Inequalities and agencies in workplace learning experiences: international student perspectives

Introduction

National systems of vocational education and training are undergoing reform to better meet the needs of the economy. In examining 450 educational policy reforms between 2008-2014, one of the OECD's key findings was that 29% of the reforms specifically targeted vocational and work based education (OECD 2015). The OECD also found that the three key policy drivers for such reform were: i) delivering the skills expected to be of benefit to future workplaces, ii) the increasing movement of people and products across borders (what it terms 'international mobility'), and iii) the need to achieve educational outcomes regardless of personal or social circumstances (what it terms 'equity'). However, the OECD's research did not consider issues related to when such drivers coexist in practice. That is, those related to the educational and skills outcomes of international students who engage in workplace learning experiences as part of vocational education.

International students in the context of vocational education are a growing element of this community. Between 2000 and 2012, the number of students 'enrolled outside their country of citizenship' doubled to 4.5 million 'despite' the global recession (OECD 2014, p. 343), a number expected to reach 7.2 million by 2025 (Altbach et al. 2009). In terms of tertiary level vocational education, such students now feature prominently in countries such as Luxembourg (49% of tertiary level vocational education students), New Zealand (21%), and Australia / Denmark (both 11%) (OECD 2014, p. 354). Indeed, Gribble (2014, p. 2) argues that "foreign work experience is now seen as a necessary part of the overseas study 'package'", and can include work placements, internships, practicum, project-based learning experience, fieldtrips, and voluntary work. This reflects increasing evidence that suggests education is no longer the sole purpose for overseas students to undertake international education (Tran, 2015; 2013a; Tran & Nyland, 2011). Amongst the primary drivers for international students engaging in vocational education are professional advancement and employability enhancement (Gribble 2014; Tran et al. 2014), capabilities for social interaction (Pham and Tran 2015; Tran and Pham 2015), exposure to alternative cultures (Tran and Nyland 2011), and a stepping stone to migration (Tran & Nyland, 2011). As such, international students bring multiple purposes in pursuing overseas study, and these purposes can be fluid and changing (Tran, 2015).

Even though there is an increasing number and proportion of international students in vocational education, and offering workplace learning experiences is increasingly seen as an important competitive move for institutions and students alike, there is a paucity of empirical work in the context of international students engaging in WIL (Gribble 2014; Orrell 2011; Patrick et al. 2008). Evidence, though not directly within the vocational education context, indicates that there are issues with the participation in, and provision of, WIL to international students (Gribble 2014; Lawson 2012; Patrick et al. 2008; Tran 2013). As Gibson and Busby (2009) argue, policy, practice and support for WIL need to be "fully considered, fit for purpose, contemporary and student-centred" (p.478), but there continues to be an absence of clear guidelines for supporting international students through WIL (Gibson and Busby 2009; Tran 2013).

1

Part of the challenge in delivering WIL with international students is the reluctance of employers and international students to engage in it. From the employer's perspective, research indicates that some employers do not recognise the potential contributions of these students, assume international students have skills or communication gaps, and/or want to avoid the complexities and risks associated with international student visa regulations (Gribble 2014; Gribble et al. 2015; Patrick et al. 2008; Shan 2013). Indeed, Tran's (2013) study found some Australian employers were cautious about employing international students because of the discrimination and exploitation cases reported in the media.

Similarly, the international student can be reluctant to engage in WIL because of the resources required to do so. One issue relates to the greater tuition fees required from those forms of WIL that are longer than their equivalent non-WIL counterparts (Murray et al. 2012). This can be exacerbated by the predominantly academic selection criteria for selecting students onto WIL programmes (Blackmore et al. 2014, 2015). A second, and a perhaps more significant issue, relates to international students' lack of localised resources. Gribble (2014) and Tran (2013), for example, found that international students' unfamiliarity with the local labour market, workplace culture, local job seeking procedures, and local networks, made it very difficult for them to develop WIL opportunities in tertiary education. As such, international students appear to experience particular challenges in engaging with WIL.

The findings from this study echo the difficulties identified above, but also provide a more nuanced understanding of the WIL experiences of international students in the context of vocational education. This paper argues that international students engaged in vocational education can experience discrimination and deskilling during their WIL experiences, and that these can be legitimised by the students themselves in relation to their position as an 'international student' with fewer rights. However, this paper also argues that international students can navigate such inequalities through building their localised knowledge through social resources. It calls for explicitly integrating pedagogies or experiences within WIL induction and support structures to help build such localised resources for international students. It is proposed that this would not only promote greater mutual appreciation of diversity in the workplace, but it would also enable richer learning opportunities for international students.

