

**THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
GRADUATES**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Nathi Alson Tsela, hereby declare that the research was carried and completed by myself. All ethical considerations with regard to research were observed throughout the process.

I declare that this study undertaken for the completion of Bachelors of Administration, Masters: Human Resource Management; at the North West University, has not previously been submitted by me or any other person for the degree at this or any other university; that all sources and materials herein have been duly acknowledged.

.....

Signed:

.....

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my late brother SANDILE BLESSING TSELA and my Father STEWARD MANGISI TSELA, you might not be around but I will always be with you in spirit MAY YOUR SOULS REST IN PEACE. To my forever loving mother IRENE DUMISILE TSELA, Mama you have been an inspiration throughout everything I do thank you for your unconditional love. To my remaining sibling and sister VUYISILE PATRICIA SIMELANE and her two children BANELE and SEBENELE SIMELANE, for all the support I received from you throughout my life, I am truly grateful. Lastly, to my beautiful wife LEAH KENALEMANG TSELA, her parents MR and MRS MORETI and lovely sister in law TSHIRELETSO MORETI, all your support motivated me.

May the almighty bless you all, as well as ensure that your dreams come to pass and are fulfilled.

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MAY OUR ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES.

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND AIM:

Work Integrated Learning is a programme that can be adopted by Universities. This programme is useful in the sense that students get an opportunity to put theory into practice. In so doing, students are able to gain skills and competencies that are applicable in their disciplines. But also, the Higher Education Institution Environment is one that is filled with competition and therefore Higher Education Institutes have to come up with strategies to enhance their reputation. Such a reputation can be boosted by the number of graduates that get meaningful employment. So graduate employability is important for both the Higher Education Institute and also the student, for student, there has to be a return on investment of education and that occurs when they get employed.

Work Integrated Learning is not an easy programme to implement and therefore the aim of the project was to determine the challenges as well as the benefits of implementing Work Integrated Learning in human Resource Management Graduates. Also the aim was on how the participant view and define Work Integrated Learning.

METHOD:

A qualitative research approach was followed for this study; interviews were used to get data from five participants, three of which were employed by a Higher Education Institution in a South African University and also vested in human resource management discipline and also work integrated learning, one participant is currently a director of Cooperative learning at a Polytechnic. The last participant was a conference on academia meets business whereby Work Integrated learning was the theme.

RESULTS:

The results show that there are benefits as well as there are also challenges to the implementation of Work Integrated Learning. They show as follows:

- Benefits can be broken down to those that benefit the students, the Higher learning Institute as well as the employer.

- Benefits to the student include but not limited to: getting employability skills and become employable, able to plan their careers effectively, being able to use theory in practical situations as well as job creation.
- Benefits to the Higher Education Institute or the University: once Work Integrated Learning is put in place, the curriculum is able to be up to date and in line with industry needs, there are also chances that industry can put some donations or resources to the Institution through investments.
- Benefits to the employers or the industry: the employers are able to train the student to whatever they want them to be looking at the industry as well as their goals, there is also a decrease in cost because they eliminate recruitment and selection which can cost lots of money in the organisation, they are also able to make for effective succession planning for the business.
- There are also challenges associated with the implementation of Work Integrated learning and they include: the difficulty in turning theory into practice, Work Integrated Learning not being documented properly, mentorships, lack of resources, competencies of academics, the lack of cooperation between all the stakeholders that have to be present especially The Higher Education Institute and the Industry/ employers, curriculum development and the issue that curriculum is not acted on time, and the fact that Work Integrated Learning can be costly to the industry.
- In the quest of defining Work Integrated Learning, the conclusion that can be drawn is in simple terms, it has to do with the integration of theory into practice.

PRACTICE RELEVANCE:

Work Integrated Learning is a tool that universities can use, but when it comes to human resource management, there is still a lot that has to be done in some universities. Work Integrated Learning is already being used in other disciplines as well as Technikons, but for universities offering human resource management, more has to be done. As noted, this can only start operating once Business and universities come together. The South African Society for Cooperative education has suggested that Work Integrated Learning should become one of the visions of Higher Learning Institutions.

KEY WORDS:

Work Integrated Learning, Human Resource Management, Graduate Employability

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the overview of the entire research. It states the purpose as well as the objective of the entire research. Amongst other issues that are discussed here, are the background to the study, the significance of the study. The chapter also highlights the structure to be followed for the remaining chapters.

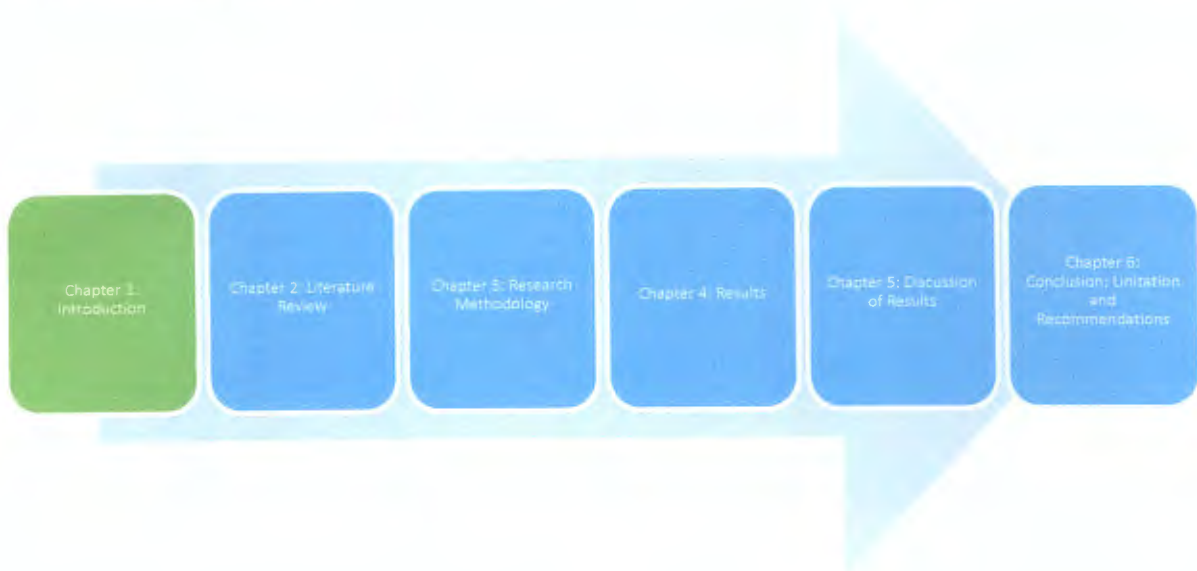


Figure 1.1: Chapter 1 in Context

1.2. BACKGROUND

In this study, the main focus is on Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in as far as it concerns to Human Resource Management Graduates. The most important aspect therefore, is to evaluate the WIL for Human Resource Management graduates in order to determine the challenges as well as the opportunities that are available to them.

In South Africa as reported by the quarter four report on the Labour Force Survey by Statistics South Africa 2013, 4.4 million people were unemployed and out of those people, 6.2 % of them

are in possession of a tertiary certificate.

One explanation that can be offered for the above figure is that, “some critics have alleged that the cause of unemployment lies in the fact that curriculum offered by schools and universities are not relevant to the current needs of the corporate world.” (Vakalisa, 2005, p2). In simple terms, it means that students who graduate do not necessary possess the skills and competencies that are needed by the corporate world, therefore end up being unemployable.

One of the ways of ensuring that graduates acquire the required skills and competencies is through the use and application of Work Integrated Learning by higher institutes of learning; this can also be incorporated as Co-operative learning. Work integrated learning can be viewed as a way in which theory can be integrated with practice in a controlled manner. (Dimenas, 2010, p.45). This places the graduate in a better position to gain employment because they have to practice, and are able to acquire the appropriate skills and competencies that are required in the workplace depending on the particular field of study. This in turn may lead to the overall employability of the graduate.

This study focuses on Human Resource Management graduates, therefore it is important that the study discusses the status on Human Resource Management as a whole rather than an isolated concept.

A brief overview of the Academic landscape in South Africa, as stated by Bohloko (2012) is that, after the new dispensation in South Africa, that is, after the first democratic elections in 1994, which brought about significant change in the education sector various institutions were made to merge, technikons as well as universities (p.269). As observed by the Council of Higher Education in 2006, Universities of Technology have always been delivering their disciplines with the aid of Work Integrated Learning and this was their unique feature.

The concept of Co-operative Education on Work Integrated Learning came into existence as Groenwald (2005) observed Herman Schnieder can be regarded as the founder of Co-operative education and what is important is that he (Herman Schieder) believed that, “related to work and study in an orderly system and convinced the world that it would work.” Through such spirit, the concept of Cooperative education developed. It has to be noted that there were some other universities at that time that had already been practicing or using this form of pedagogy, but were referred to as sandwiched education. Almost six decades after, Ferris as cited in Groenewald

further emphasised the interrelationship between theory and practice.

In the Southern African context, there is a board responsible for Cooperative Education known as the South African Society for Cooperative Education, but also worth noting is the fact that even in South Africa as a country, the Department of Education has also recognised the importance of Cooperative Education. The Council of Higher Education has come up with guidelines on issues dealing with Work Integrated Learning.

1.2.1. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AS A PROFESSION

In order for any organisation to compete in the economy today, there is a need to invest heavily in Human Resources. This underlines the importance of Human Resources within the organisation because they can be used as a source of competitive advantage (Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim, 2011) also see (Van Der Westhuizen, Van Vuuren and Visser, 2003)

Magau and Roodt (2010) gives the idea that line managers within the organisation are still struggling to see the value added by the Human Resource Division in the organisation and therefore suggest that the Human Resource Practitioner should also demonstrate their value add to the organisation (p. 276). In relation to the above discussion, the starting point would be to describe the importance of Human Resource Management in the Organisation. (Grobler, Warnish, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield, 2006, p5) point out the following:

- employees are an investment that will, if effectively managed and developed, provide long term rewards to the organisation in the form of greater productivity;
- policies, Programmes and practices must be created that satisfy both the economic and emotional needs of employees;
- a work environment must be created in which employees are encouraged to develop and utilize their skills to the maximum extent and,
- Human Resource Programme and Practices must be implemented with the goal of balancing the needs, meeting the goals of both the organisation and the employee.

Prior to the 1970's, the Human Resource Function existed primarily as an administrative and transactional function and therefore, it was referred to as Personnel Management (Hall and

Fourie, 2007, p. 55). But now due to business, the environment has changed and people's issues have become more complex.

After 1982, in South Africa, the South African Board of People Practice (SABPP) was established and its main function was to come up with standards that could be used to regulate the Human Resource function in the organisation. These can be seen as a way in which South Africa is moving forward into professionalization of the Human Resource Department.

According to Armstrong (2011), there are about 10 major functions that have to be done by the Human Resource Practitioner and these include: Strategic HRM; Human Capital Management; Knowledge Management; Organisational Development; Resourcing (Human Resource Planning, Recruitment and Selection, and Talent Management); Performance Management; Learning and Development; Reward Management; Employee Relations and Employee Wellbeing (p, 8)

In order to achieve the activities or functions stated above, Armstrong (2012) further gives us the skills that will be needed by the Human Resource Practitioner. Here are some of those skills; Strategic HRM Skills, Business Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Analytical and critical Skills; Research Skills; Statistical Skills; Selection Interviewing Skills; Job, Role, Competency and Skills Analysis; Learning and Development Skills; Negotiation Skills; Leading and Facilitating change; Leadership Skills; Influencing Skills; Handling People's Problems Skills; Managing Conflict and lastly; Political Skills (p,479).

1.2.2. COMPETENCIES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONER

With the introduction of the South African Board of People Practice (SABPP), similar to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in Britain and the American Society of Personnel Administration (ASPA) in the United States of America, Human Resource Practitioners can now register with the Board, such can be seen as a way in which South Africa is moving towards professionalising the profession of Human Resource Management..

Within the frame work of the SABPP, there are competencies that have been proposed and all Human Resource Practitioners registered there should comply with. These competencies are discussed below.

The competency model is based on three broad competencies being: the four pillars: the five core

competencies and the five HR capabilities.

1. *The four pillars:* are for the foundation of the HR competency model. It includes the following;

- *Duty to society*, HR practitioners have a duty to society to deliver high quality human resource that has an impact on society.
- *Ethics*, HR practitioners should contribute to the ethics and effective governance of the entire organisation in accordance with human resource guides.
- *Professionalism*, HR practitioners should act according to the highest set standards of professionalism while executing their duties.
- *HR business knowledge*, they have to have good business knowledge in order to survive as strategic partners in the business.

2. *The five core competencies:* these are the basic competencies that all HR professionals need to be effective in the organisation. They include the following;

- *Leadership and personal credibility*, all HR practitioners should possess leadership in order for them to drive the HR profession. Also they should have personal credibility and this can only be achieved, if they display high levels of competency when executing their duties.
- *Organisational capability*, HR practitioners have to understand the context and needs of the business in order for them to plan and deliver HR practices.
- *Solution creation and implementation*, they have to create, plan and implement HR solutions for example intervention and practices according to the need of the organisation.
- *Interpersonal and communication skills*, interpersonal and communication skills are of utmost important since HR work depends on successful relationships.
- *Citizenship for the future*, this goes hand in hand with strategic HRM, and it means that as HR practitioners people must be able to drive innovation, optimise technology and contribute sustainably, to ensure they become citizens of the future by guaranteeing sustainability of organisations and environment.

3. The last aspect involves five *HR capabilities* which are used in driving business excellence. They include the following;

- *Strategy*, they contribute to the business strategy by drafting HR strategies that are in line with the overall strategy of the organisation. Moreover, it requires the ability and influence to create people driven business strategy in partnership with other executives.
- *Talent management*, HR practitioners should also work with line managers to implement talent management plans for the organisation.
- *HR governance, risk and compliance*, governing the HR function in such a way that there is effective people decision for the business, including managing HR risks and ensuring compliance to employment laws, rules, codes and HR standards.
- *Analytics and measurement*, they have to justify the impact of HR on the business.

HR service delivery, practitioners should be able to deliver high quality HR products and services for the organisation and meeting or exceeding the needs for management, employees and other key stakeholders. (Meyer, 2012)

This competency model can be seen as an extension of the competency model that has been proposed by Ulrich (1972) as cited in Brewster, Dowling, Grobler, Holland and Warnish (2008) and describe the Human Resource Practitioner as having to have the following competencies: Change Agent; Employee Advocate; Strategic Partner to business and Administration Expect (p, 4).

It has to be noted however, that according to the years, such roles as defined by Ulrich have also developed into the modern Human Resource Management. According to Abbott, Goosen and Coetzee (2013), such roles have developed as follows:

Phase 1 roles of Human Resource Management: Strategic Partner, Change Agent, Employee Champion and Administrative Expect.

Phase 2 roles of Human Resource Management: Human capital Developer, Strategic Partner, Functional Expect, Human Resource Leader and Employee Advocate.

Phase 3 roles of Human Resource management: Talent Management or organisational Designer, Culture and Change Steward, Strategy Architects, Operational Executor, Business Ally and Credible Activist (p. 410).

1.2.3. CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FUNCTION IN THE WORKPLACE

The Human Resource Department also has challenges in which the Human Resource Practitioner has to overcome while executing the duties of the office.

Such challenges as Grobler, Warnish, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2011) states; include amongst others things, Worker Productivity, Quality Improvement, Downsizing (delaying or decruiting), the changing Workforce, Global Economy, Technology and Training. But further they also include challenges that can face the Human Resource Function in the twenty first Century. These challenges can include, sourcing the right talent to the organisation, the desired make-up of the organisation Human Resource Capital, Internal Talent to be grown and leveraged, competencies and skills that have to be acquired from external sources, and the organisation's demographic profile which will need to be changed and energized (p, 20).

These in turn make one wonder about the skills that human resource management students have to possess in order to survive and to be employable to the workplace. There focus here is soft skills that pertain to the human resource practitioner as opposed to the technical skills. These are a collection of several skills such as team building, leadership, motivation, time management, presentation skills, etc. These skills are also known as people skills, emotional intelligence, social skills and interpersonal skills.” (Rao: 2010).

