

Student and educator perspectives on equity and online work integrated learning

Amani Bell, Kathryn Bartimote

The University of Sydney

Nora Dempsey

Virtual Student Federal Service, United States Department of State

Lucy Mercer-Mapstone, Gulwanyang Moran, Jim Tognolini

The University of Sydney

Students from diverse backgrounds report that time pressures, financial responsibilities, caring commitments, and geographic location are barriers to their uptake of work integrated learning (WIL). Through interviews with 32 students and 15 educators who participated in online WIL, we investigated whether online WIL might be one way of overcoming these barriers. Benefits of online WIL for students included employability skills, meaningful work, affordability, and flexibility when coping with health issues. Challenges for students included missing out on workplace interactions, digital access, and finding a private space in which to work. Students from diverse backgrounds were viewed by educators as bringing positive contributions to the workplace. Educators found challenges in giving feedback and not being able to replicate some aspects of in-person workplaces. We conclude with recommendations on how online WIL might be enhanced to better meet the needs of students facing equity issues.

Implications for practice and policy:

- All participants in online WIL should be encouraged to intentionally view diversity as a strength.
- Educators need to create explicit opportunities for formal and informal interaction and network building during online WIL.
- Educators should provide engaging and purposeful work during online WIL.
- Students may need additional financial or material support to undertake online WIL, for example to enable digital access and access to a private workspace.

Keywords: internships; placements; employability; diversity; virtual work integrated learning; remote work integrated learning; qualitative research

Introduction

Work integrated learning (WIL), where students apply their academic learning in a workplace setting, is a valuable opportunity for students to gain situated knowledge, skills, and experience (Orrell, 2018). WIL “integrates formal learning with the practical application of acquired skills and knowledge in an industry-infused environment. WIL offers exposure to industry through an authentic learning experience” (Jackson, 2018, p. 24). Participation is believed to contribute to employability and to ease the transition from university to career (McCarthy & Swain, 2019). Given these benefits, it is increasingly expected that Australian universities provide all students with access to WIL. However, recent WIL data provided by all Australian universities showed significant disparities in WIL participation for students from the following equity groups: Indigenous, low and mid socioeconomic status, rural and regional (Universities Australia, 2019). Table 1 shows WIL participation rates by student characteristics, noting that the overall average participation rate is 37.4% (451,263 of 1,206,585 students had a WIL experience). Equivalent data are not available from the United States, our other study site, however it is estimated that around 49% of senior students take part in an internship while in college in the United States (Hora et al., 2020).

Table 1

WIL participation rates in Australia by student characteristic (Universities Australia, 2019, p. 27)

Student characteristic	Participation rate %
Indigenous	31.1
Non-Indigenous	37.3
Low Socioeconomic status	27.8
Mid Socioeconomic status	32.4
High Socioeconomic status	48.6
Remote	27.2
Regional	34.1
Metropolitan	37.7
Total for all students	37.4

Students from diverse backgrounds face challenges in accessing WIL, such as financial barriers and distance from workplaces (Universities Australia, 2019, pp. 29-30), as well as other labour market barriers such as caring responsibilities and disability. For example, students with limited financial means may not be able to afford the travel and accommodation costs associated with in person WIL, and may not be able to leave their paid work. The United States and Australia are the world's fourth and sixth largest countries by landmass, respectively (Statista, n.d) and students who live in remote or rural areas away from major cities may not have local WIL options available. We posit that online WIL, where students complete their work experiences from a location that is remote from the workplace, is one way of potentially addressing some barriers to student participation in WIL. For example, if students are able to participate in online WIL, they save on travel and accommodation costs and may be able to keep working in a part time job. This paper explores the benefits and challenges of online WIL from the perspectives of students and educators gathered via interviews in Australia and the United States.

Literature review

This literature review covers three key topics. First, we discuss the research on WIL and equity. We then explore online WIL, and conclude with issues related to online WIL and equity.

Work integrated learning and equity

While “issues of race, gender and sexuality equality, commonly discussed in educational literature, are rare in studies of [WIL]”, (Fenwick 2018, p. 375), our literature review has revealed some projects and studies that have explored WIL and equity in the Australian context. Findings of these studies include that: internships add to the financial and time pressures experienced by students facing equity issues (Lloyd, 2017); and better training, support, and vetting of potential WIL workplaces and supervisors is required (Grant-Smith & Gillett-Swan, 2017). While principles and guidelines for inclusive WIL have been developed (Peach et al., 2016; Winchester-Seeto et al., 2015), students from disadvantaged backgrounds need support to access WIL (O’Shea, 2019), and students with disability identify lack of work experience as one of the top challenges they face in gaining meaningful work (Eckstein, 2020).

Palmer et al. (2018) remind us that ‘the students least able to participate in WIL are the same students who face systemic graduate labor market barriers’ (p. 373). We propose that online WIL may be one way of reducing these barriers faced by students from backgrounds presenting equity issues. To explore this further, we discuss the literature on online WIL in the following section.

Online WIL

Within the literature, and in practice, online WIL is known by many names, including remote WIL, virtual WIL, virtual internships, and eWIL. We use the following definition from Wood et al. (2020):

[A] WIL experience focused on the student completing authentic, relevant actual tasks for an organisation through a remote connection to the workplace/community. This means the student is physically separated from the workplace/community and located elsewhere. (p. 333)

Online WIL takes many forms. For example in telehealth placements students treat clients under the supervision of a clinician, all via an online platform. Another form of online WIL is where students remotely complete a work-based project with regular guidance from a workplace mentor – for example developing, running and evaluating a small organisation’s social media strategy for a period of time.

Benefits of online WIL include: preparing students for remote work (Waters & Russell, 2016); cost savings for students and organisations (Jeske & Axtell, 2017); and international collaborations (Jeske & Linehan, 2020). Waters and Russell (2016) found that students sometimes perceived that online WIL would be more flexible in terms of time than in-person WIL, but this was not the case in practice. Some students and educators commented on the lack of physical interaction and missing out on incidental and social interactions (Leath, 2009). However overall “there is a gap in the WIL literature surrounding students’ thoughts and feelings regarding remote working and desired supports’ (Pretti et al. 2020, p. 403). In the next section, we turn our attention to online WIL and equity to present what is already known.

