

# WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING FOR LECTURERS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN THE WESTERN CAPE

## **L. J. Oosthuizen**

Department of Life Orientation

High School Nylstroom

Nylstroom, South Africa

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1760-4586>

## **J. Spencer\***

Department of Business studies

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7552-6451>

## **A. Chigano\***

Department of Education

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4293-8190>

\*Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Cape Town, South Africa

## ABSTRACT

TVET colleges in South Africa are primarily tasked with preparing students for the workplace. However, employers noted dissatisfaction in the skills and abilities of students entering the workplace. A possible reason for the poor preparation of students may have been found in past research.

The curriculum at TVET colleges, as elsewhere in higher education, is very Eurocentric and theoretical in nature. The need for decolonisation of the curriculum thus arises. A decolonized curriculum prepares students to work in a variety of social contexts and considers issues like poverty, inequality and unemployment. A decolonized curriculum needs to include content and context derived from local sources, and need to connect theory with practice. It is thus expected of TVET lecturers to interpret and link theoretical content from the curriculum to the needs of local sources, workplaces and industry. TVET lecturers thus need to have knowledge and experiences from a variety of backgrounds.

Past research indicated certain lecturers lack workplace experience and qualifications. It was found that intermediate and FET (grade 10–11) qualified teachers and graduates from universities who lack workplace experience are employed at TVET colleges. Lecturers who lack workplace experience may find it difficult to link content with the needs of the industry for which they have to prepare their students and may not know how to link theory with practice during lessons. Teaching and learning at TVET colleges require concrete experiences and deliberate encounters. Actual, concrete experiences change the perspectives of students and lecturers and

affects them profoundly, which can be seen as a pedagogic pilgrimage (Davids and Waghid 2019, 7).

To address the latter, SSACI, a Swiss-South African initiative launched a work-integrated learning (WIL) project to identify lecturers that are only equipped with a teaching qualification and lack workplace experience. The work-integrated learning program flared up lecturer's experience of work-integrated learning and increased motivation and enthusiasm, as they were able to integrate the examples learned from the workplace, to make lessons and lesson preparation more interesting. In addition, lecturers were able to tell students what to expect after graduation when they enter the workplace. A factor that negatively influences the effectiveness of work-integrated learning is the lack of policy supporting the program.

**Keywords:** work-integrated learning, application of theory, reflection

## INTRODUCTION

According to the South African White Paper for post-school education and training, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges are required to provide education and training to those who left school to develop skills for industry, commerce, and public-sector institutions (DHET 2013a, 11). TVET colleges play an important role in addressing past injustices and empowering previously disadvantaged communities by providing access to employment opportunities. In contrast, The White Paper (DHET 2013a, 15) states, TVET college graduates are not adequately prepared to link theory with practice and enter the workforce rather unprepared.

The above mentioned is confirmed by Smith (2000, 281) who explains that employers require that graduates, as potential employees, be taught in a certain way. Smith's (2000, 282) study found that half the employers questioned during the inquiry expressed dissatisfaction with how graduates are taught. Lack of TVET student preparedness may be linked to an over emphasis on theoretical content in the curriculum and the inability of lecturers to link theory with practice. It is thus very important that lecturers understand how to prepare their students effectively for the workplace (Smith 2000, 282). TVET lecturers who lack work experience may not have the ability to link theory with practice during lessons and may fail to prepare their students effectively for the workplace.

Past research has shown that a large proportion of TVET lecturers lack workplace experience (McBride, Papier, and Needham 2009, 8; Manyau 2015, 63, 75). The Green Paper (DHET 2012, 24) confirms the above as it noted a deficiency in lecturer abilities and qualifications. This deficiency relates to the needs of the industry and the types of products that the TVET colleges offer or present to the industry.

McBride et al. (2009, 8) study in the Western Cape Province found that only 37 per cent

of lecturers had workplace experience and qualifications which may enable them to link theory with practice and prepare students effectively for employment. Manyau's (2015, 63, 75) study in the North West Province, similarly, found that 49.5 per cent of lecturers had between two and four years' workplace or industry experience. To enhance the latter, Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019, 215) found that 52 per cent of lecturers nationally have less than five years of workplace experience. Many TVET lecturers thus lack the knowledge and experience to provide adequate training in the formal classroom environment because they lack the workplace experience and knowledge. According to research most of these defects in the education system is due to the effects of the old apartheid system.

