example, students identifying as female can face gender microaggressions (Bowen, 2019) and students with disabilities may experience more discrimination, harassment, and lower earnings in paid models of WIL than those without disabilities (Casebeer et al., 2017; McCloy & DeClou, 2013). International students are often hired in positions that devalue their cultural competencies, disregard their unique skills, or are not relevant for their professional aspirations (Wall et al., 2017) and additional challenges can arise due to students' lack of confidence, underdeveloped workplace competency, and English language competency (Cukier et al., 2018). These challenges with language competency can be further compounded by attitudes of prejudice within the workplace (Harrison & Felton, 2013). In many cases, workplace supervisors of international students may have limited resources, which leads to a "minimal understanding of the particular learning needs of international students and limited knowledge and skill in relation to culturally responsive supervision" (Felton & Harrison, 2017, p. 98).

Another highly impacted group is 2SLGBTQIA+- identified students, who continue to experience discriminatory attitudes and behaviors during WIL. Students feel pressure to hide their sexual orientation due to heterosexist climates of WIL organizations (Cukier et al., 2018). WIL students may feel unsafe and anxious in organizations with a homophobic climate, and there is evidence that interpersonal challenges between staff and clients arise frequently in some settings (Messinger, 2004).

In the reflection stage, a lack of flexibility in reflection assignments risks creating barriers for students with disabilities. The ongoing reliance on written journals privileges a specific form of reflection and can exclude equity-deserving students (Harvey et al., 2016), including those from traditions of oral communication.

Finally, students who faced unresolved barriers in WIL placements may continue to experience them even after the experience and may be discouraged from integrating themselves into related work environments post-graduation. This consequence may lead to further underrepresentation within specific workspaces. Though getting initial work experiences through WIL is often lauded as a way for

equity-deserving groups to advance in their field of work, unfortunately research shows that family background has an impact on a graduate's earnings well beyond graduation: "graduates from higher income households earn at least 10% more at the median than graduates from low-income households after factoring out other student characteristics, institution attended and field of study" (Britton et al., 2016, as cited in Marginson, 2019, p. 289). Though WIL can provide students with opportunities for workplace experience, it is by no means a panacea for economic mobility.

Now that inequities for equity-deserving groups have been discussed, a key next step in disrupting the social disparities found within these stages (and beyond) is for educators to examine alternative pedagogies that can reduce barriers for equity-deserving students.

APPLYING AN ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PEDAGOGICAL LENS

This article emphasizes the importance of using an anti-oppressive lens to effectively address inequitable practices within WIL programs. An anti-oppressive pedagogical approach can be important within WIL as such approaches aim to empower disenfranchised groups (Berila, 2016). Anti-oppressive pedagogy encompasses several emancipatory frameworks including critical pedagogy, anti-ableist pedagogy, anti-racist pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, queer pedagogy, and decolonial pedagogy to promote social justice and inspire transformational learning (Aqil et al., 2021; Berila, 2016). Though each of these pedagogical practices has its unique history and dimensions, the common element to highlight is that each form of pedagogy recognizes and challenges the underlying inequities in power and privilege that perpetuate oppression within educational systems and beyond (Berila, 2016; Preston-Shoot, 1995; Sánchez-Flores, 2017). Using an anti-oppressive approach involves considering equity-deserving groups' experiences to create inclusive pedagogical WIL policies and practices (Cukier et al., 2018). Therefore, applying this lens to WIL practices can provide insight into how to equalize power imbalances to eliminate power inequities (Aqil et al., 2021). Stakeholders in WIL should be mindful of the various ways in which power dynamics may be constructed, including through race, gender, class, pedagogy, and the power dynamics at play when considering the traditional roles of the instructor and student. As such, by better understanding these pedagogies of liberation, educators can consider their own positionality, disrupt systems of oppression in WIL workplaces, and empower students to address experiences of oppression by actively reflecting on existing discriminatory institutions, structures, and norms that are embedded in society.

UNPACKING EDUCATOR POSITIONALITY

When WIL instructors teach, they bring more than their expertise, qualifications, and lived experiences to the classroom; they also bring their social identities, which influence the choices instructors make when selecting pedagogical practices. Social identity formation is developed and constructed through social identifiers or characteristics such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, religion, socio-economic status, age, sexual orientation, and ability. For WIL instructors to successfully apply an equity lens to high-impact practices, it is imperative that they engage in internal self-work, in which one's values, beliefs, and biases are explored and evaluated (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019). In this section, the important role of positionality for WIL instructors is explored, as well as how it shapes and informs an instructor's lens, teaching philosophy and scholarship. In addition, this section includes a discussion of various forms of privilege and bias that impact the assumption and expectations instructors have of students, as well as the way in which they define and understand their own positionality. Furthermore, a social identity reflexive mapping tool will be discussed and suggested as a tool for educators to use as a starting point to better understand and define their positionality within the classroom.

