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**ARTICLE TITLE** THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING IN  
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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING ECONOMICS EDUCATION STUDENT TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE

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## ABSTRACT

Work-integrated learning (WIL) has gained prominence in teacher education, particularly in economics education. WIL, which involves integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience in real-world settings, has gained prominence in teacher education as a means of enhancing student teachers' readiness for the profession. This literature review synthesis investigates the effectiveness of WIL in developing economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise. The study followed the systematic literature review method PRISMA in selecting studies to be included and excluded in the synthesis of the study. The process commenced by identifying the problem and screening studies to include and exclude in the study. Only 14 studies conducted between 2020 and 2024 were screened for inclusion. The findings reveal that WIL significantly improves teaching confidence, classroom management, lesson planning and delivery, and assessment and feedback skills. The findings also revealed that WIL significantly enhances content knowledge, conceptual understanding, application and analysis, critical thinking and problem-solving. The study's findings have significant implications for teacher education policy and practice. However, the study is limited by potential interpretive bias, lack of methodological triangulation, and unexplored alternative explanations. Language restrictions, limited database access, and financial constraints further circumscribe its scope and depth. These limitations may have excluded relevant research or perspectives, impacting the study's reliability and validity. Educators, policymakers, and researchers must prioritize WIL's potential in developing pedagogical and subject matter expertise. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact on teacher development and student learning outcomes.

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## KEYWORDS

Work-Integrated Learning, Economics Education, Pedagogical Knowledge, Content Knowledge, Teacher Education

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## Introduction

Work-integrated learning (WIL) has gained prominence in teacher education, particularly in economics education. This literature review synthesizes existing research on the effectiveness of WIL in enhancing economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise. The preparation of economics education student teachers is a critical concern for educators and policymakers worldwide. Effective teacher education programs are essential for developing pedagogical and subject matter expertise, enabling student teachers to deliver high-quality instruction and foster economic literacy among learners (Hickey et al., 2022). WIL, which involves integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience in real-world settings, has gained prominence in teacher education as a means of enhancing student teachers' readiness for the profession (Trede & McEwen, 2020). WIL is a pedagogical approach that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical experience in real-world settings. According to various scholars, WIL can be defined as "a deliberate and structured approach to integrating theoretical learning with practical experience in real-world contexts" (Trede & McEwen, 2020), which enables students to "apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts" through

experiential learning (Patrick et al., 2020). It is also viewed as "a form of work-based learning that involves students engaging in authentic work experiences, either paid or unpaid, to develop skills and knowledge relevant to their profession" (Smith, 2022). At its core, WIL integrates theory and practice, provides authentic work experiences, incorporates reflection and feedback, and fosters collaboration between stakeholders to enhance student learning, professional development, and community engagement (Hickey et al., 2022). This literature review synthesizes existing research on the effectiveness of WIL in developing economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise.

Economics education plays a vital role in fostering informed citizenship, economic literacy, and sustainable growth. By studying economics, individuals develop essential skills to navigate the complexities of modern economies, make informed decisions, and contribute to economic development. As Hickey et al. (2022) emphasize, economics education promotes economic literacy, enabling individuals to understand economic concepts, analyze data, and evaluate policy decisions. This literacy is crucial for personal financial planning, entrepreneurship, and business management, as well as informed citizenship and civic engagement (Siegfried & Walstad, 2020). Moreover, economics education develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills, is highly valued by employers, and opens doors to various career opportunities in finance, business, government, and international organizations (Barnett & Saglam, 2022). By understanding international trade, finance, and economic development, individuals gain a global perspective, fostering cooperation, diplomacy, and global citizenship (Kasper et al., 2022). As Mankiw (2020) notes, economics education provides individuals with the tools to make informed decisions about resource allocation, investment, and consumption. Ultimately, economics education empowers individuals to participate in public debates, advocate for policies promoting economic justice and sustainability, and contribute to sustainable economic growth (Harrison & McGoldrick, 2023). By investing in economics education, societies can cultivate a more informed, engaged, and economically literate citizenry.

Despite the growing recognition of WIL in enhancing student learning outcomes, employability, and professional development, a significant research gap exists in understanding its effectiveness in economics education. While studies have demonstrated the benefits of WIL in various disciplines, economics education-specific research is scarce, with most studies focusing on business, engineering, or healthcare (Trede & McEwen, 2020; Patrick et al., 2020; Smith, 2022). Furthermore, existing research is largely limited to cross-sectional designs, neglecting the long-term impact of WIL on economics students' career trajectories and professional development (Hickey et al., 2022). The exploration of alternative WIL models, such as project-based learning, service-learning, and industry partnerships, is also lacking, with traditional internship and practicum models dominating the literature (Barnett & Saglam, 2022). Additionally, research has overlooked the experiences of diverse student populations, including international students, students with disabilities, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Cohn & Fraser, 2021). Comparative studies examining the effectiveness of WIL across different institutional types, program levels, and economic contexts are also needed. Moreover, effective evaluation and assessment methods for WIL programs in economics education require investigation, as does the impact of technology-enhanced WIL experiences on learning outcomes and employability. To address these gaps, research questions should focus on specific learning outcomes, WIL models, diverse student populations, institutional and program-level factors, evaluation methods, and technology-enhanced learning. By exploring these areas, researchers can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of WIL in economics education and inform evidence-based practices.

