

THE IMPACT OF WORK PLACEMENTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS IN ENGINEERING

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Abstract: Work placements and transferable skills are important and a contentious issue in engineering, there is a vast literature on both of these topics. What seems to be missing from both sets of literature are studies which explore the effects of work placements on the transferable skills of engineering students, hence this research on the impact of work placements on the development of transferable skills in engineering.

Research Questions

1. The impact of work placements on the development of transferable skills in engineering.
2. What are the other alternatives methods/ways of helping the students who are not involved in work placements to acquire the same skills as those who did placement?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of work placements to the students in terms of their academic performances?
4. How does the duration, and frequency, of the placements influence the acquisition of transferable skills?

Research Methods



Initial Findings - Students

- **The perceived value of work placements**
 - A degree course which includes a work placement is more effective for development of transferable skills than a degree course without?
88.8% Agree, 8.4% Disagree, 2.8% Didn't Respond
 - Over 90% of the students thought that work placements would have an impact upon transferable skills, but they had less confidence that work placements would assist them to obtain better degrees
- **Why students go on placements?**
 - Work experience
 - To improve their chances of getting a job when they finish university
 - To give them an idea of what industry is really like
- In general, they valued and considered work placements would have an impact upon their transferable skills

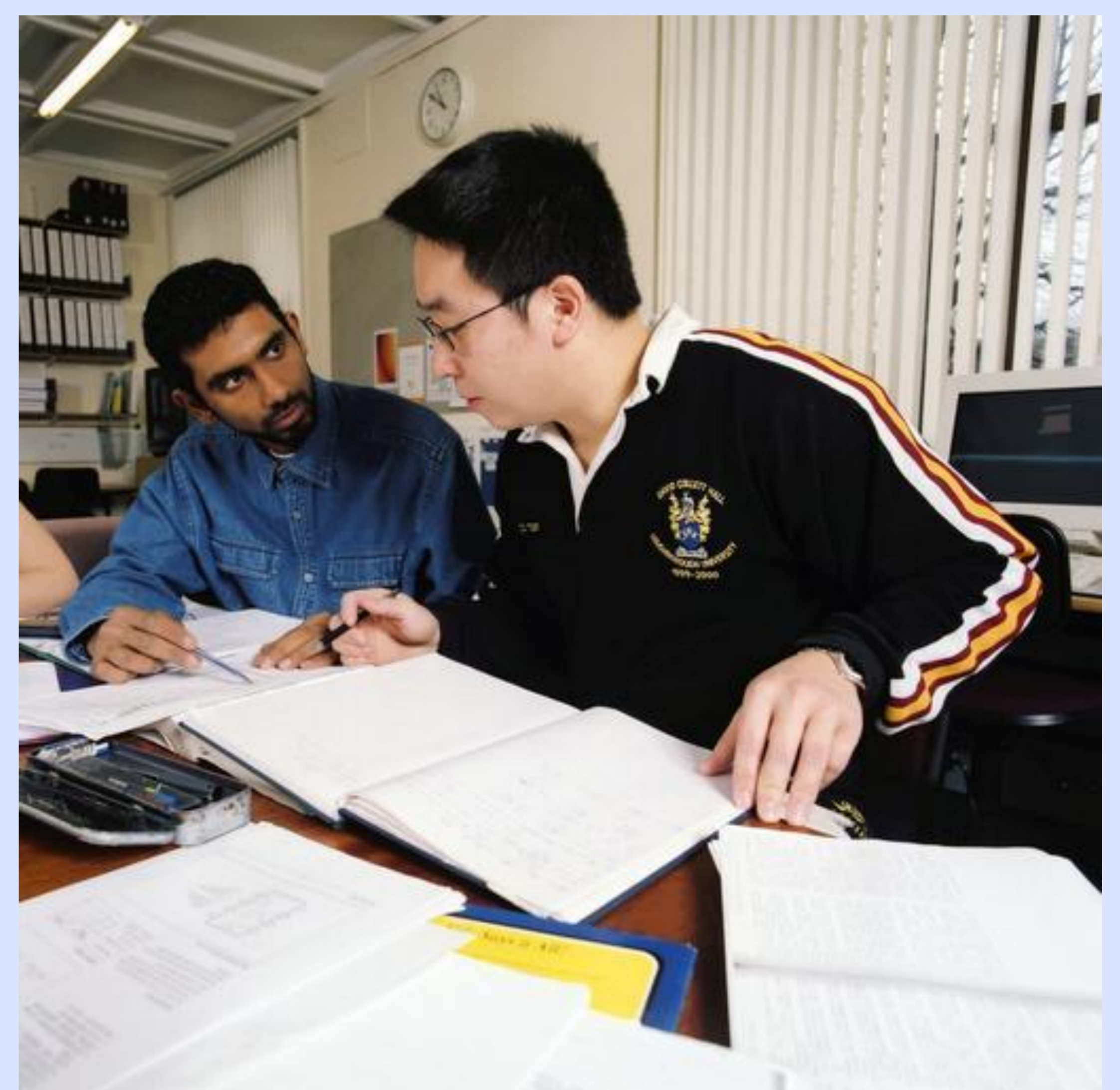


Initial Findings – Line Managers

- 87% of the Line Managers considered that work placement had very strong or strong impact upon the transferable skills of the students
- 93% of the Line Managers agreed and believed that some transferable skills can be developed better at work place
- Level of supervision can be a factor in helping the students to develop their transferable skills at work place
- All Line Managers preferred work placement of one year

Initial Findings – DIS (Diploma in Industrial Studies) Tutors

- All DIS tutors interviewed agreed that a degree course which include a work placements is more effective for development of transferable skills than a degree course without
- All DIS tutors agreed that longer work placement i.e. 45 weeks, are better for the students
- **Some suggestions for the students who are not doing work placements to acquire/improve their transferable skills**
 - Holiday work
 - Voluntary work
 - Team based projects



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