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Article Summary for *The Internationalization of Cooperative Education: a Thailand Perspective*

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*The internationalization of cooperative education: a Thailand perspective* was written by Richard K. Coll of New Zealand's University of Waikato and Dhirawit Pinyonatthagarn and Issra Pramoolsook of Thailand's Suranaree University of Technology in 2003 for the Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education. The article's major aim is to better understand students' feelings about their international co-op placement. The study focused on five Thai students who completed co-op experiences in countries other than Thailand and three international students who completed co-op experiences in Thailand.

The context for this study is Thailand's Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), which is the first university in Thailand to use co-op experience as the major educational model. SUT's students are required to complete three work placements of twelve to thirteen weeks each and there is an option to study abroad (i.e. complete a co-op placement abroad). It is not clear if the international students that are included in this study originated from the author's home university in New Zealand or were placed in their co-op experiences by SUT.

The authors undertook this study with a full understanding that their subjectivity and the subjectivity of the participants existed. The authors utilized interviews to gather their information. The findings were divided into "Student Perceptions of the Benefits of their International Placements" (3) and "Student Perceptions of the Difficulties of their International Placements" (4). Thai students identified the major benefits of their international co-op experience as better developed English language skills, increased understanding of international business culture, better career prospects and enjoyment of local travel in their host countries. International students reported the major benefits of their international co-op experience as improved English and foreign language skills, better understanding of a foreign culture and improved career prospects. Thai students identified challenges in the visa and immigration

process, language barriers, the short duration of the co-op placement, under preparedness for the co-op placement and unrealistic employer expectations. International students reported language barriers, the short duration of the co-op placement, under preparedness for the co-op placement and unrealistic employer expectations as the major difficulties of their international placements.

Finally, the authors encourage university administrators who work with international co-op placements to help students with immigration issues, lengthen the co-op placement experience, and provide better preparation and ongoing support while the student is studying abroad.

### Reference List

Coll, Richard K., Pinyonatthagarn, Dhirawit, & Pramoolsook, Issra. (2003). The Internationalization of cooperative education: a Thailand perspective. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 4(2), 1-6.