

Reflective Journal

ACE-WIL Practitioner's Professional Development: Supporting the WIL Student Journey

Use this Reflective Journal to record your thinking and ideas. You may want to write about ideas that are new for you as a WIL Practitioner or focus on something that you have wanted to improve for a while.

The outcomes of your reflections can offer you a better understanding of yourself as a WIL Practitioner. You should leave this professional development opportunity with:

- a clearer understanding of your professional knowledge,
- knowledge of your practices that intentionally support the WIL student journey, and
- ideas about how to shift your professional practices in ways that align with your interests and the scholarship.

Reflective Prompts

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AS A WIL PRACTITIONER

What drew me to my work in WIL? What makes me good at my job as a WIL educator? What do I need to learn a bit more about in my role?

What is my approach to working with students? Where did I learn this? Does this work for all students? In what ways am I flexible in my approach and in what ways am I fixed?

What is going on with the students in my program? What are their challenges?

What do I love about my work and what do I struggle with? What seems to work well (or not) in my support of WIL students throughout their journey? What would I like to see or help to develop? What do I need to learn more about?

What other areas of interest in the WIL field might I have? What do I hope to contribute to WIL?

What would I like to see happen in the field of WIL (at my institution, in my province, in Canada) and what role can I play in that?

EXPLORE YOUR LENSES

What are three things you value as a professional in WIL?

Where might you have learned to value these things? Think of individual influences and the ways social groups have influenced you to value these things.

How do these values inform your work with WIL students? Do you value the same things? How do you know?

Have you encountered any challenges to your own values or views in your work? What kinds of responses or reactions do you have when you are presented with values that are different or even opposite to your own? How do you work through those?

WHAT IS WIL AND WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT?

Pause for a moment and think about your role in support of students at all stages of the WIL journey. Do you feel that your role is an *educative* one? What we mean by educative is that *your interactions with your students includes reciprocity and are grounded in the element of exchange*. We can think of it in terms of the WIL Practitioner as not simply a placement officer, rather, playing an active role in helping the WIL student get the most from their experience. In thinking about it this way, both the student and the WIL Practitioner contribute to what is brought into the educational relationship and this will certainly differ for the WIL student at different stages of their WIL journey.

PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES DRIVEN APPROACH

Take a moment to reflect on the types of WIL offered at your institution. Review the WIL types again to see how your WIL program may align with one or more types of WIL. While imperfect, having shared terminology for various WIL types helps us speak about their unique traits, conduct and share WIL research, track various types of WIL participation, and plan strategic growth of experience-based education. Whether at the program, institutional, provincial, or national level it is important to know what *you* mean by the term WIL in *your* context - what programs fall under that umbrella for you, and how they “fit” with other WIL programs at your institution and beyond.

In reflecting on the WIL program(s) at your institution you may want to ask yourself:

What is the primary purpose of the programs that are offered? What is your WIL program trying to accomplish for students, the institution, employers, and other important stakeholders? What are the expected outcomes of the program and how do you measure them?

By thinking through these questions, you will be better able to assess the quality attributes of your program.

QUALITY IN WIL

Think about your WIL program(s) and take a moment to unpack your offerings and understand the quality attributes that are present and/or absent. Do you see some evidence of the quality attributes noted? Do

you see opportunities for growth and possible program renewal? Is there one thing you could do right away that would make a positive difference?

WORKING TOWARDS INCLUSION

Think about a few examples from your WIL program to assess for justice, equity, decolonization, and inclusion.

How are marginalized students addressed in your materials? Is it enough? Who else might you need to chat with?

What is one change you might be able to champion immediately?

If you could change on things about your style in working with diverse students, what would it be?

INCLUSIVE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Please engage with the following reflection questions and think about your WIL programs with an equity lens.

Who defines professionalism? Who is left out of that definition? What does this mean in the WIL student journey?

What policies, language, and practices are at play in WIL students' applications to your program? How might that be a barrier to students who experience marginalization?

What kinds of supports are in place regarding accommodation?

Who liaises with employers and community partners to ensure that students are in workplaces that value diversity?

TOOLS THAT SUPPORT TRANSFER OF LEARNING

WIL experiences provide many opportunities for learning in a variety of contexts as well as many opportunities for the deep reflection (through program worksheets, reflective exercises, and de-briefings) that is needed to identify the concepts that they can mobilize to their advantage in their next learning environment.

Take a moment to review or think about some of your program's resource materials - do they support metacognitive thinking?

THEORIES OF LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

For each attribute, consider your WIL program by engaging with the following reflection questions:

Thinking about the attributes, learning theories and concepts, how might you translate them to your own WIL program via various activities?

Are students actively included in the program design and delivery at various stages of their journey? (e.g. do they set their own learning goals? Do they get to determine their WIL activity? Do students self-assess and evaluate? Do they mentor other WIL students?)

Are the learning contexts of the WIL activity authentic? Are they closely related to the context the dominant skills and knowledge gained is intended to be used? (e.g. the student is an employee, the student is in a simulator environment, the student activity is on site and hands on, the project is provided by an employer host, the WIL activity is assessed by an employer host)

How often, and in what ways, is critical reflection embedded in your design and delivery? (e.g. do students keep a reflective journal or blog? Do students work together upon return to campus to share and reflect on collective experiences? Do assignments and reports reflect more critical than descriptive reflection?)

YOUR PRACTICE

Based on the theories, principles, and lenses, how will you integrate new learnings? Did you learn anything that challenges the assumptions that lie beneath your current practices?

What things stood out to you that may support or challenge the achievement of your goals? For example, what challenges might students have and what supports or challenges exist in your context?

Have you thought about the diversity of your students and how to be inclusive and culturally sensitive?

Have you considered your role as a facilitator of learning, the design of supportive and intentional learning experiences, and quality WIL experiences?

Given what you have come to understand, take some time to revisit your goals. Take look at the goals you set for yourself. Are you asking the right question(s)? Did any information invite you to rethink your goals and reframe your question? Would you shift your goals in any way?