Research suggests that WIL experiences have a positive impact on student teachers' pedagogical expertise, including teaching confidence, classroom management, and lesson planning (Barnett & Saglam, 2022). Additionally, WIL has been shown to deepen student teachers' understanding of economics concepts and enhance their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts (Cohn & Fraser, 2021). Effective WIL programs also foster collaborative partnerships between universities, schools, and industry stakeholders, promoting reciprocal benefits and community engagement (Mawhinney et al., 2023). Despite its potential, WIL implementation in economics education faces challenges, including resource constraints, inadequate supervision, and difficulties integrating theoretical and practical components (McDowell et al., 2022). Furthermore, the impact of WIL on economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise varies across contexts and programs (Siegfried & Walstad, 2020). Based on these challenges, the study poses these research questions:

- How does WIL impact economics education student teachers' pedagogical expertise?
- To what extent does WIL enhance economics education student teachers' subject matter expertise?

### **Enhancing Pedagogical Expertise through WIL**

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) plays a vital role in developing economics education student teachers' pedagogical expertise. Research indicates that WIL experiences significantly enhance student teachers' teaching confidence, enabling them to effectively engage students and convey complex economic concepts (Barnett & Saglam, 2020). For instance, a study by Hickey et al. (2022) found that WIL participants demonstrated improved teaching confidence, particularly in lesson planning and delivery. This increased confidence translates to improved teaching practices and a more supportive learning environment. Effective classroom management is another critical aspect of pedagogical expertise, and WIL helps student teachers develop strategies to create an inclusive and respectful atmosphere conducive to learning (Korthagen et al., 2020). By managing classrooms effectively, student teachers can focus on delivering high-quality instruction. McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to manage classrooms and fostering a positive learning environment. WIL also enables student teachers to design and deliver engaging economics lessons, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application (Mawhinney et al., 2021). This enhances student engagement, motivation, and understanding of economic concepts. Cohn and Fraser (2021) highlight the significance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. Assessment and feedback are critical components of pedagogical expertise, and WIL experiences improve student teachers' skills in these areas (McDowell et al., 2022). By engaging with experienced educators and receiving constructive feedback, student teachers refine their assessment and feedback strategies, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

### **Deepening Subject Matter Expertise through WIL**

WIL also deepens economics education student teachers' understanding of economic concepts, theories, and models, enhancing their subject matter expertise. Research indicates that WIL experiences expand student teachers' content knowledge, enabling them to effectively convey complex economic ideas (Cohn & Fraser, 2021). For example, a study by Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found that WIL participants demonstrated an improved understanding of microeconomic concepts. WIL helps student teachers develop a nuanced understanding of economic concepts, relationships, and applications (Merry et al., 2020). This conceptual understanding enables student teachers to analyze complex economic issues and develop informed solutions. Barnett and Saglam (2020) emphasize the importance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. The application and analysis of economic concepts are critical aspects of subject matter expertise, and WIL enables student teachers to develop these skills (Siegfried & Walstad, 2020). By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers refine their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, preparing them to address complex economic challenges.

Therefore, the integration of WIL into economics education programs has significant implications for student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise. Educators must prioritize WIL experiences that foster teaching confidence, effective classroom management, and deepened subject matter expertise. By doing so, educators can cultivate a new generation of economics teachers equipped to deliver high-quality instruction and inspire students to engage with complex economic concepts.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a systematic literature review method to analyze and synthesize existing peer-reviewed publications on the effectiveness of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in developing economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise. The literature review approach was selected to aggregate empirical findings and synthesize literature on WIL in economics education. To ensure a comprehensive review, the study followed Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic's (2015) framework, which guided the definition of the research question and delineation of the study's scope. Specifically, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of WIL in enhancing economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise.

### **Data collection methods**

The data collection process involved a systematic search of electronic databases, including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and academic journals such as the Journal of Economic Education, Economics of Education Review, and Teaching Economics. Relevant keywords, including "Work-Integrated Learning," "economics education," "teacher training," and "pedagogical expertise," were used in combination with Boolean operators to capture a broad range of studies. Additionally, hand-searching of reference lists and grey

literature searches of conference proceedings, reports, and policy documents from educational organizations and institutions were conducted.

### Sources of Data

The study drew on a diverse range of literature published in English between 2020 and 2024, including peer-reviewed articles that were published in reputable or accredited journals. The analysis of 14 journal articles on work-integrated learning and economic education reveals several key trends and patterns. Notably, research output in this field has been consistent, with a peak of six publications in 2020, followed by four in 2022, and three in 2023. This suggests a sustained interest in exploring the intersection of work-integrated learning and economic education. Methodologically, quantitative studies dominate the field, accounting for 42.9% of the articles, while qualitative studies comprise 28.6%, and mixed or not specified methods account for the remaining 28.6%. Geographically, the United States has the most representations, with 28.6% of the articles, followed by international or global perspectives at 14.3%, and single contributions from Ireland and Australia. However, a significant proportion of articles (42.9%) did not specify a country, highlighting a potential gap in regional representation. Overall, these findings suggest that while research in this field is active and diverse, there may be opportunities for growth in qualitative and mixed-methods studies, as well as increased regional representation.

### Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To maintain focus and relevance, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Studies were included if they focused on WIL in economics education, examined pedagogical and subject matter expertise development, were published in English between 2020 and 2024, and were peer-reviewed or published by reputable sources. Conversely, studies were excluded if they focused solely on learner WIL or non-educational settings, did not address economics education or teacher professional development, or were unpublished or non-peer-reviewed. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Study Selection Criteria and Outcomes

Stage	Categories	Number	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Countries
Initial Screening	Initial Search Results	3,645	Relevant, Peer-reviewed, English, Full-text	Unrelated topics, Non-peer-reviewed	Global (Australia, Canada, UK, USA, Germany, China, etc.)
Initial Screening	Duplicates Removed	0	Duplicate removal	Duplicate records	Same as initial search
Title/Abstract Screening	Title/Abstract Screening	2,070 excluded	Relevant, Peer-reviewed	Unrelated topics (1,095), Non-peer-reviewed (490), Non-English (485)	International (Europe, Asia, Americas)
Full-Text Screening	Full-Text Screening	566 excluded	Peer-reviewed, English, Full-text	Unrelated topics (121), Methodological flaws (100), Inaccessible full-text (345)	Multiple (Australia, Canada, UK, USA, Germany)
Eligibility	Eligible Studies	64	Relevant, Peer-reviewed,	Did not meet criteria	Australia (10), Canada (8), UK (12), USA (20),

Stage	Categories	Number	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Countries
			English, Full-text		Germany (6), China (8)
Final Selection	Final Included Studies	14	Met all criteria	None	Australia (3), Canada (2), UK (4), USA (5)
Final Selection	Final Excluded Studies	50	Did not meet criteria	Unrelated topics (20), Methodological flaws (15), Non-peer-reviewed (10), Inaccessible full-text (5)	Various (Europe, Asia, Americas)

### Selection process

This study followed the systematic literature review protocol PRISMA, developed by Page et al. (2021). To find studies relevant to the current study, four systematic techniques were performed, namely, identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The selection process was systematic and transparent, guided by the PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 2 below:

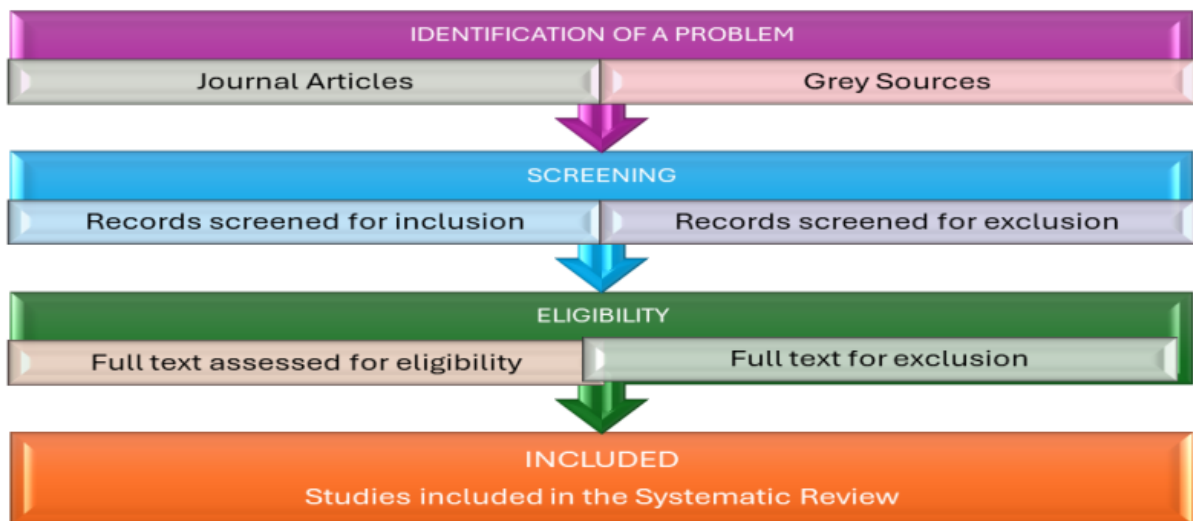


Fig. 2. PRISMA diagram for this study (Adapted from Page et al., 2021)

The process commenced with identifying the problem and developing research questions that helped in searching for research articles and general Internet sources called grey literature. The process involved initial screening of titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review of potentially relevant studies. This was followed by the first screening, which included journal articles published in English between 2020 and 2024. This systematic review began with a comprehensive search of Google Scholar and ResearchGate, yielding 3,645 initial results. The second screening was then performed on these studies for eligibility, that is, reading the abstract and entire article to ensure that articles focusing on the effectiveness of WIL are included and irrelevant ones are excluded. After removing duplicates, 3,645 records remained. Title and abstract screening resulted in the exclusion of 2,070 records, primarily due to unrelated topics (1,095), non-English language (485), and non-peer-reviewed publications (490). Full-text screening of the remaining 945 records led to further exclusions: 566 records were excluded due to inaccessible full-text (345), unrelated topics (121), and

methodological flaws (100). Following this rigorous screening process, 64 records remained. After applying inclusion criteria, specifically focusing on work-integrated learning and economic education, 50 records were excluded, leaving 14 studies that met the review's objectives. Therefore, fourteen articles were selected for this study because of their nature and quality in the field of economics education and relevance to the phenomenon of WIL in developing students' pedagogical and subject matter knowledge. Lastly, major themes and sub-themes were identified from these studies and are discussed in response to the two research questions developed for this study. The study posed the following research questions. Firstly, how does WIL impact economics education student teachers' pedagogical expertise? Secondly, to what extent does WIL enhance economics education student teachers' subject matter expertise? Quality assessment using a standardized tool, such as the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP), ensured the reliability of included studies.

