TEN YEARS LATER:
A Puzzling Picture of Work-Integrated Learning to Students' Entrepreneurial Skills

Abstract:

This paper expands a study reported at The Asia Pacific Cooperative Education Conference, Auckland, New Zealand in the year of 2004, with the paper title "An Option For Cooperative Education: Bridging The Gap With Walkabout Project", following with the paper "Undergraduate Perceptions Of The Need For Entrepreneurship In The Business Management Curriculum: Five Years After" which was presented at The 3rd Triennial Conference of International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS), Cape Town, South Africa in the year of 2009.

Ten years – after the first study in 2004 – is a long time to wait for a Work-Integrated Learning (hereinafter referred to as WIL) study to support the claims relating to the value of project-based learning and to illustrate on how the students bring their insights back to the classroom for further analysis and reflection. The present study was limited to the international class of undergraduate students at Telkom University Indonesia, Faculty of Economics and Business majoring in International Business Management studies and should be noted as an action-research effort by the authors.

Meanwhile, a substantial number of questions are asked about the state of WIL, including ones about content and delivery. All of which invites the question – So what can educators do to improve WIL in terms of building students' entrepreneurial skills?

This research paper proposes a conceptual model to advance the understanding of a puzzling picture of WIL in terms of the project-based learning, which tie the theory and practice.

Keywords:
work-integrated learning, entrepreneurship, action-research, a conceptual model

INTRODUCTION

Educated unemployment is a pronounced phenomenon in many developing countries. It is disheartening to witness educated unemployment and it is particularly worrisome to have university graduates left idle when human capital is scarce who could, if employed, help significantly to pull a developing country out of poverty. International Labour Organization (as cited in United Nations Population Fund, 2011) has warned that:

> Youth unemployment and situations where young people simply give up looking for work "incur costs to the economy, to society and to the individual and their family". And there is a demonstrated link between youth unemployment and social exclusion. All this is a threat to the growth and development potential of economies.

Indonesia, with around 250 million people, is the fourth most populous country in the world (after China, India and the United Sates). Moreover, Indonesia has a young population as around half of the total population is below the age of 30 years. Combined, these two features imply that Indonesia currently

contains a large labor force; one that will grow larger in the foreseeable future. More than a decade of macroeconomic growth has succeeded in. But, as around two million Indonesians enter the labor force each year, it will be a challenge for the Indonesian government to stimulate job creation so that the labor market can absorb this group of annual newcomers; youth unemployment (among the freshly graduated) in particular is a cause for concern and action. The chart 1 below indicates Indonesia's unemployment rate in recent years and it shows a steady downward trend.

Chart 1
Indonesia unemployment rate
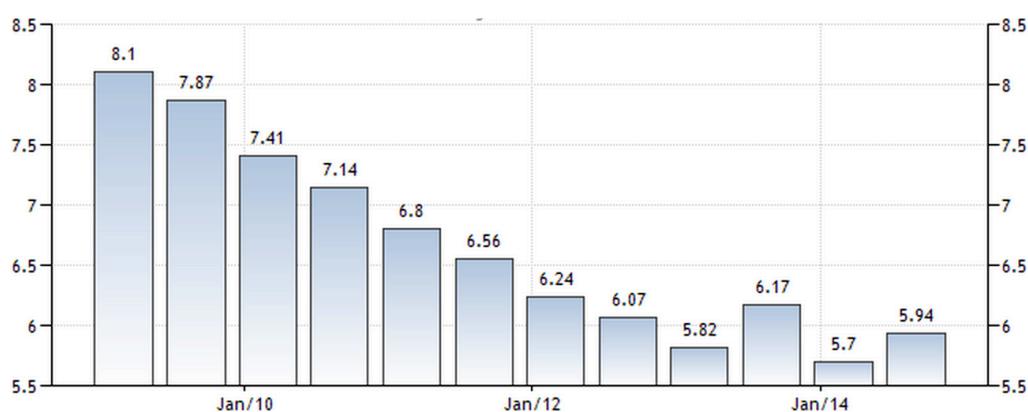
Source: Statistics Indonesia
Note: In Indonesia, the unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labor force.