As heritage from the past the Eurocentric and theory centred education system in South Africa is in the process of being re-written. A decolonized education system can be defined as one that prepares students to work in a variety of social contexts considering issues like poverty, inequality and unemployment. A decolonized curriculum needs to include content and context derived from local sources when presenting lecturers, and need to connect theory with practice (Chikoko 2021, 25). It is thus important for TVET lecturers to participate in a work integrated learning programme in order to be exposed to local content and link theory to practice.

TVET colleges is part of the Higher Education system and prepares student for the workplace by integrating theory with practice. The same system is also done by other Higher Education systems such as universities that sends prospective school teachers to do practical exposure in a school environment, to ensure they practice what they have learnt in theory (Jeram and Davids 2020, 112).

### **TVET lecturers' need for workplace experience**

Recent research has found deficiencies in the qualifications and competencies of TVET lecturers, including a lack of workplace qualifications and experience (McBride et al. 2009, 8; Manyau 2015, 63, 75). As TVET Colleges are primarily tasked with preparing students for the workplace, lecturers must have adequate work experience and qualifications. Lecturers who lack workplace experience will find it difficult to link lesson content with practice in the workplace situation (McBride et al. 2009, 8; Manyau 2015, 63, 75). To address the lack of lecturers' workplace experience a professional development project, driven by SSACCI, required of TVET lecturers to participate in work placement and be exposed to industry (Taylor 2017, 9).

According to Barnett (2005, 13) the depth and impact of a professional development experience, or its success is amongst other factors, determined by a participant's use of the new knowledge and skills. The challenge, Barnett (2005, 13) points out, lies in the ability of lecturers

to transfer the knowledge and skills they have learned to the classroom setting. This study is to determine if the workplace learning project by SACCI influenced lecturer's classroom teaching, which gives rise to the research questions:

- How did Work Integrated Learning influence the classroom practice and instruction of lecturers?
- How can the Work Integrated Learning program for lecturers be improved?

### **Conceptual framework**

This study is embedded in the conceptual-theoretical theory of *reflection*. According to the essence of the *reflection* theory, learning from experience can be enhanced through both reflections during an experience and reflection after an event (Martin and Hughes 2009, 12).

*Reflection* is grounded in the personal foundation of experience of the student, which are those experiences that shaped the person and helped create the person who he or she is now, and their intent which gives particular focus on their learning in any particular context (Martin and Hughes 2009, 12).

Theory is viewed as providing norms for a discipline and is linked to a particular context (Higgs 2013, 105). Lecturers need to know both the theory and practice of content they teach. Similarly, students need to learn the theory and practical application thereof in order to demonstrate what they have learnt (Waghid and Davids 2017, 9). A mutual dependency and rationality is thus found between theory and the application thereof.

Practice based professional learning for TVET lecturers is thus recommended in order to minimize the theory-practice divide. Practice based professional learning calls for the integration of theory and practice which are not adopted as two separate entities. Integration of theory and practice takes into account what lecturers learn during work integrated learning and teach in the classroom and not just implement strategies and activities learnt in the workplaces (Jeram and Davids 2020, 120).

Lecturers who participated in the workplace learning project had to go through a process of reflection on their experiences in the workplace and how it applies to the theoretical content during classroom instruction (Barnett 2005, 13). This reflection is done to link theory with practice and make lesson content relevant to students by decolonizing the subject content. Decolonizing the curriculum, at this stage, is in the hands of lecturers who plan and deliver lessons.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **The pedagogic value of deliberate encounters**

Davids and Waghid (2019, 7–8) describes a deliberate encounter as an actual experience that profoundly affects participants. Deliberate encounters are pedagogic experiences that might yield unexpected and improbable results. Lecturers and students may be drawn into deliberate encounters as it may produce something unexpected and new (Davids and Waghid 2019, 7–8).

