

# Preparing students for workplace learning: Short films, narrative pedagogy, and community arts to teach agency

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Teaching skills through workplace learning is easy, but developing professional agency is more challenging. In this paper we turn Dewey's claim that *you cannot learn from experiences alone, but you can learn from reflecting on experiences* on its head. We suggest more, or at least equal, focus be placed on learning from *preparing* for experiences. COVID times have reminded us how important pre-placement preparation for learning is, and how critical it is to have our students prepared to identify and leverage every learning moment they might encounter, especially when working remotely or for reduced periods of time. We describe the production, methodology and theoretical framework of eight short films especially devised to teach agency before students embark on their placements. This leads in to the second half of the paper where we describe and discuss typologies of agency.

Keywords: COVID-19, work-integrated learning, workplace learning, agency, films for teaching, narrative pedagogy, community arts

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARATION FOR WORKPLACE LEARNING

Effective workplace learning enables students to experience their future professional roles and responsibilities in real-world workplaces with suitable supervision. Workplace learning programs traditionally comprise three stages: preparation, experience, reflection. The COVID-19 distancing and lockdown restrictions have, however, disrupted this neat staged progression. Placements have been cancelled or time in workplaces reduced. Students' limited contact in the workplace invites a rethinking of the three stages of workplace learning programs. Less experiential learning time, as a result of COVID-19, points to the need to place more emphasis on pre-placement preparation.

When theorizing about these stages, attention has predominately been paid to the reflection stage (Harvey et al., 2010; Sykes & Dean, 2013). Reflection has been described as the standard approach to foster learning (Beckett & Hager, 2002). Reflection in and on action (Schön, 1983) is typically supported with strategies such as professional portfolios, journaling, and structured reflection models to enhance learning. Indeed, reflection is conceptualized as a professional capability and thereby more valued than preparation which is typically regarded as encompassing mere skills development. But to make reflection a rich learning experience strongly depends on what has been experienced and noticed while on placement. Students can experience the same event in a workplace but that neither means they paid attention to particular happenings nor that they gained meaningful insights. Experiences alone are not enough, it requires making sense of those experiences (Dewey, 1933; Boud et al., 1985). More specifically, learning from experiences depends on students consciously and purposefully noticing, observing, and engaging with workplace situations while they are on placement. Only then, do workplace experiences create rich opportunities for meaning-making.

Potentially rich learning activities can go unnoticed if no attention is paid to them, especially when they are routine processes. For example, a student recently told us that they had learnt little on placement because they were not allowed to do complex procedures but only to observe them. This student expected to learn by doing and had missed an opportunity to ask questions based on their observations.

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They did not further engage with this workplace moment because observing was not valued as a way of learning. However, observing, questioning and engaging in and after placement experiences can enable participatory and valuable learning (Smith, 2008). Of course, workplace learning preparation programs can and do enable higher-level learning, but typically, preparation for workplace learning encompasses lower-level skills development such as writing cover letters, a CV and practicing interviewing. Franziska Trede and Denise Jackson undertook research that highlights how a focus on lower-level skills means opportunities for rich workplace learning are missed. They suggest higher-level workplace learning would cover five key themes: working with others; being an active learner; being aware; knowing and applying own ability; and appreciating workplace cultures to better position self (Trede & Jackson, 2019). What combines these themes is when participants gain self-insights into their own agency. More specifically, student participants “learnt that they had to take more responsibility for being prepared” for learning in workplace settings (Trede & Jackson, 2019, p. 14).

What if students were purposefully prepared to not only notice but also solve complex cultural and ethical problems that they may encounter during their workplace placement experiences? Such sensitization would position students advantageously to learn from workplace experiences especially when they are shortened due to the pandemic and scarcity of placement opportunity. Helping students become aware of workplace intricacies ahead of time will not only manage their expectations of what, how and with whom they can learn from placement experiences, but it will enrich their reflections from them. It follows that preparing students for transformative learning will better equip them to engage with the messy realities of workplaces and develop their sense of agency.

