



# Exploring workplace learning in university education through a 'slow innovations' framework: Curation, innovation and exemplary practice

Final Report 2014

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## List of acronyms used

ACEN	Australian Collaborative Education Network
EFPI	Education For Practice Institute
PBE	Practice-based Education
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning
WPL	Workplace Learning

## Executive summary

In 21<sup>st</sup> century university education, workplace learning (WPL) is increasingly being incorporated into curricula to enhance student learning and to foster the development of capacity for authentic practice. Within universities there are significant and often common challenges that result and call forth innovative solutions to address those issues. Often timeframes may be quite constrained and the pace of innovation may be arguably too rapid to allow or enhance reflection and careful consideration of the impact and sustainability of changes made. There have been proposals for slow innovation to facilitate this process and to enhance quality and sustainability. It was within this framework that the research was centred.

This project sought to explore and identify perceptions of workplace learning, innovation, the pace of innovation, and the practice and acceptability of curation and curation strategies/technologies at the study institution, Charles Sturt University. The study adopted multiple methods to elicit these perceptions.

Firstly, this project used key informant interviews with 14 WPL educators from a wide variety of faculties, disciplines and geographically separate campuses to explore ideas of how knowledge about WPL practice is captured and transferred. The participant interviews further illuminate ideas about innovation and curation in WPL. Drawing from a 'slow innovations' framework the team suggests that curating is a useful way of conceptualising the way that practice knowledge of WPL educators is captured and stored.

An university-wide anonymous online survey (n=43) was used, to capture participant notions of three key theme words innovation, curation and exemplars which is vocabulary that was proposed as being useful in understanding the way that WPL practice knowledge is or could be retained. Participants observed that currently practice knowledge (principally knowledge about WPL practices within courses and units) exists in the form of an oral history residing in the memories of individual staff. On the basis of participant reflections the team will make a series of recommendations about how WPL practice knowledge can be better captured for the benefit of the WPL community.

It was proposed that significant work needs to be undertaken to properly scope and define the role of the WPL academic, especially with regard to administrative load. This ought to include specific advice for line managers as well integration with promotions policy. The place of WPL in the concept of academic work needs to be systematically addressed. This has significant implications for a number of areas of university policy (including workload, HR, recruitment, out of hours/overtime etc).

The following recommendations based on the research at the study institution were put forward:

**Recommendation 1:** Staff turnover is a risk to continuity and knowledge loss within workplace learning programs. The handover process between staff would benefit from being better scaffolded by the university.

**Recommendation 2:** Facilitate workplace learning (WPL) academics transition to the role with strategies such as a WPL induction relevant to that School or Faculty; a WPL buddy from within or outside that School or Faculty but similar in issues and the ready availability of generic exemplars.

**Recommendation 3:** Encourage workplace learning academics to pursue relevant workplace learning within existing resources such as the Education for Practice Institute (EFPI) WPL modules (<http://www.csu.edu.au/efpi/wpl-professional-development>), CSUed and within the Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, and more broadly within WPL focussed organisations such as Australian Collaborative Education Network Limited (ACEN <http://acen.edu.au/>)

**Recommendation 4:** Encourage the development and submission of exemplars which illustrate how challenges were addressed and develop some commonly requested ones through the Institution more broadly, perhaps through EFPI, in a consultative role.

**Recommendation 5:** Highlight strategies of curation that engage workplace learning academics, and where possible, also meet Institutional goals such as curation by publication to maintain that sense of achievement and intellectual ownership within the WPL academic individually and within the community of practice.

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# Chapter 1. Workplace learning, innovation and curation

Workplace Learning (WPL) or Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) has been variously defined and conceptualised within institutions (Billett et al., 2012; Brown, 2010; Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010; Emslie, 2011; Murphy & Calway, 2009; Swirski & Simpson, 2012; Usher, 2012). This has been encouraged by expectations of not only graduating future professionals but of graduating work-ready or even job-ready practitioners (Litchfield, Frawley, & Nettleton, 2010; Tymon, 2013). The terms workplace learning and work-integrated learning are used interchangeably within this report. WPL is the specific term used within the institution at which this study took place; and WIL is the term used at many other Australian institutions, as well as commonly in the research literature. Rather than selecting one term or the other, it was elected to maintain both terms in this report, using one to reflect the position within the particular research project undertaken (WPL), and the other in relation to the broader literature context (WIL).

Work-integrated learning has been proposed to offer many opportunities and to serve many objectives in students' learning such as reflection (Shircore et al., 2013), professional identity development (Trede, 2012), research (Chilvers, Maidment, & Crichton-Hill, 2012), employability skills (Jackson, 2013), generic skills (Freudenberg, Brimble, & Cameron, 2011), preparing teachers for teaching (Kline, White, & Lock, 2013) and developing skills in technology such as e-portfolios which are often used in workplaces to demonstrate evidence of continuing professional development (Williams et al., 2012).

Work-integrated or workplace learning has become an accepted and often expected feature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum of the traditional and emerging professions (Cooper, Orrell & Bowden, 2010). This has been led by stakeholder expectations where stakeholders have ranged from students to employers to members of the profession already working in the field (Brown, 2010; Litchfield et al., 2010). Some universities in Australia have explicit and specific requirements for work-integrated learning within courses and others encourage work-integrated learning. For example Victoria University has a stated requirement in its Learning in the Workplace and Community Policy that at least 25 per cent of course content (but not subjects) within a course must be comprised of learning in the workplace or community (Armatas & Vincent, 2011).

Thus the value and role of work-integrated learning seems well established; however, the value and role of work-integrated academics seems much less well established. Whilst universities frequently emphasise the importance of the teaching component of an academic's responsibilities, sometimes linked to student satisfaction, WIL academics responsibilities are usually more broad ranging than traditional teaching roles. Whilst these sometimes vary from institution to institution, the hidden component of WIL work includes compliance with accreditation or professional association requirements for courses (Naylor, Bhati, & Kidd, 2010); maintaining professional registration or professional/discipline association membership; risk identification and management; brokering, networking and training of workplace supervisors; providing career-specific career advice and pastoral care of students during and after workplace learning (Bates, 2011). Bates (2011) asserts that WIL teaching is, "... more the management of learning experiences ... than simply the delivery of content, and individual contact [with students] is essential because different students have different experiences [at different workplaces]". Some authors (for example Naylor et al., 2010) also identify additional challenges in WIL for institutions with multiple campus operations and/or new offerings of WIL in courses where WIL has not traditionally been a component of learning programs.

