

The Importance of
Work Integrated Learning Experiences
For Students Choosing Careers in the Arts

by

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Abstract

Graduates of post-secondary arts programs face difficulties finding employment. Five reasons that make work-related employment a challenge for art graduates are outlined. It is not that available positions do not exist for these graduates; the reality is that they may not be aware of the opportunities and possibilities available to them. Career counselling options are suggested. One of the most important ways for art students to learn about career opportunities in the field of art could be through Working Integrated Learning (WIL) Programs, especially through International Working Integrated Learning (IWIL) Programs. The purpose of this paper is to reveal and recommend more career opportunities for art graduates.

Keywords: visual art, work integrated learning, career, international

Introduction

When I was in high school, I believed I had a chance to freely choose my university major. I was very excited that I could pursue my passion for broadcasting. However my parents felt very disappointed about my choice, because my academic scores were high enough for me to enter a top Chinese university. Their preference was for me to enrol in a prestigious business program at a leading university. My long-time ambition was to become a broadcaster and so I wanted to enrol in a broadcasting program. At Shenzhen University broadcasting is part of the Art Faculty, along with programs in acting, singing, painting, dancing, and filmmaking. I was very lucky that my parents choose to support my decision, unlike some of the other mothers and fathers. Many of my classmates experienced the same problem with their parents, who maintain the belief that art programs are for less qualified, non-academic students. It is not just some parents who hold negative attitudes toward arts programs, even some of my friends who had enrolled in the arts program had similar doubts, and they started preparing to enter the family business while still in their second year of art studies.

Students in all arts fields face the same bias about their future careers. It is not only true for broadcasting, but also for painting, singing, dancing, and acting; they always face similar situations, especially in career development. Most art graduates are often uncertain about what they can do and what they want to do after graduation. If students from arts fields could have a clear vision of their career plan and pursue a financially satisfying job, would parents still oppose art as a career choice? Parents are naturally concerned about their child's future security and so are the students themselves. Students may have self-doubt about their future career goals. In order to be successful, motivation is essential. Such self-doubt undermines the prospects of being successful in a field that both interests the student and ends up being rewarding and maybe even paying the bills and debts off after graduating.

The purpose of this project is to examine the published literature about career prospects for students enrolled in art programs and to survey career options that are available to art program graduates. Such information would be helpful for students, their families and career counsellors when considering an art-based career. There are three main sections in this literature review. The first is a survey of the many available career positions for art graduates. One of the reasons why art graduates may have difficulty in finding employment is that they are not aware of the many relevant job opportunities available to them. The second part of this project surveys career-counselling alternatives that are available through art faculties to support their students' career development. Finally, a more detailed examination of two initiatives, Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and International Work Integrated Learning (IWIL) programs, are examined as means to explore more career opportunities for post secondary art students.

As educators we have the responsibility to help art graduates become more aware of career opportunities, instead of discouraging their passion to pursue the study of art. This literature review is part of a process designed to help visual art graduates' widen their focus of career opportunities, promote the development of service centers in the area of art careers and replace the stereotype of art students that parents, and perhaps some of society still hold today.

The main methodology used for this project involved a research of published studies, which provided evidence for analysis and interpretation in order to develop the recommendations outlined in this project. Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) was used as my main research database during the entire process. At the beginning of the research, I decided my key research term would be on work experience programs for art students in post-secondary institutions. After reading more than fifty abstracts, the results were not very promising. There are very few articles about work integrated learning

experiences in arts faculties, and if they do exist, they are in the field of music. On the contrary, there are many similar kinds of co-op programs provided in post secondary schools for students who study business, computer science and engineering. The results demonstrated that art faculties are lacking support for their students to gain work experience prior to graduation.

I continued to research universities, which provide cooperative programs for art students in Canada, such as the University of Waterloo, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. Their data shows that art students gain great benefits from all work experience programs. I then thought, that if work integrated learning programs could help students from many different fields, then why not art students? I used comparison and inference skills to form the presumption that, like all the other faculties, work integrated learning programs will help art students' career development. The review also offers multiple perspectives for students, parents and most importantly for school faculties.

Review of Literature

Art Graduates and Post Graduate Employment

Becoming a full-time artist has and always will be a controversial career choice. Parents may think that having a career in art is not a good choice for their children, because it is hard to find a stable, high paying job as a full time artist. Therefore, becoming an artist was considered an inappropriate occupation for many parents. Historically, in ancient China, artists occupied the lowest social class. In school we were taught that in the Yuan dynasty (206 - 220 BCE), the emperor divided people into ten levels, with one as the highest level. The bottom three levels were, prostitutes (level 8), artists (level 9), and homeless people (level 10). How disheartening it must have been to be an artist, whose social class was lower than a prostitute! In North America the phrase, "starving artist" expresses a similar sentiment, in that being an artist is not a financially advantageous career choice. Although not all artists

suffer from the “starving artist” stereotype, a recent study indicated that many of the students with Fine Arts majors still experience difficulties in obtaining jobs and in gaining job security (LaValle, O’Regan & Jackson, 2000). Artists from different time periods and different cultural backgrounds face similar situations regarding their future career development.

Stereotypes of art graduates and academic qualifications. The perception that arts students have lower learning abilities seems to exist in the Chinese post-secondary education system, even to this day. For example, according to the China Education Organization (2016), the national university entrance requirements for art faculties are always lower than for other academic faculties. The required score from 2015 in Beijing, to enter academic programs such as languages, sciences, mathematics or geography is 579/750, and for fine arts, the required score is 255/750. The lower entrance score required by universities for art students might have a negative influence on both parents’ and society’s attitudes towards art students. Some parents believe that only students who have low academic scores should consider taking art-related courses. Such negative views of art as a vocation may affect the confidence and self-esteem of the artist, which may influence their ability to attain future, meaningful employment. Trying to change society’s perspective about art students is not an easy thing to do. Educators and post-secondary institutions must rethink both the art curriculum and entrance requirements in order to change the perception that art students are less qualified or less academic.

Art students’ prospects for employment. According to Hanna (1994), the primary reason that parents are unwilling to have their children study post-secondary fine arts is because they believe “the arts will divert attention and resources away from other subjects that prepare their children for high-paying jobs” (p. 34). There is evidence that supports what some parents have long suspected; in general, students who choose arts colleges do not earn as much money early in their careers as those who attend highly selective academic

universities (Fuller, 2015). Fuller (2015) in her articles also compared the earnings of the top 50 U.S. arts colleges to those of the top 50 U.S. research universities. 50% of arts college graduates earned less than \$50,000 per year, and more than 35% of research university graduates made more than \$70,000 per year. Although hiring prospects for new college graduates are better than a few years ago, the job market remains challenging and competitive, with unemployment rates still above recession levels (Gates, 2014 cited from Bureau of Labour Statistics, U.S Department of Labour, 2013), fine art graduates face the same situation as well. The underemployment rate is surprisingly higher than most people would expect, because art students do not have time to pursue alternatives. As Linnemeyer and Brown (2010) note, “it is likely that fine art students experience unique demands due to their extensive involvement in, and commitment to the arts, which may inhibit exploration of alternative satisfying roles, and limit ones’ career choices” (p 16). As it turns out, “artists do not end up supporting themselves with steady work” as Neher (2009) mentions, and “they also experience frequent job changes” (LaValle, et al., 2000). The studies confirm parental concerns are indeed valid.

