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**Administration and Development of Post-Secondary International Experiential Learning
Programs: Challenges and New Perspectives**

by

Michelle Watters

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education at the
University of Windsor**

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ABSTRACT

International experiential education opportunities have increased for post-secondary students in response to the phenomenon of globalization. As these opportunities increase, the need to address the design and administration of such programs become apparent. This study focuses on four variables related to international experiential education programs: learning outcomes, resource implications, student satisfaction and risk and responsibility. The study uncovers certain challenges and new perspectives through the triangulation of data, including student case studies, text review and analysis of selected post-secondary institution programs, and reference to the World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE) resources. Although the study seeks to qualitatively uncover the necessary elements of such a program, international employers involved in such programs were not studied. A mixed-methods approach utilizing qualitative and quantitative data, and studying employer views on the program design are suggestions for future research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Statement of the Problem

International experiential education opportunities have increased dramatically in reaction to globalization. The globalization phenomenon is manifested in arenas such as politics, economics and education. In education, globalization is evident in the internationalization of curriculum and experiential learning opportunities among other things. As a Cooperative Education Coordinator, I was provided the opportunity not only to support the experiential learning process for post-secondary students on a domestic front, but also internationally. Working in this capacity, I began to wonder if student learning was fully supported within the current structure. In speaking to other cooperative education partners and colleagues in national and international contexts, I discovered that this was a nearly ubiquitous dilemma for post secondary institutions.

This motivated my interest to study whether international experiential education opportunities and associated learning are being maximized. The variables that appeared to surface most frequently are the focus of investigation in this thesis. It is anticipated that the information collected and analyzed will assist in determining best practices from other post-secondary institutions and international jurisdictions supporting these types of programs, as well as gathering information from students who have participated in such programs to gain insight into their perspective regarding their experiences in this context. A blending of institutional practices and student feedback will be combined in order to answer the research questions investigated.

This chapter will provide the reader with the background required to understand international experiential education, its challenges and new perspectives. Experiential education and relevant theory will be discussed, followed by one of its forms – cooperative education. Once the reader has an understanding of these fundamental concepts, international experiential education will be reviewed along with the relevant research. Finally, key terms and common acronyms used in this study will be defined.

Experiential Education

Experiential education takes many different forms as it relates to the educator and the desired learning outcome. It may take the form of volunteer experience through the establishment of required volunteer hours towards the completion of a high school diploma; it may involve participating in an outdoor adventure camp where various team building and skill-acquisition exercises are taught; it may also involve cooperative education or internships, which are more formalized processes of acquiring direct experience in order to enhance one's learning. Therefore experiential educators could be teachers, counsellors, co-op/ internship coordinators and even camp counsellors. Experiential learning emphasizes the experience of the learner, rather than the cognitive or behavioural aspects of the learning (Kolb, D.A., Boyatzis, R.E., Mainemelis, C., 1999).

The Association of Experiential Education (AEE)¹ identifies several principles associated with experiential education, which include:

¹The Association for Experiential Education is based in the United States and is a non-profit, professional membership association, dedicated to experiential education. Its mission is to provide educational resources and tools for experiential educators

- experiential education occurs when experiences are formulated and supported by reflection and analysis;
- these experiences should result in the learner taking ownership of the experience and his/her decisions made through this experience;
- the experience should be structured in such a way that the learner is able to actively participate in the learning process through investigation, problem solving and through other means such that the learner becomes engaged in the process;
- the results of the learning should develop a framework for future learning and experiences; and
- educators should be made aware of their own framework of learning and biases to ensure that it does not cloud the experience of the learner (Association for Experiential Education, n.d.).

These principles imply a constructivist ideology where experiential education should be structured to facilitate the desired learning outcomes, yet unstructured enough to provide learners with the latitude to frame the experience relating to their own personal learning. University-level cooperative education students are authorized to investigate their work placements to develop unique learning objectives; however, a framework is provided in which the students can create objectives relating to their program of study. For instance, a worksheet is used which asks students to identify their desired learning objectives in terms of technical and transferable skills they wish to acquire and how they plan to achieve them. This provides a framework in which the students can formulate their meta-cognitive learning, but in the context of which an educator can assist the learner in developing their learning appropriately.

This study is based on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning within the adult learning process (see Figure 1). Kolb describes four cyclical stages of adult experiential learning:

- Concrete Experience – the direct experience itself from which the context of the learning will take place;
- Reflection – the personal experience of learners as they experience the learning;
- Abstract Conceptualization – the application or deviation of the general rules to describe the experience (Atherton, 2005); and
- Active Experimentation – the framework in which future experiences are interpreted.

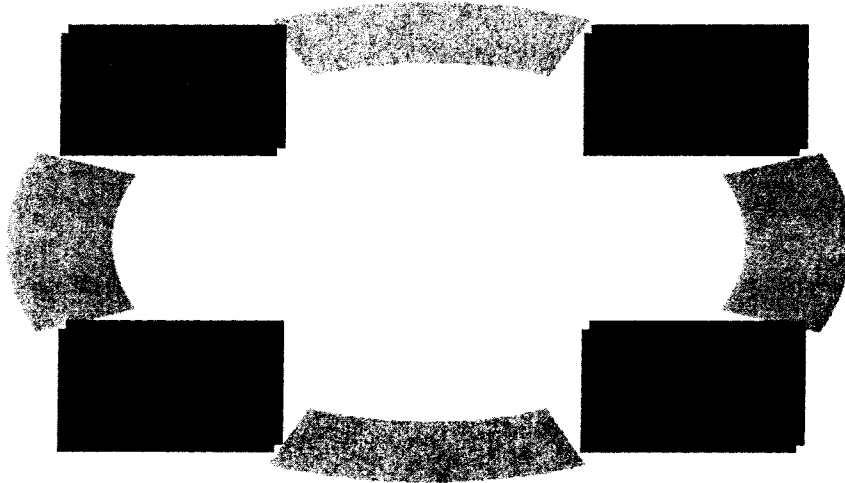


Figure 1. Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Atherton, 2005).

As the cycle repeats, the learner is able to continually develop frameworks for their experiences and thus build on his/ her learning. Therefore, educators have created pedagogy to guide the learner through these stages in order to develop and provide

meaning to their experiences. However, Kolb's theory has been criticized in that it does not take into account the phenomenon the possibility that learners may not follow the prescribed order of learning, nor does it validate the transfer of learning from one context to another (Greenaway, 2006).

As a Cooperative Education Coordinator at the University of Windsor, I began to notice differences between students who participated in structured placements with support from educators, and those that simply participated in an unstructured program. Oftentimes, in unstructured learning experiences, students may experience difficulty internalizing learning, a fact which will be evident through this research. When learning is structured with appropriate support from the educator, seasoned experiential learners can learn and internalize specific experiences, providing a framework for their learning. Conversely, inexperienced learners recognize that they have learned something, but are not necessarily able to describe what they have learned and how it might be transferred to future experiences. This process illustrates the importance of education in the experience and the value of the educator's role in providing this framework for learning.

Cooperative Education

Cooperative education was established in order to provide students with the opportunity to combine their academic studies with practical, real-world work experience. Students are able to apply their skills and knowledge in the workplace, and, in turn, are provided feedback from their supervisor as it relates to transferable and technical skills deemed desirable in the workplace. According to the Canadian

Association for Cooperative Education (CAFCE)², cooperative education can be defined as “formally integrating a student’s academic studies with relevant work experience” (CAFCE, 2006), which is then evaluated by the credit-bearing institution in partnership with the host employer. Furthermore, it can be described as the combination of academic study with alternating work terms. The employment is a practical application directed towards the student’s academic course of study, which is supervised and evaluated by both the employer and the cooperative education institution (Canadian Association of Cooperative Education, 2002). The very nature of cooperative education implies a partnership between faculty, students and employers. Faculty recognize the benefit of cooperative education as it assists students in the learning process since students were able to relate real-world experiences to their academic studies (Cantor, 1995).

Further research found that students opt to participate in cooperative education programs in order to help offset the costs of tuition, increase learning in the chosen area of study, as well as to assist in job placement or marketability upon graduation (John, Doherty, & Nichols, 1998). Marketing materials by most cooperative education institutions promote these advantages to students in order to encourage recruitment in the program.

Experiential education programs became increasingly popular as students recognized this type of learning as a gateway to increase their skill set and enhance their marketability for employment upon graduation. In 1999, approximately 10% of Canadian post-secondary students were enrolled in a cooperative education placement

² The Canadian Association for Cooperative Education acts as a resource for educators, employers and students interested in the cooperative education concept. It currently has 400 members made up of educators, businesses and government, who are interested in promoting post-secondary cooperative education.

(Chin, Munmby, & Hutchison, 1999). According to Hutchinson et al., (2001), a qualitative study was conducted in order to determine student perception of cooperative education programs. Their research discovered that participating students felt cooperative education placements assisted in their career development.

For many students, experiential education is not only a means of gaining experience in their chosen field of study, but also represents an opportunity to engage in various aspects of their future career. Thus, many cooperative education students from the University of Windsor often returned from their placement having a more comprehensive understanding of their chosen career. This experience has resulted, on some occasions, in a change of career direction. For example, students returning from a design engineering placement, changed their focus to materials engineering since it was seen as more interesting and transferable across industries. This realization is often just as beneficial as acquiring cooperative education work terms where the student has solidified the direction of his/ her career goal.

Employers also benefit from this program as it allows them to essentially hold a 'four-month' interview with students who are on their cooperative education work terms to determine suitability for recruitment purposes. In addition, cooperative education provides an opportunity for employers to temporarily augment their workforce with bright and skilled young workers. Chapman, Coll & Meech (1999) developed a service quality model for cooperative education programs from the perspective of the employer. The variables consisted of:

- the most appropriate time frame when Cooperative Education programs should contact employers to post for student

employment;

- developing communication tools with respect to the role of the university, the role of the employer as it pertains to the Cooperative Education program;
- placement support for the student and employer work term activities;
- the identification of core competencies employers expect student candidates to possess and the role of the university in developing these skills; and
- a description of the benefits of hiring a cooperative education student (p.23).

The authors go on to explore employer benefits of hiring a cooperative education student as “a convenient way to organize short-term employment, provide a flexible way to manage labour costs” (Chapman, Coll & Meech, 1999, p.23). Similarly anecdotal evidence from this research suggests that cooperative education employers enjoyed the benefits of hiring a student in that students are able to contribute to the organization in a meaningful way in developing methods to save time and money. The technological expertise that students are often able to provide has reduced time-wasting, labour intensive measures, which in turn can save the company money. Therefore, it came as no surprise that 70% of those employers surveyed felt that hiring a cooperative education student was beneficial to the company.

International Experiential Education

As experiential education programs emerged within post-secondary institutions, so did opportunities and variations of this type of learning for students. For example, the Canadian Association for Cooperative Education is currently piloting a project in exchanging cooperative education students from Canada and the United Kingdom

(CAFCE, 2004). This program is administered through CAFCE and is hosted by Wilfred Laurier University, in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. The governments of these two countries have embarked on a reciprocal exchange of students, promising a simplified work visa process in which students would be able to work overseas in paid positions related to their degree of study.

Effects of Globalization

Today, international experiential education opportunities for students are increasing as a result of the need to employ skilled workers in a global society. Globalization refers to “economic, social and cultural processes that are post-national” (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 348). This phenomenon immensely affects all sectors of employment, and subsequently, experiential learning opportunities for post-secondary students. For example, a cooperative education student on placement in Windsor, Ontario, Canada may work from 3am-12noon to facilitate collaboration with employees from Japan on a bi-national project. Students have also been involved in projects during their placements, which have taken them overseas to attend meetings, conduct testing on parts, or troubleshoot issues at the global headquarters of the company where they are assigned.

Globalization is manifested through environmental, social, cultural, economic and political structures. According to Robinson (2001) globalization is “unifying the world into a single mode of production and a single global system and bringing about the organic integration of different countries and regions into a global economy” (p. 159). Economically, globalization is of primary importance to most major companies. In order to remain competitive, such an outlook is critical and therefore a necessary skill for new

graduates to bring with them to the workforce. The ability to speak a language other than English, previous international travel experience, and having an appreciation for various cultures are skills that employers are keen to promote when undertaking overseas operations and new business ventures. For example, an international automotive company in an effort to support its operations was recently involved in an aggressive recruitment campaign to hire engineers willing to relocate to China. New graduates with these skill-sets are attractive to employers seeking to expand their business on a global basis. Cooperative education can meet these demands to produce new graduates for the workforce with a global understanding by providing opportunities for students to work in multi-national companies to enhance these skill-sets. The trend to internationalize post-secondary curriculum and supported experiential learning opportunities evolved from these findings. McCarthy (1998) identified ten recommendations to internationalize the undergraduate curriculum, which supports the notion of cooperation between international post-secondary institutions and companies through research and experiential learning opportunities. Therefore, internationalization is a response to the phenomenon of globalization.

John, Doherty & Nichols (1998), of Kettering University, Michigan, recognized the shift in globalization in the workforce and began to analyze its impact on cooperative education programs through the identification of several challenges and opportunities. The authors learned that many universities are “struggling with the development and implementation of appropriate cooperative education programs to help employers fill their global human resource needs” (p.11). This finding underscores the importance of strategically redesigning cooperative education programs as a significant resource for

global employer hiring requirements. In order to meet these requirements, the authors suggest that post-secondary institutions should develop articulation agreements with international universities which meet both the “human resource needs of the employers and the academic needs of the students” (p. 12). The University of Windsor has acknowledged this trend in its endeavour to increase the number of cooperative education exchange placements with international universities, a model supported by the World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE)³. In response to this, post-secondary cooperative education programs have seen an increase in international cooperative education opportunities, which allow students to develop skills and business acumen which augment their academic studies on a global basis. It was postulated that the combination of formal experiential learning on an international front coupled with a student’s coursework, would further enhance the student’s marketability upon graduation.

Bald and Van de Water (1998) summarized the impact of globalization on international cooperative education placements. The Oregon University International Internship program was analyzed, and possible administrative challenges for post-secondary institutions in the development and maintenance of such a program were identified. The authors concluded that international cooperative education placements should remain a student-centred activity, thereby creating benefits to the student for career development in a global work force. While it is agreed that international cooperative education placements should be student-centred, it is up to the educators or the post-secondary institution to ensure that students have the tools to develop a

³ The World Association for Cooperative Education is “an international organization dedicated to promoting Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs worldwide.

framework for their career development in a global workforce. Therefore, appropriate learning outcomes and educational strategies should be developed and employed to facilitate student learning and an understanding of the benefits associated with such placements.

Advantages and Disadvantages of International Experiential Education

While interviewing students who had participated in an international cooperative education placement, Coll & Chapman (2000) discovered that there were some advantages and obstacles to these placements from the perspective of the student. Benefits appeared to be an increase in confidence, the opportunity to travel to locations and countries one may not have normally been able to visit, and increased marketability on the job. These benefits mirror the work completed by Bentley & Broons in their paper submitted to WACE in 2000. Barriers included work permit issues, the initial cost of going to an international cooperative education placement (such as flights), and perceived lack of appropriate workplace skills. While this feedback from students in a qualitative manner through an unstructured interview process appears to be quite consistent with the findings of this study, perhaps additional more probing questions could have been asked by the researcher in order to uncover more concrete and substantial benefits and barriers to these types of placements.

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (2004)⁴ determined that one great benefit of international cooperative education placements is that they prepared students for a global workforce. Saikali and Jain (1997) collected data concerning

⁴ The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is an “umbrella, non-governmental organization comprised of 200” educational institutions and business across Canada. It is a highly regarded professional resource in providing professional development resources for international educators within Canada.

engineering cooperative education programs, which included placements abroad. The goal of the data collection was to summarize program offerings of international placements. First, work-abroad placements were endorsed over study-abroad experiences since they more accurately depicted a realistic living experience. It was also found that students were more attracted to international placements since they were able to immerse themselves in the culture of the placement country.

Finally, the authors identified three components to determine the value of international cooperative education placements, which included the suitability of the work experience according to the student's academic level; the perceived level of difficulty of the assigned work for the student (that is, whether the student was sufficiently challenged); and if the student's assigned work was meaningful in context to the company at large. Similarly, Cantor (1995) determined that there were potential benefits for the university as a whole, which could include increasing partnerships for research and funding.

Coll, Zegwaard, & Pramoolosook (2003), surveyed international companies and found perceived advantages of hiring international cooperative education students as the opportunity to access motivated and bright students as potential 'leaders of the future,' as well as anticipating ties with the corresponding university will also be strengthened. In an earlier study, Coll (2003) researched employers' views regarding the internationalization of cooperative education for science and technology academic programs. The researcher identified advantages of international cooperative education placements to be the duration of the placements for international companies, as well as

the demonstrated level of enthusiasm that students expressed during their placements, and the different perspectives that international students provided to the company.

Similarly, Coll and Chapman (2000) utilized an in-depth, naturalistic case study methodology to identify students' perspectives of the advantages and disadvantages of international cooperative education placements. Advantages identified were an increase in self-confidence upon completion of an international placement, as well as the perceived increase in full-time career opportunity prospects, and the enhancement of language and cultural experiences.

Disadvantages according to Coll, Zegwaard & Pramoolosook (2003) included recruitment issues of students upon completion of student work terms for international full-time positions, as well as the period of adjustment students sometimes faced when living in a different country, away from home and the familiarity of expected norms. Interestingly, students interviewed by Coll and Chapman (2000) identified a disadvantage with placements that sometimes involved work that was inappropriate to their field of study and academic training. In addition, students felt under-prepared to work in companies and perform work-related tasks with which they were unfamiliar.

Richard K. Coll, a noted researcher on international cooperative education programs, studied employers' views on international cooperative education placements (Coll, 2000). He readily admits that there is insufficient research focusing on employers' views of the internationalization of cooperative education programs. In his qualitative research, he interviewed several international employers to explore their views of this phenomenon. International employers differentiated between domestic cooperative education and international students by the latter's "level of enthusiasm and commitment

and the perspective an outsider can sometimes bring to a familiar context” (p. 9). The study involved interviewing eleven employers participating in the international cooperative education program. Three questions were posed to these employers about the advantages and disadvantages of the program, as well as attempting to uncover the reasons why employers were willing to participate in their international cooperative education initiative. The main theme that emerged from this research was inherently altruistic. However, it would have been more telling had the researcher interviewed employers who did not participate in the program. Indeed, as more themes may have evolved providing the researcher with richer information to further grow the program.

In a similar study, interviewing Thai employers, Coll, Zegwaard, & Pramoolsook (2003) saw results that supported earlier studies. These employers again, felt an altruistic compulsion to participate in the international cooperative education program; moreover, they noted that the students’ command of the English language was a major benefit to the employer. It was determined, however, that the main disadvantage faced by these employers was their own lack of preparation in determining the work the students would perform. This, coupled, with the students’ perceived lack of confidence in their skills and abilities sometimes resulted in a lack of challenging work. Although this study simply consisted of an interview of a Thai employer, it underscores the importance of educators working with students prior to their international departure in order to prepare them for the language and cultural issues that they may encounter.

Program Design: Challenges and New Perspectives

Coll, Zegwaard, & Pramoolsook (2003) assert that the Western model of cooperative education is conducive to the non-Western educational context in this case,

but caution that when administering an international cooperative education program, the learning process for students in this type of placement should be stressed and that one cannot assume that the framework of cooperative education programs can be easily “transferred from one educational setting to another” (p. 13). That is, the cultural context and the needs of the international employer should be considered and tailored to the program in order to ensure success. These conclusions give rise to the notion that a protocol for the administration and design of post-secondary international cooperative education programs should be investigated to ensure that the student learning and employer needs are appropriately met.

