

UFS Senate Conference 2024

Making Change Through Engaged Scholarship

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Work-integrated learning and engaged scholarship – Meetings of knowledge to create positive change

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UNIVERSITY WEST

Creating change together.





This is University West

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Swedens leading university within WIL. We are commissioned by the government to develop WIL. Intense cooperation both in education and research.

High number of applicants per place

Wide recruitment

Highest recruitment level in Sweden of students with a non-academic background

High level of employment after graduation

At top level in Sweden with 87 percent of the graduated students established in the labor market one year after exam.



Work-Integrated Learning – University West profile

- Cooperation and integration in focus since the beginning
- Since 2002 we are commissioned by the government to develop WIL
- The overall profile and value for learning, exchange of knowledge and development of knowledge permeates the University
- Starting point: knowledge is acquired everywhere in society
- Through WIL advanced knowledge is processed in interplay between academy and the surrounding society

*Creating
change
together*

Why talk about WIL and engaged scholarship together?

Engaged scholarship is described as a form of scholarship that involves collaborative and reciprocal partnerships between the university (faculty, staff, and/or students) and external communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources. Engaged scholarship is like a melting pot, a meeting of knowledge that creates added value. This has similarities with the meeting occurring in WIL, where the meeting of theoretical knowledge and practice, adds to knowledge.

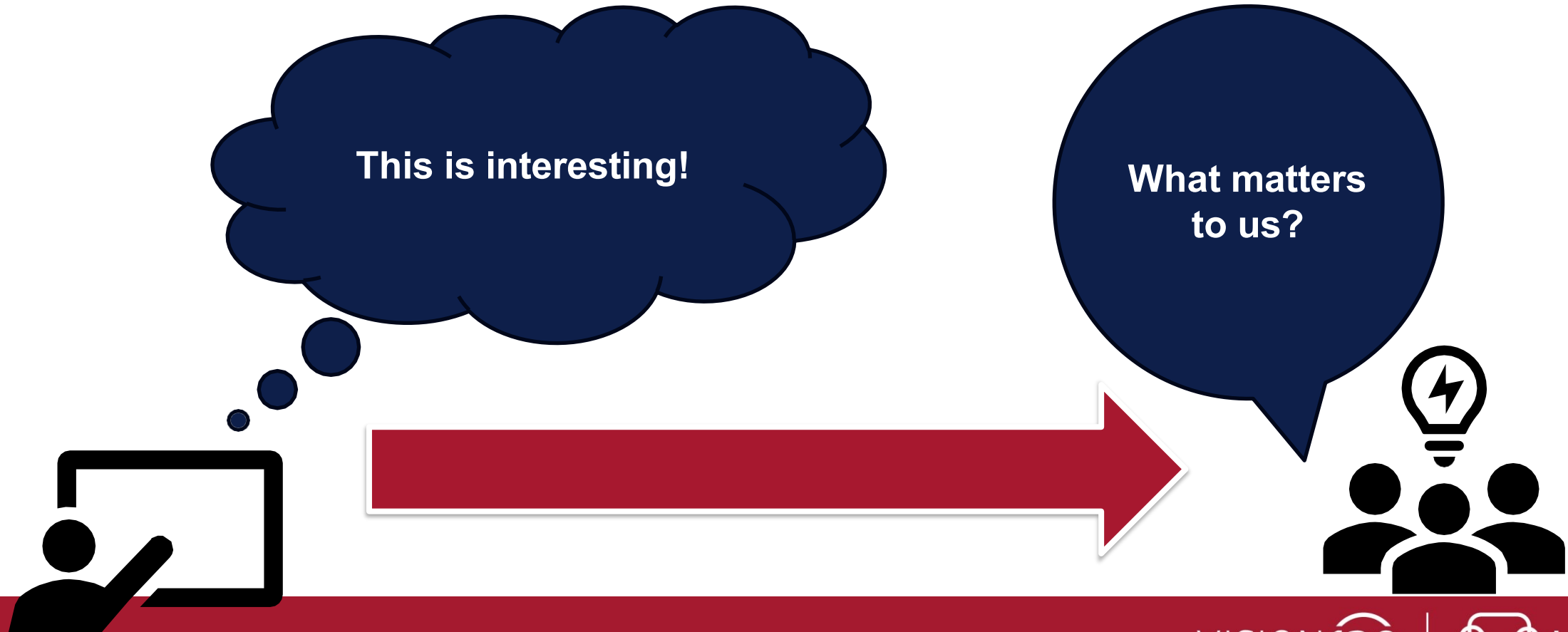
Both engaged scholarship and WIL engage in real world problems or even better in a solution focused action engaging people from various contexts to learn how to solve problems together.