Online WIL and equity

In much of the literature on online WIL, there is a predisposition towards viewing online WIL as a solely positive experience for students dealing with equity issues. Online WIL was considered as a positive for students who lived in areas far from major cities (e.g. Franks & Oliver, 2012), had financial constraints (e.g. Jeske & Axtell, 2019), family responsibilities (e.g. Franks & Oliver, 2012) or disabilities (e.g. Jeske & Linehan, 2020). Negatives and possible barriers to online WIL such as access to technology were rarely explored. Waters and Russell began to problematise the supposed benefits of online WIL, such as flexibility, but put the responsibility back onto the students to “develop good time management skills” (2016, p. 17). On occasion, online WIL has also been viewed as having benefits for clients from diverse backgrounds, with whom students were working. for example not having to travel to access health services (e.g. Paterson et al., 2019).

More recently, studies have begun to focus on experiences of online learning, including WIL, during COVID-19. Several of these researchers noted that students undertaking online WIL struggled to negotiate online interactions with co-workers and clients, reporting that “[m]anaging client relationships and the development of rapport in a virtual space required concerted effort due to the lack of face-to-face interaction” (Salter et al. 2020, p. 596) and the students “missed the personal atmosphere of an in-office setting’ (Pretti et al. 2020, p. 406). Issues with working/learning from home were also noted by some researchers (e.g. Salter et al., 2020; Mulrooney & Kelly, 2020). Bowen (2020) found that many students undertaking online WIL during COVID-19:

[L]acked an appropriate space ... Students told me during this time that their [home] work spaces did not meet the standards for more professional work, and blurred the boundaries between work and home, affecting their motivation, and compounding their stress. (p. 378).

Although these recent studies touched on equity issues to various degrees, there is a need to understand more about the experiences and outcomes of students from under-represented groups who undertake online WIL. Our research addresses this gap by providing more depth about the experiences of students and educators regarding equity and online WIL.

The research questions we investigated in our study were:

1. What are the benefits and challenges of online WIL as reported by students from diverse backgrounds?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of online WIL as reported by educators?
3. How might online WIL be enhanced and systematically supported to better meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and their educators?

Conceptual framework

Our research was informed, inspired, and challenged by two key concepts: WIL for social justice (McArthur, 2018) and the manifesto for teaching online (Bayne et al., 2020). We applied McArthur’s assessment for social justice (2018) to WIL. McArthur’s work is informed by critical theory, particularly

the third generation theorist, Honneth. A view of WIL for social justice emphasises the interconnection between individual and social wellbeing, and that students need a sense of contribution to society. The core of this interconnection is a “mutual recognition of others, who they are, what they do and their inherent worth” (McArthur, 2018, p. 58). McArthur asks us to consider the lived realities of students and whether “when we make lists of graduate attributes or employability skills ... do the conditions for their realisation genuinely exist?” (p. 61).

We found the provocations of the manifesto for teaching online productive to work with and against, for example: “Distance is temporal, affective, political: not simply spatial” (Bayne et al., 2020, p. 153). This statement focusses attention on the diverse experiences of students and educators – that while technology helps bridge physical distances, when teaching online we need to recognise that participants bring their own unique personal and local “geographies and histories” (p. 153). The manifesto reminds us that we need to view the online space on its own terms rather than always in relation to the physical campus, or in our case, the physical workplace. Taken together, the two lenses, WIL for social justice and the manifesto for teaching online, urge us to consider the importance of relationships, a sense of contribution, and context. We applied this conceptual framework to our research by using it to help us interpret and understand our findings.

Method

Context

Our project included perspectives from both Australia and the United States of America, via a collaboration with the Virtual Student Federal Service (VSFS) which is run by the United States Department of State. The VSFS was established in 2009 to make work experience with government agencies more accessible to students by removing geographic and financial barriers. Students from across the United States participate in virtual internships with United States government agencies and the VSFS has offered over 10,000 such virtual internships since it began (Virtual Student Federal Service [VSFS], n.d.). VSFS interns work remotely on projects for around 10 hours per week from September until May, connecting with their workplace educators, known as mentors, by email, phone, or video meeting. While some students have worked with their academic institutions to receive course credit for their VSFS placements, in the United States the model of unpaid internships outside of coursework requirements is common (Perlin, 2012).

Any government employee may submit a project; projects cover a wide range of activities including graphic design, data visualisation, app development, literature reviews, digital diplomacy, public outreach liaison, and research. In 2020 the VSFS had over 2,000 positions and nearly 8,000 applicants, with applications greatly increased due to COVID-19 (Konkel, 2020). The VSFS team offers support to the government-employed educators via a check-in process, a handbook, and support with any challenges that are encountered.

In Australia, WIL is generally embedded within university curricula, with students receiving academic credit upon successful completion. There are small-scale online WIL initiatives at Australian universities - more so since the COVID-19 pandemic reached Australian shores in early 2020. Inspired by the VSFS, the Innovative Research Universities are trialing online WIL projects in Australian government agencies (Innovative Research Universities, 2020).

Research team reflexivity

The COVID-19 pandemic began after this research was conceived in 2019 and impacted the project in several ways. Online WIL became much more prevalent in Australia, as Australian universities quickly moved to remote learning. We were unable to meet as a research team in person, with a planned trip to Washington DC to meet our VSFS partners being cancelled. We navigated online meetings and research interviews across time zones and our situations, such as supervising our school-aged children learning at home, separation from family members, missing in person interactions with colleagues, and anxieties about the state of the world. We also experienced some of the benefits of remote working mentioned by our participants, such as not commuting, flexible hours, and spending more time with family. During the research period, one of us was an educator of students undertaking telehealth placements. We learned much

about remote working through these personal experiences, giving us deeper insight into the responses from our research participants.