In an opinion piece published in the *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Gillespie (2002) cautions against the romantic lure of an international cooperative education placement. Her article urges academic practitioners of cooperative education programs to redefine “international education to take account of its political implications” (p.262). Furthermore, she stresses that, “accepted goals of international education such as global competence are incoherent and more important, morally, philosophically, and politically, inadequate” (p. 262). That is, should the design and administration of any component of international education be lacking, the inherent foundation of the purpose of international education can be placed in jeopardy, leaving the student participating in such a program, with no academic value, to which she coins the term, “academic tourism” (p. 264). Discussions with some post-secondary institutions who promote international cooperative education programs, have encountered such a phenomenon, where the only value of students working overseas is to gain a culturally enriching experience. When students return home to resume their academic studies, they have no

understanding of how to apply their learning to their career or academia. This is a profound cautionary note which sparked my interest in investigating the appropriate design and administration of post-secondary international cooperative education programs.

This notion is also supported by McCabe (2001) who argued that post-secondary institutions should first define and distinguish between internationalization and globalization of academic programs. He goes on to state that, “unless the field of international education can adequately define the terms internationalization and globalization, the value of their application to the development and implementation of various types of study abroad programs will be limited” (p. 139). Finally, he concludes that “some...programs continue to hold the belief that cross-cultural understanding of norms, rules and language, as a by-product of internationalization should form the basis of the development of overseas programs” (p. 140). Resorting to this type of framework is the educator’s easy fix to forcing through programs that lack academic lustre and richness that can be so fully entrenched in an international cooperative education placement if the administration and design of such a program are appropriate.

Furthermore, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)⁵, submitted an opinion piece regarding the current state of the study abroad programs in 2005. Within this piece, they concur that learning outcomes for today’s study abroad students must evolve and that one cannot rely on the outcomes of the past, such as polishing language skills and providing a cultural differentiated experience. The

⁵ The Council on International Educational Exchange is a membership organization, composed mainly of U.S. higher education institutions whose mandate is to “help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world.”

organization recognizes that today's student may have a multitude of goals as it relates to globalization. Therefore, a "one-size-fits-all" approach is no longer appropriate. CIEE also stresses that one cannot 'Americanize' the study-abroad experience. That is, the student should experience the international experience as it is, rather than attempting to provide comfortable learning opportunities to which the student is accustomed. In order for students to learn and truly understand globalization, they must experience it as it is, for themselves, within the context of their understanding. When this is achieved, students can truly absorb and internalize their learning in a global context.

In 1998, Education at Work (Ontario)⁶ conducted a survey, which surveyed 16 Ontario post-secondary institutions regarding international cooperative education placements. It was discovered that the number of students participating in international placements increased from 507 students in 1994, to 555 students in 1997, and represented 35 different countries of placements for cooperative education work terms. Of note, 50% of the placements were developed through the respective Cooperative Education departments, as well as faculty members, which indicated the level of importance institutions place on international cooperative education placements. It was suggested by surveyed Co-op Practitioners, that a reciprocal exchange model be adopted by post-secondary institutions, consisting of a combination of an academic study term followed by a cooperative education work term component. This model was also supported by studies completed by Reeve, Schultz & Laslett (1997), and Davie & Watson (1988).

⁶ Education at Work (Ontario) was previously known as Co-op Ontario, through the partnering of the University Cooperative Educators and the College Cooperative Educators of Ontario. It advocates the importance of cooperative education within the post-secondary institution environment.

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (2005) submitted an opinion piece to the Ontario Post Secondary Review, which highlighted the benefits for the post-secondary institutions to implement programs such as international cooperative education which included:

- student mobility in both directions – mobility is an element of human resource development, preparing youth for a global economy and interdependent societies, as well as creating international understanding and an avenue to a more peaceful world;
- connecting our educational institutions with counterparts across the globe;
- competition for top students...from around the world; and
- campus internationalization including:
 - curriculum that integrates international content and perspectives;
 - emphasis on foreign-language learning;
 - international ethos including events and desensitization of staff, faculty and students to international issues/ students;
 - recognition of international experience of faculty and provision of international research opportunities (p.2).

Despite these advantages to the student, employer, and post-secondary institution, according to Reeve, Shulz & Laslett (1997), there are many additional issues which need to be formally addressed should a post-secondary institution wish to incorporate international co-op placements for students. These issues include (but are not limited to):

- i) student issues, such as adjustments to a different culture, and the challenges faced by a student on a placement abroad;

- ii) visas and work permits;
- iii) the difference between expectations of a western company versus those of an international company;
- iv) monitoring and assessment of the work term(s); and
- v) risk and responsibility issues.

Given these issues, it would be prudent that an administrator evaluate and determine the feasibility of implementing such a program in an appropriate, learning-centred, and safe manner.

According to John, Doherty and Nichols (1998), and Sprinkle (1981), serious issues can arise when international experiential education placements are not administered or designed appropriately. Issues to be considered include establishing the goals and purposes of the program, the standards of the design of its administration, and the role of stakeholders in the development and sustainability of international placements. Furthermore, the concept of these types of placements should be accurately defined within the context of the intent of the program (McCabe, 2001).

Disadvantages include the vast amount of time and resources imposed on an already depleted base of Coordinators and departments, as well as the cost incurred by students in order to travel to their placements and work (Coll & Chapman, 2000). Added costs can implicate equity issues and accessibility to international experiences. As such, it would be prudent to determine how schools are addressing this issue. However, despite these challenges, it was found that administration, faculty, and students felt that the benefits of international placement opportunities far outweighed the challenges (The

Gazette, Frampton, Muzychka & Pecore, 1997). Given these considerations, there still appears to be an overwhelming benefit for the design of such programs for students.

John, Doherty, and Nichols (1998) summarized the challenges posed to engineering, science, and management cooperative education programs as they related to the global economy. Challenges included adjusting cooperative education programs to meet the human resources needs of employers on a global basis, as well as the challenge of developing a skilled labour force that can adapt easily to a global environment. The researchers stressed the importance of university global expansion to accommodate international cooperative education placements.

Coupled with the learning outcomes of traditional, domestic cooperative education programs, international cooperative education programs appear to have additional benefits for students, faculty and employers. Sprinkle (1981) researched issues regarding international cooperative education and placements. He identified that “international dimensions of the student’s educational experience” (p. 99), must be of great importance in order to ensure the appropriate transition from school to work. Through his literature review, he postulated five central issues to international cooperative education placements. They outlined the goals and purposes of such placements; the standards and design of the international component of the placement; the role of employers and the government in developing such placement opportunities for students; and the issue of reciprocity of partner countries’ post-secondary institutions and the enrolment of international students in foreign post-secondary institutions. These factors ring true even in today’s world where technology and globalization play an even

larger role on the impact of international cooperative education placements within post-secondary institutions.

Although there is a great deal of research available regarding the administration of experiential education placements, the added variable of international experiential education programs has not been widely researched. This study will examine administrative issues related to international experiential education placements. Experiential education programs are able to provide students with work experiences on a domestic or international front. Therefore the effect of international experiential education experiences should be investigated in order to determine the most appropriate design of such a program encompassing themes uncovered through a review of literature and common threads surfacing through post-secondary program review. The variables include: learning outcomes, risk and responsibility, administrative resource implications, and student satisfaction.

It is proposed that a case study and text review of post-secondary institutions be conducted in order to determine appropriate design and administration of post-secondary international experiential education programs. From this study, post-secondary institutions can then make a more informed decision as to whether or not investing additional monies and resources are warranted to offer both domestic and international opportunities for students as it relates to institutional goals and objectives for their students.

Research Question

Based on the premise outlined above, this study will focus on the following main research question, which includes four variables of study.

How should an international experiential education program be designed in order to address the following:

- a. Learning outcomes on a global basis
- b. Resource implications
- c. Student satisfaction of international placements
- d. Risk and Responsibility?

This implies that learning outcomes, resource implications, student/ employer satisfaction of international experiential education placements and risk and responsibility are all important factors when designing and administering a post-secondary international experiential education program.

Significance of the Study

The text review and case study are significant to many stakeholders that are involved with the operation of experiential education in post-secondary institutions. The post-secondary institution may be able to assess from this study the potential benefits of adding international experiential education placement opportunities for students, and may be able to justify added resource implications to administer such a program. Employers who look to hire cooperative education students and others who have participated in an international experiential education program may benefit from this research to understand the importance of providing appropriate work experience for students and potential new hires, which may include a global focus on practical skills. Students will be able to determine whether participation in an international experiential education placement will augment their studies and vocational marketability. Faculty of post-secondary institutions will also be able to review the significance of varying experiential education

placements as it relates to student coursework. Finally, government immigration authorities may benefit from this research to assist in decision-making, as they are continually campaigned by post-secondary institutions for a more lenient policy and legislation of work permits for students participating in international experiential education placements.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order for the reader to understand the scope of the proposed research as it relates to the variables studied.

Academic Outcomes: Refers to learning outcomes related to the student's academic program of study.

Cooperative Education: The combination of academic study with alternating work terms. The employment is a practical application directed towards the student's academic course of study, which is supervised and evaluated by both the employer and the cooperative education institution (Canadian Association for Cooperative Education, 2004).

Domestic Placements: Experiential education placements located within North America.

Experiential Education: The process whereby educators actively involve students in a concrete situation in order to facilitate learning through critical thinking and reflection (Association for Experiential Education, p. 47, para. 2).

International Placements: Experiential education placements located overseas and which is not considered a student's homeland.

Learning Outcomes: The desired educational goals expected to be achieved while participating in an experiential learning program.

Personal Outcomes: Goals that relate to the workplace and a student's career goal.

Professional Outcomes: Goals which will enhance soft or transferable skills, such as interpersonal skills.

Resource Implications: Includes the financial, administrative and human resource allocation required to appropriately administer an international experiential education programs at the post-secondary level.

Risk and Responsibility: The identification of the potential hazards for students while on an experiential education work term, and the measures taken to reduce these liabilities for both the institution and the student.

Student Satisfaction: The level of which the student reports that their expectations have been met while on an international experiential education work term.

Work Term: Includes a minimum of a twelve-week placement, working a minimum of 35 hours per week that is monitored and provided credit by the post-secondary institution or program to which the student is enrolled.

List of Acronyms

AEE – Association for Experiential Education

CAFCE – Canadian Association for Cooperative Education

CBIE- Canadian Bureau for International Education

CHEA – Council for Higher Education Accreditation

CIEE – Council on International Educational Exchange

CYW – Canada World Youth

ESP – Emergency Support Program (Queen’s University)

EWO – Education at Work Ontario

IASTE – International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical
Experience

ICP – International Co-op Program (University of Cincinnati)

NACE – National Association of Colleges and Employers

NSEE – National Society for Experiential Education

WACE – World Association for Cooperative Education

WUSC – World University Service Canada

YIIP – York International Internship Program (York University)

CHAPTER II

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Participants

This study was based on a convenient sample of male and female students enrolled in the Cooperative Education program at the University of Windsor, or who have completed an experiential education placement through the World University Service of Canada (WUSC)⁷. Participants 18 years and older were eligible to participate in this study. Invitations to participate in the study were sent to students who had successfully completed a minimum of one international cooperative education work term or one WUSC experience. Twelve students participated in this study.

Students who accepted the invitation to participate in this study consisted of ten males and two females. Ten students were cooperative education students and two participated in WUSC. Of the ten cooperative education students, six were enrolled in the mechanical engineering cooperative education program, two were enrolled in the electrical engineering cooperative education program, one student was enrolled in the computer science cooperative education program, and the final participant was a recent graduate of the industrial engineering cooperative education program at the University of Windsor. Of particular note, one of the participants was an international student himself from India, who was able to secure a cooperative education placement in Europe, while

⁷ The World University Service of Canada (WUSC) considers itself to be a network of individuals and post-secondary institutions who believe that all people are entitled to the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to world equity. Their mission is to foster human development and global understanding through education and training. Students from post-secondary institutions are able to apply to this program which may be considered for credit as an experiential education component towards their degree program (<http://www.wusc.ca>).

another student was a resident of Canada, but not a citizen. Citizenship resulted in additional challenges and perspectives during international experiential placements.

The two WUSC participants included one male graduate of the University of Windsor, with a double major in Computer Science and Economics. The other participant was a recent female graduate of the University of Windsor Political Science program. Both students did not apply their WUSC experience to their degree program for credit, meaning they did not complete the placement as a requisite for their degree program, which differs from cooperative education students.

A review of post-secondary institution international experiential education programs was conducted through internet searches, as well as requests for international experiential education policies and procedures from these institutions. Six Canadian post-secondary institutions as well as one American post-secondary institution were reviewed. The six Canadian post-secondary institutions included: The University of Windsor, University of Waterloo, The Co-op Japan Project (which is an umbrella program involving many partnering post-secondary institutions in Canada), York University, Queen's University, and the University of British Columbia. The American post-secondary institution selected was the University of Cincinnati.

Of the institution programs selected, it should be noted that most were cooperative education programs; however, some consisted of various experiential learning programs. This was considered of importance since some institutions combined international experiential education programs in their service delivery. The institutions were selected due to their well-developed international experiential education programs. It should be noted that several other post-secondary institution programs were considered,

based on my experience as a Co-op Coordinator, through work-related functions such as conferences and meetings. It was found that the institutions selected acknowledged the differences between international and domestic placements and therefore could be used as a rich resource for the purposes of this study.

The University of Windsor developed an umbrella organization, Windsor International to accommodate the internationalization of its campus. The University of Waterloo is known as the 'grandfather of cooperative education' in Canada and has well-established policies and procedures regarding international cooperative education opportunities. The Co-op Japan Project is unique in that it encompasses many post-secondary institutions, resulting in a partnership to address international experiential placements in Japan. York University developed the York Internship Program (YIIP), which provides formalized opportunities for students to work in another country. The University of British Columbia announced its vision to become one of the world's best universities to foster globalization and internationalization for students through their Trek 2010 (University of British Columbia, 2000). The international activities of the school are associated with this umbrella organization, similar to the University of Windsor. Finally, the University of Cincinnati boasts a formalized international co-op program (ICP), which has been well-documented and presented through various professional organizations and conferences such as WACE. The university has also developed a student textbook for cooperative education which highlights many of the variables contained in this study.

Design and Procedures

In order to appropriately uncover pertinent issues and design aspects of this study, a qualitative approach was used. An in-depth study of various schools and students involved in international experiential learning placements was explored through the triangulation of data sources. A web-search of the selected post-secondary institutions was conducted in order to examine, contrast and compare current published policies and procedures as it relates to the administration of international experiential education programs. The World Association for Cooperative Education was also referenced to provide additional information and resources from other post-secondary institutions that provided valuable information in the design of an international experiential learning program. Finally, a case study approach was selected to gain insight into the four variables from a student perspective.

Students who returned from an international experiential education placement were interviewed through an unstructured, open-ended case study process in order to gain their perspective on the international placement experience. Creswell (2003) defines a case study as a process whereby the researcher “explores in depth an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collections procedures...” (p. 15). According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), case studies should search for patterns from the interviews in order to develop any prevalent issues. However, the researcher should be cognizant of their interpretation of what a subject is conveying during the interview process may not necessarily be the interpretation of another reader, or even the subject themselves. Furthermore, the authors state that case studies are beneficial in order to refine a theory or to propose further investigation. Finally, it is important for the

reader and the researcher to understand that the findings from a case study should not be generalized, but rather, should represent the case study itself and its participants.

Once the data were collected, and the interviews transcribed, the results were analyzed based on overall satisfaction with the placement, resources, administration of the program, perceived learning outcomes, and risk/ responsibility. Narrative passages were used to convey the findings of the analysis, and case studies were utilized. The data were interpreted through comparing and contrasting the findings with current literature.

Again, according to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), discovering themes from the transcription of case studies is a method of collecting and analyzing empirical data. It can be suggested that through the review of the transcription as well as notes made from the interviews themselves, some general themes can be derived, and additional themes can be layered or woven within the foundational themes. Analyzing this information suggests the contrasting and comparison of the text. Through this process, themes emerged and were linked into concepts, which was the basis for the analysis and interpretation of the data or text collected in this study.

The layout of this study was designed in such a way that each variable was assigned its own chapter, allowing a richer perspective. Each chapter begins with an overview of the variable and its relevant literature, followed by the post-secondary institution text and case study analysis. The analysis is followed by recommendations as it relates to the administration and development of post-secondary international experiential learning programs. The final chapter summarizes the findings, draws conclusions and offers recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Limitations

There are many limitations to this study, which lead to suggestions for further research. First, a text analysis was conducted on selected post-secondary institutions which hosted international experiential education programs. Information gathered was primarily based on published information via the world wide web, which catered more to the student perspective of such a program, and national statistical studies conducted on this topic. A more thorough analysis should be conducted in order to tap into further information regarding internal policies and procedures as it relates to the post-secondary institution.

The sample was convenient since it was derived from the home institution of this author. A small sample size of twelve participants was interviewed, although variation of placement was attempted in order to provide rich data. Furthermore, there is a risk of bias in this study since I administer the international cooperative education program at the University of Windsor. However, careful consideration was given to the relationship between me and the subjects in order to provide objective feedback regarding the program. Additionally, conflict of interest was controlled in that evaluation of student performance, work term reports and other required criteria to successfully pass a cooperative education work term are not managed by the coordinator, but, rather the faculty and host employer. Therefore, the administration of the pass/fail grade is assigned in a controlled fashion which cannot be deviated or skewed due to potential conflict of interest.

As previously defined, experiential education involves a partnership between the student, post-secondary institution and the host employer. International employers' voices were not considered in this research due to lack of resources. Therefore, the

challenges and new perspectives considered in this study will only reflect views from post-secondary institutions and students.

Finally, there is not sufficient quantitative research available on international cooperative education. Chin, Munby, & Hutchinson (1999), acknowledge this challenge and encourage researchers to study the “what” and “how” of student learning while participating in a cooperative education placement. Much of the current research consist of either opinion pieces, or qualitative research, which is valuable, but can be more powerful if combined with a mixed methods approach of both qualitative and quantitative study.

Delimitations

Creswell (2003) defines delimitations as addressing “how the study will be narrowed in scope,” (p. 150). Given the magnitude of each variable studied within this research, it was important to ensure that the reader is not encumbered with too much information. Separate studies could be conducted on each variable considered. However, the variables researched in this study provide an essential overview to the administration of post-secondary experiential programs.

International placements for this study were set to include only those placements that were outside North America. Participants and post-secondary text analysis were selected based on this delimitation since it was considered that students participating in an experiential education program in the United States would not differ significantly from students participating in domestic placements. Therefore, the data would not be rich enough to discern any potential findings with respect to international experiential education placements.

A qualitative approach using case studies and text analysis was utilized for this study rather than a mixed-methods or quantitative approach since the intent of this study was to research the process of the program, rather than solely the outcome of the program (Creswell, 2003). Case studies were used in order to uncover rich data from the experiences of participants and gather more holistic feedback regarding these experiences.

The viewpoint of international employers and organizations was not included in this research for a specific purpose. Although there is documented qualitative research available and cited in this study addressing international employers' views of international experiential education (Coll, 2000; Coll, 2003), it is prudent to first study the stated variables which are considered to be in control of the post-secondary institution program since the focus of this study underscores experiential education rather than solely developing global workers. Once the appropriate design of the international experiential education program is further refined through additional research, the institution can then educate potential employers or organizations regarding the goals of the international experiential education program and the framework in which to develop future global workers.

CHAPTER III

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In order for an experiential education program to be considered sustainable and valid intertwined with academic studies, learning outcomes must be established.

Learning outcomes give purpose to a course, and provide students with a framework within which they can make sense of educational strategies and expectations such as completing assigned readings, practical experience, tests, reflections, written papers and presentations. Typically, learning outcomes are provided to the students at the beginning of the course.