The structure of this paper is as follows. This section has highlighted the problematic nature of international students participating in WIL opportunities. The next section adopts Bourdieu's theoretical ideas to conceptualise WIL as a space where international students learn what it means to participate in that space. It argues that conflicts between personal expectations and experiences are important to learning, and are part of the mechanics by which individuals learn who they are and how they should relate to others in particular spaces. These ideas then form an analytical frame to interrogate data collected from 105 interviews with international students. In the findings section, the data demonstrate that international students perceive they are experiencing unfair treatment in the form of discrimination and deskilling because of their position as 'international student'. Yet the data also show how some students had been able to navigate such situations towards different outcomes. The next section contextualises these findings in wider, international trends of discrimination and deskilling for immigrant communities, and considers possible ways forward to tackle such issues. This paper calls for more proactively inclusive support and pedagogic practices that promote reciprocal understanding in the provision of WIL, and that this should be instituted for all involved in the provision of WIL.

Theoretical perspective: WIL as a structured field

Existing research into WIL for international students highlights challenges in participating in workplaces and the potential societal structures at play that privilege some and that exclude or marginalise others. Such structures have been argued to play an influential role in the way people learn in the circumstances of practice, that is, they form part of each individual's personal epistemology (Billett 2009, 2010, 2014). Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus provides a relevant analytical frame to investigate such structural dynamics as people participate in practice (Bathmaker 2015; Clark and Zukas 2013; Colley et al. 2003; Gribble et al. 2015; Pham and Tran 2015; Tran 2015; Tran et al. 2014; Tran and Pham 2015; Tran and Soejatminah 2016). Drawing on Clark and Zukas (2013), this study conceptualises international student workplace learning experiences as a field, that is, "a structured social space with autonomy to establish rules, patterns of normal behaviour and form of authority" (ibid, p.212). For Bourdieu, through participation, individuals internalise the norms and practices of particular social classes or groups, and this comes to structure how they should think, feel and act in fields such as a workplace or WIL setting (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Thomas 2002; Wacquant 2008). These norms include, for example, how people *should* relate to one another and therefore provides a framework to understand how some groups can exert power over other groups in ways which can be exclude or exploit other groups from certain activities or positions within the field (ibid). In other words, it provides a useful framework to analyse inequities in and across fields.

Central to the production and re-production of these structures within fields are the mutually constituting concepts of habitus, capital, doxa, and misrecognition. Bourdieu argues that *habitus* is the individualised and internalised encapsulation of "relational issues and priorities, which are deeply embedded and sub-consciously informing practice" (Thomas 2002, p. 431). Generated through participation in the field, habitus is both shaped by and reinforces various forms of *capital* or resources (e.g. economic, social, cultural and symbolic) which reflect an individual's position within the field. Perhaps most relevant in the context of international students working across cultural boundaries is cultural capital, which can be understood in the following forms: the embodied (including language competence and style), the institutionalised (e.g. educational qualifications) and the objectified (including books and artwork) (Bourdieu, 1986). In this way, cultural capital not only shapes a position in a field, it is also an important source of potential inequity in either privileging or excluding access to developing *further* cultural or other forms of capital. In Bourdieu's terms, then, this dynamic is an important aspect of how such inequity in capital development re-produces the existing power relations and inequities amongst different social positions and statuses.

However, Bourdieu also suggests that for the field to be re-produced (and to maintain its structures), it relies on the actors to 'blindly accepting and following' the structures and rules in it (Nolan 2012). Here, "the point of view of the dominant, which presents and imposes itself as a universal point of view" (Webb 2015, p. 4) becomes important. These views contribute to the norms that provide suggestions of the social and physical world and offer particular affordances which influence how people come to learn (Billett 2010). This is the notion of *doxa*:

> the set of core values and discourses of a social practice field that have come to be viewed as natural, normal, and inherently necessary, thus working to ensure that the arbitrary and contingent nature of these discourses are not questioned nor even recognised (Nolan 2012, p. 205).

Importantly, "[t]he truth of doxa is only ever fully revealed when negatively constituted by the constitution of a field of opinion, the locus of the confrontation of competing discourses" (Bourdieu 1977, p.168). In other words, we can only recognise a dominant view in relation to when it confronts others views in the field. As such, doxa is intimately connected to the notion of *misrecognition*, that Webb (2015) refers to as a 'form of forgetting' which ignores how habitus encapsulates the logics of practice of a field, and therefore is constitutive of how fields are produced and re-produced over time (p. 4). As such, the target of apprehension "is attributed to another available realm of meaning, and, in the process, interest, inequities or other effects may be maintained whilst they remain concealed" (James 2015, p. 100).

Conceptualising international student participation in WIL as a field, enables the exploration of the students' experiences with particular reference to some of the areas which are influencing their participation in WIL. In this case, the processes discussed above provide a framework to analyse the ways in which dominant groups and norms in the WIL setting can exert power over international groups in ways which can exclude or exploit them from certain activities or positions within the WIL setting (ibid), and therefore the inequities within that context.