Sample

In the United States, VSFS students and educators were contacted via the closed VSFS LinkedIn Group, an email to past VSFS participants, and Twitter. In Australia, each of the 39 universities who are members of Universities Australia (the peak body for the sector) was contacted, and 13 gave permission for the research team to contact staff involved in WIL in order to request that they invite their students to participate in the study. In addition, the lead author sent an email inviting staff members involved in WIL to participate in interviews. The Australian universities covered a range of locations and types, from all states except the Northern Territory and Tasmania. We interviewed 15 educators (10 from Australia involved in various online WIL programs, and 5 from the United States, all from the VSFS). We interviewed 32 students: 2 from Australia, involved in an online WIL program, and 30 from the United States, all from the VSFS. Efforts to recruit more Australian students were unsuccessful – this disparity is discussed in the limitations section. The sample sizes (15 educators and 32 students) were based on our own expertise with qualitative studies as to what we felt would “generate adequate data to tell a rich, complex and multi-faceted story about patternings related to the phenomena of interest” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 11).

For clarity, we refer to all interviewees who participated in online WIL as students even though they might have now graduated. We use the term educators in a very broad sense because the focus of WIL is on education. Educator interviewees included clinical educators, VSFS mentors in government, and academics in charge of a WIL subject. Note that some student interviewees use the terms mentor or supervisor in their responses to refer to their educator.

While we did not directly collect demographic information from interviewees. We had an interview question where student participants were invited to self-disclose these details if they wished. Student interviewees identified with a range of equity categories – in some cases more than one, summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Equity considerations disclosed by student interviewees

Equity category	Total number of students	Student interview identification number
Not disclosed	7	1, 3, 7, 13, 14, 16, 32
Ethnic minority	10	4, 17, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
Financial issues/low income	7	2, 5, 10, 12, 18, 22, 23,
Disability	5	6, 12, 19, 22, 31
Carer	4	8, 9, 22, 23
Mental health	3	15, 17, 20
Religious minority	2	23, 24
Living far from major cities	2	8, 31
Woman in STEM	2	11, 18
LGBTQIA+	2	19, 25
Black	1	18
Veteran	1	21

A note about equity considerations: in Australia, the equity categories of interest to the Federal Government regarding higher education are low socioeconomic status students, students with disability, Indigenous students, women in non-traditional areas, students who live far from major cities, and culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, we recognise that there are several other identities and circumstances which impact students’ access to and experiences of higher education, such as being first in family to attend university, being LGBTQIA+ , having caring responsibilities, religious beliefs, being an older student, being a veteran, being a refugee, and so on. Equity categories of interest in the United States are similar. For example the Pell Institute examines college access and attainment related to race/ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, and first generation status (Cahalan et al., 2021). Students may of course belong to more than one of these groups.

Ethics approval

Approval for the research was granted by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (2020/420). A distress protocol was in place; however, no interviewees became distressed during the interviews. Gift cards (\$25 USD/\$40 AUD) were offered to participants in order to encourage participation and to show that we valued their time, noting that some educators elected to donate their gift card to a charity of their choice. All identifying information (e.g., names of people, organisations, and places) has been removed from the data, and participants are referred to as Student 1, Educator 1, and so on.

Interviews

Students and educators involved in online WIL were invited to participate in individual semi-structured Zoom interviews, of around 30 minutes on average. Interviewees were asked to elaborate on their experiences of an online placement, support provided, challenges, positive aspects, and whether (if they felt comfortable discussing) there were any issues around being or supervising a student from a diverse background that had an influence on the online placement. Amani Bell conducted the educator interviews. Gulwanyang Moran, an Indigenous student researcher, conducted the student interviews, as students are often more candid and comfortable when being interviewed by a fellow student (Abbot, 2018). In addition, it is important to ensure cultural safety when interviewing Indigenous/First Nations students (Bell & Benton, 2018), for example by discussing connections to Country. Country refers to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's connection to their ancestral lands and seas. It is a greatly significant and reciprocal relationship (Common Ground, 2021). The audio recordings were transcribed by a professional transcription service. Participants were asked if they wished to review their interview transcripts. Several did so and returned their transcripts with some minor amendments.

Analysis

The interview data were analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis. This qualitative method suits our conceptual framing as it is an approach that is "embedded in [the] theory" of the researchers' choice, that we can use to "make sense of the data" from our position of highlighting the importance of relationships, a sense of contribution, and context (Braun et al. 2019, p. 11). The analysis was carried out by two authors and discussed and refined as it progressed with the whole team. After reading and re-reading the interview data, we generated initial themes which we then reviewed and named. We wrote up the themes, with selected quotes from participants to "tell a story [and] make an argument" (Braun et al. 2019, p. 11).

Findings

We identified five themes across the interviews with students and educators: (1) interconnected relationships; (2) preparation for employment; (3) contribution to meaningful work; (4) challenges of the online space; and (5) online WIL is not simply spatial: equity considerations. We discuss each in turn below, with illustrative quotes. Note that since all but seven of the student interviewees disclosed equity issues, all of the themes touch on equity issues, but we delve into this area in more detail in theme 5.

Interconnected relationships

Students and educators discussed a range of interconnected relationships that developed during online WIL. Students appreciated the efforts of their educators in checking in, for example via weekly check ins, regular texts and emails, tailoring projects to student interests, and providing feedback. Educators elaborated on how they put in place structures and activities to welcome and orient students, and connect them with their team and peers:

The first assignment was to create a team poster, which was a roster of all our awesome interns ... and we did a team channel or group text so they could have a team identity and really work together. (Educator 4, United States)

Some educators had enacted strategies to ensure that all students had opportunities to contribute and to ask questions. One educator explained why creating a comfortable online environment for students to ask questions was important:

We wanted to make sure that they felt really comfortable and could ask questions and didn't feel worried about failing. Because innovation is all about failing quickly and picking yourself back up and learning from it ... if you're doing an internship for the government you're probably very afraid to fail. (Educator 4, United States)

Several students mentioned that their peers were an important source of support, and described how they used technology to collaborate and stay in touch with their peers:

The entire internship was run on [Microsoft] Teams and although it's not without its issues, it was still fairly manageable in terms of document sharing and collaboration and working on documents at the same time. Also, it meant we were able to have a general chat ... and then we had a separate chat for our individual groups, where we could jump on and off calls and use the chat function to send messages and share documents and links. I got quite close with my group by the end of it actually. (Student 20, United States)

The responses related to this theme indicated that setting up scaffolding for supporting both informal and formal educator-student and student-student connections in the online environment is critical for the success of online WIL initiatives.

