# Values, ethics and empowering the self through cooperative education

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Following the recent global financial crisis and the collapse of major organisations such as Lehman Brothers, and the earlier corporate failings of Enron and HIH, there has been a shift of focus towards the role of ethics education in the formation of business professionals. In other professional settings, such as policing and medicine, similar major crises have highlighted the significance of the early development of ethical practice in emerging professionals. This paper considers the nature of professional ethics for an emerging professional, arguing that professional ethics should be a key factor in cooperative education programs. The paper considers the role of values and ethics education in empowering the emerging professional to shape and change their workplace. Building on this argument, the paper suggests foundational elements of an approach to professional ethics in cooperative education programs concluding with a suggested research path for further exploration of the content and nature of such an approach. (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 2011, 12(3), 205-216*)

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Professional ethics education in pre-graduate programs of study is not a new phenomena (Lovat & Clement, 2008). However, in the last decade there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of this focus. Recent experience of the global financial crisis highlighted the importance of good ethical practice in business and the consequence when such is not present, for example the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the Madoff investment scandal. Likewise, practices in the Queensland health system, following the 'Dr Death' scandal at Bundaberg Hospital (Davies, 2005) and similar incidents in New South Wales have highlighted the importance of a strong values framework and professional ethic of practitioners in these settings. Professional ethics education will not by itself eliminate unethical practice, but awareness of proper conduct and the empowerment of individuals to challenge practice are critical outcomes of a professional ethics educational program and contribute significantly to the ongoing maintenance of an ethical profession. A sound professional ethics education will enable the individual to be critically aware and analyse practices around them rather than merely being socialised and enculturated into existing practices and values.

Professional culture and attitudes are predominantly formed in the earlier interactions that an emerging professional has with their field. Within the first few years of practice, a practitioner has developed the core foundations of their future practice (Campbell, Herrington, & Verenikina, 2009). Therefore, it is important that the development of an ethical practitioner occurs as early as possible. Cooperative education programs often provide the first interactions of the student with the professional workplace, thereby, through meaningful reflection and review, being of significance in their future development as a professional (Dressler & Keeling, 2011; Weisz & Smith, 2005). Such an experience in the

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workplace offers learning opportunities that cannot be afforded in classroom learning of ethics and professional behaviour. However, without explicit discussion of ethical practice and professional values, the development of the emerging professional through cooperative education programs becomes ad hoc and often dominated by appealing workplace cultures, which may not always be ethical or good. There is recent literature exploring pedagogical development for cooperative education (Eames & Cates, 2011; Johnston, 2011). However, notably little work explores how professional identity and ethical understanding is enhanced by cooperative education experiences. There is considerable well-discussed literature on ethics in general, such the later works by Dewey as well as Bentham, Kant, and Mill, and around applied ethics and professionalism (cf. Kultgen, 1988), but the extension of this discussion to a cooperative education context is almost non-existent.

This paper argues that there is a role for cooperative education programs to explicitly educate about professional ethics, providing the strong foundations required for the development of the ethical practitioner and empowering the self. The paper will consider some elements that may constitute the foundation of such a professional ethics program suggesting directions for future research around the content and nature of such an approach, thereby providing a framework as a foundation stone in attempting to fill the gap of knowledge in this area of the relationship between cooperative education programs and professional ethics education.

## IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS EDUCATION

Professional ethics is increasing in significance across the business world. Following the high profile collapses of companies such as Enron, HIH and Lehman Brothers, there has been a trend towards a greater emphasis on professional ethics. Corporate collapses of recent times, such as those identified above, and corrupt practices such as those exposed by inquiries into the Australian Wheat Board (AWB) (Cole, 2006) and Railcorp in New South Wales (Cripps, 2008), highlight that ethical practices are not always inherent in business. A pattern across all of these examples is around the inability for those within the organisation to effect change, but also the compliance of those within the organisation in accepting "this is the way things are done around here". As Cripps acknowledged in his report on RailCorp, it is not a case of "a few bad apples … the very structure of the organisation and the way it operates allows and encourages corruption" (2008, p.5, Vol.8). The same was acknowledged by Cole's (2006) report into the AWB, Davies's (2005) report on practices in Queensland Health, and also both the Wood (1997) and Fitzgerald (1989) inquiries into policing. In each of these cases, though, not all members of the organisation were corrupt. These examples suggest that the ability for a professional to regulate their own conduct and ensure that they act ethically is critical in realising an ethical organisation. There is importance for a professional to respond to ethical issues and vocalise concern to effect change whilst simultaneously regulating their own behaviour.

Such a trend is not just confined to the corporate business world but is also realised across a range of public and service professions such as teaching, nursing, policing, and social work. Within these professions, the trend is based upon a realisation of the accountability to the public that is inherent to these professions and the expectations placed upon these (Hugman, 2005). Within the area of policing, in particular, the trend to greater emphasis on the importance of professional ethics emerged following significant investigations into police misconduct and corruption, such as the Wood Royal Commission in New South Wales (1997)

and the Fitzgerald Inquiry in Queensland (1989). Both of these investigations uncovered social practices within policing organisations that stood contrary to their espoused roles in society. Following the Wood Royal Commission, in particular, much argument and discussion was had about the importance of ethical education with the adopted practice in the New South Wales Police Force being that ethics education and training must be explicitly evident across all training programs, especially recruit training. Within teaching, the advent of professional regulation through the development of institutes of teachers has seen a promulgation of professional codes of conduct and ethics, such as that evident in the Victorian Institute of Teachers (Victorian Institute of Teaching, 2008). This trend towards codifying professional practices is a direct response to the dominant accountability discourse and the need to be seen to be ethical. However, simple codes do not equate to good ethical conduct, or good professional practice.

Professional ethics, and statements of such affect, serve several purposes in shaping the professional (Giddens, 1991). A code of ethics can provide a framework of conduct which is culturally favoured in an organisation, that is, the code either reflects that which is already occurring, or provide a tool for reprimand and regulation (Lichtenberg, 2002). A code of ethics, or statement of values, in the workplace, can also serve to empower the emerging professional to aspire towards a goal of conduct. However, a code is meaningless if it is not reinforced by the social and cultural dynamics of the workplace. Therefore, in addition to being able to recite a professional code, an emerging professional needs to be able to negotiate the workplace environment with ethical and moral courage to see its realisation. Furthermore, an emerging professional needs to be critically aware of how a code should be interpreted in certain professional situations, particularly when presented with situations where values appear to conflict. For example, a teacher may be compelled by their code of ethics to ensure privacy and confidentiality of students but simultaneously be legally and morally obliged to report any indicators of abuse. Therefore, the professional teacher must consider and balance the values associated with these competing priorities by way of moral reasoning, and enact a decision having considered the ethical and professional dynamics of each pathway. Professional ethics education must, therefore, be able to support the development of awareness of professional codes and workplace value systems, as well as developing the ability for sound ethical decision-making, and while also empowering the emerging professional to negotiate their own interpretations and understandings of their professional obligations (Giddens, 1991), providing a critical lens (a personal interpretative framework drawn from prior experiences) for the analysis of existing practices.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Within the context of this paper, the concept of cooperative education is being defined as those experiences undertaken by students as part of their course of study, which involve an experience undertaken within a practice setting; that is, there is a deliberate and intentional engagement in learning situated in the practice of the workplace (Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010). In some settings, this is referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL), professional experience, practicum, internships, and sandwich courses. Such a definition somewhat excludes approaches that include simulations, case-based investigations and classroom-based project work, which are loosely connected to the process of professional learning, but do not engage or allow for enculturation of the student in a real world workplace setting. These experiences, whilst having educative value and contributing to the development of the individual professional, tend to lack the complexity of experience within practice settings,

which often challenge and extend professional values. Approaches such as these have value in preparing the professional and could be advocated as learning tools within a professional ethics program, but the limited complexity and over-simplification inherent in them limit the capacity for authentic and critical engagement in professional decision-making. These approaches tend to be subsets of the preparation associated with a professional placement; therefore, the focus of this paper tends towards experience of practice and learning in professional workplace settings.