Positionality is defined as:

> The notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world. In this context, gender, race, class, and other aspects of identities are indicators of social and spatial positions and are not fixed, given qualities. Positions act on the knowledge a person has about things, both material and abstract. Consequently, knowledge is the product of a specific position that reflects particular places and spaces. (Warf, 2010, p. 2258)

One of the most important aspects of conceptualizing one's positionality as an educator is understanding one's place within societal systems. The term positionality is used widely among researchers. It is a complex term that refers to the ways in which a person's social identity influences how one understands the world (Warf, 2010, p. 2258). Jacobson and Mustafa (2019) argue that the interconnection of one's social characteristics (e.g., race, class, sexuality, ability) plays a crucial role in how one sees, understands and interacts with one another. Since identities are fluid and can change and develop over time, defining positionality can be challenging as it requires educators to examine honestly and consistently three key areas, namely one's experiences, beliefs, and potential biases and assumptions.

The concept of intersectionality, coined by legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, plays an important role in understanding social identities as it aims to shed light on how the multiple axes of oppression contribute to social inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989). The concept of intersectionality describes how belonging to multiple social categories, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and other axes of identity simultaneously intersect and shape experiences within society. While intersectionality is often described at the micro-level of individual experience through social identifiers that ultimately create one's identity, how individuals experience these intersecting axes "reflect the interlocking systems of privilege and oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, [homophobia]) at the macro social-structural level" (Bowleg, 2012, p. 1269). The intersecting concept of identity on both a micro and macro level is key to better understanding one's positionality, as it encourages an in-depth and critical analysis when investigating intersecting social categories and societal structures of oppression. Yep (2014) explains that positionality operates within a broader understanding of power hierarchies influenced by intersecting social characteristics. Moreover, Yep (2014) argues that if power hierarchies are not considered, one's "interpretation of identity may be incomplete, inaccurate, and misleading" (p.89).

When WIL educators begin to define their positionality, it is important to consider how the intersections of social characteristics impact their approach to teaching and pedagogical choices. It is also necessary for instructors to reflect on their multiple identities, education, and the ways in which these lived experiences impact their understanding and interactions with students in their classrooms. Additionally, it is important for WIL instructors to consider how their students may experience work placements, especially those of equity-deserving populations. For example, WIL educators privileged by intersecting social identities, such as whiteness and able-bodiedness, must be intentional in making themselves aware of the power differentials that exist at work placements for equity-deserving groups and how these power dynamics can impact the work placement experience of these students.

Defining One's Lens as a Work-Integrated Learning Instructor

Life experiences that induce circumstances of privilege or oppression can influence the way in which different people interpret and respond to the same situation. If, for example, a student has a negative experience with an instructor and another only had positive experiences with the same instructor, each

student will have an entirely different view or opinion of this particular instructor. As a result, a person's lived experience is important in social interactions because it influences the way in which they interpret situations and make decisions (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019). The lens that instructors bring to the classroom is very powerful as it influences how they view and understand their students, along with how and what they choose to teach (Kishimoto, 2018).

Biases

The way one perceives, understands, and experiences the world contributes to the formation of biases. Bias can be defined as "the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way…[and] allowing personal opinions to influence your judgment…" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Implicit bias, also known as unconscious bias, refers to stereotypes or attitudes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner: "operating outside of conscious awareness, implicit biases are pervasive, and they can challenge even the most well-intentioned and egalitarian-minded individuals, resulting in actions and outcomes that do not necessarily align with explicit intentions" (Staats, 2016, p. 29).

According to Misawa (2010), one's social identity has both fluid and relational qualities, which change depending on the spaces and people with whom one interacts. There is a direct correlation between biases and positionality as positionality varies from one situation to another (Misawa, 2010). For example, a WIL instructor in a classroom setting may implicitly have an affinity for a particular racial group, while in an entirely different setting where the instructor is perhaps a customer in a retail store, they may unconsciously exhibit biases toward that same racial group. To better understand an instructor's positionality and the interplay of biases, it is important to consider the ways teaching and learning philosophies may have been influenced by unconscious biases. Additionally, WIL educators are encouraged to consider how biases can play a role when power and privilege are involved, particularly when placing equity-deserving students in a work environment.