There is an emerging theme in the literature that asserts that academia struggles with defining an accepted role, skills, responsibilities and recognition for work-integrated

learning academic staff, and secondarily that many of the tasks and activities remain hidden work which is not considered in academic workloads or promotion applications (Bates, 2011). Further, the reported gender balance in WIL academics is heavily skewed towards females and to lower levels of appointment with a level B the median level of appointment, and remaining as a WIL academic constrains an academic's opportunities for professional development (for example memberships of working parties; secondments; sabbatical leave and may constrain the ability to attend professionally-relevant conferences) and promotion within that institution (Bates, 2011). Sometimes these impacts are well documented but sometimes formal reviews and processes to recognise work-integrated learning activities are being undertaken (Brown, 2010).

To achieve increasingly expected and sometimes ambitious targets for inclusion of work-integrated learning, work-integrated academics and institutions have needed to or chosen to adopt innovative solutions (Armatas & Vincent, 2011; Harvey et al., 2012). The pace of innovation has sometimes been driven by necessity tailored to a particular worksite location or environment (Simpson et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2013), at others by increasing competition among courses and within institutions and at others by institutional planning and policies (Armatas & Vincent, 2011). All of these challenges impact on work-integrated learning academics.

Some have proposed that the pace of work-integrated learning innovation may be too brisk and have argued for a more reflective slow innovation pace (Swirski & Simpson, 2012) to allow a considered, strategic approach for the development of work-integrated curricula, whilst appreciating that individual circumstances might sometimes demand an instant solution. Swirski and Simpson (2012) identify the challenges and potentially negative consequences of systemic rapid innovation in workplace learning asserting that, "Within the context of WIL, the haste with which some programs and decisions are implemented can often ignore the unique characteristics of an organisation, its specific student cohort, or the scope of administrative support required".

As courses have incorporated work-integrated learning, significant changes across courses have been made but curation of the course history and wisdom, in many cases, seems to have been overlooked or deferred. Academics drawn from the professions and work-integrated learning academics especially are often in demand and high staff turnover in institutions has been well documented (Brown, 2010). This turnover may have contributed to a lack of curation of a course and its work-integrated strategies, activities and philosophies.

This lack of documented history has led to some circular curriculum development where activities are incorporated, assessed and adjusted based on feedback and then a new staff member will be allocated to that subject and will re-visit strategies and tasks already considered. Curation has traditionally been the province of historians, archivists, librarians and of museum curators but more recently these traditional activities have become digital curation for small or specialist repositories (Tibbo & Lee, 2012). More recently lifelong curation among students and graduates has started to develop with the digital curation of professional identities of university students utilising open access e-portfolios (Fenton, 2011). These developments raise additional possibilities for course curation.

The sustainability of WIL and of WIL innovation are potentially at risk should curation not be considered and a range of potential, feasible strategies be identified and disseminated. This project sought to explore and identify the acceptability of curation and curation strategies/technologies.

The study location is a multi-campus university with campus locations across New South Wales and Canberra, and study centres in Sydney, Melbourne and several regional towns. Different courses are offered across the campuses. There are four faculties: arts, business, education and science which operate across campuses and are comprised of Schools in which courses (programs of study) are situated.

## Chapter 2. Methodology

Ethics approval (Protocol 406/2013/11) was obtained from the Charles Sturt University Ethics Committee to undertake focus groups and semi-structured interviews. This was later modified and a variation approved which included the online survey, wiki discussion and a flyer that was distributed at a Practice-based education summit to recruit additional participants to the survey.

Ethics approval was given subject to the anonymisation of all research participants. To this end, the names of the participants have been changed and in all instances are reported by pseudonyms. The pseudonyms preserve the gender of the participant but have been chosen to conceal variables such as age and ethnic background. So, for example, Benedict is a male and Florence is a female.

Fourteen individual semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting 1-1.5 hours. Participants were recruited via direct invitation from across every Faculty within the study institution. Of the courses that were represented by the participants, some were administered by small teams and others with a single individual academic. Some participants were no longer working in workplace learning (WPL) for the study institution, having taken up other roles but were recruited for this study on the basis of their past experiences at this institution. Four participants were male which represents approximately 29 per cent of respondents - fewer workplace learning academics at this institution and across Australia are male (Bates, 2011).

Overall, the team felt that the participant cohort captured the breadth and diversity of the WPL roles at this institution. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist. Transcripts were verified against the original sound recordings by one of the researchers, this process having been found to enable to researchers to engage deeply with the interviews, especially the ones that they did not conduct themselves.

Recruitment was one of the most challenging aspects of this study. WPL academics are notoriously time poor (Star, 2014) and non-teaching periods are made challenging by the need to complete a variety of academic workload roles in a compressed time. Although the literature argues for focus groups for time efficiency and the synergy arising from interactions among participants (Farnsworth, 2010; Ho, 2011; Krueger, 2010), it was found that workplace learning academics preferred individual interviews or anonymous participation in short surveys.

In the initial invite to participate, participants were asked to contact the lead researcher via email and indicate their preference to participate in an interview or focus group and nominate a time. The team found that almost all participants sought interviews which they reported to be more valuable to them, offering validation of their individual expertise and value, allowing the individual to reflect and also to engage with another individual who knows workplace learning and who was perceived as likely to appreciate individual anecdotes. Every participant affirmed without prompting the benefits of engaging with another human being on the subject of WPL. Many participants expressed views that it was beneficial, helpful, indeed cathartic.

In order to try and get some breadth of opinion across the new semantics that the team was seeking to harness for WPL, namely curation, innovation and exemplars, it was decided to employ a highly specific, anonymous online survey. This survey was administered using

Survey Monkey and was advertised by flyer at a WPL oriented conference, the Practice-based Education (PBE) Summit. It was also advertised to all staff using the news portal ("What's New and News") on the institutional website. Interestingly, the timestamps of the responses indicated that there was better take-up during the conference time than outside of it suggesting that this may be a useful future method for eliciting more survey responses, but there is no way to be certain that this was not coincidence.

The survey elicited a further 43 responses. The online survey was presented as a one-minute survey and thus designed to be very short. It did not capture, gender, faculty, job role nor any other identifiable individual attributes but the technology does record IP so it is possible to verify the same machine has not been used to create multiple responses (of course it is possible that a single respondent completed the survey several times from different machines, although it was considered this to be quite unlikely). These were downloaded and imported into the Nvivo project to be analysed alongside the interview data.

The team also trialled a Wiki within a learning management system (Blackboard) site for WPL educators. The uptake of the Wiki was very poor (only three responses). It seems that this was the result of a very time-poor group of potential participants and concluded that this method is not as successful in this setting.

In spite of there being only 14 interview participants, as they were drawn from such a diverse group of faculties, disciplines, campuses and types of WPL roles, it was considered that there was considerable saturation within the data. The later interviews, whilst providing valuable additional examples and context, reaffirmed rather than contradicting the themes that had emerged from earlier interviews. The data is broadly representative of the views of WPL academics at this institution, although it is acknowledged that there would be great value in further exploring the individual experiences of additional staff.