Engaging in cooperative education involves student learning which is complex as students are simultaneously developing technical skills and knowledge (Eames & Cates, 2011) as well as shaping their personal and professional identity, and subsequently their values (Campbell, et al., 2009). The shaping of personal and professional identity, as well as their beliefs and values, is an ongoing process throughout their professional lives (Flanagan, 1981; Jepson, 1990). Garavan and Murphy (2001) conclude that a student engaging in a cooperative education experience moves through three phases of socialisation into the workplace. The first phase is the process of 'getting in' (i.e. recruitment and job preparation), the second phase is 'breaking in' (i.e. orientation, establishing relationships, etc.), with final phase being 'settling in'. Within the third phase, Garavan and Murphy assert that the student undertakes personal change and 'personalisation and value acceptance' within the workplace. It is within this third phase that they argue the prior learning and experiences of the student come to the fore in the interpretation and understanding of the practices in the workplace. Other research (Billett, 2008; Billett & Pavlova, 2005; Campbell, 2009) suggests that the agency of the individual exists much earlier than Garavan and Murphy suggest. Levels of commitment to the profession and responding to the social suggestions of the workplace are just two elements that are shaped by an individual's histories and dispositions. There exists a role for professional ethics education in developing the critical lens required by students, as emerging professionals, to interpret and place value upon the practices they encounter, making their agency explicit.

There exists a role for education in shaping the complex interactions that exist between the individual student and the social workplace, and subsequent ethical negotiations of practice. Within cooperative education, students often engage in performance of required skills, practices and ways of being which they feel are pleasing to their supervisors and assessors. Such performativity may well limit the ability of the student to enact fully their agency in making decisions about their learning and practice. As offered by Ball (1999), the performativity of education plays a particular role in reorienting education, institutions, and students towards the competitive needs of the economy. Students are expected to graduate as being 'fit for work', which is usually measured against productivity and capacity to exist within the workplace. Transformational agency of students may present as contradictory to these goals, therefore placing the student in a negative relationship with their assessment. Such an argument does not deny the existence of individual agency, but asserts that its realisation may be difficult. At the intersection of the two elements of the individual and social (workplace) exists the ideal form of practice.

Universities have a responsibility to facilitate graduates who are adaptable and transformative in the workplace (Sweeney & Twomey, 1997), a goal that is readily asserted to be a key component of a cooperative education program, as well as professional ethics education. As emerging professionals, students need to be more than mere acquirers of existing practices. Instead, they should develop as critical agents of their learning, active in

shaping their practice and practice settings (Billett, 2008). That is, whilst there can be conceived importance for education in organisational practices and codes, there must, within approaches to ethics education, be a focus upon the development of critical capacities of mind and the intuition to exercise moral courage in response to the challenges of the workplace (Bagnall, 1998). The emerging professional is not devoid of pre-existing histories and dispositions and they interpret and understand the world of the workplace through a lens formed from these (Billett, 2006; Campbell, 2009). Therefore, the student engaged in cooperative education experiences interprets their experience through a lens of prior experiences such as family environment, cultural context, social surroundings, and educational settings. This lens includes already shaped value structures and moralities that are further developed and reinterpreted through their experience in the workplace. Proposed here, based on the arguments of Bagnall (1998), is an approach to ethics education that he labels as *situationalism*. Situationalism involves:

> the deconstructive problematisation of modernist ethical rules, principles and codes of moral conduct. It involves the freeing of the moral impulse from the strictures of modernist moral precepts; and it involves the development of moral judgement and action to the point of a highly sophisticated expertise, informed intuitively by the wisdom of individual experience (Bagnall, 1998, p. 322).