A recent study from Cascone (2014) reported that art students are facing an unemployment dilemma: they have the “highest unemployment rates among recent graduates” (June 6). Cascone reported on a report by H&R Block that was carried in the Huffington Post. The title was “Higher Education = Higher Pay-check?” and the article was a summary of seven charts and graphics featuring the most in demand graduates, the ten worst and the ten best occupations, the highest paying industries, the top US locations for entry level positions, the top industries at the moment and education tax credits. Figure 1 is a summary of Cascones’ list of the top ten worst majors for unemployment. Of the ten worst majors, the following art areas took the top three spots: film/video & photographic arts at 19.6%, fine arts at 19.9%, commercial & graphic art at 19.3%. There is reason for art students to be

concerned about employment prospects. Rounding out the top five worst were philosophy & religion at 17.6% and anthropology & archeology at 16.7%. Three of the top ten industries for employment after graduation could be art related, advertising, graphics in software, and automobile design.

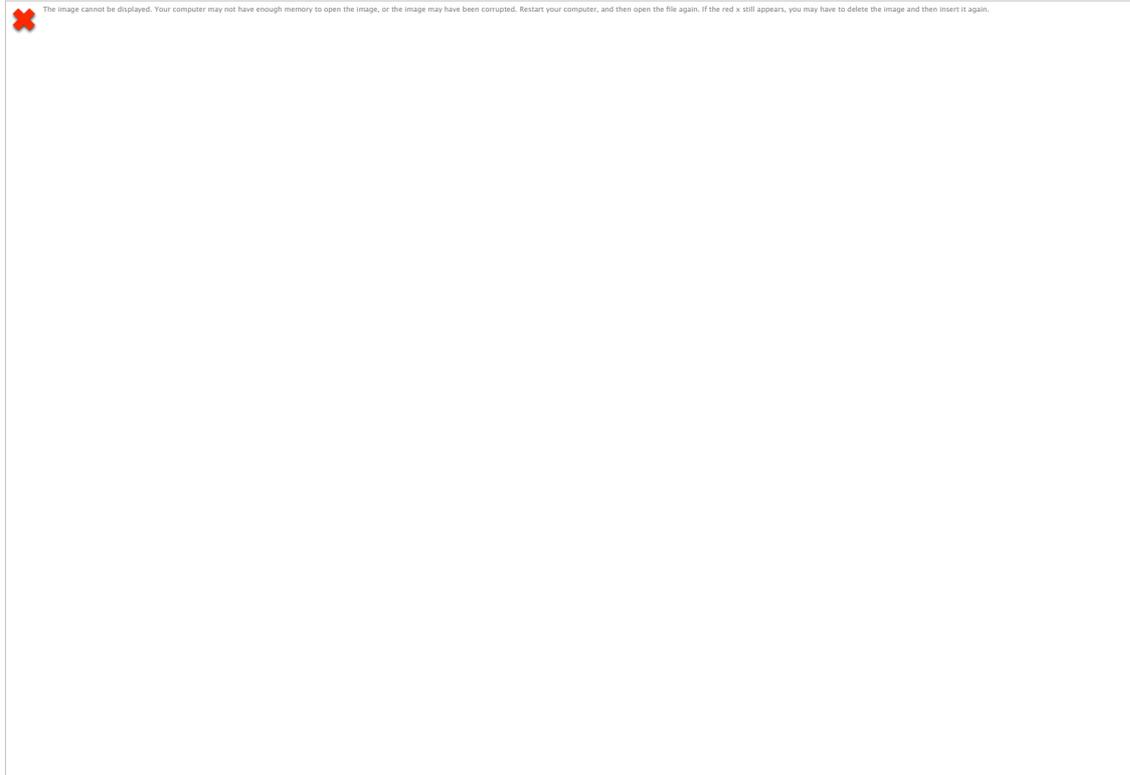


Figure 1: Top ten majors of unemployed college graduates
From Cascone, June 6th 2014

According to Chinese Art Career Study Survey Report (2012), fifty-five percent of artists must find a secondary source of income following graduation. In combination with the poor economic market they can suffer further setbacks; the implications for students of the arts can be illustrated by examples of impact from the area of visual arts: Economics is often the deciding factor whether or not a person chooses to raise their perceived quality of life by spending money on artwork. According to Neher (2009), “art galleries often face tough financial challenges due to economic recessions” (p.120). In an article titled, “The Financial Crisis and tis Effects on Public Arts Funding”, Joh (2011) states that sales at Christie’s Art Auctions have dropped from 65% to 30% of total sales. Wall Street has also been affected;

there is no longer any “easy” money (disposable income) and galleries seem to be closing everywhere (Neher, 2009). Although it is difficult to predict the effects of the latest economic downturn, we do know that “artist unemployment rates peaked two years after the last recession” (Madden, 2009, p. 8). When the economy is in a downward trend, people generally do not spend money on non-necessities, thus making art even more difficult to sell. Only 16% of people who earn upwards of \$100,000 per year spend on the arts, whereas 46% of people in the arts spend money in their field, regardless of income (Lindemann & Tepper, 2012). This strongly suggests that since the year 2000, people are not spending a lot in the art market and most artists do not have much of a disposable income to use for buying artwork.

Competition finding employment in the arts field. Artists discover that it is also hard to secure a stable and high-paying career due to the fierce competition for the scarce jobs within their field. Linnemeyer & Brown (2010) noted, “job opportunities for artists are relatively few and highly competitive” (p.620). For example, in the field of visual arts, Neher (2009) states “There are just too many artists for society to absorb, whether or not they hold degrees” (p. 118). The collector base is not large enough to support them in such a distressed economic climate. As a result, too many artists have their artwork in a holding pattern awaiting future sales. Some of the art students would like to be involved in education in combination with selling their artwork for a living. However, as Neher (2009) said, “the odds of an artist living off sales only, or finding a teaching job approach lottery-winning ratios” (p. 118). For example, in Sooke School District #62, one of three local public school districts that employ 240 high school teachers, only six of which are art teachers or 2.5% of the teacher population. The BC Art Teachers Association says it has 2300 members in all K-12 schools, but one must be aware that K-5 teachers are generalists, not specialists, and no middle or high school has more than 2-3 full time equivalent art teachers (BC Art Teachers’ Association, 2016). It remains difficult for art graduates to find any full time, stable,

employment as an artist after graduation. Much of the data shows that existing solely as an artist is getting harder and harder in this poor economic environment, affecting almost every new graduate in a similar way.

Feelings of career pessimism. Another major problem preventing a stable career is pessimism, as artists realize that there are very few job opportunities outside of the academic environment. According to Gates (2014), today's students have "high levels of anxiety regarding their career plans in comparison with what was the case years ago" (p.34). In the area of Fine arts, especially visual arts, only 13% of participants were optimistic about obtaining a full-time professional career (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010, p.619). Art graduates are often suffering from a sense of frustration. According to a Chinese career survey report, students who graduated from Arts and Sciences faculties found employment 70% of the time after graduation and graduates from the more popular faculties such as Business and Computer Sciences found jobs close to 90% of the time. However, students graduating from Art faculties found jobs ranging from, less than 45% in visual arts, down to 11% in broadcasting (Chinese Career Study Survey Report, 2012; Jobui Website, <http://edu.jobui.com/major/boyin/>). The low employment data above give people an idea that art graduates must be very anxious about their future job prospects. Today's economy is one of the primary reasons that few job opportunities exist for art graduates.

A slow economic environment, strong competition, and lack of an optimistic attitude are the major barriers for art students trying to make a decent living. "Visual arts students end up in an even more narrowly focused market by excluding broader arts related career options" (Dehaas, 2011, December). Many related career positions exist, but students are simply not aware of these opportunities. Be it a lack of search skills, or failing to use the career counsellors, they end up discouraged and settling for a low quality secondary source of employment.