1.2.4. ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GRADUATES: WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL)

According to McNamara (2013), “the fundamental aspect of WIL is the development of professional competencies, the ability of students to perform in the workplace.”(p, 183) Meaning that, Human Resource Management Graduates need to have such professional competencies that will make them perform in the workplace. Pop and Barkhuizen (2010) come up with a differing view to the importance of WIL, and state that higher educational institutions are of the notion that learning is not only campus/ lecture room bound, but also off campus, mainly within industry who then come on board as a third partner in the educational process (p. 114).

In order for universities to curb this, and ensure graduate employability, it is important for

universities to introduce workplace integrated learning. In recent decades, there has been a growth of university courses requiring students to learn in workplace as well as classroom (Cooper, Orrell and Bowden, 2011, p. 4). “The inclusion of work- integrated learning practices into undergraduate courses curricula is typically based on the premise that practical placement provides an opportunity for students to integrate theoretical knowledge gained through formal teaching curriculum, with the informal knowledge gained through immersion in a professional context.” (Heerde and Murphy, 2009).

The Council of Higher Education (2011) looks at the concept of workplace integrated learning as the integration of theory and practice in student learning(p, 4). This council further provides us with programmes that can be used in work integrated learning: action learning, apprenticeship, cooperative learning, experimental learning, inquiry learning, inter- professional learning, practicum placement, problem based learning, project based learning, scenario learning, service learning, team based learning, virtual / simulated WIL learning, work- based learning, work experience, workplace learning and so on. As stated earlier, for the purposes of this research, workplace integrated learning will focus on human resource students and therefore, such programmes have to apply to them. Furthermore, one can argue that the theories that are learnt in their studies of human resource management have to be supplemented by practical work in human resource management to achieve what can be known as work integrated learning.

The discussion above can be summarised in the Miller’s pyramid framework for assessing clinical competence and cited in Groenewald (2009, p, 77)

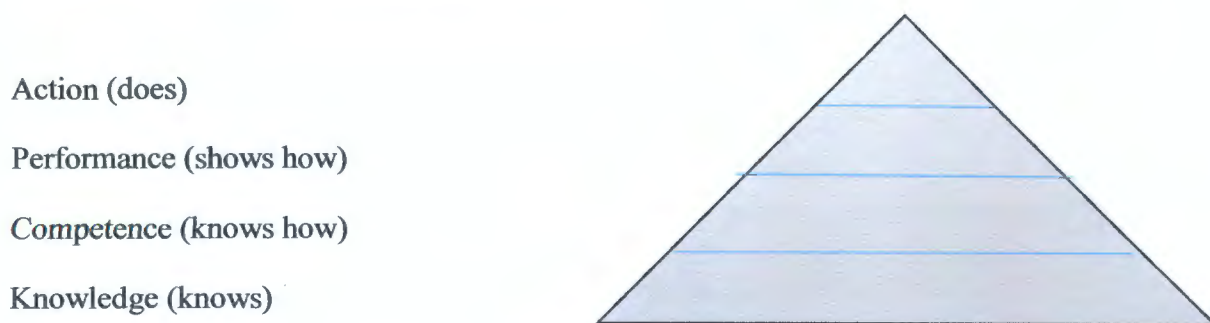


Figure 1.2: Pyramid Framework for assessing Clinical Competencies

In Human resource terms, applying this model could affect how the human resource practitioner

is able to manage the human resource function in the organisation. That is, in order for a human resource practitioner to be able to execute his or her roles, all of the above have to be present and if one lacks, there has to be a need for an intervention and in this case, Workplace Integrated learning should be used.

. 1.2.5. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH WIL

Benefits of WIL can be categorised into three main groups that is, benefits to the employer and also benefits to the students involved. Although it can also benefit the institution involved Students' benefits as Cullen (2007) include, but are not limited to financial rewards, career enhancement, cost saving and collaboration between the employer and the academic institution, it also helps students to clarify their career goals (p. 1).

Employers benefit in the sense that the new graduates come with special skills that bring knowledge to the organisation, they can also hire students for special projects that are undertaken by the Organisation. Bentley and Broons (1999) as cited by Cullen suggests that WIL increases the motivation and commitment of students to the university thus the university benefits also there are benefits in the form of curriculum development.

It also has to be noted that there are challenges that are involved in the implementation of the WIL and they will be described in the next section.

Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Webb, Fletcher and Pretto (2008) provides as follows;

Ensuring equality and assess: the concern here is that everybody has to have equal access to the WIL and candidates should not be based on whether they are getting distinctions or not. People that may be discriminated on may include, international students, employed students/ students with family responsibility, students from lower socioeconomic background, students with a disability, and students in regional or remote areas.

Managing expectation and competing demands: the objectives of the WIL have to be clearly pointed out and also when it comes to the competing demands, there is a demand for often highly "flexible" workplaces and what less flexible educational institution have to be balanced.

Improving communication and coordination: this refers to the institutions and also the employers and across disciplines and faculties. There has to be close collaboration between the

universities and employers in other to provide work- related learning experience for students

Ensuring worthwhile WIL placement experiences: here, the WIL should focus on developing and enhancing the graduate capability, and therefore the WIL experience must be relevant, meaningful and worthwhile (p. 23).

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Unemployed graduates still contribute a big number in South Africa, yet as the literature has stated, in order for South Africa to advance, the Labour Market has to be filled with qualified people. One of the reasons that can be advanced for this problem is that universities are unable to produce graduates that are employable, so Work Integrated Learning programmes is one solution that can be used to curb such. With the introduction of such interventions, it also comes with its challenges as well as its benefits, as well as also, how does one go about defining such a concept? This is the major problem statement that will be addressed in the study.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As Maree (2012) points out, “a research question is the broad, overall question to which you wish to seek answers.”(p. 7)

1.4.1. The main research question

What are the benefits and opportunities associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning?

1.4.2. Sub research questions

- What is the definition of Work Integrated Learning?
- What are the benefits to the students, the academic institution as well as the industry that can be associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning?
- What are the challenges associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning?

1.5. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The research will contribute to the study based on two levels, theoretical and practical.

From the theoretical aspect, this study will use theories that are used in learning. These theories will also be tested to assess if they are applicable to workplace integrated learning. Since learning can be seen as any permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice and or experience, such a study assesses if workplace integrated learning also follows such a definition of learning or is a fruitless exercise and therefore, students studying human resource management have to only focus on lecturers and what they deliver to them.

From the practical contribution of such a study, evaluating WIL will assist to achieve the following goals, to provide rapid feedback on the implementation of WIL, to assist in documenting the program, and also to assist in planning and revising to maximise the potential of the program. In order to achieve that above goals, it is important to focus on the following: programme design, programme delivery and resources and also programme outcomes (Salie and Schlechter:2012).

1.6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

According to Nkatini (2005) an objective is a specific and precise goal that the research sets to achieve during the research process. It provides concrete direction content, methods and mental process involved in the research. Moreover, it points to hypothesis and/ or research questions that need to be responded to during the research process.(p. 10)

They are divided into general and specific objectives.

General Objective

- The general objective of this study is to determine the Benefits and Challenges that are associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the meaning of Work Integrated learning.
- To determine Benefits of Work Integrated Learning to the Students, the Academic Institution as well as the Industry.

- To determine the Challenges associated with Work Integrated Learning implementations.

1.7. RESEARCH DESIGN

1.7.1. Research Approach

This study uses the qualitative research approach. This approach is the most suitable approach for this study because it involves data in the form of words, pictures, descriptions or narratives Monette, Sullivan and Dejong as cited in (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, 2011). Since in this study, the focus is on the evaluation of Workplace Integrated Learning, our description has to be in the form of words and therefore, one is able to understand if such an intervention works or does not assist the human resource student.

1.7.2. Research Method

1.7.2.1. Literature Review

A complete review of literature regarding Workplace integrated learning for human resource students is carried out. The sources that were consulted include:

- Reports published by the Council of Higher Education.
- Reports published by the South African Board of People Practice.
- Journals on human resource management.
- Reports published by UNISA as well as other Universities.
- Also text books will be used.
- Reports and papers that are published by Southern African Society for Cooperative Education (SASCE).

1.7.2.2. Research Participants

The research participants of the study include the Academic staff that utilise WIL and also the support staff that they use in order for the WIL programme to exist.

1.7.2.3. Population

The sample population of the study includes academics and support staffs that are in the Human Resource Management course. Therefore, not everyone was considered, only those that are concerned with Human Resource Management graduates were interviewed.

1.7.2.4. Research Procedure

Data would be collected through the use of a semi structured interview. Babie (2011) suggests that in order for an interview to be successful, there is a need for one open ended questionnaire upon which the participants will provide answers to.(p. 272)

1.7.2.5. Data Analyses

Data analyses is based on the method that the study follows. In this case, the qualitative method is used to gather data. After the data has been gathered, it is analysed as Creswell (2009) suggests. It is taken through several steps, making sense out of the text received; preparing the data in order to analyse it; perform different analyses; trying to find a deeper and deeper understanding of the data; representing the data; and trying to interpret the larger and bigger meaning of the data collected.

1.7.2.6. Ethical consideration

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011) say this about ethics, “the term ethics implies preferences that influence behaviour in human relations, conforming to a code of participants, the rule of conduct, the responsibility of the researcher and the standards of the conduct of a given profession.”(p. 113) There are two categories that are attached to ethical considerations being: responsibility to the participant, human and non-human, and also responsibility to the discipline of science to be accurate and honest in the reporting of the research.

Some of the ethical issues to be considered in this research include; avoidance of harm to participants, voluntary participation, informed consent, there will be no deception of the subjects and /or participants, no violation of privacy/ anonymity/ confidentiality, no denial of treatment, no compensation, debriefing of participants, the researcher will try to act in a competent manner, and finally for the cooperation with contributors and sponsors.

1.8. CHAPTER DIVISION

CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on introducing the variables that are used throughout the research project. For the purpose of this study, variables are, work integrated learning, and how they assist distance students doing Human Resource management. It also focuses on the evaluation about the effectiveness of such programmes.

CHAPTER2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the research reviews the existing literature in the field of study. It also discusses theories and other research that has been done on the topic.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter looks at how data is gathered and which method of research is used in order for the researcher to carry out the study. Also population and sampling is discussed and how the data is interpreted, as well as, which measuring instrument was used and why.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSES

After the data has been collected at the destined university, it is analysed using the relevant software of data analyses. Such findings are analysed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Findings recorded in chapter four are discussed here using the literature that has been clearly discussed in chapter two. This chapter assesses if the aims and objectives discussed in chapter one are achieved.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed in detail. Recommendations are made so as to inform future scholars with the desire to develop this research, on where to expand and also which aspects need further clarifications.

1.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on introducing the concept which is Work Integrated Learning, its benefits

and challenges, in the research project and also on which method is used to conduct the study. The other Chapters discuss in depth the aspects that were highlighted in this section. The following chapter is the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the relevant literature that covers our concepts and variables will be discussed in more details. Such literature will be guided by the following guidelines.

When it comes to human resource management, universities and technikons are the institutes of higher education that are tasked with ensuring that they produce graduates. So this can be seen as the role of the universities to ensure they impact all the skills required to make it as a human resource practitioner.

Where such institutions fall short of producing graduates that are employable, one program that can be used to enhance this is the use of workplace integrated learning to enhance their chances. This is so because there is a concern from the organisations that universities are producing graduates that do not have the overall skills to make it to the workplace. This makes it difficult for new graduates to get employed. Human resource graduates are not exempted from this perception.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that there is a debate as to determine whether human resource management can be seen as a profession and therefore the board in charge of human resource management in South Africa should determine the standards and competencies of human resource practitioners in South Africa.

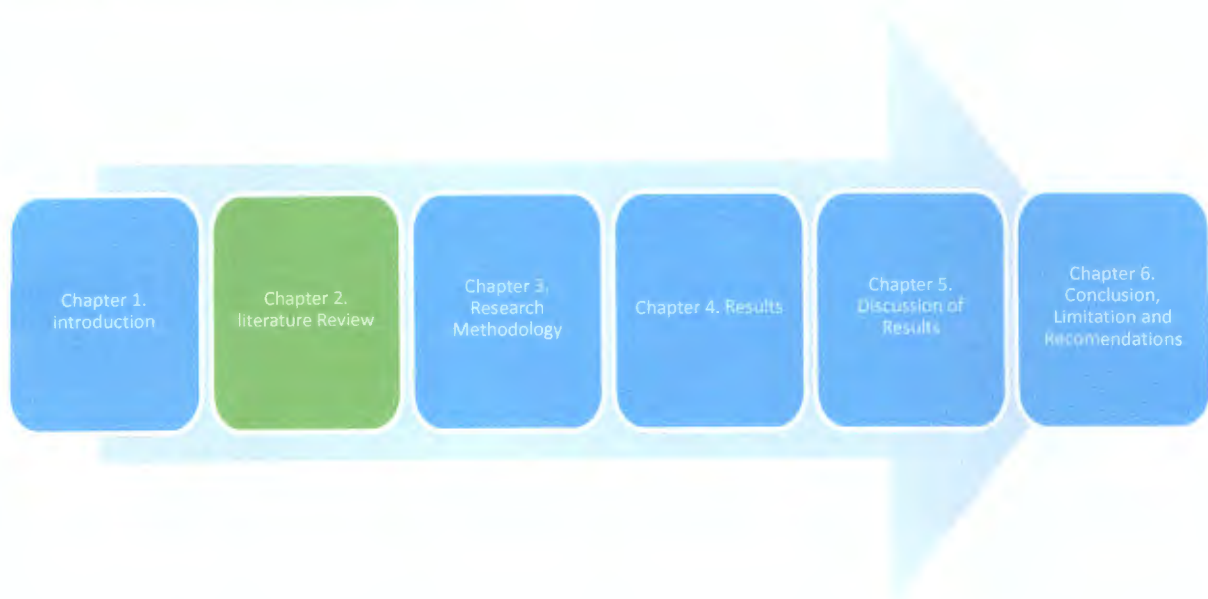


Figure: 2.1: Chapter 2 in context.

2.2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.2.1. DEFINING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

According to Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk (2008) human resource management is that part of the management of organisations that is concerned with all aspects that relate to, and interplay with, the work and the people who do the work of and in organisations. In other words, human resource management has a lot to do with the management of the people that are working within the organisations.(p. 4)

In other words, it is that function that exists within the organisation that deals with all aspect that are related to the human beings and or resource that exists within the organisation.

Van Der Westhuizen, Van Vuuren and Visser (2003) emphasise the importance of human resource management by stating that the real foundation of competitive success is no longer based on property or distinctive products but rather its outstanding people, (p. 1) see also (Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim, 2011) Therefore the people working in the various organisations there are engines that push a company to succeed in the global world that exist today.

Such a function within the organisation also has a history of how it came to existence. With the introduction of scientific management approach into the organisations and also the introduction of human relations is what led to the establishment of the human resource department in the organisation? It also has to be noted that human resource department has also developed from being mainly concerned with personnel management to a more view of looking at human resource as capital within the organisation (Grobler, Warnish, Carrell, Elbert and Hartfield, 2006).

It has to be mentioned that the custodian of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa is the South African Board of People Practices or SABPP for short, they are the professional body that deals with Human Resource Practitioners (Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim, 2011, p. 336). Just like United Kingdom (the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, or CIPD), the United States of America (the Human Resource Certification Institute, or HRCI) and Canada (the Canadian Council of Human Resource Associations, or CCHRA).

2.2.2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Before all the competencies can be discussed, one has to mention that HR practitioners' role can be divided into two main areas. Transitional activities (including the service delivery of HR e.g. Recruitment and selection) as well as strategic activities that support the achievement of the organisation's goals. (Armstrong, 2011)

Two models will be used to elaborate on the competencies that human resource practitioners should have.

South African HR Competency Model



Figure 2:2; Competency Model as defined by SABPP

Such a Competency model, is the one proposed by the South African Board of People Practice (SABPP) in short. It is based on three broad competencies being: the four pillars: the five core competencies and the five HR Capabilities.

The next competency model that will be described is that proposed by Dave Ulrich as cited in (Brewster, Dowling, Grobler, Holland and Warnish ,2008, p.4). It is based on the idea that a Human resource practitioner has four roles to play in the organisation and therefore must have four

capabilities. The four roles are, strategic partner, change agent, administrative expert and finally, employee champion. These roles are explained in the diagram below.