During a deliberate encounter lecturers and students are under obligation to treat one another with reverence and respect. In addition, dedicating one's emotional and intellectual growth is to immerse oneself into an act of reverence that your actions would bring lasting civilizational change by invoking a commonly shared action in the interest of humanity (Davids and Waghid 2019, 7–8). Work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers may provide deliberate encounters that may produce lasting civilizational change in the interest of their students and larger society. Work-integrated learning may provide a deliberate encounter to TVET lecturers which may affect the way in which they teach, treat their students and prepare students for the workplace.

### **The contribution of workplace-learning for TVET lecturers' professional development**

The workplace-learning experience provides an opportunity for lecturers to integrate and apply knowledge, theory, and understand application of theory. The experience exposes lecturers to professional workers on the job and assists lecturers in discovering their strengths and weaknesses (Martin and Hughes 2009, 31). Lecturers with adequate work experience know the attitudes and values expected from employees by industry and have a rich source from which to draw examples to link theory with practice during lessons.

Work integrated learning develops lecturers' communication skills, marketing skills, and related organizational skills. Work placement develops lecturers' ability to formulate goals into measurable objectives and to gain an appreciation of the organizations' environmental factors (Martin and Hughes 2009, 31). Lecturers who benefit from work placement thus experience improved communication skills, marketing skills, and goal-setting skills. Lecturers also develop the ability to link theory with practice. The ability to link theory with practice is an important skill required of lecturers to prepare their students effectively for the workplace.

The experiences of TVET lecturers during work-integrated learning may be compared to pilgrimages undertaken by believers. For example, Muslims who undergo a pilgrimage to Mekka describe the experience as a consolidation and enhancement of their faith (Davids and

Waghid 2019, 7). There is something at the centre of an actual encounter that profoundly affects participants. Similarly, this study will illustrate that TVET lecturers who participated in work-integrated learning were profoundly affected in the way they teach.

### **Development of lecturers' teaching skills**

Different teaching methods impart different skills to students and certain skills are important to employers (Smith 2000, 282). Lecturers, however, learn in a markedly more abstract manner than students and employers (Smith 2000, 288). Lecturers, it was found, prefer the learning by thinking approach while students and employers prefer a less theoretical, hands-on approach (Smith 2000, 288). It is thus important for TVET lecturers to become familiar with the requirements of employers.

Lecturers are extremely abstract learners and the way they learn affects the way they teach. Employers prefer a more active, involved approach to learning which is more related to the working environment for which students are being prepared (Smith 2000, 291). Workplace experience is a tool or a means that assists lecturers to link theory with practice and conform their teaching to the requirements of the industry by adjusting their teaching to be more practice-orientated.

### **Key competencies developed through work-integrated learning**

Key competencies developed during work-integrated learning are communication skills, self-confidence, customer relationships, enthusiastic participation, industry and business knowledge, self-sufficiency, personal organization, professional networks, and professional ethics (Martin and Hughes 2009, 38). Some of these competencies cannot be theoretically carried over to a person but when exposed to a professional environment lecturers “catch” on the etiquette of the industry he or she is exposed to.

Communication skills like careful listening, empathizing with others, and asking questions are essential elements in good communication. Work-integrated learning makes lecturers aware of and teaches them how to talk to different people and realize that people need to communicate in different ways and professionally (Martin and Hughes 2009, 39–40). Lecturers should realize the importance of first impressions, making eye contact, dressing appropriately, and a firm handshake. To communicate in person rather than e-mail or telephone, correct use of language and etiquette are essential elements in communicating professionally (Martin and Hughes 2009, 40). Exposure to work-integrated learning thus improves the communication skills of lecturers.

Self-confidence is an important element in the workplace. In the professional space, performance is not quantified by grades but is often intangible, and based on the perception of

others. Graduates need to adopt learning styles that quickly build their confidence. They should observe, listen and be open-minded, ask questions, reflect and request feedback. Workplace supervisors can aid the process by providing support, encouragement, reinforcement, guidance, positive criticism, and feedback (Martin and Hughes 2009, 43). Lecturers need to take note of the importance of self-confidence in the workplace and teach their students using strategies that build students' self-confidence. These strategies may include group work, practical lessons, and providing feedback to the class.