Related Career Suggestions for Fine Art Students

Although Cooley (2007) states that job opportunities for art students have decreased, while at the same time the number of post-secondary art students in the US has increased, this does not necessarily mean that today's art students will have more difficulty finding a satisfying job after graduation. The Art Career Project website (<http://www.theartcareerproject.com/art-as-a-career/>), an authoritative website to provide art related career opportunities for fine arts graduates, lists many job related opportunities for art graduates such as, medical illustrator, automobile designer, layout artist, photo retouching, and wedding photographer. It's possible that many art students and their parents have never considered the potential of these careers. Three of the top five areas of employment are computer graphics, advertising, and automobile design (Cascone, 2005).

Is it an impossible dream for art students to find stable and well paying jobs? No, I don't think so. There are many art-related job opportunities for fine arts graduates. An on-line career search for "art-related careers" found several examples like an animation production company that requires a fleet of artists to design and simulate the actions in animated films (The Art Career Project, 2016a). Another listing provided an obscure job with the Armed Forces naval architecture department, who hire artists to design and build their new watercrafts (The Art Career Project, 2016b). As well, with today's massive Internet development, web developer positions have become more and more available and sought after. A good web designer can totally affect a company's performance; according to Andrew (2014), "93% of consumers consider visual appearance to be the key-deciding factor in whether or not they make a purchase" (December 15th). In other words, a good web designer can increase a company's sales and therefore is a very important artistic position. The job market for art graduates may seem small at first, but it is also evident that there are art-related opportunities if only one knows what to look for and where to look.

Career Awareness for Art Students

There are many diverse career opportunities for art graduates. The next important issue is how to make students in arts programs aware of those valued opportunities. Art students have a great passion for their field of study and focus more on creating their artwork than on designing a successful career path after graduation (Dehaas, 2011). They are paying more attention to creating high quality artworks rather than preparing for searching for a job after graduation. It is fine to devote your entire attention to an art creation, if the goal is to sell that creation. If however that piece remains unsold, who will pay the bills? In any scenario, art graduates have to increase their career awareness.

Unfortunately, although many art students reported that they have problems finding jobs, most of them did not seek assistance. Like Ludwikowski, Vogel & Armstrong (2009) indicate, “A key challenge facing advisors is getting students who are in need to utilize the services” (p. 408). Between 17% and 20% of college students directly report occupational problems relating to their careers (Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton, & Benton, 2003), while only 6% of art students seek career services (Fouad, Guillen, Harris-Hodge, Henry, Novakovic, Terry, & Kantamneni, 2006). These statistics show that most students who are having career difficulties do not use the career services offered by their institutions for whatever reason. Even a brief search of the Internet uncovered lots of art-related jobs for art students and that is at least a hint that the employment prospects for art students are not as bleak as some have imagined. However if students themselves are unaware, do not go out and seek alternatives, then it becomes irrelevant as to how many jobs exist. There are a myriad of positions available to artists; we only need the programs and advisors to gear their focus towards them. Career advisors must be highly qualified and in touch with all the available options in a tight job market. Fuller (2015) reported that even administrators at some arts faculties were not aware of the many alternatives that are available to art graduates. The arts faculty

administrators assume that the problem lies with the students choices and that “low job success may be due to students pursuing passions that produce low earnings and not because the graduates lack job options” (Fuller, 2015. November). However, if students are not aware of options, if career and academic advisors at post-secondary institutions are not taking responsibility for providing career advice, then the prospects for improved employment status of graduates cannot improve.

The study from Fuller (2015) also states that artists are usually not interested in finance, whereas many of the Ivy League school graduates work on Wall Street. Most importantly, business, engineering and medical students were at the top for earnings, and all three faculties have co-op or internship programs, while arts faculties seem to have an aversion to the idea of occupational training. That means art students do not have an accurate perception of work experience programs. The simple fact is that art programs do not seem to support co-ops and internships in general.

Career Awareness for Art Faculties

Students themselves lack the awareness and skills to undertake an independent search for an art-related career job opportunity. They rely on career advisors and programs that are affiliated with their field of study to help them to become aware of opportunities. Many art faculties are unaware of the apparent deficiencies in the career counselling areas. Helping art students realize more career opportunities prior to graduation should be one of the most important goals for post-secondary schools. However, because of the lack of research on college art students, it is hard for school career advisors to understanding art students’ career decision-making experiences and related needs (Cooley, 2007). This limitation infers that, “art schools typically have a poor record of providing students with real world skills” (Neher, 2009 p118.), and for most graduates, it is a sink or swim situation.

The career planning needs of art students are often very different than those of academic students. For example Cooley (2007) mentioned “characteristics of artistic personality, such as introversion and introspection, play a role in the career decisions of artists” (p. 2). It is very important to have professional career counselling services available to students in the arts faculty. It is necessary for the career advisors to understand the art students’ particular needs and this endeavour may contribute to the overall improvement of career resources and services available to those individual art students (Cooley, 2007). However, according to Morgan, Greenwaldt, & Gosselin (2014), “career advisors have historically lacked a clear identity in role and function” (p. 482). Meanwhile, fine art students facing more difficulties with career advisors. In Cooley’s (2007) article, she collected using in-depth interviews with eight post-secondary participations that had a major in Fine Arts. Most of the participations reported feeling disappointed and upset because the lack of relevant career planning support from their department. Universities and colleges that overlook career counselling especially in the fine arts areas end up with students missing many opportunities to experience and learn more about their future career development.

Work-place learning and cooperative programs are very effective career preparation vehicles for many students (Kramer & Usher, 2011). Art faculties seem to lack workplace-learning programs or cooperative positions in their areas, which could further enhance career opportunities.

Work Integrated Learning Programs

Work place and co-operative learning are very effective career preparation programs for many post secondary students (Esters & Retallick, 2014). Recently a new term has emerged for such workplace-learning combinations; this new term is “Work Integrated Learning” (WIL). According to Cooper, Orrell and Bowden (2010), WIL focuses on workplace learning programs that are “implemented as a formal aspect of higher education curricula” (p.4). WIL

refers to a wide range of work-study experiences including: co-op education, internships, work placements, apprenticeships, practicum placements, and courses based on the co-operative experience (Kramer & Usher, 2011). This Project focuses on co-operative education and internships as they apply to the work-study experience.

WIL, in the form of “co-op” programs, has been popular in science and engineering, while work internships usually occur in business faculties. Consider the co-op programs at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: According to Jeffrey Martin, Co-op assistant in Engineering and Computer Science/Math Program (Personal communication, June 2, 2016), the Engineering Co-op Program started in 1983, the same year that the Engineering faculty started, which means science and engineering co-ops have been in existence for more than thirty years at the University of Victoria.

The scope of and participation in such programs should be exemplary after 30 years of refinement. There are a great many co-op opportunities for students in business; for example, students can intern at Canada Revenue Agency and also at most private accounting firms in Victoria. Faculties such as business, engineering, science, education and nursing also provide WIL programs, co-operatives or internships, to help students experience the real working environment and prepare for their future career development.

Sadly these kinds of programs are not common in arts faculties. Art faculties seem to lack extensive workplace learning and co-operative positions, even though such experiences could enhance students' career opportunities. Joy Andrews, career educator at the University of Victoria feels that even though some universities, like the University of Victoria, offer a few cooperative programs for art students, the scale is much smaller than other popular faculties such as Business, Education, and Computer Science (personal communication, May 6, 2016).