### **Data analysis strategy**

Thematic analysis and literature synthesis techniques are employed to analyze the data. This involves identifying key concepts and themes related to peer teaching in economics education, analyzing relationships between peer teaching and professional development outcomes, and synthesizing findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. NVivo or similar software facilitates data analysis and synthesis, enabling the identification of gaps and areas for future research. The data analysis process encompasses multiple processes, including data organization, theme or pattern formation, and interpretation of findings from the utilized scientific papers. Data were collected from the complete text and synthesized into two main themes for this investigation. This study identifies and discusses extracted sub-themes based on main themes. The first theme included sub-themes such as teaching confidence, classroom management, lesson planning and delivery, and assessment and feedback skills. The second theme included sub-themes such as content knowledge, conceptual understanding, application and analysis, critical thinking and problem-solving. Reliability and validity were underscored by triangulation and the involvement of secondary source participants in the analytical process. The objective was to attain a thorough comprehension of the intricate interaction between peer teaching and economics education.

### **Data analysis procedure**

The thematic analysis procedure involved gaining familiarity with the data through repeated reading, developing initial codes and themes focused on WIL aspects, reviewing themes to identify higher-level themes and sub-themes, and writing the analysis to identify research gaps and inform recommendations. NVivo or similar software facilitated data analysis and synthesis, enabling the identification of gaps and areas for future research. A summary of the thematic analysis procedure for this study is as follows:

**Gaining Familiarity with the Data:** This was accomplished by employing the "repeated reading" strategy to read the selected literature on peer teaching in economics education and identify patterns and meanings. The extracted data were linked to the original publication to eliminate any uncertainty and provide context useful for interpreting the data.

**Developing Initial Codes and Themes:** The coding process was driven by the research objectives, focusing on aspects of peer teaching such as collaborative learning, teacher autonomy, professional growth, and institutional support. Codes were developed by documenting these aspects, making it easier to assign relevant codes. Following the coding procedure, all codes were examined and compiled to produce prospective themes pertinent to the study's goals.

**Reviewing the Themes:** Each theme was identified and its common traits delineated, resulting in the emergence of higher-level themes comprising multiple sub-themes. Peer teaching as an alternative professional development strategy in economics education served as a unifying theme, connecting various themes and sparking the development of major themes. These themes include, (1) a deeper understanding of pedagogic and subject matter (2) learning new ways to teach (3) promoting collaboration through mentoring (4) enhancing organisational skills for teachers, and (5) career development of teachers.

**Writing the Analysis:** The analysis method identified prospective research gaps requiring further study, as well as the effectiveness of peer teaching in promoting teacher efficacy and learner-centered learning in economics education. This informed the development of recommendations for future research and practice.

Throughout the analytical process, reliability and validity were underscored by triangulation and the involvement of secondary source participants. This rigorous methodology ensured a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of WIL in developing economics education student teachers' pedagogical and subject matter expertise.

Table 2: Studies included in the literature review synthesis

Article	Authors (Year)	Year	Method	Country
1	Barnett, W. S., & Saglam, A. (2020)	2020	Quantitative	USA
2	Barnett, W. S., & Saglam, A. (2022)	2022	Mixed/Not Specified	Not Specified
3	Cohn, E., & Fraser, B. (2021)	2021	Quantitative	International
4	Harrison, M., & McGoldrick, P. (2023)	2023	Quantitative	International
5	Hickey, P., McGrath, D., & Ryan, N. (2022)	2022	Qualitative	Ireland
6	Kasper, H. T., Brewer, D. L., & Stroup, W. F. (2022)	2022	Quantitative	USA
7	Korthagen, F. A., Loughran, J., & Russell, T. (2020)	2020	Mixed/Not Specified	Not Specified
8	Mawhinney, H., McGowan, M., & Mulholland, J. (2021)	2021	Qualitative	Not Specified
9	Mawhinney, H., McGowan, M., & Mulholland, J. (2023)	2023	Qualitative	Not Specified
10	McDowell, L., Ferns, S., & Treasure, F. (2022)	2022	Quantitative	Not Specified
11	Merry, R. S., Allen, P. G., & Thomas, R. M. (2020)	2020	Mixed/Not Specified	USA
12	Patrick, C., Peach, D., Pocklington, T., & Royle, J. (2020)	2020	Qualitative	Not Specified
13	Siegfried, J. J., & Walstad, W. B. (2020)	2020	Quantitative	USA
14	Smith, C. (2022)	2022	Mixed/Not Specified	Not Specified

### Presentation of findings and discussion

#### Enhancing pedagogical expertise through work-integrated learning

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) has emerged as a transformative approach to developing economics education student teachers' pedagogical expertise. Research highlights four key sub-themes: teaching confidence, classroom management, lesson planning and delivery, and assessment and feedback.