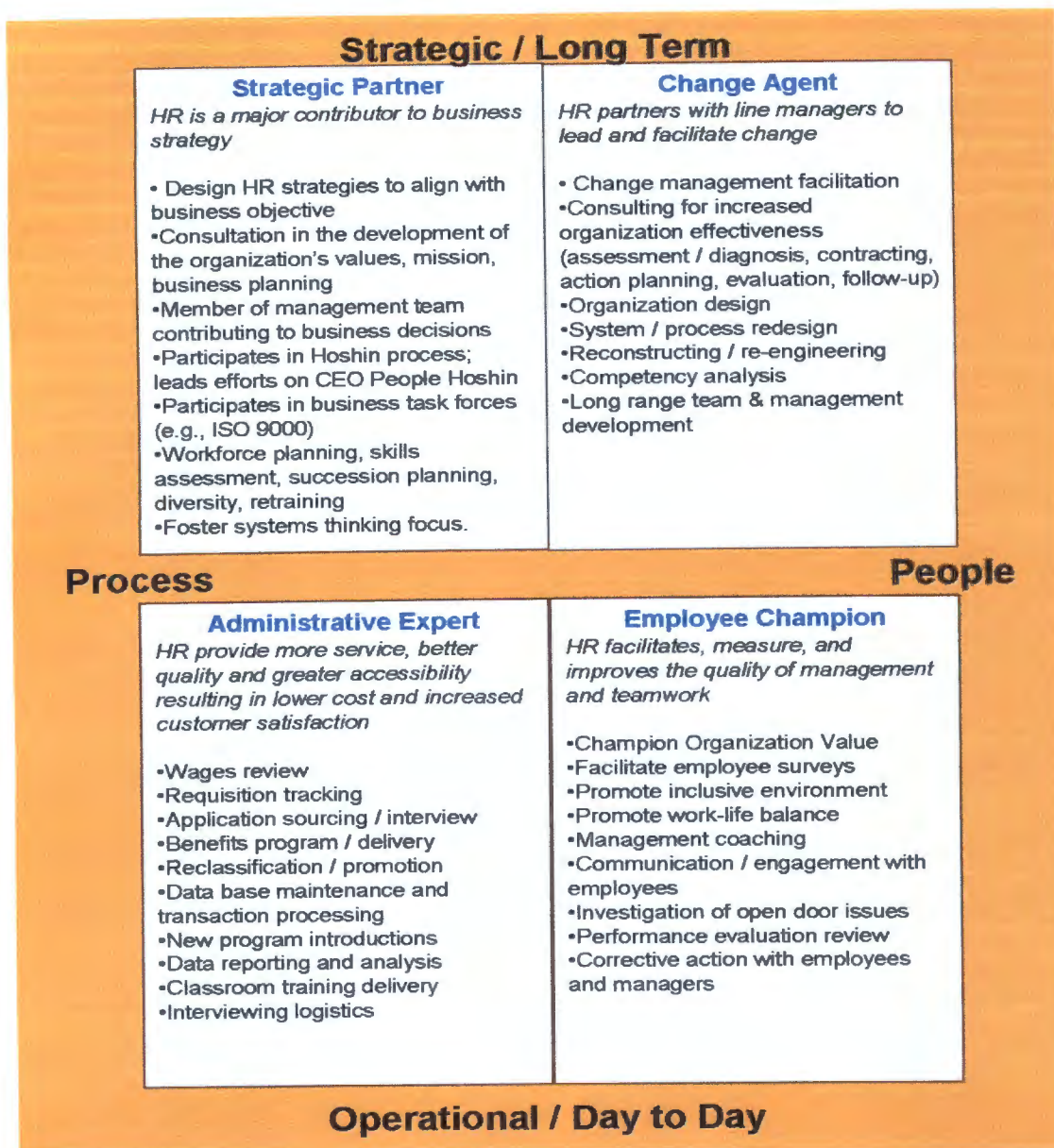


Figure 2:3; Competency Model of Ulrich as described in (Brewster, Grobler, Holland and Warnish, 2008, p. 4).

DISCUSSIONS ON THE TWO COMPETENCY MODELS

First to be discussed in brief is the four pillars as presented by SABPP, they include;

Duty to Society the HR profession has also a duty to impact on the social as well as the economical environments in which they operate, it is no longer sufficient to only become central to the organisation they work for only. According to Boninelli and Meyers as cited in Abbot, Goosen and Coetzee (2013); advocate that this is the best time under the sun for HR to play a crucial role in the society they operate under (p. 408).

Ethics, whereby, Van Vuuren and Eisdien (2006) states, “Ethical behavior is all about human behavior. Since HR practitioners need to be experts on human behavior, it stands to reason then that HR must, in some way, be able to understand and have a substantial influence on organisational ethical behavior”.(p. 27)

When it comes to Human Resource and *Professionalism*, it has been argued by Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim (2011) that Human Resource Management is also a Profession more so because it has underwent the four stages of professionalism and they include: creating a full time occupation, Establish a training school, establish a professional body as well as developing codes of ethics (p. 337).

HR Business Knowledge as the SABPP suggests, they have to have good business knowledge in order to survive as a strategic partner to the business

Then there are the five core competencies which include Leadership and personal credibility, Organisational capabilities, Solution creation and implementation, interpersonal and communication skills as well as being a citizen for the future.

The last aspect of the Competency Model presented by SABPP is the five HR Capabilities.

Strategy, Van Der Westhuizen, Van Vuuren and Visser (2003) supports these competencies and further look state that, Human Resource practitioner’s should be *Strategic People Planner* which involves identifying organisational capabilities and gaps, assessing external and internal work climate and formulation and implementation of people strategy. (p. 2)

Talent Management Schuler et al as cited in Truss, Mankin and Kelliher (2012) have noted that the global demands for talent is becoming more competitive, this they attribute is due to the changing market and change in demographics therefore there is a demand for highly skilled employees or

the so called talent. They define talent management as “the process through which employees anticipate and meet their needs for Human capital. (Getting the right people with the right skills into the right job). (p. 183)

HR Governance, Risk and compliance, Analytics and measure as well as HR service delivery are the other HR Capabilities that are covered by the SABPP.

The second model presented above is that of Dave Ulrich as cited in (Dowling, Grobler, Holland and Warnish, 2008, p. 4).

Change Agent Change within the organisation can be met with resistance and therefore there is a need to have someone that can easily ensure that change run smoothly. A change agent can be defined as “an internal or external individual or team responsible for initiating, sponsoring, managing and implementing a specific change initiative or complete change programmes.” (Armstrong, 2012)

Administrative Expert under this role, the focus is on ensuring that HR activities and tasks are executed efficiently and quickly, responding to the needs of the line, and demonstrating the value added to the organisation by HR. (Truss, Mankin and Kelliher, 2012, p. 65).

Employee champion Truss, Mankin and Kelliher (2012) say this about employee champion, “Focus on the need for HR to manage the wellbeing of individuals’ employee through listening and responding to them, and conversely ensuring that employees are aware of the strategic issues facing the firm.”(p. 71)

According to Armstrong (2011), there are 10 major functions that have to be done by the Human resource practitioner and they include: Strategic HRM, Human capital management, Knowledge management, Organisational Development, Resourcing (human resource planning, recruitment and selection, and talent management), Performance management, Learning and development, Reward management, Employee relations and Employee well-being.(p. 8)

And in order to carry out the functions that were mentioned above, Armstrong proposes that the human resource practitioner should have the following skills:

Strategic HRM skills whereby as Armstrong (2012) emphasises that, the HR practitioner has to align the HR strategy with the business strategy. In order to achieve this, the HR practitioner has to practice the following skills: 1. Know the way the organisation is structured and how the team

work together; 2. Understand the product or the service the organisation provides; 3. Understand the organisational strategy, performance goals and drivers; 4. Understand the sector in which the organisation operates and the market factor that impact performance; 5. Know how the organisation makes money; 6. Understands and speaks the language of the business and how to translate the organisation plan into people plan; 7. Understand the capability and skills requirement for the organisation to perform. (p. 479)

Business skills, Pietersen and Engelbrecht (2005) first explains what is meant by business related competencies, they state, it's the amount of Business skills and experience that staff have outside their specialty. They state that it's important to have business competencies because they link directly to the overall corporate financial performance. They also argue that in order for any strategic Human Resource Management activity to happen, the HR manager should align such to the business strategy.(p. 49)

Problem solving skills, Bubrin (2001) advances the following steps to solve group problems: 1. Identify the problem; 2. Clarify the problem; 3. Analyse the cause; 4. Search for alternative solutions; 5. Select alternative; 6. Plan for implementation; 7. Clarify the contract; 8. Plan an action plan; 9. Provide for evaluation and accountability.(p. 90)

Analytical and critical skills, analyses are the process of breaking down a condition or state into smaller parts and establish a relationship between them. Analyses includes having skills to better understand a complex situation or problem. (Armstrong, 2012).

Selection interviewing skills, is a process of ensuring that the right or proper talent can be employed by the organisation. Cook (2009) suggests that the following skills has to be here to be able to interview talent in a proper manner: 1. Select Interviewers; 2. to judge others good and fairly; 3. Use more than Interviews; 4. Use same interviewers throughout; 5. Train Interviewers and finally; 6. Take notes. Using such procedure during interviews can be valuable to be able to select the right talent.(p. 74)

Research skills, this entails that as a Human Resource Practitioners, one has to equip himself with journals and present research in order for him to know of the recent trends within the Human resource environment. (Armstrong, 2012)

Learning and development skills Wilson (2005) state that, the core of Human Resource

Development (HRD) profession is to be able to separate HRD from other professions, he list the 11 roles carried out by the HRD as: 1. Researcher, 2. Marketer, 3. Organisational Change, 4. Need analysis, 5. Programme Designer, 6. HRD material developer, 8. Instructor/ facilitator, 9. Individual career development advisor, 9. Administrator, 10. Evaluator and finally, 11. HRD Manager.(p.18)

Leadership skills, here the argument is on differentiating between management and leadership. Management is getting people to do what needs to be done while leadership is about getting people to want to do what needs to be done. Managers push while leaders pull. Furthermore, leaders focus on the following: 1. they establish direction/ develop a vision for the future; 2. they align people or communicate directions in words and deeds; finally, they motivate and aspire that is they energise people. (Boninelli and Meyer, 2011).

Managing conflict and negotiation skills go hand to hand. This is so because as Durbin (2001) rightfully puts it out that “conflict can be seen as a situation that requires for negotiation or conferring with another person to resolve a problem.” They further give us guidelines on how to handle conflict as well as negotiation, 1. Focus on Interest, not position, 2. Compromise. 3. Begin with a plausible Demand or Offer, yet allow room for negotiations, 4 make small concessions gradually and 5. Know your best Alternative to a negotiated agreement.(p. 139)

Political skills, and when referring to politics under this heading, we look at the politics in the organisation which might include having to influence people to your point of view, where you cannot rely on authority. (Armstrong, 2012)

2.3. APPLYING WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.3.1. DEFINING WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Workplace Integrated learning (WIL) in South Africa is a relatively new concept that was introduced by the establishment of The Higher Qualification Framework on the 5th of October in 2007, by the then Minister of Education, Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor.

According to this framework, it tasks the institution involved in WIL to find placement of the students. Before we look at how this integrated together, we first have to define what WIL is and

how the entire programme has to work.

Various authors have tried to give the simplest meaning to the term of Workplace Integrated learning (WIL) and some of their definitions will be used to try and come up with a definition that will be used for the purpose of this study.

According to the policy manual of Grant MacEwan University 2011, WIL refers to experiential learning activities that integrate theoretical learning with its application in the workplace in many forms to include: practicum, field placement, clinical placement, internships, and direct field of study. In South Africa, the Council of Higher Education 2011, also came up with a definition that is almost similar to the previous one, they define WIL as an umbrella term to describe curricular, pedagogic and assessment practices, across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. One last definition that can be used is the one provided for by Dimenas (2010), and it provides for as follows, WIL is a program which means that students have time to learn procedures and apply the theory they have been taught at the academy. This brings to the conclusion that WIL has to do with the integration of theory and practice.(p. 44)

UNISA (University of South Africa) in 2005 define WIL programmes as programmes that: focusing on the application of theory in authentic, work-based contexts, addressing specific competencies identified for the acquisition of a qualification, enabling the developmental, skills that will make the student employable and provide a real context in which the theoretical, practical, interpersonal and reflexive competencies of Unisa's students are developed in an integrated way and used at Unisa to include experiential education/teaching strategies such as clinical training/practice, internship, professional practice, experiential training/learning, supervised learning/practice and work-based learning (p. 2).

The reason why we focus on WIL as Serbert, Mills and Tuff (2009) state clearly is that, there is emphasis to replace "learning as acquisition" and replace it with "learning as participation". (p.444) And such can be achieved through implementation of WIL.

Work Intergrated Learning does also take different forms and these include according to Kramer and Usher (2011):

Systematic Training (workplace as the central place of learning)

Workplace Based Experience: Here, students are placed in the workplace and carry out tasks

within their curricular. This could range from short to longer period, this is what used to be known as Sandwiched learning (South African Board on People Practise, 2014)

Apprenticeships: The Skills Development Act as amended in 2008 defines an Apprenticeship as a learnership in respect of a listed trade, and includes a trade test in respect of that trade.

Structured Work Experience (familiarization with the world of work within programme)

Field experience: refers to a short period of time in the workplace, where a student is able to observe and participate in work. (Cooper, Orrell and Lawden, 2010)

Internships: This extends over a long period of time with practise supervised by more experienced practitioners. It is part of a course of study and takes credit. (Cooper, Orrell and Lawden, 2010)

Institutional partnerships (programs to achieve industry or community goals)

Service-learning: even here too is considered a component of WIL, here; the student enhances their professional skills through participating in an organised activity which will benefit the community. (Jackson, 2015, p. 352)

Other Methods of WIL not covered above by Kramer and Usher include:

Learnerships: With the introduction of the Skills Development Act in 1998, it says that, a learnership must consist of a structured learning component to it, it includes practical work experience in it, and it leads to a qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority. Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA's) are tasked with the responsibility of running Learnerships.

Cooperative Education: Wessel on a Discussion paper on Cooperative Education on Tswane University of Technology, defines it as 'a curriculum model that links work and academic- a model based on sound learning. It refers to the symbolic relationship between academics, industry and students. The relationship is maintained by combining the principles of theoretical knowledge with the practice of learning and confirming the basic of such theoretical knowledge through the lesson of application. It has to be noted that a liaison or advisory committee regulates such a relationship.

2.3.2. PURPOSE OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES

It has to be mentioned as Barling, (cited in Barkhuizen, 2005), higher education institutions have a significant role to play in a nation's wealth with its hard edged capacity to foster intellectual capacity, economic growth, stimulate development and innovation in a knowledge economy (p. 1). But now there has been challenges on determining of whether the skills that graduates have are what the corporate world needs, this is evident by the facts that according to the labour force market report of 2013, 2nd quarter, about 6.2% of the entire unemployment population which is around 4.4 million, is made up of people that are in possession of a tertiary qualification. This is the reason why WIL is established to enhance the employability of graduates.

Abeysekera (2006) is of the view that the major benefit and therefore major purpose of WIL is to increase the employability of graduates and this matches well with the present trends whereby students expect a payoff from their investment in education. (p. 1) In other words, students have a perception of getting employed after finishing their schooling and therefore want to be employable. They can only increase their employability by taking part on WIL.

By employability we refer to the set of achievements, understanding and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation. (Knight and York, 2004). It is therefore crucial that graduates become employable if they want to see a return or pay off for their education.

There are however some instances that hinder or prevent the graduate from being employable. Pop and Barkhuizen (2010), state that this is due to the fact that organisations are not able to use new graduates to fill their skills requirement because of a lack of knowledge, skills and experience (p. 2). The same sentiments are presented by Vakalisa (2005) when she states that "some critics have alleged that the cause of unemployment lies in the fact that curricula offered by schools and / universities are not relevant to the current needs of the corporate world."(p.2) In other words, they are trying to state the fact that universities are producing graduates that are not ready for the workplace or that organisations are not satisfied with. And therefore there is a need to develop WIL programmes that will be able to assist the graduate to overcome this.

The reason is that, nowadays, cooperative education or WIL is about student acquiring generic competencies whereas originally, the practical was intended to be on application of the theory of the overall co-opt program. (Groenewald, 2010), in other words, that this are the competencies and or skills that enhance employability.