When first researching this topic, very few references were available related to co-operative or internship programs in the arts. This paper will argue that WIL programs should become more of a viable option for students in Fine Arts faculties. One of the most important issues facing art educators today, is how to help fine art students attain a career that is meaningful to their field of study. Fine arts students can benefit from education combined with internships or co-operative experiences. WIL programs are designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge required for entry-level positions by giving them invaluable hands-on experiences. It is widely accepted that WIL provides employable benefits for the students (AACU, 2015). Employers also say they want an emotional quotient (EQ), the ability to relate to people, as well as problem solving skills, both of which come from on the job experiences (James, 2014). The Institution of Engineering and Technology (2016) stated that “work experience provides many benefits, giving you the skills and experience that will allow you stand out to potential employers, as well as helping you choose the right sector to work in” (July 11).

WIL programs fulfill this requirement in disciplines such as business, engineering and science. A survey was given to 2,100 Canadian University students in January 2011, conducted by Kramer & Usher (2011) and results showed that compared to the other options, such as research assistant, teaching assistant, volunteer and in-school work; students in WIL (co-op & internship) programs gained an overall better appreciation of concepts, possessed improved thinking skills, and had a better knowledge of their field of study. The studies above showed that WIL students better understand workplace culture, have improved interpersonal skills, have a clearer idea of what to accomplish and most importantly, believe it is easier to find a job in/or related to their field of study. Discouragingly WIL programs are not currently maximized to their potential in fine arts faculties.

Direct experience in areas. Many students struggle with career-related issues in post-secondary schools (Morgan, Greenwaldt, & Gosselin, 2014). They are not sure what they are able to do with their degree or what they really want to do after graduating. WIL programs offer more opportunities for art students to “try out” various settings and experience interesting related areas (Brantley, 2012). From Figure 2 below we can see that over 80% of students thought that WIL programs provide them with a better idea of what to do in the future (Kramer & Usher, 2011).

This “on the job” experience can help students, especially fine arts, confirm or reconsider specific career interests. The Canadian Council on Learning cited in Kramer and Usher (2011) “experiential learning at the post secondary level contributed to increased rates of program retention and completion” (p. 3). A second study by CCL (2008) in New Brunswick said work experience helped students to identify their academic and career direction. In Figure 2 (Kramer & Usher, 2011), 44% of students strongly agree and 41% of students agree that an internship can help them become better prepared for their future job. Of students in co-op programs 37% strongly agree and 46% agree that the program gave them better opportunities to blend into their future working area. All types of work experience gave students a better idea of what to do in their lives, but co-op and internships rank the highest at 83% and 85% respectively.

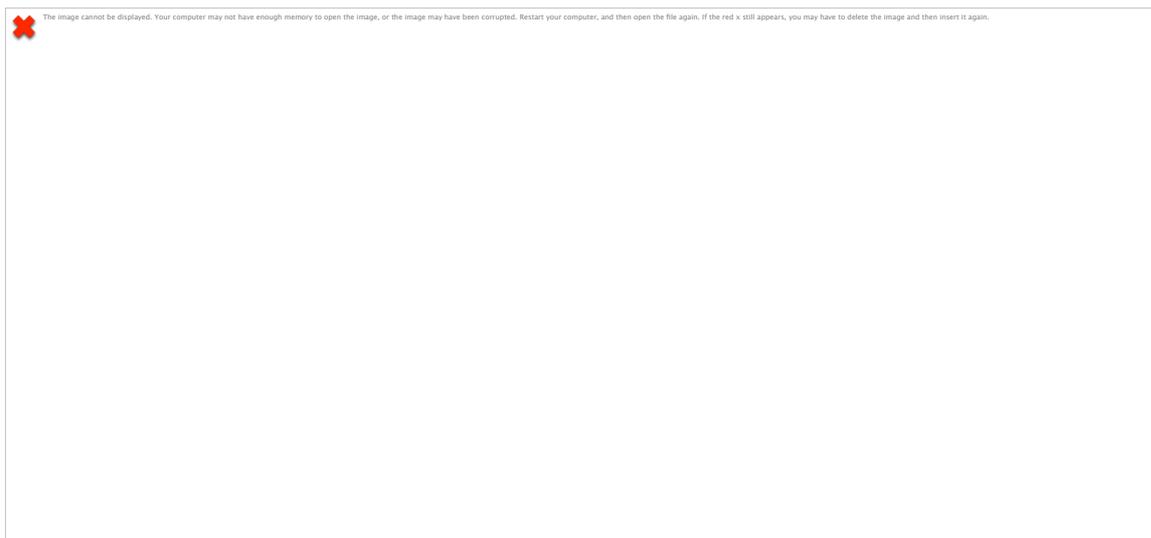


Figure 2: Value of WIL to help get an idea for what to do in life
From Kramer & Usher (2011) p.19

Networking increases awareness of job related opportunities. Working in a real environment is a good way for students to build a network of valuable contacts, to gain insight from co-workers and to learn positive hiring skills (Brantley, 2012). Networking helps students to further acquire more information and help them apply for other jobs. Networking allows students' names to become familiar at the place of employment, particularly to people in charge of hiring. From the survey provided by Career Key (2015), 65% to 80% of all jobs today are found through networking. Students in WIL programs experience the most networking opportunities while working in the real workplace environment. WIL programs are extremely important for fine art students because the job opportunities are not as plentiful.

Skills for future employment. Students who participate in a WIL program have the opportunity to increase their interpersonal skills such as: resume building, interview presentation, teamwork, communication and other job specific skills. All of which are help to secure future employment (Brantley, 2012). Figure 3 shows that there is little difference between the seven different programs in gaining interpersonal skills. When the students were asked if they feel their interpersonal skills improved after they participated in those programs, six of the groups received agreement levels of 85% or higher; only work as a Research

Assistant was lower than 80%. Students can learn great interpersonal skills though all of the work experience programs. However, the programs, which are located in the school (research assistant, teaching assistant and in-school work), gain fewer benefits than the programs located in the real world. WIL program focus on providing the “real world” experience for students.



Figure 3: Benefits of work experience programs

From Kramer & Usher (2011) p.18

As with work experience, job search skills can be learned earlier and because of this, “students with work experience are better prepared for job searches” (Career Services at Virginia Tech, 2015). In Figure 4, of the top three student groups, 83% of co-op students, 71% of research assistants, and 68% of the internship students, agree or strongly agree that work experience is important for them to find a job after graduation. Both co-op and internships are part of WIL programs.

