

17.9.2025

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**Title**

Early workplace learning experiences : what are the pedagogical possibilities beyond retention and employability? / Franziska Trede ; Celina McEwen

**Publication year**

2015

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 69 (2015) 1, S. 19 - 32

**Inventory number**

37542

**Keywords**

Studiendauer, Studienerfolg : allgemein ; Studentenschaft : Studienverhalten

**Abstract**

With this paper, we explore early placement experiences and their pedagogical potential, including ways of keeping students enrolled and persisting with their studies. Few university courses offer early placements because traditionally placement experiences have a focus on employability and work readiness of graduates, hence occur towards the end of courses. We conceptualise workplace learning (WPL) as a transition pedagogy that can address university staff's interests in student retention. In this paper the relationship between early WPL experiences and keeping students enrolled and persisting with their learning as well as the pedagogical implications of early WPL experiences are explored. Empirical data of students' interpretations of their early placement experiences demonstrated that beyond motivating students to persist with learning and staying enrolled in the course placement experiences were seen as a highlight of their first year studies. We argue that there are some benefits to students' learning to using early placement experiences within a practice-based curriculum when combined with an explicit and deliberate pedagogy that prepares students for

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practice-based and lifelong learning approaches to work. We conclude that early WPL experiences at university can be used as a strategy to assist students to transition into these institutions and develop more deliberate learner and professional identities. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Trede, Franziska, E-Mail: [ftrede@csu.edu.au](mailto:ftrede@csu.edu.au)