

**A MODEL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WORK INTEGRATED
LEARNING IN THE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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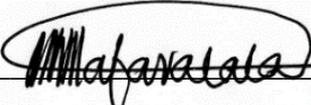
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13 January 2020

DECLARATION

I declare the thesis entitled: **A model for the integration of work integrated learning in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa**, is my own work. And that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete references.


Thomas Matome Mafaralala

13 January 2020

Dates

DEDICATION

My gratitude goes to God, by whom all things were created, the visible and the invisible, and thus include the attainment of this qualification. Except for Him, this project would have not been a success. So far, I know what it means to be jilted and deferred, but in all things, I have learnt to appreciate and remain thankful to God. He (God) is the means by which this qualification was completed, for with Him comes enthusiasm, and strength. Having gone through some calamities, indeed I contemplated quitting, but God was with me. In the light of this, I have nothing to boast, except for Him.

Colossians (1:16) reads,

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.”

Furthermore, I dedicate this work to my family, and associates: Lorraine, Asher, Awesome, Jedidah, Divine, Peculiar, Winsome, Euphoria and others. To them I say, nothing was ever achieved without enthusiasm, also that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Other people include the members of following organisations: Rejoicing in Hope of Glory Ministries, Faras Institute of Emancipation and Leadership Development, TEPPA Associations International, Faras Legacy Cohort Pty Ltd, and others.

ABSTRACT

A MODEL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING IN THE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The majority of the learners completing Grade 12 in South Africa (SA) further their studies in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVETCs). This is because, among other things, colleges seem to be more affordable and accessible in most communities in all the provinces (SA). However, many of these students appear to be struggling to complete their studies owing to failure to complete the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) module, which is a prerequisite for graduating and becoming employable. The researcher was interested to know how the WIL module affects the completion of students' studies. The researcher approached the investigation as an idealist (constructivist) using a case study design. Data was collected through the semi-structured and focus groups interviews. It was found that, among other things, the WIL module was seldom completed owing to its reliance on the availability of jobs. In addition, the lack of jobs for college students was a result of the curriculum mismatch with employers' actual needs, in Business Studies in particular. Correspondingly, the Fourth Industrial Revolution threatens job losses, which are likely to affect those with qualifications in Business Studies, hence its selection for this investigation. To address this, the researcher proposed a model which requires the colleges, businesses, government and the communities to collaborate in the creation of projects that cater for the needs of the different communities. Such projects could also help to update the curriculum to be more responsive. In this way, more opportunities for WIL could be created for students. In addition, the researcher proposed three phases for the integration of WIL, and colleges could decide on each depending on their programme specifications. The researcher concludes that no matter how good the models, without collaboration WIL could remain a constraint and qualifications could become meaningless owing to the lack of jobs. Subsequently, the researcher suggests that more research be conducted in line with the development or growth of the business sector. The findings of this study were limited to four selected colleges in the four provinces of SA, yet are applicable and useful to all higher education in the world.

Key words: *Work Integrated Learning, WIL, TVET, Colleges, Curriculum, Employability.*

OPSOMMING

'N MODEL VIR DIE INTEGRASIE VAN WERKGEÏNTEGREERDE LEER IN DIE TEGNIESE EN BEROEPSOPLEIDING EN OPLEIDINGSKOLLEGES IN SUID-AFRIKA

Die meerderheid van die leerders wat graad 12 in Suid-Afrika (SA) voltooi, studeer in die Tegniese en Beroepsonderwys- en Opleidingskolleges (TVETC's). Dit is omdat onder meer kolleges meer bekostigbaar en toeganklik is in die meeste gemeenskappe in al die provinsies (SA). Die meeste van hierdie studente sukkel egter om hul studies te voltooi vanweë die gebrek aan die Work Integrated Learning (WIL) -module, wat 'n voorvereiste is vir die graduering en indiensneming. Die navorser was geïnteresseerd om te weet hoe die WIL-module studente beïnvloed om hul studies te voltooi. Die navorser het die ondersoek benader as 'n idealis (konstruktivis) met behulp van 'n gevallestudie-ontwerp. Data is versamel deur middel van die semi-gestruktureerde en fokusgroeponderhoude. Daar is gevind dat die WIL-module onder andere skaars voltooi is as gevolg van die afhanklikheid van die beskikbaarheid van poste. Daarbenewens was die gebrek aan werk vir universiteitstudente die gevolg van die kurrikulumverskuiwing wat strydig was met die behoeftes van die werkgewers, veral sakestudies. Daarmee saam dreig die Vierde Industriële Revolusie oor werkverliese, wat waarskynlik persone met kwalifikasies uit die sakestudies sal beïnvloed, en daarom gekies vir hierdie ondersoek. Om dit aan te spreek, het die navorser 'n model voorgestel wat vereis dat kolleges, ondernemings, die regering en die gemeenskappe moet saamwerk, en 'n paar projekte skep om in die behoeftes van die verskillende gemeenskappe te voorsien. Sulke projekte kan ook help om die kurrikulum op te dateer vir meer respons. Op hierdie manier kan meer geleenthede vir WIL vir studente geskep word. Daarbenewens het die navorser die drie fases vir die integrasie van WIL voorgestel, en kolleges kan self besluit, afhangende van hul programspesifikasies. Die navorser kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat WIL, ongeag hoe goed die modelle sonder samewerking is, 'n beperking kan bly, en dat kwalifikasies betekenisloos sou raak van weë die gebrek aan werk. Vervolgens stel die navorser voor dat meer navorsing gedoen moet word in ooreenstemming met die ontwikkeling of groei van die sakesektor. Die bevindings van hierdie studie was beperk tot die vier geselekteerde kolleges in die vier provinsies van SA, maar tog toepaslik en nuttig vir alle hoër onderwys in die wêreld.

Slutelwoorde: Werkgeïntegreerde leer, WIL, TVET, Kolleges, Kurrikulum, Indiensneembaarheid.

I-ABSTRACT

ISIBONELELO SOKUFUNDA KOMSEBENZI OTHOLAKALAYO KWEZOBUCHWEPHESHE NOBUCHWEPHESHE BOKUQEQESHA NOKUQEQESHA KWAMAKHOLIMU ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA.

Iningi labafundi abaphothula iBanga le-12 eSouth Africa (SA) baqhubekisela phambili izifundo zabo emakholeji wezobuchwepheshe nezokuqeqeshwa (i-TVETCs). Lokhu kungenxa yokuthi, phakathi kokunye, amakolishi abukeka engabizi kakhulu futhi ayatholakala emiphakathini eminingi kuzo zonke izifundazwe (SA). Kodwa-ke, iningi lalaba bafundi libonakala linenkinga yokuphothula izifundo zabo ngenxa yokwehluleka ukuqeda imodyuli ye-Work Integrated Learning (WIL), okuyimfuneko yokuqala yokuthola iziqu nokuqashwa. Umcwangingi wayethanda ukwazi ukuthi imojula ye-WIL ikuthinta kanjani ukuphothulwa kwezifundo zabafundi. Umcwangingi asondele kulolu phenyo njengento efanelekayo (i-constructivist) esebenzisa umklamo wokufunda icala. Idatha yaqoqwa ngokuxoxisana namaqembu ahlelwe ngokwedlule. Kwatholakala ukuthi, phakathi kokunye, imodyuli ye-WIL yayingavunyelwe ukuqedwa ngenxa yokuncika kwayo ekutholakaleni kwemisebenzi. Ngaphezu kwalokho, ukuntuleka kwemisebenzi kwabafundi basekolishi bekungumphumela wokungalingani kahle kwekharikhulamu ngezidingo zangempela zabaqashi, ezifundweni zeBhizinisi. Ngokunjalo, i-Fourth Industrial Revolution isongela ukulahleka kwemisebenzi, okungenzeka ukuthi ithinte labo abaneziqo ku-Business Studies, yingakho ukukhethwa kwayo kulolu phenyo. Ukubhekana nalokhu, umcwangingi uhlongoze imodeli edinga ukuthi amakolishi, amabhizinisi, uhulumeni kanye nemiphakathi basebenzisane ekwenziweni kwamaprojekthi anakekela izidingo zemiphakathi ehluahlukene. Amaprojekthi anjalo futhi angasiza ukuvuselela ikharikhulamu ukuthi iphenduleke ngokwengeziwe. Ngale ndlela, amathuba amaningi e-WIL angakhelwa abafundi. Ngaphezu kwalokho, umcwangingi uhlongoze izigaba ezintathu zokuhlanganiswa kwe-WIL, futhi amakolishi anganquma ngakunye ngokuya ngemininingwane yohlelo lwabo. Umcwangingi uphetha ngokuthi noma ngabe amamodeli amahle kangakanani, ngaphandle kokubambisana u-WIL angahlala eyisibopho futhi iziqu zingaba yizezi ngenxa yokuntuleka kwemisebenzi. Ngemuva kwalokho, umcwangingi uphakamisa ukuthi kwenziwa ucwaningo olwengeziwe ngokuhambisana nokukhula noma ukukhula komkhakha webhizinisi. Ukutholwa kwalolu cwanningo bekukhawulelwe kumakholiji amane akhethiwe ezifundazweni ezine ze-SA, kodwa asasebenza futhi alusizo kuyo yonke imfundo ephakeme emhlabeni.

Amagama agqamile: Umsebenzi Ohlanganisiwe Wokufunda, i-WIL, i-TVET, amakolishi, i-Kharikhulamu, ukuSebenza.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HEQF	Higher Education and Qualification Framework
HET	Higher education and training
HOD	Head of department
HRD	Human resource development
NCV	National Curriculum Vocational
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PBL	Problem-based learning
PJBL	Project-based learning
PSET	Post-school education and training
SA	South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector of Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETC	Technical and Vocational Education and Training College
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WACE	World Association of Cooperative Education
WBL	Work-based learning
WDTL	Work-directed theoretical learning
WIL	Work integrated learning
WPL	Workplace learning

LIST OF ABBREVIATED TITLES OF LAWS AND POLICIES

FETC Act of 2006	Further Education and Training Colleges Act 16 of 2006 (as amended)
FET Act of 1998	Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998
HETC Act Amendment Act 25 of 2010	Higher Education and Training Colleges Laws Amendment Act 25 of 2010
FETC Amendment Act of 2012	Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act 3 of 2012
FETC Amendment Act of 2013	Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act 1 of 2013
White Paper for PSET	White Paper for PSET, Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school education system

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND, RESEARCH PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A survey conducted in 2009–2010 in the provinces of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa (SA) found that 43 per cent of the lecturers in the Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVETC) had technical qualifications and industry experience, 26 per cent had neither a technical qualification nor any industry experience and 29 per cent had no teaching qualification or experience (Duncan, 2018:67). This goes with findings that about 80 per cent of students who completed their studies in the TVETCs were unemployed, with a limited number employed in other irrelevant sectors of the economy (Engelbrecht, Spencer, & Van der Bijl, 2017:329).

In line with the above challenges, Akoojee, McGrath and Visser (2008:257) found that most of the students who registered at the TVETCs in rural areas could not complete their studies at these colleges but migrated to the urban areas. This migration was influenced by the fact that very few businesses are found in the rural college surroundings, so students were unable to find employment (or placement) to complete their Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes. As Duncan (2018:67) states, the lack of lecturers' experience in industry (or business) could affect the quality of their instruction and their ability to develop students adequately for the workplace. Practical experience for students in the TVETCs is a major concern, especially for those registered for vocational programmes. Without the practical experience, vocational programmes cannot be successfully completed (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:329).

Regarding the lack of quality in the programmes offered at South African TVETCs, McGrath (2012:620) states this could be linked to the fact that the design and development of the Vocational Education (VE) curriculum is given to external consultants with the exclusion of the internal staff members, especially the academics. This exclusion of academics could be one of the reasons VE in SA faces some criticism. So, to remedy this, TVETCs should begin building beyond the narrow theoretical orthodoxy, that is, begin to engage in research to improve their curricula (Powell, 2016:4).

In line with the development for students' capabilities, the concept of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) was defined. According to Jeffries and Milne (2014:564), WIL is a type of learning that occurs in a workplace with a view to assisting students to integrate theory with practice; a means by which understanding between the lecturer's intentions and students is best achieved (Raelin, 1997:562). WIL is a part of the curriculum during which students spend time in the practice settings relevant to their careers and their future employment; it is an umbrella term to describe types of curriculum (pedagogic and assessment) practices that integrate the formal and the informal learning concerns (Smith, 2011:1). On the same note, Brimble, Cameron and Freudenberg (2011:81) explain that WIL is an educational programme that combines and integrates learning and its workplace application.

In line with the concept of WIL is the term Vocational Education and Training (VET), and the relationship between the two (also TVET) is deliberated in chapter 2 (section 2.3). Briefly, VET is a curriculum that prepares students for jobs relating to a specific occupation (practical experience), regardless of whether such courses are offered at the secondary or post-secondary level (CHE, 2011:77). According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013:2–5), VET was designed to cater for students who had been unsuccessful in elementary and middle school.

The need for the improvement of WIL models in higher education (HE), TVETCs in particular, was long anticipated. Internationally, the educational value of WIL is well documented, and has been practised for many years in technical, vocational, occupational and professional settings (Blom, 2016:14). For example, in 2006, Australian HE established a network for WIL (Australian Collaborative Education Network) in order to access other WIL organisations by means of its affiliation with the New Zealand and the World Associations of Cooperative Education. The network also collaborated with some of the universities of technology to initiate a project for building strong capacity and capability across the HE sector (Fletcher, Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Pretto & Webb 2009:3).

In SA and elsewhere in the world, there is a renewed focus on WIL, which is perceived to be closely linked to economic concerns. WIL is seen to solve the problems of a struggling economy and poor uptake of new entrants (Blom, 2016:14). In spite of the fact there is a decline in the private sector, TVETCs are expected to solve the national challenge of a struggling economy in SA (Powell, 2016:3). In other words, a responsive college is one that offers

qualifications that are relevant to the needs of the employers (Buthelezi, 2018: 14–15). For more understanding, the concept of responsive college is more fully explained in chapter three (section 3.3).

As stated by Akoojee et al. (2008:271), the management of TVETCs in SA set up a number of internal workshops to cater for the WIL curricula, yet such workshops excluded students registered for the NATED¹ programmes, Business Studies in particular. This is because it is difficult to create simulated workplace experiences for the diverse areas of work covered in different vocational programmes (DHET, 2013:9). Hence, this study focused on the effectiveness of WIL models, particularly for the NATED programmes. Among others, the National Curriculum Vocational (NCV) could not be included in this study because it is still offered below the post-school level. Currently, the exit level for all the NCV programmes in SA is National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 4, which runs parallel to Grade 12 as offered in the high schools.

For more clarity, the NATED programmes were nationally developed and examined by the DHET and offered from N1–N6 (DHET, 2013b:14), of which NQF level 6 is the exit level for theory classes prior to the WIL curricula. The curricula for the NATED programmes in all departments include 18 months of theory on the campus and 18 months (2000 hours) of WIL in industry (DHET, 2011a:11). To date, this has been practised in all departments in all the TVETCs (SA). These NATED programmes are also referred to as Report 191 programmes in line with the policy document outlining the programme requirements for the then TVETCs of SA.

WIL forms part of all the NATED programmes offered by the various departments of the TVETCs in SA. However, this investigation focused on the impact of WIL on students in the Department of Business Studies. The rationale for selecting this department is discussed under the section on population and sampling (section 1.7.5.1). In this regard, Nongogo (2016:8) quotes the Deputy Minister of HE (SA), saying that students need to choose good careers that are on the scarce and critical list, since they are the ones in short supply and in high demand.

¹ Referred to as N1–N6 in the Report 191 programmes after the policy document, *Formal technical college instructional programmes in the RSA*

These include, to name but a few, bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, millwrights, boilermakers, plumbers, fitters and turners, plasterers, welders, pipe fitters and the like.

The fact that none of the programmes in the Department of Business Studies were mentioned in the list of scarce skills motivated the researcher in the selection of the department. Among others, it is stated that students from the TVETCs experience challenges competing for jobs with university students and the most affected being those the Department of Business Studies (vocational qualifications). This is because their qualifications were perceived to be irrelevant to the needs of the employers (Blom, 2016:14; Engelbrecht et al., 2017:329; Powell, 2016:3). The next section gives the background to this research study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In terms of section 24 of the Higher Education Amendment Act 23 of 2001 (RSA, 1997), about 152 technical colleges of SA were merged into 50 Further Education and Training Colleges (FETCs) with over 260 campuses countrywide and renamed Further Education and Training Colleges (FETCs). For the purpose of reflecting their nature and role in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system, the title of the FETC was then amended to TVETC (RSA 2010, s 9; RSA 2012, s 1). The amendment was aimed to empower colleges to be versatile offering programmes, which are responsive to the needs of the labour market.

In terms of the FETC Amendment Act 3 of 2012 (RSA, 2012, s 1), TVETCs became the responsibility of the DHET and were accountable to the national government and no longer the provincial departments. This was to allow them to provide education and training for the mid-level skills mandatory for the development of the national economy (DHET, 2013:2). TVETCs were seen to be relevant in offering the NATED programmes which were designed in collaboration with employers. With time, the NATED programmes (known as Report 191) were criticised for being outdated and that their curricula no longer matched the needs of industry (Blom, 2016:14; Engelbrecht et al., 2017:329; Powell, 2016:3).

The critique of the NATED programmes resulted in attempts being made to replace them with the NCV, as this was perceived to be more relevant than the NATED programmes. The NCV curricula were designed to be extensively based on workshops rather than workplaces (DHET,

2013b:14). However, Buthelezi (2018:14–15) found that the workshops did not really materialise in some of the colleges and this led to some students exiting the programmes without the necessary practical skills. As stated by Duncan (2018:67), the design of the NCV programmes required that both the students and the lecturers be offered practical work experience in industry. Criticism of the NCV subsequently led to the reinstatement of NATED programmes, which were in the process of being phased out (DHET, 2013:14–15).

As stated in the White Paper for PSET, TVETCs are required to set out curriculum modalities in which employers are involved in developing students' capabilities and their employability. Yet concerns regarding skills shortages seem to be one sided, requiring more artisans in particular (DHET, 2013:1). This is in line with the opinion that suitable artisans are required to sustain the various industries and for the growth of the South African economy. In addition, the need for artisans has been identified as the main priority area for the skills development (Nongogo, 2016:7). Further, in terms of the National Development Plan, SA aims to produce about thirty thousand qualified artisans a year by 2030, yet at the moment only 13 000 artisans are produced annually. This means the current number or production has to be doubled in the years to come (Powell, 2016a:7; Nongogo, 2016:7).

In line with the concern for the skills shortage in SA, it is pointed out that once the skills in demand are available, there will also be a greater supply of jobs, because jobs are obviously there once the skills are available (Motala & Vally, 2014:8). Also, high unemployment is caused by the lack of demand for the available skills, a reason for the slow economic growth (Treat, 2014:173). Consequently, the South African government has called for TVETCs to help reduce unemployment for both the youth and among older people, and to reduce the imbalance in revenue between the wealthy and the poor (Buthelezi, 2018:14–15).

In 2012, *City Press* (2012:31) reported that about a third of the world's youth between the ages of 15 and 29 were unemployed, and that these figures were on the rise, a ratification the challenge of unemployment is not unique to SA. Statistics SA (2015) states that of 36.1 million South Africans, about 5.4 million of working age were unemployed in 2014; of the 11.3 million youth (SA) about 3.6 million were unemployed and 9.8 million had given up on the prospect of employment, and all of these had given up on their education (StatsSA, 2015: v, x).

Okwelle and Ojotule (2018:7) conducted a study in Nigeria to determine students' constraints in participating in WIL. They found that many students (TVETCs) never participated in WIL programmes and that the few that did participate did so in unrelated organisations or irrelevant jobs. Other constraints included a lack of synergy between the colleges and industry, a lack of supervision of students, non-payment of stipends to students on WIL, scarcity of places of attachment, irregular supervision of the relevant agencies and inadequate funding. This agrees with Buthelezi's (2018:15) opinion that youth unemployment could be linked to the rejection of some of the programmes by businesses who in fact are potential employers.

Whilst governments attempt to reduce unemployment, there come another challenge, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, likely to substitute most jobs through automation and systems operated by artificial intelligence. In 2018, the informal employments could contribute around 35 per cent to GDP and employs 70 per cent of the workforce. This constitute of the low- and middle-skilled (white-collar) administrative and routine jobs, and all these are at risk of being substituted by the use of robotics and automation (Balliester and Elsheikhi, 2018: 8-9).

Hollis-Turner (2015:149) indicates that graduates from the Business Studies find jobs in a various fields including: personal assistant, administrative office manager, data processor, office administrator at a hospital, and administrative assistant in a personnel department or the accountancy/legal section of an organization or legal firm. All jobs are at risk of being swallowed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Almost all countries (91 per cent) confirmed their skilled employees are mainly from the Business Studies, posing a great risk on the future employability of the students as well. It is estimated that by 2020, of 96, 928, 00 office and administration employees globally, about 4,759, 000 (4.9 per cent) will be made redundant. On the other hand, companies with more automated activities are likely to experience revenue growth of more than 15 per cent compared to those with low automation. This insinuates students in the departments such as Engineering and Technology are likely to remain in employments or have more job opportunities whereas those in the Business Studies could hardly find jobs (Balliester and Elsheikhi, 2018: 14-22).

The DHET (2013:14) envisions TVETCs that are rooted in and serving their local communities, industries and public-sector institutions and that are accessible to students in all provinces and all locales (DHET, 2013:18). Likewise, the National Planning Commission

(2012:109) stipulates the aim to expand participation in the TVETCs from an enrolment of 300 000 to over a million by 2030 (Powell, 2016:2–5). The National Planning Commission (2012:109) and the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) of South Africa emphasise the significance of forming partnerships between the TVETCs and the majority of employers (HRDC, 2014:2). TVETCs are thus expected to partner and collaborate with at least one industry (workplace). This seeks to create a link between formal learning and the world of work which, in so doing, will provide more opportunities for the placement of students (Powell, 2016a:3).

Buthelezi (2018:14) reiterates that the government’s plan in forming TVETCs was to reduce the burden on universities. This is one of the reasons TVETC programmes had to be redesigned, making provision for articulation and progression to universities for those students who saw the need. Despite the above initiatives (redesign of programmes), there was still some criticism. For example, Engelbrecht et al. (2017:333) found that one of the vocational programmes (TVETCs) was irrelevant to the needs of the employers. As a result, only about 20 per cent of registered students could find jobs after completing their studies.

In line with Duncan (2018:67), real workplace experience is essential for both students and college lecturers because of the differences that exists between the two sectors (the training institution and the workplace) for which students are supposedly being prepared. However, in this study, the concept of WIL is ascribed to students who have completed NQF Level 6 qualifications, of which WIL is their last module prior to graduation.

In this section, the researcher gave a brief outline of the integration of WIL into the college curriculum and his reasons for conducting the investigation. The next section therefore discusses the statement of the research problem.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In line with the speech delivered by Deputy Minister of Higher Education (HE), TVETCs in SA need to ensure a continuous upgrading of skills, especially in the artisan, technician and related occupations. In addition, such initiatives could easily be achieved by increasing the opportunities for experiential learning in the workplace, and not neglecting to increase capacity in higher education (HE). This is because the current workforce lacks the required skills to

remain competitive in the economy, which is increasingly knowledge-based (Nongogo, 2016:7).

As stated by the HRDC (2014:2, 6), all TVETCs in SA are involved in partnership projects, which include companies, small businesses, Higher Education institutions (HEIs), and the like. This is in line with the views by the Deputy Minister of HE (SA), who emphasised the need for partnerships between HEIs and business, as well as to focus on the development of the artisans to support the national economy, which is a high priority. He reiterated that skilful and competent artisans are needed for government's strategic infrastructure projects (National Development Plan for 2030) to build roads, new schools, and the like (Nongogo, 2016:7).

According to the White Paper for PSET, most students exiting HEIs struggle to find jobs, and this seems to be because they lack the skills required by the majority of employers (DHET, 2013:64). In line with this, the question has been asked: *If indeed the TVETCs in SA are involved in partnerships with businesses, why are students struggling to find jobs?* (HRDC, 2015:56). Pursuing this further, one could ask: Why do graduate employment rates continue to be unsatisfactory? In line with these questions, the researcher assumes the availability of WIL opportunities for students could be for those from the other departments such as the Engineering (i.e. demand for the artisans in the country).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution looms about job losses to be anticipated worldwide. It seems the most likely to remain in employments (or employable) are those with STEM education, that is, a specialisation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Consequently, the challenge for job losses is anticipated in the careers such as the administration, Office, Services, Textile, Clothing, Foot ware, Electrical and Electronics, Agriculture (Balliester and Elsheikhi, 2018:22), hence focusing the study on Business Studies, most of the careers seems to be facing this challenge.

Although this critique appears to be a global phenomenon, TVETCs are generally blamed for the unemployment of their graduates. It is suspected they are not teaching the skills that the economy wants, or that the skills they do teach are irrelevant for the current demands of the workplace, hence the high unemployment among the youth and the increased social inequities (Klees, 2014: vii). As Engelbrecht et al. (2017:329) state, the current TVET curricula need to

be revised and updated in order to address the needs of the major industry role players and employers.

The fact that most of the programmes offered in the TVETCs are also offered in most of the universities, brings a challenge for students to compete for the WIL opportunities. Looking on most advertisements for WIL opportunities (i.e. internships), it appears the majority of employers focus their recruitments on the students who already completed their qualifications, i.e. National Diploma or degree (DHET 2018, Merseta 2019, Department of Trade and Industry 2019). In so doing, it closes the opportunities for students from the TVETCs, particularly those with only the N6 qualifications. Very confusing, even the DHET, which encourages TVET education seems to be discriminating against such students (TVET) regarding the minimum requirements for their internships (DHET (2019)).

As stated by Engelbrecht et al. (2017:332), there will never be enough employment for every qualified student, and TVET graduates experience challenges competing for jobs with university graduates; this limits their opportunities. Additionally, the new programmes (NCV) have become unpopular due to insufficient communicability with industry. Accordingly, TVETCs are experiencing challenge to ensuring their curricula are responsive to the workplace, hence a need for the placement of students (WIL) and the interactions between the lecturers and the workplace to learn the new skills required. It is these collaborations, which in turn could increase the employment opportunities for the students (Powell, 2016:3).