Having imported the participants' data into Nvivo the team began the process of coding for themes within the data. These were developed from two perspectives. Firstly, the preconceived themes of the researchers having conducted the interviews were discussed and noted. These formed the basis for the coding of the first 3 interviews. Secondly themes emerged from the preliminary coding experiences, when the transcripts were read and re-read alongside each other. The thematic analysis then involved coding all of the transcripts and then reviewing each section of the transcript at each thematic point.

One of the first analytical tools that was employed was the use of text frequency to give a sense of the meaning of important keywords. The team began by condensing the survey responses and interview data around the three key words, namely curation, innovation and exemplars, were condensed to a list of words and phrases, preserving repetitions but reducing the phrases where they were very similar so, for example in the analysis of responses to the word innovation, adding value, value has been added and value adding were considered to be synonymous and were called value-adding.

A web-based tool called Wordle was used to generate a word cloud. The power of word clouds lie in their capacity to provide a visualisation of text but also to give prominence to words with higher frequency (McNaught and Lam, 2010). Whilst Wordle was originally designated as a toy by its creator (McNaught and Lam, 2013, p630), it is gaining increasing acceptance as a tool in qualitative and education research (Seibert, 2013 and Williams et al, 2013).

The word clouds that were generated for each of the key theme words were found to be suggestive of further themes for further investigation. Nvivo text query searches were used to look more closely for patterns in the phrases that were chosen by participants. This facilitated a more nuanced thematic analysis of our data.

# Chapter 3. Results

## Overview

Workplace learning (WPL) academics identified in many cases that curation was not a consciously pursued activity and several acknowledged that if they were to leave, the history and processes/decisions within WPL in their course would leave with them. This was of some concern but time and a lack of identified strategies resulted in the issue being put on the back burner.

An emerging theme is that curation as a concept and as an action is difficult to conceptualise and effect. It is not intuitive and better strategies seem to develop with time and experience, though not in all WPL academics. The university needs to signpost curation and share the view that it is good practice.

In discussion with participants, there was interest in curation compared to a repository or the concept of curated exemplars. Many participants saw value in the idea of an exemplar of curating a course or curating WPL in a course. There was acceptance of the need for a role handover and a more formal approach to supplement the current oral tradition, if there is a nominated staff person designated to take over the role.

The concept of slow innovation was intuitively accepted and perhaps expressed as “learning to walk before you run... and doing it well”. There was acceptance that change is omnipresent but also that it comes too often, on too many fronts and with really tight deadlines.

It was interesting to learn how WPL academics conceptualised their position and role – it was to some extent dichotomised into stereotypes: either Children of a Lesser God to borrow from a film title or as Servants of a Greater Good wherein the poisoned chalice of devaluation and additional usually unrecognised workload inherent in the role impeded an academic’s capacity to seek promotion, secondments and other opportunities.

## Socio-demographics

Fourteen key informants were interviewed with four being male and 10 being female. Two-thirds of the respondents were at level B, there were some sessional level A staff, with the highest level of appointment being level C which often reflected other responsibilities to course or institute.

As is the normal practice in qualitative research, the team attempted to construct a table of participant attributes (using pseudonyms to de-identify the participants but including such information as faculty, discipline, campus, age, length of service in WPL role etc). However, the WPL community is such a contained one that even two or three data attributes would be sufficient for an individual to be identified. For example, the lead researcher of this project works on the Orange campus and has many years service to the organisation. Almost any staff within the study institution would be able to identify her on the basis of those attributes alone, had she been an interviewee.

In the case of our research participants, gender and discipline would be sufficient to identify some, especially the male participants. Thus for ethical reasons this kind of attribute table is not provided. However the following table was provided to give some sense of the participants in this research.

Table 1. Demographic characteristic of respondents in semi-structured interviews

Participants	Attributes
Number of Participants	14
Gender	10 Female; 4 Male
Faculty	All CSU faculties represented
Campus	Sydney, Wagga, Albury , Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo, Goulburn
Age	Range from mid 30s to mid 60s
Length of Service to university	Range approximately 1 year to more than 20 years

### One minute online survey: meaning-making of key concepts

The one-minute survey was surprisingly successful eliciting 43 responses over a short (two week) time period. The team was particularly interested that the majority of participant responses occurred during the dates of the PBE Summit (a conference during which flyers for the survey were distributed). The survey was so successful because it was short (hence it was presented as a one-minute survey). Participants were asked to give a brief reaction to the three-theme words that had been posed for the study, innovation, curation and exemplars. No format for responses was specified, anticipating that participants may write a sentence definition or that they may write a series of words in keeping with a word association exercise. The majority of responses were in the form of the latter (Refer Table 2).

Interestingly there were also some misnomers that were treated as outliers to the results. For example in response to the word “curation”, one participant wrote “vicars”, presumably confusing the notion of curation with the idea of a parish curate. Misnomers were not included in the word clouds because they were not considered to contribute to the meaning-making process. They did, however point to the ambiguity within these key terms and are suggestive of the fact that the terms do not have universal meaning for WPL academics.

Additionally one participant took the opportunity of an anonymous survey to express significant role dissatisfaction and frustration and to make a series of unconstructive comments about life as an academic. This is an interesting artefact of the anonymous survey instrument and the method prevented us from reaching out to this colleague. In the end the team disregarded the responses of this participant, not because they were not valid concerns, or because the team disagreed with the position, but because the participant did not actually address the questions that were being asked and the responses did not match with the survey questions.