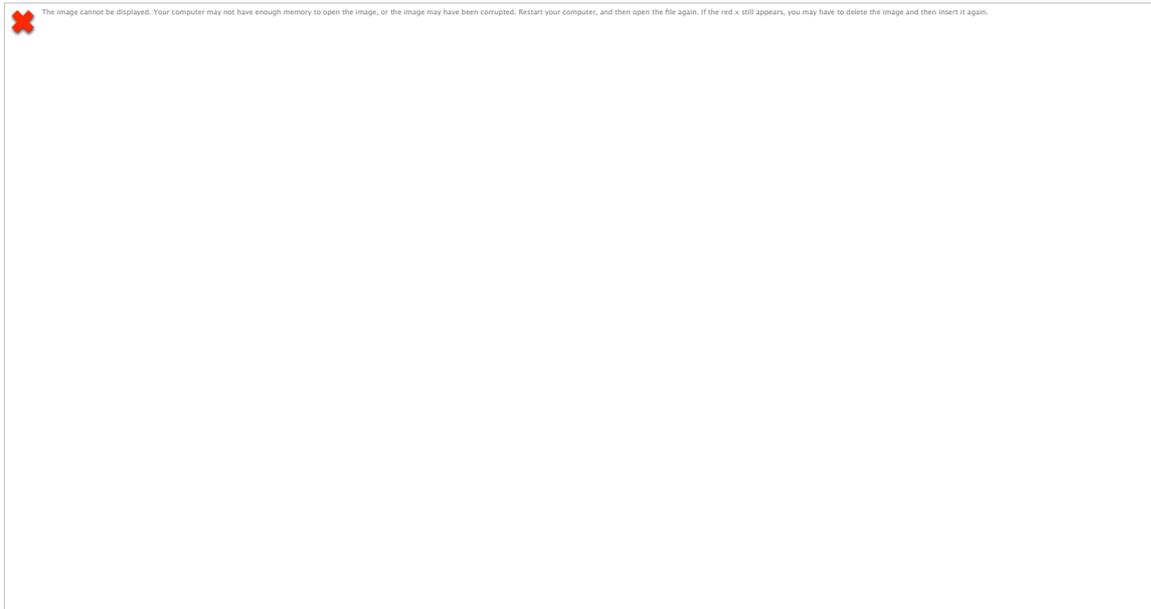


Figure 4: Work will make it easier to find a job after graduation
From Kramer & Usher (2011) p.20

The situation is similar in Figure 5, where the chart shows that students believe that out of class work will make it easier to find a job related to a field of study after graduation. The top three programs remain as, Co-op at 78%, Research Assistant at 72% and Internships at 71%. There is a considerable gap between the lowest category: summer work students at only 33%, as compared to the highest group, Co-op students at 78%.



Figure 5: Work will make it easier to find a job related to field of study
From Kramer & Usher (2011) p.21

Work experience gave all students, including fine arts, a better idea of available job paths and confidence to find work in their field of study after graduation, but as we see from the above charts, unstructured work experience such as volunteer and summer work, do not have the same degree of success. From all the figures included, it becomes apparent that the programs, which provide structured, out of school working experiences, are the best choices for students. Only WIL programs fulfill those criteria. As WIL programs encompass both internship and cooperative terms, WIL program graduates end up with a greater appreciation of learning and are better able to apply their skills to their employment. Currently WIL is concentrated domestically, but adding an international component would greatly improve its effectiveness.

Expanding WIL to an International Market

The acronym to be used from this point forward will be IWIL (International Work Integrated Learning). People realize that the everyday problems and opportunities in society today are no longer domestic, but are increasingly globalized. Post-secondary students are entering a world where “understanding and navigating linguistic and cultural differences are essential” (Gates, 2014). Sharply increasing global trends also require employees to have superior abilities to engage in multifaceted learning and cross-culture adaptation. International Work-Integrated Learning (IWIL) programs are one method to gain these abilities.

International Development is a Growing Trend

“Global, not national, is our new economic paradigm” (Gates, 2014, p.33). With the development of technology, the whole world is turning into a small inter-connected village. People can easily travel, study or live in other countries. The increasing number of students studying overseas gives schools, as well as art faculties, great opportunities to expand WIL to IWIL programs. There are over 218,000 international students in Canada (Economic Impact

of International Education in Canada, 2015), and 45,500 Canadian students studying abroad (Project Atlas Canada, 2015). For example, in Greater Victoria, British Columbia, Canada in 2014, there were 220 international students at Royal Roads University (Royal Roads University, 2016), almost 600 at Camosun College (Camosun College, 2016) and approximately 4000 international students studying at the University of Victoria (University of Victoria, 2016a).

Traditionally, “business students have taken more advantage of the opportunities for work learning experiences” (Dedee and Stewart, 2003). For example, the business program at the University of Victoria provides three terms of work-study for an additional fee. In each term, students observe the company’s business and then meet in class to discuss what they found out. The University also offers international courses based on co-operative experiences (one term in Canada, one term in Asia, and one term in Europe), in which students gain experiences from three different companies in three different countries (University of Victoria, 2016b). Students from this program not only have the opportunity to experience the real workplace, but also experience learning another language and having different cultural immersions. All these valuable experiences help their future career development: they are capable to work in a bilingual context; and they are able to quickly incorporate themselves into most sociocultural environments.

Unfortunately, this kind of work-study program is not common in art faculties yet. Over 3775 international students from 118 different countries chose the University of Victoria (UVic) for both undergraduate and graduate programs in 2015 (University of Victoria, 2016a). In the same year, 617 UVic students also participated in organized international exchange programs. There were 189 business students, 354 engineering students and only 74 fine arts students studying abroad (University of Victoria, 2016c). Compared to Business and Engineering, Fine arts is a small faculty, so the proportion of fine arts students is lower, but

remains impressive as fine arts faculties have fewer students. Considering the noteworthy number of overseas students from fine arts faculties, it is important for schools to implement IWIL programs to help fine art students with their career development.

In China, fine arts students have not been encouraged to engage in international work education experiences to the same extent as those taking industry and business administration courses. Near 50% of Chinese students studying abroad are from business or industry-related areas. Meanwhile the percentage of Chinese arts students studying internationally was a mere 5% in 2014 (Neubauer & Zhang, 2015).

In the context of American students, there are large numbers of American students living and studying overseas in other countries. In 2010 alone, a record number of 274,000 U.S. students studied abroad (Farrugia, Bhandari & Chow, 2012). Meanwhile, in a survey of American adolescents, 76% of 1,000 students surveyed stated that they would like to learn more about the world and world cultures if they were given the opportunity to study abroad (Hart cited in McLellan, 2011). In the increasingly globalized context, international education in its broadest sense, IWIL programs specifically, are found in almost all educational areas of study. For example, the international co-op programs are provided in Business, Education, Engineering, and Science at Simon Fraser University (Simon Fraser University, 2016).

Art schools are not simply confined to domestic WIL programs, but are ever expanding to IWIL programs. For example, during 2014-2015, there were more than 20,000 co-op students in more than 60 counties offered by the University of Waterloo. In 2015, eight faculties offer the co-op program, with 6900 in Engineering, 4500 in Mathematics, 2300 in Sciences, 1200 in Applied Health Sciences, 1600 in Environmental Studies, 600 in Software Engineering, 140 in Computer Finance, and 2800 in the Arts. The Arts has 45 programs with Fine Arts having only 470 of the 2800 students. Arts would comprise 15% of all co-op students, however Fine Arts faculty is only 470 of 20,000 or .00005%. On current work terms

there are only six Fine Arts students out of 5900 total or .1%. It should be noted that, 55% or 11,000 of the co-op students were working internationally, which means outside of Canada and the USA (University of Waterloo, 2016a).

IWIL Programs Provide Greater Benefits

IWIL programs increase maturity in the individual and add professional polish, by teaching skills beyond what can be gained in the classroom, such as interpersonal and improvisation skills in combination with on the job critical thinking. Moving away from secure confines to explore new countries and culture adds tremendous experience and development to young graduates. Education becomes more appreciated as a result and academic performance increases after work terms (University of Waterloo, 2016b). Students participating in IWIL programs learn to cope in multicultural, multi-linguistic situations and they gain language skills, which employers find invaluable. These students experience a new culture and demonstrate “get up and go,” motivation, independence and adaptability skills (Prospects Editor, 2015). Because there are limited articles about IWIL programs for fine arts students, the assumption can be made that fine art students also stand to gain from the benefits that IWIL provides.