It is pointed out that the lack of responsiveness in TVET programmes could be one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of WIL. This in turn has led to the TVETCs being criticised for failing to deliver on their mandate, that is, to ensure there are more employment opportunities for the youth, leading to the growth in the national economy, as well as to ensure there is no divergence between the skills composition and the demands of the labour market (Powell, 2016a:4). In line with this, one student is quoted as saying: *“You come to the college looking for a bright future, but all you get is sadness and disappointment”* (City Press, 2012:31).

Several studies such as those by Brimble et al. (2011:81), Brookes, Edwards, Koppil, Naghdy and Sheard (2010) and Smith (2011) emphasise the significance of WIL for students' future employability. These authors share the opinion that the manner (approaches) in which WIL is integrated in the college curriculum determines how best it helps to develop students'

capabilities and employability skills. According to Blom (2016:14), WIL must be integrated in qualifications largely because it can ease the transition from learning to work, thus contributing to students' employability.

In terms of the NATED Report 191 programmes (N1–N6), TVETCs in SA rely on the 18 months of workplace learning (as explained in section 2.5.1) as the only model for the integration of WIL. In line with this notion, Akoojee et al. (2008:262) indicate that relying on the WPL model is accompanied by the challenge relating to the placement of students, and that such placement is ultimately left to the students themselves. This is in line with Ferns, Jackson, McLaren and Rowbottom's (2017:37) view that the larger the number of the students, the more businesses that will be needed for placement opportunities, thus increasing the burden on TVETCs to seek more partnerships and collaborations.

According to Ferns et al. (2017:37), the barriers to WIL include

- the fact that the timing of WIL activities is not always in accord with the needs of the business
- the fact that some industries lack suitable work for students, whilst others blame students for being inadequately skilled to take on work
- the fact that employers lack understanding about the college's expectations for WIL and how to get involved
- the fact that employers struggle to locate a suitable student to attend the workplace at a particular time required by their business cycle
- a lack of awareness among students about the available WIL opportunities
- a lack of funding to promote WIL activities, especially the supervision of students
- Misalignment between employer and college expectations on the purpose and nature of the WIL experience (Ferns et al., 2017:37).

Although it is the government's intention for TVETCs to develop programmes with articulation and progression, the process has been very difficult to achieve. Accordingly, it is pointed out that the subject combinations in TVETCs do not meet the minimum requirements for entering South African universities. Also, that their (TVET) packaging of programmes consists of one language instead of two and, as such, universities find it unacceptable, hence preferring those

from Grade 12 (Buthelezi, 2018:14–15). It is in the light of this that the researcher thought to include the concept of progression as one of the elements of poor curricula in TVETCs. Unless TVETCs work to improve their curricula, the development of students' capabilities, progression and employability could remain a challenge. The next section discusses the convictions that inspired the researcher to conduct this investigation.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The researcher's interest in WIL and its impact on students' capabilities and employability was kindled when he worked in one of the TVETCs as a lecturer teaching some of the subjects in the NATED programme. As a lecturer and staff representative, the researcher experienced the challenges the management of the college experienced first-hand in regard to the placement of students in the workplace (WIL programme). Because of the lack of placements, most of the students were delayed from graduating and, if they intended enrolling in the universities; they could not be credited with the modules they completed. These challenges were mainly experienced by students in the Department of Business Studies.

A few years after the researcher left the college, his interest was intensified when he noticed that some of the students he taught during those years (2001–2008) still did not have jobs in their fields of studies; others had not been able to complete their studies due to a lack of WIL opportunities. Most of these students were doing unrelated jobs such as being a petrol attendant, a cashier and the like. When the researcher enquired why they were doing such jobs, they informed they took such jobs merely to complete the period required to apply for graduation. These encounters motivated me to investigate how TVETCs respond to the policy mandate for the integration of WIL, as well as the WIL models employed, and the impact they have on students' graduation, their academic progression and employability.

In terms of the White Paper for PSET, TVETCs are expected to increase their enrolments thereby expanding the colleges (DHET, 2013:12). Yet there is still some criticism of the relevancy and effectiveness of their programmes (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:332). The modalities for the integration of WIL have also been criticised for not being responsive to the needs of employers (Buthelezi, 2018:14–15). These are some of the reasons the researcher decided to conduct this study, in which he sought to address the lack of knowledge and understanding of

WIL by developing a model for the effective integration of WIL. The model will be able to address challenges such as the lack of students' capabilities for employability.

My decision to focus on TVETCs in the rural areas was influenced by a notion that young people in the rural areas are the most affected by unemployment due to the scarcity of businesses (Yates, 2011:1681). This is in line with the findings that about 60 per cent of the partnerships in TVETCs have been in the urban centres with the developing areas given far too little attention (Akoojee et al., 2008:257). The researcher believes that WIL might not be effective in such areas (rural) due to the lack of industries for implementing WIL.

The need for improvement TVETC programmes seems to be a great challenge, especially for the Department of Business Studies. In line with this, it is pointed out that unlike students from more structured applied programmes, those from Business Studies are faced with an overwhelming range of career options when they graduate. This is because careers related to Business Studies are extremely eclectic and are often affected by changes in the economy and other external factors (Brown & Lyons, 2003:58). The next section therefore addresses the research questions and is followed by the aims and objectives of the research study.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

In this study, the main research question was influenced by the view that most HEIs have developed a list of attributes and/or competencies that students should have in order to qualify for graduation. However, there is a need for assessments to be conducted in order to ascertain whether such competencies are in line with the needs of employers, thus referred to as employability skills (De St Jorre & Oliver, 2018:44, 51).

1.5.1 Main research question

In line with the concern for the development of students' capabilities and employability, it is pointed out that the current curriculum structure for TVET programmes is outdated, a possible reason why TVET students find it so hard to get employment (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:333). Accordingly, to attend to this concern, the research question formulated for this study helped to direct the research: How do South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes?

1.5.2 Research sub-questions

In this study, different sub-questions were formulated, helping to answer the main research question. This is in line with Bryman's (2012:10) viewpoint that in order to determine exactly what one wants to research, one needs to break the research question down by formulating research sub-questions. As a result, the focus of this study was guided by the following research sub-questions:

- What are the challenges for the integration of WIL for Business Studies students at TVETCs?
- How do TVETCs support and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities?
- How do Business Studies students perceive the administration of WIL in TVETCs?
- What are the perceptions of the stakeholders regarding the integration of WIL (students, employers and SETAs) in terms of the placement and employability of Business Studies students in appropriate workplaces?
- How can the integration of WIL for Business Studies at TVETCs be improved?

1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

According to Arthur, Coe, Hedges and Waring (2012:147), the decisions about the design and methods to use should be driven by the aim, objectives and research questions. And thus, in this study after stating the research questions, I subsequently indicate the research aim and objectives next.

1.6.1 Aim of the research

In this study, the research question was used to inform the aim of the study, which is to investigate the way South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes.

1.6.2 Objectives of the research

The research sub-questions were used to inform the objectives of the proposed research. The following objectives helped to direct and maintain the focus in this research study:

- To investigate the challenges for the integration of WIL for Business Studies students at TVETCs
- To determine how TVETCs support and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities
- To determine how students perceive the administration of WIL in TVETCs
- To investigate the stakeholders' (i.e. students, employers and SETAs) perceptions of the integration of WIL as regards the placement and employability (businesses) of students from Business Studies
- To explore means to improve the integration of WIL for students in Business Studies at TVETCs.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Gordon (2016:10–11) and Papier (2010:155), methodology is a whole philosophical perspective about how research should be conducted, the reason for doing so and how it should be used. So, researchers generally orientate themselves toward a particular methodology because they agree with its philosophical views on research; they gravitate toward particular research methods (topics) based on their preferred methodology. It is further pointed out that the methodology section is used to explain or give the rationale for why the researchers choose to use certain approaches, research designs, instruments for data collection and analysis and the like (Silverman, 2010:330; Thomas, 2009:70). Accordingly, in the following subsections the researcher explains his choice of research approach and design and the like.

1.7.1 Research paradigms

To give background on the concept of research paradigms, Dan, Dietz and Kalof (2008:2) explain that science is a social activity undertaken by the communities of people interested in

the same aspect of the world, and thus a way of learning about the world. These communities organise themselves into scientific disciplines, such as anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology, and so forth. Hence, this study comprises scientific research conducted within the discipline of sociology, often known as the social sciences.

There are two ontological positions in social science, namely, *realism* and *idealism*. Realists advocate that apart from people's beliefs, understandings and the construction of meaning (or interpretations), there is a reality to be investigated. On the other hand, idealists advocate that reality cannot be disconnected from the human mind, or the social construction of meaning (Barnard, Ormston, Snape & Spencer, 2014:5–6). In line with this, paradigms are the ways in which we think about and research the world, thus the positions researchers take to best think and study the world as social scientists (Thomas, 2013:105).

Creswell (2014:8) indicates that from a multiple of meanings, the idealists focus on the complexities of the views, narrowing them (meanings) down into a few categories or ideas. In so doing, they (idealists) rely on the views of the subjects in line with the situation being studied. He further states that the social constructivist (idealist) reality depends on one's subjective meaning, interpretation and understanding of the world (experiences) one lives and works in (Creswell, 2014:8).

In light of the above, the researcher took the position of an idealist (the same as a constructivist), thereby creating a platform for the participants to construct their meaning about the phenomenon being studied. Accordingly, the paradigm adopted in this study is interpretivism (same as constructivism). The researcher needed this to create a platform for the participants to give their opinions, understandings and perspectives by looking critically at the WIL policies and the manner in which they are being implemented. In so doing, people may be informed about the things that are being overlooked, or not correctly applied. For more understanding, the rationale for the selecting the paradigm is further explained in chapter four (section 4.2.1). In the next section, the researcher discusses the research approach adopted in this study.

1.7.2 Research approach

To give some background to the concept of research, Gray (2014:3) identifies the three types of research method, namely, basic (or applied), theoretical and pure research. However, for the purpose of relevance, only basic research was explained, as adopted in this study. Relevant to this study, basic research is primarily for learning something new or satisfying the researcher's curiosity, as well as to better understand some phenomenon, which could have implications for policy (Gray, 2014:3).

According to Gordon (2016:9), basic research is useful for identifying the needs (unmet) in the population, finding a solution(s) to a problem or evaluating such solutions. Also, that it is not aimed at generalisation but at understanding a phenomenon. Then, to conduct any kind of research study, one has to decide on the type of approach to be used along with the methods. The research approach therefore entails a plan or procedure for the research study. This is about the steps to be observed when collecting, analysing and interpreting data from the broad assumptions to the methods in detail (Creswell, 2014:1).

A distinction is made between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Barbour (2014:13) states that a quantitative approach answers questions about the strength of the connection between variables (i.e. how many?), whereas a qualitative approach provides deeper insight on how figures are manipulated through social processes. By the same token, Gordon (2016:6,26) indicates that a quantitative approach distils the results down to numbers, whereas qualitative researchers aim to understand the participants' lived experiences, perceptions, meanings and the like (i.e. interviews), and that qualitative analysis is word based.

In the light of the above, a qualitative approach was adopted in this study. Along with this choice, Braun and Clarke (2013:24, 26) indicate that a qualitative approach enables one to access the richness of the world (data), that is, all that is in our heads, as well as in the social and physical worlds external to us. In addition, a research approach should be the servant of one's research question, thereby ensuring that the purpose, literature review, and so on fit together (Thomas, 2009:76, 83). So, a qualitative approach was chosen for its relevance for answering the research questions, and because the approach is suited to the methods and methodologies adopted in this study.

Maree (2010:34) states that once one has decided on the mode of inquiry, one should explain the rationale for choosing such method(s), also describing the entire research strategy and tactics. In line with this, the rationale for selecting the research approach is explained in detail in one of the following chapters (section 4.2.2). The discussion of the methodology continues in the next section on the research design.

1.7.3 Research design

Thomas (2009:70) states that a research design is mainly about the compilation of the whole research programme (plan) from purpose to execution. It is about thinking why you are doing a research study and how you intend to go about it and the shape it will ultimately take. According to Richards (2015:37), research design is about the aspects of research to be investigated and its depth, that is, what one needs to know in order to answer the research questions and what to hold on.

According to Punch (2014:114), a research design is a set of ideas (rationale or reasoning), which guides the study in an attempt to answer the research questions. This is in line with Creswell's (2014:14) opinion that researchers using a case study could collect information (detailed) using multiple data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. In addition, a case study design enables researchers to gain a rich and detailed understanding of different facets of the questions examined (Thomas, 2013:150). In the light of this, a case study design was deemed to be relevant (in this study) for answering the research questions.

Along with the rationale for using a case study, Lewis and Nicholls (2014:66) state that case studies are often connected with qualitative studies, that they are comprehensive and intensive and that multiple data-collection methods may be used when studying a phenomenon in context. As Rule and John (2011:1–7) mention, a case study provides rich insights into situations (also thick descriptions). Researchers select examples they are familiar with and to which they have access, as well as examining a case that is manageable and achievable.

In line with the criticism for using a case study design is the fact that it is generally difficult to generalise from a single case, and that when investigating many cases, the understanding of the individual case is diminished (Chadderton & Torrance, 2012:54). However, Thomas (2013:150) reiterates that in a case study, it is not a must to generalise the findings to others.

Bearing this in mind, one studies a case in order to understand it, and this has nothing to do with the participants themselves. A case is not simply a story, but illuminates some theoretical point. As a result, the discussion on the rationale for choosing the research design is expanded in chapter four (section 4.2.3). The next section therefore discusses the theories that influenced or guided this study.

1.7.4 Theoretical framework

It is pointed out that research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum, so researchers set out to investigate issues from a position of knowledge, helping to frame the inquiry (Henning, 2011:12). In line with this are two theoretical concepts, that is, methodological and substantive theories. Methodological theory is concerned about the theory that lies behind the methods of inquiry and substantive theory is concerned with the content area of the research study (Punch, 2014:14).

Brown and Gibson (2009:11) indicate that researchers need to think about how theory could be used to analyse data, rather than worrying about holding on to some theories. This is because the use of theory might not be always necessary, yet working within specific theoretical fields is highly valued. So this study was neither aimed at testing any hypotheses nor developing any theory, rather consideration was given to some of the views and findings of others in relation to this study. For example, one study has found that most of students from the TVETCs (SA) fail to find jobs owing to the lack of the practical experience that employers need (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:328).

Next to this assumption for the need of the practical experience for the employability of students is the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) adopted in this study. ELT advocates that *experience* plays a central role in human learning and development, also that knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience (Kolb 2005:194). ELT provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development. The name *Experiential Learning* is to emphasize its central: ‘the importance of experience in the learning process’ (Sternberg & Zhang 2000:2).

Gray (2014:5) indicates that theory is valuable only if it has some predictive qualities, without which it will be replaced by the new. So, by studying different views from other researchers

regarding the phenomenon (being studied), the predictability of the theory (ELT) was found and sustained, hence relevant to this study. For example, ELT, could not be disassociated with other curriculum theories (educational field), mostly applicable in the classroom situation (prior the WIL or employment). For the purpose of relevance, these two (cognitive and behaviourist theories) were briefly explained.

Cognitive theory is primarily about how people learn, remember and interact, and often emphasising on mental processes and the use of modern technologies. This aims to solve problems concerning the mind and the brain thereby investigating intelligence and intelligent systems, with particular reference to intelligent behaviour (Pritchard, 2009:21).

Next to cognitive theory is the concept of constructivism (used in this study), which views learning as the result of mental construction. It is believed that people learn best when we actively construct their own understanding, and that learning takes place when new information is built into and added onto an individual's current knowledge, understanding and skills (Pritchard, 2009:21), hence a need for students to be exposed to the world of work (WIL) to reflect on their understandings of the lessons already taught in class.

Behaviourist theory is concerned with observable behaviours and ways of modifying those behaviours. Students often repeat behaviours that are rewarded or making one feel good and avoiding behaviours that are punishable or those with little interest (Hodges & Sebald, 2011). To embrace this, workplaces often provides students (WIL) with incentives (known as stipend). This is done to encourage learning and a hope for the future growth in the specific careers (employability and job promotions). Although these theories are significant, they serve as fundamentals to learning, whilst ELT is primarily for job readiness. This is because experiential learning is more common or synonymous to WIL.

Relevant to the ELT, are studies in the social sciences, which value the significance of WIL for students and these share similar views. Brown and Lyons (2003:58) explain that WIL enables students to act at a level of automaticity with *knowledge* and the ability to review existing knowledge to solve new problems. CHE (2011:5) and Paloniemi (2006:439) indicate that WIL provides students with professional development, employability and preparedness for professional practice (increasing students' chances of being employed). Brown and Lyons (2003:60) and Chillas, Galloway and Marks (2014:656) established that WIL develops the

student capabilities that prospective employers value. In this regard, WIL is seen as a means for students to transit from HEIs to the employment sector; more about this is discussed in chapter four (section 4.2.4). The next section therefore proceeds to discuss the methods employed for this investigation.

1.7.5 Research methodology

As Creswell (2014:14) states, data collection is about the methods used to collect data, and such (methods) are briefly discussed here, including the means to determine the sample of the population.

1.7.5.1 Population and sampling

According to Elam, Lewis, Rahim, Ritchie and Tennant (2014:12), it is always necessary to define the study constituency from which the sample is to be drawn. For each study, there are two important questions to be asked: First, who or what is the study population or constituency from which the sample will be drawn? Second, what is the sample frame from which the constituency will be selected? These questions were also asked in this study, where the population for this study included 52 TVETCs in the nine provinces of SA. Population is therefore defined as any group that shares a common set of traits; or a collection of people, objects, countries, and the like that share characteristics of common interest (Gray, 2014:208; Dan et al., 2008:40). Consequently, the next section discusses the criteria for the selection of the sample.

As it is not viable to study an entire population, researchers select a sample from the population in order to focus the study. Sampling is a key component of every research study, yet researchers need to be careful when selecting their subjects and the sources of data for the investigation. Moreover, sampling does not exclude materials such as documents, images, observed events and the like (Gray, 2014:208). Although the sampling design varies according to the paradigms and the research epistemologies involved, the first stage involves identifying exactly what or who is to be sampled (Elam et al., 2014:121).

Consistent with Gray (2014:208), qualitative researchers are privileged with selecting samples likely to generate robust, rich and deep levels of understanding. For example, in a case study

(as used in this study), the researcher makes the vital decision on which cases to select using any number of probability and non-probability approaches. Yet there are no requirements for the sufficiency scale of samples to provide estimates. Most importantly, qualitative samples are statements of prevalence, so they are usually small in size (Gray, 2014:208).

It is further pointed out that when selecting a sample, one should consider the manageability and the cost-effectiveness of data. This is because qualitative studies could be highly intensive in terms of the resources required to yield rich, detailed information (Elam et al., 2014:118). Samples sizes should be kept reasonably small scale, or else it will be difficult to conduct and analyse the interviews involved (Elam et al., 2014:118).

In the light of the above discussion, only four provinces were selected to ensure the manageability of data, namely, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West and Gauteng. In addition, to reduce the cost of travelling and accommodation, two colleges in each of the selected provinces were chosen. All the chosen colleges lie within the proximity of the researcher, that is, less than 400 kilometres from Pretoria. For the purpose of ethics and confidentiality, the names of the colleges are not revealed here.

To some extent, purposive sampling was used to select some of the elements for this investigation, namely, NATED programmes, Business Studies Departments, TVETCs in the remote areas and the stakeholders (participants) for WIL. Purposive sampling ensures that units with distinct characteristics are selected to explore and understand the themes that are of interest to the researcher (Elam et al., 2014:113).

In purposive sampling, the sites and the subjects are purposefully selected on the basis of the researcher's interest and his decisions, thus serving the purpose of the study best (Creswell, 2007:125). In addition to purposive sampling is deviant sampling (also used in this study) where the selection of cases is determined by their peculiarity, informativeness and because they fall outside the general pattern. This enables researchers to select cases because they differ in characteristics from others, that is, the dominant patterns (Neuman, 2006:215).

According to the HRDCSA (2015), the number of partnership projects in TVETCs (SA) differs depending on the college and the province in which the college is situated, with the mean ranging from three to 150 partnership projects between the rural and urban areas. Akoojee et

al. (2008:257) found that college students migrated from one province to another, mainly from the rural to the urban areas. As a result, the researcher assumed the mostly likely colleges affected could be those in the rural areas, and thus focused this study such colleges. This does not exclude the colleges in Gauteng, where the researcher selected the mostly likely affected colleges as well.

Factors that influenced the researcher to focus the study on the Business Studies Department include the findings that SA is in great shortage of the artisans (Nongogo, 2016:7) and this pose a question as to whether there is any demand for those with vocational qualifications. Brown and Lyons (2003:58) state there is some scepticism in regard to careers in the vocational programmes (i.e. Business Studies), which are often affected by factors such as changes in the economy. In line with this, Engelbrecht et al. (2017:329) discovered that one of the programmes offered by the Department of Business Studies was found to be ineffective and irrelevant to the needs of the employers.

As Elam et al. (2014:121) state, not everything in the population should be included, as there are those specific circumstances that fall outside the scope of inquiry. So, despite the fact that TVETCs offer multiple programmes and including them could add more value, the researcher decided to focus on the those offered beyond school level, hence the selection of the NATED programmes. The exit level of the NATED programmes is the National Diploma (N6 plus the 18 months of WIL), which is parallel to the diplomas offered at South African universities. The NCV programmes, which are offered to the exit of NQF level 4, parallel to Grade 12, were as such excluded (Akojee et al., 2008:263).

The sampling of the participants (TVETCs stakeholders) in this study was done in terms of six categories, namely, campus managers, heads of departments (HoDs), college lecturers, college students, SETA representatives and employer representatives. Whilst the category of students was subdivided into three, that is, those who registered for the N6² in 2018 (still in the class, N6), those who already completed the N6 (2016) and were successfully placed, and those who already completed the N6 (2016) but could not be placed find jobs. In a nutshell, the number of participants totalled 80 and included four campus managers, eight HODs, 12 college lecturers, 40 students, eight SETA representatives and eight student employer representatives.

² The last level and or theory classes (i.e. campus based) prior the engagement into the WIL

For more clarity, this information is summarised in Table 4.1 in chapter four (section 4.2.4), including the criteria for selecting the participants. In the next section, the researcher discusses the methods used for the collection of data.

1.7.5.2 Data collection methods

According to Brown and Gibson (2009:48), a case study in qualitative research often involves interviews, document analysis, and the like. As a result, the following data collected methods were used and are briefly discussed, namely, interviews, and literature study. The details of the chosen data collection methods are discussed in chapter four in the section specifically dedicated to explaining the methods and the methodologies adopted in this study (section 4.3).

Gordon (2016:4) states, interviews are best used for studying the participants' views, understandings and meanings, as well as to experience the social world, the feelings of the participants and their motivations. Interviews help researchers comprehend some aspects of the social world from the subjects' point of view, thus seeing the world and understanding it in the same way as the participants. The researcher interviewed participants to obtain their perceptions on the impact of WIL in developing students' capabilities to increase employability.

To allow the interviewees to be comfortable during the conversations, the interviews took the form of informal and semi-structured discussions. According to O'Leary (2014:218), informal interviews overlook the procedures linked with formal interviews (i.e. establishing rapport and open lines of communication). Semi-structured interviews therefore use an interview guide containing the questions to be asked, as outlined in the schedule. Additional questions not included in the schedule could be asked whenever a need arises, that is, follow up questions on the matters raised (Bryman, 2016:370). In line with the above discussion, the researcher opted to use semi-structured interviews as this would assist in following up on some of the responses that arose for some further investigation. Focus groups interviews were also used to allow the interviewees the freedom to express their feelings, opinions and perceptions on the questions asked.

One-to-one interviews have a great advantage in that they enable increased geographical range by contacting difficult-to-catch participants via telephone. On the other hand, the benefits of focus groups include the rich discussions drawn from the depth of opinion, which cannot be achieved with direct questioning (O’Leary, 2014:218). In the light of this, one-to-one interviews were used for participants such as the HODs, the SETA members and the employer representatives, which allowed for the use of the telephone and email. The focus group interviews were used to promote discussion and interaction with the selected groups of students.

To sum up the preceding discussion, in preparation for visiting the institutions where data would be collected, an interview guide containing possible questions, follow-up questions and probes to investigate the participants’ views was compiled. Resources such as the telephone and social networks were used to track down participants who could not be physically reached and emails and faxes were used to distribute some of the interview questions. Devices such as a tape recorder and camera were used to capture the observable nonverbal behaviours. In addition, a literature study was used to determine the available policies on the mandate for the integration of WIL, particularly in TVETCs.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY OF THE METHODS USED TO COLLECT AND ANALYSE DATA

Research objective	Data collection method and instrument	Participants	Sampling	Analysis and interpretation
1. To investigate the challenges for the integration of WIL for Business Studies students at TVETCs	Semi-structured interviews, literature study and the colleges' policies on WIL	Campus managers, HODs, college lecturers, students, SETAs, employers	Campus managers (4), HODs (8), college lecturers (12), students (40), SETAs (8), employers (8)	QCA (interviews), and the review of literature
2. To determine how TVETCs support and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities	Semi-structured interviews and the focus groups interviews	Campus managers, HODs	Campus managers (4), HODs (8)	QCA (interviews)
3. To determine how students perceive the administration of WIL in TVETCs	Semi-structured interviews and focus groups	HODs, college students	HODs (8), students (40)	QCA (interviews)
4. To investigate stakeholders' (i.e. students, employers and SETAs) perceptions regarding the integration of WIL as regards the placement and employability (businesses) of Business Studies students	Semi-structured interviews (interview guide)	Campus managers, HODs, college lecturers, students, SETAs, employers	Campus managers (4), HODs (8), college lecturers (12), students (40), SETAs (8), employers (8)	QCA (interviews)
5. To explore means to improve the integration of WIL for students in Business Studies at TVETCs	Semi-structured interviews (interview guide)	Campus managers, HODs, college lecturers, students, SETAs, employers	Campus managers (4), HODs (8), college lecturers (12), students (40), SETAs (8), employers (8)	QCA (interviews), and the review of literature

1.7.5.3 Data analysis

Consistent with Gordon's (2016:18) views, qualitative data analysis involves looking for patterns in what information was provided, as well as how that information was conveyed. Although the analysis involves the identification of patterns and the interpretation of data (what they mean and their implications), it mainly depends on the research question(s) and the methods used (Gordon, 2016:18). In the light of the above, data analysis (in this study) took the form of content analysis, as this was deemed to be relevant for answering the research questions.