Chart 1 provides the information that the unemployment rate in Indonesia increased to 5.94 percent in the third quarter of 2014 from 5.70% in the first quarter of 2014. The unemployment rate in Indonesia averaged 6.15% from 1982 until 2014, reaching an all-time high of 11.24% in the third quarter of 2005 and a record low of 2% in the fourth quarter of 1983. According to data released by the National Statistics Agency on August 2012, 110.8 million people in Indonesia were employed, but most, or 53.88 million (48.63%), had only elementary school educations, while 20.22 million others (18.25%) were junior high school graduates. Employed university graduates total only 6.98 million, or 6.30%, with those who left diploma programs at 2.97 million, or 2.68% (Antara News, 2012).

In Indonesia, educators and government have expressed concern due to the increasing number of unemployed university graduates in the country. Both the educators and the government argued that the link and match between universities and the employment market have not worked optimally. On one hand, the government says that educational institutes seem to target producing as many as they can graduate,

without providing their alumni with working skills. In addition to this, the government claim that they plan strategies to create jobs, with the hope they could reduce educated unemployment. The government also claim that they have prepared four ways to overcome unemployment among university graduates, including setting up vocational training centers to improve the quality of human resources, developing the educational system, facilitating the growth of job fairs and creating entrepreneurship development programs. On the other hand, the university says that the curriculum has been aimed to prepare their students to compete in obtaining employment as well as to provide their students with the professional capacity so they will be ready to work right after graduation. But the authors witness that for many young Indonesians, graduation from the university is not a joyful and exciting occasion anymore, it is more an anxious time. This is because they will join the ranks of the unemployed and many university graduates end up in positions unrelated to their field of study. To make matters worse, according to a prediction by an Indonesian economic analyst, more educated individuals will be jobless in 2020.

Meanwhile, the authors witnessed that academics and governments appear to be concentrating and encouraging entrepreneurship because it symbolizes innovation, creativity and dynamic economy. Since February 2011 the Indonesian government has issued many policies to support the advancement of entrepreneurship in Indonesia, especially for graduation student. In order to foster the spirit of entrepreneurship, the Indonesian government continues rolling the entrepreneurial empowerment programs. For example, *Program Kreatif Mahasiswa Kewirausahaan* (PKMK), the thousand graduate entrepreneurial programs, entrepreneurship training programs, and financing programs through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In 2013, the Indonesian government is targeting the addition of five million new entrepreneurs to 2025 by developing human resources for the advancement of national entrepreneurs.

In Indonesia, the term Work-Integrated Learning (hereinafter referred to as WIL) was introduced in 1993 by the Ministry of Higher Education, as an entry to understanding aspects of the link and match between universities and the employment market. As the value of WIL continues to gain university recognition, there is an increasing abundance of models and processes used in its implementation. Many Indonesian universities already have WIL programs.

At Telkom Univeristy (hereinafter referred to as Tel-U) in Indonesia, particularly for business and management students, a review of the action-research studies to determine the WIL aspects in terms of the project-based learning are essential to ensure the need for further research in this area (Lubis, 2004; Lubis, 2006; Lubis, 2010; Lubis, 2011; Lubis, 2012). Lessons learned might then be applied to refine the WIL structure and its implementation, improve the student entrepreneurial skills and to adjust the underpinning degree curriculum where possible. Following this line of thought, significant progress has been made to unveil the entrepreneurial journey of Indonesian graduate entrepreneurs as a source of the future generation of Indonesian educated entrepreneurs (Nugroho, 2012). Yet from time to time, the authors wonder if the WIL aspect of students' entrepreneurial skills could produce large numbers of truly "work-readiness" graduates.

Thus, this paper is a continued action-research effort by the authors that investigated Faculty of Economics and Business (hereinafter referred to as FEB) students' perceptions of their learning on project-based assignment. The authors use the findings to propose a conceptual model to advance the understanding of a puzzling picture of WIL in terms of the project-based learning, which tie the theory and practice. The greatest desire of the authors is to catalyze the dialogue among the WIL educators during this conference as well as the higher education policymakers from all around the world, who wish for promoting the best workforce development scheme for today's Global Society.