Good customer relationships are critical in workplaces, as customers are the source of income. It is important to understand customer needs and how to deal with stakeholders. Customer needs require investigation, engagement, discussion, planning, and attention to detail, review, and evaluation (Martin and Hughes 2009, 47). Customer relations are thus an important element in the workplace and industry. Lecturers need to be exposed to these realities for them to adapt their attitudes, abilities, and ways of dealing with customers. Only then will lecturers be able to carry over to students' attitudes and values important in dealing with customers.

Team members who are enthusiastic about their work are valued by employers. Enthusiasm is characterized by passion, willingness to be involved, positive attitude, and enjoyment of the task at hand. Employees show their enthusiasm by being proactive, volunteering, supporting the team, asking questions, and being creative (Martin and Hughes 2009, 47). Business and industry require an enthusiastic approach from employees, an important attitude required of lecturers to transfer to students.

Work-integrated learning develops industry and business knowledge, and an opportunity to apply theory to practice. Work-integrated learning also encourages the development of specific skills like computer skills and project management. Work-integrated learning furthermore provides an opportunity to research and establish yourself with the organization and its networks (Martin and Hughes 2009, 54). The latter highlights that lecturers who lack workplace experience will not be able to link practice with theory in the classroom.

In the workplace, self-sufficiency is an important attribute as it is expected of employees to be pro-active and be able to work independently. Asking for help is positive, but employees should not be dependant but be able to use their initiative to overcome problems and think creatively (Martin and Hughes 2009, 57). Lecturers who bring their work experience into the classroom will also be able to teach students to become self-sufficient and take initiative.

For any employee to be efficient personal organization is needed. To work effectively it is important to be able to plan, set and prioritize goals and determine how to achieve the goals in the time available. Goals need to be flexible given that situations change. Personal organization is key to surviving under pressure (Martin and Hughes 2009, 61). Lecturers with

workplace experience understand the importance of efficiency and organizational skills in the workplace and can transfer the concept to students.

In the workplace relationship building is important and it is advantageous to be known for the right reasons. Building a network of contacts is the best way to maximize your job opportunities (Martin and Hughes 2009, 64). Through work-integrated learning lecturers build networks with industry that not only endure future good relations with the industry but also provide possible employment opportunities for their students.

Professional ethics are about respecting the culture of an organization while maintaining your integrity. Organizations expect employees to be honest, trustworthy, and courteous (Martin and Hughes 2009, 67). Lecturers' workplace experience will enable them to integrate these values into lessons. An effective, well-structured workplace learning programme for TVET lecturers may thus improve the integration of theory and practice in the classroom. A work-integrated learning programme for TVET lecturers may serve as to uplift disadvantaged communities and redress past inequalities by preparing students more effectively for employment.

### **Institutional support structures**

For work integrated learning to be effective four key groups has been identified for support. These groups required to maximize the work-integrated learning experience are program administrators, academic supervisors, workplace supervisors and students, or for this study, the lecturers themselves (Martin and Hughes 2009, 20). A work-integrated learning programme for lecturers depends upon the backing of supervisors and administrators for its success.

Programme administrators need to ensure that non-technical competencies are supported and reinforced throughout a student's undergraduate programme in addition to being emphasized during the work-integrated learning experience (Martin and Hughes 2009, 20). Programme administrators are a critical element needed to ensure that work-integrated learning activities are well coordinated and managed. Programme administrators should be able to do all the administrative duties and necessary arrangements for the student or lecturer to optimally experience work-integrated learning.

Academic supervisors need to work together with workplace supervisors to facilitate appropriate learning experiences making work-integrated learning an constructive experience. Institutions need to specify the learning outcomes that focus on learning during work-integrated learning and encourage reflection (Martin and Hughes 2009, 24). It was found that lecturers find it difficult to understand the value and purpose of reflective processes. Effective academic supervision is thus critical in assisting lecturers to engage in reflective processes.