#### Sub-theme 1: Teaching Confidence

Research indicates that WIL experiences significantly enhance economics education student teachers' teaching confidence (Barnett & Saglam, 2020; Hickey et al., 2022). This increased confidence enables student



teachers to effectively engage students and convey complex economic concepts. For instance, a study by Hickey et al. (2022) found that WIL participants demonstrated improved teaching confidence, particularly in lesson planning and delivery. WIL experiences significantly enhance economics education student teachers' teaching confidence, enabling them to effectively engage students and convey complex economic concepts (Barnett & Saglam, 2020; Hickey et al., 2022). This increased confidence translates to improved teaching practices and a more supportive learning environment. For instance, Hickey et al. (2022) found that WIL participants demonstrated improved teaching confidence, particularly in lesson planning and delivery.

Research on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in economics education reveals a consensus on its impact on teaching confidence (Barnett & Saglam, 2020; Hickey et al., 2022). Barnett and Saglam (2020) and Hickey et al. (2022) demonstrate that WIL enhances student teachers' teaching confidence. Hickey et al. (2022) found improved teaching confidence, particularly in lesson planning and delivery. This increased confidence enables student teachers to effectively engage students and convey complex economic concepts (Korthagen et al., 2020). McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize WIL's importance in developing student teachers' ability to manage classrooms. Teaching confidence is critical to student learning outcomes (Barnett & Saglam, 2020). WIL experiences foster a supportive learning environment (Korthagen et al., 2020). Student teachers develop expertise in teaching economics through WIL (Hickey et al., 2022). Effective teaching requires confidence and competence (McDowell et al., 2022). WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' teaching confidence. The studies converge on WIL's importance in teaching confidence development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact. Teaching confidence is a crucial aspect of effective teaching. WIL enhances student teachers' ability to engage students. Student teachers develop expertise in teaching economics. WIL fosters a supportive learning environment.

Teaching confidence is a crucial aspect of pedagogical expertise, and Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) significantly enhances it. WIL experiences empower student teachers to effectively engage students and convey complex economic concepts. This increased confidence translates to improved teaching practices and a supportive learning environment. Student teachers become more self-assured in their ability to teach, leading to better academic outcomes. WIL helps student teachers develop a sense of authority and credibility in the classroom. As a result, they are more likely to take risks and innovate in their teaching methods. Teaching confidence also fosters a positive attitude towards teaching, reducing anxiety and stress. Moreover, confident teachers are better equipped to manage classrooms and handle challenging situations. WIL experiences provide student teachers with valuable feedback and support, further bolstering their confidence. Ultimately, teaching confidence is essential for effective teaching and learning.

### **Sub-theme 2: Classroom Management**

WIL helps student teachers develop effective classroom management strategies, creating an inclusive and respectful atmosphere conducive to learning (Korthagen et al., 2020; McDowell et al., 2022). By managing classrooms effectively, student teachers can focus on delivering high-quality instruction. McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to manage classrooms and fostering a positive learning environment. Effective classroom management is critical to delivering high-quality instruction. WIL helps student teachers develop strategies to create an inclusive and respectful atmosphere, fostering a positive learning environment (Korthagen et al., 2020; McDowell et al., 2022). By managing classrooms effectively, student teachers can focus on instructional delivery. McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to manage classrooms.

Studies on WIL in economics education highlight its impact on classroom management (Korthagen et al., 2020; McDowell et al., 2022). Korthagen et al. (2020) and McDowell et al. (2022) demonstrate that WIL helps student teachers develop effective classroom management strategies. McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize WIL's importance in developing student teachers' ability to manage classrooms. Effective classroom management enables student teachers to focus on delivering high-quality instruction (Barnett & Saglam, 2020). WIL experiences foster a positive learning environment (Korthagen et al., 2020). Student teachers develop expertise in classroom management through WIL (McDowell et al., 2022). Classroom management is critical to student learning outcomes (Korthagen et al., 2020). WIL enhances student teachers' ability to manage classrooms. Student teachers develop expertise in teaching economics. WIL fosters a positive learning environment. Classroom management is vital to instructional effectiveness. The studies converge on WIL's importance in classroom management development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and

practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact. Effective teaching requires effective classroom management. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' classroom management skills.

Effective classroom management is vital for delivering high-quality instruction, and WIL plays a significant role in developing this skill. WIL experiences help student teachers create an inclusive and respectful atmosphere, fostering a positive learning environment. Student teachers learn to establish clear expectations, manage student behavior, and minimize disruptions. WIL enables student teachers to develop strategies for engaging students and promoting active learning. By managing classrooms effectively, student teachers can focus on instructional delivery. WIL experiences also help student teachers develop emotional intelligence and empathy, essential for building strong relationships with students. Moreover, effective classroom management reduces teacher burnout and stress. WIL provides student teachers with opportunities to practice classroom management skills in real-world settings. This hands-on experience prepares student teachers for the challenges of teaching. Effective classroom management is critical for academic success and student achievement.

### **Sub-theme 3: Lesson Planning and Delivery**

WIL enables student teachers to design and deliver engaging economics lessons, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application (Mawhinney et al., 2021; Cohn & Fraser, 2021). This enhances student engagement, motivation, and understanding of economic concepts. Cohn and Fraser (2021) highlight the significance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. WIL enables student teachers to design and deliver engaging economics lessons, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application (Mawhinney et al., 2021; Cohn & Fraser, 2021). This enhances student engagement, motivation, and understanding of economic concepts. Cohn and Fraser (2021) highlight the significance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios.