Professional ethics education should be a cornerstone in the facilitation of the exploration by students of the existing moral and value frameworks, allowing them to actively reconstruct these through reflection on (and in) the experiences of the practice setting. Furthermore, there is a role for professional ethics education to facilitate a critical engagement within cultural norms and workplace value systems, the ethical transformation of the workplace, and therefore there must be an acknowledgement of the importance for engagement in discourses of power and hierarchy with respect to moral courage. As Bagnall (1998) acknowledges, a situational ethical reasoning is best summed up as 'respect for experience', where experience is seen as the inter-subjective realities that give form and value to the particular practice setting. Therefore, within approaches to ethics education, particularly with respect to its relationship to cooperative education programs, there is a need to develop skills within students that facilitate sensitivity to their context (such as issues of power, hierarchy, culture and position) allowing them to act in an empathetically informed manner.

## ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS EDUCATION IN FORMING THE EMERGING PROFESSIONAL

Students emerging into professional fields need to understand and navigate the increasingly important ethical aspects of being a professional, transforming the workplace and themselves (Campbell & Zegwaard, 2011b). The student entering a workplace is limited in their professional knowledge and still forming their identity within the profession (Nystrom, 2009). A primary goal of a cooperative education program, and likewise professional ethics education, is the evolution within the student of a sense of self and the development of an identity within their chosen profession and/or workplace. Much literature has been spent arguing about what constitutes a professional (cf. Nystrom, 2009; Reid, 2002; Van der Vorst, 1998). Within this paper it is asserted that students emerging from a university degree program should be considered to be professionals based on an assumed understanding of professionals as being members of occupational groups with high levels of education and critical capacity serving the public good (Bowie, 2005). This definition asserts two

propositions, firstly, the level of education, and secondly, service to the public good. This paper regards the first element as having already occurred or currently occurring. However, it is the second proposition that is of interest. University students, as emerging professionals, are challenged to act with a sense of ethical and proper conduct simply because of their professional obligation to society, regardless of the place of ethics within the formal and informal codes of a profession. This implies that mere conformity to codes or common practice within the community of practice is not an acceptable position for an 'ideal professional' (Bowie, 2005). An ideal professional must have the capacity to critically assess a situation and decide on a path of conduct, which, above all else, supports their professional obligation of service. Professionalism is a dedication to doing what one does out of a commitment to it and with the determination to do it to the best of one's ability (Kleinig, 1996). The argument, therefore, extends from defining the professional to a definition of professionalism and its implied ethical obligations. Students need to develop as critical moral agents (actively making choices whilst critically evaluating their moral implications) whilst developing their understandings of professionalism and professional obligations.

Emerging professionals, including students engaged in cooperative education programs, are challenged by the existent social and cultural norms. In the words Kleinig (1996, p.44), ending with a quote from Kultgen:

> The institutional form and power [of professions] have enabled and even encouraged them to operate in a self-interested and discriminatory manner, and in some respects may have even detracted from their ability to achieve their public goals. ... Although professionals possess an enviable expertise, the institutionalization of that knowledge/expertise has encouraged a form of tunnel vision or collective hubris resistant to correction and scornful of alternative and sometimes better ways of doing things. But the failure of the professions to live up to their ideal of disinterestedly providing the best possible service should not be allowed to obscure the significance of that ideal. What we need is 'professionalism *sans* professions'.(Kultgen, 1988)

This challenges the professional to critically engage with the dominant social and cultural norms and expose the 'tunnel vision or collective hubris', leading to transformation and adaption of the profession to the changing expectations of society. Ethical practice emerges through a negotiated position between the individual and collective. The ideal professional has, therefore, an obligation to affect positive change and actively respond to ethical ideals and misconduct; that is, the professional, at any stage of their career, must be actively engaged in the construction and negotiation of acceptable ethical practice. Through a focus on the responses of professionals to misconduct, or more broadly defined as practices which do not conform to the ideals of the profession, an argument can be made for cooperative education programs, and professional ethics education within these, to support the critical mind and moral courage of the emerging professional. Adapting a model proposed by Bowles, Collongridge, Curry, and Valentive (2006) , a professional in an organisation responds to observed misconduct and improper organisational culture in one of four ways, which are formed from a combination of voice and presence (Figure 1).