This solution focused action can take place between individuals, but also be promoted by organisations, such as universities.

Why talk about WIL and engaged scholarship together?

Because there are so many wicked problems in the world, where learning together and from each other, is a key problem solver.

Shift of focus to learning together



Work-integrated Learning



Work-integrated learning (WIL) is an umbrella term for a range of approaches that integrate theory with the practice of work. It is in the meeting between academia, working life and the surrounding society that insights, solutions and mutual development are best created that can meet the challenges society faces.

At University West we define WIL according to three dimensions:
WIL as a philosophy, a pedagogical method and a research topic.

Work-integrated Learning

WIL as a philosophy

At University West, we see both theoretical and practical knowledge as equally important and mutually dependent on each other. We believe that advanced knowledge is created in many parts of society, not least when people practice their professions every day.

When the practical knowledge is integrated with theoretical, new knowledge and new learning is created. As an institution of higher learning, we are constantly looking for new ways to integrate these two forms of knowledge.

WIL is also the university's portal to cross-border collaboration and mutual knowledge exchange with the outside world, both in our research and in our education. Our collaboration uses WIL as a learning process where practical and academic knowledge is integrated and deepened through co-creation.

Work-integrated Learning

WIL as a pedagogical method

To be able to integrate practical and theoretical knowledge into our educations, working life is a natural part of our courses and programs. We want our students to gain a deeper understanding of their respective subjects and create their own insights and practical experience.

But at University West, students get something more than an education. Through WIL, students learn to estimate and reflect on their own learning. When students leave us, they are therefore well prepared for lifelong learning and lifelong development. These are important skills to bring to a working life and a world in constant change.

Work-integrated Learning

WIL as a research topic

Since 2020, WIL has been available as an interdisciplinary third-cycle subject area. It involves studies of the learning that takes place through the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge and experiences. These are taken from learning situations within academic studies as well as working life and civil society.

WIL demands engagement!

To enable WIL all involved need to actively engage:

University

Partnering workplaces

Teachers

Supervisors

Students

...but also managers and administrators!

WIL as a philosophy

Who decides when and why there is a need for a new course or course development? How is this done?

With WIL as a philosophy this is done together with practice, with society and with a partnership for fellow teaching and learning.

There is a shared engagement to create value of the course for society and the partnership continues during the course once it has started.



WIL as a pedagogical method

There are WIL elements in the course, formalized by the university, such as:

- Practice placements
- Lectures and workshop held by workplace representatives
- Project work at workplaces

but also decided by the students in their courses:

”...in this course I will do WIL by activities X and X...”



WIL as a research field

Applied research of the learning that takes place in the course through the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge and experiences.



WIL changes the researcher?

Research with practice, through practice demands co-production, negotiation, time, and changes in perspectives.

Co-production in research affects strategies for research communication and impact.

Working and learning together demands pragmatic thinking and reflections.

Poses new questions of who is the researcher and who is being researched.

Passion to solve real-world problems increases.

**Going from
looking out to
being and staying
engaged in the
world**

Being engaged and staying engaged

Can collide with other strategies and then who decides where to go next?

Research communication in high impact journals

Research funding demands

Research competition

Student recruitment

International collaboration

Political agendas

Career goals and importance of individual merits

...versus publishing in native language, working together in the local community, academic freedom....

Shift of focus to learning together is work in progress!

This is interesting!

What matters to us?

There are so many wicked problems in the world, where learning together and from each other, is a key problem solver.



THANK YOU!

Together we create change!

There are so many wicked problems in the world, where engaged scholarship and WIL can support learning and problem solving together.