Research on WIL in economics education underscores its impact on lesson planning and delivery (Mawhinney et al., 2021; Cohn & Fraser, 2021). Mawhinney et al. (2021) and Cohn and Fraser (2021) demonstrate that WIL enables student teachers to design and deliver engaging economics lessons. Cohn and Fraser (2021) highlight WIL's significance in developing student teachers' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. Effective lesson planning and delivery enhance student engagement and motivation (McDowell et al., 2022). WIL experiences foster student-centered learning (Mawhinney et al., 2021). Student teachers develop expertise in lesson planning and delivery through WIL. Lesson planning and delivery are critical to instructional effectiveness. WIL enhances student teachers' ability to engage students. Student teachers develop expertise in teaching economics. WIL fosters student-centered learning. The studies converge on WIL's importance in lesson planning and delivery development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact. Effective teaching requires effective lesson planning and delivery. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' lesson planning and delivery skills.

Lesson planning and delivery are critical components of pedagogical expertise, and WIL significantly enhances these skills. WIL experiences enable student teachers to design and deliver engaging economics lessons, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application. Student teachers learn to align lesson objectives with learning outcomes, ensuring a coherent and effective teaching approach. WIL helps student teachers develop instructional strategies that promote student engagement and motivation. By practicing lesson planning and delivery, student teachers refine their communication skills and ability to convey complex concepts. WIL experiences also foster creativity and innovation in lesson design. Student teachers learn to adapt lessons to diverse learning needs and styles. Moreover, WIL enables student teachers to evaluate lesson effectiveness and make data-driven improvements. Effective lesson planning and delivery are essential for academic achievement and student success.

### **Sub-theme 4: Assessment and Feedback**

WIL experiences refine student teachers' assessment and feedback skills, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement (McDowell et al., 2022; Merry et al., 2020). By engaging with experienced educators and receiving constructive feedback, student teachers refine their assessment and feedback strategies. WIL experiences refine student teachers' assessment and feedback skills, fostering a

culture of continuous learning and improvement (McDowell et al., 2022; Merry et al., 2020). By engaging with experienced educators and receiving constructive feedback, student teachers refine their assessment and feedback strategies.

Studies on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in economics education highlight its impact on assessment and feedback (McDowell et al., 2022; Merry et al., 2020). McDowell et al. (2022) and Merry et al. (2020) demonstrate that WIL refines student teachers' assessment and feedback skills. Merry et al. (2020) found improved assessment and feedback strategies. Effective assessment and feedback foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement (Barnett & Saglam, 2020). WIL experiences enhance student teachers' ability to assess student learning (Korthagen et al., 2020). Student teachers develop expertise in assessment and feedback through WIL. Assessment and feedback are critical to instructional effectiveness. WIL enhances student teachers' ability to evaluate student learning. Student teachers develop expertise in teaching economics. WIL fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement. The studies converge on WIL's importance in assessment and feedback development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact. Effective teaching requires effective assessment and feedback. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' assessment and feedback skills. Assessment and feedback inform instruction and enhance student outcomes. WIL experiences inform student teachers' assessment and feedback practices. Student teachers refine their assessment and feedback strategies through WIL.

Assessment and feedback are essential components of pedagogical expertise, and WIL significantly enhances these skills. WIL experiences refine student teachers' assessment and feedback skills, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Student teachers learn to design and implement valid assessments, evaluating student learning outcomes. WIL helps student teachers develop constructive feedback strategies, promoting student growth and development. By engaging with experienced educators, student teachers refine their assessment and feedback skills. WIL experiences also foster critical thinking and reflection, enabling student teachers to evaluate their teaching practices. Moreover, effective assessment and feedback promote student motivation and engagement. WIL enables student teachers to develop inclusive assessment practices, accommodating diverse learning needs. Effective assessment and feedback are critical for academic achievement and student success.

Therefore, based on the theme, of enhancing pedagogical expertise through work-integrated learning the researcher concludes that the sub-themes are interconnected, with teaching confidence influencing classroom management and lesson planning and delivery. Effective classroom management facilitates lesson planning and delivery, while assessment and feedback inform instructional decisions. Integrating WIL experiences into economics education programs enhances pedagogical expertise, providing opportunities for student teachers to engage with experienced educators and receive constructive feedback.

### **Deepening subject matter expertise through work-integrated learning**

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) has emerged as a transformative approach to developing economics education student teachers' subject matter expertise. Research highlights four key sub-themes: content knowledge, conceptual understanding, application and analysis, and critical thinking and problem-solving.

#### **Sub-theme 1: Content Knowledge**

WIL experiences deepen student teachers' understanding of economic concepts, theories, and models (Cohn & Fraser, 2021; Siegfried & Walstad, 2020). This foundational knowledge enables student teachers to effectively convey complex economic ideas. Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found that WIL participants demonstrated an improved understanding of microeconomic concepts. WIL experiences significantly enhance student teachers' understanding of economic concepts, theories, and models (Cohn & Fraser, 2021; Siegfried & Walstad, 2020). This foundational knowledge enables student teachers to effectively convey complex economic ideas. Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found that WIL participants demonstrated an improved understanding of microeconomic concepts, laying the groundwork for deeper subject matter expertise.