At the same time, it is recognised that international students' response to disadvantage, marginalisation and deskilling in the workplace might entail the potential to reconstruct and transform themselves and the WIL situation. For Billett (2010, p. 13), individuals' agency emerges in "selectively engaging and negotiating with social suggestions to secure, develop, maintain their identity" (Billett 2010, p. 13). In this way, agency can manifest through an individuals' struggle and contestation against injustice and "contradictory or otherwise problematic situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 1012), in ways that enable "resilience, resourcefulness and capacity to change tack or break away" (Hopwood, 2010, p.114). Billett (2010, p.13) relates such an agentic characteristic to "[r]esisting, out-manoeuvring, avoiding strong social suggestion through locating a position and role within social practice which is consistent with individual subjectivity and identity". This means that there is the potential for international students to transform self not just through resisting, but through taking "transformative and constraining courses of action" (Reay 2004, p. 433) which disrupt unjust situations. For Biesta and Tedder (2007, p.137), the effectiveness of this agency depends on "the interplay between individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors". In the case of international students engaged in WIL, this means that individual students, teachers, WIL coordinators, and the availability of workplace resources, all play an important role in shaping the possibility for exercising agency.

In sum, this section has conceptualised WIL as a space where international students learn what it means to participate in WIL, and focuses in on the mechanics by which individuals learn who they are and how they should relate to others in the WIL context. This context is a space where structural inequalities emerge and perpetuate, but also a space where international students can exercise their agency. The next section outlines the methods adopted to generate data that will then be analysed by the theoretical tools outlined in this section.

Methods

As the previous section outlined, this paper focuses on the experiences of international students engaged in WIL as part of a vocational education course. The data that form the

basis of this paper are drawn from 105 semi-structured interviews with international students over a four-year period. International student participants in this research were recruited with the help of the directors of international programmes from vocational education institutions from three states of Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria). Invitations to take part in the study were circulated by the international programme directors from 25 colleges, and those who agreed to participate were interviewed for 30 to 60 minutes at their vocational education college. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The data analysis process involved the principal investigator reading the interview transcripts several times and coding the interview data using NVIVO software, version 10. The main themes of this paper were identified through a careful process of coding and critical engagement with the interview transcripts. As discussed in the above section, Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' (e.g. field and doxa) were used to interpret and conceptualise themes within the context of international students' workplace learning experiences. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the names of individuals and colleges are kept anonymous. The next section outlines and discusses the themes that emerged from the data.

Findings

This section discusses three key themes that emerged from the data. The first relates to how international students express the ways in which they have been subject to discrimination, and the second related to their experiences of deskilling through their WIL experiences. In both cases, the international students adopted subjugated accounts of self (Billett, 2010) to legitimise discrimination and deskilling in relation to their position as an international student with fewer rights, and the opportunity for an international work experience in competitive market conditions. In contrast, the final theme relates to how some students engaged a more agentic accounts of self (ibid), where they were able to access various forms of capital to navigate the social structures in the field and find alternative outcomes. Each of these themes is now discussed.

Accepting discrimination for opportunity – "we're human as well"

The first theme that emerged from the data related to international students experiencing less favourable treatment compared to others in the workplace, because of their position or status as an international student. This differential treatment manifest in various forms such as workplace behaviours directed towards the international students, but often, the international students did not expect such occurrences to happen within a professional work context. In other words, the international students had experienced a challenge to the doxa they had previously internalised. For some international students, this treatment reflected the wider perceptions of others towards them that were prevalent in the workplace, and were encapsulated in informal jokes and humour which made reference to skin tone or colour. For example, one Indian student who was working in a bakery for her WIL experience described a scenario of when she was learning how to remove cake from a hot oven. This task was a particularly dangerous and difficult task because of her height as an Indian female, and indeed, she was subject to a burn in attempting to retrieve the cakes. Although she expected support in learning this task, and in attending to the burn, she felt she lacked this support. She says:

> I'm not supposed to open the oven and they told me if they let me in the bakery I'll learn… the boss [said]… can you get [the] cake because they're going to burn. I said I can't reach because I'm not tall enough to reach. I don't know how to get the bread out. I got the bread out and I got burned. And he didn't give ****. I said to him, can

I please have a first aid kit and he's like 'it's over there'… I had to get to the first aid kit. I had to look after myself… He didn't do anything to help.

Similarly, in terms of pay, many international students had come to believe that employers were being exploitative of them in their subjugated position of international student. For some international students, this exploitation was in the form of working such long hours that they equated it to being "unpaid". For others, there was a perception that the work they performed did not reflect the pay they received, or a perception they were paid lower than other local employees with fewer responsibilities than themselves. Simultaneously, the international students also believed that employers should treat them equally to others and be paid fairly for their responsibilities. Again, such a response is indicative of the appearance of doxa. For example, a Korean student said:

we are not only international students, we are human as well... why I got a lower payment, because I'm trainer, I teach the other guys. I should get higher than other guys or at least the same as the other guys… Yeah, but I think that's our right. They should think about us and should just treat us the same as other people.