Depending on the choice of the researcher, content analysis is split into qualitative and quantitative analysis. It is this splitting that makes content analysis the most flexible analytical tool employed in a wide variety of research (Cavanagh, 1997:17; Wildemuth & Zhang, 2005:1). Unlike a quantitative approach, which focuses on the generation of numbers (i.e. how many times), qualitative content analysis (QCA) involves looking at the text, but instead of counting, researchers identify particular themes (Gordon, 2016:171).

In the light of the above discussions, QCA was found to be the most relevant for this. This is because the researcher was not interested in counting for the generation of numbers but in the identification of themes (Gordon, 2016:171). In addition, QCA focuses on the material to gain more understanding and to discover the meanings thereof. Also that it (QCA) could be used to analyse a wide range of materials such as company documents, diaries, websites, magazines advertisements, and many more. Also, that it does not matter whether the material was sampled from other sources or whether data were generalised in the process of doing research (Schreier, 2012:1–3).

QCA involves a complex process whereby researchers bring together their perceptions of the material with their individual background regarding what they already know (topic), the situation they encountered, how they feel at the time, and the like (Schreier, 2012:1–2). Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1277) identify three approaches for to QCA, namely, conventional, directed and summative approaches. Although these approaches are discussed in detail in chapter four (Section 4.7.3), in a nutshell, a conventional approach was used in this study to answers to the main research question, a directed approach was used to extend the conceptual framework on the modalities for the integration of WIL and a summative approach was used to analyse the content of WIL policies (TVETCs) and the students' journals (log books) used during their WIL programme. To prepare himself with the

processes for the main study, the researcher conducted as pilot study, which is discussed in the next section.

1.7.4.4 Pilot study

Greeff (2014:341) states that conducting a pilot study helps come to grips with important aspects of research, that is, being alert of the level of interviewing skills required, how to gain access, making contact, and the like. In line with this, Schreier (2012:147) states that it is impossible to think of the pitfalls that may occur in actual research, hence a need for practising in advance. Strydom (2011c:236) describes a pilot study as a dress rehearsal for the main inquiry, a process of validating the instruments by administering them to a small number of the subjects selected from the parent population.

In view of the above discussion, a pilot venture was conducted at one of the TVETCs in the province of Gauteng. This helped to obtain expert advice from those with more experience working on WIL at TVETCs. He was also guided on the relevant documents to be studied, the employers to be visited, the SETA working with the selected colleges and the like. Although the researcher adhered to the same procedures as in the main inquiry, the number of participants was reduced as reflected in the table below. This was done to ensure cost effectiveness and the manageability of the data. The participants for the pilot study are set out in Table 1.2.

TABLE 1.2: CATEGORIES OF CANDIDATES FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Categories of candidates for the pilot study	NO:
College campus manager	1
The HODs (Business Studies and Student Support)	2
College lecturers	2
First category of student: focus groups	6
Second category of student: one-to-one interview	4
Representative from SETA	2
Representatives from the majority employers	2
Total number of candidates	19

In order to assure the quality of the findings (pilot study), the same procedures used in the main study were adhered to. The focus was on students (N6) registered for NATED programmes (Business Studies). Likewise, the principles of trustworthiness and triangulation were adhered to but are discussed in detail in chapter four (section 4.4). It should be noted that quality is neither generated by the data nor by the processes themselves, but rather by the appropriate use of methods and the inferences drawn from them (Bazeley, 2013:403). The next section discusses the means for assuring quality using different methods and instruments.

1.7.4.5 Quality assurance

Researchers have to be specific in terms of how they ensure and/or assess the quality of the study as relative to the concept of validity and reliability. Most importantly, however, the concepts of trustworthiness and authenticity are highly regarded for the assessment of quality in qualitative studies (Bryman, 2016:302). As a result, in this study, both triangulation and trustworthiness were used to assess the quality and the authenticity of the findings.

Triangulation is therefore about using more sources of data or methods when investigating a social phenomenon; it is about taking multiple approaches to studying a particular topic and the combination of different methods used to create different types of data (Brown & Gibson, 2009:59). In this process (triangulation), multiple sources, strategies and approaches were used to collect and analyse data. This also meant considering a topic from a variety of theoretical orientations (Bryman, 2016:305).

According to Wellington (2000:23), triangulation helps to explain (map out) the fullness and intricacy of human behaviour using data obtainable from more sources. This goes with the belief that by using various sources (convergence of data), validity or strength the results may be increased (Arthur et al., 2012:147). Relevant to this is the fact that a qualitative approach values the importance of a detailed review of the literature (Babbie & Rubin, 2001:115; Neuman, 2006:70–71). This is because the literature helps to show where the study fits into the broader dialogue, as well as the importance of the study against the backdrop of previous research (Delpont & Fouche, 2011a:109).

As already mentioned, the concept of quality is used relatively together with the term “trustworthiness”, as a means of side-stepping the thorny issue of validity. Trustworthiness focuses on the methods of generation of data, a context of data collection (Brown & Gibson, 2009:59). Whilst the concept of validity is concerned with the issue of exact measurement, thus the extent to which the

empirical data reflects precisely what the participants agreed, that is, the real meaning of the concepts (Neuendorf, 2017:19).

In light of the discussions in this study, triangulation was ensured through the use of multiple sources, that is, the empirical data, the literature review and the document analysis. Whilst the review of the literature took about two chapters (chapters two and three), ensuring the richness of information as directed and guided by the research questions and the objectives of the study. Moreover, concepts such as credibility, applicability and transferability, dependability and conformability were used to ensure the quality of the study. These are explained in detail in chapter four.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Researchers should remain objective, rigorously conducting their projects such that personal bias does not affect the results. This is because in every research study some challenges will always be experienced, hence researchers should spell out how they will try to limit problems (Glicken, 2003:29; Delpont & Fouche, 2011b:111). As a result, the researcher (in this study) was careful to ensure that the results were not affected by his past experiences, having worked previously at one of the TVETCs.

Among other factors for consideration, the findings of this investigation are limited to the four selected public TVETCs in four South African provinces. In total, there are approximately 50 TVETCs in the nine provinces of SA and including all of them would have added to the trustworthiness of the findings. Nevertheless, to ensure the cost-effectiveness and manageability of the data, only the eight colleges were selected for this study. Among other constraints were the fact that documents such as the TVET policy for WIL contained little information on the various modalities for the integration of WIL; instead emphasising only one, which is WPL (Brimble et al., 2011; Smith, 2011; Brookes et al., 2010).

1.8.1 Delimitation of the study

In this section, the most importance concepts were analysed, the scope of the study was demarcated and the setting of programme of the study was discussed. The next section discusses the scope of the research study.

1.8.2 The scope

As explained in the section on the limitations of the research, the researcher focused on eight selected public TVETCs in four South African provinces. The study sought to investigate the way in which WIL is integrated in the TVETC curricula, its authenticity and the impact it has on students' capabilities, progression and employability. The study focused on students registered for the NATED programmes in the Department of Business Studies because some criticism and scepticism of these programmes have been voiced (Buthelezi, 2018:14; & Engelbrecht et al., 2017:29). Besides, the researcher assumed that students in these programmes could be affected by the way the WIL curriculum is being integrated. Hence, this study investigated the impact of WIL curricula on such students.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The fact that SA is seen to have a post-school education and training system that does not offer sufficient places to the many youth and adults seeking education and training (DHET 2013b:2), could be the result of the fact that TVET curricular does not cater for the needs of both students and the potential employers (curricular responsiveness). The researcher assumed the manner in which WIL had been administered (TVETCs) could be one of the obstacles, hence this study conducted to identify the loopholes (limitations), proposing also the model for the effective integration of WIL. Proving or disproving this assumption was covered in objective 4: To investigate the stakeholders' (i.e. students, employers and SETAs) perceptions of the integration of WIL as regards the placement and employability (businesses) of students from Business Studies. This could help to eliminate some of those hindrances brought about by the incorporation and or integration of WIL curricular.

This study was primarily to address the challenges affecting the graduateness and the employability of the students in the TVETCs (SA). However, the findings, recommendations as well as the proposed model could be more helpful to all the tertiary institutions, mostly because WIL seems to be compulsory in almost all the qualifications offered in the institutions of higher educations (DHET 2013:56).

1.10 ELUCIDATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

For the purpose of clarifying some ambiguities and determining the relevance to the field of study, the key concepts used in this study are defined and contextualised. Conceptual analysis was done regarding the following concepts: **model, WIL, effective, relevance, Public TVET, post-school system, capabilities, progression and employability.**

1.10.1 Model

A **model** is described as something that exists as an example to follow or imitate (Soanes & Stevenson 2006:920). It is a style or design of an item; one serving as an example to be imitated or compared. A **model** is a standard to be imitated; a small copy of something (Merriam-Webster dictionary). It is also regarded as something extremely good, an example of its type (Cambridge dictionary). It is a copy or replica (Bailey, 1994:322). According to the QCTO (2014:16), the four models for the integration of WIL are problem-based learning, project-based learning, work-based learning and work-directed theoretical learning. The CHE (2011:21) mentioned the following models for the integration of WIL, namely problem-based learning, project-based learning, work-directed theoretical learning and workplace learning.

Concerning the models, it appears that both the QCTO (2014:16) and the CHE (2011:21) agree on the four models for integrating the WIL curriculum, except that one model is omitted in each, that is, in the QCTO (2014:16) the WPL is omitted, and in the CHE (2011:21) the WBL is omitted. These omissions align with Aiken and Byrom's (2014:272) viewpoint that WPL is a modality of the WBL. However, in this study, the concept of a **model** embraces the use of both the WBL and the WPL, thus making five models, namely, problem-based learning, project-based learning, work-based learning (WBL), workplace learning (WPL), and work-directed theoretical learning (QCTO, 2014:16; CHE, 2011:21). The fifth model was introduced because the researcher believes that WBL and WPL are not actually the same. These are discussed in chapter two.

1.10.2 Work integrated learning (WIL)

WIL is a general term used to describe the curricula that integrate formal and informal learning (Barends & Nel, 2017:2). It includes teaching and learning practice or case studies that reflect industry practices and real-life examples (Brookes et al., 2010:1). WIL is seen a vehicle for *learning*

about learning and not necessarily about working; it provides new ways of addressing the problems regarding the relation between theory and practice (Blom, 2016:14). WIL is only achievable through a curriculum that encompasses both disciplinary subjects and workplace learning (Evans, Guile & Harris, 2011:156). A working definition for WIL (as in this study) is the curriculum that combines and integrates formal learning and its workplace application, irrespective of the time, place and or situation where it is being practised.

1.10.3 Effective

The concept of **effective** is defined as: successful in producing a desired or intended result, fulfilling a specified function, accomplish a purpose, producing the intended or expected result (Reference dictionary); producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect (Merriam-Webster dictionary); achieving the desired outcome (Cambridge dictionary); producing a desired or intended result (Oxford dictionary); the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved (Business dictionary). The concept of **effective** in this study refers to producing desired or expected results for the WIL curriculum, which are gradueness, progression and the employability of students.

1.10.4 Relevance

There are several meanings associated with the concept of **relevance**, including: relation to the matter at hand; practical and social applicability; material that satisfies the needs of the user (Merriam-Webster dictionary). **Relevance** is the degree to which something is related or useful to what is happening (Cambridge dictionary); it means to know why it matters or how it is important (vocabulary dictionary). **Relevance** is how appropriate something is to what's being done at a given time (Your dictionary); the condition of being connected with the matter at hand (browse dictionary). By synonym it means: applicability, bearing, connection, materiality, pertinence (Merriam-Webster dictionary). For the purpose of this study, the concept of relevance will be used to refer to a WIL model(s) that satisfies the needs of the college stakeholders.

1.10.5 Public TVETC

Section 1(g) of the FETC Amendment Act 1 of 2013 describes a public college as any college that provides Continued Education and Training and is regarded as a public college under section 3 and/or

declared as a public college under section 4 (RSA, 2013). A college is referred to a public or private FET institution established or declared as TVETC or Community Education and Training College or a private college established and declared under the FETC Amendment Act 1 of 2013 (RSA, 2013). This study addresses the concept of public TVETC as the selected public TVETCs of SA, but not excluding other public colleges not sampled for this study.

1.10.6 Post-school system

In the White Paper for PSET, the concept of post-school system is defined as the system that comprises all forms of education and training provision, particularly for those who have already completed their schooling (DHET, 2013: xi). This includes institutions such as universities, TVETCs, adult learning centres, and or any registered post-school institutions. Other institutions include the regulatory bodies responsible for qualifications and quality assurance in the post-school system (RSA, 2013; DHET, 2013: xi). According to DHET (2013: xi), the concept of post school education refers to higher or tertiary education under the authority of a specific municipality, province or national government department. The meaning attached to the concept of post-school education is all education and training provision for students who have already completed NQF level 4 qualifications, with the exclusion of those with qualifications offered below NQF level 5.

1.10.7 Capabilities

Stephenson (1998:2) describes the concept of graduates' capabilities as the process of aligning formal learning to the new and changing needs of the workplace. Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2011:564) describe graduates' **capabilities** as the series of attributes that can be enumerated and ticked off on completion of studies. According to Holmes (1999:93), graduates' capabilities are linked their personal sense of self and the social processes in the workplace. In this study, the concept of capabilities refers to the preparedness (i.e. skills, knowledge and information) of students to enter the labour market for employment or entrepreneurship.

1.10.8 Progression

As stated by DHET (2011b:36), the concept of progression implies that at the completion of the NQF level 7 qualification, in terms of which students meet the entry requirements for admission to a

cognate advanced qualification. In so doing, accumulated credits are presented for transfer and part-way entry into a cognate advanced qualification. According to the (DHET, 2013:18), the term progression is about one moving through the various levels of qualifications to other different combinations of the education delivery system. Progression in the case of this study refers to advanced programmes offered at the various TVETCs and/or HEIs for which the National Diploma forms the basis for registrations.

1.10.9 Employability

The concept of employability refers to the gap between graduate attributes and the industry's needs (Brimble et al., 2011:80). It thus boils down to the extent to which academics cater for the industry type course (Brookes et al., 2010:1) and the enculturation of content into the workplace (Choy & Delehaye, 2011:158). Employability refers to an educational programme and/or qualification packaged with real-life contexts typical of the needs and/or the expectations of the prospective employer (Smith & Worsfold, 2014:1070). For this study, the concept of employability refers to the extent to which tacit skills or generic skills are developed during the course of a programme.

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

Trustworthiness is a means of side-stepping the thorny issue of validity and the connotations of truth that accompany it (Brown & Gibson, 2009:59). In terms of Bryman (2016:302), trustworthiness (qualitative research) could be ensured by means of four criteria, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability, all of which were discussed in chapter four.

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In broad terms, ethical considerations include obtaining the necessary approval to conduct the investigation, and not neglecting to obtain informed consent from the participants. According to Silverman (2010:153), most HEIs provide the research guidelines for conducting research. Likewise, the researcher first obtained the ethical clearance for the study thereby adhering to all the guidelines as stipulated in the university policy. Table 1.3 provides the methods used to obtain permission, that is, a summary of the steps that the researcher took to obtain the necessary permission and consent.

TABLE 1.3: METHODS FOR OBTAINING PERMISSION

Process to obtain permission to conduct research	For what was permission requested?	Letters granting permission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters requesting permission from the principals, the representatives of SETAs and the employers of students • Letters of consent to the individual participants • Focus group consent letters and confidentiality agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College principals (interviews with campus managers, HODs and WIL facilitators, and students); access the colleges' policies on WIL for the literature study. • Companies (individual semi-structured interviews with employers and one on one interview with students on WIL. • SETAs (semi-structured interview) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission letter from principals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 1 (Appendix B1) Principal 2 (Appendix B2) Principal 3 (Appendix B3) Principal 4 (Appendix B4) • Consent to participation in the study (Appendix C) • Focus group consent and confidentiality agreement (Appendix D)

TABLE 1.4: SUMMARY OF ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sample/ Participants	Process to obtain consent	Letters requesting consent/ assent	Informed consent letters	Data collection instruments
College campus managers (4), HODs from the Business Studies (4) and the lecturers (12)	Permission letters from: college principals: Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter requesting permission from the principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College principals: Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga) Permission letters from the principals were included 	Permission requested to conduct the interviews (one to one and the Focus Groups) from the college principals. The analysis of relevant documents, i.e. policies on WIL); interview guide appended.
HODs, student support services(8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request from the participation and consent from the principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter requesting participation and consent from HODs (WIL facilitators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent letters from the HODs (WIL facilitators) are securely held on file and available on request to examiners and the REC 	One-to-one interviews (Interview guide appended)
Students (40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request participation from the HODs Consent letter for the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter requesting permission from the HODs (Business Studies) Letter requesting permission from employers of students (WIL) Letters of consent to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent letter from the HODs are securely held on file and available on request to examiners and the REC 	Consent letters from the students are securely held on file and available on request to examiners and the REC, and thus include students from the focus groups (interview guide was also used)
Majority employers of students 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request participation and consent from the management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter requesting permission from the executive management of the companies employing students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent letter from the companies employing student (WIL) are securely held on file and available on request to examiners and the REC 	Semi-structured interviews (individual)
Representatives from the SETAs (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request participation and consent from management (SETAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter requesting permission from the management of the SETA assisting with the placement of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent letter from the SETAs in partnership with the colleges (WIL) are securely held on file and available on request to examiners and the REC 	Semi-structured interviews (individual)
TOTAL: 80				

According to Silverman (2010:153), the principles of ethical research include voluntary participation (informed consent) and the right to pull out, safety of research participants, the possible risks and/or benefits. This is about making some decisions that balance one right action against another (Thomas, 2009:147). In this study, all the participants including the management of the TVETCs were approached prior to the investigation and all consented to participate by signing an informed consent form. The researcher complied with and adhered to the agreed terms and conditions.

According to Thomas (2009:150), a consent letter addresses the following:

- the researcher's full name and contact details
- the nature, purpose and expected benefits of the study
- ethics procedures being followed
- any possible harm that may come from the study
- information about confidentiality and anonymity of the participants
- Details of how data will be kept, for how long and when they will be destroyed (Thomas, 2009:150).

Still on the subject of ethical principles, Silverman (2010:155) reiterates that subjects to be included in the research must be well informed about issues relating to the confidentiality of information, and thus include the protection of participants' anonymity and their voluntary participation. As a result, in this study, the subjects were assured their identity will not be disclosed, that publication of the research findings will not affect them in anyhow. Moreover, the researcher adhered to the ethical principles as guided by the ethical committee of the university.

1.13 CHAPTER DIVISION OF THE FINAL REPORT

Chapter one entails the introduction of the study, the background, statement of the problem, research motivation, research questions and the objectives, research methodology, limitations of the study, the elucidation of the concepts, and the ethical considerations. In chapter two the researcher reviewed the literature and were presented as the conceptualisation of the VET in context, the overview of WIL, and the models for the integration of WIL. In chapter three, the literature focused on the challenges associated with the integration of WIL, the lack of generic skills required by the most employers, transitional

challenges to the un-employability of students, the dynamics linked to student's lack of capabilities, the managerial challenges causative of poor curricula, and the impact of collaborations on the college curriculum. Chapter four includes a discussion of the research methodology, the methods used, trustworthiness of the research, ethical considerations, and data analysis and interpretations. In Chapter five gives the presentation and analysis of the research findings, and these were presented under the following themes: Challenges to the integration of WIL in the Business Studies, means for helping students gain access to the WIL opportunities, students' perceptions on the administration of WIL, stakeholders perceptions of the effectiveness of WIL, and the means to improve the current WIL models. Finally, chapter six present the summary, conclusion and the recommendations, including the proposed model for the integration of WIL, suggestions for the future research, and the limitations of the study.

1.14 SUMMARY

This chapter had set out the purpose of this research, namely, to study models for the integration of WIL curricula into the programmes offered in the Department of Business Studies at selected TVETCs in SA. The motivation and the background of the study were briefly discussed, including the problem statement, the scope and the significance of the study. The adopted research methods were explained, as well as the rationale for selecting them, threats to their validity and the ethics adhered to. In addition, the key concepts used in this study were clarified, that is, model, integration, WIL, WIL modality, curriculum, implementation, post-school system, public TVETCs, NATED programmes, capabilities, progression and employability. The researcher assumed that students' challenges concerning their lack of capabilities, progression and employability have something to do with the lack of information about various modalities for the integration of WIL, hence the topic for the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE MODALITIES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WIL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the study, the background, problem statement, motivation, and the like were addressed in the preceding chapter, but mostly importantly the research question which guided the study. In terms of Kamler and Thomson (2012:16), research projects do not emerge from nowhere; all studies build on the findings of others, and these are acknowledged using citations. By reviewing the literature, one may identify some gaps, using different approaches to bring ideas together. These may be detached but speak to a particular difficulty, puzzle or debate within the field. In line with this opinion, several sources were consulted regarding the concept of WIL, and its models and modalities, while the process (review of literature) was directed and guided by the attempt to answer to the research questions, of which the research objectives helped to maintain the focus of the study: investigating how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes.

Delpont, Fouche and Schurink (2011:302) state that a thoughtful and informed discussion of the literature builds a logical framework for the research, setting it within a tradition of inquiry and a context of related studies. This agrees with Kamler and Thomson's (2012:16) viewpoint that engagement with texts others have produced helps to show the historical development of the field(s), discussing its empirical and theoretical bases and biases, as well as identifying major debates, key figures and seminal texts. In light of the above, the engagement with the literature led to the emergence of topics and subtopics relating to the concept of WIL, which were subsequently discussed, including the concept of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and its implications, an overview of WIL and its models and modalities, and so on. Yet, these discussions focused mainly on the importance for workforce development and the benefits for the students investigated.

The concept of WIL was defined as a curriculum that focuses on the development of student capabilities that are valued by prospective employers (Brown & Lyons, 2003:60). Further, it is a curriculum that develops tacit and explicit knowledge (Chillas et al., 2014:656; Moreland, 2006:7). Relevant to the main topic of the study, five models of WIL were identified and discussed, namely, workplace learning (WPL),

work-based learning (WBL), problem-based learning (PBL), project-based learning (PJBL) and work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL). For each of these models, different approaches (known as modalities) were discussed, focusing on their impact on the development of students' capabilities and employability.

In line with the concept of VET as relative to WIL, MacLennan (2008:38) emphasises that college managers ought to study the history, traditions and philosophy of VET; this could help to understand it started and the factors, which affected its development. So, the next section briefly addresses the history of VET in the South African context.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING VET IN CONTEXT

Also known as Technical and Vocational Education (TVE), VET began in Europe as an apprenticeship system, thus a belief that technical education is a fundamental part of education (Waterhouse, 2002:7), while the concept of vocation was used to give dignity and status to the practical and/or technical irrespective of the place it occurred. VET is therefore an integrated learning continuum involving curricula that are more engaging for students and lead to desirable occupational outcomes (Roodhouse, 2008:55).

In fact, the concept of TVET describes colleges offering TVE or VET courses, whilst the concept of VET describes a learning approach that combines both theory and practice. TVETCs are thus expected to become the centre for skills development in SA; a customer-centred institution that provide graduates of both excellence and relevance (Davis, 2004:121; DHET, 2013:11–19; Lumby, 2000:18). As used in the naming of the colleges in SA, the concept of TVETC signifies a curriculum that prepares students for jobs that are based on practical activities or that are occupation related (CHE, 2011:77).

Still on the naming of the colleges, the TVET sector forms an integrative framework for catalysing the sustainable development of human resources. Accordingly, the aim is to link skills, education, knowledge and innovation to the workforce and economic and social development strategies both at the organisational and national levels. In so doing, this assists in eliminating disparities experienced by disadvantaged population groups in the society (Alagaraja, Kim & Kotamraju, 2014:267). The sector assesses and

accredits the learning taking place either on campus or at the workplace, allowing those with low educational attainment better access to decent jobs (Toner, 2011:59; Waterhouse, 2002:7).

VET is more about transforming personalities to ready them for the workplace rather than merely imparting the knowledge and skills required for specific tasks. It predominantly consists of practical work rather than memorisation of theory and certification (Frykholm & Nitzler, 1993:434), hence the naming of colleges TVETCs. In this regard, learning is regarded as a social interaction and not merely the acquisition of knowledge (cognitive). In this manner, students are able to learn more from experienced practitioners in a situation relevant to the social context (Lave & Wenger, 1991:53).

In line with WIL, VET was designed on the premise that good technical teaching results in the application of learning essential for the workplace (DHET, 2013:2–5; MacLennan, 2008:35). The curricula close the gap between what is offered in the college and the workplace, also focusing on the students who could not make it in the schools (Wolf, 2002:244). VET is crucial for the development of the human capital essential for economic growth; hence, it is concerned with the employability of students and upgrading the skills of the already employed (Akoojee et al., 2008:262; Imrie, 1995:283). VET promotes students' fitness for the general demands of the labour market, extending their employment opportunities as well (Colley, Diment, James & Tedder, 2003:472). Similarly, like WIL, VET is offered with the involvement of the workplace (HRDC, 2008:8; Yates, 2011:1681). The next section gives an overview of the VET in the context of South African TVETCs.

2.3.1 Overview of VET in South Africa

VET is not new to SA but has long been offered by technical high schools, the former technical colleges and the former technikons, and was coordinated by two national departments (Education and Labour) which then shared the responsibilities. At first, there was good cooperation between these departments, the Department of Labour informed the Department of Education (DoE) about the skills shortages identified by employers and the DoE would respond by aligning the curriculum accordingly. With time, the relationship became strained, however, and the departments found it difficult to coordinate the programmes (VET) in a cooperative manner (DHET, 2013:2).

