

FROM SKILLS TO HUMANITY: THE PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING IN SRI LANKA

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Work-integrated learning (WIL) in Sri Lanka is a popular method for enhancing employability in universities and technical institutions. However, there is a lack of discussion on its philosophical implications. As a research problem mainly focus on “Can Work-Integrated Learning move beyond technical skills and incorporate aspects of human-centered, reflective, and ethical learning? The objective of this study is to examine the philosophical boundaries of WIL in Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on, its impact on students’ identities, values and personal growth. The methodology was followed qualitative research design, undertaking a literature review based on philosophical ethical theory and phenomenological approach. This research indicated that in Sri Lanka, work-integrated learning is majorly shaped by industry requirements, which often emphasize technical abilities over ethical and reflective aspects. This limited standpoint turns students into mere commodities of technological productivity rather than experienced individuals. The study also highlights how slight psychosocial support is available to students who must deal with the mental and physical strains of competitive job markets. The discrepancy between local cultural and philosophical viewpoints and universal notions of employability is another important finding that hinders students’ capacity to match their education with local values. When combined, these results suggest that WIL in Sri Lanka may hypothetically undermine the very traits of empathy, inspection, and ethical awareness that are essential to human growth. According to the research, Sri Lanka’s WIL should adopt an inclusive competency model that incorporates ethical principles, professional competencies, cultural sensitivity, and introspection. This would prepare graduates and all students in Sri Lanka for employment and foster critical thinkers and socially responsible individuals, thereby laying the foundation for responsible citizens.

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