Unearned Privilege

Privilege occurs "when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do" (Johnson, 2006, p. 21). In McIntosh's (1989) foundational text defining privilege from a dominant white perspective, she describes two types of privilege: unearned entitlement and conferred dominance. Understanding and recognizing one's privilege is an essential part of the self-work necessary when defining one's positionality. It is essential to understand where instructors' social identities might provide privilege when thinking about cultivating a classroom dynamic that considers the experiences of equity-deserving students as well as anti-oppressive approaches when designing WIL programming.

As privilege operates on multiple personal, social and cultural levels, it can be described as an intersectional concept (Sparks, 2021). At the same time, it is important to note that "intersectionality in the services of consciousness change should not be applied universally but instead should be engaged strategically and differentially" (Luft, 2009; p. 101). There are "unintended consequences to the blanket application of intersectionality [as] uniform deployment may inadvertently contribute to flattening the very differences intersectional approaches intend to recognize" (Luft, 2009, p. 100). The flattening of differences can pose a threat to social justice as it can inhibit social change and lead to some individuals focusing on their marginalized identities instead of taking responsibility for their privileged identities, particularly when discussing race (Luft, 2009). For example, in the case of a white male instructor, privilege is evident not only in his race but also in his gender. However, if he is a part of one or more

marginalized group(s) based on his religion (e.g., sexual orientation or ability), he can choose to avoid ownership and responsibility of his racial privilege and solely focus on his marginalized social identities.

Table 1 attempts to chart the dominant social characteristics that are privileged in society. Based upon Pollock's resource on positionality (2021), the chart is a valuable starting point for educators to begin thinking about defining their own social identities; educators are encouraged to place a checkmark beside characteristics that are relevant to them. In North America and many other parts of the world, certain indicators signal whether an individual has lived a life of privilege. The chart below can be used by instructors to assess and better understand the extent of their own level of privilege.

TABLE 1: Charting work-integrated learning educators' social identities.

Social Identities	
White	Fill Here
Male	Fill Here
Heterosexual	Fill Here
Non-disabled	Fill Here
Christian	Fill Here
College/University Educated	Fill Here
Married	Fill Here
Upper-Middle-Class (e.g., property owner)	Fill Here
Native Speaking	Fill Here
Citizen	Fill Here

Note. Adapted from *What is positionality?* by M. Pollack, 2021, Engineer Inclusion (https://engineerinclusion.com/what-is-positionality/). Adapted with permission.

Using Social Identity Mapping Tool to Inform an Educator's Positionality

Jacobson and Mustafa's (2019) social identity reflexive mapping tool can be used as an exercise to guide educators in better understanding and defining their positionality as WIL instructors. It can also serve as a starting point to encourage educators to start incorporating both the reflective and reflexive strategies needed in the self-work and self-exploration processes.

Jacobson and Mustafa (2019) propose a three-tier process. Tier 1 focuses on instructors identifying their social identities through groupings such as race, age, citizenship, gender, political affiliation, commitment to social justice and change, etc. Tier 2 encourages exploration beyond the categories and membership groupings and looks at how these groupings and categories impact our lives. Tier 3 requires a deep reflection that examines and investigates emotions and feelings that may be tied to the

particular areas of our social identity, such as failure, privilege, success, etc. The exercises also stimulate instructors to consider how their own social identities impact how they perceive themselves, and how others perceive them as instructors.

Fostering Reflexive Thinking Practices as a WIL Educator

Employing a reflexive approach provides instructors with a way to examine their beliefs and value systems (Kishimoto, 2018), which may inform their pedagogical practices to be more inclusive while considering equity-deserving groups in the classroom. Instructors can benefit from taking the time to recognize how their positionality influences the perspectives being upheld and centered in the assigned course readings (content), theoretical frameworks and the types of organizations that are recruited for student placements (practices), guest lecturers (activities), and assessment preferences (assignments) in the WIL program or course (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019; Kishimoto, 2018; Yep, 2014). Are most of the assigned WIL course readings written by white, cisgender, able-bodied educators? As a WIL educator, it is important to reflect on whose knowledge and ways of knowing are prioritized within the selected pedagogical approaches and why. Furthermore, WIL instructors should reflect upon their educational positionality when evaluating their pedagogical choices and approaches as well as their scholarship.

