



BOOK REVIEW: Cooperative and work-integrated education: History, present, and future issues in Asia

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1. Introduction

“Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education in Asia: History, Present, and Future Issues” is a comprehensive edited book that explores the evolution and current landscape of cooperative work-integrated education (CWIE) in various Asian countries. Cooperative education (co-op), a well-established work-integrated learning (WIL) model, has been successfully implemented for decades across many countries in Europe and Asia. Despite its proven impact on a country's sustainability and economic growth, co-op education is not globally recognized yet. With its strong industrial base and history of success, Japan has implemented co-op education at a national level and has used the model to drive company universities in Thailand and the rest of South Asia. While these experiences provide useful teaching and learning cases, there is limited literature and research on the adoption and implementation of co-op education in industrial Asia. Edited by [Tanaka and Zegwaard \(2018\)](#), this book reports the state of the co-op and WIL environment in Asia, offering synthesis, analysis, and discussion on the present and the future of such a proven model. The content presented in this book is drawn from the input and insight of a vastly representative group of international researchers, educators, students, and governmental officials; a variety of publicly available reports and publications, and survey data collected from a broad range of Asian co-op programs. The findings would, definitely, help the Asia communities expand and reframe the conversation to address the key challenges, rethink

the ways and means of contemporary workforce preparation, and create innovative strategies to better integrate working experience into student education to produce work-ready and skill-ready graduates.

2. Summary of the book

The book entitled “Cooperative and Work-integrated Education in Asia: History, Present, and Future Issues” contains ten chapters.

In chapter one, [Tanaka \(2020\)](#) gave a thorough summary of the goals of the book, including examining the historical evolution, contemporary implementation, and forthcoming challenges of CWIE across various Asian countries. The chapter defined CWIE and highlighted its importance in filling in the skills gaps and improving employability opportunities by linking the gap between classroom teaching and real-world job experience. The chapter then emphasized the importance of collaboration between academic institutions, businesses, and governments while demonstrating the variety of CWIE practices impacted by various cultural, economic, and educational settings across Asia. Intending to provide insightful analysis and actionable suggestions for the development of CWIE in Asia, the chapter laid a strong framework for the in-depth analyses and case studies that follow.

In chapter two, [Xu \(2020\)](#) noted that co-op is an important part of university education in many countries. As the number of universities in China continued to increase and their students began to encounter difficulties in employment, China urgently needed an economic development model and a personnel training model, which had already been formed in foreign countries. With the help of literature interpretation, this chapter analyzed the implementation of co-op in China. The chapter indicated that, in addition to problems in specific local policies, co-op implementation might also be affected by the overall implementation capability of China's education practice. Moving forward, the related stakeholders should begin by improving the implementation capability of China and establishing a good coupling mechanism between schools and enterprises, persistently reforming the practice concept in China's general education mode.

In chapter three, [Tanaka \(2020\)](#) examined the growth and state of CWIE in Japan today. While tracing its historical origins, the chapter examined the social and economic forces that have shaped the development of CWIE in Japan. Thus, this chapter then reviewed the current status of CWIE, emphasizing major projects and programs carried out by Japanese universities and their collaborations with businesses. The chapter also noted the advantages and disadvantages of CWIE in Japan, including how to solve skills mismatches in the labor market and increase student employability. In order to improve the efficacy and accessibility of these instructional techniques, the chapter highlighted future concerns and possible solutions for improving CWIE in Japan, emphasizing the necessity of ongoing collaboration between academics, business, and government.

