

Making 'Space' For Work-integrated Learning In Singapore: Recognising The Next Wave Of Talents Through Skillsfuture Movement

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Abstract : Work-integrated learning (WIL) has been heightened in the last few years across countries. With a specific attention on working adults, the key objective is to integrate work experiences with academic studies so that they will be given more opportunities to advance, gather relevant skills and credentials to enable them to contribute more positively to the labour market. In Singapore, developing talent through WIL aims to develop specialist and enduring skills for the industries. Collaborating with the institutes of higher education in Singapore, the Integrated Work Study Programs (IWSP) seek to harmonize classroom learning with practical work experiences so that adult students can develop skills and knowledge that are needed in the existing and future workplaces. Local higher education institutions will also work closely with industry partners, and design courses that support these students to deepen their skills. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, this paper examines the Singapore government policies in WIL and argues that despite the various supports and interventions provided by the government, it is equally important to create a 'space' in the society whereby there is a greater recognition for WIL as a valuable education approach, i.e., "continuous meritocracy". This is especially so in Singapore where academic excellence and conventional front-loaded approach to education are valued.

Keywords : work-integrated learning, adult learners, continuous meritocracy, skillsfuture singapore

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