Table 2. Online survey participants actual responses\*\*

Curation	Innovation	Exemplar
<p>A museum; art exhibition; careful collecting; Collecting information; Collection of relevant artifacts whether in the real world or digitally; sums up an idea shared by many; the collection is either for private ingestion or sharing with others who have the same interest; conserving items as in conserving art works. Obscure term not in common use; collecting information; Guardianship or custodianship; management of an asset; I do not know this word. I have not come across it before. I could guess that in this context it might be something to do with overseeing and developing particular areas of work practice. (combining the words Curator and Creation - I could be way off the mark! I deliberately chose not to look up the word); I think of museums or art galleries. Places where collections of some kind are curated (which to me means catalogued and stored); Imbedding; important process - accuration curation assists accurate future analysis; managing and archive of something information , artifacts etc; museums; museums and art galleries; no idea - never heard the word before; Preservation and maintenance; Process of putting together and cataloging Collections; Setting up a museum exhibit; sorting, preserving; store, preserve, remediate; The art gallery; the management, organisation and dissemination of collective experiences, materials and ideas; The practice of looking after something of value; Vicars</p>	<p>A new idea and/or way of making a contribution to individuals, institutions or society; CHANGE; Change. New ideas and inventions; Creativity drive; creativity; pushing the boundaries; Doing something new or producing something new; dynamic, revolutionary improvement, reducing mundane activities, creating time for greater production; introducing something new and better; Lateral Thinking; new different unique spin on something; New ideas and new concepts. Looking at existing (work) practices from a different and maybe unconventional viewpoint to improve existing methods; New methods of delivering, teaching or accessing content/material/information; New technologies; new, better; new, breakthrough; new, change; Potential to be a useful, inspiring technology/practice; Rather overworked word for "new"; something new; Something new and exciting; Something new; The first thing that comes to mind is doing things in a new way or a way in which something has not been done previously; thinking outside the square; tranfering an idea into a different context; value adding; added value to an existing experience, material or idea; While it can be quantum step change to new systems, processes and product, I see it more as smaller improvements.</p>	<p>A model worthy of imitation; a sample of how something plays out in practice and in context; A specific practice that is illustrative of effective practice; an eample4 of best practice; an example; An example of something good/useful/of value . Often referring to a person who is held as a good role model; best indicator, example; Best practice; Best practice examples; Dan Brown book The Da Vinci Code; educational examples; example outstanding example; Example of best practice; example, exemplary/role model; Excelling; I don't like the term, but I understand that it probably arose for the purpose of describing in one word examples that are considered to be best practice; Model; not simply best practice, as that presumes little or no innovation (something in practice can be an exemplar, but is not necessarily innovative). An exemplar is something which does, or attempts to break, new ground and is evidence based; Providing an idea/sample of how you want the work/infomration/assignment delivered or presented. This is 'how' you are asking the it to be done; Really good practice that we should be trying to achieve; Something very good, the best; template; The best/finest example of something; to lead by example; a case study; Tools, resources, content, even thoughts that bring on aha moments within yourself and others; When a particular this is exemplary - a notable and particularly good example of something becomes the 'exemplar'.</p>

\*\* Note that the exact typography of participants has been preserved here, including spelling and typographic errors, individual responses are separated by semi-colons. Not all participants responded to each question.

As was described above, the survey responses were condensed to form word clouds (Figures 1, 2 and 3 on subsequent pages).

It was immediately visually apparent from the word clouds that the curation cloud was considerably larger than for the other two clouds. The team took this as suggestive that there was a greater degree of consensus amongst the participants about the meaning of the word, possibly due to the fact that exemplars and innovation are more commonly used words amongst WPL staff.

The word clouds for each of the key concepts from the online survey are presented below; larger, more evident words represent higher frequency responses to the concept. Thus the word clouds are a way of representing the collective meaning that the participants assign to each of the words in the realm of WPL. The word clouds have been used to underpin a preliminary understanding of these three concepts in the study.

Figure 1. The Innovation Word Cloud





Figure 3. The Exemplar Word Cloud



## Key Informant Interviews

### Learning experiences and Assessment

A key feature of workplace learning is its capacity to provide a contextualised and authentic experience which enhances generic graduate attributes and work readiness (Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010; Emslie, 2011; Ferns, 2012; McIlveen et al., 2008; Murphy & Calway, 2009). The respondents in our key informant interviews clearly identified this as an intended goal of WPL programs across professions and disciplines and discussed related issues such as issues of access, consistency and quality.

*So, um, and they'll be different across all, all the plans. You know, across all the workplaces... You just put them, you know, the skill areas don't differ, the learning experiences do, but the skill areas don't differ. And what we do is say, just like the generic skills, it's your job to go find opportunities to develop these skills. And what we do is the major assessment for the subject is that they have to report on that in a professional ... portfolio. [Effy]*

Other respondents disclosed the challenges and opportunities that some sites might pose to student learning and the balance between a learning experience that offers students opportunities to reflect on potential changes or improvements for the site, and the point at which a site ceases to offer perceived benefit on balance.

*...But preparation a little bit more, preparation about ...centres that maybe are not very high quality, where do you draw that line to say I'm not going back, and how much can you put up with and how much does it become a learning experience for you? [Bertha]*

At the study institution's campuses, some courses have on-campus students who undertake workplace learning and others have distance students who undertake workplace learning which has been identified as posing different opportunities and challenges for workplace learning academics. Bertha noted her perception of differences as follows:

*...And so they're saying that they've got to get there, they've got to find somewhere to stay. They're such a long way away that if something is going wrong, we can't just drive there. Um, whereas any of the students, you know, in campus A campus B or campus C; in an emergency we can drive there.*

### Coming to the role – transitioning and background

Many respondents disclosed that they fell into the WPL role, though some explicitly chose a position with WPL, usually because of previous experience as a workplace educator. Whilst most enjoyed the challenges and sense of achievement inherent in the role, several identified that it was a two-edged sword.

Effy for example advised, "They [other WPL academics at other institutions in her field] keep telling me, this is the poisoned chalice!". The role has been identified as such because of the devaluation relative to traditional academics and the additional usually unrecognised workload inherent in the role which impeded an academic's capacity to seek promotion, secondments and other desirable opportunities.

Priscilla's situation represents almost a blending of these two most common views of transitioning, she reported:

*No, I just sort of happened to fall into it, in a way. That was one of the areas that ... I knew, and I knew well and I guess, you know, in looking at subjects that I was going to teach ... it was one area that I really, really wanted. I wanted to work in the professional experience subject.*

Some had been worksite clinical educators or workplace mentors and as they gained experience in their discipline/profession and in student supervision sought to contribute more directly and actively to the education of the next generation.

Hector had been employed as a professional in a relevant health institution in a teaching and mentoring role. He reported:

*...then with workplace learning, [I]took on a job with an internal education system for a **XXX** [discipline area deleted] and was involved then with teaching students and then monitoring their ability to be mentored back in the workplace...*

Many longer serving WPL academics reported that whilst they may or may not have been supported within their School or Faculty, they were not provided with a WPL induction, nor informed about other WPL academics, though later a workplace learning network did arise from an initiative of the WPL academics and administrative staff, and an institute was also established [EFPI] to highlight and research professional and practice-based education.

Benedict, a recent WPL academic whose first WPL experience was at a large metropolitan institution, wryly observed when asked about orientation and assistance:

*Um, a better question would be, did I get any induction into the institution? ... But look, I don't want to be too harsh, I mean it was, it was um, I guess assuming that I had a level of background of how a university would work. But ... I'm still learning stuff about process and all of that type of thing.*

Several respondents identified the value there would have been in a WPL buddy or mentor. Hector expressed this quite clearly:

*Yeah, ... it might be helpful to have a workplace learning buddy if you're new to workplace learning, so that you've got someone that you can ring...*

A key feature identified by respondents as contributing to their satisfaction with the role and to their workload management and expectations was clearly identified as an actively engaged and participatory line manager, someone who listened to issues and challenges and contributed to potential solutions or "work-arounds".