This chapter will discuss the importance of learning outcomes as they relate to experiential education and international placements. A review of relevant literature will be presented in order to provide the appropriate background information and current research regarding learning outcomes. Next, the presence of learning outcomes within post-secondary experiential education programs through text analysis will be reviewed. Finally, the case study portion of the participant interviews as it relates to learning outcomes will be discussed and conclusions drawn from these findings.

Review of Literature

According to Cates & Jones (1999) learning outcomes are an educational strategy of the experiential education program which is manifested through measurable and concrete variables. These outcomes are to be communicated to students who can then set their own goals for their work term as they relate to the overall learning outcomes. Learning outcomes for experiential education programs should be separated into three main categories: academic, professional, and personal. Academic outcomes are those

goals related to the student's academic program of study, such as integrating classroom theory with practical experience. Professional outcomes are identified as goals that relate to the workplace and a student's career goal. Personal outcomes can be classified as goals which will enhance soft skills, such as interpersonal skills.

This view lends itself to international experiential education learning outcomes focusing on all three identified outcomes. For example, as with domestic placements, it should be ensured that international experiential education placements relate to the student's academic program of study, professional outcomes include developing a greater understanding of the global workforce, and personal learning outcomes encompass the development of a new language in which to conduct business. Although the general "template" for the learning outcomes would remain the same, students embarking on an international experiential education placement should consider developing those skills that relate more to a global understanding of the world of work, and the development of a deeper sense of cultural sensitivity. However, these goals must remain measurable and realistic within the timeframe and context of their international experiential education placement.

Cooperative education programs operate under these same principles. For many Ontario post-secondary institutions which operate a centralized cooperative education program, learning outcomes are student and employer-centred. That is, students and employers determine the learning outcomes for the cooperative education work term. Many institutions in Canada and the United States have created a stronger tie between the students' academic study and cooperative education work terms through the development of a cooperative education course. This course allows cooperative education practitioners

to develop a framework in which to administer the program in such a way that students understand the development and progression of practical skills as they relate to their academic program, as well as workplace skills.

In cooperative education programs, there are three main stakeholders in the learning process: the student, the post-secondary institution, and the employer. Learning outcomes are maximized when all three stakeholders take an active role in the process. Since student supervisors can vary, as well as programs of study, it is important to understand that specific learning outcomes can differ. According to Elliott, Trent, et. al (2005) from the University of Cincinnati, Division of Professional Practice, co-op learning follows a general pattern, however, the specifics of the learning can vary. These practitioners believe that students can learn through the cooperative education job search process, as students in the classroom, and as a cooperative education employee. Various outcomes based on this pattern could include how to develop an effective resume, how to learn cooperatively, as well as the understanding of the technology and tools utilized in industry. For a student embarking on an international cooperative education work term, it is important for a cooperative education practitioner to understand the flexibility in developing learning outcomes. Engaging all agents in the process will assist in developing appropriate specific learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are typically grounded in the mission statement of the academic institution and the specific faculty within the institution (Cates & Jones, 1999). Through accreditation processes, course syllabi must reflect the learning outcomes established. Experiential education programs, operating as an extension of the post-secondary institution's academic program, should consider how the activities and work

terms complement the mission statement and subsequent learning outcomes of the faculty and institution.

In a project report published by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2004), the organization determined that obtaining a baccalaureate degree ensures that students have developed the capacity to think critically, have knowledge on how to prepare for the future, gained a better understanding of cultures, strengthened their community citizenship, and sustained vocational and career goals. These four dimensions are conducive to the international experiential education placement since they facilitate in students a deeper understanding of the critical skills outlined on a global basis.

Given the importance of establishing learning outcomes as it relates to an academic experiential education program, it would be prudent to examine how an international placement would relate to these established learning outcomes. Domestic experiential education placements are the standard program in which to evaluate the establishment of learning outcomes, however, most of the institutions within this study assimilate international experiential education placements into the domestic work term format, which neglects the essence of why a student may opt to choose an international over a domestic placement. In order to examine any differences in learning outcomes with regards to international versus domestic placements, it is suggested that the institution contrast and compare learning outcomes as it relates to domestic and international placements. In addition, an analysis of participant responses regarding their learning upon completion of an international work term will assist in determining

whether international experiential education programs should differ from its domestic counterparts.

Raffield (1987) identified three main components of learning outcomes for an experiential education placement. He suggested that the agents within the experiential education placement should identify the knowledge demonstrated by the student in order to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. He also stressed the importance of identifying the conditions under which the outcome is demonstrated. Finally, he argues that a rubric should be constructed to accurately assess the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. As with all experiential education placements, these components should be addressed, however, the specificity of the components supports that learning outcomes for international experiential education placements should be different in some aspects as it relates to the internationalization of the program.

This research is supported through NSEE (1998)⁸, who articulated eight principles that should be adhered to when designing an experiential education program.

These eight principles are:

- Intention – there should be clarity as to why this type of education was selected to foster learning;
- Preparedness and Planning – educators must ensure that students first possess the appropriate foundation in which to process the experience.

Educators must then frame the experience through learning objectives and

⁸ The National Society for Experiential Education is a non-profit membership association of educators, business, and community leaders. Founded in 1971, this association also serves as a national resource centre for the development and improvement of experiential education programs nationwide. This association supports the use of learning through experience for intellectual development, cross-cultural and global awareness, civic and social responsibility, ethical development, career exploration, and personal growth.

other relevant activities to nurture the learning in a flexible and adaptable environment;

- Authenticity – the experience must be meaningful and relevant to the student;
- Reflection – students must be able to uncover and articulate the knowledge gained through the experience through testing and review. The process of reflection also allows students the opportunity to measure and contrast outcomes achieved through the experience;
- Orientation and Training – students and employers should be provided with a baseline of fundamental background and information required for the experience. From this baseline, new knowledge and learning opportunities can be cultivated to enrich the experience;
- Monitoring and Continuous Improvement – the experience should be treated as dynamic in an environment of continual growth through the use of evaluation tools;
- Assessment and Evaluation – this process will allow all parties to measure the desired outcome of the experience against the learning that has occurred; and
- Acknowledgement – there should be recognition of the learning that has occurred through various means such as reporting (presentations, written reports, etc.) which will then provide closure to the experience.

Chaifetz (1992) created a handbook about developing an international work program that described the Nassau Community College London retailing co-op model.

Within this handbook, the author submits that should a post-secondary institution have a domestic co-op model in place, the international cooperative education placement component can be modified slightly to accommodate the difference at the onset of the program. However, she admits that as the program matures, there might be a need to write a more specific course outline geared specifically to international cooperative education placements. Although Chaifetz argues only for slight modifications to international experiential education programs, the research supports the notion that learning outcomes should be tailored to meet the needs and unique attributes of such placements to ensure appropriate learning takes place.

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Review

York and Queen's University

In Ontario, Canada, Queen's University created a handbook for students embarking on an international work or study abroad placement, which has been adopted by York University. Within this handbook, the university designed an exercise for students contemplating an international placement. An emphasis on setting learning outcomes is demonstrated. To establish learning outcomes, the handbook advises students to start a journal and answer some poignant questions through three distinct exercises (Queen's University International Centre, n.d.). The first exercise explores the reasons why a student would want to take part in an international placement experience. In order to start the student thinking in these terms, some potential reasons for wanting to work or study abroad are articulated. Some of the reasons listed are:

- to acquire work experience;
- to learn or improve a language;
- to travel and discover the world;

- to be challenged; and
- to broaden his/her horizons.

These reasons answer the “why” of considering an international placement, which assists students in establishing the foundation of setting learning outcomes for their placement. This exercise supports the first principle in the “Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities,” (National Society for Experiential Education, 1998) . That is, the principle of intention, which contends that

all parties must be clear from the outset why experience is the chosen approach to the learning that is to take place and to the knowledge that will be demonstrated, applied or result from it. Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience (p.1).

The second exercise the universities recommend is for the student to answer the “what” of the international placement. This exercise builds on the “why” which develops the framework to answer the “what” of the international placement. The handbook provides some examples for the student in developing his/ her learning outcomes in posing the question, “what do you wish to gain?”

- new perspectives;
- broader education base;
- additional language skills;
- experience for a future career;
- a cross-cultural experience; and
- on-site research.

This exercise allows students to tailor their international placement to their particular interests and goals, thereby creating a more student-centred approach to the development of learning outcomes. However, input and facilitation from the post-secondary institution's faculty or cooperative education office may be more conducive to the establishment of the learning outcomes, as it would allow the student to understand the connection between the international placement and academia and its importance to their experiential education.

The third exercise relates to international placement learning outcomes, and encourages students to create a plan of action to meet the learning outcomes identified. Students are asked to keep a journal in order to allow for reflection and self-assessment as it relates to the outcomes identified. Within this exercise, the importance of setting personal objectives, such as ensuring that they understand the history and culture of their country of placement is emphasized. Furthermore, pointed questions are raised to which students may provide answers to assist them in developing their plan of action. These questions include:

- What personal goals do I have for myself?
- What expectations do I have for furthering my language capabilities?
- What are my academic goals in studying (working) abroad?
- What career objectives do I have for my sojourn abroad?

This exercise conforms to the principles of preparedness and planning, authenticity, and reflection, as described by the National Society for Experiential Education (1998). Preparedness and planning refer to the foundation which the student must possess in order to

support a successful experience. They must also focus from the earliest stages of the experience/ program on the identified intentions, adhering to them as goals, objectives and activities are defined. The resulting plan should include those intentions and be referred to on a regular basis by all parties. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds (p.1).

Authenticity refers to the importance of ensuring that there is a practical context for the learning outcomes where the student can experience the meaning and reality of them. Finally, reflection can be derived from the journal writing exercise that Queen's University suggests. This allows the student to test, validate and confirm the learning outcomes as the situation and real-world experiences unfold. Students can then refine their learning outcomes as it relates to their experience. This also allows students, as well as educators to assess the attainment of their learning outcomes.

University of British Columbia

The University of British Columbia did not appear to manifest any learning outcomes from a review of its material. However, a work term report and final evaluation from the employer can assist in the self-assessment concept for students, which would include an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. All programs analyzed contain these components of assessment, which would include this learning outcome, despite its definition or articulation of such (University of British Columbia, 2005).

University of Waterloo

The University of Waterloo is considered the "grandfather" of cooperative education. With over 10,000 students enrolled in its mandatory cooperative education program, and 300 placements outside Canada per term it is incumbent upon this

university to have information for students embarking on an international cooperative education placement (University of Waterloo, n.d.). The University of Waterloo state that an international cooperative education work term will assist students in understanding the world and provide new perspectives. They also require that students verbalize why they want to participate in an international cooperative education work term. Some examples that they provide are to improve language skills (as opposed to learning a new language), to learn a new skill, or to learn about a new culture. It is interesting that the school provides the example of improving on a language skill, rather than learning a new language, which may imply that the university requires that the students possess knowledge of the language of the country where they wish to work. The answers to these questions must then be reflected in the students' learning objectives for their work term. Finally, prior to confirming the international placement as a cooperative education work term, students must study the proposed job responsibilities described by the international company and determine the skills they will gain from the experience.

In order to address learning outcomes in its international program, the University of Waterloo follows the same process as in its domestic placements. Students must complete and submit learning objectives to the cooperative education office at the onset of their placement. According to the University of Waterloo, the learning objectives should be achievable and measurable. Furthermore, the University of Waterloo emphasizes to students that “work terms provide excellent opportunities to continue learning; accepting and merely performing the job is unfortunate” (University of Waterloo, n.d., co-op student manual, 6.1). This stresses the importance of connecting academic learning to practical learning. While the University of Waterloo emphasizes

learning outcomes for cooperative education placements, there are no specific guidelines pertaining to international cooperative education placements, except the general cultural and global awareness outcomes.

Co-op Japan

The Co-op Japan Program was established in 1991 by the Federal Government's Pacific 2000 Japan Science and Technology Fund (Co-op Japan Project, 2006).

Universities across Canada are permitted to join this program for a yearly membership fee, which will allow Canadian students to complete an international cooperative education work term in Japan. This program contains overall learning outcomes, which include:

- providing young Canadian engineers, scientists, business and arts students with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in Japan;
- increasing bi-lateral relations between Japan and Canada; and
- providing Co-op Japan students with a global perspective in relation to their future career.

Furthermore, the Co-op Japan Program outlines potential outcomes for students, such as:

- broadening the student outlook and perspective on career and education goals;
- opportunity to learn another language and culture; and
- opportunity to gain valuable technical skills and experience a new culture and way of life.

However, requirements for the evaluation of students completing an international

cooperative education placement does not include the submission of learning objectives by the student or the employer. Rather, a 10-page work term report, a site visit, and a final evaluation by the supervisor are the only requirements to successfully complete the program.

As part of its selection criterion, the Co-op Japan program requires students to articulate their desired learning from this placement. However, it does not appear that these objectives or outcomes are pursued upon securing an international cooperative education placement through the Co-op Japan Program. The site visit is primarily conducted to determine if the work term is going well for the student and to maintain positive relationships with their Japanese employers. The work term report and employer final evaluation of the work term do not specify that students reflect upon the established learning outcomes.

University of Windsor

The University of Windsor appears to have a similar structure and approach to learning outcomes with respect to international cooperative education placements. Learning outcomes are considered an integral component of the program; however, there is no distinction between domestic versus international cooperative education placements.

The University of Windsor provides a rationale to students regarding learning outcomes, manifested through learning objectives. The manual, entitled, “Commitments and Expectations” states that

Cooperative education is an educational program that enables students to receive non-academic credit for on-the-job experiential learning. Co-op requires that students establish objectives that specify the significant and appropriate learning

which is expected to result from the work experience. Credit is given from the outcomes of this experience, not for the experience alone (University of Windsor, 2006, p. 23).

This statement demonstrates the importance that the cooperative education program places on learning outcomes despite the lack of distinction between domestic and international placement outcomes. The same learning objectives form is used for domestic and international placements.

The University of Windsor also supports additional experiential education programs such as the World University Service Canada organization, and houses a successful and vibrant chapter. It also supports other international experiential education programs, such as Canada World Youth⁹ which is administered through the Centre for Career Education. Upon discussion with engaged faculty, it was determined that the educational value of such a program was that faculty could apply innovative techniques in their teaching. Personal communication with faculty found that such a program would allow for a “grass-roots, hands-on, alternative method to gather information in the community.” Educational strategies such as journal writing, and the opportunity to re-integrate student learning in the classroom through sharing of their experiences as it relates to the course curriculum could be incorporated to enhance the course structure.

Faculty learning outcomes are captured through opportunities to develop a curriculum with the assumption that a learner can extend the teachings from the

⁹ Canada World Youth is a national non-governmental organization that designs and delivers international educational programs for young adults. It was founded in 1971 and since that time more than 25,000 young Canadians have participated in its program, which consists of an international experiential learning and community service program (p.8-9).

classroom into the real world through independent research and study. Certain faculty at the University of Windsor applaud the research of Green (2003) who express hope that with the inception of such a program other faculty members will see the educational value of such programs. Therefore, they would allow their students to earn academic credit for such experiences, and to further explore the educational potential of programs such as Canada World Youth.

University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati has created an international cooperative education program (ICP) as an extension of their current model. The program was created in response to the articulated need for students in the United States to understand and interact with other cultures. In order to meet some of the required learning outcomes, students were required to complete a cultural and language course of approximately 300 hours, to correspond with the particular country in which they were to complete their placement. Learning outcomes were created for the cooperative education program curriculum and centred on outcomes geared for both academia and industry (University of Cincinnati, 2004).

The University concluded that the international cooperative education workplace contains extraneous variables not easily controllable in order to set concrete objectives, as an educator would find under a laboratory setting. Therefore, it established the goal to create common learning outcomes that students would create during their pre-departure programming. The university admits that the challenge was “to focus on the targeted learning goal and develop a methodology that would achieve this goal without an excessive time commitment on the part of students while they were on the co-op work

assignment, and...without compromising the confidentiality of the co-op employer” (Elliott et. al., 2005, p.4). In order to achieve this, the university stipulated that employers and their students collaboratively set learning outcomes for the placement.

The general learning outcomes that the University of Cincinnati has developed for their undergraduate cooperative education program focus on organizational culture, technology, professional ethics, and theory and practice. However, the international cooperative education program included two additional modules centred around language and society, as well as cross cultural competency. Each module is completed while the cooperative education students are participating in their international placement. Students are asked to complete a project that includes the identification of specific observations; describing them and then analyzing these observations and findings. Furthermore, upon completion of each learning module, students are then asked to quantify what they believe to be the “primary source of their learning and to determine whether they could use the knowledge gained through the project in other environments” (Elliott et. al., 2005, p.6).

Through this review, the University of Cincinnati has a very comprehensive approach and understanding of the value of international cooperative education components, however, only the outcomes of developing a second language and cross cultural skills are deemed as additional learning outcomes to their standard domestic cooperative education program. As a Co-op Coordinator, I have seen that there are differences in even the amount of learning a student acquires on an international cooperative education work term. For example, students are assigned project-based work on a more consistent level than observed in most domestic placements. It seems that

students working domestically, are viewed by employers as assistants to a project, whereas students on international placements are assigned an independent project to complete, on a more consistent basis. This has been observed through a comparison of students reporting on their work term and their accomplishments. Students who have completed an international cooperative education placement appear to have a deeper understanding of the material and projects assigned. This notion lends itself to determine if learning outcomes should be further developed as it relates to the technical knowledge a student may acquire on their work term, and how to appropriately measure this.

Table 1

Summary of Post-Secondary Institution Program Differentiation of International Versus Domestic Experiential Education Learning Outcomes

Post-Secondary Institution	Differentiated International Experiential Education Learning Outcomes?
York University	Yes
Queens University	Yes
University of British Columbia	No
University of Waterloo	No
Co-op Japan	Yes
University of Windsor	No
University of Cincinnati	Yes

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Analysis

Articulation of Learning Outcomes

Analysis of these experiential education programs emphasizes the importance of learning outcomes for their programs to some extent. The minimal manifestation is what the National Society for Experiential Education (1998) describes as monitoring and

continuous improvement. This principle of good practice for experiential learning activities maintains that all parties responsible for the placement ensure that “the experience, as a process, continues to provide the richest learning possible, while affirming the learner” (p. 1). It also confirms that depending on the experience, there may include some flexibility which is dependent upon the parties involved in the placement. Feedback is critical to this process. All post-secondary programs contain a feedback component for the parties involved in the work term, which could include a mid-term site visit by the faculty or coordinator.

Assessment and Evaluation

All programs also have an assessment and evaluation component to the work term, which could include a work term report and a final evaluation by the supervisor and the student. In addition, all programs contain the acknowledgement principle of experiential learning, which involves the “recognition of learning and impact (that) occur throughout the experience by way of the reflective and monitoring processes, and through reporting, documentation and sharing of accomplishments” (NSEE, 1998, p. 1).

International Placement Learning Outcomes

Some programs, such as the Co-op Japan Program, York University and Queen’s University, have outlined some possible outcomes for an international cooperative education placement, which emphasize cultural and linguistic learning. Outcomes related solely to the student’s academic major appear vague and generalized, rather than specific and targeted. Given this analysis, it would be prudent to study the differences in international versus domestic experiential education placements. From this analysis, an international experiential education program could identify specific learning outcomes

that will assist the student and the post-secondary institution in connecting the student's academic and practical learning.

The principle of orientation and training are noticeably absent from all the analyzed post-secondary institution learning outcomes as it relates to the design of an international experiential education program. According to NSEE's eight principles of good practice for all experiential learning activities, orientation and training involves providing the participating parties with

important background information about each other and about the context and environment in which the experience will operate. Once that baseline of knowledge is addressed, ongoing structured development opportunities should also be included to expand the learner's appreciation of the context and skills requirements of his/ her work (p. 1).

