

## PRESENTATION PAPERS - MEDIA, CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS -

It has also meant that industry approaches us for particular events when students can be involved. Eg. I had over 120 students involved working full-time on Media issues at the 2006 Commonwealth Games some of whom made such good contacts that they secured further paid work at the Asian Games with a variety of freelancers while 20 students worked on improving their sports journalism by working on a start-up web-site with the AFL Past Players in 2005. This all creates contacts and work opportunities for students in a complex industry which is essentially closed off to the outside world of job advertisements.

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This work cannot all be included within the semester dates of universities for either staff or students. I allow students to complete throughout the year, as they must not miss any other class. This means that I have to be available for most of the year (including research time and vacations) to deal with the problems which normally appear. Also industry cannot absorb all the available students at the one time, especially now that many institutions are developing internship programs.

As universities are challenged to reduce cost and account for time of each staff member how do we account this type of valuable work?

### Careers, career development and creative arts students: an investigation of the impact of work integrated learning within undergraduate curricula

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#### Brief description of academic area:

The School of Creative Arts at James Cook University delivers Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors, Honours, Masters and PhD programs across the broad spectrum of the creative arts. The relevant sub-disciplines are broadly referred to as creative industries, creative arts, music, photography and digital imaging, visual arts, performance arts, and design. The professional studies component is core to the third and final year of the Bachelors degrees in New Media Arts, Creative Arts and Creative Industries.

#### Particular focus for WIL initiative or activity:

The relevant WIL initiative is implemented at third year level of the three undergraduate degrees. The focus is to provide a thorough preparation platform for students in relation to their career beyond the University. It is in place to connect students to the industry in meaningful, tangible and achievable ways. The key intended learning outcomes are:

- an in depth understanding of the relevant creative industries;
- networking and industry engagement skills; and
- pathways for further development and engagement with the professions.

#### Process for enacting WIL:

The final industry placement (or WIL) is the culmination of a scaffolded program of knowledge and skill development relevant to establishing a career in the creative industries beyond the University environment. In terms of this process, students engage in the following sequence of learning activities and assessment tasks:

Introduction to, analysis and understanding of core career theory concepts and interpretations (Holland, Super, Krumboltz and Constructivist);

An explication of how the student relates to or engages with one or more theories and relevancy to the creative industries;

An "industry research report" which includes an: overview and understanding of the student's explicit industry area/niche at international, national and local perspectives; case studies of 10 practitioners in their field(s); and a final reflective statement which places their new knowledge and understandings within their career framework and plan, including a process of identifying any aspects of "positive" compromise and adjustment.

A structured "community of reflective practitioners" where students present a seminar that overviews their findings and directions towards an industry placement; A detailed process of the strategies and skills required to pursue an engagement (WIL) with industry, including a number of in-class workshop and practice activities; An industry

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placement of 30 hours minimum that may be at any location and that is a negotiated and approved experience that fits within the employer or supervisor's industry settings and the University's policy settings; and a final reflective summary which includes an employer/supervisor report on the placement (WIL) and that is designed to require the students to tie all learning activities and procedures together.

#### Outcomes:

As identified above, students achieve a significantly greater understanding of the reality and relevancy of their goals, ambitions and desires in terms of a career as well as a direct opportunity to put theory into practice. Evidence of the success of the intended subject outcomes are best evidenced by the following sample of students' feedback achieved in both formal assessment tasks and the University's feedback on subjects:

"...until I took on this subject, I found [balancing experience and employer knowledge] difficult to come to terms with. Now I can quite easily see the pathway forward" (Bachelor of Creative Industries student 2008)

"I learnt a great deal about myself .... My future plans have been enhanced by this experience" (Bachelor of Visual Arts student 2008)

"...I feel more informed about how to start my own career. Before this year I was not quite sure how to begin" (Bachelor of Creative Arts student 2008)

"This semester has been one of the biggest eye openers of my life .... I have learnt so much over the last semester about pursuing a realistic career in the performance arts" (Bachelor of Creative Industries student 2008)

#### Issues arising for discussion (4-5 points)

This program relies on a carefully constructed and theorised set of activities and assessment tasks that lead students to develop a realistic yet flexible career plan and set of objectives. This approach to engaging the students in the process is a challenge. Given the industry-oriented nature of the program, there are various issues that must be addressed and supported in terms of the logistics and management of the placement aspect e.g. time lines, minimal places at key organizations, supervision issues and reporting. Generation Y poses a new set of challenges in terms of the successful implementation of this program. These challenges include issues of immediacy, relevance and priority. There is a risk in this program for students to choose a "safety net" option that provides minimal extension to their existing knowledge and experience base. Developing internal confidences and drive is particularly challenging in many cases.

