Chapter 6
Entrepreneurial Work–Integrated Learning

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ABSTRACT

After decades of decreasing long-term job security and ongoing global economic crises, attention on and interest in entrepreneurship have significantly increased among Gen Y and Gen Z students in higher education institutions around the world. The pedagogical potential of work-integrated learning (WIL) and the increased offering of entrepreneurship programs in higher education intersect in a field referred to as entrepreneurial WIL (EWIL). This field, where WIL pedagogy is applied to deliver the learning outcomes of entrepreneurship education, is discussed here. The unique features and associated challenges that EWIL presents, particularly when compared with traditional forms of WIL experiences, are also examined, from the framework of a case study conducted on an internship-based course offered in a Canadian university. This chapter contributes to an understanding of the various factors that should be considered when developing novel EWIL programs in higher education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, WIL in the context of entrepreneurship education is presented in the form of a case study based on the authors' experience, analyzing a specific modality of WIL, which henceforth will be referred to as Entrepreneurial Work-Integrated Learning (EWIL). It is then followed by a detailed analysis of how the theory of experiential education and WIL pedagogy manifests itself in relation to the intersection with entrepreneurship education for the purpose of teaching *about* and *through* entrepreneurship, specifically with respect to the engagement of students with authentic entrepreneurial activities to acquire knowledge about entrepreneurship. Various features of EWIL are discussed, as well as inherent challenges that present themselves when using EWIL pedagogy.

Entrepreneurship has become prominent in conversations relating to economic growth (Galvão et al., 2017), and more recently, economic recovery (Maritz et al., 2020). With the boom in entrepreneurial activities seen in the last few decades, entrepreneurship is considered vital for economic growth for two main reasons. First, entrepreneurship plays a significant role in job creation. In the United States alone, hundreds of thousands of jobs are created every year due to entrepreneurial activities. Second, entrepreneurship is the driving force of innovation and technological advancement (Kuratko, 2005). Since entrepreneurship and economic activities positively affect each other (Galindo & Méndez, 2014), entrepreneurship plays an important role in shaping public policies (Henrekson & Stenkula, 2009). Incentives encouraging and promoting entrepreneurship are offered by governments around the world and range from tax breaks and low-interest loans to dedicated immigration programs and grants (Acs et al., 2016).

Moreover, the disappearance of life-long careers, which was the norm for baby boomers and Gen X, has resulted in a more precarious job market for Gen Z and Y. As a result, Kuratko (2005) noted that the "younger generation of the 21st century is becoming the most entrepreneurial generation since the Industrial Revolution" (p. 578). In response to the mentioned societal changes, higher education institutions worldwide have introduced an increasingly diverse offering of entrepreneurship educational programs, both curricular and extra-curricular. In this chapter, Work-Integrated Learning pedagogy is presented and its capacity to deliver entrepreneurship education's learning objectives is analyzed using a case study.

BACKGROUND

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship, as a career choice, has been recognized for many centuries (Casson & Casson, 2014), however, the appearance of entrepreneurship as a subject of study within the formal higher education system is a relatively modern phenomenon. In North America, entrepreneurship education only began growing in earnest in the 1970s (Barnard et al., 2019; Kuratko, 2005; Mei & Symaco, 2020; Sánchez, 2013). With the growing popularity of entrepreneurship program offerings, an intellectual debate was soon to follow, questioning whether entrepreneurship can be taught and learned or whether it is an innate attribute of an individual (Dickson, 2008; Fayolle, 2013; Haase & Lautenschläger, 2011; Henry et al., 2005). This debate persisted for a few decades, throughout which entrepreneurship courses were being introduced across the post-secondary sector.

Once a critical mass of institutions was offering a range of entrepreneurship courses and programs, Kuratko (2005) concluded that "the question of whether entrepreneurship can be taught is *obsolete*" (p. 580). Since then, discussion has continued about the purpose of entrepreneurship education, what it should include, and which pedagogies are most suitable and/or effective in delivering on its aspirational goals (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012). In recent years, entrepreneurship education's objectives expanded beyond the expectation of creating entrepreneurs, to encompass the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills (Stuetzer et al., 2013). These skills are sought-after even in established corporations, as they face constant pressure to innovate and adapt to a changing industry landscape and thereby survive the advent of new, disruptive technologies. Entrepreneurship education, therefore, positions itself as being useful and even essential for Gen Z and Y as a survival tactic in a treacherous economy; this is particularly fitting as both Gen Y and Gen Z have been characterized as being entrepreneurial in nature (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018; Wiedmer, 2015).