At the same time, even though international students recognised the ways in which they had been mistreated, they appeared to legitimate this in relation to their position and status as an international student. Often, this made specific reference to their own and their employer's narratives of the scarcity of workplace learning opportunities available for international students. As one student said:

… it is really hard to get because people in the industry like bakery and all that… they do not engage students. Like they want to give you a job but they don't want to pay you. So they use us which is really awful and they treat you like ****.

Similarly, another student stated:

And they [the employer] say, anyway you need a job, right? Because you are an international student and you need a job obviously because it's harder to live without money.

A proportion of international students often accepted this treatment and persisted in their WIL experiences nonetheless, 'misrecognising' it as being natural, legitimate, or normal. In this way, although the doxa was revealed to the international students through their sensed discomfort (from unfairness or maltreatment), it was not challenged, and on the contrary, provided instances for the international students to learn their position within that context. Indeed, the expression "we're human as well" above, illustrates how some students felt they had been positioned within the workplace learning setting. As such, this is part of the mechanics through which doxa, and the inequalities embedded within societal structures, persist within a field (Nolan 2012). The next section now considers the second theme which emerged from the data.

Deskilling for opportunity – "everyone wants to make a living, so they'll do anything"

A significant theme emerging from the data related to the rejection of the personal resources that the international student brought to the WIL setting. Specifically, many of the international students suggested that their previous experiences, skills, knowledge, and other capabilities, were not appreciated in the workplace, and that this shaped the opportunities to engage in professional tasks or activities. In other words, the particularised cultural capital

brought to the WIL setting was either not recognised or was not perceived to be as relevant as a more localised cultural capital. The international students experienced this as a form of deskilling, that is, only being permitted to undertake work tasks that they had previously demonstrated competency in, and therefore prevented, limited or even degraded their professional development. For example, one Malaysian student engaged in a WIL placement at a bakery said:

> But when I applied for work, whatever skill I have was not considered as experience. For them the experience has to be Australian based. I know I can do the job. So they got me to do a two day trial at the shop and then they hired me… Your previous background, it's not so acknowledged here. Even though it's relevant...

Similarly, some students made sense of this deskilling in the form of undertaking workplace learning experiences in fields that were not seen to be relevant to their own current professional or occupational ambitions or even vocational education course. One Indian student in a community welfare placement said: "whatever we are studying, we are not getting a placement according to that field". In this way, some students were not necessarily seeing the transferability of skills in one field to another, or in other words, were limiting the development of their own cultural capital whilst in WIL contexts.

Again, the competitive environment in which the international students were competing for WIL opportunities was identified as an important justification for accepting the circumstances of deskilling. However, there was perhaps a greater variance in the appearance of doxa and misrecognition, compared to the previous theme. Some students expressed their concern at their exploitation, including the market degradation of pay through negotiations with employers, because of their status as an international student. For some, it was the only way to access and then stay in the WIL opportunity. For example, one student said:

> I still think a lot of [international students] are exploited here. Because everyone wants to make a living, so they'll do anything. And because there's now so many students. So if you don't want to do it, fine. I'll get somebody else… Oh fine, I'll get somebody else who was willing to work for four dollars… Yeah, but I can't argue… as international students, we don't have much rights but maybe we become permanent resident, we have better rights.

Other international students appeared to more directly accept, or misrecognise, the situation in relation to the brute market forces, where even the collective efforts of tutors, institutions, and agencies were not able to provide WIL opportunities, or change the circumstances faced in the WIL setting. Indeed, some of the students themselves suggested that some international students are not sufficiently equipped to engage in certain workplaces. Or, in other words, they recognise that they lacked the cultural capital, even that which manifests through "common sense", to participate successfully in certain fields. As one student, who was placed in a field outside of her desired professional field, stated:

> I'm not blaming teacher or the institution for that. Because even for them, it's very difficult to find the placement and all the agencies are not ready to accept us because sometimes it's a headache for the agency… to have [an international student] who doesn't have any common sense.

So within this theme, international students were, once again, often aware of a conflict between their own personal expectations and experiences in the WIL experience and accepted it as a normal way of participating in the WIL field. Market forces, something that were seen to be difficult to change, were often used in justifying the normality of the situation. As one

of the international students above said, in relation to other international students, "everyone wants to make a living, so they'll do anything". This reiterates how the students felt they had been positioned "without rights" within the WIL setting, and as such, enriches the description of how inequalities within societal structures persist. The next section considers the final theme which emerged from the data, that is, when the international student find ways to exercise their agency in problematic circumstances.

Agency through capital

As illustrated in the previous two themes, international students can experience a position of relative disadvantage in relation to their status as a foreign student. This section, however, illustrates how international students can exercise more agentic responses in WIL circumstances, in terms of their relationships with the workplace or the placement provider. In both cases, the international students' responses indicated how they navigate the 'social suggestions' of structure, and become active in "[r]esisting, out-manoeuvring, avoiding strong social suggestion through locating a position and role within social practice" (Billett 2010, p. 13).