This paper re-imagines the possibilities of preparing students to make the most of shorter professional placements to develop their sense of professional agency. It turns Dewey’s claim that “you cannot learn from experiences alone, but you can learn from reflecting on experiences” on its head. The authors suggest that being sensitized and prepared ahead of time is an enabler for meaning-making of workplace experiences. Without a sense of agency, students risk becoming followers or thoughtless leaders who miss opportunities to develop their professional sense of self (Edwards & D’arcy, 2004). Preparing students for agentic, purposeful learning ahead of workplace placement experiences is time well spent especially during a time when opportunity for contact between supervisors, students and other staff is limited. Agency, however, is complex because of its relational nature and the many forces that influence it. Agency plays out within systemic hierarchies and cultural (and disciplinary) norms, material affordances and spans tensions between personal, professional, social, and public value commitments (Billett, 2016; Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

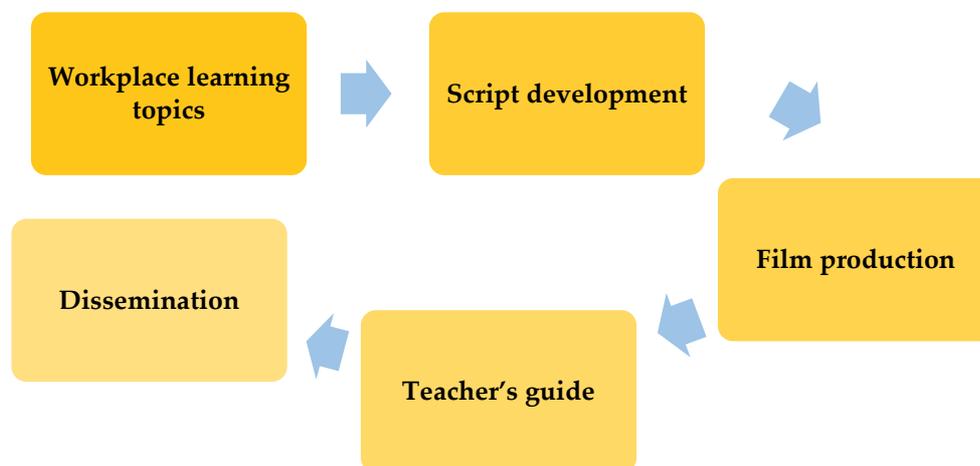
#### WORKPLACE LEARNING IN MOTION: USING FILMS TO PREPARE STUDENTS

In order to support university lecturers teach students how to prepare for their work placement, Franziska Trede created the “Workplace Learning in Motion” program, eight short films with the following titles:

1. Preparing for a student,
2. An unwanted task,
3. I have got it covered,
4. How to say it,
5. There is no harm,
6. Mid-placement visit,
7. Not easy to say, and
8. The last day.

The films can be used as a substitute for experiential learning that has been substantially curtailed due to COVID-19. Particular films can be chosen to fit specific needs and contexts for learning. The aim of the films is to depict workplace learning scenarios that are as real and relatable as possible and so can act as a discussion starter. The 10-minute films portray a short journey rather than just a snapshot. They depict authentic practice situations and seek to portray the nuanced intricacies of real-world workplace cultures. They present good and not so good ways of being a student and workplace supervisor; thereby avoiding simplistic notions of best practice and instead dramatize imperfect scenarios. The films are intended to be more evocative than cognitive (Eisner, 2008). The silences, body language and atmosphere are captured through the multimodal nature of the films. The dramatized and embodied learning portrays the situatedness and relational nature of workplace learning, making for possibilities of rich interpretations (Wilson, 2018). The focus of the eight films is on professional practice which makes them relevant to any university professional education course. However, each film is situated in a particular disciplinary setting to make them more context specific. Because the purpose of the films is to better prepare workplace learning stakeholders for learning and supervising in the workplace the disciplinary context is attenuated and the professional capabilities such as relational agency and developing professional voice are amplified.