Preparation for employment

Students and educators discussed the benefits for students in being able to create artefacts or a portfolio of work during online WIL to demonstrate their achievements to potential employers:

My name is on a good amount of things as far as publications and posts that I have on the website. I'm also a face in the "our team" section, so it's really cool to say I'm part of that organisation. (Student 18, United States)

Several students and educators mentioned that online WIL helped students to prepare for remote work - something that has become much more common during COVID-19:

I felt like it set me up for working remotely because with everything that's been going on [COVID-19] I've been working from home for the last 6 months. With the online internship, I was working remotely all the time so I had experience of holding myself accountable. (Student 9, United States)

Conversely, one student found that online WIL was good preparation for in-person work due to developing their communication skills:

It makes you a better communicator because those things are harder to do in a virtual environment. You know, because you're "well if I can do it in the most difficult of circumstances, then I can definitely do it in an office". (Student 5, United States)

Career mentoring and networking were discussed by many students and educators as key benefits of the experience. Educators set up informational interviews and students were able to meet "a lot of people in my field" (Student 18, United States). One educator mentioned that online WIL offers students a more realistic idea of what work a graduate in their field is likely to do – an "inside scoop" (Educator 4, United States). An educator in Australia similarly observed that:

We have a cohort of environmental science students and I think their default is to be in the middle of a forest counting possums. And the truth is that there's not that many jobs of that type and they're much more likely to do things like write policy for the government, so [the types of things they are doing as science virtual interns] like contributing to a report, writing policies, and looking at survey data [are good preparation]. (Educator 6, Australia)

The mentoring and networking provided and facilitated by educators led to students successfully gaining fellowships, jobs and entry into graduate school, and online WIL is viewed as a “good recruitment tool” (Educator 4, United States). These positive outcomes indicated that online placements may address some of the barriers students from diverse backgrounds face in entering the workforce.

Contribution to meaningful work

Educators and students mentioned a range of benefits beyond employability that were associated with online WIL, including contributing to the work of the organisation, for example: “I felt like we were able to make a tangible difference to the clients and the work of the legal centre, even though we weren't able to be there in person” (Student 20, United States). In some cases, online WIL enabled the expansion of projects that had previously been in-person:

Some [of our] partners are Indigenous communities, which are often remote, where students traditionally do a field trip over a few days or weeks which is great, but it's very hard to build an ongoing project over the course of a few weeks or even months. So now what's happening is we're having to work on digital Country basically. We're finding that the projects are getting longer and there's more opportunity to do different things because the timespan has stretched out because we're working online. (Educator 7, Australia)

Educators discussed some additional benefits of online WIL to those discussed by students, including targeting and structuring the learning, and being able to balance the contributions of quieter and more outspoken students. Educators also reported that online WIL enabled them to access a pool of high quality students that would not be available in their local area. Educators enjoyed the flexibility of online WIL in terms of “fitting it into the day” (Educator 12, Australia) and being able to work from “the comfort of my own home” (Educator 9, Australia). Educators found that mentoring the students was “very rewarding” (Educator 10, Australia) and developed their mentoring skill, for example: “I feel like it put my team on better behaviour. It definitely made us live our values more ... we wanted to be good mentors” (Educator 4, United States)

Challenges of the online space

Many students and educators noted the lack of in-person connection, such as “hallway chats” (Educator 9, Australia) and social catch ups, and that its absence made it harder to build rapport and relationships, commenting: “It was harder to develop that rapport and to really understand someone else's personality and work style without working with them in person on a regular basis” (Student 10, United States). This lack of relational development might be an additional barrier to students dealing with equity issues who may not have the social capital of privileged students, emphasising the importance of planning for the relationship-building opportunities discussed in theme 1.

The lack of in-person access during online WIL sometimes led to delays in communication between students and educators because they couldn't “walk down the hall” (Student 31, United States) to ask a quick question that would be resolved “right then and there” (Student 31, United States). Some students and educators felt that students missed out on the learning that is possible in an in-person work environment such as observation, “co-working” (Educator 14, Australia), “osmosis” (Educator 10, Australia), client interaction, the “smells and sounds” (Educator 15, Australia) of a hospital setting, and “getting their hands dirty” (Educator 6, Australia) doing fieldwork. One student described this as: “The small little things that you pick up about how to be a professional that you don't necessarily get if you're doing it virtually” (Student 13, United States)

Feedback, in particular, was something that educators found more challenging in online WIL, as it was necessarily more structured, less frequent, less visual, and there were fewer opportunities for feedback from a range of educators:

We couldn't really do a lot of that on-the-fly stuff so it was very structured and strategic in the way that we provided feedback. So it had a rigidity, which meant that you lose that flexibility and it kind of diminishes a little bit of the learning outcomes. (Educator 12, Australia)

Some students struggled with motivation and scheduling, as being away from the workplace environment and lack of close supervision made it easier to procrastinate. There were challenges for students and also sometimes for their clients in learning to use the technology needed for online WIL. An additional challenge was that some educators found online WIL to be a high workload, whether due to managing students across several time zones, reviewing applications for the program, or having to quickly shift to online WIL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fatigue due to solely online interaction was also noticed by some educators as a challenge for students, observing: “Spending so much time on the computer is really exhausting” (Educator 9, Australia)

Online WIL is not simply spatial: Equity considerations

Several students viewed their diversity as a strength that they brought to the online placement, often in terms of their fluency in languages other than English, for example:

I can't think or say I had any barrier. My diversity made me a strong candidate. It made me unique, and it made me the perfect person for it. (Student 26, United States)

I am Latino. My family is from [country] but I think that was more an advantage than anything else, as I speak Spanish. So I was able to read sources that I might not have been able to read otherwise, which I think made a big difference. (Student 29, United States)

Educators confirmed that they viewed students' diverse backgrounds positively, as students could draw on their lived experiences of cultural and linguistic diversity, to “reach into different communities” (Educator 10, Australia) or by suggesting ideas of how to better serve a particular group of clients:

We want to attract a more diverse visitor pool...So the first step is making a real effort to try to get diversity both in the hiring, and visitors and in internship as well ... Having a background in another culture or language is fantastic because it helps you reach more people. (Educator 3, United States)

One student initially questioned whether her acceptance into the online WIL program was tokenistic, but came to realise that her educator was a genuine champion for inclusion:

At the very beginning, I was just like “I wonder if being Black has had anything to do with the [internship] opportunities that I was given?” There are so many new ways of having to meet quota, like everyone is trying to diversify places and it's just like “OK well this person's Black so maybe we should give it to them”. But now I honestly see it as a positive. My advisor is also the coordinator for diversity and inclusion [and I can see that] she is really rooting for me and she's making sure that there's going to be more representation with the STEM community. (Student 18, United States)

Educators, particularly those based in the United States, confirmed that they were committed to increasing workforce diversity and saw online WIL as one way of achieving that goal, for example: “I'm excited that we might have a group of young women who represent the diversity that is the United States that we can sort of help them move up the ladder a little quicker” (Educator 2, United States).

Many students and educators commented on financial issues, and how an in-person placement, particularly in a major city or remote location, would be unaffordable due to housing and transport costs. Similarly, students valued not having to travel, particularly those who had lost their jobs due to COVID-19:

It's been good for the students who have lost their jobs and were struggling and actually said “well this is a blessing that I don't have to take public transport, I don't have to take my car and I can do it from my place”. (Educator 13, Australia)

The flexibility of the hours was appreciated by students who needed to work or care for family members:

I could do the hours whenever I felt I could do them. That was really good because I was working three jobs and going to school. (Student 18, United States)

I have four grandparents in the same house as me, so I have sort of a caretaker role that I play day to day. So the fact that I can have an online internship means I can watch over them and make sure that they're doing ok throughout the day. (Student 23, United States)

Digital access was raised as an equity issue by students and educators, particularly internet access in remote areas:

Rural and remote and regional students say ... they just don't have the connection. So country students ... [are] having to actually withdraw or suspend for a whole semester because they just can't do any learning at all let alone WIL. (Educator 7, Australia)

Alongside digital access was the issue that some students may not have adequate space and privacy to conduct their online WIL meetings:

I live with about four generations of family within the same house, so that takes its toll. I sometimes have to scramble to find a place to situate myself so I appear as professional as possible. I remember during one meeting last year, because I had my grandparents scattered about as well as my cousin and my aunt and my mom all throughout the house, I had to lock myself in a closet and just turn on the light and hope it worked out. And no one knew, but it worked out. (Student 23, United States)

They found it tricky to have their whole world exposed because they were doing it from their homes. So sometimes if they're in shared accommodation, their only space that was their own was the bedroom and so I think that could have made them feel a little vulnerable maybe. (Educator 12, Australia)

Another student noticed that educators may have had their own interruptions due to working from home, and educators and students extended some grace to each other, understanding the challenges of working from home:

Because we were all at home I feel like both students and the clinical supervisor understood each other's lives better. We understood that we also had other things going on, because sometimes when we were in the Zoom room, her son would come in, or just life would be happening as well. (Student 17, Australia)

Several students mentioned physical and mental health issues. In many cases, they found online WIL to allow more flexibility and different ways of communicating, for example undergoing major surgery but being able to continue with online WIL soon afterwards, or finding the online environment “easier to manage” (Student 20, Australia) while suffering from anxiety due to having “more ownership over my own time and my own engagement” (Student 20, Australia). One student, however, found that large online meetings were challenging due to hearing loss:

I have bilateral hearing loss ... and most people don't like to turn their camera on and I'm able to lip read fairly well so when I can see someone's mouth moving and hear their voice, I can tell what they're saying. But a lot of times people don't turn their cameras on ... oftentimes I have no idea what any of them are saying. (Student 22, United States)

One student mentioned that they disclosed their health issues to let educators know it would not impact the online placement:

I am a veteran [with] invisible disabilities ... PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] and I have a minor TBI [traumatic brain injury] as well. That was something I was very forthcoming about when I applied for the virtual internship because I wanted them to know it's nothing that hinders me in my everyday life. I can get through just fine. I'm not ashamed, and I'm not afraid of my illness. (Student 31, United States)

Another student discussed their sexuality, and how doing online WIL meant that it might have gone “under the radar” because of the virtual space:

I'm gay and I think especially with queerness there's a certain visibility element to it. I talk in a queer accent and I don't particularly try to hide that and I think to a certain extent I wouldn't be surprised if people know in the internship program. But it wasn't something ever expressly said or mentioned in any way. It's entirely possible that it went completely under the radar. And I think that was helped based off of its virtualness ... because it was mostly based off of email and text, it really didn't come up ever. (Student 25, United States)

One educator spoke about online WIL being “more accessible” (E8, Australia) for staff living far from major cities, and equity issues for staff are worthy of further consideration, as some of the affordances of online WIL for students facing equity issues likely apply to staff as well.

Discussion

Our findings emphasise the importance of students doing meaningful work during online WIL. Relationships and mutual recognition are also key aspects of successful online WIL, where educators put in the effort to create connections, view student diversity as a strength, and also where students view educators as whole people. Context is also key – the background of the pandemic, students' and educators' life challenges, political unrest, and so on – must be considered in the design of online WIL. We have structured the discussion around our three research questions.

Research question 1: What are the benefits and challenges of online WIL as reported by students from diverse backgrounds?