2.3.3. MODELS OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Some of the models that will be discussed here include those that are proposed to have a good Work Integrated programme within the institution.

The council Of Higher Education (2011) came up with a model that can be used to define Workplace Integrated learning. But before the model is to be provided for, there is a need to define some of the concepts that are used in the model. (p. 9)

There is the **academic field**, upon which the academic staff, through research develop new thinking and knowledge in each field. Then there is the **educational field**, upon which, such academics come up with topics that will be taught and concepts and device methods of delivering them. Then there is the **professional practice**, here, the students then transfer their knowledge learned to the workplace.

So the model as designed by the Council on Higher Education looks like this:

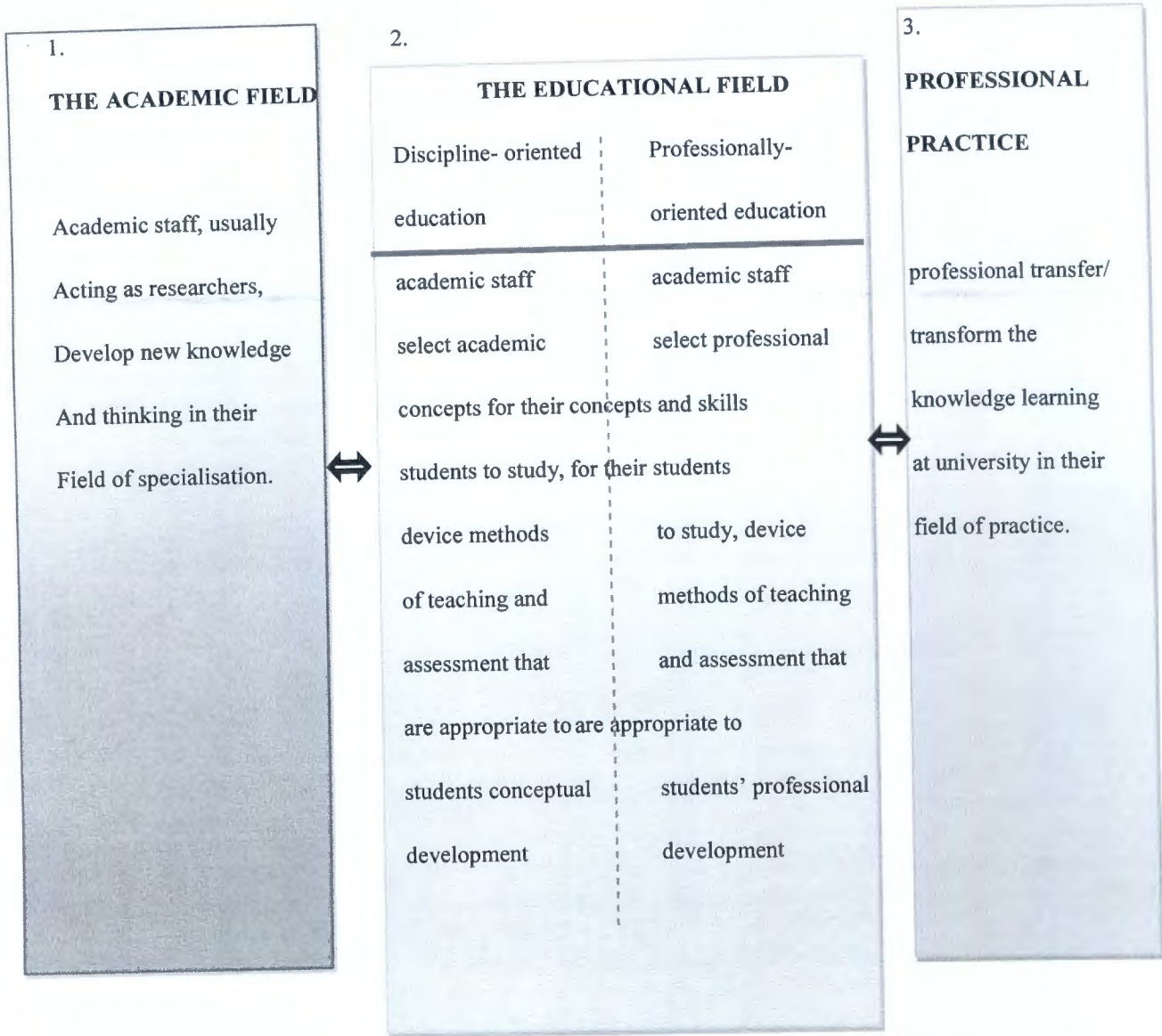


Figure 2:4 Work Integrated Model By the Council on Higher Education

To interpret the above model, there is the traditional form of study in which is represented in the academic field as well as the first discussion in the education field titled discipline oriented education. This is whereby the lectures come up with academic concepts that are based on various researches done by their colleagues. but when it come to the other part of the educational field titled professionally- oriented education, the select concepts are used in the profession and therefore they are shaped by the professional practice used in the last table.

2.3.4. APPROACHES FOLLOWED FOR WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Griffith Institute for Higher Education GIHE, proposes that there is a need to develop a curriculum that will be centered around WIL. For the purpose of such, it proposes strategies that can be used by Institute of Higher education to implement Work Integrated learning.

1. Use student placements in authentic professional contexts as learning environments in which students engage in meaningful and consequential workplace activities that are designed to achieve enhanced and integrative learning. Such looks at the very essence and definition of WIL whereby Louw and Steyn (2012) states that WIL is all about aligning academics and workplace practises for the mutual benefit of the student and the workplace. However they go deeper and state that finding an appropriate workplace in a challenge but of which they also provide a solution which is the use of e. portfolios.(p. 141)

2. Ensure that students are required to focus on the integration of theoretical knowledge and practice that allows them to connect university or disciplinary learning with workplace application by:

- designing learning activities that require the integration of disciplinary and workplace-relevant knowledge and skills deployed in the workplace;
- bringing professional practice to the core of WIL curricula to act as the organiser for both disciplinary (theoretical) and practical learning; and
- recognising that workplace practice that may be erroneous or out of step with theoretical knowledge can be used as a catalyst for integrative learning. Interpretation of and reflection on the experience of professional practice and application of knowledge in context should be at the heart of learning experiences for students in WIL curricula.

An example to illustrate the above can be as Njozela (2012) proposes, in the curriculum for teachers, this is the proposal, at the end, student have to have 480 credits to graduate and about 56 of those have to be through WIL. In the first year, students are expected to spend about 4 weeks in home school, they must observe the mentors as well and also are expected to do assignments as directed, in the third year, students are expected to teach a whole lesson by themselves and in the

fourth year, students are assigned to school for about six months.(p. 252)

3. Integrate, as appropriate, the range of supports (e.g. learning advisors, counselling) provided by the university as well as those provided to staff in workplaces by:

- making available to WIL students the university's learning supports, information and communication technology services, counselling services and other ancillary supports while they are on placement, as an integral part of the curriculum design; and
- integrating a range of services provided by workplaces including the workplace's services, safety and procedural inductions for new staff, psychological counselling services and staff development resources (e.g. libraries).

To add to this point, Schoor and Erwee (2009) says, students need to be fully prepared in terms of expectations in the workplace and of the higher education institute. Prior to placement, information session and a WIL period per week or month should be offered. It should cover aspects such as what may be expected from students in terms of working hour, dress codes, attitudes, resume writing, cover letter writing, interview skills and business practices. It should be clear when reports should be submitted as well as clear criteria to be used for assessment. Therefore a study guide, logbook or guidelines of WIL are essential.(p. 87)

4. Ensure alignment of learning objectives, workplace activities and assessment to produce effective, relevant, meaningful and intended outcomes for all stakeholders, especially students. Students' workplace experiences ought to afford the development of what is to be learned and what is to be assessed by:

- ensuring that stakeholders, both students and industry partners, have agreed on the learning objectives and learning activities of the WIL curricula;
- using a learning plan or learning contract to document negotiated agreements on learning outcomes and processes;
- coordinating with workplace supervisors and monitoring students' workplace activities to ensure that they remain consistent with the learning objectives and assessments of the course or program; and
- building the assessment around and focussing the assessment on (inter alia):

- Disciplinary knowledge and its application learned during placement;
- Critical reflection on applicability of theories and canonical knowledge to practice; and
- Self-reflection on the meaning and relevance of the experience and what was learned.

As Jackson (2015) further emphasises, the organisation must allocate adequate supervisors as well as learning support and induction and establish their expectations from the graduate while in the same time, academic practitioner should ensure that WIL design incorporates authentic leaning activities aligned to learning objectives with appropriate learning support.(p. 342) And for such, Elijido and Kloot (2015) agree with such and they also propose that students have to be taken for sessions on exactly what does WIL entails and how to write their application letters to the employers.

5. Efficiently manage and effectively monitor students' progress during placement by:

- communicating regularly with students and industry partners;
- visiting students and meeting with workplace supervisors at the workplace, to provides much needed support, especially for students who are having difficulties;
- catches problems early before they become a significant threat to students' progress, success or safety; and
- promotes closer professional relationship with industry partners
- Meeting with students to discuss and share reflective journals and experiences and
- requiring students to submit three to four 'milestone' or progress reports for a one-semester placement duration.

Pitout (2009) proposes there has to be a strong relationship between the university and the workplace, such has to be established by a memorandum of understanding, thereafter, lecturers should visit the students once a year whereby there is a lot of valuable curriculum input. On top of that, students have to be taught on how to prepare their e. portfolios which their supervisor has to acknowledge.(p. 184)

6. Effectively administer aspects of the curriculum that indirectly support students' learning and finally; 7. Balance the key elements that comprise an effective WIL placement.

In order for a WIL to come to effect, there has to be the following criteria to effectively work in other words, it is possible to carry out a WIL provided this are in place:

- Learning contract or agreement by which the student, higher education institution and employer can negotiate, approve and access the objective and outcomes of the learning process as well as the roles and responsibilities of the various parties
- Regular and efficient communication between the institution, student, mentor and employer
- A system (both at the institution and at the place of employment) to record and monitor regularly and systematically the content and progress of the students' learning at the workplace
- A mentoring system that enables the student to recognise strength and weaknesses in his/her work, to develop existing and new abilities, and to gain knowledge of work practices.

(Lewis, Holzhausen and Taylor, 2010, p. 29)

Further as can be noted by Koch (2010), there is a need for a feedback on the WIL and how the students are progressing, this can be achieved through the use of portfolio, or in other words, paper based documents. The purpose of the portfolio is to stay focus on the quality of work by a student during work integrated learning and the valid alignment of their standards to the goals of education.

Apart from the portfolio mentioned above, the University of South Africa (UNISA), has come up with guidelines that are used to run their WIL programme and these are summarised by Holtzhausen and Du Toit (2009) in order to assess the student for their marks, the following documents have to be presented: the portfolio mentioned above, a report and a competency certificate from the employer, the booklet and the logbook.(p. 163)

The booklet has the guides for the employers and gives them the responsibilities and rights of the employer. The supervisor and or mentor has to fill the logbook whenever they go to assess the student onsite and this will be used to compile the certificate. In other words, the portfolio and the certificate are the ones that are used to compile the student's final mark. But it has to be mentioned that at UNISA, WIL in a course on its own and therefore student pay full fee for it.

AN EXAMPLE OF A CURRICULUM FOR HRM THAT HAS WIL AND THAT WITH NO WIL

Two institutes of Higher education’s curriculum will be used to determine the curriculum of both. One of the institutes used is a University of Technology and as such, it should be noted that the curriculum used is that taken from their National Diploma in Human Resource Management while the other is a University and therefore their Degree in B.Admin in Human Resource Management will be used.

National Diploma In HRM

BA. Admin In HRM

| Year 1 | |
|--|---|
| Accounting for Personnel Practitioner’s | Economics |
| Business Management | Introduction to HRM |
| English | Introduction to Industrial Psychology |
| END- USER Computing | Introduction to Business Management |
| Experiential Learning | Public Administration |
| Personnel Management | The Role and Functions of HRM |
| | English |
| | Occupational Health and Safety: Ergonomics |
| Year 2 | |
| Business Management | Training and Development |
| Industrial Relations | Career Management |
| Labour Law | Statistics |
| Management of training | Public Administration |
| | Performance Management |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Consumer Behaviour |
| Year 3 | |
| Business Management | Industrial Relations |
| Industrial Relations | Psychometrics |
| Management of Training 2 | Organisational Behaviour |
| Personnel Management3 | Strategic HRM |
| Business Management3 | Labour Law |

Table 2:1. Table comparing Two Academic Institutes offering Human Resource Management

It has to be noted that from the above list, only the modules that are directly linked with Human Resource Management were listed as well as some of the modules that go for more than one semester per year were mentioned once only.

2.3.5. BENEFITS OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES

ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY

In South Africa according to the Labour Force Market Report of 2013, 2nd quarter by Statistics South Africa, 4.4 million of people were unemployed and out of those people, 6.2 per cent of the are in possession of a tertiary certificate.

One explanation that can be offered for the above figure is that, “some critics have alleged that the cause of unemployment lies in the fact that curricula offered by schools and / universities are not relevant to the current needs of the corporate world.” (Vakalisa, 2005, p. 2). In simple terms, it means that students that graduate do not necessary possess the skills that can be needed by the corporate world and therefore they end up being unemployed.

One of the benefits of WIL as stated by Jackson (2015) is the improvement of the employability of graduates thus reducing the figure above. He argues that, there are employability skills that students get in WIL For example team working, problem solving, communication, information

literacy and professionalism, and such skills are deemed to be critical enablers of graduate ability to function effectively in modern workplaces.(p. 351)

FOSTERS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

WIL fosters a partnership between higher education and the industry and this is more critical in the aspect of curriculum development, which can meet both the needs of the community as well as the industry therefore meeting all of the demands of all the stakeholders. (Smith, 2012, p. 248)

This is so solely because the Council of Higher Education discussed above promote that curriculum has to be derived from the academic Field, the educational field as well as the professional practice field, and thus meet the requirements of all the stake holders.

Jeffries and Milne (2014) has this to say about the partners in WIL “without strong and effective relationship between the university and work place, there can be no WIL”.(p. 566)

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Swart (2014) states the following, “the advantages of WIL on a broader scale are believed to affect and guide students’ educational (academic) plans and their personal and career choices and development”.(p. 390) By Career development, we refer to the ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes and tasks (Greenhaus, Callanan and Goldshalk, 2010).

It is of crucial importance that students are able to manage their own career because as Schalkwyk, Niyimbanira and Surujlal (2012) say, “students that enroll at tertiary institutions are unsure about their career path after graduation. Often their own role models/ reference they have are their parents... the university syllabus also often fails prospective students in obtaining appropriate information which is not readily available to learners to gain knowledge about different possibilities in the workplace”(p. 215). Therefore WIL can assist such student to have more direction on their own career development.

ASSIST STUDENTS TO TRANSFER AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE

WIL enables students to transfer and apply Knowledge gained through their formal university education to their reality of the workplace. Such can assist the students in that, as Smith- Ruig (2014) suggests: increase discipline thinking, improved learning, taking responsibility for learning, learning how to learn, improve problem solving, analytical thinking, improved performance in classroom and increased commitment to educational goals(p. 773).

Callaghan and Papageorgiou (2014) take the argument much further on the statement above, they state that students with a Positive Affect, (which can be defined as the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, as well as a state of high energy, full concentration and pleasurable engagement) is showed to increase when the tasks are more meaningful (p. 619).

Adding to the above, the Government of Queensland in Australia (2009) came up with the following benefits of Structured Workplace learning which can also be seen or viewed as workplace integrated learning. Benefits are divided according to the employer and also the students, they state as follows;

SWL for employers: Establishing networks and contacts for future recruitment — participating young people provide a base of contacts for employers in future recruitment exercises, Building interest in careers in the industry — SWL can help build interest in future careers in a particular industry among young people, Improving allocation of resources — SWL gives young people a “taste” of a vocation and they are more likely to make good decisions about signing up for an apprenticeship or traineeship, Creating links with young people while still at school — employers can create links with young people while they are at school and are contactable, Raising profile of courses — recognition enhances the credibility of SWL courses and the organisations that deliver these among students at schools and their parents or careers, Promoting equity — the recognition process is designed to give smaller, regional organisations access to the same formal recognition as larger, nationally based groups.