FIGURE 1: Five phases of the workplace learning in motion program.



The film program comprised five phases (see Figure 1) and included over 30 collaborators. In phase 1, the topics for the eight short films arose from three sources: literature about work-integrated and workplace learning (Billett & Somerville, 2004; Billett et al., 2008; Clouder, 2009; Kreber, 2016); Trede's research about workplace learning (Trede & Smith, 2012; Trede et al., 2012; Grace & Trede, 2013; Trede & McEwen, 2015); and the workplace learning committee of Charles Sturt University. In phase 2, the script development began with Trede preparing a short description for each film. These were given to a creative writer with formal qualifications in drama. The instruction to the writer was to keep scenes authentic, relatable, and intriguing. The first full draft scripts were circulated to workplace learning practitioners for comments. Based on the feedback a final script was produced. The third phase was the film production. A film director, professional sound and camera personnel as well as professional actors were contracted. Some films were designed to show different endings dependent on some key dialogue or agentic move of one player in the film.

In phase 4, Trede prepared instructional materials to accompany the films. These included a short summary of the film, workplace learning topics, workshop activities and links to further resources. The

films have been used with students, workplace supervisors and/or academics. There is a teacher guide that proposes four steps (see Table 1). Steps 1 and 2 advise students to analyze the characters in the film. Steps 3 and 4 encourage students to relate the scenario from the film to their own experiences in the workplace. This sequence moves from focusing on interpreting the film scenes to reflecting how oneself could act differently.

Phase 5 is the dissemination and engagement phase. The films and materials have been used in various forms in diverse university degree programs. These include a self-paced, online module for workplace supervisors (Trede, 2017); as a teaching resource in a Graduate Certificate Learning and Teaching in Higher Education; and as a conversation starter in face-to-face workshops with students and workplace supervisors. More traditional dissemination strategies included presentations at conferences.

TABLE 1: Suggested workshop activities divided into four steps.

| Steps  | Activities   |
|--|--|
| Step 1: describing, making sense of the scenario   | noticing and analyzing what happens in the film, sense-making of actions of players in the film  |
| Step 2: problem posing, questioning, critiquing structures, context, atmosphere, taken for granted reflections | critical awareness raising, how could they have acted otherwise, creative and complexity thinking, relate to different variations of agency, evaluative judgment of the actions of players, learning to take a stance      |
| Step 3: problem solving, emerging practices, curious about how to do things otherwise                          | critical and creative thinking, transition from focus on film interpretation to focus on self  |
| Step 4: action plan, next step, action   | plans for future actions, opportunity here to role play – act out other ways of responding to challenging situations, writing learning contract for self / career plan / capability development plan with concrete actions |

*Case Study: “I’ve Got it Covered” – A Description of One Film*

In this section we present one film as a case study by firstly describing the content of the film entitled *I’ve got it covered*. We then refer to the teacher’s guide and offer some sample workshop questions for teachers and students.

The film starts with a scene where three students meet their workplace educator for the first time on day one of their placement. The three students represent very different attitudes towards work and their workplace educator. She invites the students to say what they want to get out of this placement. One student is not interested in being on placement. She is chewing gum, dressed casually, and does not display any initiative. Another student says she is only anxious about failing. The awkwardness in her body language and not making eye contact hints at mental health issues. The third student, though showing keenest interest and being slightly overdressed in a suit and tie, is somewhat detached from the outcomes of his placement. He says, “I want to learn as much as I can”. In the following scenes each student is seen directly interacting with the workplace educator. The first student appears unprofessional and inappropriately demanding of her workplace educator. The second student is

gaining trust in her workplace educator and is developing confidence and pride in her work while the third student displays male manipulative tendencies and a low work ethic. Despite having best intentions towards all her students, the workplace educator struggles not only in communicating expectations, but also to take a firm stance and call the university for guidance.