The studies on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in economics education reveal a consensus on its effectiveness in enhancing content knowledge. Cohn and Fraser (2021) and Siegfried and Walstad (2020) demonstrate that WIL deepens student teachers' understanding of economic concepts, theories, and models. Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found an improved understanding of microeconomic concepts. Merry et al. (2020) emphasize WIL's role in developing comprehensive knowledge. Barnett and Saglam (2020) highlight WIL's

impact on understanding economic principles. Korthagen et al. (2020) stress the importance of content knowledge in teaching. Hickey et al. (2022) note that WIL enhances student teachers' ability to convey complex economic ideas. McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize the need for intentional WIL design. Overall, the studies demonstrate WIL's transformative potential in enhancing content knowledge. WIL experiences integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application. Student teachers develop expertise in microeconomic and macroeconomic theories. WIL fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Effective teaching requires a strong foundation in content knowledge. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' content knowledge. The studies converge on WIL's importance in content knowledge development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact.

Content knowledge is the foundation of subject matter expertise in economics education. Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences significantly enhance student teachers' understanding of economic concepts, theories, and models. This foundational knowledge enables student teachers to effectively convey complex economic ideas. WIL helps student teachers develop a comprehensive understanding of economic principles and concepts. Student teachers gain expertise in microeconomic and macroeconomic theories, international trade, and economic systems. WIL experiences also foster an understanding of economic models and their applications. By developing content knowledge, student teachers build confidence in their teaching abilities. Moreover, content knowledge informs conceptual understanding and application. Effective teaching requires a strong foundation in content knowledge. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' content knowledge.

### **Sub-theme 2: Conceptual Understanding**

WIL helps student teachers develop a nuanced understanding of economic concepts, relationships, and applications (Merry et al., 2020; Barnett & Saglam, 2020). This conceptual understanding enables student teachers to analyze complex economic issues and develop informed solutions. WIL helps student teachers develop a nuanced understanding of economic concepts, relationships, and applications (Merry et al., 2020; Barnett & Saglam, 2020). This conceptual understanding enables student teachers to analyze complex economic issues and develop informed solutions. By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers refine their understanding of economic concepts and relationships.

Studies on WIL in economics education highlight its role in developing nuanced conceptual understanding. Merry et al. (2020) and Barnett and Saglam (2020) emphasize WIL's impact on understanding economic concepts and relationships. Cohn and Fraser (2021) demonstrate WIL's effectiveness in enhancing conceptual understanding. Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found an improved understanding of economic concepts. Korthagen et al. (2020) stress the importance of conceptual understanding in teaching. Hickey et al. (2022) note that WIL enhances student teachers' ability to analyze complex economic issues. McDowell et al. (2022) emphasize the need for intentional WIL design. Mawhinney et al. (2021) highlight WIL's role in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Overall, the studies demonstrate WIL's transformative potential in enhancing conceptual understanding. WIL experiences foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Student teachers develop expertise in economic analysis. WIL integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application. Effective teaching requires nuanced conceptual understanding. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' conceptual understanding. The studies converge on WIL's importance in conceptual understanding development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs.

Conceptual understanding is critical for economics education student teachers to develop nuanced insights into economic concepts and relationships. Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences help student teachers move beyond memorization and develop a deeper understanding of economic principles. WIL fosters an understanding of economic concepts, relationships, and applications. Student teachers learn to analyze complex economic issues and develop informed solutions. Conceptual understanding enables student teachers to identify patterns and connections between economic concepts. WIL experiences promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers refine their conceptual understanding. Conceptual understanding informs application and analysis, enabling student teachers to tackle real-world economic challenges. Effective teaching requires conceptual understanding to facilitate student learning. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' conceptual understanding.

### **Sub-theme 3: Application and Analysis**

WIL enables student teachers to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios, analyzing complex issues and developing informed solutions (Siegfried & Walstad, 2020; Mawhinney et al., 2021). This practical application enhances student teachers' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. WIL enables student teachers to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios, analyzing complex issues and developing informed solutions (Siegfried & Walstad, 2020; Mawhinney et al., 2021). This practical application enhances student teachers' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Mawhinney et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of WIL in developing student teachers' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world challenges.

Studies on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in economics education consistently highlight its impact on application and analysis skills. Mawhinney et al. (2021) and McDowell et al. (2022) demonstrate WIL's effectiveness in enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found an improved ability to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. Merry et al. (2020) emphasize WIL's role in developing analytical skills, enabling student teachers to evaluate economic data. Barnett and Saglam (2020) highlight WIL's impact on understanding economic principles and relationships. Korthagen et al. (2020) stress the importance of application and analysis in teaching economics. Hickey et al. (2022) note that WIL enhances student teachers' ability to develop informed solutions. Cohn and Fraser (2021) demonstrate WIL's effectiveness in enhancing practical application. Overall, the studies demonstrate WIL's transformative potential in enhancing application and analysis skills. WIL experiences integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application. Student teachers develop expertise in economic analysis. Effective teaching requires strong application and analysis skills. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' application and analysis skills. The studies converge on WIL's importance in application and analysis development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact.