Until the establishment of the new government (democratic), South African public colleges (now TVETCs) offered qualifications anchored in the NATED programmes. These programmes were examined by the national DoE and offered from N1 to N6 (NQF level 4). For many years these programmes, specifically designed for the workplace, were offered successfully in trimesters. Students spent a trimester on the campus and the other two trimesters in the workplace. With time, NATED programmes were neglected and became outdated (DHET, 2013:14). Those employers who were concerned about the dated curricula stopped providing placement opportunities (Akoojee et al., 2008:254; DHET, 2013:14).

Since the advent of the new government (1994), SA has begun the process of rebuilding the education system with the aim of improving the quality of the offerings. In 2009, the DHET was established to integrate education and training (DHET, 2013:2). Aiming to foster key skills in the TVETCs, the DoE tried replacing the NATED programmes with the modern programmes presented as NCV (offered only from NQF level 2–4). However, the phasing out of NATED programmes failed as a result of criticism of the NCV programmes initially designed for learners completing Grade 9 (DHET, 2011a:5, 24; DHET, 2013:14). The fact that some college focus on younger, less-qualified students (i.e. NCV) discourages enterprises from agreeing to WIL partnerships (Akoojee et al., 2008:262; DHET, 2011a:11).

The aforementioned criticisms discouraged students from enrolling in the NATED programmes, adding to the challenges (i.e. lack of placements) of WIL (DHET, 2011a:11). Students enrolling for the NATED programmes attended theory classes for 18 months, followed by another 18 months (2000 hours) of WIL. Consequently, the NATED programmes were perceived to be too far detached from the needs of the employers. To fulfil a WIL mandate (DHET, 2011a:11), other colleges set up their own business or learnerships for placement opportunities (Akoojee et al., 2008:272). It is argued that if VET is correctly applied, it contributes positively to workforce development strategies (Roodhouse, 2008:57), a topic for the next discussion.

2.3.2 Importance of VET for workforce development

According to StatsSA (2015), approximately 2.8 million young people in SA (between 18 and 24 years old) were neither employed nor enrolled for education and training. The generally accepted notion is that skills and/or talent lead to employability, thus eradicating poverty and unemployment (Powell, 2016a:2–

5). Also, that the more education one acquires, the more likely one is to get a higher income and the less likely to experience unemployment (Wolf, 2002:15).

As Alagaraja et al. (2014:268, 272) state, the three important areas of national human resource development are the education, training and development of human resources. These areas require a shared interest in the development of curricula to address the increasing global skills shortage. Subsequently, it may be assumed that good training leads to greater efficiency, which in turn leads to the growth of the economy thereby increasing government revenues through taxes (Anderson, 2009:25). Hence, the DHET (2013: viii) aimed to increase participation in TVETCs with the intention of addressing poverty and unemployment among the youth.

HEIs should be orientated to the provision of skills that enable employability. This is because people's knowledge, skills, talents and attitudes are the key factors of success in every aspect of human endeavour, not least economic prosperity (Lumby, 2000:16; Holloway, 2010:23). In line with this, Powell (2016a:2–5) maintains that skills shortages hamper firm productivity, which in turn hampers economic growth. In addition, skills innovation is curbed thereby affecting job creation, another factor which constrains economic development. In addition, it is stated that in SA there is scant evidence of a relationship between VET and economic growth (Motala & Vally, 2014:8).

Anderson (2009:36) mentions that SA is no different from other middle-income countries where TVETCs are perceived to be the main solution to advancing the economy by addressing the skills shortage. In contrast, the South African policy narrative for TVETCs is located within the concept of social and economic growth, which relies heavily on the development and maintenance of a viable, responsive and effective TVET sector (DHET, 2013:3–12). Hence, TVETCs are blamed for failing to respond to youth unemployment, poverty and social inequities, by failing to supply the skills required for economic growth (Klees, 2014: vii). TVETCs are thus expected to produce skilled workers relevant to the needs of the labour market for the purpose of advancing the national economy (Ismail, Krauss, Omar & Sail, 2011:604).

Properly designed VET curricula can potentially benefit the development of the workforce. Hence the government (SA) aims to increase the VET courses to maximise the production of the national skilled

workforce and enhance economic growth (Ismail et al., 2011:604). As stated by Lumby (2000:19), the TVET curriculum needs to be widely integrated in order to be more responsive to the satisfaction of both the students and the employers. In so doing, TVET programmes could help to reduce poverty, leading to the employability of students. However, to enhance the concept of VET, the next section gives an overview of the concept of WIL,

2.3 OVERVIEW OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Brown and Lyons (2003:58) indicate that traditionally the relationship between a programme of study and employment was based on an education-assessment-selection process, which involved students taking a range of subjects that develop the knowledge and skills as required by employers.

WIL is embedded in immersion in the *social, cultural* and *emotional* aspects of work (Colley et al., 2003:471). As Brookes et al. (2010:107) state, WIL is an umbrella term for teaching and learning practices, which reflect industry practices and/or real-life examples.

According to Abdullah and Mtsweni (2013:3), WIL is a kind of partnership, which involves the learning institutions, students and the businesses employing the students, each with a specific role to play. This partnership aims to integrate the knowledge and skills of the two sectors in order to improve teaching and learning and the world of professional practice (CHE, 2011:9). However, it is pointed out that the success of WIL depends upon the propensity for students to want to learn, without which nothing can be achieved. In addition, for WIL to provide a solution for the national economy, much will be required if a low-skilled society is to be transformed into a high skilled one. Otherwise, WIL cannot offer quick-fix solutions (Dalrymple, Kemp & Smith, 2014:75).

There are several benefits associated with the integration of WIL. Among others, it helps students learn from expert developers, being part of project teams delivering practical hands-on workplace skills (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:3–7; Raelin, 1997:567; Walo, 2001:12). As Jones (2010:701) states, WIL helps students act at a level of automaticity with knowledge, review existing knowledge to solve new problems, practising also what was learnt in class. In so doing, WIL provides the professional

development, employability and preparedness for professional practice (CHE, 2011:5; Paloniemi, 2006:439).

Still on the benefits for WIL, it provides the opportunity to reflect or test career choices, bridging the gap between graduate attributes and industry experience (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:3–7; Brimble et al., 2011:80). WIL is a means for transitioning from schooling to work, making students more attractive to potential employers and thereby increases their chances of being employed (Blom, 2016:14; CHE, 2011:5). It thus provides the abilities which prospective employers value, as well as a better understanding of the industry's requirements (Chillas et al., 2014:656; Walo, 2001:12).

Although WIL has some benefits, as already mentioned, there are a number of concerns regarding its integration. Among others is the fact that it is intimately bound up with the social context in which it is situated, thus its specification concerning the place or environment in which it occurs. In addition, its success depends largely on its partnerships with industry because its activities are largely social and cultural rather than individual and technical in nature (Lave & Wenger, 1991:53). So, for WIL to be successful, authentic activities with complexities that match those in real practice ought to be included (Colley et al., 2003:1).

It is further argued that WIL can be real, simulated or occur in industry itself, but its prime importance is the *outcomes* and not learning merely to gain a qualification (Brimble et al., 2011:81). The concept of learning is described as a change in behaviour resultant from experience (practice), knowledge or skill gained through study, teaching, instruction or experience. This (learning) is a process by which behaviour is shaped or controlled; a process of constructing understanding based on experience from a wide range of sources. Next to this are four aspects of paramount importance, namely: learning as a social process (interaction between what is known and what is to be learnt); learning as a metacognitive process (Wray and Lewis (1997) in Pritchard, 2009: 2,103).

Pritchard (2009:24) iterate the most learning does not take place in school, but the exchange of thoughts and ideas in any form of discussion given any context. In this way learning is viewed as scaffolding, which in turn lead to a greater understanding or insight into the topic (or conversation). Learning depends on an individual's preferred learning style, also certain conditions concerning the brain. Learning

outcomes are therefore viewed as methods to assist students capture their own experiences to be presented for accreditation at the completion of the WIL programmes. In this way, students formulate their own personal action plans, which serve as a contract between the workplace and the colleges (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:122).

WIL creates real-life contexts typical of those in which students will work after graduating. In this regard, WIL is not confined to the workplace (Smith & Worsfold, 2014:1070). Hence, it (WIL) regarded as “*learning at*”, “*learning for*” and “*learning through*” work (Evans et al., 2011:156). Irrespective of the place it occurs, WIL requires students to be involved in highly authentic simulated environments, contexts or activities, which expose them to real work environs for them to interact with a particular context (Jeffries & Milne, 2014:565; Smith & Worsfold 2014:1073). Simultaneously, academics take the position of brokers acting between the student and a learning environment, making it conducive for learning (Biggs, 2003:27). In light of above, the next section focuses on models and/or strategies that will expose students to real work settings and situations.

2.4 MODELS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WORKPLACE INTEGRATED LEARNING

Fletcher et al. (2009:9–10) states that WIL is an umbrella term for a various models and modalities that integrate theory with work practice in academic qualifications and/or curricula. In line with this, it is explained that WIL models are the strategies used to expose pupils to real work settings for observation, interaction and familiarising themselves with a particular context (Geall, Harvey & Moon, 1998:610). Students are accordingly expected to be proactive, actively improving their knowledge and skills, also learning things in advance in order to become relevant in the changing world of technological advancement (Rae, 2007:608).

Although the concept of a model was distinguished from the concept of modality (sections 1.11.1 and 1.11.2), some use the terms interchangeably. Fletcher et al. (2009:9–10) state there are various terms used in HEIs to refer to the concept of WIL and/or its models. In line with this, Harris and Smiegel (2008:11) highlight the dilemma for institutions when different concepts are used to refer to WIL or when a specific concept is used to refer to different things. There is consequently a lack of uniformity as regards the developments and/or activities to define the WIL curricula (Connor & MacFarlane, 2007:7). Therefore,

as elucidated in chapter one (sections 1.11.1 and 1.11.2), the discussion regarding the WIL models is presented focusing on the following the five models, WPL, WBL, PBL, PJBL and WDTL.

As already indicated, different authors support different approaches (modalities) to WIL, with the most frequently used being practicum, professional practice, internship, learnership, industry-based learning, cooperative education and fieldwork (Fletcher et al., 2009:9–10). According to Guile and Griffiths (2001:124), there are five approaches to WIL, namely, the traditional, experiential, generic, work process and connective model. For more clarity, these are briefly explained below.

A typology of WIL with five models according to Guile and Griffiths (2001:114–119):

- The **traditional model** is associated with apprenticeship, adapting students' skills in workplaces.
- The **experiential model** is an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning.
- The **generic model** advocates for students to be engaged in work-related activities with the learning outcomes assisting them capture the required practices.
- The **work process model** emphasises the need to situate the activities in the actual context of the real work environs.
- The **connective model** advocates for students to see the workplace as a place comprising a series of interconnected systems involving a range of communities of practice (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:114).

In line with the model by Abdullah and Mtsweni (2013:8–9), academics are regarded as core to the process of teaching and learning, using textbooks and tutorials (printed material) and the like. The electronic media embrace virtual learning settings where students have access to social media technologies and the practical training includes computer classes, programming modules and suchlike. In terms of this model, the dimensions for WIL include an ad hoc approach, cooperative education, work-based programmes, internship and community engagement (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:8–9). These dimensions are regarded as some of the modalities embedded within the WIL models, a topic for the following sections. Furthermore, the WPL and WBL were prominently discussed as they are commonly viewed as comparable, and typically adopted in the most HEIs (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:272).

2.4.1 Workplace Learning Model

Workplace learning (WPL) is an accredited college course in which a significant proportion of study is undertaken in the workplace; this type of module, course or learning curricula brings together the learning institution and the employer for the creation of new learning located in the workplace (Boud & Solomon, 2001:1, 19). WPL entails the involvement of the workplace in teaching and learning and the curriculum includes part-time or full-time employment (SASCE, 2007:45). This is influenced by a belief that generic skills can be developed effectively in the professional context of the workplace (Fletcher et al., 2009:17). Subsequently, this section explains the meaning of WPL, its benefits and disadvantages.

As stated by the DHET (2011a:11, 24), students who have completed N6 (TVETCs) are expected to further complete another 18 months in the workplace. This is regarded as horizontal learning and refers to WPL in particular. The underlying component of WPL is student involvement in a practical experience, that is, 18 months of supervised and relevant work experience (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:3). Relevant to the WPL model is the learning cycle with the four iterative stages that underly learning. These are (Kolb, 1984:10) concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. These stages (or series) are briefly explained below.

In line with Kolb's (1984:10) four learning cycle, it is believed that

- one cannot learn by simply reading (or watching) but have to be actively involved (*concrete experience*)
- student attention should be focused on particular elements of the experience, i.e. time out to rethink about what has happened (*reflective observation*)
- students analyse what they learn and integrate it into logically sound theories (*abstract conceptualisation*)
- students always try to consider how they will be able to apply what they have learnt (*active experimentation*).

The WPL modalities vary but most are situated in the workplace as a by-product of doing work. One of the most common is internship, taking the form of action learning, synchronous learning and reflective

learning (Fletcher et al., 2009:13). Similarly, it is stated that internships prepare students for more employability in a world of daunting complexity and relentless change. The programmes afford students an opportunity to undertake workplace activities relevant to their qualifications. Most often, these students are required to complete some essay-related projects, helping them to reflect (surface) on their tacit understandings (Arnsby & Costley, 2007:7).

According to Chillias et al. (2014:664), deficiencies in college delivery could, to some extent, be mitigated by internships. These (internships) are viewed to be strongly supporting WIL across the breadth of learning outcomes and are increasingly becoming imperative for the employment prospects of students (Coleman & Smith, 2010:8). However, it appears that most internships target students who have already graduated, making it difficult for students who have just completed their N6 (Boud & Solomon, 2001:4). Alternatively, there is another modality, which is parallel to internships, that is, learnerships. Through learnerships, students are able to obtain qualifications while working (CHE, 2011:73).

According to the CHE (2011:73), learnerships combine both theory (classroom) and practical experience (workplace). Often known as on-the-job training, students learn the ins and outs of an occupation through practice under the supervision and guidance of an experienced and qualified person. However, the challenges for learnerships include the lack of placement for students in the workplace and/or college departments relevant to their field of specialisation (Baldwin & McRae, 2004:132). In addition, learnerships could create some ideological tensions, especially when the purpose of the experience serves differing objectives apart from learning for work or learning through work (Hardwick, 2013:349).

Still on the modalities and/or approaches for the WPL model, according to the CTM (2000:27–28), the modality must

- be able to provide experience in occupations that require both skills and knowledge
- be relevant to the outcomes and provide a wide variety of direct experiences
- not just be routine experiences of a repetitive nature
- be supervised by a person who is competent in the skills and technical aspects of the occupation and also interested and eager to assist in the training
- have a record of a safe working environment

- have a reputation for conducting ethical business practices in the community
- have sufficient hours to achieve the desired outcomes
- have adequate facilities and equipment for practice
- be open for the student and the employer to discuss wages, allowances or salaries.

Several authors point to a number of benefits associated with the use of the WPL model, including the provision for students to be familiarised with the workplace in order to gain cultural awareness of their discipline, thus applying theory to practice (SASCE, 2007:45). Furthermore, they develop certain personal skills (i.e. planning, communicating, analysing and solving of problems), contributing in a team or group environment, and learning about the organisation for future employability (Baldwin & Mcrae, 2004:134).

As stated by Billett (2001:66), the workplace provides long-standing evidence of the efficacy of learning primarily because the most intriguing kinds of learning in the industry are not understood ahead of time (i.e. in the classroom). So WPL ensures that students learn new forms of activity as they are being created by ever-changing personal circumstances and industry practices (Engeström, 2001:137). Besides, WPL does not only create valid learning experiences for students but also a recruitment pool for the prospective employers, thus creating a win-win situation for colleges and participating employers (CHE, 2011:78; Chisholm, Harris, Johrendt & Northwood, 2009:319).

Although there are some privileges that comes with the adoption of the WPL model, one of its challenges includes the lack of placements for students. Accordingly, the supply and demand of placement opportunities is a major challenge for WPL, adding the management of large numbers of students engaging in WIL curricula (Challis, Holt, Mackay & Smith 2006:1). As an alternative, some colleges end up giving students mere assignments, which then defies the whole purpose of WIL (Holtzhausen, 2008:228). In addition, some jobs that students undertake are not fit for WIL, but are merely work experience (SASCE, 2007:50).

Other challenges include the fact that WPL supports the personalisation of learning, which is likely to result in either being strongly or weakly integrated (Dalrymple et al., 2014:75). In this way, some students manage their WPL experience easily whereas others find it difficult to cope with the increased

responsibilities (Boud & Solomon, 2001:31). Other factors include some employers not having clear guidelines for their involvement and responsibilities during the process (Wessels, 2005:45).

Still on the challenges, it is stated that students are often not prepared to meet workplace expectations. In addition, the placement process ignores factors such as how they learn and whether they make progress in the workplace (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:121). However, to address this, it is pointed out that TVETCs should ensure employers are approved prior to placement, ensuring they have the required infrastructure, staff and training programme that meet the requirements set for the WIL programme. This includes some personal visits to determine suitability and to establish good relationships with them (Wessels, 2005:45).

In line with the placement of students, Fletcher et al. (2009:17) raise a number of concerns including the fact that relying on students to identify their own placements challenges the relevance of such places for practice, placing the most competent students first also questions the employability of those not placed, selecting students based on academic performance poses some questions regarding students who do not meet this criterion even though they have completed their theory classes and, lastly, requiring students to leave their paid employment to go and complete their WIL programme in an unpaid job placement.

As stated by Fletcher et al. (2009:17), the concerns for the WPL includes the high incidence of unemployment and subsequently the lack of assistance in identifying the available placements, not to mention the lack of preparedness of students and a lack of well-trained WIL supervisors and mentors, as well as a lack of knowledge, skills and experience on the part of the industry partners. Other concerns include the unpaid placements, which disadvantage self-supporting students who have to leave their paid jobs to be in an unpaid job. Also the lack of available placements for students with disabilities, a lack of transport and accommodation for those in rural and remote areas and the costs related to being away from home (Fletcher et al., 2009:17).

On the lack of placements for students, Challis et al. (2006:1) indicate this could be addressed by using things like notice boards to display information about relevant jobs and online employability resources such as adjacent computer rooms. In addition, the development of a new policy regarding the development of new programmes inclusive of job hunting skills, thus bringing a radical shift in the whole knowledge and learning process (Boud & Solomon, 2001:5, 19, 21). Yet, such initiatives require working together in

a triple alliance (business, social and political stakeholders); rethinking the use of resources such as TVETC facilities, particularly when there are large numbers of students searching for placements and not finding any (Lumby, 2000:17).

In regard to addressing the above challenges, prior to the placements information sessions or a WIL period (weekly or monthly) could be created to address the concerns about employers' expectations, that is, issues related to employability (Engelbrecht, 2003:140). Also, students need to be mentored to ensure that they are productively engaged and that all the aspects of WIL are embraced. This is where academics come in, monitoring their students' progress in line with the learning objectives of WIL (Wessels, 2005:50). Moreover, attention needs to be paid to the use of pre-placement, during placement and post placement. Subsequent to this is the occupational qualifications, a model for discussion in the following section.

2.4.2 Occupational Qualification as a model of WIL

According to the DHET (2014:9), Occupational Qualification (OQ) entails the formal recognition and certification of learning achievement awarded by the Occupational Qualification Sub-framework (OQSF), one of the three councils comprising the NQF. Among others, the responsibilities of these councils are as follows: the Umasi oversees the General and Further Education and Training, the CHE oversees the Higher Education Qualifications, whereas the Occupational Qualification Sub-framework oversees the OQs. Each of these is managed by a Quality Council, which is also responsible for the development of OQs, quality assurance, the development and implementation of policies such as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), credit accumulation and transfer and assessment. All of these councils then recommend qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF (DHET, 2014:9; Van Niekerk, & Van Zyl, 2014:3–4).

According to the DHET (2014:9), the OQSF defines the relationships between different occupational qualification or part qualification as regards articulation and career progression. It provides for OQs, the RPL, as well as credit accumulation and transfer within and between occupational and part qualifications. With respect to the Quality Councils, SAQA develops the level descriptors (content) for each on the NQF, and thus registers the relevant qualifications as per the recommendations of the Quality Council(s). The NQF is therefore responsible for classifying, registering and publishing such national qualifications (quality assured), with articulation between and within the three sub-frameworks (DHET, 2014:9).

This model (OQ) consists of about 25 credits associated with an occupation (a trade or profession), and these include the following components: knowledge, practical skills, work experience and the external summative assessment (DHET, 2014:15). OQ thus exposes students to interactions that integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes into the curriculum. In this regard, WIL covers the work experience component of occupational qualifications, while its content is applicable to the purpose of the OQ, the cognitive demands of the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria contained in the level descriptor (DHET, 2014:9, 15)

The benefits of OQ include that it addresses the weakness of locating placements for students thereby shifting the placement responsibility from the colleges to the employers. In addition, such placement can be done prior to registrations at colleges. Furthermore, OQ facilitates the articulation between occupational and part qualifications (both vertical and horizontal) within the framework, and across the NQF to qualifications, thus ensuring career progression opportunities (DHET, 2014:19).

Like other models, OQ also has some challenges, including that most of the WIL opportunities involved (OQ) are in careers related to trade and do not have a vocational orientation (DHET, 2014:15). For more understanding, the concept of trade refers to the occupation for which an artisan qualification and a relevant trade test are required (Skills Development Act), while vocational programmes entail qualifications that aim to provide the knowledge and skills required to enter the economy through a wide orientation to general learning (DHET, 2014:15). Almost all the qualifications in Business Studies form part of a vocational programme.

In line with the above challenges, it is pointed out that in 2014, the DHET published about 27 Occupational Qualifications (OQ) and/or Certificates for public comment; however very few of the listed qualifications related to careers in the Business Studies (DHET, 2017:1–2), a concern for this study. For more understanding about the OQ as a model of WIL, the next section discusses one of the modalities of the OQ, commonly known as apprenticeship.

2.4.3 Apprenticeship model

Like WPL, which only takes place in the workplace, in terms of the apprenticeship model, a student signs a contract of employment with the employer first (WIL) and does the theory afterwards. This is unlike the WPL, where students register with the college first and do the practical experience (WIL) during or upon the completion of the theory modules. As Steedman (2010:4) states, the apprentice is expected to complete all the training programmes inclusive of the off-the-job components (formal). The formal training includes the stipulated period of the employment contract with evidence endorsed by the employer of meeting all the requirements.

Steedman (2012:1) reiterates that apprenticeship is a system whereby the employer contractually undertakes to employ a person (apprentice) for a specific period with the intention of training him/her for a specific occupation. At the end of the training period, the apprentice is bound to continue with employment in the company for a specific period as stipulated in the contract. Among other duties, the apprentice is required to follow and study a master of trade on the job, as opposed to schooling. In a nutshell, apprenticeship is a type of curricula where the trainee learns by imitating the skills of other workers under a written contractual agreement (Steedman, 2012:1).

In countries like Australia, TVETCs bring together apprentices from a large number of workplaces, allowing different specialised learning programmes to be provided according to the needs of different occupations and sectors (Sonja, 2001:5). In countries like Germany and Switzerland, apprenticeship is highly valued (an occupational route to upgrade schooling qualification) yet neglected in countries like Sweden. In some countries apprenticeship is used to acquire certain theoretical knowledge to enhance the apprentice's occupational competency, as well as to improve on numeracy and communication skills (Steedman, 2010:2).

Although theory could also be offered in the workplace, most companies prefer that such components be completed after the training. In so doing, companies focus on the practical training whereas the colleges concentrate on all the theoretical aspects (Sonja, 2001:5). In all countries offering this model, the apprentice is obliged to spend some time learning from the workplace, often a period of one day a week, particularly in Australia and England (Steedman, 2010:2).

According to Sonja (2001:3), the benefits of this model include an opportunity for the apprentice to earn a wage while learning, high occupational skills, high self-esteem, adaptation to the workplace and free tuition for learning at work. When the apprentice begins at the college, he/she becomes more focused in that they are able to understand the relationship between the workplace learning and the theory behind the skills acquired. In so doing, students are able to link the expectations of the two sectors, making them understand the big picture as to why education is so important. In addition, apprenticeship has an advantage in that its basic foundation is a partnership between the college, industry and government (Sonja, 2001:3, 5).

On the benefits of apprenticeship, Sonja (2001:5) reiterates that it helps to develop both marketable and technical skills, which are even more effective when balanced with theoretical instruction. Depending upon the specific occupations, this usually takes a duration of between one to five years. Nonetheless, the concerns for this model includes that such opportunities are often linked with careers relevant to other departments such as hospitality, engineering and others, except for careers in the Business Studies. Therefore, such students (other departments) are more privileged than their counterparts. In addition, the training cannot be conducted in merely simulated work conditions (Raelin, 1997:569), hence it has similar characteristics as the WPL model.

In view of the fact that models such as the WPL, OQ and apprenticeship are limited to the availability of jobs in the workplace, some colleges go to the extent of creating some on-campus workshops as a way of assisting students to complete their WIL programmes. Most such initiatives are brought in as the modalities for the model called the WBL, which is discussed in the next section.

2.4.4 Work-based learning model

The WBL is commonly viewed as comparable to the WPL model, primarily because both aim to expose students to realistic work experiences (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:3). The only difference is that the WPL model is restricted to students being in the workplace (CHE, 2011:17), whereas the WBL is not (Chisholm et al., 2009:319). WBL is being regarded as having a kind of experiential nature where learning is not necessarily located within the parameters of the workplace (Chisholm et al., 2009:320, 325). In view of

this discussion, this section explains the meaning of WBL, its founding theories, objectives, functionality, benefits and some concerns about its applicability.

According to the CHE (2011:77), WBL helps to acquire occupational knowledge and skills with the involvement of employers in either a formal or non-formal situation. This combines both the reflection and critical thinking (higher cognitive order) skills included in the college modules offered as content within the context of the world of work. The model is generally offered in the form of simulations using such modalities as projects and assignments (i.e. case studies), mentorship, and e-simulations, and is offered as a substitute for students being in the actual workplace (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:3).

It is pointed out that WIL is now viewed as being more than merely WPL, in that the learning affordances that were traditionally situated in the workplace are now being replicated in HEI settings (Fletcher et al., 2009:13). Unlike the WPL, WBL blends theory and action by adding a layer of experience to conceptual knowledge, helping students stay abreast of changes in the field and for the invention of new equipment with the support of the workplace. Actually, WBL is founded on the opinion that theory is offered with intentions for application, hence a need for students to be in the workplace for the application of theory acquired (Raelin, 1997:562).