This film covers topics of professionalism, responsibilities, and appropriate communication modes, all of which are conditions to nurture professional agency. "I've Got it Covered" highlights the complex relational issues between students and workplace educators and raises many questions. For example:

- What is an appropriate professional role that students can take on?
- How to develop effective mentoring relationships that enhance a sense of agency?
- How to know what it means to be professional on placement?
- How to be an assertive workplace educator?

These questions help create a sense of purpose for learning to become a professional on placement. "I've Got It Covered" reminds us of the need to explicitly discuss the roles and responsibilities of students and workplace educators before commencement of a placement. It also enables lecturers and tutors to prepare students by asking strategic questions that start a dialogue and lead to shared understanding.

Here are sample questions from the "I've Got It Covered Teacher's Guide " for leading a review activity to unpack the film and move the conversation towards helping students analyze not only their own workplace learning practices, but also those of other workplace learning students, and the workplace educator:

- What do you think about the different relationships between the workplace educator and the three students?
- What might be done differently from the workplace educator's perspective?
- What resources might be useful for workplace educators to help them be assertive and communicate clearly with students?
- What is your experience of supervising and managing diverse students' attitudes on placement?
- How might you respond to students who show no interest in their placement?
- How might students' attitude towards workplace learning affect your work as an educator, the workplace and their learning?
- What is most important to improve workplace learning in this scenario?
- As lecturers and tutors, how do you prepare students for the first day on placement?

Sample questions for students:

- What are the different attitudes towards placement and the workplace educator portrayed by the three students in this film?
- How might students' attitude towards workplace learning affect their work and learning, the university's reputation, the workplace?
- What might be resulting workplace learning experience for the different students?
- How do you clarify your role and responsibilities for a specific placement?
- How professional are the students portrayed in this film?
- What might a more professional attitude look like for the students?
- What resources might help you develop a more professional conduct on placement?

## PRE-PLACEMENT PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

When real-world placements are hard to find, the priority for workplace learning supervisors and coursework teaching staff should be less on teaching rules, procedures and facts, but more on enabling prospective professionals/practitioners to be deliberate, thoughtful, reflexive and self-starting. This is easy to say but how do you do this? The above section described how the “Workplace Learning in Motion” short film-stories can be used for students in placements. Now, we will present the pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings of the “Workplace Learning in Motion” films. There are four parts to our theoretical framework. The first part is a sketch of the evolution of thinking about using short films for teaching and the relationship to reflective practice and case-study analysis. Then we describe and discuss literature that draws attention to different approaches to using videos for teaching about professional practice. Thirdly, we suggest that the “Workplace Learning in Motion” films can be conceived as narrative pedagogy. And fourthly, we suggest that a further key feature of the pedagogy behind these short films is that they are less instructional / documentary and more arts-based. We will, of course, elaborate on the notion of ‘arts’ and how this is important when enabling the teaching and learning of agency.

## SHORT FILMS, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND CASE-STUDY ANALYSIS

Film provides vast amounts of rich detail using images and sound that capture the immediacy of a real classroom [workplace] that all students can draw upon as common examples of authentic learning experiences (Lane & Brown, 2007; Jacobs et al., 1999; LeFevre, 2004; Perry & Talley, 2001; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Furthermore, it allows teachers, supervisors, and students to replay events that can support de-briefing, unpacking, problem-identification and -analysis. In other words, films can be helpful to do case-study analysis. Donald Schön, an influential theorist, wrote about the use of short films to teach and learn reflective practice back in 1983.