Currently, three distinct objectives for entrepreneurship education are recognized: teaching *about* entrepreneurship, teaching *for* entrepreneurship, and teaching *through* entrepreneurship (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012; Mason & Arshed, 2013; Sá, 2018). Based on the expected outcomes for each of the three objectives, different pedagogies have been suggested as more suitable for achieving said outcomes, although their effectiveness is still being debated (Haase & Lautenschläger, 2011).

When teaching *about* entrepreneurship, it is expected that students acquire knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship as a subject. This can be achieved by learning from individual case studies of entrepreneurs, as well as trends and commonalities across an entire sector or group of individuals and corporations. Most importantly, learning *about* entrepreneurship essentially positions the student as an observer, being external to entrepreneurship and guided by an intellectual motivation to acquire knowledge and understanding. Teaching *for* entrepreneurship asks students to acquire those skills and attitudes that are deemed essential to practice entrepreneurship, although there is no consensus on which specific skills and attitudes, now commonly referred to as "entrepreneurial skills," are needed to become successful (Obschonka et al., 2011). Teaching *for* entrepreneurship is therefore concerned with the practicality and applicability of the knowledge that is transferred to students. As with other professional training programs, teaching *for* entrepreneurship includes skill acquisition activities with ample practice to facilitate mastery of skills, though these skill-building activities are typically simulations and are therefore considered inauthentic. Lastly, teaching *through* entrepreneurship requires students to engage authentically in entrepreneurial activities (Vincett & Farlow, 2008), which will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter.

Considering Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) as a pedagogy that contextualizes the learning environment in a real-world or simulated working environment, it is reasonable to expect that it be the pedagogy of choice when teaching *through* entrepreneurship (Mason & Arshed, 2013; Rae & Carswell, 2000; Neck & Greene, 2011; Haase & Lautenschläger, 2011). It is surprising, therefore, that so little examination has been done of how WIL pedagogy is applied within entrepreneurship education when teaching *through* entrepreneurship. Examination of entrepreneurship education literature, as it pertains to the distinction between teaching *about*, *for*, or *through* entrepreneurship, focuses mainly on *what* should be taught and very little on *how* it should be taught (Mason & Arshed, 2013; Pittaway & Edwards, 2012). It is only in questioning the "how'' that we are forced to examine the adequacy of WIL pedagogy, its strengths and weaknesses, its usefulness and challenges, in the context of entrepreneurship education.

While experiential education has been widely accepted in entrepreneurship education (Mandel & Noyes, 2016), reports have thus far limited their discussion of the 'experiential' part of experiential entrepreneurship education to the availability of a 'real-world' experience and use of reflection as a learning tool, stopping short of unpacking particular experiential learning pedagogies. To date, only a few articles have made explicit reference to WIL pedagogy in the context of entrepreneurship education (Dhliwayo, 2008; Andrade et al., 2018; de Villiers Scheepers et al., 2018; Kay et al., 2019; Pretti et al., 2020).

EWIL: A CASE STUDY

Since 2014, the authors have been involved in the design and delivery of an internship-based undergraduate-level course called "Exploring New Ventures" at the University of Toronto in Canada, using EWIL pedagogy to inform and guide the students' experiences with early-stage startup companies. The course was created in response to growing interest from students in learning and engaging with entrepreneur-

ship, as well as an increasing number of early-stage startups created within the university's incubator programs and in need of assistance to grow. Recognizing the synergy inherent in purposefully leveraging these two trends, the course, which included a mere 10 students in its first year, quickly grew to more than 100 students by its fifth year of offering.

Overall, since its inception, over 350 students have participated in the course, representing a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. While the majority came from the physical and life sciences, there has also been representation from the social sciences, business, and humanity programs, with the vast majority of participating students being in the fourth and final year of their education. As part of the course, students completed either 100 or 200 working hours with early-stage startups, based on their enrollment to either a half course or full course, respectively. While the half course was designed to span 12 weeks in either the first or second term of the academic year, the full course was offered twice per year and was designed to span either 24 weeks during the first and second terms in the academic year, or 12 weeks during the condensed summer term. The placement companies were recruited, vetted, and on-boarded to the program by the authors and were provided with guidance and support throughout their participation in the EWIL program. The participating startup companies typically included a handful of personnel, most having only two to five individuals that usually included the companies' founders. Students were matched with a direct supervisor within individual startups, and the number of students a particular entrepreneur was allowed to directly supervise was limited to 3 to maintain the quality of supervision.