Students gained a range of benefits from online WIL, including preparation for remote work, job opportunities, networking, mentoring, and the satisfaction of doing meaningful work. Students with mental and physical health issues found online WIL to be more flexible in many cases. Students dealing with equity issues also found online WIL to be more affordable, as did students in a study by Hoskyn et al. (2020), who found that online WIL decreased “some of the hidden costs of being on placement” such as transport costs and time, and expensive dress codes (p. 446). To increase the number of students from diverse backgrounds undertaking online WIL, we should ensure that they realise that online WIL can be affordable and flexible.

Several students found that their cultural and linguistic diversity was an asset during online WIL, enabling them to better understand and serve the needs of diverse clients. Educators confirmed that they viewed student diversity as a strength. This strengths-based approach (e.g. Airini & Naepi, 2018) contrasts with deficit views about students from diverse backgrounds. Such strengths-based narratives may, in addition to the above points about affordability and flexibility, help us to create more targeted and inclusive communications to students when promoting online WIL opportunities.

Some students found that online WIL negatively impacted on their motivation, causing them to procrastinate. To overcome this challenge, we suggest that online WIL be carefully designed to ensure that there is sufficient support and structure for meaningful engagement and learning. Digital access was another challenge, particularly for students in areas with poor internet service. In order for students from diverse backgrounds to access online WIL we need to provide sufficient digital and technology resources, and support students and educators to use those technologies effectively. The reality and impact of unequal access to adequate technology and reliable internet has been brought to the fore during COVID-19 lockdowns, and highlighted by many journalists and educators (e.g. Atherton, 2020).

Students were sometimes unable to locate a private, quiet space in which to conduct online WIL, as illustrated by the example of a student of locking themselves in a closet. Similarly, a survey of 208 students and 71 staff at a United Kingdom university discovered that “over a third of staff and just over a quarter of students found it difficult to cope with online learning due to their home issues such as childcare” (Mulrooney & Kelly, 2020, p. 4). As with access to technology and the internet, we need to consider how to ensure students have a space in which to work uninterrupted with sufficient privacy, and that flexibility is provided to allow students with their caring responsibilities to participate at times that suit them.

In some cases, students reported that they appreciated the connections and rapport developed with peers and workplace colleagues during online WIL. However, in many cases workplace connections and camaraderie were more challenging to cultivate in the online setting, as has been found by other researchers,

for example: in “a work culture that is no longer apparent or accessible ... students may feel invisible and unnoticed behind a computer screen” (Bowen, 2020, pp. 381- 382). To address this challenge, we suggest that educators consult the existing body of literature on how to build relationships and rapport among students, their peers and educators in the online setting. It is certainly possible to build relationships in the virtual space with considered pedagogical approaches:

In exactly the same way that the sociomaterialities of the classroom and corridor provide campus-based teachers with opportunities to engage and interact with their students, the virtual spaces and places of the online mode provide ways for digitally mediated interactions between students and teachers to occur. (Bayne et al. 2020, p.130)

Another challenge faced by students (and educators) during online WIL was fatigue due to solely online interactions. Selwyn observes that: “Many of us have experienced ... the discombobulated feeling of spending all day online (supposedly working) and then all evening online (supposedly relaxing).” (Selwyn & Jandrić, 2020, p. 993). We recommend that strategies for managing online fatigue, such as regular breaks and other forms of communication where possible, are developed and discussed with online WIL students.

Research questions 2: What are the benefits and challenges of online WIL as reported by educators?

Educators experienced many of the benefits and challenges reported by students. As discussed above, educators found that students from diverse backgrounds helped them better understand and meet the needs of their diverse clients/communities. In addition, some educators reported that encouraging contributions from quieter students was easier. Another benefit was that several educators found online WIL to be more flexible than in-person WIL. Salter et al. (2020) similarly found that online WIL educators had “more flexibility to conduct shorter, but more frequent supervision sessions” and that educators “who would not have been able to attend the placement if it was face-to-face were able to be involved” (p. 595). The greater accessibility of online WIL for staff from diverse backgrounds has the benefit of increasing the visibility of equity staff as role models for students.

Like the students, educators were concerned about students missing out on particular aspects of the in-person workplace, such as hands-on activities, physical presence, and “sounds and smells”. Salter et al. (2020) describe this challenge as “students [being] unable to embed themselves in and engage informally with the community and organisational staff” (p. 596). We need to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds are also able to access in-person WIL, so that they do not miss out on the experiences that are only possible to gain in an in-person work environment.

Educators found that providing feedback to students was more difficult in online WIL because it was necessarily more formal, and students missed out on more relaxed feedback from themselves and other colleagues who would usually be present in the in-person workplace. Educators also reported increased workloads with online WIL, as has been found in other studies (e.g. Mulrooney & Kelly, 2020; Salter et al., 2020). The higher workload of online WIL has been intensified by the COVID-19 lockdowns, with Australian educators needing to quickly transform in-person WIL into online formats where possible (Blackmore, 2020). Despite the higher workload, educators experienced mentoring and supervising online WIL students as positive and rewarding.

Research question 3: How might online WIL be enhanced and systematically supported to better meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and their educators?

Our findings highlight the need for careful consideration in the design of online WIL programs, so that the intention to provide a more accessible WIL experience for students dealing with equity issues is not prevented by the pre-existing barriers they already face. As emphasised by Selwyn and Jandrić (2020): “The lockdowns have starkly illustrated the limitations of presuming digital education to be an immaterial process. Digital education always takes place somewhere.” (p. 993)

It is important to view online WIL as its own space. Although there are corporeal aspects of in-person WIL, such as touch and smell, that cannot be experienced in online WIL, when compare to in person WIL, online WIL should not simply be viewed as inferior. Although online WIL already affords many benefits for

students from diverse backgrounds, we recommend that online WIL be deliberately designed to be inclusive.