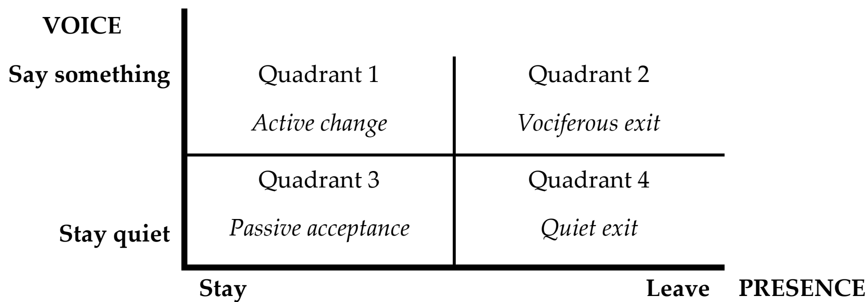


FIGURE 1:

Quadrants of a worker response to identified misconduct in the workplace. (Adapted from Bowles, et al., 2006)

Within Quadrant 3 would be found a worker who observes improper conduct and for a range of reasons, such as 'that is just the way it is done around here' or 'it is not affecting me', chooses to say nothing about the conduct but also fails to leave the organisation. This response can be seen within the reports of the Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service (Wood, 1997) in which apparent misconduct was evident to a range of police working within New South Wales. However, a dominant culture of not speaking out actively encouraged otherwise good officers to say and report nothing (Chan, Devery, & Doran, 2003). Such a lack of response, it can be argued, condones the conduct that is occurring. To a lesser extent, those in Quadrant 4 allow the conduct to continue, but distance themselves from that which they do not agree with.

Those in Quadrant 4 respond not by seeking change within the workplace but by seeking change in their circumstances. It can be argued that if the conduct is socially unacceptable then if a critical number chose this path, due to reasons of unacceptable work practices, an organisation may, through a process of critical reflection, begin to change. However, this conclusion relies upon an assumption that the organisation comes to a realisation of this with limited feedback from exiting staff. Furthermore, often a person is restricted in the flexibility they have in moving between employment and therefore often move from possibly Quadrant 4 to definitely Quadrant 3. Those within Quadrant 2 are vocal in their reasons for their exit. Often this voice is realised through actions associated with whistle-blowing but can equally be understood as the venting of 'bad blood'. They are clearly active in their objection to the conduct, but once out of the profession or organisation their ability to affect change is limited. So unlike Quadrant 4, the organisation is aware of the issues but because of the separation of employment is generally able to ignore these concerns. Change generated through Quadrant 2 tends to result when the voice of the disenfranchised becomes public, for example, legal proceedings or media publicity, as in the case of an employee leaving due to sexual harassment.

It is argued that Quadrant 1 is the favoured location for the ideal professional in responding to misconduct. Within this quadrant the professional realises the issue is evident and not right, they are also active in making change to the organisation and have accepted a level of responsibility for this change. An example of this is evident in the report into the conduct of Dr Patel (colloquially known as Dr Death) within the Queensland Health System (Davies, 2005). Within this it was reported that a nursing staff member, who still remains employed