DEFINING THE WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING: THE "WALKABOUT" PROJECT

Passage to "work-readiness"?

It is important to understand at this stage what the authors understand by WIL in the form of "Walkabout" project for business management students at FEB Tel-U. It is also critical to be aware of and understand the dimensions of WIL in the form of "Walkabout" project for entrepreneurship course and how the previous action-research findings will need to be incorporated when designing a conceptual model, which combined the entrepreneurship learning and WIL. The authors acknowledge that entrepreneurship as well as WIL is becoming and will continue to become, an integral elements of any future academic programs in business management, where it will expand into an established and ultimately accepted field of academic inquiry.

In order to illustrate more clearly what "Walkabout" project is all about, Lubis (2006, p.2) described the following explanation:

> The term "Walkabout" was taken from a rite of passage by the Aboriginal custom in Australia in the desolate hinterlands of the continent. When a boy goes on to become a man, he is given a bow, arrows and sent off into the desert, to walkabout and survive alone on his own wits for six months. The distance covered on a walkabout may exceed 1,000 miles, done without the aid of compass or radio. It is believed that the boy is in his way under the guidance of a spiritual power. If he returns safely to his tribal village, he is received as an adult.
>
> This exercise applies the same test to the students, which they are formed into teams with five to six members and team's members are self-chosen. Those students are given the opportunity to practice their academic-based knowledge outside the classroom. An overview of the "Walkabout" project and a list of guidelines were also provided. Each team requested to fill a blank form with the information required, titled as a "Walkabout" Project proposal. It was mandatory to complete this form with a brief description of the project they would undertake and hand it to the author. As the name suggests, this proposal was designed primarily to record their planning stage. However, this record had a secondary purpose and this was to provide the evidence that the students use the key points written in their proposal as a stimulus for organizing their "Walkabout" project. In short, they are expected to transfer their relevant knowledge directly into a "real world" context.

The idea of rite of passage as an alternative to becoming an adult and living in the "real' world cannot be taken for granted. Just because the students complete the "Walkabout" project in entrepreneurship course and are ready to graduate, this does not always mean that they are ready to function independently in the "real" world with "work-readiness" qualifications. In other words, the return to that rite of passage effort, however, can be greatly multiplied if action-research findings is used in tandem with other appropriate topic of investigation, discourse and dissemination of WIL to build a comprehensive passage to "work-readiness" support system for those business management students in more vulnerable situations for which an action-research effort alone is simply not enough.

How fast are we moving right now?

An alternative framework to advance the understanding of a puzzling picture of WIL requires empirical analyzes shed light on the relationships among the different elements. Evidence has already been provided regarding the relationship between WIL and "Walkabout" project processes (Table 1). As the coming decade will be complex, volatile and uncertain, the authors believe that future of WIL to students' entrepreneurial skills will have to adapt to the specific needs of the business management students at FEB Tel-U. To answer the question of "how fast are we moving right now?" one need to note the perspective of doing the "Walkabout" project means to help students learning from their experiences as the passage to

"work-readiness" qualifications. Examination of the previous action-research topics is highlighted in the following table.