The sorts of activities that contributed to this were, for example, reviewing the actual work performed and providing administrative support for tasks that did not actually require the workplace learning academic's particular professional/discipline skills. Those activities that were identified as less helpful were those where the WPL academic raised an issue of workload and was told to go back to their discipline group and solve it there.

This reverse activity extended beyond a lack of being pro-active, for example, a line manager who did not appear to consider a work-life balance for WPL academics was described by Florence:

*I have an example where XXX (line manager) emailed all of the WPL academics at 4 o'clock on a Friday afternoon. I forget what it was, but it was something that had just landed on their[identifier deleted] desk, and their plan was that we were going to solve the problem over the weekend. It was like, this one person was really angry and so that is really unrealistic. You can't expect that, it's wrong. It's not healthy, and then they were like yes, I understand that, but this is the reality.*

By contrast, Clementine and Millicent in particular, identified how their line managers had assisted them to work more equitably compared to traditional academics by providing administrative support as part of the team to manage workplace learning. Millicent observed readily that, "...we do that as a team, we don't do that individually", and offered more clarity about support and encouragement for balance in her role when she continued as below:

*I haven't really ever thought about it, because we ... have the team that we have, we've always been open minded and ... XXX [line manager] has given us a lot of opportunities and breathing space to develop XXX [WPL subjects] to how we believe it would best fit with the experiences that we have had across our work life, as well as you know, researching and talking to other people externally.*

Clementine also echoed Millicent's comments of supportive behaviour and recognition by her line manager:

*I have an admin officer that I've had all the way along, from the time that I took upon this role at my campus, and originally I had an admin person that had part of their role was workplace learning on each of our campuses. But ... we now have a hub... I now have two full-time staff members that deal with workplace learning. One of them is[administrative] Level 5, the other one is Level 4.*

## WPL in part of your role

Many authors (see, for example, Bates, 2011; Emslie, 2011) have identified that academia has not yet come to an understanding and conceptualisation of a workplace learning workload. There is a reported lack of recognition and inclusion of activities such as:

- Recruitment and maintenance of partnerships with relevant industry
- Compliance requirements of professional associations or registering bodies
- Memberships of professional associations and committees
- Liaison and marketing to supervisors and sites
- Student induction to work and worksites
- Risk identification, characterisation and management
- Pastoral care for students during workplace learning (Bates, 2011)

Clementine a WPL academic for approximately six years but an academic for eight years clearly identified that the WPL academic role is extensive. She explained:

*... This role is never ending. It's ever evolving. You can never go home and think at the end of the day, I'm now finished and it's all done and dusted... I am also available after hours, because I have a work phone, for any issues that are surrounding WPL... my fifty percent [position allocation] does not even anywhere go near what I am actually expected to do. It is far, well and truly over.*

Florence identified the chronic shortage of time inherent in the workplace academic role, noting:

*And really, I'm just thinking that knowing from what my role was like as a workplace learning [academic] ... and knowing how many weekends or out of work time was spent getting the allocations done and the nuts and bolts of getting the students prepared, getting them supported, getting the workplace learning supervisors [at the worksite] prepared and then of course it always went chaotic as students were out on placement, [the issue] is time.*

This theme of time poor workplace learning academic staff was re-visited by Florence and others on multiple occasions during their interviews. At a later point Florence observed:

*Yes. Yeah, and just like my experience of being a workplace learning coordinator [academic], you've also got your teaching load as well and your research load and everything else that never goes away... I think nobody really talks to academics about how they feel about things or how they're coping with change... I just think we have to be really careful about trying to add extra things to academics without consideration to their workload, because I think we [academics] are at a tipping point.*

Hector echoed these views noting that WPL combined with large student cohorts impacted on his capacity to undertake further study or a research degree explaining:

*I was enrolled in my masters, ... which is some by subject and then some by portfolio, and I just pulled out of the subject yesterday that I'm meant to be doing, because I just feel overwhelmed with the fact that placement is still turning over, and we are months away from our first group of students going out. I'm still marking portfolios with students who've just been out in February for what was last year's placement.*

Marion also stated that time was in too short a supply:

*... we don't have a lot of time available to go off and do that (visit WPL sites)... I think you'd have to clone us if you did that, because we've, we've got so many students that are going out to so many sites...*

Marion for example observed when asked about activities in her role, "So, um, sites that students go to, so establishing contact with sites that students go to. Providing orientation for the sites to the XXX (institution) requirements". Marion offered further clarity by observing:

*I've done it (orienting sites and supervisors) usually visiting them. I've run workshops, as well as assisted them over the phone when they've come up with students and they don't know what to do...*

Marion also identified the problem solving nature of the role identifying it as an ongoing role.

*So, if there's an issue with students, I am dealing with it and then I'm telling them what's happened. Or if there needs to be changes in ... their workplace learning placement, I work it out and then I tell them what's happened so that it can be documented ... and I just, yes, keep putting out the fires.*

This problem solving nature of the WPL role was echoed by Maeve, who observed wryly, "If you want an easy life, to be fair, you wouldn't pick a subject that had workplace learning in it".

Further, there is a reported gender skew towards women in workplace learning, and, also in either gender towards lower academic levels of appointment, with the most commonly reported being level B. This was also reflected in the key informants two-thirds of whom held level B appointments.

Several respondents reported on the value accorded to WPL work, such as Benedict below:

*Ah, I think the main thing that would have made the path easier, um, is something you've already touched on, and that is acknowledgement of it as a legitimate academic pursuit.*

There was also identification that the WPL role was often not chosen but assigned and was viewed by several respondents as a poisoned chalice wherein devaluation and additional usually unrecognised workload inherent in the role impeded an academic's capacity to seek promotion, secondments and other opportunities.

Hector expressed a view that WPL academics, because they usually come from the profession not by following the traditional academic path [Bachelor of X; Bachelor of X (Hons); PhD; Fellowship; Teaching], were often not particularly valued by traditional academics, and experience and industry-related qualifications similarly. He observed:

*I think we would be children of a lesser God in that we feel a little inferior to some of the pure academics who've come from a science background or a social science background. Not one of us has a PhD, you know? We've got three people running around with a Masters, which in the field, like in practice, in the industry, if you've got a Masters, you would be an amazing person!... and then you come here and it's kind of like, well, that means nothing.*

However when the traditional academics had to teach Hector's students, they found that the students only valued those aspects of their teaching that had direct, apparent relevance to their future career, and so those traditional academics did value his ability to help them contextualise their teaching for his students, noting:

*A lot of our students... in their science subjects, they're looking for the practical application of science to being a XXX [profession deleted]. The lecturers for that struggle! They'll come to you and say, hey, look, can you come along for a two hour session and we can cover some practical applications of science, or you know, they hammer me with practical questions...*

Bertha reflected that the learning for the students is viewed as valuable, but like Benedict and other respondents above, was not so confident of her own role being valued, and of her own professional development. She observed:

*I think that the role that I have in terms of working with these students goes way beyond the hours that I'm given. Way beyond, and I've often thought that. You know, I like to continue with my studies, because I like to study and put back into the course, the new knowledge that I'm getting. But I find that a real struggle, because it's way beyond what we've been allocated and it's not as neat and tidy as a theoretical subject which you deliver, you give, you do the assessments and all of that.*

Most respondents explicitly identified the impact on opportunities within traditional academic promotion and progress though there were different interpretations. For some there was a reflection as to whether the traditional path to academic success was or ought to be the only one and for others the consideration as to what exactly ought to constitute academic success broadly, and also specifically with respect to workplace learning. Some saw that they were the Cinderellas, second class or children of a lesser God within the academic environment, and others saw that, for their profession or discipline they were rather "servants of the greater good", individuals prepared to accept a lack of opportunity to secure the needs of professional accreditation or associations, that they highly valued.