### *Rule-Example vs Example-Rule Teaching Using Video*

The use and benefits of using short films for teaching purposes are numerous and widely cited. But like any technology deployed for teaching purposes, the nature of the teaching and learning will be shaped less by any inherent properties the film has, and more by the specificities of the film’s content, structure and style and then how it is used by the students and teachers. What we want to highlight is the difference between using films to instruct and using films to provoke and inspire agency. Rosella Santagata and Giulia Angelici (2010) and Tina Seidel et al. (2013) contrast two ways short films can be used for teaching professional practice. In both cases, they researched the use of short films of and for teacher-trainees teaching in the classroom. Films can be used to instruct students about externally prescribed content, procedures, what and how to do. In the wider realm of workplace learning, films are often used to teach students formulaic, best-practice content about how to pitch ideas, refine one’s curriculum vitae, how to report to a supervisor, how to document, or about health and safety procedures. Alternatively, or additionally, films can be used to present complexities and ambiguities in the workplace from which students can build or extend content themselves, decide for themselves what is regarded as good practice, analyze problems and consider various possible solutions, and work out for themselves what and how to do. Seidel et al. (2013) call the first a ‘rule-example’ type of short film because it teaches rules through direct guidance. The second is ‘example-rule’ because the emphasis is on using examples to support problem-solving.

*Narrative Pedagogy and Short Films*

The “Workplace Learning in Motion” films (2017) deploy an example-rule approach to teach and learn reflective professional practice. To drill further down into the detail of the type of films we think can be helpful - especially when COVID=19 physical distancing restrictions make work integrated learning challenging - we will now draw attention to their narrative features. Central to Trede’s workplace learning films are the narrative arcs of prominent characters. In this sense, the films have a close affinity to narrative pedagogy. There is an extensive body of research about ways it can be used to teach professional practice (Brown et al., 2008; Strangeways & Papatraianou, 2016; Vandermause & Townsend, 2010). As one would expect, narrative pedagogy takes many forms with multiple interpretations. For the purposes of this paper the following defining features are suggested.

Key to narrative pedagogy are stories or accounts from practitioners / professionals / students of particular experiences to do with work-related practices. In its most basic form, the lecturer or tutor tasks students to prepare a reflective narrative about work-related practice. This is not a journaling exercise where individuals reflect privately. Instead, key is that students present their narratives to other students for discussion, de-briefing, and analysis. This might involve students reading their essays or presenting their own self-made short film accounts to peers in class.

Stories are subjective and relational. They depict practices that comprise of knowing, doing, saying, and relating. Rational, cognitive knowledge is no longer privileged. When stories are presented through films with high production-value, learning in the workplace is made explicit and expressive. Images, body language, silences, gaps in the dialogue are all central elements to human sense-making (Eisner, 2008). Films can be provocations to think more critically. Films can be the starting point for discussions about uncomfortable or complex workplace situations. Using films is a safe strategy for difficult discussions because it removes self and overly focusing on self and invites the audience to think and talk. They can be the trigger for creative thinking and identifying ways to act otherwise. Knowing the best practice from a textbook might not be the best way to act in a cultural, political, emotional, or economical practice situation. Workplaces are messy realities that provide opportunities for informal learning. Films can generate emergent, participatory group processes that simulate relational agency that is required at work. Learners can collectively workshop appropriate choices of how to be and act in future unpreparable workplace situations.

Underpinning this is the thesis of a longstanding body of experiential learning theories. Prominent figures include Silvia Gherardi, Karen Warren, Ruth Cohen, Jennifer Gore, John Dewey, David Boud, and Malcolm Knowles. The thesis is that meaningful curriculum should be built less from rigidly defined content and more from the experiences of students and practitioners. However, we would like to emphasize here that these experiences should be carefully curated by supporting students to devise, present and analyze their own and each other’s narratives. These contain accounts of lived, as opposed to textbook, experiences.

*Community Arts-Based Film Scripts*

While the “Workplace Learning in Motion” films enact narrative pedagogy, there is a feature that takes them beyond. The film scripts were crafted as creative writing pieces. While the research behind the stories derives from real-world experiences and practice-based research, they ultimately were crafted to have dramatic effect. This distinguishes them from the process in narrative pedagogy of participants telling and sharing their own authored stories. Trede’s films were produced using a methodology that has affinity with community arts-based practice. Trede and Flowers (2008) deployed this methodology

in a project for patient education with a cardiac ward at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney. Two artists were employed to spend three months with staff and patients and produced a series of large canvas pictures to accompany storyboards that were used to facilitate patient education.