Table 1
Findings from previous action-research

Source	Topics examined	Sample description	Main findings
Lubis (2004)	The importance of "Walkabout" project as an option for building a stronger cooperative education in the future.	A total of 49 respondents consists of 17 groups of students as the first batch who practiced the "Walkabout" project during the academic year 2003/04.	The "Walkabout" project was an opportunity to implement students' skills and management knowledge gained from all the subjects they had been studied from the previous semesters.
Lubis (2006)	The importance of five dimensions of teambuilding experience in "Walkabout" project, namely, team trust, self-esteem, team awareness, team effectiveness and team bonding.	A total of 147 respondents as the second batch who practiced the "Walkabout" project during the academic year 2004/05.	The "Walkabout" project did create a positive attitude toward the desired change. This situation refers to the inward feelings of partnership within the team that can occur when the five dimensions of teambuilding are used.
Lubis (2010)	The evaluation of what the students gained from WIL, in the form of the "Walkabout" project.	A total of 693 respondents, students who practiced the "Walkabout" project during academic year of 2004/05 (147), 2005/06 (105), 2006/07 (103), 2007/08 (174) and 2008/09 (164) students.	The prospects for the students of becoming self-employed.
Lubis (2011)	The "four-stage model" assessment tools for evaluating student's progress.	A total of 672 respondents who practiced the "Walkabout" project during academic year of 2010/11, consist of class-A (52), class-B (52), class-C (52), class-D (52), class-E (50), class-F (52), class-G (52), class-H (51), class-I (52), class-J (52), class-K (52), class-L (52) and class-M (52).	The practice-based entrepreneurship course appears promising and The Department of Business and Management Education that runs it would undoubtedly feel encouraged by the findings, which could act as a promising experiment in students' entrepreneurial activity.
Lubis (2012)	The Entrepreneurial Team (ET) conflict, consist of relationship conflict, task conflict, process conflict.	A total of 541 respondents who practiced the "Walkabout" project during academic year of 2011/12, class-A (40), class-B (50), class-C (50), class-D (50), class-E (50), class-F (50), class-G (50), class-H (51), class-I (50), class-J (50) and class-K (50).	The students' ET was able to address their conflicts competently and demonstrate incredible progress to finish their entrepreneurial project. Most importantly, the students' ET demonstrates a willingness to consider the views, positions and feelings of others as a stable base for managing conflict.

Source: Secondary (Authors'record)

RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CLASS PROGRAM

A decade ago, the idea of project-based learning under WIL – so called "Walkabout" project – is well documented and considered as an option for building a stronger WIL in the future, as clearly stated (Lubis, 2004, p.10):

Bridging the gap is in the aspects of the new curriculum. Those aspects consist of the educator and student commitment, the system support, the control of experiential learning to meet the student's "work-readiness" qualifications, that this "Walkabout" project can prove to be particularly useful.

A decade ago, it was explained that the field was still relatively new and that relatively no empirical studies on "Walkabout" project at FEB Tel-U have been performed. It was found that the feedback from students has been positive and in all cases the students have been able to successfully immerse themselves in the "Walkabout" project and learn new skills and knowledge outside the classroom. Overall, the newly implemented "Walkabout" project during academic year 2003/04 has been a positive WIL experience.

Nowadays, after ten years, in order to add an extra dimension to the student perceptions of the "Walkabout" project, this paper explores the benefit of the "Walkabout" project at the new international class in FEB Tel-U. The introduction of international class in FEB Tel-U dates back to 2009 and has run with a diverse range of international students as the capstone to its degree (Table 2).

Table 2
International class profile

Batch	Year	Enrolments	Domestic	International	Remarks
1	2009	29	28	1	-
2	2010	34	32	2	-
3	2011	37	36	1	The first batch who undertake the "Walkabout" propject
	2012	33	30	3	-
5	2013	29	28	1	-
6	2014	49	48	1	-

Source: Internal university compiled by the Placement Coordinator

In this international class, the entrepreneurship course contributes four credit hours during the sixth semester and these form part of the total number of credit hours allocated for the completion of eight semester academic program for International Business Management studies. The first "Walkabout" project was introduced to batch-3 during academic year 2013/14 and in many ways the culminating point of the entrepreneurship course, required students to complete a project-based assignment in which enable the students to undertake a new and valuable learning experience on a group basis. During academic year 2013/14, the authors conducted a comprehensive and independent evaluation of the "Walkabout" project. The evaluation was intended to address the extent to which the "Walkabout" project was having the WIL aspects of students' learning. Of interest also was the extent to which the "Walkabout" project was contributing to the personal development and team building skills.