## Curation

Curation as a concept and as an action was one in which respondents differed significantly in their perceptions. Some saw curation as a type of handover and others saw it as having a record or a history, even a course archive. Many reported that the significant details of WIL in the course were in some, often longstanding, academic's head and had they left suddenly that course wisdom would have been lost.

Clementine expressed this issue very clearly:

*...my XXX [line manager] has said please do not leave! Please do not leave, because everything about workplace learning is in your head...it is very hard to hand on to somebody else, because you have the contacts, you have the knowhow... you're it.*

Sybille who has workplace learning responsibilities in a course with a first student intake in 2005, identified that the evolution of the course, and most importantly the decision-making behind the way the course is structured and activities are included, were both definitely needed as new academics join to enhance a collective or shared vision of the course. She stated:

*And [also] just the history of it, with the new staff sort of going, this doesn't make sense - I don't see the point of this, and just not understanding how the people who actually set the course up were thinking. And there's fewer and fewer of us that actually do know that.*

Hector identified quite explicitly, that whilst some information would be accessible, about workplace learning in his course, much of it was not and could be lost, a course-related risk that may not have been previously considered. He stated:

*So, it's all in my head. So a little bit of it is sitting on my computer, so if I died tomorrow or I resigned tomorrow and someone knew my login, they could come in and find information. I've got a folder called placement subjects where they could jump in and find all the relative [relevant] forms. They could find the portfolio [assessment task], they could find documentation about students, they could find*

*all the subject outlines from last year. But a lot of the interaction stuff [contacts and networks] is in my brain, that's for sure.*

Hector in continued discussion identified the categories of information that would be valuable and benefit from curation. He identified:

*Yeah, I think we should, we probably need to share the evolution of where workplace learning has come from when this XXX [profession deleted] course at CSU first began. It was the first course in the whole country, so you know ... That would be pretty good information to go back and look at and where it's evolved to now. And had it evolved, could be the correct question, had it changed in twenty years?*

Claude for example observed in this interchange with the interviewer (MDS) in which he outlined the value of the previous academic making herself readily available even though she had resigned her position:

*It, um, that is, when I took up my post, my predecessor happened to be in XXX [Town], so she very generously had meetings with me to have handover sessions.*

*Interviewer: So you had a living repository! (laughs)*

*A living repository, yes, indeed, and I also had a filing cabinet and humongous amounts of material.*

Whilst Claude did have a filing cabinet of historical value, "... back to the start of the course in 2006...", he did not rely on it for any of the many innovations he has introduced. Claude did however identify that curation was not just collecting and keeping ("the humungous filing cabinet") but in sharing and disseminating. He asserted that:

*...that's not institutional curating, within a course or a subject handover and that sort of thing, but also larger scale social curating in terms of educational research and presentation of papers or conference presentations...*

Other WPL academics also expressed their views. Marion for example readily offered a view, "Well, see, curation to me, because I've also got a history background... You're maintaining something for posterity". Although Marion recognised curation as a concept and desirable within workplace learning, she also noted that she was unaware of curation within the course,

*I must admit, I haven't asked that question, but I suppose with the curriculum being in its fourth year, I imagine that past assignments for subjects are somewhere... maybe on the S Drive [a shared drive with staff access].*

Florence echoed Marion's perception of uncertainty observing:

*As I was talking, I was thinking it's stored in people's head. It's almost embodied knowledge. And it hasn't been stored, apart from the spreadsheet that says these hospitals are predominantly these experiences, to somebody new coming in, that would be a very laborious start.*

However, Florence did explicitly identify that workplace learning materials were valuable and deserving of appropriate curation stating:

*See, that says that you're looking after it, it's something that's precious and you're not just going to let it sort of get lost somewhere. It's going to be kept and that*

*sense of yes, people will be able to be access it. So I think there's the caring side, the caring side, that part of the curation that will ensure that people will easily access it and be able to use that information.*

Clementine recognised the value of curation especially when seeking to hand over the WPL role to another academic at a future time:

*I see it as, my curator role, I look at what have I done to then change [innovate] to pass onto somebody else. I can't see myself in this role forever, and I shouldn't see myself in this role forever, but I will be always attracted to this kind of role.*

Sybille recognised the value of course wisdom but not necessarily keeping material about minor matters, for example. She saw wisdom in curating well-chosen artefacts and documents, observing:

*... I guess, you would think of preserving and looking after a collection or something and bringing it together... so it would be choosing... choosing what are the best examples, whether they're the highest quality or the most representative or whatever. You're choosing a collection of items for people to look at and visit.*

Sybille also saw curation as respecting what had gone before and particularly the guiding lights who were instrumental in developing and implementing the course that students study and the changes that had been made to the course, stating:

*Yeah... the history of how the course was set up ...when our course was first set up, it was ... basically three people. It was just a germ of an idea... one of the three people... no longer works at the university...the other day[someone] said, oh, who's she? ... just some practitioner that came here and worked here?. And I thought ...Absolutely no way! She was so central to how the course got set up. That gets lost as soon as all the people that knew her aren't there.*

## Innovation

Innovation and change were seen to be ever present and often desirable or necessary. Frequently they related to student learning and assessment when this concept was raised with participants.