This implies that the learning outcomes for an international experiential education program should be specific to the placement as well as the student, however, background information can be provided to the participating parties so that a framework can be provided in which the learning outcomes can be developed. This may include input from the faculty as well as other supportive resources for students, such as their Cooperative Education Coordinator. This is supported by the work of Chaifetz (1992), who stated that "if a domestic co-op course is already in existence, this outline can be changed only slightly to allow for an international work component. As the years progress, it may be decided that there is a need for a more specific vehicle for the course and at that time an appropriate co-op course outline may be written for the international program" (p.14).

Academic Tourism

It is essential to international experiential education programs that the phenomenon of academic tourism is not the sole motivator for student participation. Academic tourism refers to the learning associated with a student's traveling and sight-seeing, taking precedence over the placement and the opportunity for learning. Rather, the academic learning within a globalized context should be emphasized in addition to the cultural and linguistic learning outcomes that are a natural phenomenon of this experience. This implies that additional consideration and work must be committed by the participating parties in order to ensure that these learning outcomes are identified and assessed appropriately. This concept mirrors Adams (2001) analysis of the prospective approach to learning, which was postulated by Mumford (1995). Mumford's work outlines a four-stage process to learning by experience, which includes planning to learn, implementation of this plan, a review of the plan and conclusions. Should the participating parties in the international experiential education program create a plan to learn while working abroad, this can then be executed and evaluated appropriately and the assessment phase of the placement can truly reflect on the actual learning that has occurred.

This notion is supported by the work of Devon, Hager, Lesenne & Saintive (1998) who outlined specific engineering outcomes for international collaborations. Outcomes included:

- increasing numbers of engineering and technology graduates will understand the global diversity in engineering practices and codes, and the emergence of international codes and practices;

- increasing numbers of engineering and technology graduates will have the ability to work in multi-cultural/ multi-national teams;
- increasing numbers of engineering and technology graduates will have developed their foreign language skills, particularly their oral and technical foreign language skills, while in college – including getting a dual degree or a minor in a foreign language; and
- the quality of engineering and technology graduates may be increased by using the principle of comparative advantage (p.2).

Furthermore, Friedrich & Gunn (2000), encouraged experiential education practitioners to present students with a “detailed block of information that they must investigate during the work that they will do,” for their international experiential education placement (p.2). Clear instructions should be provided to students so that they may reflect on their learning beyond the typical description of their duties. These researchers suggest the following categories of investigation for students: nature of the work setting, duties and responsibilities, relationship to career goals and program of study and overall evaluation.

Student Interview Analysis

Students who recently completed an international experiential education placement were interviewed regarding their perception of learning while on their placement. Although the interview was unstructured, the following questions were posed to the students in order to provide a framework and facilitate their responses that would yield information about learning outcomes during an international placement:

- 1) What do you feel you learned on your international placement?

- 2) Do you feel your learning related to your academic studies?
- 3) Do you think you will be able to relate your learning from your placement to your academic studies?
- 4) Do you feel an international placement facilitated your learning more than a domestic placement would?
- 5) How relevant do you feel your international placement was to your academic studies?

It was determined that a focus on learning as it relates to academic studies would be more relevant to this study, since the very purpose of a programs such as cooperative education is to link a student's academic learning to the workplace and vice versa. After all, if a student merely wanted to gain a cultural awareness or language immersion, they could simply travel overseas on their own accord to meet this goal.

Twelve University of Windsor students and recent graduates were interviewed. Ten students were enrolled in the cooperative education program and had recently returned from an international cooperative education placement. Students mainly represented the engineering and computer science cooperative education programs, which is representative of the programs of study that currently embark on international placements at this institution. The remaining two students completed an international experiential education placement through World University Service Canada (WUSC). One student completed a double major in Computer Science and Economics, while the other student graduated from the Political Science degree program. This does not imply that students of other disciplines do not have the opportunity to embark on such a

placement, however, most of the overseas opportunities are available for engineering and computer science students.

Through the case study analysis various themes emerged. These themes included participant articulation of learning, integration of theory and practice.

Articulated Learning

When asked what was learned on the international placement, students highlighted the learning of the differences between work cultures. One student (participant 2) described this difference as North American people “live to work,” and European people “work to live.” Of interest, a recent graduate, who participated in an international work placement through WUSC (participant 11), commented that he gained the “ability to think critically and from other perspectives,” noting that “wrong is not always wrong.” For example, communism may be viewed as “wrong” by western civilizations, however, for other countries, this political view may not be wrong given the circumstances, living conditions and needs of the people. Therefore, it is important not to pass judgement on other cultures, as well as ensure that one is viewing the issue from the “perspective of the culture” involved.

Students interviewed also emphasized the development of their soft skills, or those skills that can be considered as transferable to any type of job, such as communication skills, adaptability, and appreciation of cultural diversity within the workplace. Students articulated that they felt they were given more project-based work than was experienced during their domestic placements. This included the acquisition and development of skills directly related to their field of study. For instance, four of the ten cooperative education students interviewed shared that they learned more about the

technical concepts required for their degree program in a “state-of-the-art facility.” One participant (participant 11) responded as follows:

Technical stuff...a lot about engines. Obviously was a lot more complicated than I thought and I got the overall point of engineering. And what I got to know was talking to engineers, although I wasn't specifically involved in it. I had an idea of how well valve-train systems begin and how it ends for the problems we have. The most important one I think is their management skills that really help you. There are so many times that engineers are trying to fix little tiny numbers...calculations. I guessed something was wrong and they have to look at everything, the number right from the beginning. One engineer's project...somebody took care of that and they didn't know what he did...that kind of stuff. Like communication, I talked about it in my presentation...

From these interviews it would seem that it would be appropriate to work with the student to develop specific technical learning outcomes as it relates to his/ her discipline of study. Cultural and global awareness outcomes should also be a major contributing outcome for students given that they are learning about the workplace culture in addition to technical skills.

Finally, students were asked how relevant they felt their international cooperative education placement was to their academic studies. Most students related their placement to career decision-making functions such as determining appropriate courses to take while enrolled in their studies, as well as the development of soft skills, rather than a direct correlation to their academic studies. Approximately half of the students interviewed felt that their international placement was relevant to their academic studies.

One student also commented that their international cooperative education placement “challenged” them vocationally and that their prior academic learning assisted them in the work functions of their international placement.

Of interest, one student who participated in the WUSC international experiential education program did not feel that the learning during the placement related to her program of study of Political Science, despite working in a developing country. Though WUSC provides resources in which participants can draw upon to complete the required (and assigned) research project, it does not appear that adequate reflection on acquired learning is developed. Participants are required to write a research paper on an assigned topic, and present their findings to local governmental and other authorities; however, it would appear that academic learning unique to the student’s program of study is not emphasized. In order for participants to fully recognize their learning on their placement, it would be prudent for participants to also reflect on their learning as it relates to their academic studies. However, since only two students from WUSC were interviewed for this research, it is not conclusive that this type of program excludes this component of experiential learning. However, any international experiential education program should have a formalized component of reflection as identified through Kolb’s experiential learning theory.

Integration of Theory and Practice

Participants were asked to reflect on their practical learning while participating in an international experiential education placement, as it relates to their academic studies. Students felt that their learning was more unique to their placement, rather than their completed academic courses. One particular student (participant 7) described the overall

outcome from academic studies in that “the university teaches you how to think,” while the placement taught more “practical skills, such as time management and organizational skills.” However, two students (participants 8,9) described how they would often review previously learned theoretical concepts taught at the university with their supervisor. Formulas would be written on a white board as they collaboratively worked to derive a solution to the task at hand. These two students reported that they were excited to see the connection between their academic studies and their practical learning. It was also commented that their international cooperative education placement related to their academic studies “more than any” domestic placement that they have completed, to date. Another participant (participant 1) responded:

“Yes, yes! Technical stuff...yes. I used a couple of my courses...actually at one point I needed my books, but I didn’t take them with me so, I had to get some of the Germans students to bring their books and they’re all in German.”

This observation may not be a direct function of the international aspect of the placement, but may be a function of the employer and the task at hand. However, this could warrant further investigation on a larger scale.

Since eleven of the twelve students interviewed returned to their academic studies upon completion of their international experiential education placement, it was interesting to note if they felt that their recent international experience could be applied to any courses that they were now enrolled at the university. Most felt that their international practical learning could be applied to their senior courses. One participant (participant 5) supported this notion by emphatically stating, “For sure! This experience was related to my academic studies...the topic itself was above my academic studies,

because it was more of a physics base knowledge. It was specific...but at the same time it requires the use of all my undergrad courses.” Most students also felt that the soft skills required to be successful in a post-secondary academic institution, such as time management, team work and organizational skills were also developed on their international placement, which could be applied to their current studies.

This notion is supported by Frederickson’s (2000) research on service learning (another type of experiential learning) and student performance. Within this study, the researcher collected student course performances over three semesters of schooling within a specific degree program. Approximately 22% of these students were also enrolled in the service learning component of the degree program. The research suggested “pedagogical utility for the use of service learning as a means to engage students and enhance their performance in coursework” (p. 70). However, other variables, such as gender, ethnicity and age also were determining factors in course performance. Therefore it was found that there was a weak but positive correlation between service learning and improved course performance over non-participants.

This finding was also consistent with the work of Heller & Heinemann (1986) which yielded similar results. These researchers also suggest that experiential education programs may want to focus their learning outcomes on “ways of acting and reacting at work ... especially in providing students some direction for dealing with typical and difficult situations that arise at work” (p. 31) as opposed to teaching students how to get a job through such educational strategies as resume writing and interview skills.

Differences between Domestic and International Placement Learning

Students interviewed were asked if they felt an international placement facilitated their learning more than a domestic placement. This question was warranted since most students interviewed had completed both an international and at least one domestic placement, which provided a basis for comparison. All students interviewed shared that the language differences they experienced presented a barrier to this aspect. They felt that if they had a better command of the language spoken within their international placement company, then they would have learned more on their placement versus a domestic placement.

Despite the fact that language lessons were offered to the students, they still experienced language barrier issues. This finding suggests that students should have a fundamental knowledge of the language spoken prior to the embarkation to their international placement. The process of understanding the corporate culture, engaging in practical learning and adapting culturally to their new surroundings seems to be too much for a student to fully grasp with the added strain of learning a new language. In fact, two students commented that although language classes were offered to them, they did not feel that they were worthwhile enough to warrant taking time off of work to attend the classes. Based on this information, students apply their learning more when they are somewhat comfortable with the language spoken prior to the commencement of their international placement.

Challenges and New Perspectives

Unstructured Versus Structured Placements

When developing an international experiential education program, more time should be devoted to assisting students in the development of outcomes that relate not

only to their career and work-related skills, but assisting them in identifying those skills as they relate to connecting their academic studies with their practical experience.

Wiggins and McTighe (1998) support this notion in assisting the student to truly understand desired outcomes. They state that “understanding involves sophisticated insights and abilities, reflected in varied performances and contexts” (p.5). Obtaining more information about the placement and the incumbent student’s job responsibilities, engaging the educator, and the student in developing concrete outcomes related to their academic studies will assist in this process. This process should be initiated prior to the student leaving for their placement, and then cultivated by the supervisor upon arrival to the international placement. As with any experiential education learning outcomes, the specific objectives, teaching strategies, and assessments can be modified as it relates to the student’s placement and their environment, however, a framework should be established in order to facilitate this process. This is supported by Cates and Jones (1995) who state that “while students work ... they learn on a continuous basis. But they may not be aware of their learning without some direction and intervention. Learning becomes a cycle of acting and reflection which then leads to new knowledge, skills and awareness” (p. 35).

Learning Outcomes

It is suggested that an international experiential education program develop specific learning outcomes as it relates to the unique learning opportunities presented to the student. Outcomes can consist of the cultural, workplace and academic learning within an international environment. This can be completed by engaging students who have completed an international placement in order to gain their perspective. Faculty

who have an interest in global learning would be a vested resource in assisting in developing these learning outcomes.

Cates and Jones (1995) state that “the most important benefit resulting from linking co-op with academics is that student learning is optimized” (p. 29). Therefore, learning outcomes should focus on the globalized aspects of the placement as it relates to the student’s program of study. Educators should devote the time to ensure that students understand this important aspect in order to maximize learning during international placements.

CHAPTER IV

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

As with any post-secondary initiative, resource implications must be accounted for and appropriately managed. International experiential education programs are no exception. However, many post-secondary institutions are currently attempting to manage such programs under their current experiential education stream, without additional resources to assist in its administration. Experiential education programs are becoming more globalized as students and employers acknowledge this critical trend in recruitment and retention (Jacobs, 2000) resulting in a projected growth of international experiential education programs.

This chapter will review the resources required to appropriately administer an international experiential education program as discovered through relevant research. Next, a text review of the specified post-secondary institution programs will be analyzed and compared. Finally, the case study interviews of participants will be summarized and analyzed to comment on the resources required to administer such a program.

Review of Literature

In 1998, Education at Work Ontario published a survey of international cooperative education programs. Sixteen Ontario institutions responded to the survey and reported over 35 different countries of placement. The number of students participating in an international cooperative education program rose from 432 students from these sixteen institutions in 1996, to 555 students in 1997, an increase of 7.5% in one year. This demonstrates the increasing demand for international cooperative education placements.

The survey went on further to discuss potential issues with international cooperative education placements, which included:

- time and uncertainty involved in securing work permits;
- expense and low salaries for students on international placements;
- uncertainty of student housing arrangements overseas; and
- difficulties in communication and monitoring of the placement.

All of the issues identified additional resources required in order to administer such a program, which will not compromise the integrity of the program, nor place the student at any unnecessary risk during their international placement.

The survey offers petitioned advice from the respondents which include:

- devising a plan, make it a priority and devote the appropriate resources;
- setting up proper contracts for students, and ensure that health and liability coverage is appropriate; and
- ensuring allocation of sufficient resources (human and fiscal) as even a small number of students require a great deal of time; ensure that all candidates are well-prepared and flexible.

From these surveys, resource implications are of primary concern to respondents to administer such a program. Sufficient preparatory work is required in order to secure a placement for students which include work permits or visas for students; arranging or ensuring that housing is available for the student; educating the student about pre-departure activities, such as health coverage, flight costs and cultural sensitivity; and determining whether a company will provide the student with meaningful work. Requirements during the placement include the monitoring and evaluation of such

a placement, which can be difficult due to geography since a site visit must be conducted by telephone or email in order to determine the student's progress.

Finally, post-work term activities could include preparing the student for reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock is a phenomenon that students appear to experience upon return to their home country from their international placement. It is defined as "the psychological and psychosomatic consequences of the readjustment processes to the primary culture" (Huff, 2001, p. 246). Adjusting to the way of life prior to their international work term, and returning to an environment where it appears that nothing has really changed, can impact a student, so much so that depression may set in. The role of the educator is to debrief with the student about his/ her work term and prepare them for the possibility of reverse culture shock.

Similarly, in 2002, the Canadian Association for Cooperative Education (CAFCE) conducted a survey of its member institutions to study the state of international cooperative education in Canada. Of the 56 respondents, 66% placed students in international cooperative education placements. Furthermore, 78% of the respondents shared that international cooperative education placements were either secured by the student or the post-secondary institution. Post-secondary institutions provided assistance to students in obtaining visas for work overseas (65%).

This survey uncovered several resource implications to consider when developing and administering an international experiential education program. A large proportion of time is invested in the initial process of the placement itself. For instance, attempting to entice an overseas employer to consider hiring an experiential education student is extremely time consuming. This is manifested through the challenges of contacting

employers by phone, language barriers and time zone differences. In fact, one respondent to the CAFCE survey commented that “it is very time consuming to place just one student due to the visa problems. If it wasn’t for the visa complications it would be worth it” (p. 6).

Human resources are critical to properly administering an international experiential education program. It is necessary for staff to be familiar with the visa process for each country of potential placement. In addition, the paperwork required for the visa process is labour intensive, taking a considerable amount of time. Even when the host company assists with work permits and visas, the post-secondary institution must monitor the process to ensure the appropriate documentation is acquired.

As a cooperative education coordinator, I have had to assist students in obtaining work permits and visas for their international placement. Oftentimes, the host employers are looking to me to guide them in the visa process as well. Therefore, it is important to complete most of the “legwork” for the employer to have the process appear seamless and uncomplicated. Even students working in the United States can have a difficult time in securing a temporary visa. Templates of letters for students and employers to complete are created to ensure that all information and required documentation is succinct and acceptable to the host country’s immigration authorities.

Financial resources are an important factor to consider when administering an international experiential education program. Many students endure additional financial hardship when choosing to participate in an international placement. Relocation costs, such as flights, housing, transportation to and from work, food, and funds associated with securing a work permit are all costs which many students participating on a domestic

placement would not incur. Furthermore, experiential education students on an international work term typically are paid less than their domestic counterparts. This trend is due to the fact that overseas employers do not understand that Canadian students must pay for their education. For instance, in countries such as Germany, the responsibility of tuition for education is not incumbent on the student. Therefore, companies do not need to pay the students a competitive wage for work experience. Students may earn approximately five hundred Euros per month, which is not sufficient to pay for their accommodations, flight, food, and transportation costs. Therefore, students should be provided a self-assessment tool to determine whether or not they are financially capable of participating in such a placement. Furthermore, they should be educated on appropriate budgeting for their placement as well as the cost of living associated with the host country (Heller & Geringer, 1984).

Heller & Geringer also go on to site other resource implications such as ensuring that students are appropriately advised on securing a placement that is relevant to their area of study. The authors suggest that students should be educated on the time allocation required for an international placement. This would refer to the time required to adjust and assimilate to their new culture at work as well as socially. Students may feel that travel and work are the only aspects of their placement that require their attention; however, adjusting to simplistic, yet necessary functions such as how to complete banking transactions, and when to buy groceries can prove to consume a great deal of time and effort.

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Review

York University

The York University International Internship Program (YIIP) is housed under the auspices of the Office of the Associate Vice President International. Sixteen professional staff administers such internationalization programs as YIIP, international student programs, strategic international initiatives, and policy analysis.

This program boasts that the institution arranges the international placements where “in most other instances, students are expected to find their own placements” (York University, 2005, para. 3). Placements consist of a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations related to a student’s field of study. Currently, there are 44 internship host organizations with a total of 63 available placements. Placements are mostly unpaid, which has an impact on the financial resources required for the program, however, some host organizations provide funding for the selected student.

Students apply with a formal application form, resume, transcript, and letters of reference to an interview committee, comprised of York University faculty and administrators, and if possible, representatives from host organizations. The top three candidates for each available position are then selected for an interview by the committee. Students who have completed an international internship through York University are also recruited on a volunteer basis to assist as a resource for future York interns.

Pre-departure sessions are facilitated by York University staff, which is a mandatory requirement of the international internship process. However, students are responsible for securing their own work permits, travel and housing arrangements. This

allows students to retain some responsibility for their placement, as well as develops the level of independence that would be required to be successful in such a placement.

To address financial issues, students who successfully secure an international internship are automatically granted a \$3000.00 award to assist in meeting the costs incurred through the participation in this program. Furthermore, students are also encouraged to apply for the York International Mobility Award to assist with these costs, which is awarded based on a financial needs-assessment to assist those students in participating in the program. The amount of the award depends on the number of students who apply that meet the needs-based criteria, as well as the location of the international placement and the estimated flight costs for that particular site.

York University has a smaller number of staff to administer this program, however, there is adequate financial support for students wishing to participate in such a program. Furthermore, York works in partnership with host organizations to assist with some of the international requirements such as housing, work permit resources and other necessary arrangements.