The course was offered to students in various academic programs without imposing restrictions on specific disciplinary focus, leading to the aforementioned diversity of disciplines of the program's participants. The decision to open enrollment to all academic disciplines was an acknowledgement of the cross-disciplinary nature of startups. Specifically, when startups include only a small number of team members, it necessitates that everyone in the startup, at least in its early days, must be adaptive and perform any tasks needed while they present themselves. Nonetheless, the one academic prerequisite for the course was completion of an introductory level course in entrepreneurship or business. This requirement ensured students who participate in the EWIL course, and are expected to undertake internships with startup companies, do so with a basic awareness of what a business or corporation startup is, and be mentally prepared to engage with real-world corporations in the form of startup companies. From an academic perspective, the purpose of the course, as articulated in the learning objectives, is that students learn *about* entrepreneurship, *through* entrepreneurship (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012). Specifically, the course's learning objectives included: an appreciation of the uniqueness of the startup environment and the complexity of knowledge transformation through commercialization, effectively communicating within the startup working environment, applying concepts in entrepreneurship, and identifying and communicating work-related achievements that exemplify critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

As part of the in-class sessions, topics and themes relating to entrepreneurship were discussed, such as understanding customer behaviour, communicating through the value proposition and the elevator pitch, business models, and the business model canvas. Through these sessions, students became familiar with concepts, frameworks, tools, and jargon that is commonly encountered in startup training programs (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012) and in startup environments, thereby learning *about* entrepreneurship. During their work placement with the participating startups, students were expected to use their knowledge and skills, acquired through their disciplinary background or even outside of their academic experience, to support the entrepreneurial efforts of their supervisors, thereby learning *through* entrepreneurship. This

is in contrast with entrepreneurship programs that are focused on teaching *for* entrepreneurship, although many students who have taken the course have indicated their personal desire to pursue entrepreneurship.

As with any WIL program using an experiential, education-based pedagogy, multiple reflection activities were used throughout the course, both as formative and summative assessment tools. These assessment tools will be presented in chronological sequence as they were used throughout the delivery of the course. To begin, students were asked to formulate individual goals for their learning as part of their participation in the internship-based course. This included both personal growth and academic growth-related goals. The personal goal setting was followed by a more formalized learning plan, which then allowed students to negotiate their personal learning goals with the needs of their placement companies, serving as both a reflective tool and an assessment tool. Using several personal check-in interviews throughout the course, students were invited to verbally reflect on and consult with the authors about their ongoing internship experience—an activity mainly used as a formative assessment tool.

Arriving at the midpoint of the course, students were asked to present a short account of their experience thus far, with an emphasis on their perceptions of their experiences. They were also asked to describe their expectations for the second half of the course, particularly as they related to the students' prior expectations from the internship. Once the second half of the internship was underway, students were asked to revisit their original learning plan and reflect on its relevance to their current experience within the placement company. They were then asked to resubmit, with that information again being used as a formative assessment and reflection tool. At the end of the course, students were required to deliver a final oral presentation and written report, both serving as summative assessment tools where students reflected on their internship experience. These two final assessments required students to consider their expectations from the program as they first joined the startup placement company, their ongoing experience throughout the internship process, and finally how their experience had shaped their understanding and perception about the entrepreneurial working environment.

Much like in traditional WIL programs, most notably in co-op programs, supervisors were asked to evaluate their students' performance at the workplace during the internships. As with other WIL programs, feedback from supervisors is known for its challenges as supervisors may be reluctant to provide feedback, they feel may negatively impact students' academic standing (Fletcher, 1988; Jackson, 2018). Such challenges were addressed in this particular program by having cultivated and maintained close relationships with participating entrepreneurs so that evaluation expectations were clearly communicated early and often throughout the engagement with the partners, which resulted in consistent, authentic feedback from supervisors to participating students.