The combined method, in the form of "in-and-out" class sessions, have been adopted to prepare the students with the balance and coherence between academic and practice-based dimensions of the WIL environment. Balance, coherence and integration in turn require some topics shaping entrepreneurship course design valuing the coming together of the theoretical with the practice of the "Walkabout" project, as presented in Appendix-1. The "Walkabout" project guidelines for this research context was borrow directly from the previous study (Lubis, 2004).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

Reflecting on the experience as the educators of the "Walkabout" project for undergraduate students at FEB Tel-U, from the authors' perspective, the WIL aspects is a specific and unique form of learning. This specificity and uniqueness occur because WIL does not have a clear definitions, although in principle the meanings are similar. This specificity and uniqueness, derived from the variety and plurality, is not only a repertoire of learning worth appreciated, but it is also a challenge. The authors acknowledged the current choice of WIL in the WACE byline, is a deviation from the former notion "cooperative education". This thought is similar to what Groenewald (2012) explanation that WACE is apparently also shifting away from using the original term "cooperative education".

In the context of applications of action-research, other researchers have noted (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Grainger 2001), qualitative means of research enquiry are well suited to "cooperative education" and suggest that given pragmatic concerns, practitioners are well positioned to conduct action-research, case studies and/or combined methodological approaches. Thus, the authors position this study as a continued action-research effort by the authors for improving a specific practice of WIL aspects in entrepreneurship course.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The main research question for this study is: What are domestic and international student's views on their "Walkabout" project? In particular, the authors wished to probe students' views on the best and worst features of their team-based assignment. The main data-gathering tool used to gain a view of the students' views consisted of a self completion questionnaire and was based on that used by Lubis (2006). The

authors considered the following open questions consist of issues that might influence student perceptions of their "Walkabout" project experiences:

1. What in your opinion is the best aspect of the practice-based experience gained from "Walkabout" project?

2. What in your opinion is the worst aspect of the practice-based experience gained from "Walkabout" project?

3. This is an opportunity for you to express any important issues you may have, or points you would like to raise regarding the entrepreneurship course and the "Walkabout" project.

Those three questions was kept as concise as possible in order to maximize the number responses and hopefully solicit the most honest responses from a cohort of 36 domestic students and one international students, who completed their "Walkabout" project during academic year 2013/14. The authors circulated the questionnaire on session-14 since it was considered the least resource intensive and most effective action-research method available. Other data of relevance were obtained from an examination of the teams' final report prior to the in-class presentation during session-13. The results reported in this paper represent the summary of responses to the questionnaire given to students as their personal reflection gained from the "Walkabout" project.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Perhaps the most interesting findings of this action-research at FEB Tel-U is that the students were passionate about the rite of passage challenge and enjoyed to play a part in doing out-class learning session. They also had a similar passion for their team-based assignment and this illustrates the close linkage between WIL and students' entrepreneurial skills. The important point to be made here is that the "Walkabout" project did create a positive attitude toward the desired change, the findings that already take place ten years ago (Lubis, 2004). Because space limitations preclude an in-depth discussion of every aspect of WIL in the form of the "Walkabout" project, in the following section the authors limit the descriptions to include representations of the overall findings related to each research questions.

Students' perceptions of the "Walkabout" project best aspect

Generally, the students clearly identified team-based experiences as important gains. Thus, it was evident that the students felt they had gained a better understanding of practical knowledge. In addition to this, it

was evident that the "Walkabout" project in the international class setting were closely linked to gaining language skills. The following statements illustrate the students' perceptions:

> *I now understand more about team building skills outside the classroom and how it works in my walkabout project team. The out-class session is quite challenging to all of us.*

> *This is the interesting experience for me. My competency in Bahasa Indonesia, especially pronunciation and conversation, have been improved very much because I had to speak Bahasa Indonesia every day with my team members.*

> *I learn the skills necessary to set up my own business from this "Walkabout" project.*

> *I feel more self-confident in starting my own enterprise. I was hugely satisfied. And now, I definitely will try to set up something that is self-fulfilling.*

> *My seniors told me that they learn about entrepreneurship as well as teamwork from "Walkabout" project. Yes, I did have similar learning experiences as they did. This "Walkabout" project engaged my team in a real-life challenging task.*

Students' perceptions of the "Walkabout" project worst aspect

The investigation indicated that the vast majority of the students have expressed their disappointment with the duration of the "Walkabout" project, as clearly stated in their comments:

> *Two months is just too short to complete the project and I think the duration should be extended to around six months.*

> *The most difficult thing to start the project-based assignment is to assess the project need and determining how much time is needed to meet the desired outcomes.*

Overall, the students valued their rite of passage and their "survival mode" was attached to "team building skills", "personal development" and "personal satisfaction". In short, the entrepreneurship course and the "Walkabout" project were well pitched to the needs of the students and was generally very well received.