Structured workplace learning also has the following benefits for the student involved in it; Enhancing pathways — recognized SWL helps young people access further study, training and employment pathways through formal recognition of skills development, Building networks — young people develop contacts for future employment, increasing social capital by broadening the networks of people that can enhance opportunities, Delivering real-world experience — young



people increase their work-readiness through development of employability skills (a benefit to both participants and employers), Adding value to studies at school — SWL compliments school studies and assists with the transition from school to work, Increasing participation — young people who may not be attracted to formal instructional learning options can participate in equally valuable SWL and gain credit towards their education.

2.3.6. CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

As McNamara (2013) suggests, one of the major reasons of engaging students to WIL is so that they are able to gain what is terms' professional competencies. By professional competencies, one refers to the ability to use professional knowledge and skills in the workplace. The challenge that is associated with this phenomenon is, how does one go about checking if the students are actually acquiring professional competencies? For example, if the students engaged with WIL are too many, the supervisor may not be in a position to evaluate each of them effectively, or the students capabilities can interfere with the validity of the results if they were to be assessed individually.(p. 184)

There ought to be a collaborative assessment that can be done by the workplace supervisor, the student and the academic.

The workplace supervisor has the responsibility to supervise the student and also by providing learning opportunities, the student is responsible for their own learning while also they are encouraged to come up with their own learning plan, the academic supervisor, they are there to provide support to the student and also to the workplace integrated learning.

NEED FOR A STRUCTURED AROUND WIL PROGRAMME.

Brown (2010) is of the opinion that each university is responsible for addressing their challenges on WIL,(p. 508) yet there is a need to be collaborative approach in the development of curriculum,

and in structuring, support and assessing WIL experience. Calmeyer et al (2011) suggests that WIL educators struggle with the concept of how best to design and implement worthwhile WIL programmes to increase employability of graduates, this is so because this authors are of the opinion that there has to be a fine balance between meeting the demands of industry and community and meeting the university requirement for high quality learning. (p. 73)

This causes a problem with South African universities and or colleges. According to the South African Green Paper For Post- School Education And Training (2012) the relationship between colleges and industries, with some exceptions is weak. This is evident in the fact that approximately 65% of students at colleges are unable to find workplace experience that is needed for the completion of their N Diplomas.

A structured WIL programme is the one that is explained by The Council on Higher Education (2011), which states that in the establishment of the WIL, there has to be three fields that are involved. These include the **academic field** whereby the academic staff, in their role as researches develop new knowledge and thinking in their filed or specialism, the **educational field** whereby university teachers select topics and concepts for their students to study and device methods of teaching and assessment. The last field is the **professional practice** here; professionals transfer or transform the knowledge learnt from university in their field of practice. the fundamental difference when it comes to WIL is that, the educational filed apart from being shaped by the academic filed, is also shaped by the professional field where the professionals are also used to come with the concepts and the curriculum.

MENTOR

Groenewald and Thulukanan (2005) emphasise that at the heart of a good work integrated learning is having a good mentor to ensure that the graduate is able to learn everything necessary to gain the professional competencies.(p. 85)

Du Plessis emphasise (2010) on the fact that students must receive external support in the form of coaching from supervisors, teachers/ mentors as well as hints, feedback, models and reminders.(p. 209)

As pointed out earlier, the duties of a mentor would be to highlight the student's strengths and

weaknesses and therefore students must work on such to improve. If their mentor are not providing such feedback, then this become a challenge to the implementation of WIL.

There are also some challenges that have been highlighted by du Plessis (2010) and they focus on the student. More importantly he states that universities will have to do a lot to assist disadvantaged students who may have less access to work placements(p. 208).

Furthermore, Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Webb, Fletcher and Pretto (2008) extend and include the following challenges to WIL.

Ensuring equality and access: the concern here is that everybody has to have equal access to the WIL and candidates should not be based on whether they are getting distinctions or not. Among people that may be discriminated on may include, international students, employed students/ students with family responsibility, students from lower socioeconomic background, students with a disability, students in regional or remote areas.

Managing expectation and competing demands: the objectives of the WIL have to be clearly pointed out and also when it comes to the competing demands, there is a demand for often highly “flexible” workplaces and what less flexible educational institution have to be balanced.

Improving communication and coordination: this refers to the institutions and also the employers and across disciplines and faculties. There has to be close collaboration between the universities and employers in other to provide work- related learning experience for students

Ensuring worthwhile WIL placement experiences: here, the WIL should focus on developing and enhancing the graduate capability, and therefore the WIL experience must be relevant, meaningful and worthwhile(p. 23).

A brief summary as well as how a student is able to grasp all the required learning as well as competencies and skills can be described by a diagram of Dale as cited in Pitout (2009):

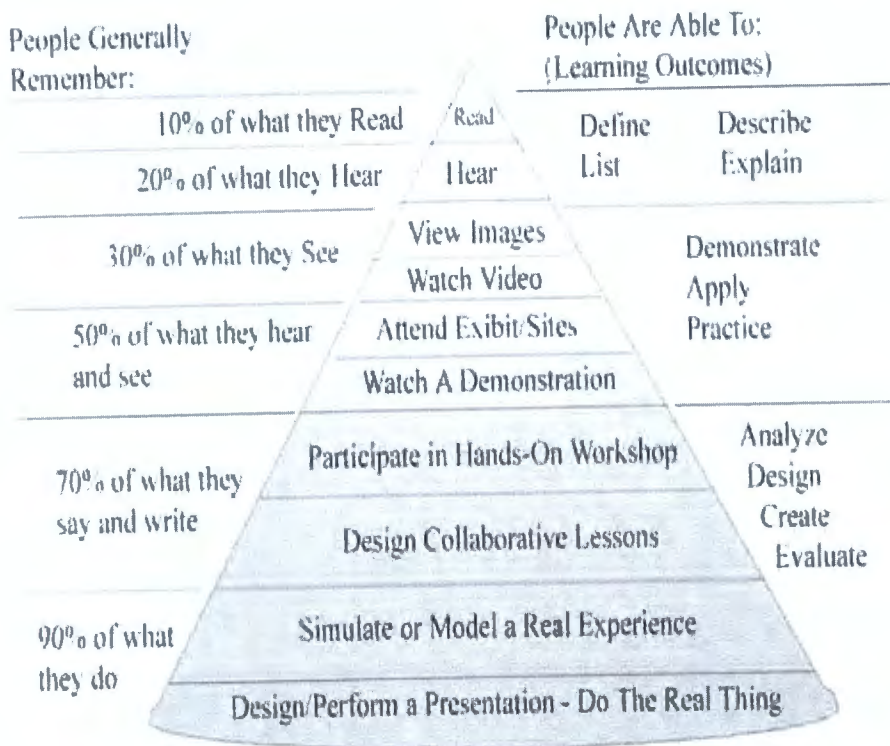


Figure 1: Cone of Learning according to Dale (1969: 13)

Figure 2:5. Diagram showing how competencies are gained

2.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, WIL was defined clearly looking at the relevant literature that is available and also a look at human resource management as a course that is provided for by institutions of higher education. The overall purpose of WIL is to enhance the employability of graduates and therefore is an important variable to be studied.

The next chapter will focus on how the researcher will go about gathering the data to be used to interpret the information obtained.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This aspect of the research project, it focuses on how the researcher conducts the research. It also discusses the research method used to collect and analyse data. The chapter also discusses the research population and the sampling technique used to gather the data.

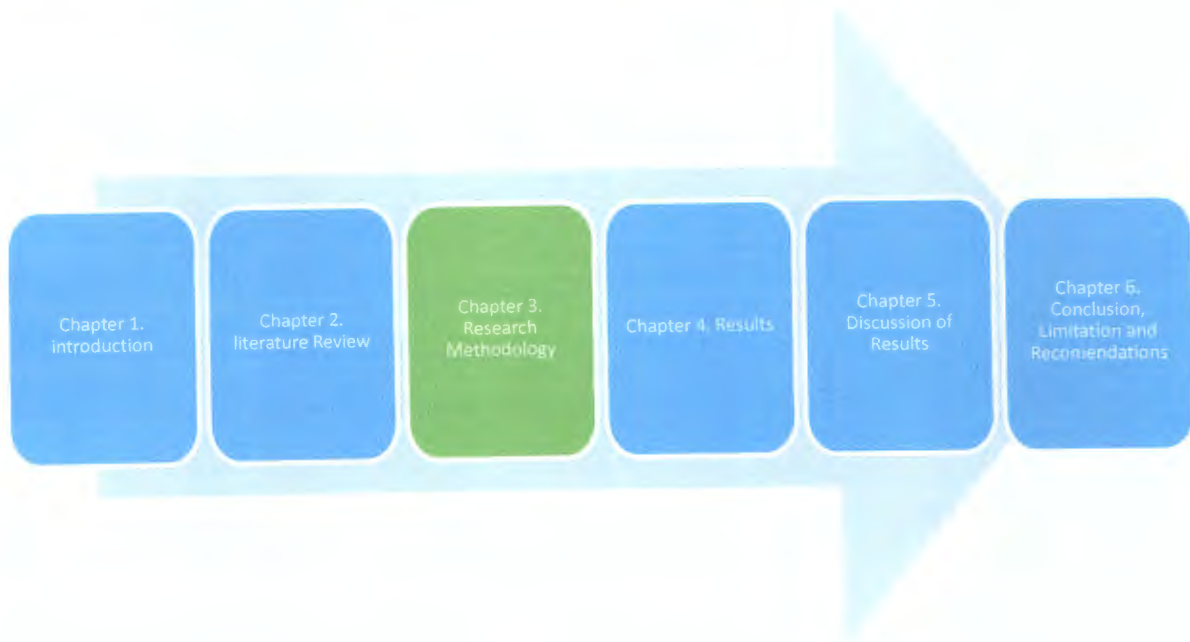


Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 in context

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM- THE PHILOSOPHY

A paradigm can be defined as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular world- view it addresses fundamental assumptions taken on faith (Maree, 2012, p. 48) while at the same time, Creswell (2013) is of the idea that a philosophy “means the use of abstract ideas and beliefs that inform our research.” Such ideas are instilled in learners during their educational training (p. 16).

Such beliefs, realities or ideas, concern the notion of Ontology (beliefs about the nature of reality)

and Epistemology (the relationship between the knower and known) on how the research should be conducted. The following section focuses on the issues discussed above and how they relate to the study.

3.2.1. Ontology

Researchers have to admit that reality can be seen from different or multiple of views and this assumption of ontology focusses on the way in which the researcher views the phenomena that are discussed in this study. (Bryman, 2012). With regard to the Ontological perspective by the researcher, Work Integrated learning should be studied not only to determine challenges but also, to look at the benefits thereof to determine which outweighs the other.

3.2.2. Epistemology

Whereas an ontological assumption is concerned about the nature of reality, epistemology assumption focuses on how the research is conducted (Bryman, 2012). According to Creswell (2013), when one is conducting a qualitative study, the researcher must get as close as possible to the participants being studied looking at epistemological assumptions. This is also the same assumption that will be followed by the researcher in the study (p. 20).

3.2.3. Modernistic Approach

The modernist paradigm was seen as the most appropriate approach for this study. The reason for this type of paradigm as Miller, Birch, Mauthner and Tessop (2012) state, is to find the 'truth', [the modernist approach] seeks progress towards enlightenment and a move towards civilisation (p. 48). Bryman and Bell (2007) coin this concept and support the authors above but they state further that modernism leads to a focus on controlling and predicting future behaviour and events to make a better, more efficient world (p. 567). WIL programmes have to be understood and the challenges and opportunities have to be understood so that people are better equipped to address future needs when coming to WIL.

3.3. DESCRIPTION OF INQUIRY STRATEGY AND BROAD RESEARCH DESIGN

3.3.1. A description of the study

This study looks at Work integrated learning in as for as it concerns to Human resource management graduates. The major focus is to determine how WIL benefits those graduates therefore, the study focuses on the opportunities and challenges that are associated with WIL. WIL is another method that can be used by Universities to teach and deliver the subject course. This type of method is different from the traditional classroom method that has been used in the past because it tried to integrate work in addition to the classroom. As it can be noted there are a few universities that apply such methods with regards to human resource management; because unlike other professions, graduates are not forced to undergo WIL.

According to Creswell (2007), “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practice that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representation, including field notes, interviews, conversation, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (p. 36). At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalist approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them.” This means that a study of this nature, one has to agree that in order for people to understand more on workplace integrated program, there is a need for participants who are human resource graduates who operate in their natural setting to determine if their employability skills up to date.

3.3.2. Characteristics of qualitative research

Creswell (2003) gives the characteristics of qualitative research. He states:

- Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site (home/ office) of the participants to conduct the research.
- Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The methods of data collection are growing, and they increasingly involve active participation by participants and sensitivity to the participants in the study.
- Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes

an interpretation of the data.

- The qualitative researcher views social phenomenon holistically. The more the complex, interactive, and encompass the narrative, the better the qualitative study.
- The qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the enquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study.
- The qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning that is multi-faceted, iterative and simultaneous.
- The qualitative researcher adopts and uses one or more strategies of enquiry as a guide for the procedures in the qualitative study (p. 181).

Karkukly (2011) states this about some of the advantages of using qualitative research, “the advantage of qualitative research is its high validity. Validity refers to the appropriateness, usefulness of inferences and accurate reflection made by the researcher upon the data which they collect. In other words, qualitative research tends to accurately measure what the researcher claims it does. However, it is often very subjective as the researcher often includes personal experience and insights as part of the relevant data thus making complete objectively impossible. The nature of a qualitative research inherently has a very low reliability in that, it is extremely difficult to replicate a piece of qualitative research because it often does not have a structured design and occurs in a natural setting that is ever changing (p. 61).

3.3.3. Case study research design

Such a study or research is a case study focusing on the concepts of work integrated learning and also looking at the human resource department as being professional.

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011), “the one shot case study design is most often used to determine whether an event, intervention or treatment (independent variable) has any effect on a group of participants (p. 146).” It also has to be noted that such a study can only take place once such intervention has taken place. The intervention used in the current study is the work integrated learning approach to determine if it has an impact on the overall employability of human resource graduates.

Below are some of the advantages and disadvantages of using a case study as adopted by Blaxter, Hughes and tight (2010);

Advantages;

- Case study data is drawn from people's experiences and practices and so it is seen to be strong in reality.
- Case study allows for generalisation from a specific instance to a more general issue.
- Case study allows the researcher to show the complexity of social life. Good case studies build on this to explore alternative meanings and interpretations.
- Case study can provide a data source from which further analyses can be made. They can, therefore be achieved for further research work.
- Because can studies build on actual practices and experiences, they can be linked to action and their insights contribute to changing practice. Indeed, case study may be a subset of a broader action research project.
- Because the data contained in case studies are close to the people's experiences, they can be more persuasive and more accessible.

Disadvantages;

- The very complexity of a case study can make analyses difficult. This is particularly so, because the holistic nature of case study means that the researcher is often very aware of the connection between various events, variables and outcomes. Accordingly, everything appears relevant. It is not, however; and to write up your case as if it does not make a good research.
- While the contextualisation of aspect of the case strengthens this form of research, it is difficult to know where 'context' begins and ends (p. 74).

3.3.4. Classification of the study's overall research

- *Empirical* - This study can be classified as empirical, as primary data was collected from the participants.
- *Basic research* - Basic research seeks to expand the knowledge of the field under study and

it is conducted to better understand certain processes and their outcomes. (Saunders et al., 2009).

- *Exploratory* - Kumar (2005) states that exploratory research aims to explore and investigate an area about which little is known.
- *Cross-sectional study design* - This design is used when a study investigates the prevalence of a certain phenomenon. Cross-sectional design entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to collect the data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This study was cross-sectional as all the participants will only be interviewed once and no follow-up interviews will take place.
- *Primary data* - Primary data refers to “data collected specifically for the research project undertaken” (Saunders et al., 2009). This type of data is seen as the most valid, informative and meaningful data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The data that was used in this study was collected specifically for this research study.
- *Qualitative data* - Qualitative data is data that is not numerical (Saunders et al., 2009). In this study the data was collected through means of interviews and no numerical data was used.

3.4. SAMPLING

Due to the cost and time, it is impossible for a researcher to gather data from the whole population; instead he or she has to use a sample. Kumar (2010) defines a sampling as the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of the unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group. A sample is a subgroup of the population you are interested in (p. 193).