EWIL MODALITIES

As mentioned above, WIL pedagogy, as a particular practice of experiential education, purposefully places students within a real-world working environment, or at times provides a simulated environment in lieu of a real-world working environment, to provide an experiential context for learning. When considering EWIL as a type of WIL, a consideration of what is meant by "real world" or "simulated" work environments in relation to entrepreneurship is required. Indeed, WIL in entrepreneurship is unlike other types of more traditional WIL programs where there is an expectation of an inherent power relationship between an experienced professional and a student "in-training," such as in apprenticeships, internships, and practicums (Gardner & Bartkus, 2014). In entrepreneurship education in general, and experiential

entrepreneurship education in particular, there is an expectation of agency and independence (Ibrahim & Soufani, 2002). This "freedom," where the entrepreneur is not held accountable for their work by another person in power, makes EWIL unique among its WIL counterparts. It is therefore important to consider the presence, or rather the extent, of such autonomy or independence as experienced and perceived by the student as they participate in an EWIL program. This is particularly important in the context of Gen Z students who have been found to be independent in their attitude towards work (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018), and for Gen Y students who "typically enjoy experimenting and enjoying new approaches and solutions" (Wiedmer, 2015, p. 55).

In the following sections, based on the case study presented, a particular modality of EWIL is explored in detail and is referred to as *Supervised EWIL*. Particular attention is given to the unique features that distinguish it from other traditional WIL programs, as well as the challenges that are inherent in such features, owing to its uniqueness. Before delving deep into the particularity of supervised EWIL as the modality of choice for this chapter, it is important to recognize and contrast it with the unsupervised EWIL modality, considering the importance of the concept of "freedom" as mentioned above. It is worth noting that in unsupervised EWIL programs, students are guided by a mentor, which can be either an external experienced industry professional or an internal academic professional. Therefore, to avoid a misconception of unsupervised EWIL modality by implying a complete lack of accountability, and to maintain the focus of its pedagogical uniqueness, this modality will herein be referred to as *Self-directed EWIL*.

Self-Directed EWIL

Self-directed EWIL is probably the most intuitive way that educators and students envision an experiential entrepreneurship experience in which students "become" entrepreneurs. Students develop their own ideas for a product or service and are then expected to invest their time and effort in pursuing this idea through various "entrepreneurial activities." This form of learning can be classified as learning *through* entrepreneurship, as was explained in the preceding section, namely by learning the skills and knowledge needed for entrepreneurship activities by participating in entrepreneurial activities (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012). However, within the current discussion it is important to recognize the alignment of such experiences with WIL as a pedagogy.

Fundamentally, students in a self-directed EWIL engage in the creation of their own venture, as opposed to working within an existing one as is the case for other traditional forms of WIL programs. The first implication of such a distinction is that students in self-directed EWIL typically report to a program facilitator and/or industry mentor rather than to a direct supervisor within the organization. As such, students in the self-directed EWIL enjoy a sense of autonomy in choosing the specifics of the work they engage with, while at the same time lacking the formalized employee-employer relationship that is the dominant professional relationship in traditional forms of WIL. Self-directed EWIL takes place in entrepreneurial-co-op programs, or e-co-op programs (Zegwaard et al., 2020), where students invest an entire academic term in pursuing their entrepreneurial activities instead of being given a traditional co-op placement with an established corporation. As the name suggests, it is expected that an e-co-op program offers students a variant of the traditional co-op education model, which is a well-established and accredited type of WIL pedagogy. Nonetheless, WIL program developers should consider the unique power dynamics in a self-directed EWIL, such as an e-co-op, including the impact such differences may have on the academic quality of such programs. While there are more aspects of self-directed EWIL programs that can be examined, they are beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it should be noted

that some of the features and challenges that will be discussed in the following section also apply to self-directed EWIL, albeit with some differences of intensity.

Supervised EWIL

The general structure of supervised EWIL follows the traditional structure of WIL programs; the student ('the trainee'), carries out specific functions in the work environment to benefit the placement partner, under the direct responsibility of a supervisor ('the expert'). However, beyond this similarity in general structure, a closer examination of the context and pedagogical focus of entrepreneurship presents a unique experience, which is the focus of this section. These unique features can be categorized as the academic context, the functional context, and the leadership context.

The Academic Context

As the core rationale for WIL pedagogy is to purposefully situate students' learning in a real work environment, it is not surprising that WIL has traditionally evolved in vocational and professional (i.e., relating to a particular profession) programs, such as various trades, nursing, engineering, and teacher education. However, with the growing recognition of the importance of work experience in increasing students' employability (Jackson, 2013), the popularity of WIL has expanded to other programs of study where the connection between disciplinary focus and subsequent employment is less obvious. As mentioned above, entrepreneurship education can be perceived as both the study of entrepreneurship as subject matter (referred to as teaching *about* entrepreneurship) and as training to become entrepreneurs as a pseudo profession (referred to as training *for* entrepreneurship). Therefore, when considering the utility of WIL within the context of entrepreneurship education, one could argue that an entrepreneurship student should participate in a WIL program under the direct supervision of a senior entrepreneur, just as is done in other professions using a WIL program.