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF "WIL-E"

It is important to point out here, the authors develop a conceptual model (hereinafter referred to as Work-Integrated Learning of Entrepreneurship or "WIL-E") with the help of the findings from the previous studies (Lubis, 2004; Lubis, 2006; Lubis, 2010; Lubis, 2011; Lubis, 2012). By providing a conceptual model of WIL-E, this paper has contributed to the field of entrepreneurship as well as WIL, which can help to an overall understanding and the further development of "WIL-E" (Appendix-1). The author contends that there are the philosophical aspects of learning that collectively should contribute to a deeper appreciation of entrepreneurship and WIL, in the form of the "Walkabout" project assignment to the

students. The philosophical aspects constituting concepts of the lifelong learning. According to Delors *et.al*. (as cited in UNESCO, 1996) the lifelong learning is to be found in the philosophy of education, so called "The Four Pillars of Education - UNESCO", which defined as follows:

Learning to know – by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life.

Learning to do – in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young peoples' various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context, or formal, involving courses, alternating study and work.

Learning to live together – by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence - carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts - in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.

Learning to be – so as better to develop one's personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment, and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, esthetic sense, physical capacities, and communication skills.

For the evaluation of entrepreneurship in higher education as well as WIL, both quantitative (measurable) as well as qualitative (difficult to measure) indicators are important. Quantitative criteria include the number of students who enroll for the entrepreneurship course, which means the number of participants who undertake the "Walkabout" project. Such quantitative criteria are, however, only to a limited extent meaningful to assessing the quality of an entrepreneurship course and WIL. Thus, the evaluation must be adapted to the objectives of WIL and students' entrepreneurial skills to be developed.

In this conceptual model of "WIL-E", the first stage investigates factors related to "Level-1", which explain the very basic of entrepreneurship learning and the WIL learning, when the students are asked to run their project-based assignment. The compulsory entrepreneurship course and the concept of WIL have the potential to provide direct and significant benefits for students, in terms of "learning to know" with regard to the "academic-based". Effective ways must be found to improve the assessment of the impact of entrepreneurship course and the WIL on students. Standards and guidelines are important for an evaluation in higher education. Due to the special characteristic features and goals of entrepreneurship course and WIL, the assessment criteria for may, however, vary from general standards and guidelines. In Indonesia,

accreditation systems for faculty economics and business are often used to evaluate entrepreneurship course, but often have no accreditation systems for WIL.

The second stage investigates factors related to "Level-2", which explain the next step of entrepreneurship learning and the WIL learning, in terms of "learning to do" with regard to "personal development" and "learning to live together" with regard to the "teamwork". At this stage, other important evaluation factors are the progress in entrepreneurial attitudes, perceptions and intentions of students taking the "Walkabout" project and changes in the image of and attitudes towards entrepreneurs. Another criterion for "work-readiness" qualifications for students is important at this stage, for example, five years after graduation.

The third stage investigates factors related to "Level-3", which explain the next step of entrepreneurship learning and the WIL learning, in terms of "learning to be" with regard to the future "life and work". This future measurement is important but also very difficult because there is often a substantial time lag between entrepreneurship learning as well as WIL learning and its impact. Not to mention the impact on society and the economy, for example, to reduce the numbers of graduates unemployment. The suggested conceptual model of "WIL-E" for the future analysis of action-research is presented in Appendix-2.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Here, the authors have focussed on developing several arguments intended to advance the understanding of the relationships among dimensions central to entrepreneurship and WIL. If the future of WIL will be a collaborative effort, with universities, businesses and governments working more efficiently together, thus the experimentation of "Walkabout" project actually allows all parties to learn more and more about what works and what does not. The authors hope that other scholars will take up the challenge of further exploring and testing these ideas. Further studies can take the following directions. First, researchers can develop to design questionnaires and validate an instrument that quantifies each level of entrepreneurial learning and WIL to test our conceptual model of "WIL-E" empirically to verify our propositions. Second, future research can also theoretically extend our model by introducing other possible dimensions of learning. Doing so will identify the factors that lead to a best workforce development scheme for today's Global Society.