Queen's University

Queen's University houses an internship program, which involves students embarking on a 12-16 month placement. There are two professional staff that administer the program within the career services department of the university. Internship opportunities are advertised, however, students are encouraged to secure their placements independently. Resources are provided for students to start their internship search.

Students interested in an international internship are encouraged to apply for positions through the external provider, International Association for the Exchange of

Students for Technical Experience (IASTE)¹⁰. This organization is a fee-based service provider, which will assist students in securing an international placement, as well as the work permits and visas required for the country of placement. Queen's University provides ideas and possible resources for funding for the student, however, the responsibility of securing the appropriate funding to participate in the international placement lies with the student.

Queen's University professional staff spends much of their resources ensuring the safety of their students on international internships rather than the actual procurement of placements. External partnerships are sought to provide the students with resources which can be accessed independently.

University of British Columbia

The University of British Columbia currently boasts cooperative education programs in five faculties: Commerce, Engineering, Arts, Science and Forestry. The programs are decentralized by faculty, which means separate directors, professional and support staff for each faculty. Currently, the only published international cooperative education program through this institution is with the engineering program; however, some of the international internships advertised are posted to other programs such as to the science faculty.

The engineering cooperative education program employs seven professional staff and four support staff, and has placed over 800 students per year since 1998. The international placement program consists of placements through the Co-op Japan Project

¹⁰ The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IASTE) was founded in 1948 as an independent non-governmental program. To date, more than 6500 Canadian students have participated in this program.

(which will be discussed in further detail), RISE (an international internship program offered by the German Academic Exchange Program), as well as other international placements varying from countries such as Holland, Australia, Germany, Hong Kong and Singapore. Students are encouraged to complete at least one international cooperative education placement in order to acquire cultural and language skills. There is no one specific cooperative education coordinator dedicated solely to the international placement program.

The University of British Columbia publishes an orientation guide for students participating in international cooperative education work terms. The guide covers the following relevant issues:

- policies and documents, which includes a student agreement and waiver liability form for students to complete and sign;
- pre-departure information;
- financial aspects of the placement;
- health coverage;
- preparatory information; and
- participant responsibilities.

Work permits are considered the responsibility of the student. The University of British Columbia Cooperative Education office directs students to external companies in order to work through the process, for which a separate fee is incurred by the applicant. A cooperative education coordinator works with a student's faculty advisor for the program to complete the evaluations required for successful completion of

the cooperative education work term. A coordinator is also available to students upon their return to the university to debrief their work term.

Comparing the size of the engineering cooperative education program at the University of British Columbia to the human resource allocation of staff, the international aspect of the program is added to the portfolio of the existing staff to manage. This could make it difficult to develop the program, although participation in the program is encouraged. Despite the human resource complement, the University of British Columbia relies on external resources to assist with the added duties of securing work permits for students. This reliance comes at an additional cost to the students over and above their cooperative education fee payment making such placement opportunities difficult for students who may not have sufficient funds to cover the extraneous costs. Furthermore, the university does not advertise additional sources of funding through awards or scholarships for those students who demonstrate financial need or hardship to participate in this opportunity.

University of Waterloo

Over 800 students per year work outside of Canada for a cooperative education work term at the University of Waterloo (University of Waterloo, n.d., para. 1). Approximately 70% of these positions were secured by the University of Waterloo and the remaining 30% were secured by the student. Most of the positions remain on North American soil in the United States; however, some positions are located within Europe and Asia.

In order to service the vast number of students working abroad, three cooperative education coordinators have been assigned the portfolio of international placements.

These coordinators work with the students to finalize their international employment details. However, students are responsible for securing their own work permit authorizations, which can be completed independently or with the assistance of identified external companies that are fee-based for this service. Coordinators assist students in verifying their work term to the local Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP) to request an extension of health insurance should the student participate in a work term longer than seven months.

The University of Waterloo provides students with information about several funding options for international cooperative education placements. All of these options are listed on their web-site for quick access for students. Links are provided for students to review the scholarship or award along with the corresponding application form. Employers are also encouraged to consider initiating a scholarship or award for students who may apply to an international cooperative education work placement.

Given the number of students embarking on an international cooperative education work placement, and the fact that placements in the United States are considered a part of this portfolio, it would seem prudent that a minimum of three cooperative education coordinators are required to manage this volume of students. A comprehensive handbook describing the steps a student must complete in order to confirm an international placement is available. Within this handbook are many funding options for a student to access independently if they are in need of financial assistance. The cooperative education coordinator assigned to the international placement portfolio at the University of Waterloo acts as a resource to the student but does not act on the

student's behalf for any of the functions required to secure and commit to an international placement.

Co-op Japan

The Co-op Japan Project places approximately 40 students per year through a consortium of participating universities in Canada. There are two professional staff, who also hold professional positions within the University of British Columbia cooperative education program. The role of the Co-op Japan Program's staff during a student's work term in Japan includes:

- ongoing communication with participating students in the program;
- resolution of difficulties in assistance with the Canadian and Japanese Embassies;
- on-site visit with the student and the company while the internship is in progress;
- and
- collection and evaluation of work term reports and employer evaluations.

Students are responsible for securing their own work permits with support from the Co-op Japan Project staff. Accommodations are provided and subsidized by the host company.

There are additional financial costs to students and their home institutions participating in the Co-op Japan Project. Institutions who wish to partner with the Co-op Japan Project are required to pay \$1500 per year to participate in the program, which allows their students to apply for the program. Students are required to pay between \$3911-4892, which includes:

- application fee;
- language test;

- typical co-op fees accrued from their co-op program, payable to the Co-op Japan Project;
- participation in a Japan Training Week (in Vancouver, BC);
- airfare;
- materials; and
- insurance.

This model of international cooperative education work placements demonstrate more formalized agreements with specific companies in Japan as well as the Japanese government. In addition, there is collaboration amongst universities, which assists in reducing the human resources required to administer the program. For example, cooperative education coordinators from the partnering institutions can provide students with the information required for the placement and assist in the work visa process. This is unique in that cooperative education programs are known to be competitive, ensuring that students are provided with exclusive placement opportunities.

Financial resources with this model are quite demanding for the partnering institution as well as the participating student. Costs are incurred by both parties. From an institutional perspective, the Co-op Japan Project may be a more cost-effective means to securing placements in Japan. Coordinators do not have to spend their time securing labour intensive placements. However, the program can be considered exclusive to only those students who can afford to pay \$4000-5000 in fees prior to the commencement of the international placement.

University of Windsor

The University of Windsor Cooperative Education program places approximately 20 students per year on an international placement. Of these twenty students, half are placements that are secured through the cooperative education program, while the remaining half of students consists of those who have found their own placement internationally. One cooperative education coordinator acts as the lead contact and information resource for international placements. This role includes assisting students in securing their work permits and visas as well as ensuring the appropriate forms and contact information are completed prior to the embarkation of the student.

Placements secured through the program can be secured through a cooperative education exchange agreement with overseas post-secondary institutions, as well as placements with international companies on an individual basis. Cooperative education exchange agreements are modeled through the recommendation by the World Association for Cooperative Education publication of a Guide for Developing International Co-op Programs (Reeve, Schultz and Laslett 1997), which encourages post-secondary institutions to exchange students to reduce the resources required to secure international cooperative education placements. The rationale is that placements can be secured through the exchange partner's existing network of employer contacts. Furthermore, this model is preferred by immigration authorities as well as by domestic employers for work permit and commitment purposes. The exchange partner can be responsible for monitoring the placements through site-visits or other means, and ensuring that any program requirements such as reports and evaluations are met. Within this model, the cooperative education coordinators' responsibilities would include

locating willing international cooperative education post-secondary institutions and formalizing an agreement between the two institutions.

The cooperative education department works in partnership with Windsor International, which is an umbrella inter-university forum which comprises all international initiatives within the institution. Windsor International assists cooperative education students with some of the risk and responsibility issues experienced on an international cooperative education placement, as well as in recognizing these students who have completed such a placement. This added resource provides students with additional support that the Centre for Career Education cannot currently provide under its current resource structure.

There are existing funding sources for University of Windsor cooperative education students wishing to participate in an international placement. Two awards based on a needs assessment are available for which students may apply. They are valued up to \$750.00, or the approximate amount of the cost of the student's flight to the international cooperative education placement site. This award allows students who may not have the immediate means to travel to their placement the equal opportunity to apply to international cooperative education postings.

Based on the number of students embarking on an international cooperative education placement at the University of Windsor, a coordinator assigned as only a portion of their portfolio appears to be appropriate, however, in order to expand the program, more assistance would be required. Additional staff would be required to maintain information regarding students working overseas, as well as act as a contact for students to address any concerns or emergencies. Finally, resources would be required to

establish new international partnerships with host companies or institutions and maintain existing relationships.

The University of Windsor also endorses other international experiential education programs such as WUSC and Canada World Youth. Upon discussion with supportive faculty, it was determined that further resources are required in order to continue to expand and maintain international experiential education programs for students. Resources would include bursaries for students to fund unpaid experiences. Currently, the university has committed \$500 per accepted student as SEED money as a pilot project. However, it is hoped that other faculty deans will become engaged in such a program and commit monies from their annual budgets to assist in funding these opportunities for students. It is suggested that a separate coordinator be hired to administer the program in concert with faculty, as well as requisite support staff, web developers and the appropriate development of marketing materials for students. Finally, it is hoped that with additional resources, additional destination countries can be added to its repertoire to enhance the program.

University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati has a formalized international cooperative education program, called the International Co-op Program (ICP). The university “invests considerable resources to provide students with rigorous and effective education in the language, culture and history of their chosen country,” (University of Cincinnati, 2004, para.1). Included in these resources are language and culture course offerings which a student must satisfactorily complete prior to the international placement. These courses are offered in-house, at the University of Cincinnati. The language component includes

more than 300 hours of study of the language, culture and history of German, Japanese or Spanish. Furthermore, the university requires students to successfully complete an in-house ten-week seminar course in preparation for their international cooperative education work term. There is also a two-week immersion program in the student's country of placement, which is led by a faculty advisor. Seventy students are admitted to the ICP program on a competitive basis. Therefore, there is collaboration amongst those faculties that offer the program, as well as the language arts faculties along with the ICP staff, to administer the program.

Funding for this program was initially provided by a grant from the Department of Education, with the University of Cincinnati matching this grant. Upon completion, permanent funding was implemented by the university in order to continue with the program and expanded to include other students from the various faculties within the university. The program has used this funding to design and administer the program, which also includes the resources required to secure overseas opportunities for students. The ICP boasts a 100% student placement rate. Given the resources required to secure overseas placements, including the time and effort of the ICP staff, this placement rate is an extraordinary achievement.

Resources within the ICP program do not include the procurement of work permits and visas for students embarking on an international placement. External companies are used and students are directed to access these services to which the students are responsible for paying the fees incurred. However, the University of Cincinnati does provide information regarding grants students can access. The grants are

provided by the University Institute for Global Studies and Affairs, however the travel grants are not guaranteed.

Upon analysis of the University of Cincinnati's International Co-op Program, a collaborative model is utilized in order to provide students with a comprehensive program. Faculty members from the cooperative education programs, language arts programs, external work permit acquisition companies, and the ICP program staff themselves work together so as not to duplicate service and utilize existing resources to support the program. There is an additional tuition cost to the student to enroll in the language and culture courses, in order to sustain the required resources for the program.

Table 2

Summary of Resources by Post-Secondary Institution for International Experiential Education Programs

Post-Secondary Institution	Pre-Departure Assistance	Additional Human Resources	Internal Funding for Students
York University	Yes	Yes	Yes
Queen's University	Yes	No	No
University of British Columbia	Yes	Yes	No
University of Waterloo	Yes	Yes	Yes
Co-op Japan	Yes	Yes	No
University of Windsor	Yes	No	Yes
University of Cincinnati	Yes	Yes	Yes

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Analysis

Upon analysis of the selected programs' resources, the general themes of human and financial resources emerged. The themes are further analyzed to address issues of each.

Human Resources

From an analysis of the targeted post-secondary institution programs, it would appear that human resources to administer the program are scarce. In order to appropriately administer the program, many institutions have creatively initiated partnerships within the university, with various faculties, as well as with external providers to assist with work permits and student visas. Students are also viewed as a resource to assist in various aspects of the program such as procuring placements, accessing external service providers, and assisting in marketing the program to future students.

Several models of international experiential education programs are utilized and it appears that each post-secondary institution program adopts a mixed methods approach. That is, international placements are secured through reciprocal exchange agreements between international post-secondary institutions with similar placement opportunities; private or individualized placements with international companies; and providing information about external placement companies for students to access. Another model that is gaining some recognition is combining an international academic exchange with an international cooperative education placement following the academic term. This model is endorsed by WACE (2005), and seen as an adjunct to the reciprocal cooperative education exchange model. This provides students with the opportunity to acclimatize

themselves to the cultural norms of the host country prior to the addition of the workplace culture, which may encourage further vocational success while completing their placement.

Financial Resources

Funding is the responsibility of the student. Students are encouraged to think through their finances prior to applying to an international experiential education placement. Awards are available, but will not completely cover costs for this initiative. Therefore, these opportunities may be somewhat exclusive to students who already possess the financial means to embark on such a placement. More financial resources are needed for students wishing to embrace such an opportunity to ensure an equitable process. Alumni offices of these post-secondary institutions can play a role in encouraging those alumni that had completed an international experiential education placement in supporting additional awards for other students to access the same experience. International companies who host students can also be encouraged to provide funding to students, such as subsidizing housing or travel costs associated with the placement.

Student Interview Analysis

Cooperative Education students and students who completed an international experiential education placement through WUSC at the University of Windsor were interviewed regarding their perception of the adequacy of resources that were provided to them. The following questions were posed to the students in order to provide a framework and facilitate their responses that would yield information about accessible resources while participating in an international placement:

- What prompted you to pursue an international experiential education placement versus a domestic placement?
- How did you hear about international experiential education placement opportunities?
- What kind of support did you receive from your program of choice? Were there any other supportive resources that you experienced (faculty, Windsor International, etc)?
- How did you find the process to secure and commit to your international placement with respect to logistics, work permits, living arrangements, etc?
- Would you recommend or suggest any further resources to assist you with this process?

From the responses, three main themes emerged. First, participants described the factors that motivated them to pursue an international placement; next, they commented on the support received from the post-secondary program. Finally, participants provided recommendations to increase support to students.

Motivators

Most students that were questioned on why they pursued an international versus a domestic experiential education placement expressed their keen desire to broaden their scope on a global basis. An international student at the University of Windsor (participant 5) responded that:

Being an international student...I have come overseas...you know...going outside...like outside the country or going far it's not problem. So that's one of

the reasons why I chose international placement. Secondly, I was basically interested in getting an experience in multi-national company. (This company) is one of the better companies for doing an electrical co-op; especially at its corporate research centre.

Participants felt that this type of experience would enhance their marketability for full-time employment upon graduation. Also, it served their interest in working and living in another country. That is, it would be an experience which would set them apart from other applicants searching for similar full-time positions. This would imply that the students who select to pursue an international placement are forward thinking in their career planning.

Most students who applied for an international experiential education placement at the University of Windsor were notified of these opportunities through the cooperative education department at the Centre for Career Education or through student advertising in such University-sponsored events such as "Club Days." In addition, the cooperative education coordinator informed the students of international opportunities through mandatory workshops, job postings, as well as marketing meetings. Most participants commented that they would like to see these opportunities advertised more to other potential candidates through special meetings. These meetings would consist of students who have already successfully completed an international experiential education work term who would discuss their experiences and answer any questions that potential students considering may have. Students felt that they were in a better position to answer these types of questions than staff or faculty, since they were able to experience first-hand the placement along with moving to another country. These students were anxious

to share their experiences with others and in turn, assist other students in preparing for such a placement. This type of “alumni” program would assist in reducing the resources required by the post-secondary institution in marketing these opportunities to other students.

Support Received

In general, students felt that they were provided adequate support from their cooperative education department at the Centre for Career Education and other experiential education programs, such as WUSC. Such resources included a pre-departure workshop which included some thought-provoking information such as cultural awareness, financing and travel advisories that was conducted by Windsor International for all outbound academic exchange and international cooperative education placement students. A reception was also organized by Windsor International, which provided the opportunity for inbound exchange students and outbound students to mingle and discuss any questions or concerns they may have. This has proven to be a useful exercise in that students are able to meet indigenous people from the host country and discuss sites of interest, cultural differences, as well as network with potential students to visit during their international placement.

With respect to the work required to secure work permits, living arrangements and travel arrangements, students, in general, felt that the process was relatively simplistic. However, they did note the extensive waiting period required in order to secure a work permit. The waiting period differed by country and location of placement, with some students expressing frustration in the fact that they sometimes waited almost a full term (four months) prior to receiving word that they could start their international

placement. Most students shared that their work permit and living accommodations were arranged through the Centre for Career Education as well as the host employer, program, or institution. Therefore, little effort was required on their part to complete this process. However, one student stressed that the “immigration laws are changing all the time,” and the importance of maintaining this information. With additional resources the post-secondary institution could maintain this information or provide adequate contact information for the students to access and ensure that they are providing the correct information and completing the required forms.

Recommendations

The participants interviewed felt that there were sufficient supportive resources in place to embark on their international experiential education placement. However, there were some additional resources students suggested to assist future students. Suggestions included:

- provide information on host company etiquette and dress code in order to assist in pre-departure packing;
- amend travel documents on a yearly basis which orients the student to the host company and country;
- provide a listing of suggested items to pack and those which are not recommended;
- provide more information on the work permit process for students to follow;
- provide more communication and liaison between previous students and current students; and

- give ample lead time for students to prepare for and complete requisite tasks, such as immunizations.

From the interviews, the participants were interested in check-lists and directions regarding pre-departure activities. This may be an arduous task given the numerous countries and types of placements. However, this information could be gathered from the exchange post-secondary institutions as well as web-sites and feedback gathered from alumni of the program.

Additional resources as suggested by the students were as follows:

- start the process early in order to allow time to secure work permits;
- international cooperative education placements should be considered as a separate entity to domestic placements and should be advertised separately;
- students should be as involved as they can with the host company or institution to ensure a rich experience;
- students should have some basic understanding of the language (for countries whose first language is not English); and
- more interaction should be concerted between alumni of the placement and those students about to embark on the international placement.

Challenges and New Perspectives

Inter-Institutional Collaboration

Although the suggestions provided by the participants would require further resources, collaborative efforts within the post-secondary institution faculties and services could be accessed in order to assist in ensuring the needs of the students are met.

Internal umbrella organizations such as Windsor International are an excellent venue to act as the impetus for initiating collaboration between faculties and campus services.

Post-secondary institutions must look at the rich resources that are within their reach and discover ways to work together to provide support to students who are participating in an international experiential education placement. When collaborative efforts meet the needs of the students, additional resources can be fueled such as financial resources for students through alumni and host companies.

Funding

Funding remains a critical issue in developing international experiential education programs. The programs must be seen as equitable in allowing students to participate despite personal financial situations. Post-secondary institutions must explore alternative means to assist students. Creative thinking and collaboration between faculties and departments are essential. The York International Internship Program (YIIP) demonstrates a model that provides tremendous support to students admitted to the program. Senior Administration has committed a \$500,000/year budget to the York International Mobility Award to ensure equity in the program. They also provide participating students \$3000 each to assist with the costs incurred.

Funding can also be manifested through scholarships and other fund-raising initiatives endorsed by the post-secondary institution's alumni office. Effective marketing campaigns and communication with alumni who have participated in such a program may encourage those to contribute to a scholarship fund so that other students may have the opportunity to embark on an international experiential education placement.

Human Resources

As demonstrated through the post-secondary institution analysis and participant case studies, it is evident that host institutions are struggling to allocate appropriate human resources to such a program. Again, post-secondary institutions are faced with ensuring that faculties and departments collaborate to invent ways to provide participating students with the support required. Many institutions rely on faculty and staff who have other assigned portfolios to maintain the program. This model makes it difficult to maintain such a program.