The first challenge of comparing teaching *for* entrepreneurship with other vocational or professional programs is that being an entrepreneur is typically not recognized as a profession in the same sense that being a teacher, engineer, researcher, or social worker is. Indeed, entrepreneurs can be found in positions of corporate leadership, such as chief executive officer, chief technology officer, or chief operations officer, as well as being employed by large corporations in other functions, although that is now more commonly referred to as *intra*preneurship. Therefore, it is worth recognizing that while traditional WIL programs can easily identify the professional competencies a student is expected to exhibit as part of their WIL experience, that is less obvious for EWIL. Since entrepreneurship is not considered a profession, the debate about entrepreneurial skills and competencies is restrictive to commonly observed characteristics of successful entrepreneurs (Stuetzer et al., 2013), rather than a requirement for professional designation.

Furthermore, while 'students as trainees' in WIL programs are expected to apply their disciplinary knowledge and skills to benefit the placement partner, that cannot be equally said for entrepreneurship. For an entrepreneur who chooses to participate in an EWIL program as a placement opportunity for students, the student's pursuit of his or her own goals offers no benefit to the company. Rather, entrepreneurs as supervisors expect the students to fulfill a particular function to support their entrepreneurial endeavors. This means that for supervised EWIL the entrepreneurship learning outcomes must be achieved by students' proximity to an actively engaged senior entrepreneur. It is this distinction that sets EWIL apart in the context of the academic relevance of the WIL experience to entrepreneurship education. The

implication of the above is that in a supervised EWIL experience, the functionality that students provide within the placement organization does not directly support the learning objectives of the entrepreneurship education program, and appropriate attention is required to allow for their indirect support.

The Functional Context

Much like with traditional WIL programs, the premise of EWIL pedagogy is that through participation in a real work environment, students are exposed to unique learning opportunities that are not afforded in classroom-based learning or structured learning environments such as teaching labs. These learning opportunities include human interaction that is authentic and true to the real-life experience of employment (Jackson, 2015) and the challenges that students face when they are required to apply their knowledge and skills for purposeful activities (Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2008). Unlike traditional WIL programs, a supervised EWIL program places particular emphasis on the nature of the placement environment, beyond the basic expectations of a safe and professional work environment where students can apply their disciplinary knowledge and skills. As was explained for the academic context, entrepreneurship is not considered a vocation or profession and therefore placement sites must be purposefully integrated with entrepreneurship education. However, rather than focusing on the functionality of the student within the partner organization, as is the case for traditional WIL programs, EWIL programs focus on the nature of the work environment offered by the placement partner. As such, students participating in entrepreneurship education programs expect to find their EWIL experience situated within an authentic entrepreneurial environment, which raises the question of what an authentic entrepreneurial environment is.

In discussing who constitutes an entrepreneur and what an authentic entrepreneurial environment is, it is reasonable to begin with the association between entrepreneurship and startups (Kobia & Sikalieh, 2010), meaning corporations in their early stages of creation. Defining "early stages," however, is also a matter of consideration. Certain industries define "early" as anywhere from several months to a few years (as in software-based products or services), while other industries may consider a decade-old company to still be in its "early" stages (as with biomedical or material-based companies). Suffice it to say, for EWIL programs to achieve their intended academic goals, an industry-relevant lens is required to assess whether a particular placement partner is sufficiently "early" in their operation to provide an effective learning environment for the student. This attention to the earliness of the company may be immaterial for traditional WIL programs, as long as an experienced professional can supervise and offer the students a meaningful professional experience. For EWIL programs, however, it is important to recognize the importance of the measure of earliness in identifying placement partners.

Another feature of startup companies, as it relates to their relative earliness, is the number of people working within them, including both founders and employees. The term 'startup' refers to companies with as few as one person (the founder), and as many as a hundred employees. It is therefore important to recognize students' expectations as they relate to the size of the placement company. While students' expectations may vary based on their personal preference for working dynamics, it is a general expectation that startups be of a relatively small size, at least in comparison to well-established corporations in the same industry.