DISRUPTING OPPRESSION IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING WORKPLACES

Developing Strategies with Work-Integrated Learning Workplace Partners

Within the last five years, numerous North American workplace organizations across many fields have expressed the need to create more inclusive work environments. Most initiatives have involved publishing a recently developed or evolved diversity and inclusion statement to demonstrate a commitment to more equitable hiring. Despite these statements, there are often discrepancies between company hiring statements and their hiring practices, which is now referred to as diversity washing (Baker et al., 2022). This approach serves as counter-productive given that the many forms in which inequities and oppression are expressed in the workplace manifest from historical systems and practices embedded within the institution. The barriers faced by equity-deserving students tend to be rooted in the structure of a workplace. Without the commitment to disrupt the sources of oppressive practices, beyond developing surface-level inclusion statements, students will continue to be exposed to unsafe environments, leading to potentially drastic consequences. The possible solutions are two-fold. The first strategy is to work iteratively with employers and workplaces to remove barriers for equity-deserving students. The second approach is to consider how students might be better prepared to confront the barriers that they experience.

WIL educators have a responsibility to remain aware of common forms of discrimination in the workplace that impact on students, especially those that disproportionally impact equity-deserving students. Ignoring the implications of unfair rejection of equity-deserving students by community partners who have demonstrated a lack of interest in appropriately encouraging equitable, diverse and inclusive environments should not be tolerated. Additionally, it is also unacceptable to allow students to work in environments where they are not aware of what it means to be a victim of workplace discrimination/harassment or how to address these circumstances and could be considered a breach of duty of care by educators and the institution. For instance, it is critical that students be prepared for what to do if they experience microaggressions in workplaces. Microaggressions can be defined as everyday derogations, slights, and invalidations that are often experienced by people of minority or marginalized backgrounds (Lui & Quezada, 2019). Although microaggressions are known to be subtle

behaviors, they are a form of harassment, and it is important that these events are immediately addressed.

While considering how to build capacity among students, it is equally important to consider if the equity, diversity, inclusion, and access (EDIA) values and practices of community or employer partners meet high standards. Though it is not WIL educators' responsibility to single-handedly alter the community partner's workplace practices, there may still be opportunities to work collaboratively with partners to help build more equitable practices and welcome students into these spaces. For example, educators can provide advice on how to equitably support students, especially where supervisors may not have received training in EDIA practices (Winchester-Seeto et al., 2015). Grade point average cut-offs disproportionately exclude equity-deserving groups (Dunn et al., 2016) so partners and employers might consider other ways to recognize excellence, including community involvement or lived experience. Other suggestions include providing resources to partners and employers on best practices in equitable hiring including the importance of pay transparency, sharing resources about microaggressions, providing private space for prayer if needed, or recommending that partners ask students which pronouns and names they use (Mallozzi & Drewery, 2019). It is recommended that workplace supervisors receive information and education about sexual orientation issues in WIL, and that students be provided with queer-friendly resources or that WIL practitioners develop relationships with queer-friendly agencies (Cukier et al., 2018).

WIL programs need to respond to employer demands but also intentionally address systemic barriers. Equity statements are becoming increasingly common in hiring (Paul & Maranto, 2021), but there is still much work to be done in many sectors to remove barriers for equity-deserving groups (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2019). It is unrealistic and naïve to assume that students will experience no barriers or microaggressions when they join workplaces. WIL educators should also consider ways that all students can be better prepared before entering these spaces.

Anti-Oppression Workshops for Students

There are several methods of anti-oppression education including training, workshops, and courses that aim to promote the uptake of anti-oppressive principles by promoting critical dialogue and engaging activities. These approaches may offer a key method in preventing oppression and increasing access for equity-deserving students. There is emerging evidence that anti-oppression workshops for students can increase knowledge of concepts associated with anti-oppression and facilitate critical reflections on power, privilege, and social location (Djulus et al., 2020). Anti-oppression workshops for all students can prime them to reflect on how they will confront biases within their environments. WIL educators should consider incorporating anti-oppression workshops or learning resources as part of students' preparation for WIL experiences in the workplace. Importantly, anti-oppression workshops would benefit all students because it can promote allyship. A fundamental aspect of becoming an effective ally is awareness of social location (Djulus et al., 2020), which enables people to increase their self-awareness while gaining a better understanding of others. As WIL programs typically incorporate reflection, educators and practitioners might consider adding critical reflective questions on ethical action and allyship.