In problematic circumstances, the international student responses directly responded to doxa, or a sensed discomfort, and appeared to act as a prompt to disrupt the proliferation of unfair treatment in a workplace. This included, in some cases, reporting employers to organisations specifically established for addressing fair work in Australia. For example, a Korean student had spent time researching his rights in Australia and had devised a plan to tackle the unfair pay he was receiving:

> So I've been exploited by my employer… I will collect all these documents and I will lodge the complain[t] to the Fair Work Organisation. Then I will write the letter the boss and within seven days he has to pay me the rest of the money or otherwise I can lodge the complaint to the Fair Work.

In other cases, the discomfort of the doxa seemed to prompt international students to seek alternative WIL placements. For example, one Indian student who had experienced "awful" treatment had eventually moved to another bakery, but had also initiated further actions to address the treatment through talking to others. She said:

> I talk to people actually. I talked to someone else and said what happened to me at the work. They were very supportive and they wanted to call the person in [the store].

As such, building and utilising relationships and networks, or social capital (Morrice 2007; Thomas 2002), appeared to be an important aspect of enabling the international students' agency within WIL contexts. Of particular significance were the relationships and networks within the vocational education provider, which reflects other studies that have highlighted education's role in forming social and cultural capital (e.g. Thomas, 2002; Billett 2014) and in relation to avoiding exploitation (e.g. Mills 2008). Tutors in particular were seen to be important in enabling the international students to navigate the complexities of building new cultural and social capital. Specifically, international students understood the role of tutors as helping them navigate local area, connecting with local employers and agencies, and developing professional credibility through testimonies, and so on. For example, one Indian student in the community welfare industry said:

> … if you're new to the country you don't know where to go looking for the placement and no one knows you either. So it would really help if you had someone to put you in touch… Telling you what these different roles, etc.

For one Korean international student in the hospitality industry, the role of the tutor reached as far as counselling on the details of job descriptions and pay levels:

> … the teachers can find more pathways to the workplace. There can be many levels of finding jobs, they can, at least, provide us a list of fine restaurants in the city or in the area around or at least they can give us with reference letter or something like that so that we can get it in our resume. And more for the counselling about the job and also the pay/wage.

This section has highlighted some of responses of international students when they become aware of a conflict between their personal expectations and their experience, do not accept the doxa, and therefore navigate through to an alternative response. It has highlighted that international students can have a repertoire of responses which attempt to tackle workplace inequities for themselves, but also for others on a wider scale. Yet it also reflects some of the reasons why international students have difficulties in participating in WIL experiences (Gribble 2014; Gribble et al. 2015; Patrick et al. 2008; Shan 2013; Simons et al. 2006; Tran 2013). The next section now discusses these findings in relation to wider international trends of discrimination and deskilling in immigrant communities, to identify possible ways forward.

Discussion

The previous section highlighted international student experiences within WIL settings, and some of the inequities that resulted from being positioned as an international student in that context. These findings reflect studies in other contexts which highlight the importance of cultural capital such as linguistic competences and social capital such as local networks and networking skills to participation in education and workplaces (Blackmore et al. 2014; Blackmore et al. 2015; Gribble 2014; Gribble et al. 2015; Harrison and Ip 2013; Morrice 2007; Patrick et al. 2008; Spooner-Lane et al. 2009). However, the findings of this paper expand the existing literature and argues that no study currently reports the experiences of the inequalities experienced of international students engaged in WIL as part of a vocational education course. Presented through the accounts of international students, discrimination and deskilling manifests in different forms in the context WIL, and that international students can respond by accepting (or misrecognising) these practices as normal. This can be justified in relation to the position of 'international student', and the highly competitive opportunity for an international workplace learning experience.

These findings reflect other contemporary studies that investigate the experiences of skilled migrants seeking employment in a new country (e.g. Erel 2010; Morrice 2007; Slade 2012; Syed 2008). For example, Morrice (2007 , p.156) found that migrants gaining relatively high levels of qualifications and skills in the UK did not guarantee employment, and that "negative and racist attitudes of employers" were practical barriers to access. More recent studies echo this and argue that skilled migrants continue to report discrimination related to race and ethnic origin (Shan 2013; Syed 2008), and language proficiency or even accent at work (Sawir et al. 2012).

This study found that for those international students who were able to access a WIL opportunity, their cultural capital was not always recognised, and could be placed in roles that underutilised their current skills or talents, or roles that were seen as irrelevant for their professional ambitions or course. In addition, some international students were paid unfavourably compared with domestic workers. Again, these circumstances reflect wider trends of migrant unemployment and migrant employment in low-skilled jobs (referred to as 'brain-waste' or 'brain abuse') (Bauder 2003; Brandi 2001; Liversage 2009), limited opportunities for upward mobility due to racism (Erel 2010; Junankar and Mahuteau 2005; Syed 2008), and the wage discrimination of migrants (Junankar et al. 2004; Syed 2008). Indeed, the issue of under payment or unpaid work appears to be an increasing feature of some labour markets (Stewart and Owens 2013), and more recently WIL (PhillipsKPA 2014). There is also evidence which suggests a wider emerging doxa that WIL should be exempt from wage payment if it is part of a course of education or training (Stewart and Owens 2013), thereby positioning it outside of equality and fair work regulatory boundaries.