As Raelin (1997:562) notes, WBL is introduced after the experience (practice); helping to question the assumptions of such experiences. In this way, learning is attained as a means of addressing the challenge and/or a task at hand. Similarly, learning takes the form of reflection or reflection-in-action where students are involved in projects aimed at addressing the work-related problems likely to be experienced (Schön, 1983:132). It is believed that by reflection, students automatically integrate between the theory learnt in the class and the workplace experience, which in turn build confidence, boldness and the expertise (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:121).

The objectives of WBL are achieved by ensuring that in all assessments students interact with real-world tools and contemplate the real-world consequences of their responses with assessments that attempt to measure the process of generating responses and the responses themselves (Crisp, 2007:37, 229); for example, thoughtfully interrogating the existing perceptions and understandings and seeking ways to bring

mental models often untested, unexamined and/or erroneous into consciousness. In so doing, new models are formed which consciously serve people better (Raelin, 1997:571).

In line with the use of the WBL model, it is indicated that Australian universities create a range of reflective activities, which connect students' experiences to some personal career and life goals. Additionally, in most cases students participate in seminars (i.e. online) that help them to reflect on their goals, adjusting them in line with the knowledge gained during their practice. At the end of the term, these students submit their reports to reflect on their workplace experiences subsequent to their career plans and the relevance of such as judged through their experience with the workplace (Brown & Lyons, 2003:65).

Still on the modalities for the WBL, a model was developed with three core components to address employability challenges, namely, the student-centred, curriculum-centred and employment-centred components (see figure 2.1). In this model (WBL), students are advised to select any of the three learning-programme outcomes necessary to analyse, judge or reflect on their progress over a period of a year, using evidence to support their claims. In their final year, these students are tasked to look at things such as employment trends, their characteristics and the like (France, Ribchester & Wakefield, 2009:34; Worsley, 2003:70).

The three core components to address employability challenges

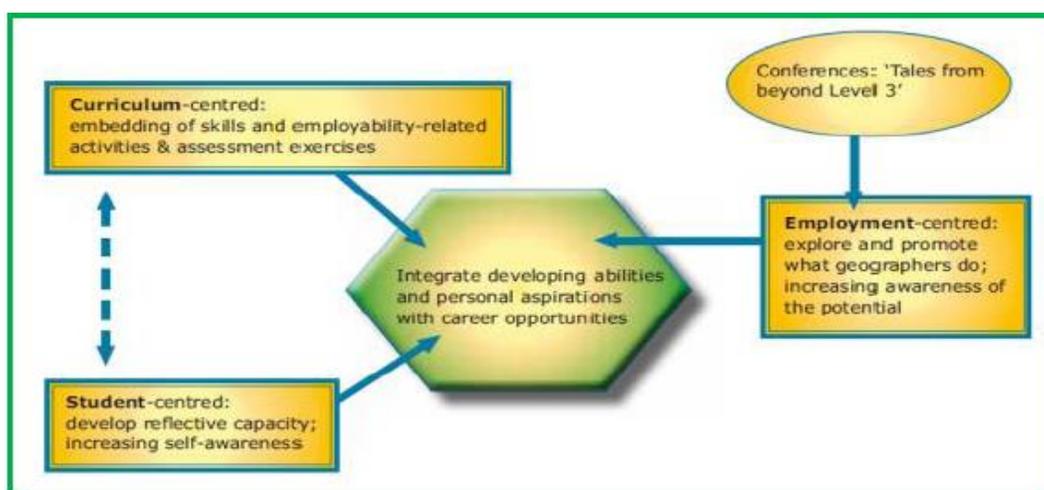


Figure 2.1: The three components of employability strategy (Worsley, 2003:70)

France et al. (2009:34) further explain that in this modality (figure 2.1), portfolios are used in the first and second year as a mechanism to encourage employability. In so doing, WBL provides more employment-related activities balanced with a greater focus on students' reflective capacity. This ensures a greater recognition of the scale and nature of personal development. Activities such as the employability conferences are used to raise awareness and aspirations among students, bridging the gap between students and future employment (France et al., 2009:34).

Still on the use of the WIL conferences, before they start, students are asked about their expectations of such (conferences) and the same is done even after the conferences. The questions seek to check students' readiness to put into action the information acquired. Whilst stories about the workplaces are being presented by tutors, students are able to learn or hear directly from alumni acting as role models (Worsley, 2003:70). Students' access to Alumni helps them gain more connections for networking, advisory, guidance and so forth (France et al., 2009:34).

Another example of the WBL model is the framework developed by Ridgman and Shawcross (2014:261). This framework presents a holistic view with about 17 high-level activities enabling students to develop the skills required to function effectively in a team, thus working with others (see Figure 2.2). However, it is argued that such activities could also have some limitations in that a typical job could include over a 100 different activities, which can also give rise to more complex jobs (Ridgman & Shawcross, 2014:261).

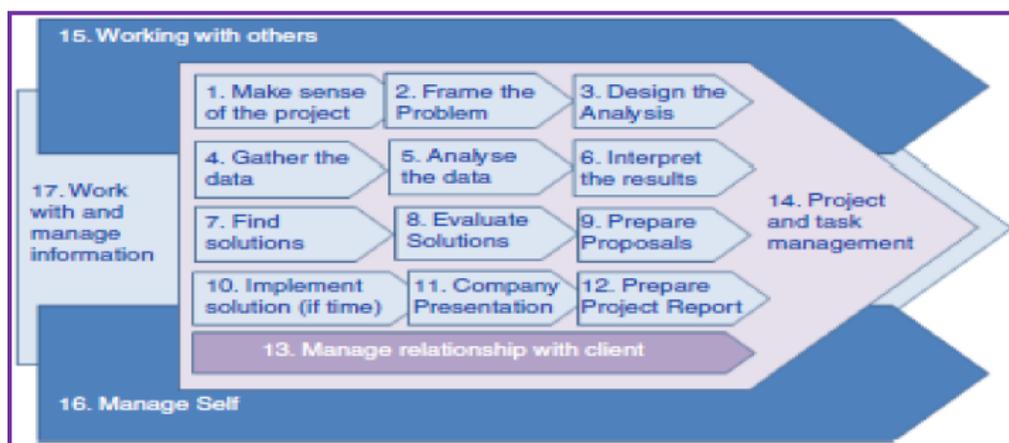


Figure 2.2: A WBL model with 17 WIL activities (Ridgman & Shawcross, 2014: 261)

In line with the benefits associated with this model (WBL), it is indicated that WBL creates an environment that is socially responsive and promotes the employability of graduates. This is because it strengthens partnerships with communities and the workplace and presents students with problems of societal and interpersonal relevance such as working effectively in teams, and to assess the social aspects of their situations. This helps students commit to standards of professional ethics, obtaining life skills crucial for their professional development in their specific disciplines (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:6). In fact, this model encourages reasoning and dialogues in which implicit validity claims (or assumptions) are made explicit and contested (Raelin, 1997:571).

In line with the above benefits, Blom (2016:14–15) states that if DHET desires to achieve enhanced learning, then it should make the case for WBL as an educational practice. This is because the WBL model is perceived to be capable of solving the problems related to a poor intake of students in the TVETCs. However, the concept of WBL is not new to SA, the DHET (2013:64) initiated the development of a policy framework for WBL, which came at the back of claims (White Paper) that students exiting higher education (SA) struggle to find jobs and are often regarded by employers as lacking the necessary skills required in the workplace.

In an attempt to integrate the WBL model, TVETCs in SA set up their own places of employment to deliver some learnerships in terms of which students may develop cognitive models, helping them to make sense of practice (Akoojee et al., 2008:272). However, such initiatives have received a lot of criticism, including that such learnerships are focused on students registered for NCV and not NATED programmes. In addition, such learnerships are predominant in programmes in Engineering Departments, and exclude Business Studies programmes (Akoojee et al., 2008:272). Moreover, such learnerships may not mirror the real-life problems found in the actual workplace (Blom, 2016:14).

Criticism regarding the effectiveness of the WBL in South African TVETCs blames college leadership in that there is a renewed focus on WBL in SA and across the globe with the interest closely linked to economic concerns, as well as the fact that its educational value in authentic workplace settings is well documented but yet has not been implemented accordingly (Blom, 2016:14). When appropriate modalities are integrated, WBL solves real-life problems, making them the focus of study and thus converting theory into tacit knowledge. In so doing, students are able to integrate both the theoretical principles and the

social construction of the workplace, using projects such as case study analysis, action research, field research, multimedia methods and so forth (Raelin, 1997:568).

In line with the use of good approaches, McDonald and Van der Horst (2007:5) maintain that the design of WBL requires some conscious efforts to align both the curriculum and its assessments such that they are not an obstacle in the learning process. In this manner, WBL becomes a quality process, contributing to the main objectives (intended learning outcomes) of the WIL curricula. Nevertheless, WBL does have some challenges, including that when knowledge is verbalised (thus development of skills profiles), it may leave out knowledge that is intuitive or tacit, and which hence is not codified (Tran, 2015:210).

Still on the challenges for the WBL, it is pointed out that if the student provides evidence of its assessment, then what is being assessed is the student's ability to articulate their competence and not the generic skills (McNamara, 2013:189). So, to avoid this, assessments tasks ought to be carefully selected showing how well each student progresses in meeting the criteria as stated in the objectives of WIL (Biggs, 2003:30). In fact, WBL assessments demand that both the situational and contextual factors of cognitive learning (inclusive of social and reflective) be carefully considered (Brown and Lyon, 2003:54). In a nutshell, WBL activities offered on campus should focus on the workplace and what is expected from students on graduating (Boud & Solomon, 2001:4).

Other concerns for WBL include that its assessment methods mirror the process from the conventional college discourse (Cairns et al., 2011:41), yet the *what* and *how* of learning is substantially different between the two environments, that is, the college and the workplace (Boud & Solomon, 2001:4–5). This calls for the models that empower students with real-life experience and strengthen partnerships with local communities and the workplace (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:1), a reason for this study. Yet, finding a conceptual frame for WBL pedagogy to transpose an educational pedagogy to WBL is neither simple nor possible because of the different pedagogies at work (Evans et al., 2011:159). The next section therefore is focused on the PBL model, which is very similar to the WBL model.

2.4.5 Problem-based learning model

Often regarded as a model for the integration of WIL, PBL (also called Problem Oriented Learning) is one of the modalities of the WBL. This is because it does not compel for students to be physical placed in the working environment (Brookes et al., 2010:107); hence regarded as one of the WBL modalities. In support of this notion, it is explained that PBL was founded on the premise that for HE students to be employable and productive, the knowledge and skills obtained must lead to the type of jobs and occupations linked with the new development in the workplace (Brown and Lyon, 2003:111). This section therefore further explains this modality, stating its objectives, benefits and challenges.

As opposed to the WPL, PBL does not depend on the placement of students in the workplace. This is an industry type of course where academics look at what is required in the workplace and cater for it (Brookes et al., 2010:107). As a modality of the WBL, it thus has to do with students' involvement in highly authentic simulated environments whilst remaining under the college supervision (Smith & Worsfold, 2014:1071). PBL was founded on the principle that being at work does not inevitably mean that one is learning the work ethics (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:271). In this model, real-life contexts typical of those in which students will work upon graduating are created. This helps students with skills such as problem solving, self-directed learning and teamwork (Smith & Worsfold, 2014:1071).

It stated that PBL involves the realistic description of problems likely to be encountered in the workplace. Students have to answer a series of questions about possible actions for addressing such problems as encountered in the workplace. (Kane, 1992:18). This model requires students to imitate the actual world of work, teaming up to carry tasks built on real-life problems. In this way, they (students) are able to learn through the structured exploration of a research-based problem (CHE, 2011:17, 72). PBL is based on the conviction that simulating the actual workplace could enable students to experience some important aspects of the work embedded within an educational framework (Glavas & Schuster, 2017:55). Additionally, it places the notion of students' social and interpersonal development ahead of the workplace experience (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:122).

Although PBL is one of the modalities for the WBL, it thus has different approaches. For example, some colleges set up workshops imparting certain knowledge and skills vital for securing employment (Brown

& Lyons, 2003:63). Others get people from business to give students projects relevant to the workplace (Fletcher et al., 2009:13). This is similar to action learning where students work on real problems, learning by attempting to provide solutions. For instance, virtual learning enhances students' learning experiences using technologies such as student tracking, online support, electronic communication and internet links and so forth (CHE, 2011:71, 76).

To make PBL a success, Jackson (2016:205) indicates that its content should be more relevant to the working environment, using applied projects and experimental learning, making sure students understand the general principles behind the skills that are developed. Nevertheless, the PBL model also has some constraints, including that it runs the risk of being ineffective and/or irresponsible, especially if problems are not carefully chosen and well structured. Also, that the impracticalities of codifying the workplace knowledge could make it inaccessible for learning, bearing in mind that the nature and/or structure of college subjects need to be adapted to the academic context first (CHE, 2011:11, 17).

Still on the challenges for the PBL, Mooradian (2005:110) enlightens that it is difficult to describe in the curriculum tacit knowledge obtainable through the visual, auditory, bodily experiences and skills. Consequently, the model could be more effective for teaching elementary skills such as computation and reading, wherein students could observe, interview and review some documents (CHE, 2011:17). This could be one of the possible reasons HE cannot opt for this model in its purest form. In the light of this, the next section addresses the PJBL model, which is very similar to the PBL as discussed above.

2.4.6 Project-based learning Model

The project-based learning (PJBL) model is a form of work experience whereby students gain work experience or graduate skills by engaging in a research project. In this model, simulations are used to engage students in complex work-related activities, through which knowledge and skills are transferred (CHE, 2011:17). To understand more about this model, the next section defines the concept of PJBL, stating its objectives, advantages and disadvantages.

Although PJBL model could be offered in the form of the WPL, it is mostly adopted as one of the WBL modalities. Most often, academics select the topics to be investigated, and such topics reflect the most

important ideas and concepts to be incorporated in the projects (CHE, 2011:17, 23). Whilst some of these research projects can be done on campus, most of them involve outside laboratories or associations (Fletcher et al., 2009:13). According to McDonald and Van Der Horst (2007:1–9), students are given tasks (action research) relevant to provide a link between their experiential learning and onsite theoretical principles.

As stated by the CHE (2011:78), PJBL may be integrated through action learning, a specific feature of learning, which challenges students to apply theory in a project reflecting on a real-life situation. Most projects are recommended by some sponsor from specific organisations. In this way, the project adds value to both the students and the organisations to which the project is attached. Most often such courses begin with the modules on theoretical aspects, following the presentation of the conventional component; their success depend on how they are supported, especially their supervision and assessment (Raelin, 1997:568).

PJBL differs from WPL, which places the burden of being placed in the workplace on students prior to their graduation, in that it integrates real-life projects into learning in the classroom and is completed as a professional job to be done upon graduation (Fletcher et al., 2009:13). Yet, it also involves some workplace experiences, which include internships, capstones, service learning, and so forth (Boud & Solomon, 2001:4). In line with this, McNamara (2013:185) explains that in Australia, PJBL is incorporated in the field of law where students undertake placements as part of their practical legal training. This training takes place after graduation in preparation for admission as a legal practitioner. This is no different from South African universities.

Another example of PJBL is the Fusion programme for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This focuses on the recruitment of graduates to work on an agreed technology-based project driven by companies' developmental needs (Gallagher, 2015:465). The SME programme operates as a dynamic, tripartite arrangement formed between the company, colleges and graduates, all working towards a joint business project. Their duration ranges from 12 to 24 months, placing a strong emphasis on the support of the academics. HEIs provide further support (technical and mentorship) to the individual graduates during the course of the project (Gallagher, 2015:465).

In line with this model, Gallagher (2015:465) reiterates that project managers recruit eligible companies with a suitable project, and then identify and select a suitable academic institution to partner with. Together they prepare and submit a formal application seeking support for their project. If the proposal is approved, a recruitment campaign finds suitable graduates for interviews. The graduates' benefits include learning the business and management skills such as project management, technology transfer, marketing and business development, product development and innovation and entrepreneurship (Gallagher, 2015:465). But this is done on a part-time basis covering the employment period with the company. As an alternative, virtual placement is used to complete real-world workplace projects via online communication (Fletcher et al., 2009:13).

Still on the modalities for PJBL, Aiken and Byrom (2014:271) state that it could be conducted through a taught placement module, often used for students who are unable to secure a placement on their own. In most cases, such modules could take ten weeks with 20 credits where students are mandated to work alongside the employers for a mentorship. In this way, the employer identifies a project students should work on in order for them to be marked at the end of the module (Fletcher et al., 2009:13). Even so, this requires quality assurance, authenticity and relevance for the professional work to be done on graduating (Dalrymple et al., 2014:85).

It is noticeable that most of the models already discussed have an alphabet "B" (for work-*based*) appearing in the middle (i.e. WBL, PBL and PJBL); this shows the flexibility of the models as regards the places they take place. In fact, all these models are not restricted to a workplace, but depend on the institution as to whether they occur on campus or in the workplace. However, models such as the WPL, OQ and the apprenticeship differ. The "P", as shown in the "WPL", implies being physically involved in the workplace and/or industry. The next section therefore discusses community engagement, one of the modalities that could be used either with the WPL or the WBL models, depending on the institution's choice.

2.4.7 Community engagement as a model of WIL

The increasing prevalence of WIL curricula in HE brings the need for certain new models to be developed to support its (WIL) conceptualisation and the practice (Dalrymple et al., 2014:75). An activity that merely focuses on conceptualisation is not enough to produce learning and limits students from acquiring

problem-solving skills (Raelin, 1997:566). Consequently, Powell (2016:6–9) stresses the importance of embedding WIL more firmly in the community rather than as a separate and/or distant entity. For more clarity and a better understanding, the concept of community engagement, its benefits and weaknesses are subsequently explained.

In line with the community engagement model, Lave and Wenger (1991:52) developed a theory of community of practice known as “situated learning”, premised on the assumptions that human beings are social beings and that our knowing derives from social participation. Furthermore, that learning is social participation in terms of which learners participate in the practice of social communities, constructing identities in line with such environments. It is, hence, regarded as a kind of partnership with organisations in search of answers to pressing social and economic problems (Banerjee, Galiani, Lenvinsohn, McLaren & Woolard, 2008:715); it is neither restricted to what happens within the strict parameters of a workplace nor to campus learning (Chisholm et al., 2009:320).

According to Abdullah and Mtsweni (2013:8–9), community engagement addresses two aspects; first is formal teaching and research, and the second is community needs. This model involves the use of classroom-based teaching and learning where students participate in activities that equip them with knowledge, analytical skills and discipline crucial for the entry level of their professions. Although the model could be seen as a modality of WPL and the WBL, it has its own techniques. This includes having conversations with those in employment, part-time placement and action research. In this way, the learning assessments provide a means for students to reflect on their career aspirations in line with their placement opportunities (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:272).

Jackson (2016:205) further states that community engagement has networks such as access to peer support in the workplace, coaching, buddy systems and mentorships. These activities determine the transfer of generic skills, facilitating also the means for reflection on feedback on the procedures for the application of skills. In most cases, projects such as “service learning” are done at the third-year level, and this allows students to make some critical decisions liaising with the surrounding communities, service partners and academic experts. This is similar to capstone, the culminating class of a course of study taken (usually) in the final year of study with students demonstrating all that has been learnt in their majors (CHE, 2011:23, 72).

In line with the model of community engagement is the concept of *specialisation*, a placement type of activity, which requires students to visit schools (career specialists) and workplaces. This affords students with opportunities to liaise with relevant practitioners who are already in the field, in the form of day trips to community centres to talk to people (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:279). Community engagement could also be conducted as a credit-bearing module where students pay the full subject fee with the programme conducted outside the college geographical borders. Those who do not participate fail the module but with the provision of being afforded a second chance (Du Toit & Holtzhausen, 2009:158).

Relevant to this is a project initiated by a particular university to exploit the research and computing expertise for the personnel and its stakeholders. The project focused on designing and building an ICT solution to address social and humanitarian challenges (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:1–6). Another example of this model is used at the Keele University in England, which hosts its annual employer focus group with employers to obtain feedback about the college's graduates, the curriculum and services to employers. Major employers are invited to discuss the improvement of the curriculum through some kind of partnerships. In so doing, colleges are able to build a rapport with employers, coming to appreciate and acknowledging they are making a difference (Mendez & Tudor, 2014:219). So, this model helps in advancing relationships with WIL stakeholders for the future employability of the students.

In line with the benefits of this model (community engagement), it is indicated that taking part in the community projects helps to develop certain capabilities as boundary crossers and a means of collaboration between the formal programmes of study and work (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:119). In addition, it features authentic activities with complexities matching those in real practice; students undergo a particular experience first and then extrapolate learning from it (Lave & Wenger, 1991:53). In so doing, students are able to handle more sophisticated data than they would in a mere conceptualisation. With experiments, students are able to try out their conceptual knowledge for contextualisation and attainability (Raelin, 1997:566).

Still on the benefits, Aiken and Byrom (2014:279) state that community projects enable students to reflect on their career aspirations to surface and criticise their tacit understandings. And not only that, it enables students to use such reflections to inform future action (Schön, 1983: 61). Furthermore, opportunities are

created for students to inquire how others reacted to their handling the tasks and/or encounters, debriefing the real-time experiences (Raelin, 1997:568). However, same as others, this model also has some challenges. For its success, students' needs to be informed on, among other things, the forms of assessment to be used and whether such information should be included in their WIL study guides or logbook (Baldwin & Mcrae, 2004:133; Engelbrecht, 2003:140),

On the challenges, Abdullah and Mtsweni (2013:8) highlight that for the model to be effective, contractual arrangements between the college and an agency ought to exist. Additionally, for its formalisation as part of a qualification, it needs to be gazetted as a policy first. In this way, the curriculum could be redesigned as supported by sound justification (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:279). Alternatively, to shift the responsibility of WIL to the employers, TVETCs could consider the model called occupational qualifications. In so doing, colleges will be left to concentrate on the theoretical component. Therefore, the next section briefly discusses the last model of WIL, that is, work-directed theoretical learning.

2.4.8 Work-directed theoretical learning model

According to Lumby (2000:19), the design of work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL) model enables trainees (students) to contribute to their employment upon the completion of the modules. Relevant to this is the theory of constructive alignment, stating that learning objectives, teaching methods and assessments need to be aligned such that students do the *real work* with lecturers, acting as brokers in a learning environment (Biggs, 2003:27). Following this model, the theory modules are sequenced in ways that are practicable and applicable to the specific careers (CHE, 2011:23).

The benefits of this model include the alignment of disciplinary knowledge with the needs of professional practice. However, it requires more consultation with workplaces for assessment to ensure the curriculum is appropriate for the qualification (CHE, 2011:23). Among other challenges is the fact that its design is tough, demanding more preparation, organising, modelling, and suchlike, unlike the traditional teaching approach (Bates, 2011:120). Furthermore, the model is usually offered for short durations, especially when qualifications are aimed to supply the workplace upon the completion of the training, and this is done with the help of the competent practitioners who play supportive roles (Biggs, 2003:27).

In this section the various models for the integration of WIL were discussed (WPL, WBL, PJBL and WDTL) including the modalities such as the OQ, apprenticeship and community engagement. This ends the discussion of the models for the integration of WIL.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, literature was reviewed with the purpose of discussing relevant information indispensable to this study. Among other things, the following were discussed: the concept of VET as linked to the WIL curricula, its role for workforce development and its benefits for the students (i.e. employability). The relationship between the concept of VET (same as TVE) and the naming of colleges as TVETCs in the South African context. Relevant to the discussion on the VET is the overview of the WIL curricula, its benefits and the challenges thereof, while the discussion on the models for the integration of WIL included WPL, WBL, PBL, PJBL and WDTL. Moreover, the chapter further discussed the modalities of WIL, which include community engagement, occupational qualifications and apprenticeship.

In all the discussions, the researcher concisely discussed the benefits and the challenges for any of the models and/or modalities of the WIL curricula. The table below provides a summary of the various models discussed in this chapter. The next chapter is focused on factors that have caused the lack employability among the TVETCs of SA.

Table 2.1: Work Integrated Learning Typology (CHE, 2011:21)

Work-Integrated Learning typology				
Curricula modality	WPL	PBL	PJBL	WDTL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms and practices associated with the curricula modality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-service , Work placements, • Cooperative education, Practicum • Work-based learning, Sandwich courses, Apprenticeship, Internships <p>Traineeships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequence real world problems, • Integrated learning, • Discovery learning, • Self-directed learning, • Peer learning groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry project, • Real world learning, • Guided practice, • Capstone modules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom-based instruction, Lecture • Tutorial, Peer learning groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning contracts, Work record books, Learning logs, • Journals, Mentoring, Specific training, Learning portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work simulated problems, • Case studies and scenarios, • Team learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study visit, Site visit, • Job shadowing, Authentic tasks & texts, Fieldwork, • Interviews, Team work, Service Learning, Integrated trans or inter- disciplinary projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career-focused courses and curricula (e.g. Communication for Business), • Guest lecturers (e.g. from industry), • Authentic examples, • Workplace assessors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace & Classroom (for preparation & reflection) • Electronic media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom, Laboratory, Group sessions, Library, • Electronic media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple sites: • Classroom, Workplace, Laboratory, & workplace, etc. Electronic media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture theatre, Classroom, Laboratory, Studio, • Websites, Blogs

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH WIL INTEGRATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The background and the motivation of the study, research objectives and the questions leading the investigation were discussed in chapter one. Although concepts such as VET and WIL were concisely discussed in chapter two, in the main, the chapter was focused on different models for the integration of WIL. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the challenges that exist for the integration of WIL. This chapter is a continuation the literature review in the previous chapter. The preceding chapter reviewed the literature on the various models for WIL integration, while this chapter will focus on the challenges associated with the integration of WIL.

As guided by the research questions, several themes or subtopics emerged for discussion and were all discussed in turn, including the authenticity of the WIL programmes; the mismatch between graduates' attributes and employers' needs; transitional challenges resulting in students' lack of employability; the dynamics linked to students' lack of capabilities; the managerial challenges caused by poor curricula; the impact a lack of transformative leadership on TVETC curricula, as well as the impact of collaboration on such curricula.