in the same hospital, realised the questionable conduct of Dr Patel and became active in seeking change and having the system make a response to this issue. However, what also became apparent, and the inherent difficulty of the position captured in Quadrant 1, was that although the nurse acted professionally and was willing to act for change, the system, in part because of the positional power of Dr Patel, was not responsive to her concerns and the misconduct was allowed to continue. Likewise, there is a need to acknowledge that within cooperative education experiences, more so than working as an employed professional, there exist significant differences in positions of power between the student and those in the workplace, which will be problematic and need consideration when encouraging students to actively critique the conduct of those around them. A detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper, but within any discourse of professional ethics issues of power, and organisational culture, should form a central focus. Students, as emerging professionals, must be agentic in their learning and discerning in placing value on certain practices within the workplace. However, such does not occur as natural phenomena, but is something that needs to be encouraged and facilitated through education.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS EDUCATION IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A claim, such as those made above, about the need to be vocal when faced with an ethical issue and for students to be critical agentic professionals, relies upon the capacity of those involved to explicitly realise and understand that an ethical issue is present. For a student to be aware that there is an ethical issue evident in their experiences of a practice setting, they need to have a level of awareness and ability to identify these within their profession (Corbo Crehan & Campbell, 2007). To an extent this knowledge develops through engagement in cooperative education experiences and workplaces, but it is also something that can be facilitated by an educative process. One role of an ethics curriculum is to develop this level of awareness, but more so to develop the critical capacity of students to interrogate their settings and experiences identifying the issues that lie within and developing strategies and practices to respond to these (Bowden & Smythe, 2008; Reiss, 2010). It is naïve, though, to claim that a critical mind is all that is required from a student in the workplace. A comprehensive ethics curriculum targeted to cooperative education programs must also equip students with an understanding of the expectations and obligations inherent in their profession (professional values) and the development of the ability to make ethical and moral decisions (Zegwaard, 2009). Therefore, the emerging professional and graduate, should be able to both interrogate and transform professional and workplace values, as well as navigate and exist within predetermined and historical professional boundaries.

An effective ethics curriculum, which builds capacity for students to be critical moral agents within their profession, has to address both the idea of developing critical moral agency as well as a sensibility about the workplace the student will be moving into. It is suggested, therefore, based on the work of Bowden and Smythe (2008), that there are five core elements to an effective professional ethics curriculum which responds to these ideas. These are:

1. Reflection on the relationship between personal and professional values and expectations;
2. Interrogation of practices and case studies to develop a greater sense of ethical conduct and both personal and professional value systems;

3. Development of decision-making capacities to manage ethical considerations within their practice;
4. Development of skills to negotiate and respond, within the context of differing power and hierarchical positions, to ethical concerns and issues; and
5. Improved capacity for negotiating and persuasive abilities to advocate an ethical position and advance change.

These five elements, or underlying goals, provide a springboard to considerations of pedagogical implications. Core to this collection of ideals is a movement away from conceptualisations of cooperative education as being solely a process of socialisation, or enculturation, into a dominant value structure, towards students being equipped with a critical sense of mind, and moral agency, to better interpret and negotiate the workplace. An ethics education program should act as a support for the empowering of the emerging professional. Within the first element, there is an opportunity for an analysis of personal aspirations, values and principles, in comparison to professional and workplace values. Such an analysis is suggested by Zegwaard and Campbell (2011b) to provide an interesting focus for research in this area. The pedagogical implication of this element, though, is the requirement for students to become aware of their histories and dispositions through a variety of tasks which require reflection and commitment. This is borne out somewhat in the next two elements, which are practice based, through the common tool of case study analysis, but require an understanding of the relationship between the personal perspective and the professional. Inherent in these elements is the evolution of the 'disinterested professional'. As concluded by Zegwaard:

> Ultimately, it is important for [cooperative education] to include values education in the delivery of the placement programs because having [cooperative education] graduates well-informed and rehearsed in making good ethical and morally sound decisions not only places these graduates in a position of high integrity, it would also make a positive contribution to the overall operation of their community of practice (2009, p.48).

The final two elements focus specifically on the key idea of the development of moral agency and a critical mind. These elements challenge professional ethics education to not merely be the training of students in espoused values and codes, but to develop in them the ability to transform and change the workplace and profession. These skills may well be developed in the classroom-based pedagogies of simulations, case studies and discussions, but more authentically they are grounded in the critical interrogation of cooperative education experiences. Hence, there is a valuable relationship afforded between professional ethics education and cooperative education which shapes the whole student and equips them with the critical agency required of a true professional.