Institutions must also look to students returning from international placements as resources for support. York University has developed several programs which provide a medium for returning students to assist in the marketing and support for future participants, which is an effective means of utilizing the experiences of the students as resources. Many participants interviewed commented that they would be interested in committing to assist in these types of programs. In fact, this would be an excellent manner way for post-secondary institutions to address the phenomena of reverse culture shock for returning students since a support network would evolve. However, human resources must be allocated to administer such programs and ensure consistency and continuity.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Student satisfaction plays a major role in determining whether international experiential education programs should be offered. According to Keller (1983), students will experience satisfaction when they perceive success of achieved outcomes. If student needs are not being met by this type of learning, there would be no reason to pursue and maintain such programs. Satisfied students can also play a part in future marketing strategies to persuade other students to participate. For instance, students at the University of Windsor who have completed an international cooperative education placement have willingly volunteered to present to students who may want to consider such placements. In fact, many of the students who chose to participate in an international cooperative education placement commented that they learned about the opportunity through alumni of the program. Therefore, this type of strategy is a high-yield, low-cost return to post-secondary institutions in promoting these programs.

This chapter will seek to discover the criteria that have been established to determine levels of student satisfaction through a review of literature, post-secondary text analysis, and finally, case study interviews. The information will be compared and contrasted to determine the level of student satisfaction as it relates to international experiential education. This information can then be utilized to uncover the overall impression and level of satisfaction that students have with this type of experiential learning.

Review of Literature

Many published papers have provided commentary on student satisfaction and his/ her experiential education placement, and even international cooperative education placements; however, there are few published works that quantify such a phenomenon. Parks, Onwuegbuzie & Cash (2001) developed an instrument to measure student perception of their cooperative education experience. The instrument was developed through a 7-point Lykert scale which included the variables related to the student career, academic and personal-growth, and was named the PLACE instrument (Predicting Learning Advancement through Cooperative Education). These variables were based on designed pre-and post- graduation outcomes of cooperative education. The scale was rigorously tested and found to be both reliable and valid as an instrument to quantify student perception of his/ her cooperative education placement. Upon analysis of this scale, it would seem appropriate that the instrument could be modified to encompass international cooperative education placements and prescribed learning outcomes that may emerge. Until then, anecdotal published papers as well as qualitative analysis will continue to be the mode for studying this phenomenon in international experiential education.

It is crucial to have an understanding of students' perceptions with respect to the value they place on experiential education. Girard (1999) summarized the importance of determining student satisfaction towards academic programs such as cooperative education, since educators can "gain an understanding of people's awareness of situations, which can aid in the design and implementation of effective programs" (p. 42).

Wiseman & Page (2001) qualified experiential education site and student perceptions of the program. A 60-item questionnaire based on a "literature review, along

with input from four focus groups consisting of 24 co-op professionals at a cooperative education workshop” (p. 64) was delivered to participants. Site supervisors and students were also involved as participants in the study. In comparing the data, it was determined that all “cohort groups perceived student professional development to be an indicator of quality site learning” (p.73). This includes allowing site supervisors the opportunity to develop their cooperative education student’s sense of “professional identity” (p. 71) as well as assist them in creating their own network to provide direction to their career focus. It was also found that students maintained a sense of academic integrity even in the workplace and were challenged with the responsibility of serving as an ambassador for their academic institution. The authors concluded from this finding that “quality site experiences should incorporate scholarly norms” (p. 73). At the University of Windsor, this notion has recently been put into practice through the Academic Integrity Department to consider violations of practice on a cooperative education work place and potentially impose academic sanctions on a student whose behaviour does not meet the expected standard while on work term. This demonstrates the importance of the relationship between the post-secondary institution, the student and the experiential education employer.

Finally, this study identified eight nationally-based indicators to determine the quality of the cooperative education placement:

- provide the student with professional development;
- provide a challenging and learning climate;
- use educational standards to generate student pride and competence;
- provide opportunities for students to practice their professionalism;

- help students to develop occupational work ethic;
- expose students to practical problem solving;
- allow students a degree of independence;
- allow students to maintain an academic approach; and
- encourage students to think critically (p. 74).

The authors of this study suggest that these eight indicators could act as a guideline in developing evaluations and assessments of students as well as the quality of the experiential education placement. International experiential education placements could reliably incorporate such variables into evaluations and administration along with added quality indicators, which would be exclusive to this type of placement program.

Gibbs & Morris (2001), expressed concern about how experiential education employers were held responsible for the accreditation of a student's work experience. They questioned the practices of accrediting workplace learning through the post-secondary institution and urged practitioners to consider societal values and skill-based development through the university. The authors felt that this would be the responsible pedagogical approach to develop students and their attributes as it relates to the world of work. This perspective supports the notion of international experiential education placements since these learning outcomes would encompass the technical, societal and cultural skills that are developed within the student during this experience.

Evanson & Zust (2004), explored student satisfaction while participating in an accredited international experiential education placement. The researchers analyzed nursing students' reflection journals as well as group interviews, while providing

“nursing service in a rural, economically challenged area of Guatemala” (p.1). From their analysis, six themes emerged:

- clarification of career path/ goals;
- improved understanding of social justice and globalization issues;
- motivation to continue service work;
- discovering the reciprocity of relationships with others;
- appreciation for the whole person; and
- finding a way to respect the sacredness of the (international) experience (pp. 6-10).

Through this experience, it was determined that nursing students participating in an international placement experience a “highly meaningful” placement, which resulted in significant “professional and career growth” (p. 10). However, this conclusion is somewhat questionable since the international experience took place over a one-week period. The experience may very well have caused the subjects to reflect on their career and professional growth as it relates to this international experience, however, it is arguably not long enough to result in significant professional and career growth. These participants would need to immerse themselves in a longer placement to determine the full embodiment of such an experience as it relates to growth in these areas.

Experiential education practitioners have demonstrated the importance of determining student satisfaction with their international experiential education placement as it relates to administration. Given the tremendous amount of resources required to administer such a program, student satisfaction is critical in determining the sustainability of such a program. Waryszak (2000) of Victoria University of Technology in Australia

used a quantitative approach to assess student perception of international cooperative education placements. The Work Environment Scale, developed by Moos in 1994 was administered to participating students to determine their perceptions from an expected and “real,” or experienced, standpoint. Through this approach, data was collected on three occasions from selected students: prior to the placement to determine their expected social climate; during the placement to determine their realistic experience of social climate; and after the placement to determine the students’ ideal preferences for international experiential education placements. The ten dimensions studied through this scale were:

- involvement;
- co-worker cohesion;
- supervisor support;
- autonomy;
- task orientation;
- work pressure;
- clarity;
- managerial control;
- innovation; and
- physical comfort (p. 4).

This study suggested some improvements to the international experiential education program as it relates to the travel and tourism industry, which can be characterized as an involved and high-pressure environment. It provided a tool for the assessment of student perceptions related to an international experiential education

placement. Finally, it demonstrated the expected versus the realistic expectations students have of international experiential education placements. This underscores that students may have a “glamorized” expectation of an international placement, which may affect their satisfaction with the actual learning experience.

Coll & Chapman (2000) used a naturalistic case study approach to determine student perception of international cooperative education placements. Results were categorized into student perception of advantages and disadvantages of such placements. Themes which emerged from the research include:

Disadvantages:

- student perceptions of difficulties associated with international placements (including work visas);
- cost;
- lack of relevant work skills;
- homesickness and loneliness; and
- lack of preparation for placements.

Advantages:

- raising self-confidence;
- enhancement of career prospects;
- enhancement of language skills; and
- cultural experiences (pp. 97-101).

The researchers concluded that despite the rigorous and time-consuming efforts required on the part of the cooperative education student as well as the associated department, the rewards outweigh the disadvantages. In fact, one student summarized his

experience by stating, “the rewards are so great. In fact it has been the best year of my life” (p. 102). Furthermore, the participants recommended experiential education practitioners encourage more students to participate in international experiential education placements since a focal advantage appears to be the significant increase in self-confidence not only on a personal basis, but, also in the professional or technical realm as well. The researchers commented that “with comparatively little modification to the placement process, a high rate of success is possible, thus allowing students the opportunity to realize the benefits they identified” (p. 103).

Finally, the researchers summarize critical suggestions for improvement for experiential education practitioners in the administration of an international experiential education program:

- adopt a model of exchange partners in order to alleviate the problems of the placement process, such as work permits;
- coordinators of the program should better prepare their students prior to embarking on the placement, such as providing a detailed description of the host company, as well as the duties and skills required;
- coordinators should be more sensitized to student concerns with respect to the stress experienced in securing work permits and other immigration matters; and
- students should be placed at an international company which exude a youthful and active social environment in order to facilitate the assimilation into a new culture with relative ease.

The suggestions provided by the researchers appear to be valid and

instrumental in the administration of an international experiential education program, however, it is unrealistic to consistently place students in a work environment where the majority of the work force is in a similar age cohort of students. This provides an encapsulated experience, which will not fully develop the essential skills of working with a diverse population. Although cultural sensitivity might be developed, it is compromised through the suggestion to maintain the worker age variable, which is not indicative of a realistic experience.

Eakins & Christopherson (2000) identified similar dimensions in predicting student satisfaction in experiential education students within a global workforce. The researchers concluded that there are many dimensions which comprise the meaning of student satisfaction during their experiential education placement. Of critical importance are: the subjects studied, the work environment, including support of colleagues, and working in a team environment; learning new skills and knowledge; applying concepts learned at university; taking responsibility for work projects; challenging work projects; autonomy in the work role; and learning particular business practices of the organization.

From this research, it was suggested that:

Given the dynamic nature of workplaces and the diverse range of students and practitioners involved with cooperative education, a negotiated curriculum for each student and their workplace could be appropriate. This curriculum should have as its central methodology a series of learning contracts to be developed by the student and their supervisor over the placement, and which identify projects that support the posing and solution of work place problems. Review and

reflection about the approach to, and the outcomes of these projects should occur regularly (p.7).

The researchers recognize the utopian nature of such a proposal, but argue that this is a necessary component of the learning institution.

Although themes can emerge as to the dimensions that promote student satisfaction within their international experiential education placement, it should be noted that this concept is subjective in nature with each student's experience providing the template for his/ her suggestions. Therefore, complete satisfaction in an international experiential education placement or a domestic experiential education placement can be considered as subjective in nature and highly dependent on the students themselves and their experiences as they see it.

Overall, from the review of literature, it would appear that although there are identified problems in the administration of international experiential education placements, students are very satisfied with such programs. Furthermore, the suggestions for improvement offered can easily be incorporated into the administration of such programs with the appropriate resources. Even after weighing the cost and resources incumbent upon students, students remain highly satisfied with their placement opportunities. In an editorial piece in its publication, *The Gazette*, Memorial University students who participated in the university's international cooperative education placement highly recommended this opportunity. One student interviewed stated that, "no question, I would do it all again and for twice the cost. What I experienced and learned is something I will never forget!" (Frampton, Muzycha, and Pecore, 1997).

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Review

York University

The York International Internship Program solicited feedback from students who participated in the program in order to assist other students. The feedback provided insight on how to select the right type of placement, application process hints, and tips on how to make an international experiential education placement a success. These students emphasized some primary themes in ensuring a satisfying and rewarding experience.

Themes included:

- research the company and country of placement to ensure that the students are prepared for the placement;
- have some familiarity with the country such as cultural ties or knowledge of the language spoken in order to facilitate the assimilation to the new country;
- ensure the company compliments the students' academic studies;
- be open to the new culture and ideas through taking initiative; and
- asking questions and getting involved in the workplace and the societal activities as much as possible.

These themes are consistent with the general literature, which highlights the importance of the student's ability to assimilate to the host country and employer. The more prepared the student is with respect to his/ her placement, the more satisfaction will be demonstrated towards the international experiential education placement. This finding stresses the importance of pre-departure workshops and available resources that should be easy for the student to access prior to the onset of the placement.

Queen's University

A review of Queen's University's program found that student feedback regarding international experiential education placements is not readily publicized; however, students who have returned from such placements are provided opportunities to volunteer within the international office. Volunteer placements include participating in pre-departure workshops for future students embarking on such a placement. This opportunity allows alumni to share with new students their experiences as well as provide suggestions to ensure maximum satisfaction of their placements. Other volunteer opportunities such as working in the international resource library to assist new students in selecting appropriate information to research potential work abroad programs exist for student involvement. Students can extend their learning experience from their placement and apply their knowledge and share their experiences with others through these opportunities.

Queen's University has two unique volunteer programs for students to participate in upon return from their international experiential education placement. This includes the Country Representative Program (CRep), which consists of student volunteers who have lived or worked abroad for a minimum of two months and are eager to share their experiences and expertise with others through workshops and special presentations scheduled throughout the year to promote the program. Queen's also hosts an annual International Development Week, which requires volunteers to assist in providing a focus on international development efforts. Interested students have an opportunity to capitalize on previous students' successes and areas for improvement in order to maximize their satisfaction during their international experiential education placement. Queen's University supports student voluntary involvement to promote their programs.

Students sharing in their successes and experiences provide a better impetus and frame of reference for new students since they are able to relate to the concerns and questions of prospective students more readily than professional staff could. Therefore, the success of these volunteer opportunities would be correlated with the level of satisfaction that a student experienced while participating in their international experiential education placement. As with many volunteer organizations, there is a positive correlation between the number of active volunteers and the student experience that would encourage them to share their experiences and expertise with others.

University of British Columbia

At the University of British Columbia student testimonials are publicized. Of course, these testimonials are meant to serve as a marketing tool to encourage other students to participate in the international program. However, they do emphasize the importance of properly preparing for an international placement. Preparation includes understanding that students may be traveling to work and live in a country where they do not have any connections, acquaintances or friends. This can be very difficult for some students if they are not prepared for such an experience. A student who participated in a research placement in Munich, Germany shared this perspective:

I spent three summer months working in Munich at the GSF National Research Centre for Environment and Health, Department of Molecular Biology and Tumour Genetics. I was very nervous, I was halfway across the globe and didn't know anybody and wasn't even sure I had the scientific background to do a good job at the lab.....To sum things up, RISE Program = A+ goodness. I had a fantastic time. To be honest, at first I didn't think I could learn so much in one

summer, but I really did both personally and academically. I met people who truly motivated and inspired me. And I learned about myself and how I felt in science and my future. (Hoang, 2005).

Despite the student's apprehensions regarding her international experiential education placement, she experienced a high level of satisfaction. This quote also supports the literary findings that international experiential education placements can increase a student's confidence, which is a dimension in evaluating student satisfaction within their international placement.

University of Waterloo/ University of Windsor

The University of Waterloo also supports the notion that despite the cumbersome requirements such as securing work permits, students have shared that international cooperative education experiences have been worth the additional time and effort required. This view is also shared by the University of Windsor, where students have indicated that they were increasingly satisfied with their international cooperative education placement. In a recent University of Windsor publication the testimonial of a student returning from an international cooperative education placement was highlighted. The student stated that "of course, this kind of experience is not for everyone, but if you're sociable and want to get a taste for how the rest of the world lives, works and plays, you'll have an amazing time." (Public Affairs and Communications, University of Windsor, 2005, p. 23).

Co-op Japan

The Co-op Japan project has identified the necessary skill-set a prospective student would possess in order to experience a satisfactory international placement in

Japan. Skills include previous travel abroad and an understanding of the differences between North American culture and Japanese culture. The program material states that “students who understand some of the cultural differences, who are prepared to accept changes to their lifestyle and are accepting of the Japanese way of living and working, typically do better than those that have not considered the issues, or who believe that Japan will be the same as any other western country” (Co-op Japan, 2005, p.9).

Furthermore, it would seem that students who demonstrated adaptability and flexibility in type of placement and location, tended to be more satisfied with their placement. This finding supports the research of Waryszak (2000) who cautioned that student satisfaction is tied to their expected and realistic placement experiences. It is important that students are provided a realistic view of the international experiential education placement in order to ensure appropriate preparedness and subsequent satisfaction with the placement.

University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati presented their findings on developing cross-cultural competencies through international cooperative education programs (Elliott, Trent, Dansberry, Cates et. al, 2005). Through their identified learning outcomes, major themes for success and satisfaction during a student’s international cooperative education work term emerged. The main theme included the willingness to be open to new cultures and new ideas. For example, one student interviewed stated,

I found that the Germans are very detail oriented. They do something until it is 100% correct.....In the U.S. we are not quite so concerned that our product is 100% perfect. We do not spend the extra time to get it exactly correct. We would rather get it done a little faster.....My boss kindly reminded me that I needed to

work a little more exactly. I needed to write down exactly what I had done in the lab and record exact amounts (p. 9).

This would support the recommendations by Wiseman & Page (2001), which stated that students tend to be more satisfied with their placement when they are placed in a challenging learning environment.

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Analysis

Challenging Students

Another emerging theme was the importance or willingness to learn the host country language in order to succeed in his/ her placement, and experience a higher level of satisfaction. One student participating in an international cooperative education placement in Japan shares,

Throughout the course of my two six-month co-ops in Japan, I seized as many opportunities as possible to speak Japanese with both my co-workers and perfect strangers.....I was traveling with my family to Tokyo Disney Sea, and I wasn't sure which station we should get off at, and I asked a friendly looking Japanese lady. She ended up taking us to the front gates of Tokyo Disney Sea, giving me her phone number, and inviting me over to her home to meet her family and have a delicious dinner of Japanese food....it really challenged me, but I was happy to have that opportunity to improve my ability (Co-op Japan Program, Prospective Students, 2006).

Student Expectations

In summary, student satisfaction depends on the degree of realism they possess regarding the advantages and disadvantages of an international experiential education

placement. It is the responsibility of the international experiential education program to ensure that students understand the challenges they may be faced with and to prepare them for these. Furthermore, eliciting the expertise and experience of students who have returned from an international experiential education placement will assist new students in creating a realistic framework in which to experience a satisfactory work term. It would be prudent for international experiential education programs to ensure that these dimensions are in place when administering such a program.

Student Interview Analysis

Interviewed participants were asked the following questions as a guideline when addressing perceived student satisfaction with respect to their international experiential education placement.

- How satisfied overall were you with your international placement?
- What changes would you make to your placement, if you had the chance?
- Would you consider an international placement again? Why or why not?
- Would you recommend an international experiential education placement to other students? Why or why not?

From these questions, some common themes emerged. These themes included overall student satisfaction, language competency, pre-planning and workplace immersion.

Student Satisfaction

All students who were interviewed stated that they were more than satisfied with their international experiential education placement. In fact, most students stated that their placement exceeded their expectations. One student stated that he was able to

increase his network of contacts for future career opportunities, and that at the very least, he had acquired international references, which he felt would increase his marketability in a globalized workforce. Most students were also placed in smaller cities, and not in major metropolises, which attributed to their satisfaction with their placement. One student participant (participant 7) stated that:

The experience for people, who go to the big cities like London, go to experience it as more of a tourist. But we were in the smaller city, so we're able to experience more of the Swedish life...like riding buses with them and doing everyday stuff that they do.

This implies that students interviewed preferred experiencing life in areas where tourism has not had an effect on daily living in which they could experience life not as a tourist, but as a indigenous person.

When asked if the students would consider another international experiential placement, all students emphatically stated that they would. Most reasons encompassed the desire to experience different workplace cultures they relate to a globalized environment. They also felt that participating in such a program would make them more marketable when searching for full-time employment upon graduation. Further research should be conducted on the employment statistics of students with international experiential education experience as it compares to domestic experiential education placements in order to provide students with this information so that they may appropriately conduct their career planning.