We suggest that the design process be participatory, with all stakeholders (students, educators, clients) involved, and should consider several factors:

- **Access:** It is important to ensure that if an online WIL program is not open to all students, that diversity is considered in the selection process with consideration and accommodation for barriers to participation addressed in the application process.
- **Support:** Students may need additional financial or material support to undertake online WIL, for example to enable digital access and access to a private workspace. The mental and physical health needs of students should be considered.
- **Inclusive and strengths-based approaches:** All participants in online WIL should be encouraged to take a strengths-based approach to share and celebrate diversity. Consideration should be given to creating environments which invite students to bring their whole, authentic selves to online WIL, for example, the use of gender pronouns in email signatures and online meetings.
- **Relationship building:** Educators need to create explicit opportunities for formal and informal interaction and network building among students and their peers, and also between students and other staff in the organisation.
- **Educator development:** Educators may wish to develop their mentorship/supervisory skills via relevant courses or informal learning, in order to develop a facilitative and relational approach to supervision. Educators should provide meaningful work that is supported with enough information about what the student role entails.

Limitations

Our research, while providing a rich data set, had some limitations. Although we put in considerable effort to recruit more student interviewees from Australia, there was a significant imbalance between the number of students interviewed from the United States versus Australia, meaning that the student perspectives presented here predominantly represent United States experiences. While ideally there would have been even numbers of participants from the United States and Australia, we were not perturbed by this imbalance as it enabled us to identify potential practices that are successful in a long-running, large online WIL program in the United States that may be transferable to Australia. Another limitation is that, in the United States sample, the participants were all from the same program and were located in Federal Government departments, whereas the Australian participants included a mix of host organisation types.

Suggestions for future research

We suggest that further research explore the nuances of different online WIL contexts, for example, clinical, for profit, government, not for profit, different organisation sizes, and so on. We also suggest that researchers continue to explore issues related to equity and online WIL, such as: the experiences of students in particular equity groups, including those who belong to more than one equity group; the experiences of students who missed out on participating in online WIL (e.g., students who apply to programs but are not selected); and the nature of application and recruitment processes as regards equity. Further areas for future research include: the nature of interactions in online WIL; longitudinal studies of students and educators partaking in online WIL; equity and workload issues for educators; and perspectives from countries other than Australia and the United States.

Conclusion

We need to take care not to transfer the barriers to in-person WIL to online WIL. While online WIL clearly has benefits for students from diverse backgrounds, challenges such as access to technology, and difficulties in conveying in-person workplace norms need to be addressed to ensure that the benefits and opportunities offered by online WIL are not distributed inequitably. Online WIL needs to be carefully designed to consider context, relationships and mutual recognition, and to provide students with meaningful work. The COVID-19 pandemic has very much focused attention on remote work and study, societal inequalities and what the future might look like. We hope that, through heeding the voices of the participants in our study, we might imagine a more equitable version of WIL in a COVID-19 endemic world.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education for the Research Grant to undertake this work, and for permission to draw on our final report (Bell et al. 2021) in writing this paper. We thank the research participants for providing their insights - we really appreciate their time, especially during a pandemic. Thanks to Tai Peseta, Brittany Hardiman and Gina Saliba for their perspectives on the conceptual aspects of the paper.

References

- Abbot, S. (2018). *A continuum of research: Assistants, partners, and undergraduate researchers*. Elon University. <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/a-continuum-of-research-assistants-partners-and-undergraduate-researchers>
- Airini, & Naepi, S. (2018). A notch in my heart: University practices that help Canadian first-generation student success. In A. Bell, & L. J. Santamaria (Eds.), *Understanding experiences of first generation university students: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Methodologies* (pp. 73-96). Bloomsbury.
- Atherton, G. (2020, November 14). A moment to address digital poverty and embed HE equity. *University World News*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20201113085637660>
- Bayne, S., Evans, P., Ewins, R., Knox, J., Lamb, J., Macleod, H., O'Shea, C., Ross, J., Sheail, P., & Sinclair, C. (2020). *The manifesto for teaching online*. MIT Press.
- Bell, A., Bartimote, K., Mercer-Mapstone, L., Moran, G., Tognolini, J., & Dempsey, N. (2021). *Exploring the benefits and challenges of online work integrated learning for equity students*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University. https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Bell_USYD_EquityOnlineWIL_FINAL.pdf
- Bell, A., & Benton, M. (2018). Experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous first generation students at an Australian university. In A. Bell, & L. J. Santamaria (Eds.), *Understanding experiences of first generation university students: Culturally responsive and sustaining methodologies* (pp. 47-72). Bloomsbury.
- Blackmore, J. (2020). The carelessness of entrepreneurial universities in a world risk society: A feminist reflection on the impact of Covid-19 in Australia. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 39(7), 1332-1336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1825348>
- Bowen, T. (2020). Work-integrated learning placements and remote working: experiential learning online. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 21(4), 377-386. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_21_4_377_386.pdf
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(2), 201-216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Hayfield, N. (2019). "A starting point for your journey, not a map": Nikki Hayfield in conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke about thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 19(2), 424-445. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2019.1670765>
- Cahalan, M. W., Addison, M., Brunt, N., Patel, P. R., & Perna, L. W. (2021). *Indicators of higher education equity in the United States: 2021 Historical trend report*. The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, Council for Opportunity in Education, and Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy of the University of Pennsylvania. <http://pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the US 2021 Historical Trend Report.pdf>
- Common Ground. (2021). *What is Country?* <https://www.commonground.org.au/articles/what-is-country>
- Eckstein, D. (2020). "Nothing inevitable about exclusion": *Careers support for students with disability*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. <https://issuu.com/ncsehe/docs/davideckstein-issuu-final>
- Fenwick, T. (2018). Pondering purposes, propelling forwards. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 40(3), 367-380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2018.1425205>
- Franks, P. C., & Oliver, G. C. (2012). Experiential learning and international collaboration opportunities: Virtual internships. *Library Review*, 61(4), 272-285. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00242531211267572>
- Grant-Smith, D., & Gillett-Swan, J. (2017). *WIL wellbeing: Exploring impacts of unpaid practicum on student wellbeing*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education.