In chapter four, [Oh and Om \(2020\)](#) noted that the co-op model at Korea Tech is directly linked with its focus on the "education-at-work" mission for engineering students. Every student at Korea Tech was required to perform co-op for one year to graduate, so they had to participate in at least two school-and-industry co-op systems. Unlike school-based co-op internship systems in other nationally-funded universities in Korea, where graduation is entirely through the performance of a graduation project or performance at a designated partner company, schools using part of the academic index to calculate remaining semesters use co-op internship

systems. In other words, large-capacity enterprises, niche enterprises, and small and medium-sized enterprises belonging to region-based entrepreneurship centers are all divided into one type of work and three different types of work to manage the co-op system, each jointly supervised by one company Tech. Additionally, for the internship, shared administrators were selected from among students with volunteer experience, and the faculty were connected to each teaching institution and worked part-time. This chapter also aimed to analyze and evaluate the co-op at the Korea University of Technology and Education (Korea Tech) as a leading example of industry-university partnerships in Korea. As co-op was emerging as a key strategy for creating a skilled and experienced workforce, top universities in Korea were actively seeking to expand co-op programs. Korea Tech pursued co-op programs as part of its focus on education at work in its engineering curricula. Its cooperative education program was notable in that it offered multiple varieties of opportunities for internships based on the type or characteristic of work students perform, and each opportunity was supported by different stakeholders: company partnerships, the Korea Tech administration, student volunteers, and instructors.

In chapter five, [Tanaka and Lai \(2020\)](#) aimed to review the concepts and understandings of WIL as an international phenomenon and the development of WIL in Hong Kong. The regulatory environment in Hong Kong was described, and how vocational and professional education, as well as industry partnership under the WIL policy, differed from the current trend. The background and organizational framework of WIL for sub-degree (higher diploma) and degree (professional or vocational) education at the case study university, namely Hong Kong Polytechnic University, were used to illustrate the concepts and understandings represented in this chapter. A case was made for industry-university collaboration within the higher education system, where strategic commercial and academic knowledge creation should be aligned with the pragmatic needs of society and global communities.

In chapter six, [Nguyen et al. \(2020\)](#) provided an analysis of the composition and arrangement of Vietnam's educational system, stressing the many educational tiers and the functions of governmental bodies in regulating educational practices. The chapter examined the development of CWIE historically in Vietnam, outlining its beginnings and going over the opportunities and problems encountered throughout implementation. The chapter also examined the function of industry relationships, curriculum design, and student participation as they studied the present status of CWIE programs in Vietnamese universities and vocational schools. The chapter also addressed the possibility of CWIE's continued development and expansion in Vietnam, highlighting the significance of cooperation between government, business, and academia in order to meet the changing demands of the labor market and improve graduates' employability.

In chapter seven, [Srisa-an and Pramoolsook \(2020\)](#) discussed the development of co-op and WIL in Thailand and suggested ways in which the system might be further improved in order to benefit both students and industry in both the short and long term. The chapter also looked back at the establishment of co-op in the Thai higher education system and how its inherent structures were largely impacted by conditions prevailing at the time. It then examined the lessons learned, issues arising, and the pace at which students, industry, and educational institutions adapted during the course of its existence. The authors selected Thailand as a case for study and chose this country to provide insight into how co-op was being implemented in an Asian country outside the United States and the developed world. Having an English-speaking workforce was a challenging priority for Thailand, and WIL programs for university students were an essential means for achieving such a goal. The chapter suggested a

complementary initiative in science curriculum planning. Different results might be presented if the survey were done in a non-ASEAN developing country or a developed country, e.g. the United States.

In chapter eight, [Mahat et al. \(2020\)](#) noted that universities had a pivotal role in the 21st-century skills development agenda. Preparing future employees was a significant mission of higher learning institutions. Universities were under a lot of pressure to collaborate with their industry in order to produce work-ready and skill-ready graduates. Therefore, universities need to enhance their collaborations with industries. The chapter suggested that students be equipped with industrial knowledge and skills to form a competitive workforce. Universities needed to be aware of the latest tech requirements, and graduates equally needed to be cognizant of the different expectations of industries. The authors proposed that the Malaysian government should play the role of a policy driver to enhance the current collaboration programs managed by the Ministry of Education and also other related agencies. A longer-term strategic plan and streamlined quality control were necessary for the survival and excellence of the collaboration effort from both sectors.