Academic supervisors are responsible to find work placements and liaise with lecturers and employers. Academic supervisors need to maintain close contact with workplace supervisors and participants in the field and offer assistance, encouragement and direction especially in selecting an organisation that meets lecturers' needs and professional goals (Martin and Hughes 2009, 27).

For workplace supervisors, the two main activities in the work placement context are for a lecturer to be given specific responsibilities in a work placement context and regular debriefing sessions with supervisors. A limitation may be in that it takes time for some lecturers to establish effective relationships with supervisors and gain the confidence to share their experiences (Martin and Hughes 2009, 23).

Lecturers need to take responsibility for their learning from the outset by clearly establishing their roles and the learning outcomes through an induction programme. Before work placement, lecturers should talk to previous participants about their work experiences, choose organisations that value their contributions and talk to more than one organisation about what the organisation can offer. Lecturers need to discuss their expectations with workplace supervisors who should clarify their roles before lecturers start with work placement (Martin and Hughes 2009, 22). The possibility of discussions between lecturers and industry, or induction, will only be possible in a setting made available by a department for work-integrated learning.

Workplace supervisors should meet with lecturers before placement and schedule students' work responsibilities. Workplace supervisors should orientate lecturers to the organisation and its clients and expose students to a variety of learning experiences. Workplace supervisors should allow lecturers to accept appropriate responsibilities in the workplace and provide lecturers with constructive criticism, ongoing feedback, guidance and instruction. Workplace supervisors should complete and submit assessment forms and contact the academic supervisor regarding lecturers' performance (Martin and Hughes 2009, 28).

### **Documentation required for work-integrated learning**

A learning contract or agreement between the organisation, academic institution and lecturers should describe their job description, supervision to be provided, learning objectives, tasks to achieve the objectives and evaluation methods that will be used to demonstrate achievement of the objectives (Martin and Hughes 2009, 33).

Lecturers should complete a daily record their hours worked, duties performed, work behaviour and reflect on all activities that take place. Lecturers should furthermore reflect on all activities that take place and link to theory throughout their workplace experience. Questions

like “what was done”, and “what could have been done differently”, and “how what does was done link with theory” should guide students’ reflection when completing the reflective journal (Martin and Hughes 2009, 35). The above mentioned will stimulate reflective thinking and help lecturers to enforce what they learnt.

Besides sections for lecturers’ feedback on work-integrated learning, SSACI also included sections for employers to reflect on their experiences of lecturers’ work experience that took place. Allowing employers to provide feedback, allows lecturers to see how employers experienced the exercise and how lecturers can improve his or her experiences (SSACI 2014, 73–74). More importantly, lecturers are being given the opportunity to reflect on their experience and need to give SSACI feedback on how the content gathered will have an impact on the teaching and learning to happen in class.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method used in this study is a case study. The work-integrated learning of lecturers is seen as an intervention of which the results have been studied. The experiences and views of lecturers who did work-integrated learning during 2016 have been explored using a case study.

Purposive sampling was employed to purposefully select participants and sites that will best help the researcher to understand the problem and research question (Creswell 2009, 178; Leedy and Ormrod 2010, 212). Five participants who underwent work-integrated learning in the initiative by SSACI during 2016 were selected for personal interviews. The participants were purposively selected on the grounds of their experience in the TVET sector, participation in the SSACI project,

Qualitative data analysis involves organizing the details about the case, categorization of data, and placing clusters of data into meaningful groups (Leedy and Ormrod 2010, 137). After gathering, organizing, and reading the data, it was transcribed and then printed. The data was studied and key ideas circled or underlined. Key ideas from the data were placed in categories and provided with headings.

Qualitative trustworthiness and credibility were ensured by comparing data with codes to make sure there is no drift in the definition of the codes as recommended by Creswell (2009, 190–191). The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured by comparing the findings of the study with the key ideas that emerged from the transcribed data. The findings were also taken to participants for member checking.

Participants received a letter of informed consent that explained the nature and rationale of the study. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured in the letter of consent. Participants interviewed were briefed on the content of the letter of informed consent, which

needed to be signed before the interview. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point of the study. Participants were protected by keeping all information confidential.

