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Title: Graduate Preparation as a Continuum of Transgression and Transformation

Abstract category: Enhancing the employability capabilities and confidence of students as they prepare to transition into new professional environments

References to ‘transitions into’ university and ‘transitions out’ into professional practice presuppose two main thresholds in a student’s tertiary experience; one between the start of a course and that which came before; and the other between the end of the course and that which follows. From a philosophical position the act of crossing any threshold is immensely powerful. As Kingwell (2003) states: “This crossing is no simple matter, though we may blithely perform it dozens or even hundreds of times a day [as in the case of a physical threshold such as a doorway]. What is involved here? What relationships of time and space, of consciousness and identity, of necessity and freedom, are created by the move from outside to in, and back again?” (p. 1).

In this presentation, this existential notion of threshold is used to explore the phenomenon of graduate preparation for professional practice. Using a specific work integrated learning (WIL) program as an example, the presentation argues the need for students to experience the crossing over into the work place and back again into academia several times throughout their course in order to adequately enhance employability capabilities and confidence. In contrast to most approaches to work integrated learning, the approach described in this presentation emphasises the significance of the threshold transgression continuum in the transformation of the student and their learning; a transformation facilitated by particular relationships of time and space, of consciousness and identity, of necessity and freedom.