Maeve saw that innovation was not some substantial change but rather having the flexibility and to have developed the capacity to match a solution to a situation. She stated:

*So in my repertoire [of problem solving strategies], I would have maybe a dozen different ways of doing something, and that's [the innovative one] only one. And so someone might ... say, well, that's very innovative, and they're probably right. It's all about the application of better solutions to fit the current situation.*

Florence identified that to her perception change and innovation were always, at least potentially, positive. She stated:

*I wouldn't perceive innovation to ever be negative. To me, it's something that's new, that solves a problem perhaps that you already had. So it's going to allow you to do something in a more efficient or effective manner.*

Claude also viewed innovation in a positive light, noting:

*But the most basic thing it [innovation] means to me is that it allows students to get an application of their theory to practice. So there's a bridge there between campus and workplace. It's also a bridge between them and their future, so it's a bridge between them out of the book, out of the lab, out of the tute room.*

Benedict saw that innovation in WPL was a necessity:

*Okay. I think for me, innovation ...that you need to be innovative in order to get reliability, and validity in workplace assessment, because otherwise it's like herding cats!*

Hector also identified a role of innovation as achieving functionality or validity in WPL assessment:

*I think innovation as a concept, so probably building a system or having an assessment that is functional, that is simple for the students to utilise, that is easy for them to access and that is basically fool-proof.*

Darius expressed the view that innovation was about currency, recency and relevance, asserting:

*So you know, you're constantly being dynamic and you're thinking what's out there in the broader field. It comes back to what I mentioned before about being scholarly, and thinking about what's happening in the wider world and ultimately keeping what's happening with your teaching and your research, keeping relevant.*

Sybille, however, noted the costs applicable to proposing a substantial or significant innovation in workplace learning, observing that the perceived costs and time usually meant that change was "slowly, slowly". She stated:

*...really as a workplace academic, you don't have a lot of power. You ...have to use influence ...So if you want to do something that is labelled innovation, you have to actually use up a fair bit of influence credit... most of the time what you actually do is just quite incremental. And every now and again ... you will then say, okay, here's this innovation that I want to do... [and I will use up influence and resources to do so].*

Several respondents in reporting WPL innovations felt unheard and unnoticed, Priscilla reported a conversation with a colleague as follows:

*... I've spoken to people who have done tremendous innovative practices, work[ed] day and night to give the students spectacular opportunities, and they all say, but you know, not once has anybody ever asked me what I do.*

This may echo the feelings of being disenfranchised and devalued by the WPL role reported earlier.

## Exemplars

Very few respondents reported having access to exemplars, especially if they were the founding workplace learning academic for the course. Some proposed that they may have been helpful but may not have existed as many pioneering WPL academics worked alone within their course in WPL matters, and where they came from the profession/discipline may not then have had comparable contacts at other institutions.

Some identified that having some exemplars of assessment would be helpful to new WPL academics. Others would have found an exemplar that identified what the study institution believed typified workplace learning to have significantly enhanced their entry to the role.

Sybille observed how helpful exemplars could be but also identified the challenges inherent in too broad an array of resources. She noted:

*I know exemplars from others, they often are useful. The difficulty and the challenge always, I think, with exemplars... is that just in time sort of concept... Being able to find the information you need where you need it and when you need it... when I was new, I would have dearly loved an exemplar just to show me what this institution thought workplace learning was...*

Surprisingly, one exemplar was often, somewhat wistfully, requested - an exemplar illustrating how to curate a course's WPL history and broader history. Another that was mentioned, sometimes with wry humour, was an exemplar of how to actually engage in research, both time-wise and skills-wise.

Darius, on reflection of his early days in workplace learning, opined:

*Oh, look, it [an exemplar] would have been helpful, certainly, yeah. I think my background saw me through, anyway... It's just here you go and off you go, and start pedalling... So, I certainly think more [assistance] would be better ... just to get an idea. Sometimes as to how, especially with something like research...*

Along with these, a further strongly desired exemplar that was often identified was how to succeed academically as a WPL academic. Effy, a WPL academic of approximately seven years experience, probably expressed this most clearly when asked if any exemplar would be or would have been helpful. The one she proposed is below:

*(laughs) How to get promoted while doing this.*

Discussion of exemplars often turned to where exemplars might be stored for accessibility and timely access. An institute within the study university was frequently identified as an ideal site.

Sybille for example, stated:

*...really in EFPI [Education for Practice Institute], that's ... as far as the website goes. It would be the logical place, wouldn't it? It would be great if it was searchable... if you had a repository.*

However a formal repository was not the only way that respondents proposed or identified. Some respondents proposed activities through which curation, or taking care and keeping the course wisdom was maintained or could be maintained in the future. There were openly accessible filing cabinet records in some courses, some courses used accreditation records to mark milestones and some innovations such as new or revised subject offerings, some used subject outlines as a "history over time", curation by publication was used by others (Simpson, 2014). One academic was working to put together a history of the course as a year book for students (and new staff), while others were looking at setting up a discipline/profession website informed by existing sites such as this OLT funded site established by pharmacy academics <http://www.pharmacylearning.edu.au/about-learning-resource-database>, and some activities by individuals such as Darius identified:

*It's what they call diaries have been developed, but it's kind of like lesson plans for DE [distance education]. So they diarise what they do in their job through the session... where that corporate memory, so to speak, gets out and is documented and then maintained. And then future people come in and maintain that and build it and it becomes richer and into the future.*

## Chapter 4. Discussion

This research explored workplace learning academic's perceptions of academic practices, their experiences, their evaluations of innovation, curation and exemplars. Many chose not to identify their often significant workplace learning accommodations and developments as innovation, though these did meet their own definition(s) of innovation when that was elicited. Rather they identified them as practical or pragmatic solutions to problems, issues or challenges, sometimes stating the old adage, "Necessity is the mother of invention".

This poses challenges for the establishment of a repository of exemplars as academics who do not view their achievements and activities as different, worthy or outstanding are less likely to offer or propose an exemplar for inclusion. However during interviews with participants when their activities and innovations during discussion were recognised as such by participants, the majority would be prepared to offer at least one exemplar for a repository, if requested or specifically sought. Many noted that the repository probably might not assist them so much but would be extremely valuable for new academic staff or academic staff new to workplace learning, with some respondents observing that they wished there were a repository when they did start in workplace learning.

This observation of relative need when new to a role is consistent with the literature in Australia and overseas. Hafler and colleagues (Hafler, 2011) for example assert that there is a hidden curriculum in institutions for students but also for new faculty members. They assert that, "...becoming a faculty member is a process of occupational enculturation that involves a broad range of social practices infused with both formal/explicit and informal/implicit learning dimensions". Exemplars, especially easily accessible ones, then would assist new academics in developing, or less well defined areas of practice such as workplace learning, to better understand institutional philosophies and acceptable or expected practices. Thus exemplars would have utility in times of transition - aiding practitioners choosing to enter academia, academics joining a newly offered course for that institution or emerging occupations such as therapy or physician's assistants.

In addition, workplace learning academics identified that a key issue for consideration may be workplace learning activities and workloads, and raised an important issue for further elucidation- what really is a successful academic career. Must it be defined by research, by traditionally recognised teaching activities, or could it recognise the often hidden value inherent to workplace learning?