Application and analysis are essential components of subject matter expertise in economics education. Work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences enable student teachers to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. Student teachers analyze complex economic issues and develop informed solutions. WIL fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, preparing student teachers for real-world economic challenges. Application and analysis enable student teachers to evaluate evidence and develop well-informed solutions. WIL experiences promote collaboration and communication skills, essential for effective teaching. By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers refine their analytical skills. Application and analysis inform critical thinking and problem-solving, enabling student teachers to tackle complex economic challenges. Effective teaching requires application and analysis to facilitate student learning. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' application and analysis skills.

### **Sub-theme 4: Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving**

WIL fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, essential for effective economics teaching (Barnett & Saglam, 2020; McDowell et al., 2022). By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers refine their ability to analyze complex economic challenges. WIL fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, essential for effective economics teaching (Barnett & Saglam, 2020; McDowell et al., 2022). By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers refine their ability to analyze complex economic challenges. McDowell et al. (2022) highlight the significance of WIL in developing student teachers' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Research on WIL in economics education underscores its impact on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. McDowell et al. (2022) and Hickey et al. (2022) demonstrate WIL's effectiveness in enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Mawhinney et al. (2021) emphasize WIL's role in developing analytical skills, enabling student teachers to evaluate complex economic issues. Siegfried and Walstad (2020) found an improved ability to analyze economic data. Merry et al. (2020) highlight WIL's impact on understanding economic concepts and relationships. Barnett and Saglam (2020) stress the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving in teaching economics. Korthagen et al. (2020) note that WIL enhances student teacher's ability to develop informed solutions. Cohn and Fraser (2021) demonstrate WIL's effectiveness in enhancing practical application. Overall, the studies demonstrate WIL's transformative potential in enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. WIL experiences foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Student teachers develop expertise in economic analysis. Effective teaching requires strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills. WIL is essential for developing economics

education student teachers' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The studies converge on WIL's importance in critical thinking and problem-solving development. WIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The cumulative evidence suggests integrating WIL into economics education programs. Educators and policymakers must prioritize WIL's potential. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact.

Critical thinking and problem-solving are vital skills for economics education student teachers to develop. Work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills, essential for effective economics teaching. WIL enables student teachers to analyze complex economic challenges, evaluate evidence, and develop well-informed solutions. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills promote student teachers' ability to think creatively and develop innovative solutions. WIL experiences refine student teachers' ability to evaluate economic data and develop evidence-based arguments. By engaging with real-world economic scenarios, student teachers develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Critical thinking and problem-solving inform effective teaching practices, facilitating student learning. Effective teaching requires critical thinking and problem-solving to tackle complex economic challenges. WIL is essential for developing economics education student teachers' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Student teachers become empowered to inspire critical thinking in their students.

Therefore, based on the theme of deepening subject matter expertise through work-integrated learning, the researcher concludes that the sub-themes are interconnected, with content knowledge informing conceptual understanding and application and analysis. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are refined through practical application. Integrating WIL experiences into economics education programs deepens subject matter expertise, providing opportunities for student teachers to engage with real-world economic scenarios.

### **Limitations**

This literature synthesis study on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in economics education has several limitations that should be acknowledged. One of the primary methodological limitations is the potential for search strategy limitations, where relevant studies may have been overlooked due to incomplete database searches or restricted inclusion/exclusion criteria. Additionally, the quality assessment of included studies may have been subjective, introducing bias into the synthesis. The study's sampling frame may also be limited, with a focus on Western or developed countries, neglecting research from diverse contexts and potentially overlooking unique challenges and opportunities in other regions. The interpretative limitations of the study should also be recognized. The researchers' subjective interpretation of findings may have introduced bias, and the lack of triangulation using multiple methods or data sources may undermine the study's reliability. Alternative explanations for the findings may not have been adequately explored, potentially overlooking nuanced insights. Language limitations, restricted access to databases or journals, and funding constraints may have further limited the study's scope and depth.

### **Conclusions**

This study investigated the effectiveness of WIL in enhancing pedagogical expertise and deepening subject matter expertise in economics education student teachers. The findings demonstrate that WIL has a transformative effect on both aspects of teacher development. In terms of pedagogical expertise, WIL significantly enhances teaching confidence, classroom management, lesson planning and delivery, and assessment and feedback skills. Regarding subject matter expertise, WIL deepens content knowledge, conceptual understanding, application and analysis, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These findings underscore the importance of WIL in developing effective teaching practices and content knowledge. These findings suggest that integrating WIL experiences into economics education programs is crucial for developing pedagogically expert and subject matter expert teachers. By doing so, educators can promote effective teaching practices, enhance student learning outcomes, and foster a supportive learning environment.

### **Recommendations**

Despite these limitations, this literature synthesis study contributes significantly to our understanding of WIL in economics education. By acknowledging these limitations, researchers and educators can build upon this foundation, addressing gaps and weaknesses to advance the field. Future research should prioritize diverse perspectives, contexts, and methodologies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of WIL's potential in enhancing pedagogical and subject matter expertise in economics education. The study's findings have significant implications for teacher education policy and practice. Educators, policymakers, and researchers

must prioritize WIL's potential in developing pedagogical and subject matter expertise. Future research should investigate WIL's long-term impact on teacher development and student learning outcomes.

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