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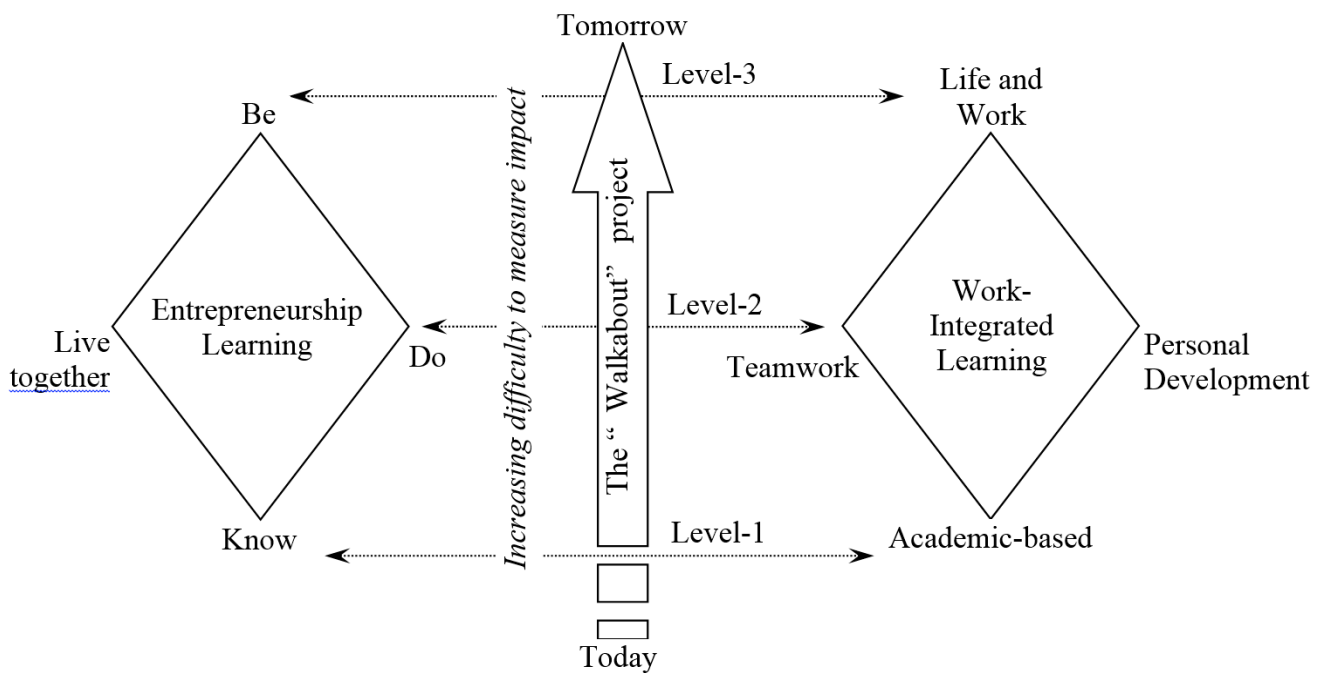UNESCO. (1996). Task Force on Education for the Twenty-first Century: "Learning: the Treasure Within". Retrieved April 2, 2012 from http://www.unesco.org/delors/fourpil.htm

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APPENDIX-1

Entrepreneurship course at the sixth semester during academic year 2013/14

Session	Method	Topic
1		Introduction to entrepreneurship
2		The entrepreneurial process and the four competences
3		Entrepreneurs' profile: Men vs women Entrepreneurs
4	in-class	Planning new venture
5		Intrapreneurship
6		Individual presentation
7		Individual presentation (continued)
		Mid-term break
8		
9		
10	out-class	"Walkabout" project period
11		(team-based assignment)
12		
13	in-class	Teams' presentation
14		Evaluation of "Walkabout" project and closing remarks

Source: Secondary (Authors'record)

APPENDIX-2

The "WIL-E" Conceptual Model

Source: Authors' construct