Language benefits. There is no doubt that students can practice a second language in their own country, but immersion is the preferred and more effective method. Use of language requires a great deal of time and practice. IWIL programs provide cultural and linguistic immersion (Gates, 2014), and students in these programs can practice at all times during the process. This is particularly important to students from other countries that need to learn English as the preferred and common language of global business. It is also very important for art students to master English as a second language because art and it's related fields are a part of global business.

Abilities for global living. Students in IWIL programs not only gain career benefits, but also learn how to survive in the global context. During the work term in another country, students are able to actively participate in the negotiation of basic day-to-day services. These services include: transportation, money exchange, shopping and set up of supplemental site visits in their areas of interest (Roholt & Fisher, 2013). Site visits are crucial for exploring related job areas in their field. International arts students can sample or immerse themselves in the art communities where they are studying. This can only help broaden their creative perspective.

Cross-culture understanding. Cross-culture understanding is a very unique benefit for students in IWIL programs. The director of Middlebury College in the US, Jeff Stevenson, believes that IWIL experiences are key to preparing students to work effectively in cross-cultural contexts (Stevenson, cited in Gates, 2014). Students learn to cope in a foreign society/culture in conjunction with their working environment. Gates (2014) feels that international short-term programs can provide students with articulation relevant to the experience and to their potential employer. However, Redden (2013) feels students are in many ways, more involved in the country and the culture when studying for longer periods than a semester at a foreign university. Many international students who come to study for longer periods of time in Canada come to understand and appreciate the culture so well that they end up living, working and staying in Canada.

Conclusion

Both WIL & IWIL programs have a tremendously positive impact on all students' careers and academic work. This is particularly true for fine arts students. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2015), the Faculty of Fine Arts lags far behind most other faculties in believing that work experience increases students' ability to find work after graduation with only about 20% offering WIL options. Education (70%),

Engineering (60%), Math & Computer Science (50%), and Health (45%), all were well above Fine Arts (University of Waterloo, 2016c). Both WIL & IWIL programs are growing trends and are extremely important to every faculty (especially fine arts), school and country. As stated, students obtain many career benefits from both WIL and IWIL programs. Due to the increasing success of WIL, logical consensus follows, that IWIL could provide even further career opportunities to students because students in IWIL programs can experience different cultures, learn a new language and practice the abilities for global living. More importantly, IWIL students can obtain more opportunities in career development, both in the domestic and international job markets.

The growing trend in American IWIL programs suggests that students today realize an education with international experience is important (McLellan, 2011). Employers, like some transnational corporations, desire employees that have cross-cultural experiences and work terms from other countries. Figure 6 shows that 94% of employers are somewhat or much more likely to consider hiring college graduates who have internship experience, while 51% of employers are much more or somewhat more likely to hire students who have had participated in a study abroad program. Employers are 66% more likely to hire graduates who have experienced diverse communities. Figure 6 also shows seven different experiences employers prefer; six experiences come from WIL programs and the seventh is from international education. WIL programs have many benefits for all graduates, including those in fine arts, to improve future career development. IWIL as an extension of WIL programs offers every benefit of WIL with the additional benefits of an international experience.



Figure 6: Employer expectations of graduates
From Hart Research Associates (2015) p.7

Both IWIL and WIL programs develop an awareness of, and an appreciation for work. They extend knowledge of career opportunities, and provide experiences in career areas or in an individuals' area of interest. The student experience encapsulates a multifaceted and cross-culture experience abroad and it offers career exploration, linguistic development, and work place experience in a different culture. It also provides a new network of contacts, new friends and co-workers from new countries, and a redefinition of academic interests.

With the developing trend of globalization and the communication of every culture becoming intertwined, art learning has also obtained a new status. Some schools are beginning to encourage art students to participate in IWIL programs and students are realizing the benefits of such programs. To emphasize the growing awareness, some schools are actively supporting WIL as well as IWIL programs in addition to traditional study abroad programs (Gates, 2014). For instance, the University of Waterloo has made a particularly big

push in promoting international internships and post-graduation work opportunities as alternative ways for fine arts students to gain meaningful experiences abroad (University of Waterloo, 2016d). It would be a great benefit to art students if fine arts programs were more involved in this International drive towards excellence.

While researching this paper my perspective has totally changed regarding career choices for post-secondary fine arts students. Being a fine arts graduate, I faced many stereotypes, such as society believing you possesses a lower learning ability, and parents thinking you cannot find a high-paying job after graduation. My classmates and I were disillusioned to pursue the careers we had prepared for following graduation. However, all these prejudices were and are wrong. Art students have the same learning ability as all other students, perhaps even better. There are so many art-related jobs awaiting art graduates. Fine arts students should be more optimistic and be better prepared to seek jobs on the career periphery while they are studying in school. Career advisors and work learning programs provide many valuable opportunities for fine arts students to learn and experience the real work environment before the graduation. Advisors in fine arts faculties need to understand the curriculum, eliminate society's false perceptions, and update all thesis professional skills at their disposal to understand the unique situation and help art students to set and attain bright career goals. This article supports and encourages that WIL and IWIL programs are available to provide fine art students with better self-understanding and specialized career perceptions. WIL and IWIL programs are very beneficial for all students, especially for fine art students in order to build up their confidence and self-esteem for their future careers.

Parents, students, schools, post-secondary institutions, governments, and employers are the primary stakeholders and they must demand WIL and IWIL programs in all faculties, especially in the arts. This is the particularly true for students' job prospects because of the

inherent rewards and increased awareness. WIL and IWIL are constantly evolving, and they can help transform education, change society and give the world a better future.

Implementing WIL & IWIL In Art Faculties

From the literature review it was discovered that it is difficult for fine art students to attain a financially satisfying job today. There are three main reasons for this situation. First, parents are unwilling to have their children choose art as their major field of study. Parents intending to support their child's post-secondary school education may believe that art students are categorized as having lower learning abilities, and that it's hard for them to find a well-paying job after graduation. Secondly, students, themselves, do not have a proper awareness about their future career development after graduation. They often pay too much attention to the creation of their artworks, instead of preparing for a job following graduation. Even though some of the students may think about preparing for a related job, they don't know what to do to get ready for post-graduation while in school. Lastly, art schools do not have enough professional advisors or career programs to address the students' needs. Research shows that WIL & IWIL programs provide successful personal experiences and career benefits to students in business, engineering and science faculties, but the programs are not widely used in fine art faculties at this time.

Based on results found through the literature review, some useful implications to resolve the challenges for fine arts students are suggested. This part of the article is going to address how to implement WIL and IWIL into art schools as they already occur in business, engineering and science faculties. The solutions are horizontally divided into two categories: how to implement WIL and how to implement IWIL in art faculties. Art faculties must play the most important role in promoting WIL and IWIL programs. Some suggestions are going to be put forward for fine art faculties to implement WIL and IWIL programs successfully;

what schools can do to change parents' and society's stereotype towards fine art learning and to increase fine arts students' awareness as to their future career development.

Suggestions for WIL Programs

Creating Publicity Website

Important searching path. With the development of technology, a website becomes an essential tool for people seeking information. Most students are interested in work experience learning, but they are not aware of the existence of WIL and IWIL programs. Especially, as Head & Eisenberg (2011) stated: "The majority of students' information needs were directly related to personal decision-making in their daily lives" (p.8), so an effective website gives both students and parents an easy method to learn more about the programs and help them to decide what they want. A large numbers of students used the Web to get their daily information needs. Head & Eisenberg (2011) surveyed more than 86 full-time college students' searching experience to study their everyday research behaviour during 2008 to 2011. From Figure 6 we can see that almost 95% of the respondents used web search engines to seek information. 84% of the students rely on Wikipedia, and 63% use government sites. Only 14% of students go to librarians to seek information. Network research for post-secondary students is gradually displacing the other searching paths.