There are three features of community arts practice we wish to highlight. One feature is stories. Like narrative pedagogy, community arts practice revolves around the production of life stories. But it is not just the story-telling that matters, it is the story-making process. In the case of the “Workplace Learning in Motion” films the story-making process was underpinned by research of verbatim accounts of students in work placements. These accounts were crafted into film scripts by a professional creative writer and then reviewed and edited by real-world workplace educators. This segues into the second feature to highlight, namely the co-production behind the filmmaking. Central to community arts methodology is bringing artists and community stakeholders to make art together (Flowers, 2002, 2009). It could be a theatre piece, a mural, or indeed short films. There are some who say the quality of the art matters less than the co-production (Goldbard, 2006). But the researchers subscribe to the view that the quality of the art is important (Thiele & Marsden, 2003). That is why in the case of Trede’s short workplace learning films, a skilled creative writer was commissioned to prepare the scripts. Their instructional value relies not just on the authenticity of the stories, but interesting and provocative characters, understandable dialogue and monologue, dramatic dilemmas, and technical elements such as setting, sound and light that lend themselves to film.

#### A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON AGENCY IN WORKPLACE LEARNING

While a case is made a case about the value of films for workplace learning preparation, what is more important is that they can be used for the teaching and learning of agency. Agency is the capacity to influence, act and overcome helplessness (Hitlin & Elder, 2007). It is especially needed in uncertain times like we are witnessing now with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Placements have been cancelled, postponed or shifted to work from home placements.

Agency is strongly connected to understanding context, identifying choice, professional judgment, considering consequences for self, others and the public good. Being a professional is more than following policies and fitting in to workplace cultures. Professionals need to decide what is worthwhile to perpetuate and what needs to be let go off and what new practices should be introduced. In other words, a central defining feature of professionalism is being agentic and deliberate. Students should not delay engaging with their professional agency until graduation. Professional agency can be nurtured in preparation for workplace learning.

The uncertainty and disruption caused by the pandemic can be seen as an invitation to reconsider how workplace learning could be otherwise. It is an opportunity to question and change routines that no longer work. This connects well with agency, which is associated with the capacity to ask questions, to take initiative, and exert influence. Agency can be seen as a pre-requisite for learning (Hitlin and Elder, 2007) and develop a sense of professionalism. But agency is so much more than observable behavior. Agency is located within a complex world and steers clear of the idea of “an emaciated notion of learners’ agency” (Beckett & Hager 2018, p. 137) that unashamedly foregrounds the individual and cognitive knowledge.

For the purpose of this paper, agency is framed through a critical-social professional practice lens which privileges the sayings, doings and relatings of individuals in socio-cultural activity (Kemmis, 2014). Agency has been described as a core skill for learning and working because it relates to the capacity to reflect, create and respond within social contexts. Without a sense of agency, learning and working

could be described as accidental or rule-following behavior. Agency is not an individualistic and heroic concept. Just like learning and working, exercising agency is a shared and social responsibility that is interdependent of self and social context. Individuals do not act alone out of context but in response to a given situation surrounded by competing interests and supported by others. The films depict the relational nature of agency.

Hitlin and Elder (2007) postulate that different types of agency are called for depending on the type of response that is required now to achieve immediate or future goals. They suggest there are four types of agency: existential, pragmatic, identity, and life-course. Each has specific temporal characteristics.

#### *Existential Agency*

Existential agency relates to the idea of “free will” and to “an existential capacity to exert influence on our environment” (Hitlin & Elder, 2007, pp. 175-176). It is a belief that one has some sort of influence and the capacity to initiate and control own behavior. The ability for self-reflection and self-regulation is an important point because it focuses on the capacity to act appropriately within context. It is not action at any cost but action that is based on pre-thought about the consequences of these actions. This is particularly interesting when the action is about defying expectations and social norms. Existential agency engenders a sense of self-empowerment that motivates the capacity to act. It is foundation for the other three agency variations.