These respondents have not been the first to consider the workloads or the unrecognised or uncategorised nature of significant workplace learning activities. Many scholars have contributed to a lengthy and on-going discussion in workplace learning (Bates, 2011; Billett, 2012; Brown, 2010; Emslie, 2011; Matthews, 2014; McLennan, 2008; Posner, 2009). However there have been persuasive proposals that academic work itself be reconceptualised for the 21st Century to adapt to change and to the missing generation of potential academics – Generation X, exacerbated by the retirement of the largest cohort in academia – the baby boomers (Bexley et al., 2011).

Bexley et al's (2011) study identified that just under 50 per cent of Australian academics identified that their workload was, to their perception, not sustainable and caused significant personal stress. Further, they highlighted that policies within Institutions would benefit from review to identify a more sophisticated workload and work distribution than the traditional teaching-only, teaching-research and research-only positions most commonly offered.

The institution in which the current study was sited does identify a teaching-professional academic role which was introduced in 2007 (<https://policy.csu.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00162>) but none of the respondents reported that they had been appointed to that role.

The Professional Activity Work Function Policy identifies that any academic appointed to this role is expected to normally engage in a range of professional activities such as:

- ✦ transferring/applying new professional knowledge to members of the profession and the broader community through publications, seminars, conferences, websites, etc;
- ✦ professional consultancies;
- ✦ engagement with or in clinical environments;
- ✦ developing, leading and/or evaluating continuing professional education;
- ✦ external professional reviews;
- ✦ professional practice;
- ✦ gaining a doctorate or other advanced professional qualification;
- ✦ maintaining professional accreditation;
- ✦ research with, for and about the profession and about professional practice; and
- ✦ contribution to the development and improvement of policy and practice through involvement in professional/industry associations, accreditation authorities, conference organisations, advisory bodies, and national or international delegations (<https://policy.csu.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00162>).

These requirements may not adequately encompass the workplace learning academic role but rather may be consistent with Bexley et al's (2011) proposal for the development of additional roles reflective of need in the 21st century university.

However, the study respondents appear to have been among the first to seek satisfaction in an academic career in workplace learning by re-defining what success means to an academic and disclosing their proposals for discussion in the wider academic setting. This re-definition may however constrain their opportunities to succeed unless the discussion can be extended and gain traction in the institutions themselves and the broader academic community. Without broad stakeholder buy-in workplace learning academics may, unless perhaps new strategies are adopted to meet institutional targets such as for publication, see them failing to succeed in maintaining a fulltime academic position.

## Chapter 5. Findings and recommendations

The key findings of this research have been derived from the analysis of the participant data. A series of recommendations were made in response to and aligned with the key findings. These are summarised in the table below:

Table 3: Research recommendations aligned to key findings

Finding	Recommendation
<b>Findings &amp; Recommendations relating to HR policies and staff management</b>	
<p>The WPL academic has particular workload and work function that appears to be not well recognised nor well defined within the university, neither by other academic staff nor by university leaders and managers.</p>	<p>We propose that significant work needs to be undertaken to properly scope and define the role of the WPL academic, especially with regard to administrative load. This ought to include specific advice for line managers as well integration with promotions policy. The place of WPL in the concept of academic work needs to be systematically addressed. This has significant implications for a number of areas of university policy (including workload, HR, recruitment, out of hours/overtime etc).</p>
<p>WPL knowledge exists (principally in the form of oral history) within the minds and memories of individual staff at the university. This is both a risk and an opportunity. It is a risk to the operational practice of the university because should a staff member become ill or for whatever reason resign from the university, or should such a staff member become disenfranchised with their role, the university stands to lose important knowledge that is critical to the smooth running of courses and units.</p>	<p>Staff turnover is a risk to continuity and knowledge loss within WPL programs. The handover process between staff needs to be better scaffolded by the university. Facilitate WPL academics transition to the role with strategies such as a WPL induction relevant to that School or Faculty; a WPL buddy from within or outside that School or Faculty but similar in issues.</p>
<b>Findings &amp; Recommendations relating to WPL practice</b>	
<p>Most participants do not routinely look for exemplars in addressing challenges within their WPL practice.</p>	<p>The repository of WPL exemplars that has been developed by the Education for Practice Institute (EFPI) could be more widely promoted as a resource for WPL staff. Encouraging and incentivising staff to contribute their own practice as exemplars would be beneficial to this process. Encourage the development and submission of exemplars which specifically illustrate how challenges were addressed and develop some commonly requested ones through the Institution. EFPI is best placed to facilitate this and already has a vibrant program for working with staff to develop exemplars.</p>
<p>The value of exemplars in WPL practice is poorly understood by WPL academics. Some participants did not feel that there was sufficient value for them in reading exemplars from other disciplines.</p>	<p>Exemplars templates need to be well designed to make the example sufficiently generic to be useful in multiple settings and contexts. The value of exemplars needs better marketing among WPL academics. WPL induction programs should explicitly include examples of practices translating from one discipline into another.</p>
<p>Curating through publication is a neat way of "killing two birds with one stone". There was a great deal of enthusiasm for this from participants although little experience of it.</p>	<p>One possibility is some kind of peer reviewed journal for the publication of experiences in WPL. It is anticipated that curation through publication in a suitably focussed journal would engage WPL academics and foster a sense of achievement and intellectual ownership within the WPL academic</p>
<p>WPL academics find it difficult to see their own work as innovative or to immediately recognise the value to the WPL community more broadly.</p>	<p>Engage WPL academics to identify where innovation is most commonly needed and develop strategies to address commonly reported situations of need</p>

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## Appendix A. Participant Interview Guide

The questions below provide a guide for the interview. Responses by the participants may lead to additional supplementary questions being asked or some questions being omitted.

The key informant will be welcomed, asked for confirmation that they have read the participant form and completed the consent form, and formal informed consent will be obtained for their participation in the research which will be audiotaped and transcribed.

The key informant will be presented with a preamble, re-iterating the study objectives, the topics that will be explored during the research, and their role within the research.

1. What is your background in workplace learning? I would be very interested to know about previous experience at any university in Australia.
2. Did you choose an academic position that included workplace learning or has workplace learning been added to your course or subject since you commenced work at CSU?
3. Could you please tell me how much and how long any workplace learning activities are?
4. Would you please explain to me how you developed workplace learning activities for your subject(s)? [Would you identify these as innovations/innovative; what does curation suggest to you? do you curate these?]
5. Does the location of this campus offer any advantages or pose any challenges for workplace learning activities / tasks? [has this required innovative approaches]
6. Had you undertaken any workplace learning as a student? (If yes, how long and at which institution?)
7. Would it have been helpful to have had access to a repository with exemplars of workplace learning activities? [do you or how do you curate your course]
8. Would you be prepared to submit one or more workplace learning activities to a repository at this institution?
9. Can you give me any other thoughts you might have about the issue of workplace learning activities?
10. We discussed innovation, especially 'slow innovation'. What are your reflections about this particular approach to the workplace learning context?

Thank you very much for your time.