However, this study also found that international students exercised their agency, navigating the structures imposed on them to change their situation or even begin to challenge the doxa in the particular workplace setting. Billett points to this in the "active and constructive character" of "centre stage in the dual processes of learning and remaking culturally derived practices" (2009, p. 210). The role of localised knowledge appeared to be important in this process, and was accessed through people they had come to know as constituting their social capital. This reflects research that indicates the important role of educational institutions in helping students prepare for WIL and develop social and cultural capital before undertaking WIL, especially in relation to confronting marginalisation, exploitation and deskilling in the workplace setting (e.g. Mills 2008; Thomas, 2002). Various institutional mediating factors, ranging from institutional policy, strategies, resources to teachers' and WIL coordinators' involvement, are important to such preparation and the development of habitus that are essential to students' capacity to successfully undertake WIL. Although Mills (2008) argued for the possibility of such activity to tackle the re-production of inequalities in the workplace, studies indicate that those in charge of WIL may not be adequately prepared to supervise international students (Rai 2002; Zunz and Oil 2009), and approaches to supporting international students throughout their WIL experience are still lacking (Gibson and Busby 2009; Tran 2013).

Erel (2010) and more recently Gale and Parker (2015) recognise that although disadvantaged, students can also express their agency through developing 'navigational capacity' (Appadurai 2004), especially by enhancing appropriate capital before and during the workplace learning experience. There are a number of pedagogical responses and approaches which develop such adaptive capacities in the context of workplace learning experiences. These include *accommodating* the needs of a diverse transcultural community, *integrating* examples or cases of vocational practices across cultural boundaries, *connecting* with (and validating) the specific prior experiences and practices of students from across cultures, and *reciprocating* which creates a mutual learning development journey, where the student and teacher become learning companions (Tran 2013; Wall and Tran 2016, 2015).

Such pedagogical practices have been linked to more expansive learning opportunities and learning achievement, because of a more individualised response to the particular circumstances of the individual (Wall, 2016a, 2016b, forthcoming). Such adaptive and reciprocal approaches involve the explicit development of navigational capacities that target social and cultural capital of both the international student and tutor. However, it is important to recognise that these are only two stakeholders in the WIL context, and that the employer

and employees who constitute the WIL site have a major role in enacting (and challenging) social structures and doxa. No empirical work currently exists which explores the role or potential of employers or employees within reciprocal pedagogic relationships in WIL, but additional research in this area could provide further insight into the dynamics of agency and inequities in WIL contexts, and further avenues for practice development.

Conclusion

Seeing international tertiary education as a means to develop professional skills and knowledge and enhance employment prospects is becoming increasingly common among international students. Within this context, workplace experiences are valuable assets to international students in terms of their employability and migration, their capabilities for social interaction, and exposure to alternative cultures. Workplace experiences are more than just a component of vocational courses, but have become a passport to their participation in the labour market after graduation, migration, and social integration. This paper shows, however, that international students experience a range of disadvantages, marginalisation and deskilling within the WIL learning context.

This paper contributes additional evidence that WIL can be problematic for international students, and highlights multiple manifestations of discrimination and deskilling. When faced with discrimination or deskilling, international students can accept (or misrecognise) these circumstances as a normal and natural part of the everyday fabric of working in a foreign country. Such treatment can even be legitimised by the students themselves in relation to their status as an 'international student' with fewer rights. Iinternational students can nevertheless challenge such circumstances, and building and utilising forms of social capital, including tutors, appeared to be important in enabling these students to exercise their agency.

In these ways, this study re-emphasises and increases the significance of the preparation of international students before and during workplace learning experiences, but most importantly, in relation to developing a navigational capacity to enhance the cultural and social capital of the international student in the WIL context. For example, by using their networks to find out more about their rights in the host country.

Various pedagogical practices explicitly develop the cultural and social capital of students from across cultural settings, and these can be seen as part of an embedded approach to supporting the workplace learning experiences of international students. This is particularly important to enable international students to be able to expand the learning opportunities available to them in WIL contexts, and do so which respects diversity in the workplace.

This paper calls for more proactively inclusive support and pedagogic practices in WIL that promote reciprocal understandings in and through the provision of WIL that should be instituted for all involved in the provision of WIL. This, it is more likely to promote educational as well as equality and diversity outcomes within the context of WIL.

References

Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. E. (2009). *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution*. Paris: UNESCO.

Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition. In Y. Rao, & M. Walton (Eds.), *Culture and public action* (pp. 59-84). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Archer, W., & Davison, J. (2008). *Graduate employability*. London: The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

Bathmaker, A. M. (2015). Thinking with Bourdieu: thinking after Bourdieu. Using 'field' to consider in/equalities in the changing field of English higher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 45*(1), 61-80.