The issues of age and size of a company, however, are merely the externally visible attributes of startups and are indicative of the core issue at hand: the internal working dynamic of the placement partner. Using a common definition for a startup as "an organization formed to search for a repeatable

and scalable business model" (Blank, 2010), two key attributes can be inferred in a startup company. First, the lack of a business model suggests that the corporation has not yet fully defined and committed to the core features of its business, which may include the target customer base, the product or service, the channels of delivery and communication, and the costs associated with pricing mechanisms and production. The fact that one or more of the above have not been finalized implies a sense of 'freedom' in the sense that exploration and validation are still perceived as a necessary part of the company's daily operations. The second key attribute follows from the absence of commitment to a particular business model, meaning that activities in the business are perceived as temporary; employee performance may not be standardized into routines that, by comparison, are expected in well-established corporations, where the purpose of work is focused on efficiency and repetition to achieve consistent growth.

The core features of a startup—where testing and discovery are the norm and rote repetition of established operation is absent—are commonly observed preferences of Gen Y and are often noted by students as their motivation for participating in EWIL programs (Ng, et al., 2010; Wiedmer, 2015). It is important, therefore, to identify the true nature of a potential placement partner along its path from conception to growth and mass production. It should also be recognized that some divisions and positions within well-established corporations may also offer the sense of discovery and exploration that exists in a startup. Though they are the exception rather than the rule, these opportunities should be considered an acceptable EWIL experience, in the same way that a startup company can offer a WIL experience for traditional WIL programs.

The Leadership Context

Following from the discussion of startup size is the recognition that startups generally have little to no organizational hierarchy. For many students who choose to participate in EWIL programs, this absence of organizational hierarchy is particularly appealing. Students expect to work in an environment where they can develop working relationships with most or all of the entire team, rather than having contact with only a fraction of the company's staff, as is the case in medium and large-sized firms. Furthermore, some students want to have the ability to work closely with the company's founder(s), making size and staffing even more relevant. This opportunity to connect with leadership gives students a sense that their contribution, however small, will have a significant impact on the startup company. Since students' success in learning, regardless of the particular pedagogy, is strongly correlated to their motivation to engage with the learning experience, such expectations of influence in the startup company, whether realized or not, offer a particularly strong source of motivation for students to excel in their EWIL program.

A second feature that is commonly observed when working with startups is the discrepancy between the student's academic background and that of their direct supervisor in the placement company. This feature is a direct consequence of the small size of startups in their early stages, before there is a need and financial ability for specialization within the company. However, because a student's functionality in the startup is not typically linked to their academic disciplinary focus, their direct supervisor's background is also less important. Finally, considering the nature of work with a small team, students are continuously challenged to communicate effectively with professionals from other disciplinary backgrounds. This differs from students in traditional WIL who may work primarily with professionals from disciplinary backgrounds similar to their own. Such communication skills are recognized as crucial for success in the workplace (Robles, 2012), whether students work in their own discipline or others, in small or large

corporations. While communication skill-building can also be seen in other WIL programs, it is an inherently embedded feature of supervised EWIL.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

In the above sections, the specific characteristics and contexts for EWIL were explored and explained. But it would be naive to assume that EWIL does not also present challenges that may lead to less-than-optimal or even negative outcomes. Therefore, in this section the authors will share their experience with EWIL programs, examine specific challenges inherent in supervised EWIL, and offer suggestions and advice to address them. It should be noted that this list is far from exhaustive and only addresses the main challenges that the authors have identified over time, consolidating them into themes that have resurfaced repeatedly. The authors encourage the reader to see these challenges not as specific incidents, but as general rules that can be contextualized to any particular EWIL program.

The Academic Context Challenge

The distinction between WIL and EWIL creates two challenges concerning how EWIL contextualizes academic learning, which is a crucial component in WIL pedagogy. First, owing to EWIL serving its academic focus for entrepreneurship education, some EWIL programs may be available to students with a wide range of disciplinary program affiliations, as was the case for the authors. In such situations, as is also the case for general courses open to students from across the institution, the curriculum and pedagogy used in class must be appropriately designed for the wide range of students' background knowledge and skills. The second, and perhaps more challenging, implication is the extent to which the program curriculum is relevant to individual students' placement experiences. As was noted above, early-stage startups are typically characterized by being dynamic and evolving, which in turn is reflected in the dynamic and evolving need for students to perform in their capacity as trainees in a supervised EWIL program. It is therefore common to see a wide range of roles being assigned to students participating in a supervised EWIL program. With such diverse functionalities, the extent of relevance of each part of the curriculum to students' work experience in the placement companies is equally diverse.