In chapter nine, [Lee \(2020\)](#) noted that over the past thirty-five years, co-op and WIL had become firmly established ways of learning for university students in Singapore's higher education institutions. Over that period of time, Singapore emerged as a rapidly industrializing and developing country on the world stage, with a first-class education and training system. The rapid growth and scale of co-op and WIL in higher education and its developments were possible because of the close partnership and cooperation between employers and the public sector, including universities, polytechnics, and central and government agencies within the economic development division of the ministry. The chapter traced the development of higher education in Singapore and co-op, WIL in particular, through the example of the establishment and growth of a comprehensive co-op and WIL program at Nanyang Technological University. The Nantah example allowed an insight into how the operation and growth of such a program at one of the universities was effectively carried out from a systems perspective using a broad-based approach and involving a whole range of university amenities, company and business linkages, and on-campus communication services.

In chapter ten, [Zegwaard \(2020\)](#) noted the role of co-op in relation to current and future skills requirements in the Asian region. Based on the conclusions of the chapter and interviews with various stakeholders, four critical issues were identified if cooperative education was to be developed further in the region. Those were quality control, diversification, refocusing of strategies, and closer collaboration with industry. Enterprise-centered co-op, such as apprenticeship, day-release, and sandwich course attachments, had long been a work-based provision for knowledge and skills formation. Traditionally, it provided young people with a work-based alternative to school-based provision and enabled them to combine learning with the socialization process that took place in the worlds of work and home. With the globalization of the economy, the changing technologies, and increasingly complex and flexible production systems that require knowledge and more advanced and adaptable skills, the Asian business sector is demanding a highly skilled workforce. a workforce with higher skills.

3. Analysis and evaluation

3.1. Themes and style

The primary focus of this book is the evolution and relevance of CWIE in Asian education. The book covers a lot of aspects, including the role of public policy, the merits of collaboration between businesses and universities, and the pros and cons that both students and schools face. Thus, scholars, educators, and decision-makers are among the book's target audiences because of its professional but accessible style of writing.

3.4. Contributions

Every chapter offers insightful information on several CWIE aspects. For example, the chapter on the CWIE system in Japan provides a thorough examination of the ways in which cultural influences impact educational practices, while the chapter on Singapore looks at how CWIE is incorporated into the country's vocational education system. These case studies highlight both common problems and particular solutions found in many nations.

3.5. Cohesion and structure

The book has a consistent format even with its wide range of subjects and geographical emphasis. The chapters have been systematically ordered by the editors, starting with more general historical and theoretical debates and ending with focused case studies and practical issues. As the reader reads the book, this arrangement aids in the development of a thorough knowledge of CWIE in Asia.

4. Personal reflection

This book about CWIE in Asia is very interesting and educational, and we really liked reading it. The different points of view give a full picture of CWIE, and the in-depth research in each part adds new ideas even to people who already know a lot about the subject. That being said, some parts may have too many policy details for people who are not familiar with the subject.

5. Conclusion

The book provides great detail about how CWIE has grown, what it does now, and the problems it will face in the future in many Asian countries. Through thorough case studies and analyses, the book demonstrates how important it is for academia, business, and government to work together to improve educational results and job prospects. It makes the point that plans need to be flexible in order to keep up with the changing needs of the job market and give people useful information they can use. Educators at all levels can benefit greatly from this extensive book, as it provides both a comprehensive overview and specific examples of successful implementation of CWIE.

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Keywords

Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (CWIE): CWIE is a collaborative curriculum between higher education institutions and external organizations. Its purpose is to equip graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the job market and to advance their careers in the present and future.

Cooperative Education (co-op): Co-op is an educational program that combines classroom learning with practical, hands-on work before graduation. The co-op program allows students to alternate between academic study and full-time employment, enabling them to get practical experience in their chosen field of study.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL): WIL is an educational approach that combines a student's academic studies with practical experiences in a job or professional context. WIL experiences need the active collaboration of three key entities: an educational institution, a hosting organization, and a student. WIL may be implemented at either the course or program level. It involves the creation of student learning objectives and outcomes that focus on employability, agency, knowledge and skill mobility, and life-long learning.