Bauder, H. (2003). 'Brain abuse'', or the devaluation of immigrant labour in Canada. *Antipode, 35*(4), 699-717.

Biesta, G., & Tedder, M. (2007). Agency and learning in the lifecourse: Towards an ecological perspective. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 39*(2), 132-149.

Billett, S. (2009). Personal epistemologies, work and learning. *Educational Research Review, 4*(3), 210-219.

Billett, S. (2010). Lifelong learning and self: work, subjectivity and learning. *Studies in Continuing Education, 32*(1), 1-16, doi:10.1080/01580370903534223.

Billett, S. (2014). Learning in the circumstances of practice. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 33*(5), 674-693.

Blackmore, J., Gribble, C., Farrell, L., Rahimi, M., Arber, R., & Devlin, M. (2014). *Australian International Graduates and the Transition to Employment*. Melbourne: Australian Research Council / Deakin University, Melbourne.

Blackmore, J., Gribble, C., & Rahimi, M. (2015). International education, the formation of capital and graduate employment: Chinese accounting graduates' experiences of the Australian labour market. *Critical Studies in Education*, 1-20.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press.Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* London: Sage.

Brandi, C. M. (2001). Skilled immigrants in Rome. *International Migration, 39*(4), 101-103.

Caruana, V. (2014). Re-thinking Global Citizenship in Higher Education: from Cosmopolitanism and International Mobility to Cosmopolitanisation, Resilience and Resilient Thinking. *Higher Education Quarterly, 68*(1), 85-104.

Clark, M., & Zukas, M. (2013). A Bourdieuian approach to understanding employability: becoming a 'fish in water'. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 65*(2), 208-219.

Colley, H., James, D., Diment, K., & Tedder, M. (2003). Learning as becoming in vocational education and training: class, gender and the role of vocational habitus. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 55*(4), 471–498.

Connor, H., & Brown, R. (2009). *Value of Graduates: Employers' Perspective*. London: The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What Is Agency? *American Journal of Sociology, 103*(4), 962-1023.

Erel, U. (2010). Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies. *Sociology, 44*(4), 642-660.

Gale, T., & Parker, S. (2015). Calculating student aspiration: Bourdieu, spatiality and the politics of recognition. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 45*(1), 81-96.

Gamble, N., Patrick, C.-J., & Peach, D. (2010). Internationalising work-integrated learning: creating global citizens to meet the economic crisis and the skills shortage. *Higher Education Research & Development, 29*(5), 535–546.

Gibson, P., & Busby, G. (2009). Experiencing work: Supporting the undergraduate hospitality, tourism and cruise management student on an overseas work placement. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 61*(4), 467-480.

Gribble, C. (2014). *Employment, work placements and work integrated learning of international students in Australia - Research Digest 2*. Melbourne: International Education Association of Australia.

Gribble, C., Blackmore, J., & Rahimi, M. (2015). Challenges to providing work integrated learning to international business students at Australian universities. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 5*(4), 401-416.

Harrison, G., & Ip, R. (2013). Extending the terrain of inclusive education in the classroom to the field: International students on placement. *Social Work Education, 5*(2), 25-35.

Hopwood, N. (2010). A sociocultural view of doctoral students' relationships and agency. *Studies in Continuing Education, 32*(2), 117.

Inui, Y., Wheeler, D., & Lankford, S. (2006). Rethinking tourism education: What should schools teach? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 5*(2), 25-35.

James, D. (2015). How Bourdieu bites back: recognising misrecognition in education and educational research. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 45*(1), 97-112.

Junankar, P. N., & Mahuteau, S. (2005). Do migrants get good jobs? New migrant settlement in Australia. *The Economic Record, 81*(255), S34−S46.

Junankar, P. N., Paul, S., & Yasmeen, W. (2004). *Are Asian migrants discriminated against in the labour market? A case study of Australia - Discussion Papers 1167*. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.

Lawson, C. (2012). *Student voices: enhancing the experience of international students in Australia*. Sydney: Australian Education International.

Liversage, A. (2009). Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies *Finding a path: investigating the labour market trajectories of high-skilled immigrants in Denmark, 35*(2), 203-226.

Mills, C. (2008). Reproduction and transformation of inequalities in schooling: the transformative potential of the theoretical constructs of Bourdieu. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 29*(1), 79-89.

Morrice, L. (2007). Lifelong learning and the social integration of refugees in the UK: The significance of social capital. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 26*(2), 155-172.

Murray, D., Blackmore, J., Gribble, C., & Hall, R. (2012). *Internships and work placement opportunities for international students in Victoria: A report prepared for the Victorian Department of Business and Innovation by the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)*. Melbourne: International Education Association of Australia.

Nolan, K. (2012). Dispositions in the field: Viewing mathematics teacher education through the lens of Bourdieu's social field theory. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 80*(1-2), 201-215.