   To overcome the curriculum-work experience relevance issue, curriculum planning for a supervised EWIL program can follow one of several paths. One obvious solution can be to restrict the role of students within the placement startup companies to a predetermined role that is most aligned with the curriculum material. This, of course, will likely result in limiting the availability of such placements, as it will require program coordinators to identify those companies that fit within the program's requirement and that have that particular need at the exact time of the program's offering. A second approach can be to restrict curricular topics to those broad enough in scope to be relevant to all students, regardless of their specific work experience with the placement startup. The danger in this case is resultant topics and concepts that are so broad that students perceive them to be of little academic value. Lastly, one could consider an approach where the curriculum's objective is not to be relevant to the students' functionality within their placement, but instead to frame the EWIL experience as a "living case study" where students can critically observe the learned material's utility (or lack thereof) within the placement environment. It is this third approach that the authors found to be most successful in delivering academic value to

students in a supervised EWIL, with a large diversity of students' disciplinary background and a wide diversity of roles within the placement partners.

The Inexperienced Supervisor Challenge

Early-stage startup companies offer students the experience of working on larger projects rather than on specific tasks (Zehr, 2016), which is more aligned with students' expectations as they apply for EWIL programs. Such work experience expectations are particularly characteristic of Gen Y, who seek challenging work with potential for high impact, rather than non-stimulating work (Ng, et al., 2010). However, serving students' expectations to work in new and barely established companies may mean pairing them with first-time entrepreneurs who lack supervisory experience, either in general or in a corporate environment, specifically. Such a lack of experience in entrepreneurs serving as supervisors may lead to inefficient and potentially detrimental dynamics between themselves and the students. A common concern is students' potential disappointment when lacking guidance and direction from their supervisors. Students who are highly independent and self-motivated are also typically proactive and engage with their supervisors to achieve a sense of fulfillment. However, for the less independent and self-confident students, an inexperienced supervisor may result in a "missed opportunity" feeling, as the student is left wondering about their untapped potential. If a supervisor's expectations are unreasonably high, a student may suffer from failure-induced frustration; if the expectations are too low and present no challenge, the student may feel boredom-induced frustration. A student may also be frustrated when an inexperienced supervisor is unable to properly align their own expectations with those of the student.

In the authors' experience, as long as the students participating in the EWIL program were in the top percentile of maturity and independence, inexperienced supervisors faced little to no challenges working with the students and leading to a positive experience. However, when students struggled with self-motivation or other external factors that influenced their performance during the EWIL experience, inexperienced supervisors struggled to provide the appropriate support to nurture students and help them maximize their experience within their challenges. This observation is in line with a survey of Gen Z, which reported that while about half of respondents required clear instructions from their supervisor, the vast majority expected frequent feedback on their work (Böhlich & Axmann, 2020). In the case of an inexperienced supervisor, then, who may provide neither clear instructions nor frequent feedback, a student's placement experience is likely to be compromised. A useful tool to minimize this potential disappointment, and one which has been successfully used by the authors, is a learning plan. Requiring students to submit a learning plan formalizes the process through which students must acknowledge their understanding of their supervisors' expectations. This is then followed by creation of a working plan to lay out their execution. The learning plan serves as both a clarifying tool for the students and a written understanding of what has been agreed upon, thereby negating potential miscommunication or misunderstandings.

The Organizational Structure Challenge

Early-stage startups with no organizational structure may wait until they have significant funding and/ or a need to increase recruitment before hiring human resource (HR) professionals. In well-established corporations, on the other hand, HR professionals are central to the company's operations and act as the single point of contact for WIL professionals looking to secure WIL placements (Mackaway &

Winchester-Seeto 2018). HR personnel also provide support and oversight to students during their time in placements. Therefore, interactions between WIL professionals and early-stage companies for the purpose of establishing an EWIL experience may include administrative challenges that, while perhaps also present in traditional WIL programs, are specifically inherent in EWIL programs.