## **DATA PRESENTATION**

On completion and dissection of the data, a few issues derived from it and can be clearly defined. The themes that emerged were lesson enrichment, closing the gap between classroom and industry, lecturer's credibility, and the need for institutional support.

### **Lesson enrichment**

Participants agree that the syllabus alone is too theoretical which in turn, points towards a Eurocentric syllabus that needs to be decolonized (Chikoko 2021, 25). When work is explained in terms of how the industry operates the subject becomes alive and interesting to students. The experiences during work integrated learning enabled lecturers to implement changes to the curriculum to improve their teaching.

The first participant stated that the syllabus is not interesting to teach by itself and that she took photos during her work-integrated learning to make her lessons more interesting.

“My exposure to the industry made it possible for me to make the subject alive to students. The syllabus is not interesting and explaining to students how the industry is operating makes it more interesting and relevant to the outcomes.”

The fifth participant stressed the importance of integrating industry with the curriculum.

“Lecturers are more interested in the curriculum and pass percentages whereas we should focus on the needs of the industry. Lecturers should be made aware to understand the importance of integrating the industry with the curriculum.”

The third participant changed his teaching style as a result of his work-integrated learning exposure:

“The other positive side is also that it changed my teaching style in class to consider all learning styles in a lesson.”

Literature emphasized the importance of using a variety of teaching methods. Smith (2000, 282) states that different teaching methods impart different skills to students and certain skills are important to potential employers. Work-integrated learning exposed lecturers and widened their worldview so that they were able to make lessons more interesting to students. These findings

are in agreement with Davids and Waghid (2019, 7) who deliberated that an actual experience profoundly affects participants. The concrete experience of work-integrated learning prompted the lecturers to change their teaching styles.

### **Closing the gap between theory and practice**

The second participant stated that what we are doing at the college is very textbook orientated:

“It is in line with what the industry wants but the industry is evolving at such a quick rate. For me, it is to bring the industry into what the students need to do at the college. It is to adapt students’ tasks and bring them closer to what the industry wants. In industry, there are shortcuts for doing tasks that are not found in the textbook.”

The fifth participant found that the systems used in industry are similar, but also differ from the systems taught at the college.

“It helped a lot because we can now inform students that what we are teaching them is not what they will get in the workplace. They should adapt to the programs in the workplace. This is a great deal because we teach students according to the textbook context that speaks to the program but not for them to work in the industry. We need to ensure students are ready for the documentation and systems used in the industry.”

The third participant explained that the curriculum does not cover everything that is expected by the industry.

“The positive side is that I could recognize the gaps required from companies and bring them into my teaching.”

The importance of integrating knowledge from the workplace with theory in the classroom is emphasized in the literature. Literature confirms a discrepancy between what students learn and what employers expect of them (Smith 2000, 282). A decolonized curriculum need to include content and context derived from local sources when presenting lecturers, and need to connect theory with practice (Chikoko 2021, 25). Work integrated learning assisted lecturers in making theory relevant and applicable to students.

According to Chikoko (2021, 25) decolonized education system can be prepares students to work in a variety of social contexts considering issues like poverty, inequality and unemployment. A decolonized curriculum need to include content and context derived from local sources when presenting lecturers, and need to connect theory with practice. Lecturers who have workplace and industry experience may thus have the experience and skills to

decolonize the curriculum in the classroom.

### **A customer driven approach**

The fourth participant emphasized the value of quality products and services to customers he learned from his experience. The company at which he did work-integrated learning placed a lot of emphasis on the quality of their service:

“How will the TVET sector incorporate quality? I feel that a lecturer who comes to the class unprepared should be sent home.”

The lecturer explained that TVET colleges should provide quality services to students and, for example, present well-prepared lessons to students. The importance of customer relationships is reflected in the literature.

According to Martin and Hughes (2009, 47), good customer relationships are critical in the workplace, as customers are the source of income. Work-integrated learning taught lecturers the importance of a customer driven attitude. Lecturers who have a customer driven attitude may see their students as customers and provide quality service by presenting well prepared lessons. The result of quality education may be improved retention and pass rates, which, in turn, may assist in redressing past injustices.