3.4.1. Target population

The target population of the study includes academics as well as a focus group, which arose from a presentation that occurred in Namibia based on Academic meets business. Such are involved in the implementation of WIL with the higher education sector. This study aims to explore the opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of the above programme and therefore, our population will give the appropriate data that will be needed.

3.4.2. Unit of analyses

Unit of analyses are drawn from the population. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010) state the following about unit of analyses, he or she should be highly representative of a particular population and also such an individual should be extremely typical of the phenomena being studied (p. 193). For this study, the unit of analyses will include lecturers of human resource management that also use WIL. The other aspect will include the support staff in WIL that is cornered with Human Resource management

3.4.3. Sample size

Due to the nature of qualitative studies, it requires a smaller sample size due to its nature and complexities. Therefore, the sample size of this study will not be above 5 participants that have to be interviewed for the purpose of data collection.

3.4.4. Sampling technique

For the purpose of this study and also looking as the qualitative type of research, such a study follows the purposive type of sampling. It is defined by Bryman (2012), as a non-probability form of sampling. Does not choose the sample on a random basis, but instead, they are sampled in a strategically way so that the sample is relevant to the research question being posed (p. 418). The researcher tries to sample the population in order so that there is a variety in key characteristics in the sample towards the question posed. This type of sampling technique can also be known as judgmental sampling since the researcher uses his or her judgment to determine about which one is useful or relevant. (Babbie, 2011).

Closely associated with this type of sampling is the Stratified purposive sampling Marre (2012) whereby the researcher's selection of participants is done according to a criterion relevant to a particular field (p. 5). In this study, our major focus is on work integrated learning and as such, our sampling will focus on academics that use such program and also they have to be specific to Human Resource management.

Also this study will focus on convenient sampling technique, that is to say that participants will be available to the researcher by their virtue of accessibility. (Bryman and Bell, 2011)

3.5. PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

| Participant | Background |
|-------------|--|
| P1 | Participant one. a white female associate professor – programme manager at a South African university with a PhD in Industrial Psychology, she has been in the position for two year and has ten years’ experience in the HRM field |
| P2 | Participant two is a white female and is the executive Dean within the faculty of commerce and administration at one of the south African Universities and has been in the position for three and a half years. She has a D. Com in Human Resource Management (HRM) and has been in the HRM field since 1977. |
| P3 | Participant three is a white female Professor at a South African University and has a PhD in organisational Behaviour, she has been with the current university for 3 weeks at the time of the interview but has vast experience in the HRM field as she has been in it for the past thirty years. she is a member of the following HRM professional bodies: SABPP, AOM, AFAM, EURAM and EOWOP |
| P4 | Participant four is an Indian male and a school director of cooperative education at Polytechnic which is outside South Africa and has been in that position for two years, he has an MBA and has been in the HR field for fifteen years |
| P5 | Is a focus group (a conference that was focusing on Academic meets business). There were five participants all from different background which includes Europeans, Africans, Academics, and also Business. |

Table 3:1. Table showing the list of Participants

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

The data on this research will be collected by the use of semi- structured interviews between the participant and the researcher. Bryman (2012) defines this type of interview as a term that covers a wide range of instances. It typically refers to a content in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. The questions are frequently more general in their frame of reference from that typically found in a structured interview schedule. Also, the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies (p. 212).

3.7. PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The first step in the collection process is that, the researcher has to schedule a meeting with the participants. Such interviews will be scheduled according to their availability and when they are suitable for the interview. Merriam (2009) defines an interview as a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation and focuses on questions related to the research study. (p. 87) this can either be on an one on one basis or with a focus group whereby as the above author states, a focus group in qualitative research data collection, here, the interview occurs between the interviewer and a group on people that are have knowledge on the topic. (p. 93)

During the interviews, the will researcher explains the research topic and the expected outcomes of the interview and the participants' role in the process. For recording processes, there was a need to record the interview therefore a recorder will be presented.

A list of questions is prepared by the researcher upon which the respondents have to reply to those questions. Thereafter the participants are given a consent form that they have to sign as per the standards of the research ethics.

On the aspect of Participant 5, the focus group, there was a conference that took place in Windhoek (Namibia) that focused on academia meets Business. The researcher got responses from the presentation and discussions that were discussed on the conference.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION AND STORING OF DATA

In the interviews that are scheduled, there is an open ended type of questionnaire that will be given to the participants.

Below are the advantages and disadvantages of using the open type of questions to collect your data;

- Open ended questions provide in depth information if used in an interview by an experienced interviewer. In a questionnaire, open ended questions can provide a wealth of information provided respondents feel comfortable about expressing their opinions and are fluent in the language used. On the other hand, analysis of open ended questions is more difficult. The researcher usually needs to go through another process –content analysis in order to clarify the data.
- In a questionnaire, open ended questions provide respondents with the opportunity to express themselves freely, resulting in a greater variety of information, thus respondents are not conditioned by having to select answers from a list. The disadvantage of free choice is that, in a questionnaire, some respondents may not be able to express themselves and so information can be lost.
- An open ended question allows respondents to express themselves freely, they virtually eliminate the possibility of investigator bias (investigator bias is introduced through the response pattern presented to respondents) on the other hand, there is a greater chance of interviewer bias in open ended questions, (Kumar, 2011, p.153).

For the purpose of storing the data, recordings used during the semi- structured interview and the data will be transcribed data and will be kept safely in a locked data storage cabinet. Further, Creswell (2013) suggests that the following should be done to store that data collected: always develop backup copies of computer files; use high- quality tapes for audio- recording information during interviews. Also, make sure that the size of the tapes fits that transcriber machine; develop a master list of types of information gathered; protect the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data; develop a data collection matrix as a visual means of locating and identifying information for a study (p. 175).

3.9. DATA ANALYSES

Qualitative data is data that is not quantified meaning that there is no use for numbers. However, Bryman (2012) is seen as a theory that is derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. He further argues that data collection, analysis and theory are closely related (p. 387).

In this type of method, the focus is on the content analyses of the data collected. In other words, Schreier (2012) states that one assign successive part of your materials into categories of your coding frame. The authors further describe the steps that should be followed when analysing such data:

Step 1: deciding on your research question.

Step 2: selecting your material.

Step 3: building a coding frame.

Step 4: dividing your material into units of coding.

Step 5: trying out your coding frame.

Step 6: evaluating and modifying you coding frame.

Step 7: main analysis.

Step 9: interpreting and presenting your findings (p. 1).

3.10. DATA VERIFICATION

To ensure the data is accurate, after transcribing the data, it is sent to the participants so they can read and certify that it is a true representation of their sentiments or expressions.

3.11. ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

With reference to qualitative research methods, it is worth noting that when evaluating one has to

have alternatives that can be used to replace reliability as well as validity. Lincoln and Guba as cited in Bryman and Bell (2012) gives us the following alternatives that can be used, credibility and trustworthiness as well as transferability. To gain the trust of the participants, their identity will remain anonymous (p. 395).

3.11.1. Credibility and trustworthiness

Credibility can be ensured through implementing the research according to the canons of good practice and submitting findings to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the investigator has correct and understood that social world. Therefore, in the current study, the transcript is given to the participants to ensure that they are correct. (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

3.11.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent or degree to which research findings can be applied or generalised in another study. (Bryman, 2012) Transferability as Thietart (2007) noted, is concerned with both, work that assesses the potential to extrapolate research into other observational fields, and researchers who incorporate into their own research approach results imported from a different domain to that in which they are studying (p. 214).

3.12. RESEARCH ETHICS

De Vos, Strdom, Fouche and Delpont (2011) say this about ethics, “the term ethics implies preferences that influence behaviour in human relations, conforming to a code of participants, the rule of conduct, the responsibility of the researcher and the standards of the conduct of a given profession.” There are two categories that are attached to ethical considerations being: responsibility to the participant, human and non-human, and also responsibility to the discipline of science to be accurate and honest in the reporting of the research.

Some of the ethical issues considered in this research include; avoidance of harm to participants, voluntary participation, informed consent, there will be no deception of the subjects and /or

participants, no violation of privacy/ anonymity/ confidentiality, no denial of treatment, no compensation, debriefing of participants, the researcher will try to act in a competence manner, and finally for the cooperation with contributors and sponsors (p.113).

3.10. CONCLUSION

The chapter above gave a guideline on the qualitative method of research that is used in the study. To ensure that one understands the concept of WIL and also its challenges and opportunities, one has to follow the qualitative route in order to fully understand how participants that use WIL cope with the challenges.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the findings that the researcher got from the participants. It also attempts to make sense of the response from the participants. In a qualitative study, there is no use of numbers and therefore, the data is analysed by the use of themes.

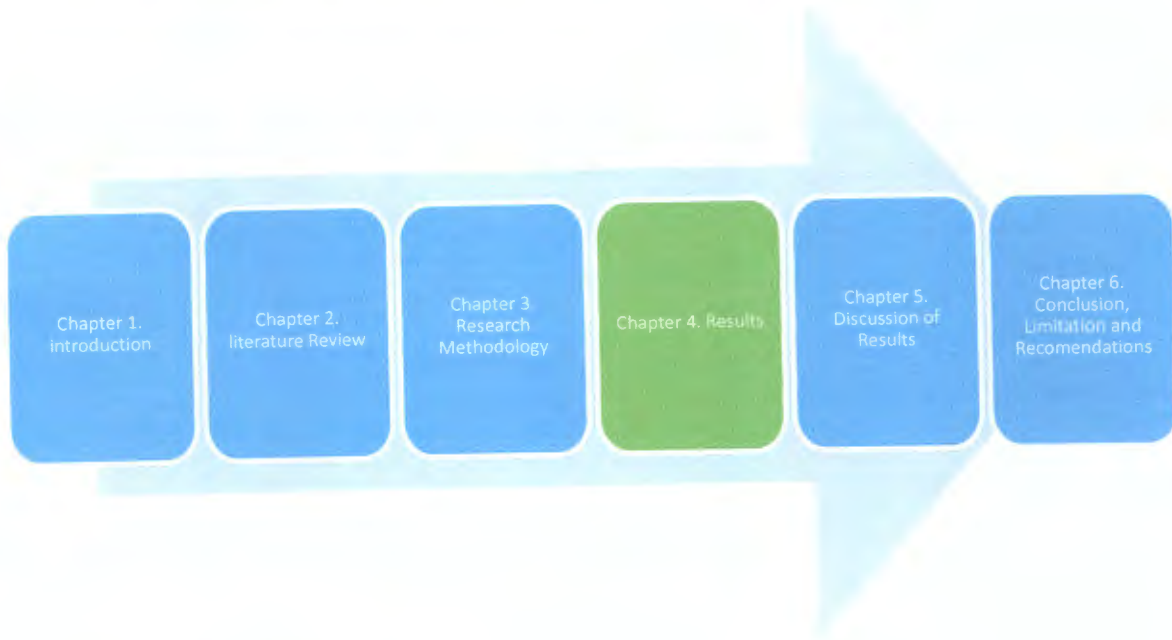


Figure 4.1: chapter 4 in context

4.2. IDENTIFYING STATEMENT RELATING TO THE TOPIC

Through the use of the interviews, the researcher was able to gather the data. As it has been noted in the above chapter, an open ended type of questionnaire was used and therefore, the response was unstructured. The following process was used to analyse the data as suggested by Hahn, 2009.

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | Theoretical concept | Emerges from saturated category and themes |
| Axial/ thematic coding | Level 3 coding | Previous coding is studied to |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| | | develop a highly refined theme |
| Focused coding, category development | Level 2 coding | Reexamines level1 codes and further focuses the data |
| Initial coding/ opening coding | Level 1 coding | Large quantities of raw data are focused and labeled during level 1 coding. |

Coding process for descriptive purposes adopted from Hahn (2009).

From the initial response from the participants, there were statements that were identified that relate to the research objective (table 4.1 shows this statements)

Table 4.1: initial statements identified in data

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Ensures curriculum is up to standard | Corporate can invest to institution | Gain employability skills |
| Career planning | Practical application | Job creation |
| Train student to become anything | Reduces cost on recruitment etc | Effective succession planning |
| Not documented effectively | Difficulty in turning theory to application | Mentorship |
| Lack of resources | Competency of academics | Lack of co- operation |
| Curriculum development | Feedback on curriculum issues not acted in time | Costly to industry |
| Not Talking to each other | | |
| Go and do some practical's somewhere | Application of theory | Application of theory in the real work environment |
| Preparations of students going out into the workplace | Assessment thereof | Exposure to technical side of things |

A total of 25 statements that were identified, were then grouped into themes and this is summarised in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: themes identified from the response

| Initial Statement | Main Theme Identified | Description |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go and do some practical's • Application of theory • Application of theory in the Real World Environment • Exposure to technical side of things | Definition of Work Integrated Learning | Factors that can be seen as defining Work integrated learning |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of students going out into the workplace • Assessment thereof | Components of Work Integrated Learning | Factors that can be seen as Components of Work Integrated learning |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures curriculum is up to standard • corporate can invest to institution | Benefit of WIL (Sub theme focusing on the benefit of WIL to the Academic Institution) | Factors that can be viewed as a benefit to the implementation of WIL |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain employability skills | Benefits of WIL (sub theme focusing on the benefits on the students) | Factors that can be viewed as a benefit to the implementation of WIL |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career planning • Practical application • Job creation | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train students to become anything they want • Reduces cost on recruitment • Effective succession planning | Benefits of WIL (sub theme focusing on the benefits on the employers | Factors that can be viewed as a benefit to the implementation of WIL. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not documented effectively • Difficulty in turning theory to application • Mentorship • Lack of resources • Competency of academics • Lack of co operation • Curriculum development • Feedback on curriculum issues not acted in time • Costly to industry | Challenges of WIL | Factors that can be viewed as a challenge to the implementation of WIL |

4.3. FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These research questions are based on the definition of Work Integrated Learning, benefits and challenges that encountered with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning within the human resource environment.

4.3.1. RESPONSE RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Table 4.3: DEFINITION OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

| Definition of WIL | Participant |
|---|-------------|
| Application of theory | P4, P3 |
| Go and do some practical's | P2 |
| Exposure to technical side of things And gain Competencies | P1, P2 |

Work Integrated Learning can be seen as a situation whereby the students do some practicals somewhere in the industry.

work integrated learning means that you go and do some practicals somewhere so you will have to do certain things like a project where you can say you go do an analysis of organisational structure or what is the ideal balance between line and support in an organisation. (P2)

Work Integrated Learning can also be seen as the application of theory.

Work integrated learning is the application of theory. Where it happens doesn't really matter, it is the application of theory in the real world. (P4)

The technikons are much better in preparing students because of the practical side. With university students, the people come in with a lot of theory but then they do not know what to do with it. There is not a balance between theory and practical. (P3)

Work Integrated Learning can be seen also as a way in which students get exposure to technical

aspects of things and gain Competencies.

They have practical simulation exercises for the students but they do that through work integrated learning, where students then get exposure to the more technical side of things. (P1)

They must be able, but one thing having knowledge of something, but can you apply and that for me is competence. Ok so it's right if I say to you that I have got the knowledge of HRM, but can I conduct an interview. Can I develop a training programme? Those are the competencies that acquire the student to apply the knowledge in the workplace. (P2)

4.3.2. RESPONSES RELATING TO THE BENEFITS OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Such benefits can be divided into three categories and they are, benefits to the Academic Institution, benefits to the individual students as well as the benefits to the employer.

Table 4.4: BENEFIT TO THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

| Benefit to the Academic Institution | Participant |
|--|--------------------|
| Ensures curriculum is up to standard | P1, P4 |
| Corporate can invest resources to the individual universities | P1 |

The major benefit to the Academic institution is that such institution's curriculum is always up the standard in terms of what the industry is looking for in the individual students.

What is nice for us academics, it gives us an opportunity to make sure our curriculum is really up to scratch. (P1)

At higher education perspective the benefits are huge and you are forced to keep your curriculum relevant because the industry is doing something that you are not doing. (P4)

Another participant came up to the conclusion that once relationships are established between the industry and the Academic institution, there can be a room whereby the industry can invest to the resources of the Institute.

In corporate, there is a lot of benefits, I speak now from experience... one university I worked for got a sponsorship for 1.5 million to upgrade their lecturing halls. (P1)

Table 4.5: BENEFIT TO THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

| Benefit to the student | Participant |
|---|-------------|
| Get employability skills therefore become more employable | P4, P1 |
| Career planning | P1 |
| Practical application of theory | P2 |
| Job creation | P3 |

The important factor that Work Integrated learning benefits the student is that they gain employability and therefore can be easily employed.

