

60-Second SoTL

Episode 81 – Effective Placement Supervision in Work-Integrated Learning

Featured Article

Hains-Wesson, Rachael, Anne-Marie Fannon, Borghild Brekke Hauglid, Jennifer Graham, and Idris Ademuyiwa. 2026. "Student and Supervisor Perceptions of Effective Placement Supervision in Work-Integrated Learning Programs: A Systematic Literature Review." *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* 14: 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearningqu.14.15>

Transcript

(Music)

0:10

Jessie L. Moore:

What makes work-integrated learning placements truly effective—for students *and* for supervisors? That's the focus of this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. I'm Jessie Moore.

(Music)

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In "Student and Supervisor Perceptions of Effective Placement Supervision in Work-Integrated Learning Programs," Rachael Hains-Wesson, Anne-Marie Fannon, Borghild Brekke Hauglid, Jennifer Graham, and Idris Ademuyiwa synthesize findings from one of the largest systematic literature reviews on this topic to date. Their article appears in a special section on work-integrated learning in *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, an open access journal.

0:57

Over a two-year period, the authors conducted a systematic literature review of published research on students' and supervisors' perceptions of placement experiences. They identified 9,349 peer-reviewed articles on the topic published between January 2010 and March 2023. Using systematic literature review protocols, they narrowed this dataset to 180 studies, conducted in 49 countries, with 150 published in English and 30 in Norwegian. The researchers next conducted a meta-synthesis and coded these studies to identify patterns in how students and supervisors define effective placement supervision. The article provides a rich description of the systematic literature view and meta-analysis processes, and I recommend reading it as an example if you're embarking on a systematic literature review.

1:51

The researchers' findings reveal both shared priorities—and a meaningful disconnect. Across the literature, four key elements of effective supervision emerged:

1. a caring and inclusive environment,
2. a positive student–supervisor relationship,
3. a learning environment that promotes skill development, and
4. the structural conditions that support or constrain supervision.

2:16

But students and supervisors emphasize these elements differently.

Student-focused studies highlight the relational and emotional dimensions of placements. Students consistently point to the importance of feeling welcomed, included, and psychologically safe. They value supervisors who are supportive, present, and affirming—and who build trust through feedback and ongoing interaction.

For students, effective supervision isn't just about learning tasks—it's about belonging, confidence, and being recognized as a legitimate member of the workplace.

2:49

Supervisor-focused studies, however, tend to emphasize structure and function. Supervisors prioritize setting clear expectations, helping students connect theory to practice, and managing the logistics of placements.

They also highlight persistent barriers like insufficient training and a lack of institutional recognition or support for supervisory work.

3:11

In other words, while students experience supervision primarily through relationships, supervisors often approach it through responsibilities and constraints. This divergence matters. Without alignment, even well-designed placements may fall short of their potential.

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To address this gap, the authors propose a three-step model for effective placement supervision.

First, institutions and organizations must provide adequate resources, training, and recognition for supervisors.

Second, supervisors should intentionally cultivate a caring, psychologically safe environment grounded in trust and inclusion.

And third, with those foundations in place, supervisors can more effectively support learning—helping students connect theory to practice and develop professional skills.

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Ultimately, this study suggests that effective work-integrated learning depends on aligning structural support with relational care to create meaningful, high-impact learning experiences.

To learn more about this study, visit our show notes for a link to the open access article.

4:15

(Music)

4:20

Jessie L. Moore:

Join us for our next episode of 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning. Learn more about the Center at

www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

(Music)