OECD (2014). Indicator C4 - Who studies abroad and where? In OECD (Ed.), *Education at a Glance - OECD Indicators* (pp. 342-361). Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD (2015). Preparing students for the future. In OECD (Ed.), *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen* (pp. 57-75). Paris: OECD Publishing.

Orrell, J. (2011). *Good practice report: Work integrated learning*. Surry Hills: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

Patrick, C.-j., Peach, D., Pocknee, C., Webb, F., Fletcher, M., & Pretto, G. (2008). *The WIL Report: Work Integrated Learning - A National Scoping Study [Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Final Report]*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.

Pham, L., & Tran, L. T. (2015). Understanding the symbolic capital of intercultural interactions: a case study of international students in Australia. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 25*(3), 204-224.

PhillipsKPA (2014). *Engaging Employers in Work Integrated Learning: Current State and Future Priorities - Report to the Department of Industry*. Victoria: PhillipsKPA.

Rai, G. (2002). Meeting the educational needs of international students: a perspective from US schools. *International Social Work, 45*(1), 21-33.

Reay, D. (2004). 'It's all becoming a habitus': Beyond the habitual use of habitus in educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 25*(4), 431-444.

Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Forbes-Mewett, H., Nyland, C., & Ramia, G. (2012). International student security and English language proficiency. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 16*(5), 434-454.

Shan, H. (2013). Skill as a relational construct: hiring practices from the standpoint of Chinese immigrant engineers in Canada. *Work, Employment & Society, 27*(6), 915-931.

Simons, M., Harris, R., & Smith, E. (2006). *The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Learning: Understanding Learners and Learning*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Slade, B. (2012). "From High Skill to High School" Illustrating the Process of Deskilling Immigrants Through Reader's Theatre and Institutional Ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry, 18*(5), 401-413.

Spooner-Lane, R., Tangen, D., & Campbell, M. (2009). The complexities of supporting Asian international pre-service teachers as they undertake practicum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(1), 79–94, doi:10.1080/13598660802530776.

Stewart, A., & Owens, R. (2013). *Experience or Exploitation: The Nature Prevalence and Regulation of Unpaid Work Experience, Internships and Trial Periods in Australia*. Adelaide: The University of Adelaide and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and education: how useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers? *Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences, 38*(2), 144-166.

Syed, J. (2008). Employment prospects for skilled migrants: A relational perspective. *Human Resource Management Review, 18*(1), 28-45.

Thomas, L. (2002). Student retention in higher education: the role of institutional habitus. *Journal of Education Policy, 17*(4), 423-442.

Tran, L. T. (2013). Internationalisation of Vocational Education and Training: An Adapting Curve for Teachers and Learners. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 17*(4), 492-507.

Tran, L. T. (2013a). *Teaching international students in vocational education and training: New pedagogical approaches*. Camberwell: Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) Press.

Tran, L. T. (2015). Mobility as 'becoming': a Bourdieuian analysis of the factors shaping international student mobility. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, doi:10.1080/01425692.2015.1044070.

Tran, L. T., Marginson, S., Do, H., Do, Q., Le, T., Nguyen, N., et al. (2014). *Higher Education in Vietnam: Flexibility, Mobility and Practicality in the Global Knowledge Economy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tran, L. T., & Nyland, C. (2011). International vocational education and training–the migration and learning mix. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 51*(1), 8-31.

Tran, L. T., & Pham, L. (2015). International students in transnational mobility: Intercultural Connectedness with domestic and international peers, institutions and the wider community. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, doi:10.1080/03057925.2015.1057479.

Tran, L. T., & Soejatminah, S. (2016). 'Get foot in the door': International students' perceptions of work integrated learning. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 1-19, doi:10.1080/00071005.2015.1128526.

Wacquant, L. (2008). Pierre Bourdieu. In R. Stones (Ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers* (pp. 261–277). New York: Palgrave.

Wall, T. (2013). Diversity through negotiation. In K. Bridger, I. Reid, & J. Shaw (Eds.), *Inclusive Higher Education: An International Perspective on Access and the Challenge of Student Diversity* (pp. 87-98). Faringdon: Libri Publishing.

Wall, T. (2016a) Author Response: Provocative Education: From Buddhism for Busy People® to Dismal Land ®, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, March.

Wall, T. (2016b, forthcoming) Žižekian ideas in critical reflection: the tricks and traps of mobilising radical management insight, *Journal of Work Applied Management*, forthcoming.

Wall, T., & Tran, L. T. (2015). Becoming an international work-based learner. In R. Helyer (Ed.), *The Work-Based Learning Student Handbook* (second edition ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Wall, T., & Tran, L. T. (2016). A transcultural dance: enriching work-based learning facilitation. In R. Helyer (Ed.), *Facilitating Work-Based Learning: a Handbook for Tutors*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Webb, S. (2015). Learning to be through migration: Transformation learning and the role of learning communities. *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, 8*(1), 62.

Zunz, S., & Oil, K. (2009). A preliminary look at international students in MSW field placements at nonurban US campuses. *Jounal of Social Work Education, 45*(1), 131-137.