The benefit is that my student has more up to date information and therefore they will be more employable. (P4)

I definitely think that WIL can enhance the employability of HRM student. (P1)

Work Integrated learning also encourages the student to plan their career accordingly.

All the students can build on their net on what's important, and able to do career planning very well. (P1)

Work integrated learning also brings practical application of the theory the student learn in the classroom.

It gives you an idea of the real world and that is a good benefit... when I taught my student, we did salary administration, we take the process of applicant's CV, we take SARS statements, UIF and

they must compile a salary slip.

(P2)

Work Integrated learning also creates room for Job Creation

Once higher learning institutions and business move closer, they can start talking about job creation opportunities.

(P3)

Table 4.6: BENEFITS TO THE EMPLOYER

| Benefits to employer | Participants |
|--|---------------------|
| Train students to become anything they want | P1 |
| Cost reduction on recruitment and selection processes | P4 |
| Effective succession planning | P4 |

Work integrated learning gives the employer the opportunity to train the student to become whatever they want the student to become.

The employer will get to know the person and they can train them into whatever they want them to be. According to their organisational goals and it is redeemed.

(P1)

Work Integrated learning is also able to assist the employer to lower the cost of recruitment and selection.

Cost reduction on employment is an important one in the recruitment and selection phase and it is much more effective as you have an exposure period with your student and then you are able access if you want to make the appointment or not.

(P4)

Work integrated learning also benefits the employer in terms of succession planning.

Standard response is going to be delivered capacity to employers that allow them talent pipeline, allows for effective succession planning.

(P4)

4.3.3. RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHALLENGES OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Table 4.7: CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

| Challenges of work integrated learning | Participants |
|---|--------------------|
| Not documented effectively | P4, P5 |
| Difficulty in turning theory to application | P1, P4, P3 |
| Mentorship | P4, P1, P2, P3, P5 |
| Lack of resources (eg Computers, funding etc) | P1, P3, P4, P5 |
| Competencies of academics | P1, P5 |
| Lack of co-operation (between universities, industry, government and professional bodies) | P5, P4, P3, P1 |
| Curriculum development | P3, P4, P5 |
| Feedback on curriculum issues | P5, P4, P3 |
| Costly to industry | P4, P3 |

One of the major and primary challenges to Work integrated learning is mentorship.

We don't have budget to support them, mentorship while student's dialogue manages students ability to add technology in order to compile e. portfolio. (P4)

You have an internship programme where the students get allocated mentors... there are challenges but they get to know this person and walk a path with the person. (P1)

Training must be done on mentoring. It is expensive but it can be done. (P2)

They must have a program to mentor graduates. Resources must be put in place. (P3)

Industry need information on how to mentor the students coming to us as we know we are winning but don't have the skills. (P5)

Another challenge to the implementation of work integrated learning is also the lack of co-operation between the institutes that have to be involved with the full implementation of the program.

Linkage in academic and professional bodies was also a very critical point... there is indeed a gap between what our industries and communities are asking for... industry go to university and what do they see- handicap, obstacles, problems etc... In universities, they play the leading role in order to discern on what they think of this and in the case of other professions they also need industry alignment. (P5)

If you talk to corporate, their complains has always been the fact that they are not participating in the progress of curriculum by higher institutes, on the other hand, higher education are complaining that you guys are not coming forth. Not talking to each other, communication. (P5)

Traditionally academics don't relate well to employers... the need to consult a professional body. (P4)

Higher learning institutions and businesses must move nearer to each other. They must start talking to each other.. (P3)

I think the government also needs to get a wakeup call. (P1)

Another challenge that came up from the participant has to do with the development of a curriculum that incorporate Work Integrated learning, to ensure that the relevant skills and competencies are impacted to the human resource graduate.

Therefore the organisation should also give some sort of training and information for higher

education institutes on what they should teach. (P3)

So that becomes a challenge because they need to be consulted at curriculum stage, and often that doesn't happen... the challenge comes in terms of academics being unable to formalise curriculum (P4)

The role of the industry in prescribed textbooks and how we engage them and that the English teacher be part of not just the curriculum development but also the textbook admin. (P5)

Another challenge that has been noted by the participant is concern on the issue that it is difficult for the student to convert the theory into application when it comes to the Work Integrated aspect. In other words, students are taught a lot theory.

We give them the theoretical stuff, but we need to train them on how to do this practically. (P1)

Sometimes the real world does not demand what you were taught in class... you can place an HR student anywhere but the application context is so different and often I find higher education institutions did not even identify or articulate. (P4)

We give students a lot of theory and now they do not know what to do with that. (P3)

There is also a challenge when it comes to the lack of resources that can be used for Work Integrated learning. Such resources can range from a number of instances from giving out stipends to the provision of computers at the workplace, or even telephones.

But the other thing also from the university side is that we don't have the resources to do that, and that is a big thing. We as lecturers say we want to do it, of course, but we have limited resources and that is frustrating. (P1)

Resources must be put in place by universities to enhance employability of graduates. It's a plan that must be put into place. (P3)

You have to have resources like furniture; computers and telephones for them... some need to go outside of Windhoek to apply yet there is no budget to support that (P4)

Does the organisation have financial allocation for training to actually allocate a certain amount of their money not to be already in staff but to say here is a certain amount of money to the university for the graduate who is going to spend some time with us? Some of them have a problem with something like as a taxi or lunch money (P5)

There are also the challenges that arise due to the fact that the Work Integrated Learning programme has to be documented more effectively.

It is not documented effectively. (P4)

Industry needs feedback forms; they need template for mentorship. (P5)

There is also a concern when it comes to the competencies of the Academic staff in delivering Work Integrated Learning. This is referred to as the school syndrome, where by Academic staff does not have experience of what the industry wants in terms of skills.

Many of them have never been in corporate and many of them are not even interested to know what is going on in corporate. (P1)

Professors should spend 5 years at the university and maybe 3 years in the industry and this speeds them up to understanding the real world. (P5)

Another challenge that was highlighted has to do with the fact that even though the curriculum is developed, the feedback on it takes a long time and therefore it is difficult to act on time

With regards to the process of curricula, we have every program needing to go back to our standards for reviewing every 3 years. Curricula exercises is done on a 3 year basis. Any new changes and new development in the industry with no qualification grants for a period of more than 3 years. It does not create a lot of potential instability in the program, good instability and the kind of instability that causes growth. (P4)

Education is business. To develop a curriculum takes three years and another 12 to 21 months per senate approval. How does change work in business and how long does it takes? Every minute business is changing and then we say sorry senate has not approved yet. (P5)

In the three year period of a degree, there is not enough time to give practical's. (P3)

Another challenge that was noted by the researcher was the fact that Work Integrated learning is costly and therefore, expensive to the industry.

There is benefits attached to it and there is constrains as it cost the company to take a student because you have to have resources, like furniture, computers and telephone for them. (P4)

4.4. CONCLUSION

The data was analysed and the findings were reported in the chapter, the process that was used is the one discussed above by Hahn, wherein the response was read to and important statements were identified. Level 1 coding, from the statements were analysed and themes had to be concluded from the initial statements given. Themes that were identified include benefits and challenges of Work Integrated learning. The benefits were divided into sub-themes and therefore, focusing on benefits to students, to the University as well as to the employer. The findings were then discussed according to the direct quotes from each and every participant.

The participants concluded as follows;

On the definition of Work Integrated Learning, it can be seen as a way of applying theory into the real work environment, whereby the individual involved goes and do some practical work and get exposed to the technical side of things.

On the Benefits of Work Integrated Learning, such can be subdivided into three. That being benefits to the Student, the Academic Institution and the Organisations that employ the student. This include; ensuring curriculum is up to date, corporate are able to invest in the academic institution, gain employability skills, career planning, practical application, job creation, and that organisations are able to train students to become anything they want them to be, reduced costs on recruitment, effective succession planning.

However there are also challenges to Work Integrated Learning this include but not limited to, Not documented effectively, Difficulty in turning theory to application, Mentorship, Lack of resources (eg Computers, funding etc), Competencies of academics, Lack of co-operation (between universities, industry, government and professional bodies, Curriculum development, Feedback on curriculum issues, Costly to industry.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION ON RESULTS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings that were noted in the above chapter. These findings are used to confirm or reject the research aims, objectives and hypothesis. In order to achieve the above statement, the research question is restated and then a discussion based on the response is provided

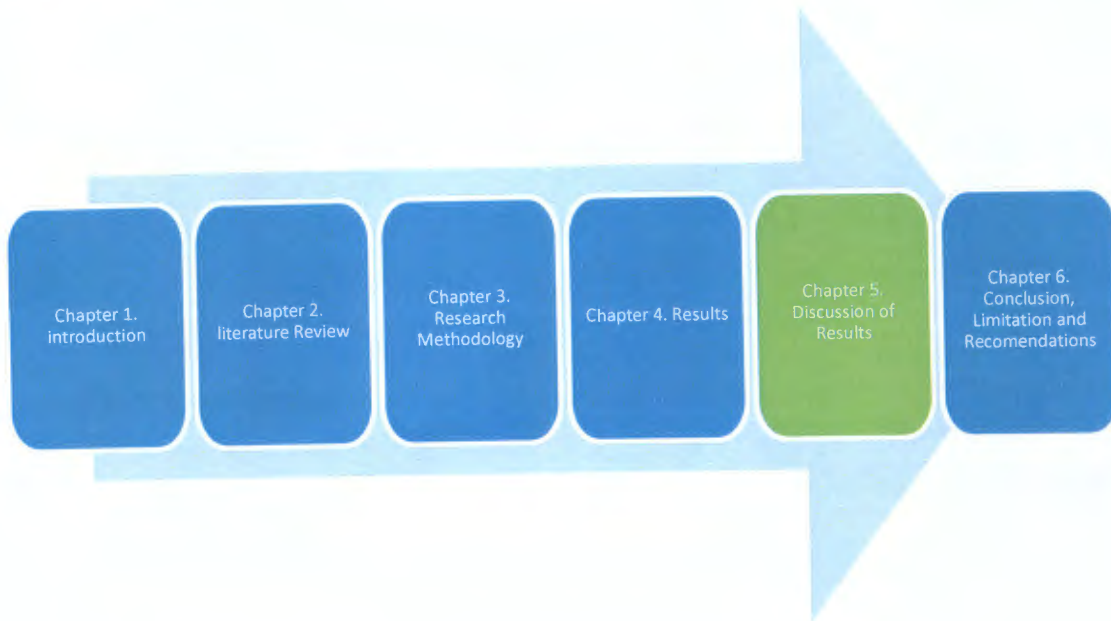


Figure 5.1: chapter 4 in context

5.1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What is Work Integrated Learning?

The participant's response to this question was that Work Integrated Learning has to do with the Application of theory into practice (P4). As well, (P2) discovered that in WIL, the student has to

move from one set up, which is the classroom to another setup, which is the work place in order to do practical's. This is in line with the criteria as laid down in the South Africa, the Council of Higher Education 2011 states that coming up with a definition of WIL, it suggests WIL is an umbrella term to describe a curricular, pedagogic and assessment practices. Across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. One can come to the conclusion that therefore, WIL is about integrating theories that are learned in the classroom together with the practical application of those theories that can be offered in the workplace setup.

On elaborating the statements above, the University of South Africa came up with criteria's of determining work integrated learning, focusing on the application of authentic, work based context, P2 covered the definition of WIL, in that the student moves from the classroom to a practical situation. Although it has to be noted that WIL does not only occur in the work Environment only.

The other definition as produced by participant 4, has to do with the application of theory. Such a description is as the heart of the definition of WIL in that there has to be an integration of theory into practical situation. Further, Grant MacEwan University are also in support of the statement. WIL refers to experiential learning activities that integrate theoretical learning and its application.

P2 also suggests that WIL has to do with how a graduate goes about getting competencies. Based on the Pyramids given in chapter 2, one notices that people are able to remember 90% of what is simulated or modeled or having a real experience in other words, to do the real thing, and WIL is able to give people the extra advantage because they go out to do the real work.

5.1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the benefits associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning?

The results show that there are benefits that can be attached to the implementation of work integrated learning. There were a number of benefits to the implementation of Work Integrated Learning and they can be divided into three sub themes.

Benefits to the academic institute

Here, as can be noted by the response in that through WIL, higher education institutions are kept up to date when it comes to their curriculum development. According to the Council of Higher Education 2011, there are three different fields that should be present in the development of a curriculum on WIL. They include the academic field, the education field and as well as the professional field. Curriculum should be more focussed on the professional field and therefore, the Council suggest that academic staff select professional concepts and skills for their students to study, they device methods of teaching and assessment that are appropriate to the students' professional development. In so doing, the students learn concepts and skills that are professionally oriented and therefore are easily employed.

But it also has to be noted that the co-operation between all the stakeholders is a problem and this therefore, can also lead to the problem in curriculum development, because the realistic situation occurs when all the parties are on the same boat.

Another benefit that has been highlighted under this sub theme also has to do with the issues of investment. The participant went on to give the institution the amount of 1.5 million to establish a lecture hall. This would also be the benefit as when both the academic and business can more close together but as we will see later, such a relationship is still hard to connect, and this is stated by the South African Green Paper for Post School and Education in 2012 that the relationship is indeed weak.

As it can be noted however is that WIL fosters the partnership between the two (Academic Institutions and Employers), and this could assist in keeping curriculum issues up to standard. Smith (2012) also shares this opinion, he states as follows “ WIL fosters a partnership between higher education and the industry mores o in the aspect of curriculum development, which can meet the demands of all the stakeholders.

Benefit to the Student involved

Various benefits were raised by the participants and they include gaining employability skills. The real situation as stated by statistics South Africa in 2013 in the second quarter, is as follows: In a population of about 4.4 million of people who were unemployed, 6.2% (about 272 000 people) are in possession of tertiary certificates but are unemployable. By employability we refer to a set of

achievement, understanding and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation (Knight and York, 2004). In interpreting the response, if graduates were to have more employability skills, it means that there would be less individuals that are in the unemployed bracket thus those graduates would get meaningful employment. (See also Vakalisa) where they share the same sentiments, but also one can also mention that students are able to gain what can be termed as Technical as well as Soft skills to enhance their chances.

Another benefit as noted by the participant is that the student would be able to plan their career more effectively. By career planning one means the individual's outlining future career development and their setting and pursuing career goals (Zikic and Klehe, 2006). The student will know what is important in order for them to plan and develop their career more effectively. By Career development as Greenhaus, Callanan and Goldshalk (2010) suggests, it is the ongoing process by which individual's progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relative unique set of issues, themes and tasks. Students are able to plan for those issues and themes as they progress on their specific careers they have chosen and are also able to plan for challenges.

Another benefit is due to fact that WIL allows for practical application of theory in the real world. This is due to the very existence of WIL, when one defines WIL, the University of South Africa, state that WIL refers to experiential learning activities that integrate the theoretical learning with its application in the workplace. A conclusion on the definition of the concept is that it has to do with the application of theory in the workplace. And in so doing, this will benefit the student because there is not much learning of theory without making sense of everything. Such an argument is also supported by the participants as to the fact that universities teach too much theory without practice and therefore it is equally important that student get to practice what they have learnt. But also one can mention the student are able to gain what can be termed as professional competencies as defined by McNamara (2013:184) which focuses on the professional knowledge and skills that the students benefit

The last benefit as noted by the participant is that WIL also help the student with Job creation. Such a benefit can be attached to the one mentioned above that focuses on gaining of employability skills.

Benefits to the employer

The last aspect in the discussion on the benefits of WIL is with regards to the employer. Employers are also able to benefit from WIL in that then are able to train the employee to become anything they want them to be. As the participant has stated it, organisations know what their goals are and will be able to push the students into achieving those goals. Also worth noting is that organisations operate in different industries and therefore, such organisations can be able to train student on that industry they focus upon.

Another Benefit as noted by the participant is that Work Integrated Learning to the employer is that, it is able to reduce cost on recruitment, selection and also induction. These are some of the duties that fall within the Human resource Department. By recruitment, it is a way in which as organisation advertise to the public about a vacancy and selection occurs once recruitment has taken place whereby the ideal candidate has to be chosen to fill in the vacant post in induction, here the organisation tries to orient the new employee into the workplace (Armstrong,2011). In WIL, the organisation can suspend such duties because the student will already be there and therefore decreasing the expenses, because money will not be wasted on advertising, interviewing etc.

