

Exploring the Preparedness of Student Paramedics for Work-Integrated Learning: A Scoping Review



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Objective:

The objective of this review is to map existing literature related to the preparedness of student paramedics for WIL to provide an initial assessment of the potential size and scope of the current literature available.

Research Question:

What is known from the existing literature about the preparedness of student paramedics for participation in work integrated learning placements?

Methodology:

A scoping review using the methodological framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005), refined by Levac et al. (2010) and the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis (Peters et al., 2022).

Search Strategy:

Data Bases:

- CINAHL,
- MEDLINE,
- Scopus
- Web of Science
- Grey Literature - Google Scholar

Search Terms:

Population

paramedic* OR EMS OR
EMT OR "emergency
medical technician*" OR
"emergency medical
service"

Concept

student* or
undergrad*

Context

"work integrated
learning" OR
"placement*" OR
"practicum*" OR
"experiential learning"
OR "internship*" OR
"field education"

Background:

Paramedicine in Australia has transitioned from unregulated, vocational origins to a nationally registered profession underpinned by university-based education (Brooks et al., 2018; Michael et al., 2025). Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), mandated in paramedicine accreditation standards (Ahpra Paramedicine Accreditation Committee, 2020), gives students supervised, real-world clinical experience to develop skills, professional identity, and workplace readiness (Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, 2023). Preparedness for WIL involves clinical and professional knowledge, practical skills, communication, confidence, and emotional resilience (Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, 2023), yet many students feel underprepared (O'Brien 2013). Rising enrolments and reduced placement availability have heightened competition, with some providers citing readiness concerns (Hanna et al., 2021). Without a national evidence-informed framework, preparation strategies remain inconsistent, making preparedness a priority for sustaining high-quality WIL partnerships (Fleming et al., 2023; McCall et al., 2009; Weber et al., 2023; Zegwaard & Rowe, 2019).

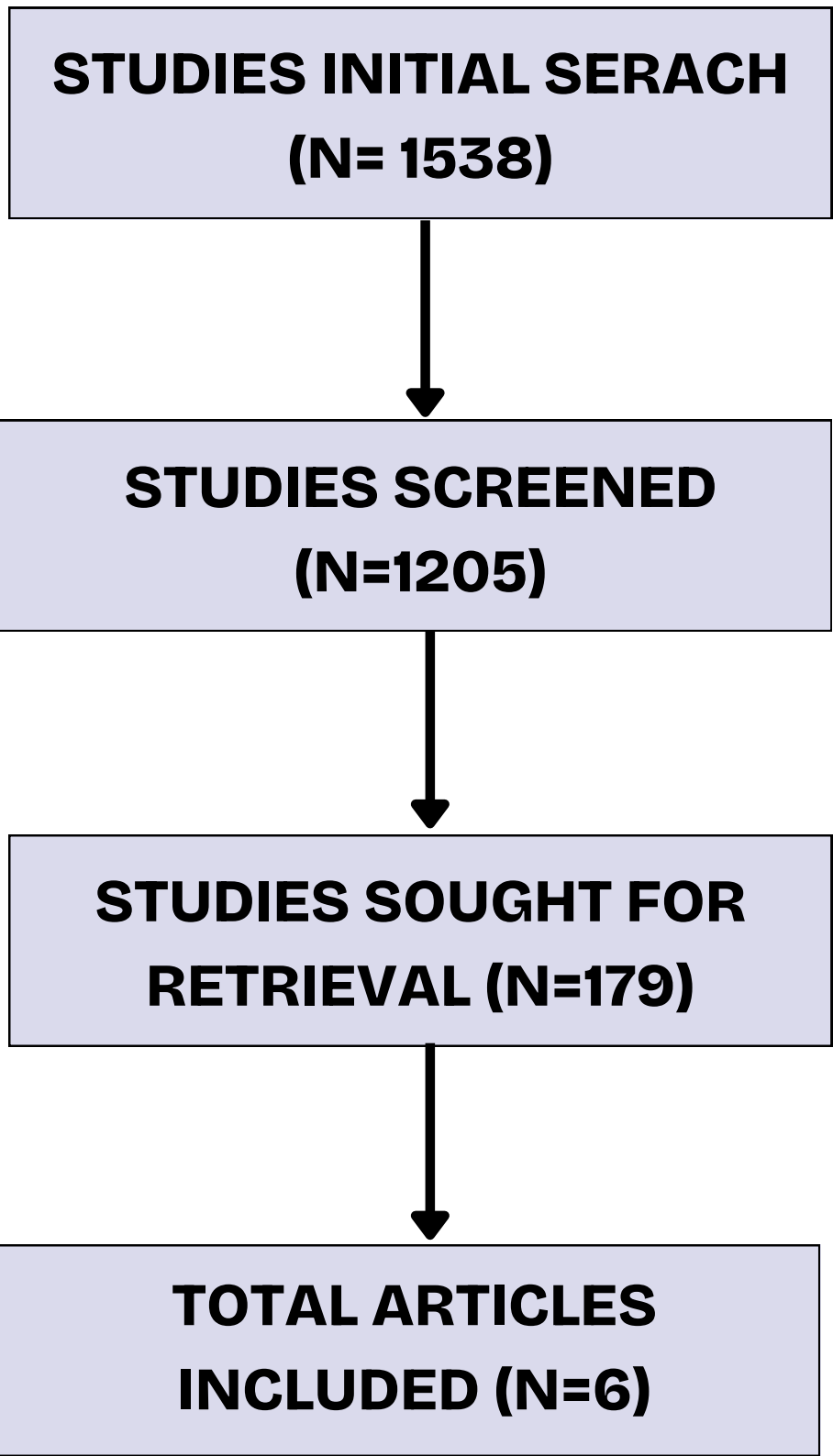


Inclusion Criteria:

- Full text literature
- Student paramedics
- Entry to practice tertiary paramedic programs
- Focused on preparation for WIL placements;
- English-language

Results:

Modified PRISMA table



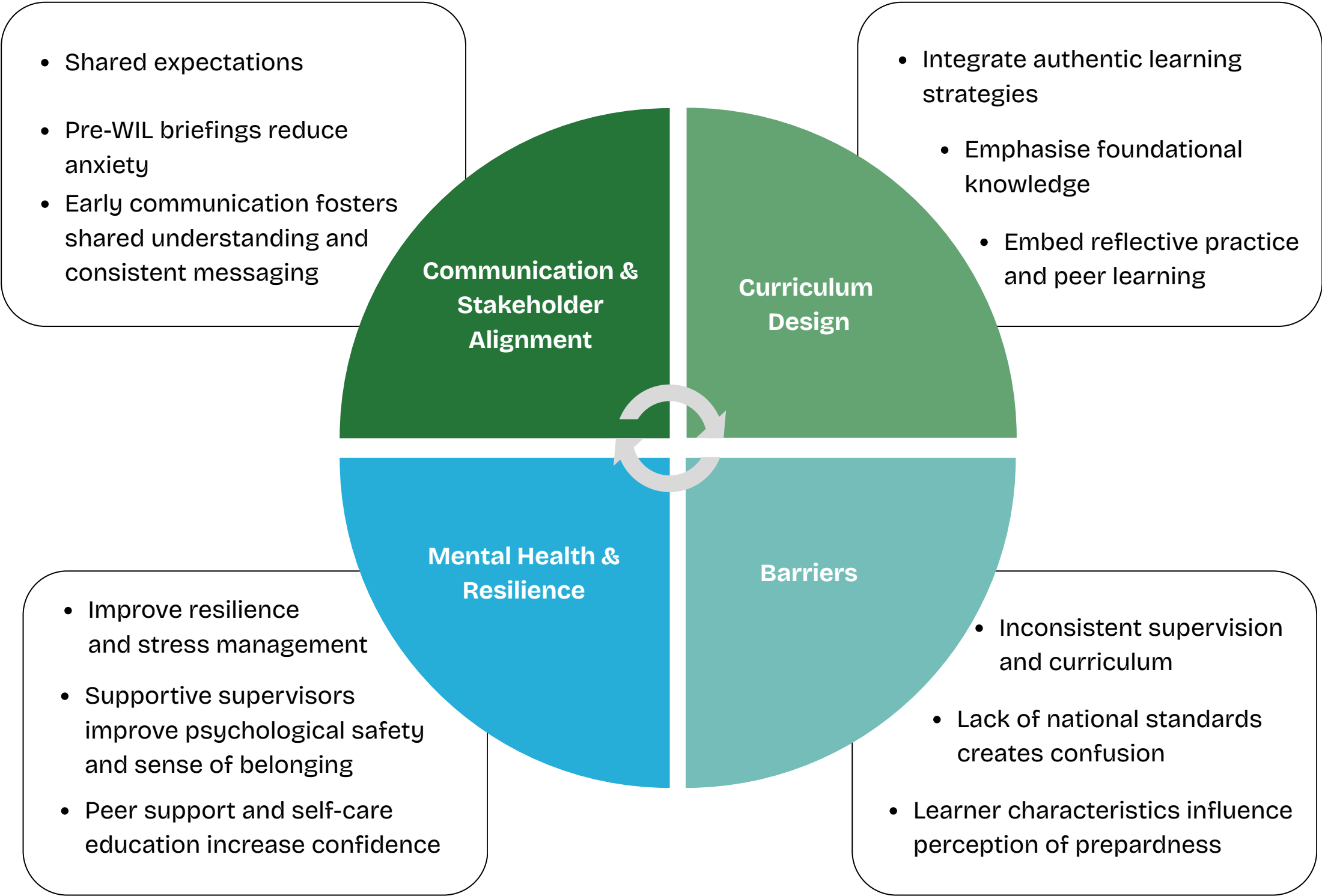
Study Characteristics

- 6 Studies (2009 - 2023)
 - Set in Australia, NZ and UK
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- 3 qualitative, 1 cross sectional survey, 1 qualitative systematic review & 1 narrative literature/curriculum review
 - 838 undergraduate student paramedics
 - 74 paramedics, clinical educations and managers

Conclusion:

- Student preparedness for WIL is influenced by interconnected educational, structural, and emotional factors. Addressing these holistically through national standards, consistent curriculum, stakeholder collaboration, and wellbeing strategies can enhance confidence, engagement, and readiness.
- This review provides an evidence base to inform paramedicine education, policy, and national standards, ensuring more consistent and effective preparation for WIL placements.

Content Analysis



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