#### *Pragmatic Agency*

Pragmatic agency applies to routine situations and exerting influence to achieve particular social outcomes. This type of agency focuses on solutions that are required to address problematic situations. It occurs between the now and the immediate future and is associated with “the ability to innovate when routines break down” (Hitlin & Elder, 2007, p. 176). Pragmatic agency requires making choices due to disruptions. Choices are not random but guided by self-reflection (existential agency) and influenced by a complex net of moral codes, predispositions, emotions, personal histories and social phenomena. Pragmatic agency is underpinned by the intention to find a match between self-concept and cultural, social, and political expectations. Existential and pragmatic agency together can reshape social expectations. It is not a re-action but can be a transformation. It is finding new solutions and act on problematic situations.

#### *Identity Agency*

Identity agency, a temporally proximal agency, applies to novel situations and its interplay with self-concept as part of a longer-term commitment to self-identity. This self-commitment comprises standards and values which are also shaped by expectations from others on self. Identity agency does not automatically happen; indeed, it is influenced by feedback from others. Personal autonomy and a sense of who we want to become shape this relational commitment to identify with a role, and in the longer-term, live up to expectations. Identity agency relates to “personal autonomy while following social dictates” (Hitlin & Elder, 2007, p. 181) and being accountable, not only to others but also to self. It focuses on achieving situational goals.

#### *Life-course Agency*

Life-course agency, a temporally distant agency, applies to purposeful transitions of life pathways. It is associated with planned actions with long-term implications and the belief in one’s capacity to make

big choices in life to achieve specific life goals. "Life-course agency refers to individual capacities to orient themselves toward long-term outcomes, across social domains" (Hitlin & Elder 2007, p. 183) and envisage the future self with optimism. It relates to the emotional intelligence to select conducive environments for pursuing life goals. It requires self-reflection, perseverance, resilience and endurance in the face of setbacks. Life-course agency is about claiming or leaving identities. Understanding life-course agency helps to appreciate individuals' choices and actions. Like pragmatic and identity agency, life-course agency is based on existential agency, the "capacity to exert influence on one's life" (p. 186). These four variations of agency have overlapping boundaries and interconnected characteristics. These four concepts are helpful to highlight time as an external situation and how it is intertwined with agency and individuals' internal journeys. It suggests that agency is dynamic, changes and develops over time, just like the self. Observable actions can be understood as a response to immediate situations or longer-term goals and what needs to be done. These variations of agency can be highlighted in "Workplace Learning in Motion" workshops to raise awareness of when, why, and how to act in workplace situations.

These four variations bring many concepts of agency into a meaningful relationship. They highlight the importance of pre-thought and identification of choices, actions made based on conscious purpose, and responsibility of the consequences of one's actions. Understanding agency through a temporal lens will assist teachers to highlight these nuances of agency to students. This deeper understanding of agency in turn will sensitize students when on placement to make more deliberate decisions when and how to exercise agency.

## CONCLUSION

In accounts about planning workplace learning it is typically asserted that high quality supervision, opportunities to undertake a mix of simple and complex tasks in the workplace and an empowering workplace culture, are important conditions to enable the teaching and learning of agency. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, made it difficult to provide these conditions. More reason than to focus on preparation for workplace learning. This paper has presented both a practical and theoretical approach to planning and implementing workplace learning preparation strategies. The quality of preparation, not just the quantity of time spent in the workplace, is key to teaching and learning agency through workplace learning. A limitation of this approach to teaching and learning agency is that it has not been formally evaluated. However, the highly contextual nature of agency and workplace learning does not lend itself to such evaluation. Instead, future research could collect reflections from students after placement experiences to determine the impact of the film workshops on their sense of agency.

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