5.1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What are the challenges associated with the implementation of work integrated learning?

There were a lot of challenges that were identified by the participants and can be noted due to their responses. It has to be noted that some of the challenges are related to one another.

One of the most important challenges has to do with mentorship. The sole purpose of a mentor is to provide the mentee with support, assistance and guidance with regard to learning opportunities. (Copeling,2013). In the workplaces where such students are placed, there have to be a mentor who will be able to assist the student but as the response, mentorship is a challenge either because they

are not trained properly to mentor effectively. The Mentor also has the responsibility of compiling some of the documents that are needed to access the students, performance and therefore have to be careful in their execution of the responsibility. Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda and Nel (2012: 234) give us the most important qualities of a mentor, they say it is an experienced and trusted advisor and therefore if the mentor fall short of this two qualities, it can be a challenge. But they also give us the idea that in the workplace, there are two sets of mentoring programmes being the formal and the informal one. In WIL emphases is on the Formal type of mentorship whereby there are written policies and practices that exist in the organization.

Another major challenge to the implementation of WIL is due to the fact that, there is still a lack of co-operation within the stakeholders that are involved in WIL. Such stakeholders include the Higher Education Institute, the Employer, Government and Professional Bodies. And this brings us to the issue of who is the actual driver of the whole process? The different participants gave different views, for example, P4 says that the education institute should be the one that drives such a process because WIL on its own is a course and marks are attributed to it and therefore unfair to ask the student to drive the process. P5, say that, the society is the real drivers of WIL because the society has the responsibility of coming up with policies and such policies can include Work integrated learning. The South African Green Paper For Post School Education and Training in 2012 also highlight that there is a weak link between industry and also the Universities, wish is evident in the fact that about 65% of the college student that need WIL are unable to find workplace to complete their WIL. This is further emphasised by P4, academics don't relate well to industry. The South African Board of People Practice, as the custodian of Human Resource Practitioners also has a role to play enabling WIL. An example, in Industrial psychology, which can be seen as a sister to Human resource management, practitioners have to work for a number of years before they can be registered with the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA) which states as follows on their website “ the Council guides and and regulates the Health profession in the country in aspects pertaining to registration, education and training, professional conduct and ethical behavior, ensuring continuing professional development, and fostering compliance with health care standards. All individuals who practice any of the health care professions incorporates in the scope of the HPCSA are obliged by the Health Professions Act no 56 of 1974, to register with the council. Failure to do so is a criminal offence. ([http:// www.hpcsa.co.za/About.](http://www.hpcsa.co.za/About))

Another challenge identified by the respondents is the issue of curriculum development. The

curriculum according to the Council on Higher Education, code of good practice has to be shaped by the professional's field or the industry. In other words, theories and assessment have to have an input from the industry. But this as noted is hard to achieve because another challenge has to do with lecturer either not coming from the industry or lecturers not being interested to know what's happening in the industry. This leads to the problem that lectures become unaware of which skills are needed by the industry.

In the traditional education classroom way, students are taught a lot of theory upon which they find it difficult to convert into practice. Such a challenge can be linked to the one above in that lectures are not interested in knowing what is happening in the industry. P1 noted that some lecturers are teaching using a text book that is twenty years old, and how that is frustrating. This is contrary to the attitude of P5 which believe that industry is changing every minute and therefore this causes the problem in which students learn theory that is not up to date and therefore, find it difficult to turn to practice in a work environment that is constantly changing.

There is also a major challenge in the implementation of WIL and that is with regards to the lack of resources that are needed for the existence of WIL. Such resources range from a number of issues that may include stipends, because some student is from different geographical areas to the provision of equipment by the workplace. P1 noted that the issue of resources is a crisis and also frustrates them because they cannot work effectively. Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Webb, Fletcher and Pretto (2008) noted that there has to be equal access to WIL, but where resources are lacking, only those that are able to afford will have access to WIL and the others won't.

Another challenge as can be noted by the response is the problem of academics failing to act on time when it comes to curriculum issues. P5 state that this is how a Curriculum is approved, developing a curriculum takes about three years, and then it has to go to the senate that can take about 12 to 21 months to approve. And once all that has taken place, students spend three years in a university to get their Degree so all in all, to develop and test a curriculum takes almost seven years. This is contrary to the idea that business is evolving every minute and therefore need new skills and competencies to keep up with their goals.

5.2. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings that were analysed in chapter 4 were discussed with the view of understanding what the respondents said and how they view the phenomenon of Work Integrated Learning for Human Resource Management Graduates and the benefits and challenges of such a programme. In the next chapter, the researcher will try to come up with the recommendations to resolve such challenges so that Work Integrated Learning can then be applied smoothly for Human Resource Management Graduates.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

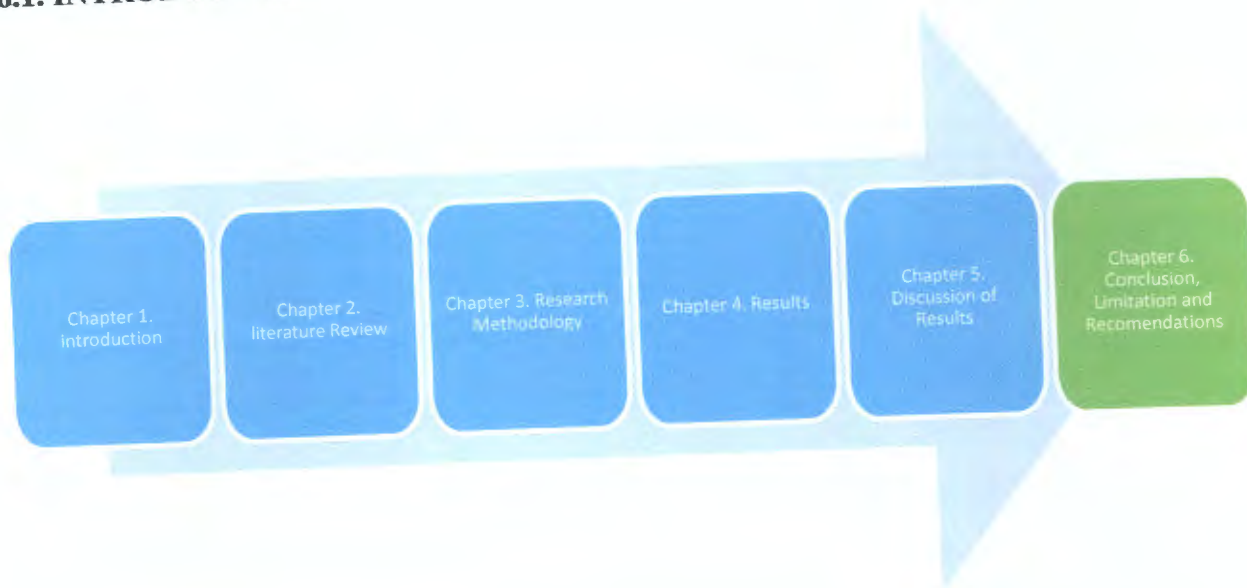


Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 in context.

This is the final chapter in the entire research. This chapter looks at the overview of the study, the conclusion that can be drawn from the literature and also conclusion from the findings, it will also focus on the limitation and finally the recommendation will be discussed.

6.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The following section of the chapter focuses on the purpose of the study, the research objective as well as the concepts of the overall research.

6.2.1. Purpose of the study

The purpose of such a study was to determine what is Work Integrated Learning and also to look

at the challenges and benefits of it with regards to Human Resource Management Graduates.

6.2.2. Research objectives

The research objectives were:

- To define Work Integrated Learning
- To examine the benefits associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning
- To examine the challenges associated with the implementation of Work Integrated Learning

Learning

6.2.3. Content of the study

CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on introduction of the variables that were used throughout the research project. For the purpose of this study, our variables were, work integrated learning, and how they can assist Human Resource management graduates focusing on the benefits, challenges of Work Integrated Learning.

CHAPTER2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the research is known as the reviewing of literature, also the theories and other research that were done about the topic were reviewed and also discussed in this section.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter looked at how data was gathered and which method of research was used in order for the researcher to carry out the study. Also population and sampling was discussed and how was data be interpreted.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSES

After the Data was collected, this chapter focused on the findings of such data and it had to be

broken down into themes and then analysed.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Findings recorded in chapter four, were discussed using the literature that has been clearly discussed in chapter two. This chapter is important to check if our objectives as discussed in chapter one can be addressed.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Here, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed in details. Recommendations are used so that scholars wishing to carry on with this research can know where to expand and also which aspects need further clarifications.

6.3. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THIS STUDY

The conclusion that can be drawn from the question as to the definition of Work Integrated Learning, one must say it is important to determine exactly what is meant by the term. The term is used to as a programme to a certain discipline to integrate theory into practice, or practical situation. There are policies that try to give a definition and in our case we can refer to the South African Society for Cooperative Education, The Council on Higher Education and also borrow from The University of South Africa, all these policies came up with definitions' of Work Integrated learning upon which, the most common elements between them is that Work Integrated learning has to do with applying theory into practice. It might not necessarily be in the workplace but the industry is the best place to ensure that students are able to apply the theory.

Conclusions that can be drawn from the benefits of Work Integrated Learning, it has to be noted though that such benefits arise when there is a direct link between the University and the Industry to ensure that Work integrated Learning occurs and operates in a smooth manner. As indicated earlier, students need to have a return on investment on their investment in education, and at the same time, universities' reputation is at stake, therefore it is important to get employed or are

employable after university. The benefits were broken down into subthemes.

- The University benefits from Work Integrated Learning in several ways. Work Integrated Learning has to do with applying theory and therefore this helps the institution to have curriculum that is relevant to the profession as well as to the workplace. The reason for this is that, curriculum is shaped by both the industry and the academic institution. The other benefit that can occur is as a result in terms of investments by the industry to the university. That is why it is important to establish an Advisory/ liaison committee whose duties as suggested by South African Society for Cooperative education is to provide recommendations to the authorities within the governing structure of the university about external environment, being the labour market and this has a bearing on curriculum. (Lundall, 2003).

- Students also benefit from Work Integrated learning in that they are able to get employability skills. In order for students to be employable though, Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007) suggest that the student should have the following: a career development learning, experience, degree subject knowledge, skills and understanding, generic skills and emotional intelligence. Work Integrated learning can assist the graduate to gain some of these competencies to enhance their chances of gaining meaningful employment. And also to get their return on investment in education. Other Benefits as noted by the participants included career planning a situation whereby as a student, one is able to plan and develop his or her career and is able to come up with goals that have to be achieved. At the heart of Work Integrated Learning is the Application of Theory into practise. This does also benefit the student in that they are able to see what is learnt in the classroom working in the real world. A good example here would be whereby students are taught about remuneration management, in the workplace and through Work integrated learning, they come across different softwares that are used to administer remuneration such as VIP.

- The last benefit that was discussed was the benefit towards the organisation or the employer. Employers also benefit through Work Integrated learning in various ways. The first way is that the employer is able to train such student into becoming anything they want them to be. This benefits the employer in that business operate on goals and businesses are different from one another when looking at the industry that they exist. In so doing, the employer is able to train the mind-set of the student to adjust to whatever the employer needs from the student. Another benefit is that the costs on recruitment and selection is reduced. This occurs because employers avoid such

programmes which may be costly to undertake. For example in recruitments, there has to be advertisement which on its own is expensive and in selection, there are interviews which are used and the people that take part in this interviews will be spending their time in their work as opposed to those interviews.

Such a programme also has its challenges as to the implementation of such a programme. There are shortcomings to the implementation of Work Integrated Learning. Some of the issues raised by the participants and that are of major concern to the researcher are the issue of Mentorship, resources, competencies of academics and also the issue surrounding the curriculum. Mentorship may occur in a formal and also in an informal setting but for the purpose of this study, it will focus on formal mentorship and not to say that informal mentorship is not taken serious by the researcher. By mentorship, Henley Management College as cited in Masago (2011) states, it is a mutual learning partnership in which the individuals assist each other with personal and career development through coaching, role modelling, counselling, sharing knowledge and providing emotional support. Such can also be seen as the duties that mentors are supposed to play in the Work Integrated programme (p. 937). Mentor also need training to acquire some of this skills and to know how to evaluate the students. Mentorship plays an important role. Another challenge that was noted was the problem with resources. As has been noted, Work Integrated learning should be accessible to all students and not selected students that are able to afford. Students as well as universities have to provide resources to the implementation of Work integrated learning so that students have easy access to such a programme with fewer challenges. Another issue that had to be addressed is that of curricular development. The Griffith institute for higher Education has specific steps that should be followed by universities implementing Work Integrated Learning. Challenges occur here in that universities and industry should come together to develop curricular that is Work Integrated oriented. Establishment of some bodies, for example the South African Qualification Authority require universities to upgrade their curriculum. Another factor to this is that even though the curriculum has changed, they can only be evaluated after a long period to determine if it is working or not. this is so because, developing a curriculum takes about three year, also it has to be approved by the Council which can take somewhere between 12 to 21 months, and now it has to be taught to the students, and on average, students take about three years to complete their degree. Such a situation is different from business in which change occur on a day to day basis and requiring new skills almost every day.

6.4. LIMITATIONS

6.4.1. Limitations as a result of the data collection method

Data in such a study was collected by the use of a semi structured interview whereby the interviewees were asked an open ended questionnaire. Interviews in a qualitative study usually has to go hand in hand with observation (Alvesson and Karreman, 2011), this is so because through observation, the researcher is able to get direct and unmediated access to reality, observe how things really are.

6.4.2. Limitations as a result of the sampling method

In a research project, it is impossible for the researcher to gather data from everyone in the population and therefore a sample is used to collect data. A sample is defined by Krumar (2010) as the process of selecting a few from the bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of the unknown piece of information. The sample technique in the study was purposive and convenient sampling technique but also it has to be noted that the exercise was voluntary (p. 193).

6.4.3. Limitations as a result of sample size and characteristics

In the study, there were five participants that took part. They consisted of three academics from the faculty of commerce and administration, one participant is the director of co-operative learning at a Polytechnic and the last was a conference that was on academia meets business. When it comes to the characteristics of the sample, it has to be noted that not all had first experience on Work Integrated learning which limited their responses.

6.5. RECOMMENDATIONS



From a Human Resource management perspective, there still has a lot in the South African context to implement Work Integrated learning. Such a situation is different from other fields of study for example education where by Work Integrated Learning is given priority. After the data has been analysed and interpreted, below are the recommendations:

- The Universities should try to market and also advertise Work Integrated Learning to the community but importantly, to the employers with the intention of engaging employers to be part of such, South African Society for Cooperative Education suggests that Work Integrated learning should become the vision of universities.
- Mentors should be adequately trained on how to go about executing their duties and assisting the students.
- Business has also complained, in instances where Work Integrated learning occurs that the paperwork becomes too much, so another recommendation is to come up with a one page assessment form or the use in internet whereby they can just fill the responses. (such is a case because the supervisors have to compile a portfolio of evidence to the university).
- The issue of alignment with the South African Society on co-operative Education, the Council on Higher Education monitor 2011, the guidelines recommended by such bodies has to be implemented by institutions of higher education.
- Curriculum pertaining to Human Resource management has to be developed in a manner that makes it possible to change so as to keep up to date with the skills that are needed in the industry.

6.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study was focusing on the benefits and challenges of work integrated learning pertaining Human resource management graduates, but as it can be noted, there is a difference in how such are implemented when looking at other departments for example education. There is a need to determine why such differences exist and what has to be done to ensure there is one standard applicable across all departments. There is also a need for research to focus on the role of the South African Board of People Practise in the implementation of Work Integrated learning and also professionalising the profession of human resource management.

6.8. CONCLUSION

The research focused on Work Integrated Learning, the challenges and benefits of such a programme pertaining to human resource management graduates. Work Integrated Learning can be viewed as a programme that universities can utilise to give their students employability skills. The reason for this is that theory gets integrated to practice and therefore students get the skills that are needed in the workplace. It has to be noted though that there are challenges to the implementation of such. One of the challenges and also a recommendation is that, universities and employers should come together so that they can discuss matters of how to implement Work Integrated Learning.

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