All participants emphatically agreed that they would recommend an international experiential education program to other students. Students felt that this was a rich

learning opportunity for them both inside and outside the workplace. It also expanded their cultural awareness, which will assist in working with a diverse population.

However, students did caution that only the 'right' person should participate in such a program. One student stated that the applicant must have the "desire and the independence, or want to be independent" in order to succeed in such a placement.

Another student also shared that, "students need to be open to new experiences. Don't try to maintain your own lifestyle, but, rather combine the benefits of both lifestyles."

Language Competency

When asked if students would change anything about their international experiential education placement, most said that they would have liked to have a longer placement, even though the average placement was one year in length. This was due to the fact that most students were placed in a country where a language other than English was spoken as the first language. It took time for students to develop an appropriate comfort level with the language and feel that they could make an effective contribution to the company. This highlights the importance of insisting that students have a plan for developing some sort of language competency either before the anticipated international experiential education placement or during the placement. Most of the participants interviewed were placed in Germany, which provided intensive German language classes to students free of charge during the course of their placement. Two students, placed in Sweden, were also offered the same service, but declined the lessons as they did not feel that learning Swedish would assist them in their future career goals as the language is not widely spoken. These two students did admit that this decision was not wise since they

were not able to contribute as effectively in their workplace as they would if they had participated in the language tutorage sessions during the course of their work term.

Pre-Planning

Students also stressed the importance of pre-planning for themselves and with the international host company in preparing appropriate projects and work for initial completion. Pre-departure workshops from the post-secondary institution are paramount in assisting the students in preparing for their placements. An orientation package consisting of the company information and other pertinent details would provide the student with this information. Contact with previous or current students at the host company would also prove to be beneficial so that incumbent students may ask any questions in order to appropriately prepare.

Workplace Immersion

Furthermore, students also wanted to feel more immersed in the workplace culture, which included having a work station situated close to their team of co-workers. That is, some students felt isolated and not as much part of the team during the initial phase of their work term. This can have more of an impact on the student at the onset of their placement, when they may be experiencing a level of homesickness as well as drastically adjusting to their workplace and a new culture. Two students (participants 7,8) suggested that new international students should prepare a presentation to the host company upon their arrival, which could include information about themselves, some cultural information, their goals and expectations for their work term. They share:

There is one big thing that we did (not) experience until the last two weeks...we're able to introduce ourselves to the people and through our

presentation we included something for the people to have the opportunity to learn something about Canada...in terms of our football, and other stuff...because, the language barrier between them and us was a big deal. So I think if these types of presentation were done the beginning of our arrival in all the departments over there...I think it will give these guys a better feel of who we are.

This type of activity would allow the students to 'break the ice' with new co-workers and open doors to further discussion so that they may be able to contribute more effectively to the team. These suggestions appear to be particularly useful and appropriate and could be considered by administrators when designing an orientation package for international experiential education employers.

Challenges and New Perspectives

Candidate Selection

With respect to the administration of an international experiential education program, these themes emphasize the importance of selecting the right candidate for an international placement. This would include pre-screening candidates internally first, with pointed questions geared at the dimensions listed above. For instance, the University of Windsor has adapted a pre-screening tool through research produced by the World Association of Cooperative Education, which includes having the students write an essay outlining why they want work internationally for their cooperative education placement. Once this application process is completed, they are then pre-screened through a faculty interview where they are assessed in the context of candidate suitability. Following this process, faculty interviewers then provide feedback to students and the cooperative education department regarding their strengths, weaknesses and probability

of success in an international cooperative education placement. The applicants who successfully meet these criteria are only then passed through to the international company for their personal interview and selection. This process appears to allow for optimal prediction of success and student satisfaction in an international cooperative education placement.

Pre-Departure Preparation

Students selected to participate in an international experiential education program are faced with many exciting yet stressful challenges. These challenges include securing work permits, making flight and accommodation arrangements, and even packing for an extended stay in a foreign country with no family or friends. Therefore, as educators, it is critical to provide as much support as possible to assist the student in the transition.

Supports could include providing step-by-step instructions regarding these issues and continued follow-up to ensure the student is comfortable and ready for their departure.

It would also be prudent to implement an alumni program where students can contact previous participants in the program for advice and to have any questions answered. Alumni can typically provide more relevant and personalized information to participant questions or concerns rather than the standardized responses of the institution. Contact could be achieved through an internet-based listserv or chat room supported by the institution.

Student Satisfaction

Overall, it would appear that students who have participated in an international experiential education placement were generally satisfied with their experience. They would recommend this type of placement to other students and would embark on another

international experiential education placement, if given the chance. This is a strong testimonial for the value of such programs in post-secondary institutions.

CHAPTER VI

RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY

Risk and responsibility is of paramount concern to post-secondary institutions as it relates to the administration of any endorsed program and the safety of its faculty, staff and students. Risk can be defined as the

uncertainty that surrounds future events and outcomes. It is defined as any condition or circumstance that may result in injury, damage or loss to either individuals or organizations. Risk management is a structured approach for reducing the chance of injury, damage or loss by taking steps to identify, measure and control risks. Risks can be technological, financial, human resources (capacity, intellectual property), health and safety. It can be external (political, economic, natural disasters, wars, terrorism), internal (reputation, security, knowledge management, information for decision making), (CBIE, 2005, p.1).

Review of Literature

In order to reduce risk, it is important for administrators to carefully examine the implications of its activities and determine what, if anything could go wrong, or be misinterpreted. The Canadian Bureau of International Education (2005) has identified three steps to the process of risk management as it relates to international education:

- reviewing a situation and asking what can go wrong and what harm could result;
- identifying practical measures that can be taken to keep harm from occurring; and

- if harm does occur, identifying practical measures that can be taken to lessen the impacts of harm and pay for any resulting in damage or losses.

These steps imply that careful consideration should be given to all aspects of international experiential education programs to determine if there are benefits that override associated risks. Voorheis, Meyer & Van Houton (1997) correctly asserted that “the workplace becomes an extension of the classroom” (p. 3), which implies that responsibility lies with the institution placing the student in a workplace environment. Therefore, post-secondary institutions should examine the safeguards and insurances they have in place to assist them in any event that may impact the safety and security of a student in the workplace. The very nature of international experiential education placements implies an even greater sense of urgency as workplace safety and insurance policies may be different from domestic placements. It is critical that post-secondary institutions carefully examine international companies for these factors prior to placing a student under their auspices (Mueller, 2000).

The events of 9-11 sparked even more scrutiny of risk and responsibility for post-secondary institutions and experiential education placements. During this time, as a cooperative education coordinator myself, attempting to contact students overseas and within the United States while on their placements, I experienced first-hand the importance of having an emergency plan in place. With phone lines closed and worried parents contacting the office, it became crystal clear that we could no longer “do business” as we had before. That is, post-secondary institutions must be prepared for any disaster situation that may arise on a global basis or to the individual student. On this issue, Peak & O’Hara (1999) suggest written formal contracts between the institution and

the host company and even the student to make them aware of the risks involved is an important consideration. The authors go on to comment that as the number of international components related to the placement increase, so does the liability for the institution. However, Hampton (2000) suggests that most post-secondary institutions only require students and host companies to sign learning contracts, which only address the anticipated student learning while on placement. The author suggests “the most successful contracts therefore, begin by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each involved party; the student, the experience provider, and the institution. They also provide specific mention of the issues most likely to raise liability or legal issues within the work environment” (p.5). This consideration may be prudent for international experiential education programs where laws, responsibility and liability may differ from domestic placements. These clauses should also be implemented in experiential education exchange agreements with international post-secondary institutions.

Colorado State University (2002) developed a manual for their faculty when considering experiential learning as an adjunct to classroom study. Four steps are outlined for faculty to reduce risk and responsibility within this context:

- create service learning agreements that are unique to each situation;
- discuss with the students the risks involved in this type of learning, as well as the benefits and skills required;
- talk with the companies about their insurance coverage for students in their workplace; and
- set up a line of communication for students to report difficulties to their supervisor.

Although host companies may react cautiously to discussing internal insurance coverage for student workers; it is critical to have confidence in terms of risk and responsibility for all three parties. Included would be errors and omission coverage in the event that the student makes a mistake in his/ her work which may cost the host company money. For example, an accounting student makes a calculation error during an audit, resulting in litigation to the host company. Although the company bears the responsibility, what is the responsibility of the post-secondary institution, if any, since the student is a learner in this situation? These are questions that must be raised and resolved.

As another safeguard to appropriately ensure risk management, Schultz (1992), recommends that the post-secondary institution conduct site visits within the workplace, as well as hold mandatory workshops for students prior to their experiential education placement in order to alert students to potential problems they may encounter in the placement site. Workshops could cover health and safety aspects, as well as potential litigious hazards that students may encounter in the workplace. Site visits will provide the post-secondary institution the assurance that students are working within a safe environment or facilitate identification of risks to the host company prior to an occurrence. However, this by no means reflects the responsibility of the institution to identify all risks within the host company. As discussed previously, this emphasizes the importance of the triad partnership in these risks.

As such, many post-secondary institutions (particularly in the United States) have addressed "Hold Harmless Agreements," an agreement derived from many host companies requesting post-secondary institutions to release them from liability. A

statement of principles was released with respect to a Hold Harmless Agreement approved by the Cooperative Education and Internship Association (2003), in response to this type of request by the host company, which can be viewed as unfair and one-sided, given that the litigious event may be a direct cause of the host company's negligence. The organization suggests that when such agreements are encroached by the host company, all parties should ask themselves the following questions:

- Who is receiving the greatest benefit from this co-op or internship?
- Who is in the best position to control and insure against possible risks?

These questions highlight the prevalence of risk management and the complexities involved in administering experiential education programs. The issue is personified as it pertains to international experiential education programs, given the various laws and regulations imposed by companies abroad. Therefore, it is critical for post-secondary institutions interested in administering an international experiential education program to identify all risks that would be involved, and develop a plan on how to manage or minimize these risks. Involving all parties in the process will allow for a more comprehensive management plan in which there will be reciprocal understanding of their responsibilities as it relates to this issue.

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Review

The importance of risk and responsibility was prevalent for each selected post-secondary institution. In fact, risk and responsibility contained the most information for students that outlined the responsibilities for each partner – the student, the employer, and the post-secondary institution. From a list of desired traits for potential candidates, to

the very written contracts students are required to sign, this facet of its administration is threaded through all aspects of the reviewed programs.

York University

The York University International Internship Program (YIIP) outlines criteria that would relate to risk and responsibility measures. These measures would include language proficiency in the target host country in order to ensure that students will be able to communicate at even a basic level. Students embarking on an international experiential education placement to a country whose native tongue is other than English, would require this skill in order to ask for directions if lost, or contact emergency services should such a situation arise. Although English students are, in most cases, able to find someone who speaks some English, it is important for the post-secondary institution to ensure that at least some basic language requirements are supported through the host workplace, through the post-secondary institution, or that the student already possesses this particular language skill at some level.

York's program also seeks students that complement their "academic and professional fit, ability to adjust to cross-cultural situations, take initiative and work in teams" as candidates for their international program (York University, 2005, para. 8). This prerequisite would imply general characteristics that would assist the student in succeeding in such a placement, which is of benefit to all parties involved, however, it also suggests that students who have the ability to adjust to cross-cultural situations will ensure appropriate assimilation and safety.

A responsibility of the host organization prior to the placement includes providing information to secure appropriate student accommodation. It remains the responsibility

of the student to confirm their accommodations; however, the university must ensure that adequate information is provided to assist the student in making this decision. This provision implies the adult-status of students and that post-secondary institutions are not ultimately responsible for this aspect of the placement. However, in an internal report prepared by Marsh USA (2000) entitled, "The 'Best Practices' for Controlling Risks Inherent in Foreign Travel," the organization itemizes minimum standards for accommodations secured with host families, as international experiential education programs, such as WUSC would employ. These standards include "pre-screening the host family which would include a reference check of that family; a review of the physical condition of the premises; a working fire detector in the student's room; and the provision that the student provide feedback on the experience and their living conditions upon conclusion of their stay" (p.7).

York University also highlights several of the required responsibilities of students selected to their program, which relate to pre-departure, during the placement and even after the placement. Pre-departure responsibilities include:

- making appropriate immigration and travel arrangements, including obtaining required immunization and health certificates;
- making housing arrangements; and
- the purchase of adequate medical/ travel insurance coverage for the period of the placement and provide proof to the university prior to departure.

Pre-departure planning sessions consist of information such as host country information, which can include travel advisories and warnings. Other information consists of program alumni advice on how to make the placement a success.

As a post-secondary institution working with young adults, it is not possible to completely ensure the safety of the student; however, it is critical for institution to inform and provide adequate resources to students. For example, many students while embarking on their international experiential education placement have plans engage in travel unrelated to the placement. The post-secondary institution cannot ban the student from traveling to certain countries; however, the university should provide links and information for the student so that they may make informed decisions.

During the international placement, York University outlines other responsibilities for the student, which include:

- handling all finances responsibly;
- maintaining professional attitude and respect traditions and customs of host country and organization;
- notifying project managers at university and host organization of any changes in contact information during the placement;
- keeping the project manager and host organization informed of all travel arrangements; and
- contacting university representative if problems arise with the internship.

Students would be required to handle their finances responsibly in order to ensure they have enough money to survive during their placement, or in the event of an emergency. Situations may include emergency medical situations where students are required to pay for the service up-front prior to being reimbursed by their health insurance carrier. It is also critical for the post-secondary institution to be aware of the student's current contact information at all times should he/ she need to be contacted in

case of an emergency. Knowledge of a student's travel arrangements will also assist the post-secondary institution in providing emergency support if required. For example, students travelled to Thailand in December, 2005 for holidays and found themselves struggling with the Tsunami disaster. It is important to note that York University has not requested that the student clear their travel arrangements with the University, but, rather, they require knowledge of their plans.

Upon completion of the international placement, York University requests that students consider volunteering as a resource for future students of the program. This will enable candidates to access important information that may not be as readily available to the post-secondary institution, such as social situations to be cautious of to continue to support the safety of the student while overseas.

Queen's University

Queen's University is known for its comprehensive development of risk and responsibility measures for international activities. The university has developed an "Emergency Support Program" or ESP in order to address these issues. The program was inspired through the tracking of lawsuits in the United States related to international activities at the post-secondary level. The underlying principle of this risk management program is that a partnership should exist between students and the institution in order to assist students in making informed decisions regarding their safety and the possible risks involved.

It is the goal of this program to provide 24-hour support for students abroad under university auspices, as well as providing information and educating students about "shared responsibility" in managing risk. This program is designed for decentralized

programs and encompasses all international initiatives supported by the university. The Emergency Support Program consists of eight main components:

- a university-wide emergency protocol system;
- emergency card for students to carry while overseas;
- 24-hour emergency telephone hotline;
- pre-departure orientation sessions;
- acknowledgement of informed consent, which consists of various forms, including release forms, and current contact information;
- emergency contact database, which would allow the university to contact any of their students abroad should an event arise (with signed consent);
- emergency evacuation plan for groups; and
- re-entry support sessions.

It is important to note that Queen's University has developed a definition of an emergency, which they articulate as the "tragic death of a student through accident or suicide; accident or serious illness; traumatic event (such as sexual assault, hostage-taking, natural calamity); early warning or perceived emergency (such as cultural maladjustment); and student communication (such as weather, civil unrest, earthquake)" (Queen's University, 2006, p. 5). It is interesting to note that the university has included student maladjustment to the culture as part of this definition, which highlights the importance of communication between the student, the host company and the post-secondary institution to recognize these signs and appropriately address them.

The pre-departure orientation at Queen's University consists of travel information and its logistical issues, cultural information about the host country, health insurance,

health and safety, as well as any known hazards for the host country or company and travel advisories/ warnings. For instance, students traveling to Australia should be made aware of certain poisonous insects or snakes in the location in which they will be living and how to manage these types of bites.

Finally, the informed consent aspect of this program focuses on the philosophy that the university understands students are adults, however, the university has provided adequate information in order for adult students to access the resources and information required to make informed decisions. This information allows students to understand that they have personal responsibility to their care.

University of British Columbia

The University of British Columbia has also developed a comprehensive approach to risk management and its communication to students about their responsibilities. The university not only addresses risk and responsibilities and student conduct, but also student financial responsibility. This clause assumes that all costs pertaining to the student's participation in an international experiential education program are the responsibility of the student. Although there are awards or bursaries available to the student to access, the university itself is not responsible for the funding of this optional initiative.

The University of British Columbia emphasizes the responsibility of the student within all printed information and waivers surrounding its risk management program. Many sentences often start with "it's your (the student's) responsibility to..." or "you (the student) are personally responsible for..." This ensures that students are aware of their responsibilities within this program. Although information is provided for students,

the actual procurement of such required items as visas, passports, health insurance, and so forth, are necessary for students to obtain. In fact, the university stresses that they will assist students by directing them to the appropriate resource, but procuring all documentation is the sole responsibility of the student.

The university outlines in its information to students interested in an international experiential education placement topics such as work permits, health insurance, and other security matters, including registering with the Canadian Consulate within the host country of placement. Additional resources such as financial and currency information are also provided.

University of Waterloo

The University of Waterloo requires students who participate in the international cooperative education program to complete various forms such as an emergency contact form and risk and responsibility form that is then forwarded to the university international office as part of its risk management program. The emergency contact form requires the student on an international placement to provide such information as current contact information, emergency contact information and proof of appropriate medical insurance. The information is then kept on file in the international office for easy access in the event of an emergency. The risk and responsibility form requires the student to read and acknowledge the risks that may be encountered while on an international placement to which the student will assume responsibility. This form also expects that the student will research the overseas country to which they will be placed as well as the following:

- respect the laws and the customs of the host country;

- complete a pre-departure physical and any required immunizations;
- avoid participation in activities in opposition to the government of the host country;
- follow any directive issued by the Canadian Government, the granting agency, or the post-secondary institution;
- take all reasonable precautions to ensure the student's personal welfare, including the development of their own personal risk management plan;
- register at the Canadian Government Office within the host country; and
- monitor government-issued travel advisory reports.

Finally, the University of Waterloo pre-departure orientation session addresses topics that will assist students in developing their own risk management plan. The sessions include passport and work permit information, health insurance, health matters, financial issues, items to pack, safety and cultural preparation. As reviewed within Queen's University risk management plan, culture shock can be considered as a potential emergency. Therefore, it would be prudent for the post-secondary institution to provide information to students on its warning signs and implications.

Co-op Japan

Since the Co-op Japan Project works as a partnership between many post-secondary institutions, risk management would primarily be specific to the student's home institution. However, the Co-op Japan Project does provide additional resources and supportive efforts as it relates to international placements in Japan. Resources include a pre-departure week for qualifying students that focus on the Japanese culture and expectations, as well as other expectations and responsibilities as it pertains to

students working in Japan. Financial matters are also discussed, as well as health concerns. For instance, should a student have special dietary requirements or medications, it is recommended that these issues are resolved prior to their acceptance to the Co-op Japan Project since these types of accommodations cannot be ensured for the student in Japan. The information disseminated reinforces the student's role and responsibility within this type of placement. Furthermore, basic language requirements are put in place in order to assist the student in communicating in their host country.

University of Windsor

The University of Windsor has developed a risk management plan in partnership with Windsor International, an internal umbrella organization that assists with all University of Windsor international initiatives. The plan includes an emergency contact form that all students must complete in order to maintain contact with the student at all times while they are participating in their international experiential education placement. Windsor International contacts each student by email on a monthly basis to which students must respond within a specified timeframe. This precaution is to ensure that the student is coping with their placement and are safe. Should the student not respond to this email, the University of Windsor makes it a practice to establish contact with the student on a priority basis to ensure his/ her safety.