Depending on a startup's stage of development, there are a few issues that may present themselves when recruiting and partnering for EWIL programming. These issues have been experienced by the authors and include some that arise frequently as well as some that are only occasionally observed. Perhaps the most common challenge observed for students participating in an EWIL with early-stage startups is the absence of a formalized onboarding process. Onboarding in workplaces is important for establishing a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and sense of support, whether as an intern or an employee (Meyer & Bartels, 2017; Klein & Polin, 2012). For early-stage startups, however, it is rare to have such practices in place in the earlier stages of the corporation, for obvious reasons. Entrepreneurs with relatively little or no leadership or supervisory experience, as discussed in the previous section, may not even be aware of the need for an onboarding process, and thus it is commonly absent from EWIL placement partners' employment protocols. It is therefore important that EWIL program developers consider ways that the academic partner may compensate for the absence of an onboarding process: alerting potential placement partners of the importance of such processes, offering resources and support, and grounding students' expectations for such an experience well in advance.

A different challenge related to an absence of organizational structure may present itself when students work with founding teams that include multiple founders, yet a single direct supervisor is not officially designated. In such incidents, when students are tasked with various duties by multiple individuals within the organization, they may find themselves struggling with contradictory instructions or competing time priorities. With no clear hierarchy within the organization, students may find themselves frustrated by wanting to meet all requirements of quality and efficiency but being unable to do so without disappointing someone. From the authors' experience, such incidents can be minimized and circumvented by requiring EWIL placement partners to designate a direct supervisor and ensure that students are aware of who they report to.

CONCLUSION

The current economic reality of Gen Z and Gen Y is expected to further increase the demand for entrepreneurship education programs as well as WIL programs in higher education. While incubation and acceleration of startups are not new activities in higher education, they are still predominantly considered extra-curricular in nature. With growing calls for more WIL offerings in higher education, such programs present an opportunity where, much like the case study presented in this chapter, synergy can be found. These extra-curricular activities can support and potentially enhance institutions' ability to develop new EWIL programs that leverage, rather than replace, existing entrepreneurial activities. Pedagogically, EWIL programs share many similarities with more traditional WIL programs, yet unique differences have been recognized and explained in this chapter. This chapter offered a preliminary conceptualization of how EWIL programs can be critically examined when exploring the unique characteristics of EWIL as a pedagogical practice.

The distinction was made between traditional WIL and EWIL as it relates to contextualizing the entrepreneurial working environment to the academic purpose of the program. It was suggested that

while EWIL pedagogy lends itself naturally to teaching *through* entrepreneurship, a supervised EWIL modality does so in an indirect way by affording an observation of entrepreneurial activity as an active participant and observer. Students' functionality within startup companies as placement sites was differentiated for EWIL as compared with traditional WIL programs, a distinction that is due to the dynamic nature of startup companies. And finally, the inherent lack of organizational structure that is common for early-stage startups was considered as particularly appealing for students. Finally, several challenges were also identified for EWIL that correlate to the above-mentioned unique features of EWIL, based on the authors' experience.

It is important to recognize the role that EWIL, in all its modalities, can play in meeting current and future generations' demands for more entrepreneurial experiences and more WIL experience. Considering that both entrepreneurship education and WIL pedagogies are still evolving across higher education, it is expected that new offerings will emerge, with increasing diversity and innovation, and most likely with new and unexpected intersectionality. However, regardless of the specifics, the authors' hope is that educators will maintain their adherence to delivering effective entrepreneurship education and consider the adequacy of their chosen pedagogy for the intended learning outcomes.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Entrepreneurial Skills: The skills that are considered to be positively correlated with successful entrepreneurial activities by entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial Work-Integrated Learning (EWIL): Work integrated learning in the context of entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurship: The pursuit of identifying and fulfilling a need to a significant large target group through the creation of an organizational structure.

Experiential Education: A theory of learning that is founded on the idea that students' lived experience forms an integral part of the process of learning and construction of knowledge.

Incubation: The affordance of support in the form of space and/or administrative services to entrepreneurs in the early stages of creating startup companies. Also typically includes dedicated mentorship and training services.

Reflection: The practice of sense making through examination of past experiences and their meaning as it relates to an individual's understanding of themselves.

Self-Directed EWIL: Students participating in EWIL programs "as entrepreneurs" where they come up with their own ideas for a product or service and are then expected to invest their time and effort in pursuing this idea through various "entrepreneurial activities."

Startup: A business in its early stages as it explores a reliable and scalable business model through successive experimentation.

Supervised EWIL: Students participating in EWIL programs, as 'the trainee' as they fulfill specific functionalities within an entrepreneurial work environment to benefit the placement partner, which is an early-stage startup.

Supervisor: A designated individual who has authority over a subordinate, student, or employee, as it relates to professional activities.

Work-Integrated Learning: A pedagogical practice that purposefully situates students in authentic or simulated work environments to support the students' learning process.