- Hora, M., Chen, Z., Parrott, E., & Her, P. (2020). Problematizing college internships: Exploring issues with access, program design and developmental outcomes. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 21(3), 235-252. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_21_3_235_252.pdf
- Hoskyn, K., Eady, M. J., Capocchiano, H., Lucas, P., Rae, S., Trede, F., & Yuen, L. (2020). GoodWIL placements: How COVID-19 shifts the conversation about unpaid placements. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 21(4), 439-450. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_21_4_439_450.pdf
- Innovative Research Universities. (2020). *eWIL Pilot – online workplace learning projects*. <https://iru.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/eWIL-pilot-projects-Sep-2020.pdf>
- Jackson, D. (2018). Developing graduate career readiness in Australia: Shifting from extra-curricular internships to work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 19(1), 23-35. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_19_1_23_35.pdf
- Jeske, D., & Axtell, C. M. (2017). Effort and reward effects: Appreciation and self-rated performance in e-internships. *Social Sciences*, 6(4), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6040154>
- Jeske, D., & Axtell, C. M. (2019). Virtuality in e-internships: A descriptive account. In A. Lazazzara, R. C. D. Nacamulli, C. Rossignoli, & S. Za (Eds.), *Organizing for digital innovation* (pp. 219-233). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90500-6_17
- Jeske, D., & Linehan, C. (2020). Mentoring and skill development in e-internships. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 12(2), 245-258. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWAM-09-2019-0028>
- Konkel, F. (2020, October 23). 3 Tips from federal HR pros on recruiting talent in a pandemic. *Nextgov* <https://www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/2020/10/3-tips-federal-hr-pros-recruiting-talent-pandemic/169515/>
- Leath, B. (2009). Solving the challenges of the virtual workplace for interns. *Young Scholars in Writing*, 6, 3-11. <https://youngscholarsinwriting.org/index.php/ysiw/article/download/180/180>
- Lloyd, N. (2017). *Access to work integrated learning: Influence of Ccommunities of practice*. <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/access-to-work-integrated-learning/>
- McArthur, J. (2018). *Assessment for social justice: Perspectives and practices within higher education*. Bloomsbury.
- McCarthy, P. X., & Swayn, M. (2019). *Higher education and employment in Australia: The impact of internships*. CSIRO Data61. <http://production-ribit.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Ribit-Research-Higher-Education-Australia.pdf>
- Mulrooney, H. M., & Kelly, A. F. (2020). Covid 19 and the move to online teaching: Impact on perceptions of belonging in staff and students in a UK widening participation university. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching*, 3(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2020.3.2.15>
- Orrell, J. (2018). Work integrated learning: Why is it increasing and who benefits? *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/work-integrated-learning-why-is-it-increasing-and-who-benefits-93642>
- O'Shea, S. (2019). "Mind the gap!" Exploring the post-graduation outcomes and employment mobility of individuals who are first in their family to complete a university degree. *Research fellowship final report*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education.
- Palmer, S., Young, K. & Campbell, M. (2018). Developing an institutional evaluation of the impact of work-integrated learning on employability and employment. *International Journal of Work-integrated Learning*, 19(4), 371-383. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_19_4_371_383.pdf
- Paterson, S. M., Laajala, T., & Lehtelä, P-L. (2019). Counsellor students' conceptions of online counselling in Scotland and Finland. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 47(3), 292-303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2017.1383357>
- Peach, D., Moore, K., Campbell, M., Winchester-Seeto, T., Ferns, S., Mackaway, J., & Groundwater, L. (2016). *Building institutional capacity to enhance access participation and progression in work integrated learning*. Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Perlin, R. (2012). *Intern nation: How to earn nothing and learn little in the brave new economy*. Verso Books.
- Pretti, T. J., Etmanski, B., & Durston, A. (2020). Remote work-integrated learning experiences: Student perceptions. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 21(4), 401-414. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_21_4_401_414.pdf
- Salter, C., Oates, R.K., Swanson, C., & Bourke, L. (2020). Working remotely: Innovative allied health placements in response to COVID-19. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 21(5), 587-600. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_21_5_587_600.pdf
- Selwyn, N., & Jandrić, P. (2020). Postdigital living in the age of Covid-19: Unsettling what we see as possible. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(3), 989-1005. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020->

- 00166-9 Statista. (n.d.). *The 30 largest countries in the world by total area*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262955/largest-countries-in-the-world/>
- Universities Australia. (2019). *Work integrated learning in universities. Final report*. <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/International-network/Australia/InternationalStrategy/EGIPProjects/Documents/WIL%20in%20universities%20-%20final%20report%20April%202019.pdf>
- Virtual Student Federal Service. (n.d.). <https://vsfs.state.gov/about>
- Waters, S., & Russell, W. (2016). Virtually ready? Pre-service teachers' perceptions of a virtual internship experience. *Research in Social Sciences and Technology*, 1(1), 1-23. <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/187546/>
- Winchester-Seeto, T., Mackaway, J., Peach, D., Moore, K., Ferns, S., & Campbell, M. (2015). *Principles, guidelines and strategies for inclusive WIL*. http://acen.edu.au/access-participation-progression/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FINAL-Principles-Guidelines_and_Strategies-Inclusive-WIL-as-at-6_11_15.pdf
- Wood, Y. I., Zegwaard, K. E., & Fox-Turnbull, W. H. (2020). Conventional, remote, virtual, and simulated work-integrated learning: A meta-analysis of existing practice. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 21(4), 331-354. https://www.ijwil.org/files/IJWIL_21_4_331_354.pdf
-

Corresponding author: Amani Bell, amani.bell@sydney.edu.au

Copyright: Articles published in the Australasian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET) are available under Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives Licence ([CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)). Authors retain copyright in their work and grant AJET right of first publication under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Please cite as: Bell, A., Bartimote, K., Dempsey, N., Mercer-Mapstone, L., Moran, G., & Tognolini, J. (2022). Student and educator perspectives on equity and online work integrated learning. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 38(6), 185-200. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.7524>