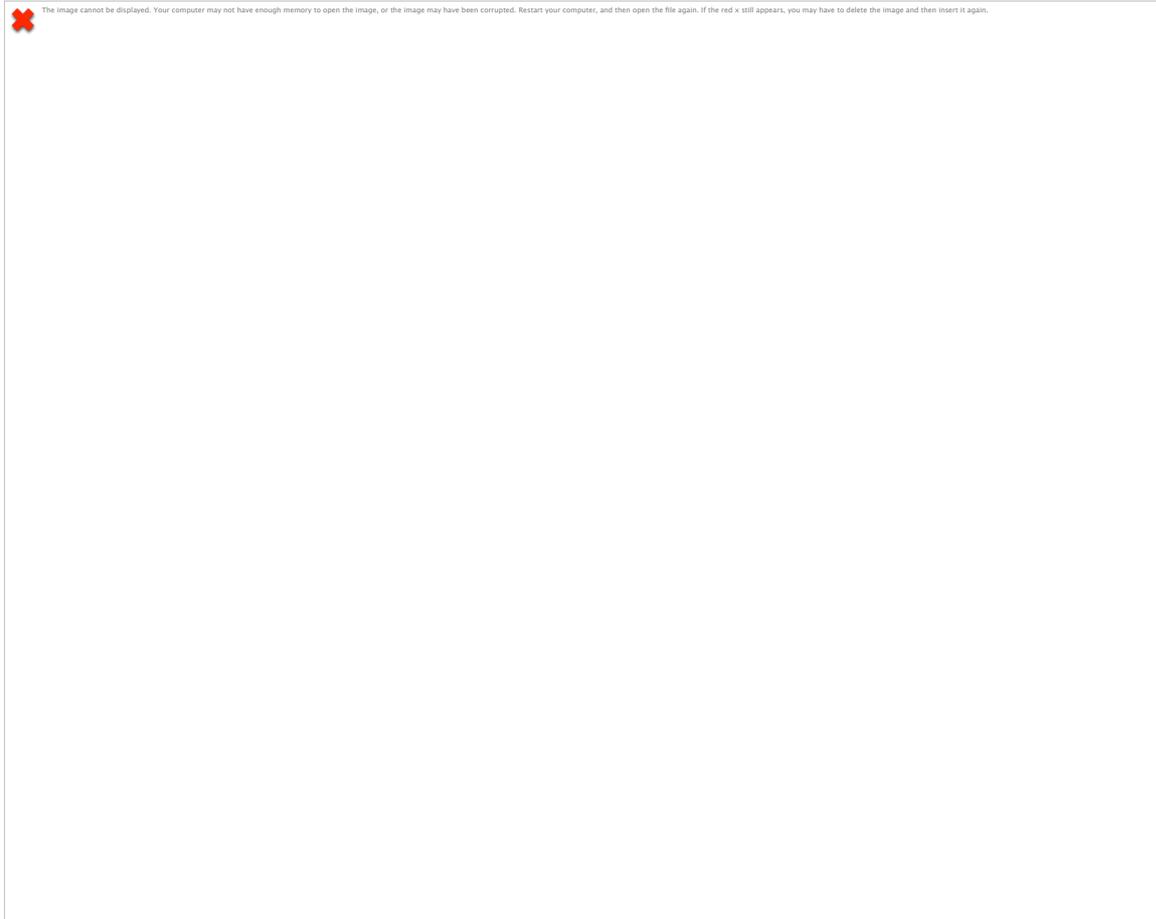


Figure 6: The most popular research path for college students
From Head & Eisenberg (2011) p.11

Based on Head and Eisenberg's study, websites remain the primary source for students to gather information and make their daily decisions. It is necessary for WIL and IWIL programs to have an accurate, effective webpages to introduce important information and provide alternative ideas for students.

Three universities in Canada with well-developed Co-op programs were the focus for my literature review, University of British Columbia, University of Waterloo and University of Victoria. These institutions have the largest co-op and international co-op programs. In searching their websites, which as noted above are critical for students seeking career options, their inherent strengths and apparent weaknesses became obvious.

Link for employers. The section for potential employers is very important. In the literature review it was clear that collaboration between companies and universities is very

important. Why do they want to hire co-op students from this institution? What are the benefits that co-op students can offer to the company during the work terms as opposed to simply hiring graduates? Both University of British Columbia and University of Victoria's websites have specific links for the employers. For example, on UBC's website, they list some reasons why hiring from a UBC Co-op helps employers identify prospective quality hires, cost-effective alternatives for employers' short term hiring, and co-op students who can handle special projects and work periods (University of British Columbia, 2016). University of Victoria's website lists some similar benefits for employers, plus they offer professional support and community relationships with the company (University of Victoria, 2016d). In the literature review I found that employers have many requirements and specific criteria for the students and potential employees. Students also have questions for the employers. Unfortunately, none of the institutional websites I examined have links for employers and students to communicate directly. WIL and IWIL programs need to ensure that their webpages have useful links for employers that address the information they need and a directly way to communicate with students.

Link for parents. Another discovery in the literature review was people, especially parents, believe that it is hard for fine arts graduates to find a financially satisfying job. This perspective tends to make parents unwilling to let their child choose the arts, particularly fine arts as their major. WIL and IWIL programs offer great opportunities for students, and more importantly for fine art students, to prepare for their future career development. The websites from all three universities I reviewed have a special link for parents. The website encourages parents to book a campus tour, sign up for open houses, and has an email link to answer specific questions for advisors. There are links for special dates, money matters, student well being, housing, etc. UBC's parents' link lists the top ten frequent questions that parents might want to ask, and offers the answers to those questions. Comparing the parent link from UBC

with Waterloo University, Waterloo University is better because you can actually book an appointment with the school and talk to a person who works in the department. You can not only check the frequently asked questions, but also ask specific questions. It is important for schools, faculties, and programs to provide a separate link for parents. Parents' opinions often affect students' decision-making, as the primary supporter of their students, parents need to know the specific information of the various programs, and all the possible employment avenues available to graduates with or without work experience. A link for parents is not only necessary, but also vital.

Link for fine arts students. Through the literature review it was noted that WIL and IWIL programs are widely implemented in faculties like Business, Engineering and Science. Upon searching the websites of University of British Columbia, University of Victoria and University of Waterloo, there is a great deal of information for academic students, especially business and engineering students, for applying to the co-op program. The website from UBC, has specific links for Business, Engineering, and Arts & Science. However, when clicking on the Arts link, it has a basic introduction about this co-op program being necessary for today's global economy. There is some information about how students from all different kinds of disciplines, such as Social Sciences, Humanities, and Creative and Performing arts, can participate in a co-op program. As a fine art student, the site informs me about how I can apply to the co-op program right now, but there is no further information. If you continue to click on the "Arts co-op program website" link, there is some news and achievements regarding the co-op program; some links for employers to post jobs; some benefits that students in these programs can obtain; and a big yellow button for "Apply To Jobs." There are many questions about the program that beg answering such as: Am I qualified to participate in the program? How much must I pay? What if I change my mind during the

program? There is nothing there to answer these basic questions. A link for fine arts students is a very important way to motivate them to join the program.