CRITICAL REFLECTION TO DISRUPT SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

Critical reflection is an important introspective and ongoing learning process that requires continuous commitment to be successful (Bowen, 2016a). As discussed, it is valuable for WIL instructors to reflect upon their own values and beliefs to understand the ways in which these may have influenced their

teaching style and pedagogical choices in WIL. This is especially significant when working with equity-deserving students because many of the instructor's decisions have an immediate impact on the classroom culture and the course curriculum. In the same way that critical reflection is imperative for instructors, it is equally important for students to engage in critical self-reflection.

WIL programs need to help students to critically reflect on their experiences and make sense of their workplace interactions (Bowen, 2016b). If students' experiences are not unpacked in the classroom, it could be argued that sending students into organizations to learn professional behaviors will simply replicate the existing structures of inequity, since not questioning the status quo practices simply maintains it (Shor, 1992). Students are not simply passive recipients of knowledge; thus, it is important that educators connect learning to wider social, political, and economic forces (Giroux, 2016). Educators across disciplines question how they can develop students' moral agency and engage in critical-dialogue that disrupts prejudice, sexism, racism, and other systems of oppression, and scholars argue that WIL should develop students' professional identity and contribute to ethical action (Fleming & Haigh, 2017).

WIL programs often rely heavily on reflection to help students learn from their experiences in the workplace. However, rather than making the connection to systems of inequity present within their internship sites, WIL student reflections are often focused on their own skill-development or the application of theory to practice. Classrooms can be spaces for WIL students to critically reflect on the nature of their work, but even when prompted with critical readings, lectures, and discussions, internship students can miss the opportunity to apply critical theoretical analysis to their experiences (Johnston, 2011).

Zegwaard et al. (2017) use the term critical reflection to describe "the ability to examine the uniqueness of our individual positionality within social systems, and the ability of the individual to align constructs of self with particular identities and actions, thereby contributing to ongoing learning and reformation of the self" (p. 152). Once educators have defined their positionality, as previously discussed, they might consider suitable critical reflection activities and assessments that may help students learn how their own positionality affects their experiences. Critical reflection should provide students with opportunities to better understand the workplace culture of their professional setting (Winchester-Seeto et al., 2015), but also provide a place to question these spaces (Cockayne, 2018). For example, including opportunities for students to discuss sexism and racism (and other issues) can create an environment where students can learn and empathize with others (Zawadzki et al., 2014).

Approaches to reflection need to be built with intention and to go beyond prompt questions for brief online discussions, or reflection assignments on students' personal skill development. One internship model shows promise as a possible approach to engage students in critical reflection. Ripamonti et al. (2018) studies an internship program where students are supervised by both workplace tutors and academic tutors who "act as critical supervisors, helping students to question the values and the political meanings of certain views and logics that guide the organization and highlight the contradictions and ambiguities that characterize it" (p. 761). Terry (2009) also describes an internship model where students benefit from supervision from both the faculty supervisor and field supervisor, exploring moral, ethical, and professional dilemmas by engaging in a field placement, writing journals, and participating in a seminar class. While research in this area is sparse, an approach to critical reflection that includes both a workplace supervisor and an academic one deserves further exploration.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the intersection between WIL and anti-oppressive practices will lead to actionable strategies to increase access and inclusion for all students, particularly those who are, and have been, systemically oppressed. Institutions of higher education are responsible for providing student learning experiences while supporting broader community and societal needs. This impact may not effectively occur without accepting the responsibility of WIL educators to foster an equitable environment, while equally recognizing the educators who may also be placed within structures where they themselves are marginalized. An important step is recognizing the need to learn about the current inequities within our communities, while committing to consistent self-work to unlearn existing oppressive practices and relearn how to apply appropriate approaches to address these injustices.

The authors suggest methods to challenge oppressive practices in WIL including self-reflective strategies to acknowledge how one's positionality affects teaching practices, intentional approaches to eliminate workplace obstacles for students, and lastly, encouraging students to analyze how their experiences relate to broader social, political, and economic issues. Insight from emerging anti-oppression and anti-racism literature suggests how WIL learning environments and curricula might be transformed to foster equitable experiences for all students, particularly those who identify as equity-deserving. WIL educators must play a role in preparing students to become the change agents of the future (Kreber, 2016). If institutions of higher education consistently combine their efforts and collectively improve their practices, then there will be long-lasting impactful change.

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