### **Lecturers' credibility**

The first participant emphasized the credibility her experience in industry gave to her teaching:

“Students identified that I knew what I was talking about and it made it more interesting to students to see that what we are teaching is actually being used within industry.”

When students realize a lecturer knows his or her field and is able to explain how to perform tasks related to the field the lecturer earns the respect of the student. A student who respects a lecturer is far more open to receive information from the lecturer. The second participant explained that the college started an initiative to place lecturers with their students for work-integrated learning:

“When lecturers do work-integrated learning with students it motivates students and shows them that lecturers are in it with them. Even student discipline in the classroom improved as lecturers who do work-integrated learning with them earn the respect of students.”

A deliberate encounter obliges lecturers and students to treat one another with respect (Davids

and Waghid 2019, 7–8). Doing work integrated learning with students will not only earn the respect of students. Lecturers will, in return, be obliged to show respect to students.

### **The lack of policy providing for work-integrated learning**

The first participant said she received a portfolio from SSACI and that Campus managers were very supportive.

“Campus managers were very supportive and allowed lecturers to participate in the programme. More time should be allocated for work-integrated learning and more support provided from TVET college management. There should be a structure implemented at TVET college sectors in order to support lecturers that is willing to go for work-integrated learning exposure. There should be recognition from college management for work-integrated learning attendance because at this stage lecturing staff do not see the need for going to work-integrated learning.”

Martin and Hughes, (2009, 20) recommended a structure for supporting work-integrated learning which includes administrators, academic supervisors, workplace supervisors and participants or TVET lecturers. For an effective structure to be established policy is required to outline the structure of the programme. The second participant also mentioned the lack of policy providing for work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers.

“Currently there is no policy in place to force lecturers to go for work-integrated learning. We send lecturers for work exposure but there is no policy in place to say that a lecturer must get a certain amount of days’ work or whether work-integrated learning should take place during college time or in holidays. A policy need to be put in place to assist with the work-integrated learning program.”

The third participant reported that support was not up to standard:

“I expected more because some of my colleagues did not know what work-integrated learning is. Work placement should be scheduled so that you cannot fall behind with the required time frame of the curriculum. To send for work-integrated learning on a regular basis will be enlightening for the program.”

The fourth participant felt that lecturers should be placed for approximately two weeks to get to know what industry expects.

The fifth participant felt that lecturers are reluctant to participate in the work-integrated learning program but if time is allocated within the curriculum more lecturers can be exposed to the work-integrated learning programme and they will be more eager to learn.

The need for effective policy and support for work-integrated learning is reflected in literature. Smith (2017, 8–13) reported a lack of support from colleges in certain instances.

Smith (2017, 8–13) further found an incapacity from provincial offices to provide a structure and effective support.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Another point discussed in the findings was the discrepancy between what is expected of employees in the workplace and industry and the content taught to students. The points that emerged were:

- Curriculum content is very theory-oriented which illustrates the need to decolonize South African education.
- The systems used in the workplace and industry differ from the systems taught at colleges.
- Work-integrated learning allows lecturers to identify the gaps or discrepancies between what the workplace expects and what is taught.
- An emphasis on quality and good customer service needs to become part of the TVET college education system to provide quality education and exceptional graduates to the workplace and industry.

The work-integrated learning program enabled lecturers to provide ample examples to link content with the workplace. The following points were lifted out and contributed to lesson enrichment:

- Lecturers who used photos and examples from industry to make lessons interesting.
- The use of examples from industry made subject content more relevant to students.
- Work exposure motivated lecturers to change their teaching styles and incorporate all learning styles during lessons.
- The work-integrated learning program equipped lecturers to better prepare students for the workplace.

The data and findings illustrates the benefits of work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers. However, for work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers to be structured and focussed a policy may be required. Currently, no policy for the support of work –integrated learning for TVET Lecturers exists. For work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers to be efficient a departmental structure with administrators, managers and required documentation may need to be defined in a policy for TVET Colleges.