On the University of Victoria website, there is no information to be found for future arts students who may be considering a co-op program. Most of the information is for students who are already in the program. They have links like on how to improve career plans, opportunities to attend a career event or workshop, career planning tools, job application tools and skill assessment tools. All of these links discuss general information, but there is nothing specifically addressing a fine arts option. Even though University of Victoria has the link “see how we can help” and “ get an advisor”, they are lacking in previous program information, and there are no specific visual images provided for the students. Therefore it is hard for fine arts students to have a complete understanding of the program. To help with this circumstance, WIL and IWIL programs’ webpages should have a link to the cooperative employers and set up an online chat room for students to communicate with the employers directly.

The website from Waterloo university is very impressive, they have many pictures about how previous programs worked and what previous students thought about the co-op program. This is good because it gives future students a clear and true idea about the program. The other great feature is the numbers they provide; for example, the website lists that 100% engineering undergrads are in co-op, which says this program is popular and successful in the engineering faculty and makes one want to know more about this program in Arts. If you continue to click the undergraduate link, they also offer many new options in this new link. They have different links about the school, about the program, and about students’ life in the programs. Waterloo also has a link for international students, transfer students and even one link for aboriginal students. Waterloo however, like the other two universities, does not mention any co-op opportunities for fine arts students (University of Waterloo, 2016d). WIL

and IWIL programs should set a specific link for Fine Arts students to gain a clear idea about the programs. The literature review mentioned that there are many art-related job opportunities for fine art students such as, architectural designer, animated filmmaker and website developer. There are many related job for arts graduates, but the problem is, students are not aware them. If WIL and IWIL websites can add a link to introduce related career opportunities, it would help students to have some new thoughts about their future career development and awaken their enthusiasm for job preparation.

Orientation Sessions

Students and parents may have many more pertinent questions themselves; seminars, informational meetings and workshops can offer a great opportunity for both faculty and students to discuss their specific concerns and questions. As Roholt and Fisher (2013) suggested, seminars offer great opportunities for new students to communicate with previous participants and have a session with a visiting scholar. When I explored the websites of the three universities, I noticed that only University of Victoria provides seminars, career fairs and career events links. However these resources are only available to current students, it's not helpful for future students. One feature that stood out from the Waterloo University website was, the link "chat with a current student." You can ask questions of current students in the program, which is a tremendous way to learn more about the program. The problem here is when a fine arts student signs into the online chat link, they have no idea who they are talking to. Because WIL and IWIL have been popular in Business and Engineering faculties for a long time, fine arts students have more possibilities to chat with a current student who is majoring in Business or Engineering rather than a student in Fine Arts. To ensure art students can get information from current students who's major is in the same field, the website should divide the chat room base on the different majors. For example, under the section of "chat with a current student", students can have an option to choose, " talk to a business

student”, “talk to an engineering student” or “talk to a fine arts student.” By doing so, fine arts students are able to communicate with a current student from the same major, which is more practical.

For most of the students, this is probably the first time they will enrol in an actual work placement. It is very important for them to feel comfortable enough to go out and work in a totally new environment. The students will get more information about the co-op companies and they can also ask questions of the employees who come from that company. All of these seminars and meetings are designed to help students and parents feel more confident and comfortable about the WIL program. Seminars are good opportunities for all stakeholders: students, parents, art faculties and co-op companies to have face-to-face interactions.

Financial Encouragement

Student participation in WIL programs is not free; the tuition for them is higher than other regular in-school programs. For example, the full-time one year domestic tuition fee for a fine arts program at the University of Victoria is \$6138 (all fees in Canadian dollars), and for international students it is \$18,138, while a Co-op program costs an additional \$676 per year, with international students paying \$1126 (University of Victoria, 2016e). The extra 10% tuition is well worth it because students often earn a good salary during and after graduating; the average salary for co-op students from the University of Victoria was \$2273 per month (University of Victoria, 2016f). This is still a very important motivator for WIL programs. Scholarships and decreasing student loans are also very influential for students and their parents.

Research Group for Fine Arts

Although there is a great deal of research data on post-secondary students' career development and decision-making, the research data related directly to fine arts students is lacking (Cooley, 2007). It is crucial for the fine arts faculty to address the omissions and

expand research to assist fine arts students with their unique requirements. As the literature review mentioned, due to the lack of literature on post-secondary fine arts students, it is difficult for career advisors to give specific career advice to fine art students. WIL is a very complicated program; they are not only working on campus, but off campus as well, in an actual work environment. Advisors and faculty must consider the diverse needs of the students, in conjunction with safety, and all the connections between on and off campus. As Cooley (2007) mentioned “the lack of information about college students in the arts can hinder the development of the professionals’ ability to provide the most relevant services to these students” (p.9). This is why it is a critical time for fine arts faculties to strengthen their WIL and IWIL programs. There are many ways to improve the programs, for instance, WIL and IWIL websites can create a blog for a fine arts research group. This would enable the sharing of the results. This data could help fine arts students in understanding the options for their future career and it could also help in fine arts advisor’s improving their knowledge and capabilities.

More Suggestions for IWIL

The IWIL program is an extension of WIL programs. IWIL offers more benefits than WIL programs have to offer, particularly for fine arts students and their career choices. Because IWIL programs involve different cultural backgrounds and international cooperation, the requirements for IWIL programs are more complicated than WIL programs. IWIL programs require all the same procedures and more than WIL programs, such as publicity, effective and interactive websites, seminars with employers, and a professional team to address the needs of fine art students.

Administrative Aspects of Student Travel

IWIL programs, like WIL programs, need a strong admissions team to support the program from the beginning. However, because the IWIL program is more complicated,

IWIL also needs to create and monitor the aspects of student travel, international employment and accommodations. The IWIL administrative office should be responsible for researching and securing student work visas, especially if the process is complicated due to a student's country of origin and/or destination (Gates, 2014). For example, IWIL staff members have to take care of all the important details such as, the students' flight information, their living safety, the different types of insurance, and the students' physiological and mental well being. Administrators must also maintain connections with several social work agencies and various organizations chosen by the local partners. These organizations can help students much more readily, in their new host country.

IWIL Scholarships & Student Loans

Like WIL programs, IWIL students have to pay extra fees. The average cost of a two-year IWIL program ranges from CND 37,000 to CND 77,000 (Data from the University of Waterloo). As the literature review mentioned, the depressed economy may decrease fine art students' confidence to find a job after graduation. Considering that students will find it hard to afford these huge tuition costs and pay their students' loans after school, scholarships are a terrific way for them to participate in IWIL program. Schools and companies can and should be the main sponsors along with increased government funding. It may be easier for students to attain student loans as the programs' graduates find well paying employment. They can also defer costs and arrange future payment, as they will be gainfully employed during their four to six work terms.

Conclusion

WIL and IWIL programs achieve great success in many post-secondary schools. Students say that the program is excellent because it offers experiential learning, which bridges the gap between academia and the working world. They enjoy the experience in a new environment, it gives them a broader perspective, and they have the opportunity to meet

new people across diverse cultural backgrounds. Schools also realize the meaningful experience that students gain from WIL and IWIL programs. The successes of WIL and IWIL programs in some academic faculties give art educators a new perspective in career development for fine art graduates.

The most current research showed that WIL and IWIL programs in the Fine Arts faculty would help fine art students achieve their art dreams and pursue and in conjunction be qualified for a financially satisfying career. WIL and IWIL are not the only options for fine arts students to improve their future career decisions. There are many different related disciplines available for fine arts students to increase their career scope. Teaching exchanges with partner universities, international studies and performing arts genres could also widen their perspectives. One must remember that all types of hybrid programs exist which blend online and classroom learning. This enables academic flexibility while working or raising a family. Simply stated, there are many, many more career opportunities for fine art students than ever before. Parents, schools, employers and art students themselves, should have a new, brighter and vibrant perspective for today's fine arts graduates.

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