3.2 CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTEGRATION OF WIL

There is much scepticism regarding the responsiveness of the qualifications offered in South Africa TVETCs. This relates to the fact that the quality of the programmes is often not assured (DHET, 2013:14). Nevertheless, WIL is a fundamental component of the curriculum, directed and the employability of students (Bilgin, Cantori, Clark, Mukuria & Rowe, 2014:1). Accordingly, the next section addresses concerns relating to the lack of quality assurance in TVET programmes.

3.2.1 Understanding the concept of quality in TVET programmes

In line with the concept of quality in regard to the programmes (TVETCs), it is stated the lack of quality is a result of the tension emerging from three forces, namely, the employer's objectives, the academic objectives and the generic skills objectives within the curriculum (Alagaraja, et al. 2014:274). In addition, the forces competing for influence on the curriculum include the government, the workplace, and the HEIs (Baden, 2010:53). However, it is left to the colleges to struggle with this issue; they in turn pass on the task to the academics, assuming their subject matter knowledge will help to solve the problem (Nabeel, Voogt & Pieters 2015:601). In the light of this, this section addresses the tension between the WIL stakeholders, each with conflicting objectives.

Several authors have attributed various meanings to the concept of quality. Among others, quality implies a systematic and continuing evaluation, as well as a search for data for identifying both the strong and weak points of the effort (SASCE, 2007:122). In conventional terms, quality related is to customer satisfaction, but for HEIs, quality is the extent to which programmes meet the academic goals, objectives and outcomes. This includes high academic standards, customer satisfaction and the transformation of students in terms of knowledge, employability and life skills (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:1–9).

Consistent with McDonald and Van der Horst (2007:1–9), it is further stated that what is regarded as quality today might not be seen as quality tomorrow, as the concept is relative, with different stakeholders assigning different meanings to it. Quality is used flexibly in ways that are appropriate for the particular circumstances. Quality is often used to define the vision, mission and objectives of the organisation. In so doing, it is used to assess or examine the degree to which actions and performance measure up to stated ideals (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:1–9). Academically, quality means the curriculum that prepares graduates for defined international professions and the like (CUT, 2003:1).

As pointed out, there is a need for TVETCs to transform to start evolving new pedagogic models of WIL to support facilitators in conceptualising and/or developing practice (Dalrymple et al., 2014:76). In addition, TVETCs need to conduct research on the models and modalities of WIL, which could contribute to the development of students' generic skills for the enhancement of quality (Hu, Abadeer, & Husman, 2009:922). WIL requires good planning and preparation, mentoring and the supervision of students

(Wessels, 2005:40). Nonetheless, it is contended that no matter what the permutation of course design, with an ever-changing marketplace for the newly graduates, and a rapidly evolving HE sector, new challenges are certain to emerge (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:281).

Furthermore, Moore (2003:305) indicates that academics need to understand what skills and knowledge students should possess in line with employers' expectations. This is because students (Business Studies) face increasing levels of scrutiny and demands for greater accountability. Furthermore, the challenges of improving the curriculum include the demands and processes required for programme accreditation. Additionally, there is a need for curriculum policy that brings about a shift from discipline-based qualifications to more VET programmes, and from closed to more open and interactive colleges with increased responsiveness and accountability (Moore, 2003:305). The next section furthers the discussion on the concept of quality, focusing on the authenticity of the programmes.

3.2.2 The authenticity of the WIL programmes

It is a fact that WIL seems to have many benefits for students, as discussed in chapter two, yet its authenticity is being questioned. McDonald and Van der Horst (2007:1–9) indicate that most of the assessments done in the TVETCs are merely based on traditional practices of essay and problem-type examinations, failing to test for critical thinking, creativity and reflection. Additionally, TVET programmes are perceived to be irresponsive and inconsistent with the demands of the workplace (Nabeel et al., 2015:602). Accordingly, this section deals with factors affecting the quality of the programmes offered in the TVETCs.

According to Du Toit and Holtzhausen (2009:167), traditional methods make provision for the factual and logical learning style whereby students are required to complete a set of multiple-choice questions. This ignores the fact that students also have different learning and thinking styles. A possible reason is that TVETCs are constantly called on to offer programmes that are responsive to the needs of businesses (DHET, 2013:11–25). Students need to be provided with new methods for problem solving in both their own interests and those of society. Such activities help them with conscious learning, skills transfer, and the proper application of theory learnt in the classroom (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:7).

For the improvement of TVET programmes, Frontczak (1998:25) calls for the development of new models of WIL that would move away from a traditional to an interactive way of learning. This will help open up opportunities for students to showcase their capabilities thereby expanding their real world (Smith & Weisz, 2005:606). This concurs with Colley et al.'s (2003:471) opinion that TVET programmes should be characterised by socialisation rather than merely giving the knowledge and skills required for specific tasks. Furthermore, such programmes should be more engaging, motivating students to be creative, to innovate, develop intellectually and so forth (Frykholm & Nitzler, 1993:434). The next section discusses such a transition from the traditional to the new methods of assessments.

3.2.3 A need for a shift, from a dialogic to a triadic approach

According to Dalrymple et al. (2014:76), the improvement of the college curriculum requires that the design of learning programmes shifts from a dialogic to a triadic approach, an approach with the active participation of all the stakeholders, which includes the students, colleges and employers. It is pointed out that a triadic approach privileges the needs of the employer in a way that accords with the needs of the students and the colleges. In addition, it is indicative of the interconnection between HEIs, government policies, and economic and social structures (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:275; White 2012:8).

As stated by Munoz (2008:214), today's students want to be more engaged; approaches such as one-way lectures, rote memorisation and the accumulation of isolated facts and terms are regarded as tedious and boring and are seen as passive learning methods that do not facilitate generic skills. Hence, the use of a triadic approach shifts away from the learner-centred approach to one where the employer drives the learning design, mapped to the needs of the organisation. Nevertheless, students are still the central component but not above the needs of the employers (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:275; White, 2012:8).

On the same notion (triadic approach), Engelbrecht (2003:49) maintains that for such an approach to be effective, its objectives should be clear and realistic such that WIL policies and objectives reflect commitment to quality (SASCE, 2007:115). Other factors include a need for the induction of students and preparation, supervisor access, and the establishment of student learning support across the college and workplace sites (Smith, 2011:1). In addition, assessment and learning activities should be aligned with

integrative learning objectives (Biggs, 1999:207). Moreover, without the sessions for reflections, it will be difficult to improve WIL – a discussion for the next section.

3.2.4 A need for reflection sessions upon the completion of WIL

Criticism on the lack of quality in the TVET qualification includes a concern about the lack of reflection sessions. Relevant to this, it is highlighted that traditional methods of assessment provide limited information on students' capabilities, weakening the assessment of reflective and social knowing. In addition, such methods are based on perception, measuring knowledge possession and not the practical performance of students (Peach & Susilawati, 2012:15).

It is pointed out that WIL should be conducted such that students return to their campuses for the reflection sessions. Academics should ensure that students get a chance to reflect on their experiences, knowledge, skills and competencies gained (Frontczak, 1998:25). It is believed that reflection enables students to realise their mistakes and find a way of correcting them (Jackson, 2016:203). However, it appears that TVET students entering WIL programmes (Nated) do not return to their campus except to submit their logbooks (journals) in preparation for graduation (DHET, 2013:11).

In line with the need for reflection sessions, learning assessments should combine the learning outcomes with a defined purpose(s). In so doing, it will provide students with applied competence and a basis for further learning (SAUVCA, 1999:19). In addition, evidence of the competencies and skills they (students) mastered during the WIL period could be supplied by means of assessment methods such performance-based and portfolio assessment (Wessels, 2005:48–51). Portfolio assessment is helpful for capturing students' unique learning experiences, displaying their creativity and originality, and giving them the freedom to express what they learnt (Frontczak, 1998:26).

As stated by Erwee and Van Schoor (2009:84), the significance of WIL is increased when assessments are linked to certain criteria, helping students approach the work more critically and earnestly. This could be achieved if the learning objectives clearly state what is expected from the students, that is, specific roles, level of insight, values, skills and attitudes should be outlined in the learning outcomes (SAQA, 2007:21). By so doing, the objectives of WIL could be achieved by measuring its quality at the end, hence

the practical work done. In line with this is the notion that learning is a process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experience and that knowledge is a result of grasping experience. So, without experience, one cannot understand the new knowledge (Kolb, 1984:41). The next section continues to discuss concerns regarding the lack of quality, focusing on the lack of the employability skills required by employers.

3.3 THE LACK OF GENERIC SKILLS REQUIRED BY MOST EMPLOYERS

The lack of employment is often linked to the lack of generic skills by graduates. This is in line with Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003:107) who state that most governments find it difficult to guarantee the employment of students in a competitive global environment. So, SA is not the only country experiencing a lack of employment for its graduates. Over a decade, the United Kingdom experienced the highest unemployment rate for graduates, although recent figures suggest the number of self-employed graduates grew from 3.3 per cent in 2007 to 4.8 per cent in 2012 (Nabi, Walmsley & Holden, 2015:482).

Brown et al. (2003:107) further state that HEIs are obliged to enhance the employability of their graduates and that they should pride themselves on providing career-focused education, helping students to gain practical experience – referred to in this study as graduates' attributes (CHE, 2011:6). In contrast, it is indicated that employers require students who do not only need to earn money but bringing some development in the workplace (Fletcher et al., 2009:17). The integration of WIL thus seeks to address this concern, to avoid a mismatch of qualifications between the graduates' attributes and employers' needs. Colleges are expected to prepare students for the types of employment they will enter upon graduation, such as the tacit skills required by the majority of employers (Hynes & Richardson, 2008:190).

TVETCs in SA are expected to provide programmes that prepare students for immediate employment or that upgrade the skills of the already employed (Akoojee et al., 2008:262). In so doing, the challenge of the programme mismatch could be addressed, and thus increasing the employability of students (Nabeel et al., 2015:602). However, Tran (2015:209) argues that it is unrealistic of employers to expect students to possess all kinds of skills and knowledge upon graduation as tacit knowledge cannot be learnt in advance. In addition, such skills may be understood and interpreted differently, with employers having different preferences. According to Rae (2007:608), graduate employability is a combination of both

college and workplace experience, so this cannot be achieved without the role played by the workplace environment. For more understanding, the next section addresses the concept of employability as it relates to college students.

3.3.1 Explaining the concept of employability for students

There are various meanings connected to the concept of employability and this section seeks to address these. Employability is defined as a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure work and be successful in their chosen occupation. It is further stated that WIL seeks to achieve some of the following attributes of employability: creativity, adaptability, independent working, working in a team, communication skills, time management, ability to use new technologies and commercial awareness (Moreland, 2006:7).

According to Hillage and Pollard (1998:111), employability depends on how one stands relative to others within a hierarchy of job seekers, and that one's credentials are judged against the requirements of the job applied for. This means that employability is determined by one's capabilities or profile. In line with this, the concept (employability) is understood to be intimately connected to the question of social identity; people tend to limit the range of jobs to those they think are fitting or they feel they have a chance of getting (Brown et al., 2003:107, 111).

For more understanding, different theories on employability help to expand the meaning, namely, the consensus, conflict as well as the absolute and relative dimensions of employability. As stated by Brown et al. (2003:110), the absolute dimension states that there is no unemployment during times of labour shortages but as soon as jobs are in short supply some people are regarded unemployable. Furthermore, when most jobs are low-skilled and workers exchangeable, the skills and personal qualities of employees are of little interest to employers. In this way, employability is determined by the economic conditions, accordingly appropriate skills and the relevant knowledge to do the job are important (Brown et al., 2003:110).

It is further explained that the relative dimension pertains when there are more vacancies than applicants, and all the applicants are in possession of the relevant qualifications and skills. In this way, employability

is determined by the laws of supply and demand in a competitive global market (Brown et al., 2003:110). Supporters of consensus theory believe that the means of production is knowledge and no longer things such as capital, natural resources or labour; hence the demand for the most knowledgeable or talented people. In line with this, those with low skills get jobs with a low wage (Drucker, 1993:7; Nabeel et al., 2015:602).

Still on consensus theory, which lays emphasis on the demand for talented people, it is emphasised the opportunities in the labour market are based on people's abilities and efforts to secure and keep their jobs (Nabeel et al., 2015:602). Further, the value of highly talented people depends on the presence of a knowledge-based economy, putting pressure on HEIs to increase the demand for knowledge workers (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones & Michaels, 2001:3). Still on a need for talented people, it is maintained that in the development of skills profiles, intuition and tacit knowledge are likely to be omitted, henceforth the for WIL, which help to address such things omitted (Tran, 2015:210).

According to Tran (2015:210), employability is more than just being employed; it includes having certain abilities and skills that have developed throughout a person's working life. The belief that employing the knowledgeable, skilful and talented people is a key in a post-industrial society is often referred to as the axis of achievement (Brown et al., 2003:114). In keeping with Drucker (1993:7), the post-capitalist phase seeks virtual knowledge workers who bring creativity, innovation and personal development in return for monetary rewards. This type of worker owns the means of production and the tools.

Followers of conflict theory believe that being educated does not guarantee access to employment and yet without education one unemployment could even be worse. Subsequently, workers are hired on a plug-in-and-play basis, with personal qualities emphasised only to legitimate the reproduction of inequalities. Instead of investing in the development of staff, it is left to individuals to develop themselves. Individuals are thus expected to create their own employment opportunities because companies avoid taking accountability for the welfare of their workers (Brown et al., 2003:114–116).

Followers of conflict theory believe that the expansion of the HEIs does not reflect the production of high-skilled jobs as demanded by the labour market. Instead, HEIs are about credential inflation; the more graduates that enter the labour market, the more the value of such credentials declines (Brown et al.,

2003:114–116). So, people upgrade their qualifications to improve their job prospects, and yet the value of knowledge is seen in productivity and innovation, resulting in more flexibility in appointments and dismissals and in workers' exploitation (Stewart, 1997: viii). In light of the above, the next section addresses the challenges associated with graduate attributes.

3.3.2 Challenges linked with the lack of graduate attributes

The ILO (2016:27) reports that in 2016, there were about 205 million unemployed people in the world. According to Statistics SA (2015), of 36.1 million of the working age (2014), about 5.4 million were unemployed; of the 11.3 million of the youth (SA) about 3.6 million were unemployed (StatsSA, 2015:x). It is assumed the lack of employment for the youth could be because they lack the skills required by the majority of employers, the focus of this section.

Brown and Lyons (2003:55) indicate that the unemployment rate challenges HEIs to prepare students effectively for future careers and the workplace. Relevant to this, Hynes and Richardson (2008:190) found that those with little practical experience (WIL) are most affected by unemployment. Others (authors) blame the lack on employment due to the skills mismatch on the models used for the integration of WIL in HEIs. This is because WIL is thought to be a solution, affording students the knowledge and technical skills required by the majority of the employers. WIL exposes students to the employment sector, giving them the chance to spot and pursue the opportunities offered in there (Lasch, Le Roy, Marques & Robert, 2009:259).

As stated by Lucas, Sands and Wolfe (2009:200), the movement of students to and from the workplace helps colleges to keep the curriculum responsive and such students are able to sell themselves. In line with this, Lasch et al. (2009:260) state that visiting the workplace helps one to appear more credible in that one acquires both the theory and the practical skills required by the majority of employers. However, in spite of the fact that WIL is being integrated in the curriculum (HEIs), students' employability challenges seem to be ongoing (DHET, 2013:8). Moreover, while TVETCs in SA are perceived to have useful skills obtainable through their workshops (WIL), employment opportunities for students are nevertheless said to be very limited (DHET, 2013:2–9).

To address this, the United Kingdom has encouraged HEIs to put graduates' attributes at the top of their agendas (Chillas et al., 2014:656). Likewise, the Australian government has stated that graduate employability should be used as a measure for the success of all the educational programmes (Ismail et al., 2011:604). In South African TVETCs, however, employment opportunities seem to be scant for those in Business Studies, especially those from the rural areas, a possible reason for the migration of students to the cities to access jobs (DHET, 2013:2–9).

In spite of the above challenges, colleges are expected to design curricula that accommodate both school leavers and those who could not make it in the secondary schools (DHET, 2013:2–9). However, it is pointed out that students who register for courses in Business Studies often face a multiple career options on completion of their studies. This is unlike other students coming from courses or programmes that are more structured. Moreover, the use of workshops for the WIL curricula would seem to be irrelevant for Business Studies because it is difficult for them to simulate workplace practices, also given the shortage of learnerships (Brown & Lyons, 2003:58).

The challenges for students in Business Studies could mean that South African TVETCs provide training for individuals who will not be able to find employment (DHET, 2013:8–9). This is because employment for students from Business Studies (or commercial fields) are affected by the economic instability, hence changes in the economy (Brown & Lyons, 2003:58). In line with this, Jones (2010:504) emphasises that medical students graduate as doctors, but students in entrepreneurship rarely graduate as entrepreneurs. A study conducted by Griffith University (2001:1) also questions the purpose of WIL, for students in the Business Studies:

If the main aim of undergraduate leisure studies programs is to prepare students for careers in the broadly-based leisure industries, how is the enhancement of graduate employability best achieved and how are the performance measured? (Brown & Lyons, 2003:58).

In line with the challenges facing students from Business Studies, it is argued, looking at the demographics of the South African labour force, that the government should consider expanding other forms of on-the-job training especially in non-artisan fields. Additionally, educating and training people for formal-sector employment should be reconsidered (DHET, 2013:8–9). Alternately, TVETCs could create employment

for themselves in, for example, enterprise education, which provides life-long learning skills that society expects (DHET, 2011a:11; Jones, 2010:510). By so doing, students in rural and remote locations could be helped to create more businesses to improve their communities (Fletcher et al., 2009:17).

In line with the concept of WIL, there are some concerns about what is regarded as graduate attributes, which the employers expected from the students. Aiken and Byrom (2014:275) state that graduate attributes is not a series of attributes that can be enumerated and ticked off. Instead they constitute a dynamic relationship between the individual's personal sense of self and the social processes. The next section therefore expands this discussion, focusing on the impact of transitions on the lack of employability for graduates.

3.4 TRANSITIONAL CHALLENGES TO THE UNEMPLOYABILITY OF STUDENTS

In line with the employability challenges for students, it is highlighted that bridging the gap between HEIs and the employment sector is a very difficult, complex and messy. Among other things, it requires students to translate and transform the knowledge and skills learnt in the colleges to a working context; this takes much time and effort. Moreover, transitional challenges vary from a lack of employability skills to an inability to cope in the new work. Hence, the need for curricula that address these concerns (Nabi et al., 2015:482; Tran, 2015:207).

According to Jackson (2016:200), transitions are not automatic but require conscious effort that enhances work readiness and workplace performance. He further distinguishes between two sets of transitions: The Near and the Far transfer. The Near transfer is the transition of learning within a context that is similar to the expected practice or application. The Far transfer has to do with the acquisition of knowledge and skills across different contexts, that is, from the college to the workplace. The Far transfer seems to be more difficult in that it requires a graduate to negotiate for the job, so the onus rest with him/her as to whether he or she finds one (Tran, 2015:209).

According to Jackson (2016:203), the individual's ability to transfer across the different contexts is influenced by three factors, namely, the programme characteristics, the learner characteristics and the role

of the workplace in the development of generic skills. The next section explains these factors, adding the competency and the preparedness of academic staff.

3.4.1 The effect of personal characteristics on the employability of students

It appears that the more students acquire educational qualifications in a specific field, the more they become stereotyped with regard to other jobs not relevant to their fields. This aligns with the opinion that students' perceptions and beliefs about the type of work and/or work environment influences their employability. Further, those who are motivated to look for jobs are more likely to succeed (Jackson, 2016:205). This is because people tend to limit the range of jobs to those they feel are appropriate, and which they feel they will have a chance of getting (Brown et al., 2003:111).

According to Jackson (2016:203), the following personality characteristics determine one's chances of being employed: willingness to take risks, aptitude, self-esteem, self-confidence (learning and application), knowledge and cognitive ability, ability to communicate and solve problems, customer consciousness, cultural ethics, self-management skills, connections with prior learning and management of change (new contexts). Reflective students are more thoughtful about their performance, thus being cautious as to whether they are being committed or not. They are curious as to what contributed into their passing or failing (Raelin, 1997:567).

3.4.2 The effect of the programme characteristics on the employability of students

The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2016:27) stated that in 2016, there were about 205 million unemployed people in the world, with the estimations that by 2019 the global unemployment might rise to about 212 million people (about 8 per cent increase per annum). Moreover, it is indicated that among the employed, most of them are in the informal sector, being exploited, underpaid and have little job security. It seems that self-employment is more stable than jobs in the informal sector (Banerjee et al., 2008:717; Davis, 2004:121), hence, TVETCs are expected to bridge this gap.

It is pointed out that some of the employers only recruit from institutions based on previous experience with their graduates (Yeadon, 2010:48). This practice means that students fight desperately to obtain

internships to improve their employability and that most are even willing to work for free. For example, about 45 per cent of employers' new hires had completed their internship with the same company and about 39 per cent had had internships elsewhere (Svacina, 2012:77). However, Treat (2014:173) states that once they have relevant skills, there will be a plenty of jobs; conversely, there is greater employment for those with the skills that are in demand.

According to Powell (2016a:2–5), the unemployment of graduates could be blamed on the lack of responsiveness of college programmes, hence the need for effective alignment of the curriculum in HEIs. However, there has been a shift in the skills composition, from lower skilled to the absorption of a highly skilled labour force (Banerjee et al., 2008:716). This puts pressure on TVETCs to deliver programmes (high skills) that meet the needs of the workplace. In this way, colleges could start to make a more meaningful contribution to the unemployment of the youth (Klees, 2014: vii). Moreover, colleges should work to improve their research in order to start building beyond the narrow theoretical orthodoxy (McGrath, 2012:623).

In line with Powell (2016:2–5), there is a need for the development of the right skill mix within the labour force, which in turn would address the high levels of unemployment. Yet such skills could lead to a situation where employers hire graduates with qualifications that are irrelevant to the task(s) expected of them. Besides, it is argued that the high rate of unemployment is caused by the lack of economic growth, and not the quality of education (Motala & Vally, 2014:8). Moreover, students need to master the values behind the skills they are developing (Jackson, 2016:205).

Still on the quality of education, Choy and Delehay (2011:158) state that WIL depends on effective collaboration with the workplace, which also plays a vital role in the construction of knowledge. For the most intriguing kinds of learning in the industry are not stable, defined or understood ahead of time. Also that personal lives and industry practices need to constantly transform, learning things as they are being created, learning in advance (Engeström, 2001:137). Nevertheless, the extent to which tacit skills may be developed differs from one institution to another, depending on how highly the employability skills are prioritised (Chillas et al., 2014:656).

On the notion that WIL helps in addressing the shortage of skills, there is a need for curriculum alignment in order to promote employability skills among students, as well as to ensure that the knowledge and skills obtained lead to jobs and development in the workplace (Brown et al., 2003:111). Moreover, the college curriculum should reflect both internal and external consistence. To achieve this, those designing the curriculum need to ensure there is coherence with other external stakeholders of the colleges, and should not exclude the guidelines laid down by the ministry of education (Nabeel et al., 2015:604),

Still on the effectiveness of WIL, Jackson (2016:205) states that TVETCs should make content more relevant to the working environment, using applied projects and experimental learning. Also that the teaching method and assessment should be such that the learning activities are aligned to the objectives. In this way, all aspects of the curriculum will be in accord, for the enhancement of student learning (Biggs, 1999:11). Relevant to this is Engeström (2001:133)'s standard theory of learning, with four questions, namely: who are the subjects of learning? Why do they learn? What do they learn? And how do they learn? Subsequent to these are the four bodies of knowledge to be considered for curriculum alignment, namely: explicit knowledge, formal knowledge, implicit knowledge, and informal knowledge (Grollmann, 2008:545).

Guile and Griffiths (2001:114) distinguish between vertical learning which is codified and transmittable in formal, systematic language, and thus ideas about intellectual development, and horizontal learning, which is rooted in activities designed with the participation of workplace consultants. Students develop or transform as they move from one context to another. This (change) could emanate from work experience or the ability to cope with the demands of work in different organisational settings (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:119).

According to Nabeel et al. (2015:602), the task of developing college curricula is left to professional curriculum designers, usually external. In this manner, academics exist as the mere implementers of a curriculum they do not agree with or understand. Besides, such activities require the involvement of all stakeholders in terms of the skills in demand, curriculum mapping and so forth. In so doing, they will be able reach consensus (shared vision) on how the programmes should be structured, as well as their development and implementation (Nabeel et al., 2015:602).

In line with the involvement of academics, Akoojee (2008:297) states that the involvement of academics in the design and development of the curriculum is promoted in many countries, and is a good strategy for improving the curriculum (TVETCs) and the fitness of the academics. This is because neglecting academics in the design of the curriculum often leads to poor implementation, that is, poor lecturer ownership of the curriculum. In fact, the involvement of academics in the curriculum improves the harmony between the design of the curriculum and its implementation. In addition, academics should be visiting the workplace, keeping abreast of the new technological advances, updating the course content and also having a chance to renew the existing internships (Nabeel et al., 2015:602).

According to SAUVCA (1999:27), the involvement of academics in curriculum design increases the levels of accountability to the design of the curriculum, its development and the implementation. In such activities, academics are able to clearly state their learning assessment criteria and the learning outcomes, giving them out for public scrutiny. It is a fact that good curriculum design can influence good learning outcomes (Smith & Worsfold, 2014:1073). Once the curriculum is well aligned, the next challenge is to ensure the workplace is actively involved in its execution, of WIL curricula in particular. The next section expands the discussion on the involvement of academics in the administrative elements of WIL, towards the employability of the college students.

3.4.3 The role of academics in the employability of students

In line with the lack of quality of the programmes is the criticism that academics in South African TVETCs are perceived to have skills that are no longer in demand in the workplace, and this makes colleges no better than glorified secondary schools. This discrepancies (mismatch) renders the colleges unfit for their purpose (Akoojee, 2008:297). To address these criticism, the DHET has tasked South African universities with designing vocational programmes for the development of college lecturers (Papier, 2010:154).