Central to the argument made in this paper, yet absent from this list of goals, is the need for students to enact ethical practice in cooperative education settings. Whilst it has been argued that a solid theoretical foundation in an ethics education program empowers students in making ethical decisions, this is still somewhat removed from the reality of the workplace and the various social pressures which can exist. As identified earlier, student performativity towards assessment, in its myriad of forms, can direct behaviour in particular directions. If a student aspires to demonstrate high productivity to impress the workplace supervisor, they may be inclined to undertake unethical means to achieve this goal. Therefore, simple provision of an ethics education is not adequate in ensuring ethical

practice. There exists a role for an articulated relationship between espoused values within the discourses of the academic and workplace settings. Research is needed across a variety of settings to better understand this relationship and how educational forms within universities and cooperative education can enable ethical practice in the workplace. Furthermore, some further exploration of the complex relations of power within cooperative education settings is an imperative in the development of an appropriate ethics education curriculum.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Students, through cooperative education experiences, interact with the practice settings of their chosen profession, often for the first time. As emerging professionals they need to develop both technical abilities and characteristics and identities as professionals. At the core of a professional identity and practice, where an aspect of the profession is defined as having a moral purpose to serve the public good, must be critical ethical decision-making and professional values. However, these attributes need to be developed and made explicit through a conscious educative process. There is a role for the university in developing these attributes and developing the ability for students to critically respond to the practices of the workplace rather than being enculturated and socialized into cultures, which may or may not be inherently ethical. This paper has broadly avoided labeling particular values that may be considered within such a curriculum as it is more the practice of ethics than particular values that should be taught. The preparation for cooperative education programs needs to include education and training around professional ethics, of which a primary focus must be the development of a critical mind, with acknowledgement of the social and cultural contexts of the practice setting (Campbell & Zegwaard, 2011a). The above suggests some broad approaches to this process; however, there is a need to further explore this discussion and, in particular, examine in greater detail the underlying professional values which would underpin common workplaces these students are placed in, with an aim of developing a generic framework dealing with multiple professions or perhaps specific for each profession (Zegwaard & Campbell, 2011a). Likewise, approaches such as that put forward in this paper, require exploration and development of effective pedagogical strategies that can be specifically scaffolded into cooperative education programs. These need to be witnessed in practice, bearing in mind the challenge of positional power differences between the student and professionals in the workplace, and reviewed with respect to the goals of both cooperative education and professional ethics education.

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative education (APJCE) arose from a desire to produce an international forum for discussion of cooperative education, or work integrated learning (WIL), issues for practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region and is intended to provide a mechanism for the dissemination of research, best practice and innovation in work-integrated learning. The journal maintains close links to the biennial Asia-Pacific regional conferences conducted by the World Association for Cooperative Education. In recognition of international trends in information technology, APJCE is produced solely in electronic form. Published papers are available as PDF files from the website, and manuscript submission, reviewing and publication is electronically based. In 2010, Australian Research Council (ARC), which administers the Excellence in Research (ERA) ranking system, awarded APJCE a 'B' ERA ranking (top 10-20%).

Cooperative education/WIL in the journal is taken to be work-based learning in which the time spent in the workplace forms an integrated part of an academic program of study. More specifically, cooperative education/WIL can be described as a strategy of applied learning which is a structured program, developed and supervised either by an educational institution in collaboration with an employer or industry grouping, or by an employer or industry grouping in collaboration with an educational institution. An essential feature is that relevant, productive work is conducted as an integral part of a student's regular program, and the final assessment contains a work-based component. Cooperative education/WIL programs are commonly highly structured and possess formal (academic and employer) supervision and assessment. The work is productive, in that the student undertakes meaningful work that has economic value or definable benefit to the employer. The work should have clear linkages with, or add to, the knowledge and skill base of the academic program.

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