Participants also agree that time should be incorporated into the year plan for the work placement of TVET Lecturers and that more time should be allocated. Currently, not all lecturing staff sees the importance of work placement because there is no significant outcome value for them. If lecturers receive recognition for their work experience their attitude will change towards work placement.

The need for policy to guide the implementation of a formal work-integrated learning programme exists and it needs to address at least the following:

- The human resources required to manage the work-integrated learning programme for TVET lecturers which includes an administrator, academic manager and workplace manager.
- Lecturers need to be duty-bound to undergo work-integrated learning in workplaces and industry.
- Work-integrated learning for lecturers from all subject areas.
- The possibility of lecturers doing work-integrated learning with their students in order to build credibility and respect with students.
- Timeframes and schedules for placement of lecturers. When lecturers do work-integrated learning with their students the need for substitutes in the classroom is eliminated and scheduling work-integrated learning becomes easier.
- Professional development and recognition for work experience of lecturers for workplace exposure. If the work-integrated learning for lecturers can be accumulated to allow access to occupational qualifications like, for example, trade tests in the engineering fields, acknowledgement of work-integrated learning may become possible.

Work-integrated learning provides a deliberate pedagogical encounter for TVET lecturers and students and may contribute towards decolonising a Eurocentric system that is focussed on theory rather than the application thereof. It may also contribute to the advancement of respect between lecturers and students, improve lesson delivery and benefit of society at large in the long term.

## REFERENCES

- Barnett, B. G. 2005. "Transferring learning from the classroom to the workplace: Challenges and implications for educational leadership preparation." *Educational Considerations* 32(2): 6–16.
- Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. London: SAGE.



- Chikoko, V. 2021. "Re-visiting the decolonising of South African higher education question: A systematic literature review." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 35(1): 21–36.
- Dauids, N. and Y. Waghid. 2019. *Teaching and learning as a pedagogic pilgrimage. Cultivating faith, hope and imagination*. New York: Routledge.
- Department of Higher Education and Training. 2012. *Green Paper on post-school education and training*. Pretoria: Government printer.
- Department of Higher Education and Training. 2013a. *White Paper on post-school education and training*. Pretoria: Government printers.
- Department of Higher Education and Training. DHET. 2013b. *Policy on professional qualifications for lecturers in technical and vocational education and training*. Pretoria: Government Printers
- DHET see Department of Higher Education and Training.
- Higgs, L. G. 2013. "Theory in educational research and practice in teacher education." Bulgarian Comparative Education Society. Paper presented at the annual international conference of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society. 11<sup>th</sup>, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, May 14–17, 2013.
- Jeram, R. and N. Dauids. 2020. "In support of practice based teacher professional learning." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 34(3): 112–127.
- Leedy, P. D. and J. E. Ormrod. 2010. *Practical research planning and design*. Boston: Pearson.
- Manyau, T. 2015. *Assessing skills development management for lecturers in technical vocational education and training colleges in North-West province*. Mafikeng: NWU.
- McBride, T., J. Papier, and S. Needham. 2009. *FET college lecturers in the Western Cape*. Cape Town: UWC.
- Martin, A. and H. Hughes. 2009. *How to make the most of work-integrated learning: A guide for students, lecturers, and supervisors*. Massey University: Massey University Press.
- Smith, F. 2000. "Attitudes, learning styles, and the workplace." *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 52(2): 281–291.
- Smith, J. 2017. *SSACI-ETDP SETA WIL for lecturers in public TVET colleges*. Johannesburg: JS & Associates.
- SSACI. 2014. *Industry-based work-integrated learning for TVET Lecturers*. Lecturer guide. Cape Town: SSACI.
- Taylor, V. 2017. "WIL for TVET lecturers project." Unpublished report. Cape Town: SSACI.
- Van der Bijl, A. and L. J. Oosthuizen. 2019. "Deficiencies in technical and vocational education lecturer involvement qualifications and its implications in the development of work-related skills." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 33(3): 205–221.
- Waghid, Y. and N. Dauids. 2017. *Philosophy and education as action implications for teacher education*. Lanham, MD: Lexington books