Other criticism includes that subject methodologies have not been satisfactorily catered for. The design of the programmes neglects the context within which academics teach, that is, both disciplinary and workplace knowledge (Papier, 2010:157). On the same notion, Biggs (1999:11) states that for programmes to be effective, there must be efforts to align curriculum and assessments such that they do not burden the learning process. Also that programmes need to be grounded in the understanding of horizontal knowledge

situated in workplace and do not neglect the teamwork between academics, communities and the workplace (Grollmann, 2008:545).

According to Papier (2010:157–159), the United Kingdom experienced similar criticism of mismatch in the curriculum. To address this, workshops on lecturer preparation were organised covering topics such as professional ethics, specialist teaching and learning, assessment for learning, progression and the like. Likewise, Germany and Scandinavia have programmes to expose lecturers to the workplace for the effective running of the WIL curricula. Developing nations like Indonesia, Turkey and some African countries also have programmes that expose both students and lecturers to the workplace. Such workshops are funded by countries like Germany and Australia (Papier, 2010:159).

Still on the competence of college lecturers, it is stated that, for their development, both educational and workplace philosophies (and practice) need to be integrated into professional development (Finch, 1998:46; Papier, 2010:159). On the same notion, Raelin (1997:571) indicates that people learn best by sharing their theories and experiences with each other. And so, as part of learning, academics team up to provide new perspectives, stimulating inquiry as regards their experiences and practices. This is because one's experiences of work constitute a good part of the subject matter for learning.

It is pointed out that cognitivist educators believe that learners bring different understandings and ways of knowing to the classroom with the goal to assist in the process of understanding the material. The setting allows students to interact with the content and each other in a way learning becomes meaningful. Cognitively, educators design structured educational events for students, also making them active in learning through engagements with content in a unique and individual way (discovery method). They (educators) work as facilitators guiding students toward the educational objectives (Isbell, 2011:20-21).

In line with the above notion, Baden (2010:55) states that the inward-looking of the curriculum reflects a project of introjection which is largely the outcome of academic influence, while the outward looking reflects a project of projection subjected to external influences. The next section therefore discusses the factors that cause students' lack of capabilities and employability, in which WIL is likely to be involved.

3.4.4 The role of the workplace in the employability of students

It is pointed out that, regardless of the model of WIL implemented, without employers playing their role, the development of generic skills would not be possible. This is because WIL depends on the extent to which industries enable students to interact with workers and the extent to which workplace supervisors understand the different learning strategies to suit individual students (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:118). However, according to Aiken and Byrom (2014:275), there is a constant need for employer assessment to be done prior to the placements of students. This is to ensure a common understanding (demands for WIL) between the college and the businesses employing the students, as well as to understand how such businesses work and the content of what needs to be integrated.

In line with the role of the workplace, it is indicated that although academics may hold dominance over the content and theoretical knowledge base, employers could also contribute more on the intricacies of the workplace environment (Choy & Delahaye, 2011:158). Hence, there is a need for colleges and employers to review the curriculum together to familiarise workplace supervisors with the administrative elements of WIL, particularly for those factors of work that cannot be easily quantified (DHET, 2013:15; Jackson, 2016:203–205). In so doing, colleges could be educationally transformative, preparing students who are ready for the world of technological and cultural change (Moore 2003:305).

According to Smith and Worsfold (2014:1081), supportive and/or administrative WIL elements are important aspects of the whole WIL experience and impact on students' satisfaction. For example, as the lecturer estimates how well students know the content, the supervisor at work appraises the performance in practice. Accordingly, clear guidelines are required for workplace supervisors on the way in which they should assist students, for example students counselling, access to other learning resources at the workplace, and so on (Peach & Susilawati 2012:15). In so doing, students will find it easier to transit from colleges to the workplace, thereby enhancing their self-efficacy, one of the objectives of WIL (Smith & Worsfold 2014:1081).

For WIL to be effective, colleges and industry need to work together in the design and delivery of the curriculum (Brookes et al., 2010:107), focusing on to how students could be supported during their WIL programme (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:114). This could help colleges to deliver programmes and services

that are aligned to the changing dynamics of the labour market, thereby providing students with opportunities to develop the skills necessary to support their future employability (DHET, 2013:15; MacAllum, Yoder & Poliakoff, 2004:7).

Assessments form an integral part of the WIL learning process, linking explicitly to student learning outcomes and grounded in authentic experience rather than focused on the recall of abstract knowledge (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:1–9). In this manner, colleges could transform into comprehensive institutions that are creative, responsive and anticipatory, providing students with valuable insights into economic and technological change. (Adams, Edmonson, & Slate, 2013:529). The next section therefore deals with the dynamics associated with the students' lack of capabilities.

3.5 DYNAMICS LINKED TO STUDENTS' LACK OF CAPABILITIES

In chapter two it was discussed that students' lack of capabilities (work readiness) could be linked to the types of modalities used for the integration of WIL (Akoojee et al., 2008:303). This section goes further to discuss other factors causative of the lack of development for students' capabilities. In this regard, Lean (2012:532) states that students' lack of employability skills is linked to the fact SA has a huge number of small businesses against the backdrop of a huge decline in the number of large enterprises. Nevertheless, these small enterprises play a significant role in the advancement of new innovations thereby driving economic growth in industries such as clothing, forestry and mining, police services, wholesale and retail (McGrath & Paterson, 2008:303).

Attitudes towards the integration of WIL vary; some are of the opinion that it is the duty of students to ensure they are placed (Aiken & Byrom, 2014:272). Hence, students migrate across provincial boundaries primarily because SA still requires a far greater number businesses in some parts of the country than others, in remote areas in particular (Akoojee et al., 2008:257; DHET, 2013b:1). One of the causes for the decline in apprenticeships (cooperative education) in the world is the fact some employers expect students to have high-level technical skills (CHE, 2011:21). Still on the discussion on the factors that cause a lack of development of students' capabilities is the need for curriculum articulation and progression, as well as the development of innovative learning, a discussion for the next section.

3.5.1 The need for curricula articulation and progression

The reliance of TVETCs on the 18 months of WPL not only affects students in regard to a lack of capabilities and the employability skills. Without completing the WIL curricula, students cannot obtain their National Diplomas. Not only that, without the Diploma, students can neither be admitted to other HEIs for further studies nor be credited with the modules already completed in the college (DHET, 2013:6). By contrast, in countries like the United States of America, curriculum is designed such that communities rely on their TVETCs for both diplomas and degrees. TVETCs provide continuing education for adults and offer training opportunities for entrepreneurs and incumbent workers in the form of certification and specialised programmes and services (Adams et al., 2013:529).

According to Lumby (2000:17), TVETCs in SA require curriculum reform, a process that will provide students increase with more routes to progress through particular vocational disciplines. In addition, to augment economic growth, the WIL curricula need to be developed in collaboration with employers (BIS, 2012:1). This is one of the reasons the DHET began a dialogue between the HEIs and the education departments on providing learners, students and employees with the competencies and skills required by employers (Forde, 2002:34). South African colleges need to design an education system that allows for the movement of students both vertically and horizontally and between different streams and levels. However, this will be possible without a coherent and coordinated post-school system (DHET, 2013:6). The next section expands on this discussion by focusing on the need for the development of innovative learning.

3.5.2 The need for the development of innovative learning

Alagaraja et al. (2014:262) state that the route to employment has become unpredictable and that the concept of jobs-for-life is disappearing. This poses a challenge to colleges to foster innovation and an entrepreneurial mind-set among students and staff; this could be offered through internal workshops (European Commission, 2009:2–4). It is pointed out that to promote growth in the economy, HEIs in Europe developed programmes to help students create new jobs and provide wider participation in entrepreneurship education (European Commission, 2009:2–4). Likewise, in Vietnam, HEIs have begun offering qualifications in entrepreneurship to address the unemployment of the youth (Tran, 2015:208).

Except for countries like Greece, where the HEI structure and regulations prohibit the commercialisation of knowledge, entrepreneurship education has been promoted around the world as the main solution for reducing unemployment (Piperopoulos, 2012:462). For example, HEIs in the UK and many other countries have started initiatives to support students taking courses in entrepreneurship (Nabi et al., 2015:482). This is despite the fact that the concept (entrepreneurship) has something to do with the knack for sensing an opportunity where others see confusion (Timmons, 1989:1). Entrepreneurial initiatives are formed by a person's attitude towards life, the prevailing culture and the person's self-confidence (Bird, 1989:8).

In line with the concept of innovative learning, it is stated that for educational change to keep pace with changes in society (maintaining standards and values), the process of curriculum design needs to be carefully and thoughtfully managed (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:1–9). Yet change is costly and resource-intensive, and is not a panacea but can be fraught with problems. Nevertheless, transformation cannot be undermined with a mere response that focuses on the short term (Akoojee, 2008:297). Innovative learning therefore has the following attributes: inner control, risk taking, adaptability, tenacity, leadership, decisiveness, determination and sheer guts, and the like (Nieman, Pretorius & Van Vuuren, 2005:416).

According to Botha and Van Vuuren (2010:608), there are three types of entrepreneurship programme, namely, business start-up programmes (assist students to start businesses), advanced entrepreneurship programmes (students are assisted to grow their existing businesses) and business start-up programmes (involve mentorship in the running of existing businesses). Yet all these depends on individual motivation, without which entrepreneurship is not possible (Herron & Sapienza, 1992:49).

Amongst the challenges for entrepreneurs are the pull and push factors contributing to the success or failure of the enterprise (Nabi et al., 2015:483). Such factors include government legislation, which regulates private businesses, especially the issues of registration and taxes, and these are often complex and difficult to understand. Other issues include the added expenses of corruption and bribery (Adomako & Danso, 2014:213). The next section furthers the discussions on the challenges linked to the lack of employability for college students to include the lack of managerial expertise.

3.6 MANAGERIAL CHALLENGES CAUSATIVE OF POOR CURRICULA

Since the transition to democracy in 1994, SA has experienced enormous changes in the field of education. Such changes have led to criticism relating to the introduction of educational policies and curricula without careful consideration of the long-term consequences of their implementation. Hence, the backtracking and abandonment of some of the curriculum (i.e. 2005), which resulted in unnecessary expenditure on materials no longer used (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:1–9). Yet, such initiatives (policies and legislation) were aimed at steering the system more effectively towards the goals of economic development and social reconstruction and equity (Moore, 2003:303). So, the lack of quality in HEI programmes cannot be disassociated from this challenge, one of the contributing factors.

In terms of DHET (2013:20), among other factors is the fact that the merger processes of the TVETCs have struggled to reach a point where the college management is fully operational. This may imply that the lack of quality in the TVET programmes could be the result of poor governance in the colleges in SA. Senior managers need to empower teams to produce pragmatic ways of delivering quality services. However, it is a fact that unlike the universities in SA, which traditionally had autonomy regarding the design of the curricula and assessment criteria, this was not the case with the TVETCs, even after they had been transferred to the higher education sector (Akoojee, 2008:299; Papier, 2010:154).

As stated by the DHET (2013:2), the TVET institutional landscape still suffers from a lack of infrastructure, teaching facilities and staff, especially those in rural areas. Politics in SA has resulted in a pointless doubling of some facilities, unequal distribution of resources, and abandoned institutions and campuses far from centres of economic activity. Consequently, colleges are perceived as having second-class status and as being a sector in decline (Akoojee, 2008:300). In line with this notion, it is stated that the role of the state needs to be clearly redefined, and that colleges should be granted autonomy, thus the freedom to adapt training to local needs, hire appropriate staff, and choose methods of instruction. In so doing, colleges will become more responsive to their local environments (Adams & Johanson, 2004:4, 79; Atchoarena & Delluc, 2002:57).

Still on the concept of autonomy, it is pointed out that the state exists primarily to increase the participation rate in HEIs, enhancing the cognitive skills of graduates to meet the demand for high-level skills. The state maintains the quality of academic programmes with increased graduate outputs as per the human resource needs of the country. It should also ensure that limited resources are used efficiently and effectively, and the expenditure of public funds is accounted for (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:1–9). Likewise, the decentralisation of TVETCs was aimed to produce a dynamic, flexible system resulting in responsive colleges that are more effective and respond efficiently to local circumstances (Adams & Johanson, 2004:79).

As stated by Akoojee (2008:298), when properly managed, decentralisation could increase the responsiveness of the TVET sector, hence the development of the FETC Act 16 of 2006, which advocates for the transfer of the personnel from the DHET to the colleges (RSA, 2006). By contrast, many challenges emerged in the manner in which the decentralisation of the TVETCs (SA) was handled, including increased managerialist patterns of control and the mismanagement of funds (Adams & Johanson 2004:79; Akoojee 2008:297). However, the lack of responsiveness on the part of TVETCs that could be linked to the lack of visionary leadership, a discussion for the next section.

3.6.1 The lack of transformative leadership and its impact on TVETC curricula

As stated by Mafaralala (2006:14), there is a lot of unhappiness among staff at TVETCs, brought on in part by the fact that the merger of the colleges resulted in much confusion and frustration, the effects of the decentralisation. In some of the colleges the staff continued working without supervision due to unfilled vacancies in managerial positions. People were moved into higher positions without the posts being advertised or the credentials required to do the job, a possible reason for the lack of quality in programmes. Even when the DHET was brought in, there was still no progress.

According to the new institutional landscape (at TVETCs), colleges are expected to offer programmes that are in demand in the labour market, thus improving national competitiveness and inclusiveness. They are expected to increase access for those who were excluded during the nondemocratic era (Akoojee, 2008:300). Yet, it is argued that for an organisation to be effective, it depends on the qualities the

leadership possess. This is because leaders differ in their styles, beliefs and personalities and these differences have an effect on the total output of an organisation (Mafaralala, 2006:40).

Still on the topic of leadership qualities, it is indicated that transformational leaders inspire their followers, transcending their own self-interests for the greater purpose and motivating followers to perform beyond expectations, working together towards a collective goal and teamwork (Arthur & Hardy, 2014:39). Furthermore, transformational leaders articulate their beliefs, demonstrating a concern for their followers (Alok, 2014:268), and this is what is expected from college leadership.

Anderson (2009:36) argues that leadership is not attributed to those in prominent positions of authority but to every individual. In point of fact, managers (TVETCs) need to understand that leadership depends on the motivation and dedication of the personnel, which could have an impact on the quality of education (DHET, 2013:19). As stated by Mafaralala (2006:40), leadership refers to having the knack of getting others to follow and do so willingly. Good leadership creates a trusting working environment where staff will invest their efforts for high performance (Barnes et al., 2013:119). Hence, there is a need for the active participation of academics in pursuit of the mission and vision of their colleges.

Still on the topic of quality leadership, it is stated that good leaders get their followers to comply without exercising force; they influence or persuade others to help make a vision attainable (Mafaralala, 2006:40). By contrast, the things that discourage staff from active participation include showing favouritism, dishonesty and interpersonal sabotage, antisocial behaviour, the enactment of unfair procedures and leader betrayals (Boss, Salas, Shapiro, Tangirala & Von Glinow, 2011:412). In the course of their day-to-day activities, ignorant leaders keep offending their followers through their words, behaviour and/or lack of action (BASFORD, 2014:79).

The challenges for college leadership, which could have an impact on the quality of education, include lack of educational research by the college staff, unrealistic minimum professional requirements for employment and the lack of continuous engagement with students in practice (DHET, 2013:16–17). Leadership development programmes could make a difference by helping to eliminate these challenges (Barnes et al., 2013:117). Yet, without collaboration between the colleges, industry and other stakeholders, WIL cannot be successful, a topic for the next section.

3.7 THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATION ON THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

In line with the concept of collaboration, Lee (2012:29) states that businesses are facing increasing pressure to play a more active social role in addressing the needs of communities. This could be addressed by establishing partnerships with stakeholders, such as between the colleges, communities and businesses, because such stakeholders own domain knowledge and expertise that contribute significantly to the quality of education (Choy & Delahaye, 2011:158). Therefore, this section addresses the significance of partnerships between the colleges and their stakeholders.

For colleges to improve the quality of education, WIL models need to be developed in collaboration with the workplace teams (Jeffries & Milne, 2014:564). This is in line with the HRDC (2014:8) which indicates that each college should have at least one functional and sustainable business partner to advance linkages between formal and informal learning. This is because collaborative networks (i.e. communities of practice, access to workplace etc.) determine knowledge transfer (Jackson, 2016:205). It is further stated that innovative models of WIL demand that colleges work together with businesses to design and facilitate an appropriate and responsive college curriculum (Jeffries & Milne, 2014:564).

In line with Lee (2012:29), collaborations and partnerships bring significant social benefits through joint action, as well as a unique and complementary resources for the benefit of all. Such partnerships are a key factor for economic development and workforce enhancement. However, those entering into partnerships do so with different objectives. For example, colleges could be driven by the inspiration to obtain grants or gain access for their students to the workplace. The government generally has the objective of encouraging economic growth through the direct employment of graduates, knowledge transfers and innovation (Mendez & Tudor, 2014:213).

In line with the purpose of partnerships, the Australian HEI sector (in 2009) has been pressed to demonstrate how they respond to skill shortages, thus the readiness of their graduates for the professionalised workforce. In addition, the WIL methods incorporate a combination of theory and practice in their qualifications (Fletcher et al., 2009:3). Equally, the partnership model has become a major vehicle for the delivery of public services in countries like the United Kingdom (Cardini, 2006:397). In

such places, college collaboration with employers is highly prioritised for national economic growth (Mendez & Tudor, 2014:213).

According to the HRDC (2014:8), all TVETCs in SA are currently involved in partnership projects with different stakeholders, including companies, government departments, businesses, HEIs and SETAs and international colleges. In 2011, the DHET, employers, the labour movement and community organisations signed the National Skills Accord to promote expanded access to training opportunities in both educational institutions and workplaces (Akoojee et al., 2008:262; DHET, 2013b:8). Still, the researcher believes such endeavours could be targeting students in the other programmes and not those in Business Studies, a reason this was selected as the focus of this study

In line with the existing partnerships, Powell (2016a:5) questions, why students are still struggling to get placements and/or employment. It is also pointed out that hosts find it difficult to attain access to the appropriate person in the colleges to initiate new WIL activities or just for information about the WIL activities in progress (Jeffries & Milne, 2014:566). TVETCs are thus expected to put structures in place that will allow them to respond rapidly to changes in their environments (Adams et al., 2013:529). To accomplish this, they need to align their mission with the changing conditions, reaching beyond the communities they serve (MacAllum et al., 2004:7).

Still on the need for partnership, it is pointed out that if proper **communication** with stakeholders are not established, TVETCs will continue to work in isolation and this intensify the mismatch of between the qualifications and the employer's needs, thereby perpetuating the un-employability of students (Nelson & Zadek, 2000:13). Notably, colleges need to areas for the exploration of the mutual value in collaborations. In fact, to strengthen partnership, communication is required at the conception, during and after the WIL programmes (Jeffries & Milne 2014:566). Yet, the principle of win-win should be applied for both partners to gain value (Mendez & Tudor, 2014:216).

In line with the benefits of WIL, it was found that some students (in Colorado State University) could not cope with their new employments regardless of the fact they completed their WIL programmes and that others quitted within their first two years of employment, posing a challenge to the quality of the WIL curricula, particularly when both the students and the employers were unhappy (Freestone, Thompson,

Trembath & Williams, 2007:350). On the same notion, it is enlightened that transition from college to work is turf, that is, a shift from being a consumer of education to being a producer; also that employers have different expectations than the academics, hence something needs to be done to help the graduating students (Yeadon, 2010:44).

Still on the need for partnership, it is pointed out that the market responsiveness of the curriculum should be a common goal (Adams et al., 2013:531). In so doing, partnerships could yield to a curriculum that better reflects work practices (Fletcher et al., 2009:17). On the same notion, it is maintained that WIL partners need to understand which aspects (of WIL) contribute to the effectiveness of the programme in terms of developing generic skills (Hu et al., 2009:922). Furthermore, the WIL modalities need to be extended to encompass the full range of skills necessary for the transition from college to work and early career success. Importantly, the alumni should be mentioned here as one of the valuable sources of mentorship (Graham & McKenzie, 1995:5; Holton, 1998:115).

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, literature focusing on the challenges associated with the integration of the WIL curricula was reviewed. Different themes and subthemes emerged and were discussed, including the challenges associated with the integration of WIL, the lack of generic skills as required by the majority of employers, the impact of transitions on the employability of students, the dynamics linked to students' lack of generic skills, the managerial challenges impacting on the college curriculum, as well as the impact of partnerships on the college curriculum. Other subthemes included the authenticity of the WIL curricula, understanding the concept of employability and the graduates' attributes, a need for the development of innovative learning, the lack of transformative leadership and the like. This concludes the discussion of the findings of the literature review. The next chapter will discuss the methods and methodologies adopted for this study in more detail.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The essence of this research is set out in chapter one: to investigate the models for the effective integration of WIL curricula into the NATED programmes offered in the Department of Business Studies at South African TVETCs. The previous chapter focused on the challenges facing the integration of WIL models, which in turn were discussed in chapter two and included workplace learning (WPL), work-based learning (WBL), problem-based learning (PBL), project-based learning (PJBL) and work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL). This chapter focuses on the research methodology, also known as the epistemological inquiry (Henning, 2011:36).

Henning (2011:36) states that in order to become an informed researcher or a methodologist, researchers should study the various methods and traditions of doing research. And so is this chapter, the methods selected, the rationale and the manner in which such methods were used addressed. According to Thomas (2009:70), the research methodology includes the methods used as well as, most importantly, why such methods are used the purpose of the inquiry and the choices made about the research approach. According to Braun and Clarke (2013:31), the methodology provides a framework for the study, a series of decisions about what counts as research, how it is conducted, and the sorts of claims made about the data. The next section expands the discussion on the research methodology.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research methodology focuses on the description of the research paradigm, the design, the rationale for choosing a design, as well as the details of the research approach and the logistical procedures that were followed in executing the study design (Delpont & Fouche, 2011a:109). As Braun and Clarke (2013:31) state, research methodology refers to the framework informing the methods appropriate for the study and the rationale thereof, and thus consist of the theories and practices for doing research. This is often regarded as the theory for conducting research, thereby producing valid knowledge about the world (psychological and social) being investigated. In light of the above, the researcher describes the methods

and the rationale for having selected them, including the research paradigm, approach, design and theoretical framework.

4.2.1 Research paradigm

In line with the concept of a paradigm are two ontological positions, namely, realism and idealism. Realism is likened to a person who views the world through a perfect glass window through which the view of the world will be more precise. Opposed to this is idealism, which is likened to a prisoner who views the world through the bars of a prison cell. The two will obviously have different views based on the position from which they see the world (Braun & Clarke, 2013:28).

Relative to these ontological positions, is critical realism, which looks at the world through a prism (i.e. one's culture, traditions, etc.). In this regard, the view depends on what is shaped by the prism (Braun & Clarke, 2013:28). As Thomas (2013:110) states, in common parlance, the term "paradigm" has come to have several meanings. When used in the social sciences, it refers to different frameworks such as positivism and interpretivism which are used to discover knowledge. Barnard et al. (2014:18), on the other hand, regard them (paradigms) as research traditions, which include ethnography, phenomenology, constructionism, hermeneutics, narrative analysis and many more. These are often used by researchers as their research paradigms.

Gordon (2016:10–11) states that researchers differ on the methodologies they choose, depending on the purpose of their research, as some methodologies are better for answering particular types of questions. This is accompanied by the viewpoint that all human beings are involved in the process of making sense of their worlds, hence their understanding of the world is valued. Additionally, researchers seek to give meaning to and to interpret, justify and rationalise people's actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:28). In the light of this, the researcher adopted the use of an interpretivist paradigm, as this was found to be relevant answering to the research question(s) in this study.

Along with the choice for the paradigm, Henning (2011:17) states that interpretivism differs from positivism in that the researcher has more control over the investigated, ensuring that their thoughts and/or feelings do not influence the research findings. Positivism fails to bring full expression from those

participating in the study. In keeping with Gray (2014:36), interpretive studies aim to understand as deeply as possible the world through someone else's eyes. Thus, the research questions seek to explore the personal or social meanings, the interpretation of the symbolic material and the validity of the different interpretations of the same material (Schreier, 2012:21).

According to Gordon (2016:26), researchers using the interpretive paradigm (as in this study) allow participants to explain in depth and detail what they have experienced, and how they thought and felt about a phenomenon. In so doing, they (researchers) know what it feels like to walk in their (participants) shoes, to see and understand the world as they do. Except for the interpretations given, data neither speaks itself nor have a meaning. Also, it is the recipients of data who construct meaning from what is heard (words) or seen (images) (Schreier, 2012:1).

It is further stated that the intimidating mound of data collected cannot really tell you anything until you have gone through a systematic process of interrogation and interpretation (O'Leary, 2014:274). It is for this reason that the researcher took a constructivist stance, seeking not only to explore the data, but also to explain and give meaning to the data collected. Accordingly, the next section addresses the research approach and design, the theoretical framework as well as the research population and sampling.

4.2.2 Research approach

According to Barbour (2014:13), a research approach entails primarily the ability to explicate how the macro (social class position) is translated into micro (the everyday practice) to guide one's behaviour. Various approaches may be adopted in a study, depending on the research questions and the research objectives. As a result, one has to decide which one best fits the project (Brown & Gibson, 2009:48). According to Schreier (2012:21), a quantitative approach is standardised whereas the key features of a qualitative approach include the emphasis on validity, interpretation, induction, case-orientation, and so forth.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach seeks more in-depth understanding of the problem whereas a quantitative approach aims at a general understanding. In addition, a quantitative approach requires a full description of the data, while a qualitative approach requires an active effort at interpreting the data

(Fouche & Schurink, 2011:312). Therefore, having taken an idealist stance, a qualitative approach was found relevant for exploring the concept of WIL and its models. It was also deemed to be suited to the exploration of the different connotations ascribed to a social (or human) problem (Creswell, 2014:2).

According to Barnard et al. (2014:20, 22), idealists believe the research approach should best fit the research question(s) rather than being merely aligned to a specific epistemological stance. Accordingly, the researcher applied this approach (qualitative) for the construction of meaning during the data analysis, hence taking the position of an interpretivist. It is further believed that a qualitative approach is most commonly grounded in interpretivism (Gordon, 2016:6, 26). This was needed to get people's understandings, perceptions and feelings about the study. Furthermore, answers to the research question(s) could not be given in statistical formula, but needed to be described and interpreted. This meant that the types of question used required the participants to express themselves rather than answering with a yes or a no.