The University of Windsor recognizes that some international experiential education placements might be secured independent of the Centre for Career Education, Cooperative Education Department. In these cases, students are required to complete a Risk Audit form, which requests that the host company confirm the type of placement (for example, manufacturing versus an office environment), if protective gear is provided

(if required), as well, if the student is covered under the host company's insurance in the unfortunate event of a workplace accident. This form must then be signed by an authorizing agent of the potential host company, along with the company stamp and submitted to the Centre for Career Education for evaluation prior to confirming such a placement. Should the host company not cover the student in the event of a workplace accident, the student is required to show proof of accident insurance to his/ her coordinator for the duration of the proposed placement.

Additionally, international placements that are secured through the cooperative education department at the University of Windsor involve pre-screening of students applying to the host company. The pre-screening process involves a committee comprised of faculty as well as the cooperative education coordinator, and consists of questions relating to student independence, cultural sensitivity, adaptability and flexibility. Students are asked whether or not their family is supportive of such an endeavour since it is critical to have these facets in place to provide the student with as many resources and supports as possible when embarking on an international placement. It is also an opportunity for the coordinator or faculty member to discuss all the implications and risks that might be associated with the placement to ensure the student is duly informed. Furthermore, the Centre for Career Education has recently adopted a waiver form from Windsor International for cooperative education students to sign prior to confirming an international experiential placement.

The University of Windsor also conducts a pre-departure workshop with students in partnership with Windsor International that covers similar important aspects while on an international placement. Parents are also invited to attend such workshops in order to

provide reassurance and enforce the level of student responsibility required for such an opportunity.

University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati has created a course syllabus for its international cooperative education program. Within this program, the university has developed an 11-hour mandatory course, which covers all aspects of the international placement. Topics include living overseas and the cultural implications for the student. Furthermore, the University of Cincinnati places an emphasis on students demonstrating language competency in the country of choice for the international cooperative education placement. This competency allows students to make an effective contribution to the workplace, as well as addressing the already specified risk management issues.

Post-Secondary Institution Program Text Analysis

Upon review of the selected post-secondary institution programs and their risk and responsibility measures, several themes emerged. These themes included student pre-departure workshops, cultural and language competency, and student waivers.

Pre-Departure Workshops

Student pre-departure sessions are a critical component of an international experiential education program. These sessions allow the institutions to disseminate information efficiently, while providing students with the necessary resources and support to minimize risk while on their placement.

Cultural and Language Competency

The importance of having some exposure to the culture and language of the host company is also important in risk management. Post-secondary institutions should

ensure that students will be provided this resource as this safeguard will assist students in independently navigating their way through the host country, city and workplace.

Student Waivers

Students should also sign a contract with the post-secondary institution to minimize risk for the institution. The contract should request that the student acknowledge their responsibility within the program, as well as outline the responsibilities of the post-secondary institution. The contract should also contain an emergency contact information section, which releases the post-secondary institution to provide information about the student to relevant parties in the event of an emergency.

Risk and responsibility can be an arduous task to administer in an international experiential education and it is virtually impossible to control the behaviour or action of students in such a dynamic environment. However, providing resources, assistance and support to the student while on the international experiential education placement can assist in minimizing risk for the student, the post-secondary institution and the host company. The following table provides a summary of risk and responsibility measures by post- secondary institution program (see Table 3).

Table 3

Summary of Risk and Responsibility Measures by Post-Secondary Institution Program

Post-Secondary Institution	Student Waiver	Pre-Departure Workshop	Pre-Determined Language Competency/ Training
York University	Yes	Yes	No
Queens University	Yes	Yes	No
University of British Columbia	Yes	Yes	No
University of Waterloo	Yes	Yes	No
Co-op Japan	Yes	Yes	Yes
University of Windsor	Yes	Yes	No
University of Cincinnati	Yes	Yes	Yes

Student Interview Analysis

Interviewed participants were asked the following questions about their experience with risk and responsibility while on their international placement:

- How prepared would you say you were to adjusting to your international placement?
- Did you encounter any obstacles or challenges while on your placement?
- How safe did you feel while on your placement – at the workplace, living in a different country, etc?

- Would you have any recommendations with respect to risk and responsibility while on an international experiential education placement?

From these questions, three themes emerged in order to address risk and responsibility measures from the student perspective. These themes included pre-departure preparation, safety precautions and language competency.

Pre-Departure Preparation

Most students interviewed felt that they were moderately prepared for their international experiential education placements and that they adjusted with relative ease to their host country due to their pre-departure preparation. Students felt it was helpful to talk to program alumni who had recently returned from the same placement in order to provide information that perhaps the institution could not. This feedback supports the voluntary programs that post-secondary institutions endorse in asking students who have returned from an international placement to act as a contact person for future students.

Students also felt that the pre-departure orientation session that was delivered by Windsor International and WUSC assisted them in preparing for their embarkation. Topics included finances, risk management, homesickness and cultural awareness. The workshop also allowed students to meet other participants in the program with whom they could establish a connection and possible flight companions, which assisted them in ensuring they arrived safely to their host country. For example, two students that were selected to go to Sweden for their international cooperative education placement, made arrangements to travel together. Travelling together allowed them to acclimatize themselves to the time change and subsequent jet-lag as well as work together to navigate the rail and bus system to arrive at their destination safely.

Students interviewed offered some advice to future students with respect to their safety and developing their own risk management plan. Many students conceded the importance of pre-planning and ensuring that students do their “homework” prior to embarkation, as well as in their planning for additional travel to other countries while overseas. This included researching the countries as well as potential risks prior to traveling. Information was readily available on the post-secondary institution’s web-site with respect to travel advisories and certain risks to be aware of. For instance, one student (participant 10) described a visit to another country where picking pockets was rampant. Due to his research, he recalled warnings of friendly groups of people who approached him to provide him with some information. One of the group members placed his/ her hand on the student’s arm. At that point, due to his previous research on the country and city, the student was aware that this group was most likely trying to pick his pocket. He was able to safely get away from the group. Another student (participant 11) stated:

One suggestion is to know the language... which I think, is a common thing. If you know the language of the land then people of that land will talk to you more. This is because they will know you are making an effort to learn their lifestyle. And also being cautious of what is going on at first in settling down and start exploring.

Safety Precautions

All participants interviewed stated that they did not encounter any major challenges during their international experiential education placement. Students stated that as long as one “maintained a common sense approach” to situations, there would be a

high probability that their safety and security would be preserved. Furthermore, all students stated that the university sent them to safe host cities for their placement. This highlights the importance of universities not only ensuring the safety of the company and placement details, but also the level of safety within the host city.

One student (participant 12) who participated in an experiential education program through WUSC stressed the importance of pre-screening host families for student accommodation prior to placing students. This student recounted the experience of feeling unsafe within the home of the host family, particularly with the father and being left alone with him. In this case, the coordinator assigned to the student was not available for the student to express her concerns, which resulted in increased fear for her safety.

Language Competency

Another student underscored the importance of having a basic understanding of the language spoken as well as knowledge of the laws of the country/ city. Students may travel within their host city or beyond and even gaining an understanding of the rules of the road and street signs are important. This particular student experienced an encounter with the local police due to lack of information, and had difficulty communicating with police during the incident.

Since placements were arranged by the post-secondary institution, host employers were cognizant of the challenges a foreign student might face while commencing their international placement. Some companies developed, in conjunction with previous foreign students, a company orientation manual for the foreign student, which outlines

work permit and accommodation information, as well as a general description of the company's facility and how to navigate around the facility.

One student (participant 7) observed that one must be trusting of others in a foreign country. That is, when dealing with language barriers and navigating in a new city, one must learn to trust others when asking for directions or for information, that it will be accurate and not delivered with any mal-intent. However, students, in their travels to other countries or cities during their placement, found that it was important to research the country/ city of destination to be vigilant of any risks which may be encountered.

Challenges and New Perspectives

Student Perception of Risk and Responsibility

When discussing risk and responsibility with the interview participants, this topic appeared to be somewhat of a non-issue. This perception may be due to the careful planning and support that the host country and the post-secondary institutions provide to the students and the level of preparation they felt prior to embarkation. Students felt comfortable in contacting their coordinator, or Windsor International, or accessing the web-site for specific questions or resources they required in order to minimize risk during their international placement. However, this could also be due to the pre-screening process that students are required to successfully complete prior to final confirmation of their placement. Common sense thinking as well as adaptability, flexibility, cultural awareness, and resourcefulness play an integral part in the current success of minimizing risk. It is prudent to ensure that students possess these characteristics prior to final selection to provide the foundation for an effective risk management plan (Reeve, Schulz & Laslett, 1997).

Institutional Liability and Waivers

It is imperative for post-secondary institutions to ensure that all possible risks are examined prior to supporting international experiential education programs. It is apparent that these programs are essential to internationalizing the curriculum in response to globalization and they can be successful as long as risk is managed effectively.

Best practices of institutions include pre-departure workshops for students and their parents in order to provide an introduction to the many issues for consideration, as well as emphasizing safety, common sense and potential risks. Waivers outlining student responsibility during the placement are also necessary. Pre-screening of applicants to the program, including host companies and families are critical to managing risk and reducing liability on the part of the institution, as well as emergency contact information and release of information documents are all aspects that the institution should appropriately manage.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The design and administration of an international cooperative education program at the post-secondary level can be quite complex. Determining student interest and satisfaction, establishing learning outcomes, developing a risk management plan, and assigning appropriate resources are just a few issues that should be addressed. Within this research, several challenges and new perspectives have emerged with respect to the established variables.

Learning Outcomes

Since the purpose of an experiential education program is to provide students the opportunity to put theory into practice, the establishment of learning outcomes is critical. The post-secondary institution programs and students studied appeared to view international experiential education programs as an extension of domestic programs with the added learning outcome of cultural and language learning. Both the interviewed subjects and the post-secondary program text analysis did not indicate that there was a difference in technical or transferable skill development as compared to domestic and international experiential education placements. However, quantitative research would be required to substantiate this.

Learning outcomes for experiential education should be designed through research into student learning (Eames & Cates, 2004). Cates & Jones (1999), suggest that experiential education programs should be centred through established principles of student learning. The authors provide several suggestions for the design of a cooperative

education program that could also be customized to international experiential education program learning outcomes:

- ensure students understand the expectations of the program;
- provide students with resources and supports for expected success in the program;
- develop the resources necessary to measure student transfer of knowledge;
- encourage feedback from students to document student learning;
- redesign the program based on the academic model of designing a course and ensure the goals of the program match the goals of the institution; and
- increase student awareness of learning during the placement.

Through the exercise of constructing outcomes and developing measurement tools to assess learning, it is probable that there would be additional learning outcomes attributed to student learning through an international experiential education placement. Learning outcomes which highlight new perspectives of cultural awareness, global awareness, and language acquisition - all transferable, yet necessary skills in today's labour market, should be articulated and then measured appropriately within the international experiential education program.

Furthermore, a certain level of accountability for international experiential education learning outcomes should be assumed by the post-secondary institution. According to an on-line article published through the National Association of Colleges and Employers¹¹, "Spotlight Online," career services programs that advertise their programs should be held accountable through the tracking of student success rates for the

¹¹ The National Association of Colleges and Employers was established in 1956 and is touted to be the leading American source of information on employment statistics for tertiary institutions. The Association provides information about various workplace benchmarking tools for colleges and universities.

established learning outcomes and compared to the national statistics. For example, students participating in an international experiential education program that highlight the outcomes of the development of global awareness should be compared to the published statistics of the program, and be held accountable for its successes and/ or failures. This accountability increases the credibility of the program, and raises its profile to students, employers and the post-secondary institution. The establishment of learning outcomes for international experiential education should be regarded as an extension of the learning outcomes established for domestic placements with customization to the unique components of the program, with appropriate assessment tools and accountability to manage the program.

Resources

A challenge to allocate appropriate resources is required in order to appropriately administer an international experiential education program. The very nature of the program implies that human resources and adequate funding are required to ensure the sustainability of the program. Staff are required to advise students through the application process of work permits and passports, as well as understanding the intricacies of the various host countries and placements in order to maintain relationships and ensure cultural sensitivity. Designated staff are also required to conduct pre-screening of candidates, pre-departure and post-work term debriefings to ensure that students understand the various facets of the international placement and prepare the student for potential culture shock, or reverse culture shock. Although many post-secondary institutions share these responsibilities through vested faculties or departments,

it is important to ensure that adequate human resources are put in place to avoid potential risk.

Funding for students to participate in such a program should also be evaluated to ensure equal opportunity and that such opportunities are not reserved for only those students who can financially complete a cooperative education work term overseas. Scholarships and bursaries through the post-secondary institution, government, local cultural groups and the host institution should be thoroughly investigated and pursued as an avenue for all students to access such a program. Furthermore, prospective students should be made aware of such funding resources in order to assist them in determining financial feasibility for participation in such a program.

Bald & Van de Water (1998) argued that, “a substantial personal investment is required from the student, as are a commitment of resources from regular university budgets, and stipends or in-kind support for interns from host organizations that receive their services,” (p.58). They also suggest that in order to reduce initial start-up costs of such a program, administrators should “concentrate initially on one geographic area and a limited number of academic disciplines...however, without at least one full-time administrator, it will be difficult to get an international internship program off the ground. The complexity of work permits and immigration regulations alone is frustrating enough to thwart half-hearted attempts at international internships” (p.59).

Appointing at least one full-time coordinator to administer the program and liaise with partnering departments and faculties, as is the case at the University of Waterloo, will assist in the orchestrating of such a program, thereby allowing other experiential education coordinators to administer the domestic arm of experiential education

programs. This should also likely lead to a more comprehensive risk management of such a program since students, international employers and post-secondary institution administrators will maintain one source of contact for all international experiential education details.

Student Satisfaction

Determining student satisfaction will also assist in ensuring that an international experiential education program is sustainable and will provide a mechanism for feedback to make continuous improvements. As an administrator of an international experiential education program, it is important to develop criteria highlighting attributes that lead to student satisfaction. The criteria should be developed with students given their perceptions of the program (Edwards & Jancauskas, 2000). For example, Waryszak (1999) established that students from Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne Australia, majoring in Hospitality and Tourism studies held a high level of expectation of involvement in the workplace, as well as “greater peer cohesion, more task orientation, more work pressure and greater control,” within their placement (p.1). Therefore, the administrator of such a program should develop a student satisfaction rating that pertains to the criteria. Similarly, Schamback & Dirks (2002), developed a series of student satisfaction research questions based on the feedback from graduating cooperative education students:

- the opportunity to gain realistic work experience valued by employers;
- career decision-making and academic advising;
- development of confidence with respect to professional skills;
- linkage between academic studies and practical work experience; and

- financial remuneration during the placement.

With respect to international cooperative education placements, Bentley & Broons (2000), identified similar characteristics of student satisfaction, with the inclusion of criteria such as improved employment opportunities, experience living and working in a foreign country, access to available jobs that would not be accessible to participants' domestic counterparts, perceived preparation for a globalized workforce and the establishment of an international network of contacts. These criteria provide a new perspective in which to more quantitatively assess student satisfaction of the international cooperative education placement. This tool can also assist in developing a pre-screening model of students who would most likely benefit from an international cooperative education placement. That is, when students report on their level of satisfaction with their international placement, these criteria can then be extrapolated to assess which students consider these criteria to be an important aspect of their placement during the student selection process.

Another new perspective was uncovered when interviewing recent participants in an international experiential education placement. It was determined that from a subjective perspective, students were highly satisfied with their international placement, however, they would recommend that the post-secondary institution provide more pre-departure information such as suggestions on what to pack, host company information and country information. This information could be compiled with relative ease and individualized to the students and their placement should sufficient resources be allocated to such an endeavour.

Risk and Responsibility

Assessing risk and responsibility of an international experiential education program is a paramount exercise for the post-secondary institution to complete. The post-secondary institution must determine what level of risk it is willing to assume and what resources will be allocated in order to minimize risk. According to Bidwell (1997), risk and responsibility for the institution generally fall into four main categories:

- injury to students while at work;
- injury to the students in transit to and from work;
- injury to customers or co-workers at the work-site as a result of the students' actions; and
- damage to the work-site property as a result of the students' actions.

Therefore, the risks assumed for international cooperative education placements are magnified, in particular, with respect to potential risk of injury to a student while in transit to and from their work-site. Risks would include international travel, which cannot be an easily controlled variable to manage. It is critical then to establish an appropriate risk management plan which would include a pre-departure workshop or training that would consist of cultural awareness, both in the workplace and in the host country, currency and financial information and emergency procedures. Travel advisories, language training, and consistent communication with students while on their international cooperative education placement are critical components in developing and administering a risk management plan for such a program.

Furthermore, an assessment of the host country and the host company by the post-secondary institution are important facets of minimizing risk. This assessment is particularly critical in situations where students have secured their own international

cooperative education placement. The post-secondary institution must conduct a risk audit of the company and country and even city where the student will be living prior to sending the student to such a placement under the institution's auspices. Emergency contact information and the appropriate waivers and release forms are also a critical component in managing risk at the post-secondary institutional level. Institutions are challenged to develop a risk management protocol that is designed in concert with its legal counsel to ensure all aspects are addressed within the program. Fortunately, none of the subjects interviewed encountered any real or potential emergencies that would require the deployment of such a protocol, however, when all parties understand and acknowledge the risk involved in such a program, as well as preventative measures, risk can be minimized.

The lure and excitement of administering an international cooperative education program can be quite appealing. In a globalized workforce and society, one might assume that all post-secondary institutions should administer international cooperative education programs. However, careful consideration of these challenges and new perspectives should be addressed in order to appropriately administer such a program. Lazarus & Oloroso (2004) identify many challenges to the administration of a cooperative education program, which can include garnering institutional support for the program, promotion and marketing such a program, maintain employer relations and managing staff and appropriate resources. Should the post-secondary institution not be prepared to manage such facets, the timing of such an endeavour may not be appropriate. However, much of the literature and research support international cooperative education programs as multi-national companies increase (ERIC, 1989).

Suggestions for Further Research

The variables presented in this research can serve as a springboard for further study with respect to the administration of international experiential education programs. This study could be replicated, interviewing and reviewing textual information to compare and contrast North American perceptions versus overseas perceptions of international experiential education programs. It would be interesting to determine if overseas post-secondary institutions and students found North American international experiential education placements beneficial to their academic study.

Learning outcomes, in and of itself can provide a plethora of continued study. The study of learning outcomes as it relates to international experiential education programs should be investigated and further defined so that post-secondary institutions can provide a framework for such a program. Since there are many theories of learning as it relates to experiential learning, the design of learning outcomes can be designed around the goals of the post-secondary institution, or the student themselves, or some sort of combination. The examination and design of appropriate assessment tools for the designated learning outcomes would also prove to be beneficial to post-secondary institutions.

One variable that was not extensively considered within this study was the most effective allotment of resources and the examination of several models to secure international experiential education placements. The research conducted by Reeve (2004), which outlines potential models to secure international cooperative education placements could be used as a springboard in researching the most efficient and effective means to this facet of the program.

Finally, varying this study and adding a quantitative approach would assist in providing concrete statistical analysis to the variables studied. The design of surveys through a Lykert-type scale would provide data that could be useful in demonstrating the viability of an international experiential education program to post-secondary institution administrators, students and potential international experiential education employers.

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<http://international.yorku.ca/internships/faq.htm#8>

VITA AUCTORIS

Michelle Watters (nee Cope) was born in Stratford, Ontario in 1971. She graduated from Vincent Massey Secondary School in Windsor, Ontario in 1989 and went on to complete her Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) at the University of Windsor. In 1995, Michelle was accepted to Monash University in Australia where she graduated from the Graduate Diploma of Education program with High Distinction. She is currently a candidate for the Master's Degree of Education at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Fall 2006.