A qualitative approach is also deemed to be effective in situations where little is known about the phenomenon being researched, allowing one to use various methods and theoretical stances. Moreover, it can be used to gain new perspectives for investigations where much is already known (Gray, 2014:162). In addition, qualitative researchers have the privilege of generating concepts from the theory or previous studies during the analysis of data. This is because by accessing people's everyday lives, one is able to get an in-depth understanding of the decisions they make (Barbour, 2014:15–16). Hence, more literature was reviewed to gain insight, different views and ideas from other researchers about the research topic.

In keeping with Barnard et al. (2014:6), when qualitative researchers analyse data, they are influenced by certain assumptions, derived from previous studies. This is because in qualitative studies, evidence is yielded regarding both knowledge and theories. Researchers do not just analyse data with a blank mind. Likewise, the choice of a qualitative approach for this research was influenced by assumptions regarding the lack of responsiveness of the WIL models adopted in South African TVETCs (section 1.2). The next section therefore addresses the design and the rationale for choosing the mode of inquiry.

4.2.3 Research design

Henning (2011:36) points out that as the methodology section focuses on the processes, tools and the procedures for conducting research, the research design sections looks at the end product. This design may be influenced by the philosophy or methods adopted in the research. Research design is therefore about generating a research plan for a topic in a given research focus, thus a template providing a structure to think about the means of working through a specific research project. This is about specifying areas of interest and working on the kind of data necessary for the exploration of fields (Brown & Gibson, 2009:48). Its (research design) purpose is to show how the research questions connect with the data, the tools and the procedures for answering such questions (Punch, 2014:116).

Fouche and Schurink (2011:312) state that in a quantitative approach the researcher's choices and actions are determined by the research strategy (design), but in a qualitative approach, the researcher's choices and actions determine the research strategy. In view of the fact that a qualitative approach was adopted in this study, a case study design was selected on the basis of its relevance. Also that its (case study) value lies on its ability to draw attention to what could be learnt from a single case, and that data could be collected using various sources of information inclusive of the interviews and the literature review (Creswell, 2014:73) used in this study. In addition, the researcher's choice was influenced by John (2011:21)'s opinion that case study design makes easy for the research to access the case, study it in depth and act as the insider researcher.

In line with the benefits for this design (case) is that a single case draws much attention; it is more than a mere methodology allowing one to choose what to focus on. Additionally, it (case) enables the exploration of a bounded system using multiple sources of information (Fouche & Schurink, 2011:308). A case study thus enables one to generate multiple perspectives using various methods of data collection and yet it also creates numerous accounts from a single method (Gray, 2014:163). This helps to explore situations where there are some doubts about a phenomenon, enabling researchers to make instructive comparisons through a careful selection of cases (Barbour, 2014:24).

By using a case, one is able to compare the various views, responses and experiences of the participants (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014:65). A case study design is accordingly regarded as the best approach for making

comparisons, as it supports an in-depth exploration and in-depth insights into the research phenomenon (Barbour, 2014:24). In line with idea of comparison, in this study the findings obtained through the use of different data collection techniques (i.e. interviews and literature review) were compared to see if they yielded the same results.

According to Creswell (2014:14), case studies are also found in evaluation studies where they are used to analyse programmes, events or processes. In this regard, evaluations are used to decide whether a programme should be continued or not, and in turn for gaining information on the improvement of the programmes. Evaluations can also be used to gauge whether a programme has been successful or not, including the analysis of larger units such as national policies (Gray, 2014:8, 297; Ormston & Ritchie, 2014:35).

O’Leary (2014:158) states that evaluation designs attempt to determine the value of certain initiatives, identifying certain consequences and opportunities for improvement. By posing questions to the various stakeholders, researchers are able to decide whether such initiatives should be sustained or not. Ormston and Ritchie (2014:35) conclude that formative evaluations provide information for the change or improvement of a programme, whereas summative evaluations focus on checking the effectiveness or outcomes of such programmes or policy.

In line with the above discussion, evaluations were used to determine the success and/or the impact of the WIL curricula on the development of students’ capabilities and employability skills. In addition, both formative and summative evaluations were used. Formative evaluation was used to investigate means for improving existing models of WIL, whereas summative evaluation examined the impact of the current models (WIL) on the development of students’ capabilities to enhance their employability.

The challenges involved in using a case study design include that by studying a small case, one could be perceived as being subjective and biased, doing so for the sake of obtaining thick descriptions regarding the research question (Bryman, 2016:445). However, researchers choose a case design in order to understand the case and not for mere generalisation; in addition, researchers consider the depth of the case and not its coverage (Chadderton & Torrance, 2012:53–54). Moreover, a case study requires interpretation (placing it within a context), and one has to decide on the time to be spent on fieldwork and the methods

relevant for the study (Thomas, 2013:150). In the light of the above, the researcher (in this study) focused on the depth of the case for more understanding. So, the next section addresses the theoretical framework that guided the study.

4.2.4 Theoretical framework

Brown, Lewis, and Webster (2014:79) state that a brief review of theories is helpful to inform the positions set out in ethical codes and governance processes, and is of value in reflecting on ethical dilemmas from different perspectives. It is further stated that once the mode of inquiry has been decided, the rationale for choosing the method(s) must be explained, thus also describing the entire research strategy and tactics (Maree, 2010:34). So, in this section, the researcher provides his theoretical stance as well as, most importantly, the rationale for having selected such theories.

The concept of theory is defined as a set of interconnected concepts, definitions, and so forth which present a systematic view of phenomena based on facts and observations, primarily to explain and predict a phenomenon (De Vos & Strydom 2011:37). In fact, the term “theory” refers to explaining or predicting a particular phenomenon, establishing (or seeing) the links, generalising and abstracting ideas from data with explanations connected to the research findings of others (Thomas, 2009:100).

In terms of selecting a theory to apply, four questions are mostly asked, namely: Should theory be used as a tool or a product? Or it should be used to explain something being investigated? Or it should be the aim of one’s endeavours assuming it will help to explain and predict more? Or one should try to develop more and better theories with this aim in mind (Thomas, 2009:76). In line with all these questions, Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), was used primarily to explain the concept of WIL, the subject for the investigation.

Relevant to ELT are the four learning types, which contribute to a solid foundation of WIL namely: *experience, reflection, experiment* and *conceptualization* (Raelin, 1997:568). ELT views learning as: *experiential, reflective* and *iterative*, requiring a holistic sense of individual competency, development, sensitivity and sociality (Cairns, Evans, Illeris, Malloch & O’Connor, 2011:41). So, for learning to be successful, WIL (also experiential learning) requires an immersive, authentic and communal environment

for testing students' skills, their ability to adapt their behaviour and the productive use of resources (Frykholm & Nitzler, 1993:434).

The prominent use of the ELT does not invalidate the importance of other educational theories such as Cognitive Learning and Behaviourist Learning Theories, these two were briefly discussed (section 1.7.4). In terms of Kolb (2005:194), ELT demands for learning to engage students in a process that best enhances learning; students' beliefs and ideas (on a topic) to be examined, tested, and integrated with new (or refined ideas); Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world, requiring the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment and lastly, a process of creating knowledge.

ELT is a process of constructing knowledge that involves the four learning modes, namely: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting, all responsive to contextual demands (Kolb 2005:194). These factors insinuate the significance of the workplace experience crucial for the development of students' work readiness, hence interconnectivity of the two concepts (experiential learning and WIL). To link up these (ELT and WIL), ELT advocates for the need of WIL to ensure the curriculum responsiveness and the employability of students.

On the other hand, both the cognitive and the behaviourists theories focus on the role of the educators in the development and the preparations for the students prior entering the employment sectors. Cognitivists (educators) believe that students bring different understandings and ways of knowing to the classroom, and the educator's role is to assist in the process of understanding the material or content taught (Isbell, 2011:20-21). In this theory, it is believed the hidden processes of categorization, organization, storage, and retrieval are at the heart of the learning process, and thus become a primary consideration for educator (Phillips & Soltis, 2009).

Cognitivists (also constructivists) view learning as the result of mental construction, that is, learning by actively constructing their own understanding (generating new ideas). They (students) learn factual information, skills (mental and physical), and develop new attitudes in different environments. Adding that new learning takes place when new information is built and or added in one's current knowledge,

understanding and skills (Pritchard, 2009:21). Relevant to ELT, the workplace is seen as the appropriate setting for students to acquaint, demonstrate or construct the new (understanding, knowledge, skills, etc.).

As opposed to the cognitivists, Behaviourists (also called associationism) acknowledge that hidden mental processes could be at work during the learning process and that because such processes are not observable or measurable, they should not be the focus of attention (Phillips & Soltis, 2009). As an alternative, behaviourism is based on the notion human behaviour by the external factors such as rewards. These (rewards) could be intermittent used as strategic ways for students to continue behaving in a desired way. (Hodges & Sebald, 2011; Isbell, 2011:20-21). To accommodate this theory, students in the WIL programmes often receive rewards in the form of stipends to inspire them for more learning and a hope of employability.

Linked to behaviourism is humanism, which advocates for prioritising on helping students reach their potential. This believes that self-actualization, the natural, healthy development of students is primary for them to reach their full potential (Hodges & Sebald, 2011). It is believed that (Humanism) that people cannot be reduced to components and that learning occurs in environments where people can feel safe and secure. This further states that only if certain needs are met, students can progress toward a deeper, more fulfilling understanding of themselves and their role in the classroom. In this way, they (humanist teachers) act as counsellors and mentors more than transmitters of required content (Isbell, 2011:20-21).

One of the most popular contributions from the humanist perspective comes from Maslow (1943) who created a hierarchy of human needs. Maslow believed that each of the primary needs must be satisfied if the person is to move on to the more sophisticated, deeper needs at the top. Humanists believe that students should be allowed the freedom and opportunity to make their own decisions as they progress through the hierarchy. They also believe that the deepest, most meaningful and lasting educational moments occur at the top of the hierarchy (Isbell, 2011:20-21).

The prominence of the ELT is based on the fact, others tend to emphasize cognition over affect, whilst behavioural learning theories deny the role for subjective experience in the learning process. ELT proposes a constructivist theory of learning whereby social knowledge is created and recreated in the personal knowledge of the students (Sternberg & Zhang 2000:2). The adoption of the ELT as the most

prominent does not invalidate the significance of other learning theories. In line with the predictions of the ELT, it is pointed out that WIL helps students make the transition from learning to work, contributing to the development of employability skills and making students more attractive to potential employers (Blom, 2016:14).

Along with Brown and Gibson (2009:17), the concept of theory (as discussed above) is often linked with two terminologies, that is, concept and framework (i.e. conceptual framework). The term “concept” (as in “theoretical concept”) refers to a word (or phrase) specifically used in making sense of a particular empirical area. This word becomes a concept when used to do some analytic work, whilst the term “framework” has to do with how philosophy fits into the design. Therefore, the term “conceptual framework” entails researchers developing certain theoretical insights, as well as discussing the rationale for selecting the corpus of literature (Silverman, 2010:330). In the light of the above, several studies were used to further outline the concept of WIL and its significance towards the employability of students.

In terms of Frykholm and Nitzler (1993:434), WIL is about transmitting the dispositions and attitudes that are required for an immersive, authentic and communal environment, as well as testing students’ skills and their ability to adapt behaviours and resources to more productive uses. Jackson (2016:199, 202) states that the development of students’ capabilities and employability is determined by three characteristics, that is, the student’s characteristics, the programme’s characteristics and the workplace characteristics, all of which have been discussed in detail the chapter three (section 3.4).

According to Colley et al. (2003:480), WIL requires the involvement in the “social”, “cultural” and responsive aspects of the workplace. In this regard, Evans et al. (2011:156) define WIL as learning “at”, learning “for” and learning “through” work. WIL is seen as a collective term, which includes teaching and learning practices that reflect on real-life instances (Brookes et al., 2010:107). In this regard, WIL is seen to be requiring the use of multiple learning environments.

By tradition, the relationship between a programme of study and employment was based on an education-assessment-selection process, which involved students taking a range of subjects that developed the knowledge and skills deemed essential by employers (Brown & Lyons, 2003:58). Thus, WIL comes in as a form of learning (*experiential*) with the objective to achieve its desired outcomes, and thus the

acquisition of the practical skills (and knowledge) crucial for the workplace (Brimble et al., 2011:81; CHE, 2011: 9). Hence there is a need for effective collaboration between the HEIs and their WIL stakeholders.

According to Abdullah and Mtsweni (2013:3), WIL forms a multilateral relationship between the HEIs, students and employers, each with specific responsibilities; it is thus a strategy to integrate the academic programmes with the relevant skills to be acquired through the workplace involvement. In so doing, WIL assists students to capture their own experiences and present them for accreditation (Guile & Griffiths, 2001:122). In line with the concept of employability (WIL or experiential learning), Engelbrecht et al. (2017:332) contend that there will never be enough employment for every qualified student, and that TVET graduates must compete with university graduates for employment, which could also limit their opportunities.

De St Jorre and Oliver (2018:44, 51) indicate that graduate employability can only be developed over the lifetime from a wide range of experiences. Moreover, HEIs are not able to predict or guarantee job opportunities in students' fields of interest. In fact, HEIs develop certain attributes and capabilities to maximise students' chances of finding jobs and/or creating their own employment. However, this depends on students' abilities to proactively acclimatise and repackage such capabilities for employability. In a nutshell, WIL is about the HEIs building linkages or partnership with employers, thus creating access to multiple learning environments through programmes to prepare students for the workplace environment (De St Jorre & Oliver, 2018:44, 51). Hence the relevance of the ELT, without which WIL cannot be possible.

With regard to theories, in a top-down theory, reformulated theoretical and conceptual schema are used to classify, characterise and make sense of the social world. By contrast, in bottom-up theory, researchers create theory through their research, generating and clarifying concepts through the analysis of data (Brown & Gibson, 2009:15). Yet, a great understanding of social theory is required in order to provide context to and interpret the evidence generated, also providing context to the investigation (Ormston & Ritchie, 2014:29). As aforesaid, this study was neither aimed to refine nor develop any theory but ensuring the views and findings of others were incorporated in an attempt to answer the research questions. The

used of ELT and the discussion on the related theories is based on their relevance to the demands of the WIL often regarded as the *experiential learning*.

Lastly, it is pointed out that theorists are uncomfortable with anything subjective or ambiguous, hence the use of different approaches to problem-solving, taking a logical, one-step-at-a-time approach. Theorists adapt and integrate their observations into frameworks in order to see how such observations relate to each other, then work towards adding new learning into existing frameworks. To achieve this, they (theorists) question and assess the possible ways that new information might fit into their existing frameworks of understanding (Pritchard, 2009:43). In the light of the above, this study envisages to develop a model for the effective integration of WIL (also known as experiential learning). The next section explains the methods adopted for the collection of data in this study.

4.3. RESEARCH METHODS

As Henning (2011:36) states, research methodology is a set of complementary methods (thus *goodness of fit*) aimed to deliver the results, which reflect on the research question and research purpose. Research methods therefore refers to a way of doing something, often with an intimation that it is being done systematically or in a considered thought-through way (Thomas, 2013:192); these are tools or techniques for collecting or analysing data such as that obtained from interviews (Braun & Clarke 2013:31). Therefore, in this section, the researcher outlines the methods and techniques used for the collection and analysis of data.

4.3.1. Population and sampling

In line with this section, Strydom (2011b:223) indicates that researchers study a sample to understand the population from which it was drawn. A small number of the units of a population is selected in order to study the entire population. In this regard, the term “population” means individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics such as the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned. Sampling therefore has to do with the criteria for the inclusion and/or exclusion of the subjects. In this way, the researcher decides as to who or what should be included or excluded in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013:57).

In regard to the required sampling size, Braun and Clarke (2013:55) maintain that there are no limits for the sample size, even though qualitative researchers tend to use smaller samples than quantitative researchers. Moreover, the size of the sample is mostly determined by the research purpose and the research questions. Other factors include the credibility of information, its usefulness, how interesting it is, as well as the time and other resources necessary for working with the data (Strydom, 2011b:223). According to Lewis and Nicholls (2014:65), sampling is about the identification of those who by virtue of their relevance to the research questions, are able to provide the most relevant, comprehensive and rich information.

According to Strydom (2011b:226), researchers use either probability or non-probability sampling, drawing samples from the given populations. In non-probability sampling, researchers draw a sample that is representative of the entire population, whereas in probability sampling, the sample is merely based on randomisation. Moreover, in qualitative research, the concept of representative does not necessarily mean the sample drawn is representative, but rather is considered to be so (Strydom, 2011b:223). Relevant to this study is the fact that qualitative research adheres to the use of non-probability sampling (Elam et al., 2014:111–143), as did this study.

In consistence with Delpont and Strydom (2011:391), non-probability sampling includes purposive, theoretical, deviant sampling, and the like. Such samples are selected to reflect particular features of groups within the sampled population, depending on the characteristics of the population. They are not intended to be statistically representative, hence they are best suited for qualitative studies (Elam et al., 2014:111–143). It is highlighted that different sampling strategies could be adopted at different stages of research. When categorising and naming data, sampling remains open and unstructured, but as the theory develops (with categories), sampling becomes more purposive (Elam et al. (2014:115).

It is further explained that in purposive sampling, cases are chosen because they illustrate some features of particular concern and/or interest to the researcher (or study), as well as the logic of the adopted research design (Silverman, 2010:141). In light of the above, purposive sampling was deemed to be relevant for this study. In line this choice is the opinion that purposive sampling enables researchers to select the settings and the population, by virtue of which their relationship with the research questions could provide the most relevant, comprehensive and rich information (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014:65).

Still on the choice for purposive sampling, it is highlighted that sample units are chosen because they have the characteristics required for a detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and research questions (Elam et al., 2014:113). It is further distinguished that in a fixed strategy (as used in this study), the sample is established at the outset of the research, so there is little or nothing to be added to the sample as the research proceeds, hence, the sampling strategy is guided by the research questions. On the other hand, in a non-fixed strategy, the sample is gradually added to as the investigation evolves (Bryman, 2016: 326).

Often referred to as extreme case sampling, deviant sampling was also adopted in this study. In deviant sampling, cases that differ from the dominant pattern or characteristics of others are selected (Delpont & Strydom, 2011:393). The use of both purposive and deviant sampling helped to select cases that appeared to be of interest, and were also relevant to answering the research questions. For example, the colleges in the rural provinces (Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West) were selected for their typicality with regard to the assumption of a lack of industries (WIL curricula). The researcher is also aware that without the potential employers, WIL is unlikely to succeed. On the other hand, colleges in Gauteng were selected for their typicality for attracting the majority of students from rural areas.

In line with Sarantakos (2000:156), the use of non-probability sampling by qualitative researchers is without exception. This is because sampling is based on saturation, involving low cost and less time. Therefore, for the purpose of cost-effectiveness and time, only provinces within the vicinity of the researcher were selected. The sample was kept to a minimum, with 80 participants in six categories, namely, four campus managers, eight HODs, 12 college lecturers, 40 students, eight representatives of the SETAs and eight representatives of the employers of college students. The following table shows the number of participants selected for this study:

Table 4.1: The Population and Sample

The different categories of the subjects		No.
Campus managers	1 x 4	4
HODs (Business Studies and Student Support Services)	2 x 4	8
College lecturers (Business Studies)	3 x 4	12
First category of students: focus groups	6 x 4	24
Second category of students: one on one	4 x 4	16
SETA representative from each college	2 x 4	8
Employers for each college	2 x 4	8
	TOTAL	80

The selection of the participants was based on the following reasons:

- Campus managers and the HODs (college management) were deemed to be relevant to indicate the way TVETCs support and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities.
- The HODs (Business Studies and Student Support Services) were selected for their relevance to answering the question(s) pertaining to the way South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes; as well as the challenges for integrating WIL.
- College lecturers were chosen for their relevance in answering the questions about the curriculum, namely, how can the integration of WIL for Business Studies at TVETCs be improved?
- Students were grouped to obtain the different perceptions, experiences, challenges and so forth. Students registered for N6 (focus groups) were selected to determine their awareness and readiness to start a WIL programme in the following semester; others (who had completed the N6), were selected to give their experiences, challenges and perceptions regarding the administration of WIL.
- The SETA representatives were selected to give their views on the responsiveness of the TVETC curricula, especially with regard to the WIL programme for students in the Business Studies.
- The representatives from the majority employers were selected to give their views on students' employability (Business Studies) in appropriate workplaces.

In line with the above participant selection, Delpont and Strydom (2011:390) indicate that a small set of units can give an idea of what can be expected in the entire population of the intended study. In addition, the overall purpose of using the relevant sampling techniques is to collect the richest data, that is, a wide and diverse range of information. The next section discusses the research methods further, focusing on the means for collecting the data.

4.3.2 Data collection methods

Based on Henning (2011:36), this section (research methods) relates to the researcher's decisions regarding the processes, kinds of tools and procedures to be used for data collection. Accordingly, in a qualitative research study, a case study design might involve interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and the like (Brown & Gibson, 2009:48). Consequently, various data collection methods were used. These are discussed briefly here: they include interviews (one to one, semi-structured and focus groups), observation, literature study and document analysis. Each of these methods was found to be useful and relevant for addressing the research questions, as well as, importantly, the aim of the study, which is to investigate how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes.

4.3.2.1 Interview

The term "interview" refers mainly to talking to people. This is about researchers chatting with people in order to seek answers to a number of questions regarding a specific topic or theme. Researchers use this technique to find out first-hand how the participants genuinely feel about certain issues that relate to the research topic or theme (Oleary, 2014:217). In line with this, Thomas (2013:194) describes interviews as a kind of discussion with someone in which you try to obtain information in the form of facts, opinions, attitudes and the like. It is a way of generating data using verbal communication and spoken narratives.

O'Leary (2014:218) further distinguishes between formal and informal interviews. In a formal interview the researcher maintains an objective stance to establish rapport, gain trust, and open up lines of communication, whereas in an informal interview, he or she ignores the rules and roles associated with formal interview. Unlike the former, in the latter the style is casual and relaxed (informal) in order to minimise of any gulf between the interviewer and the interviewee. Generally, the value of the interview

is based on the belief that people are individuals who can actively construct their social world, and also communicate insight about it. In so doing, interview data is generated that gives insight about people's lives (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014:55).

Still on the value or benefits of using interviews, it is maintained that interviews are economical in terms of time and resources, and that they actively examine precisely what is happening in people's lives and not merely try to get some comments (Gubrium & Holstein, 2011:150). In line with the above discussion, the interviews in this study took the form of informal discussions to allow the interviewees freedom to chat happily. Certain arrangements were made prior to the interviews, including arranging the audio tape for recording, seeking permissions, confirming arrangements and rescheduling appointments. Notes were made during the interviews.

Furthermore, Thomas (2013:194) states that interviews may be conducted as structured, unstructured or semi-structured, involving the interviewees in either one-to-one, telephonic or group discussions. Although not all were adopted in this study, the next section briefly discusses such approaches.

4.3.2.1.1 Structured and unstructured interviews

According to O'Leary (2014:218), structured interviews are best suited for interviews where standard data is a goal. This is because they function like a classic job interview, using pre-established questions in a predetermined order (standard mode of delivery). In addition, prompts and probes are predetermined and used under defined circumstances. This technique allows interviewers a high level of control, adding to interviewee comfort and the free flow of information (O'Leary, 2014:218). Because there is a high level of control over the participants, this could not be used in this study. The researcher felt it would be more useful when standard data is the goal.

Unstructured interviews are similar to structured interviews; they are like a conversation where a question is asked and the interviewee responds. In this technique, prompts are only used for some topics, and for making follow ups on points worthy of further questioning (Bryman, 2016:370). Unstructured interviews draw out rich informative conversation around particular themes without the use of predetermined questions. In so doing, it allows participants to talk and express their ideas in a non-dictated manner, as

the researcher keeps the interview focused on obtaining the data required (O’Leary, 2014:218). However, this technique was found to be unsuitable for this study and the researcher subsequently opted for semi-structured interviews, in other words, a discussion.

4.3.2.1.2 Semi-structured interview

As stated by Thomas (2009:162), semi-structured interviews take the form of a meeting with someone in which one asks a set of predetermined questions with a little scope for follow-up or comments. In so doing, the interviewees determine the important issues (agenda) to be covered. In this technique, the researcher has a plan for questioning, but is flexible in allowing the conversation to flow. This allows the participants to deviate from the plan to discuss other interesting topics (unexpected emergent data) relevant to the study (O’Leary, 2014:218).

As Bryman (2016:370) states, semi-structured interviews use a list of questions in line with a specific topic(s), allowing the interviewee to decide on how to reply. Questions not listed in the interview guide could also be asked depending on what the interviewer picks up from the responses. Most importantly, however, the researcher remains consistent in the use of wording in all the interviews. In the light of the above, the interview guides were set and prepared in advance but also allowed the interviewees an opportunity to ask questions and freely express their views. In keeping with O’Leary (2014:218), interviews were conducted in different forms including, face to face (also known as one to one) and multiple and focus group interviews, a topic for the next discussion.

4.3.2.1.3 Focus groups

According to Thomas (2013:203), the term “focus group” has come to be used interchangeably with multiple interviews. However, in a multiple interview, the researcher is in control of the discussion, he or she takes the lead in asking questions. In so doing, the method saves time and money, as a number of individuals are interviewed simultaneously with participants freely discussing some topics (Bryman, 2016: 398; O’Leary, 2014:218). In line with this, a focus group is defined as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher; its design is carefully

planned in order to obtain the interviewees' perceptions on a topic of interest in a permissive and/or non-threatening environment (Greeff, 2014:361).

Contrary to multiple interviews, focus groups intend to facilitate a discussion among the participants and not between a researcher and the participants (Tewksbury, 2009:47). Further, in a focus group, the researcher's questions are targeted to elicit a collective view in line with a specific topic, and the group members are free to express their independent views (Carlson, Culberston, Gandha & Ryan 2013:2). In comparing the usefulness of one-to-one interviews and focus groups, neither method is superior to the other. In fact, the usefulness of techniques for each study is guided by the specific purpose of the study (Greeff, 2014:341).

The benefits of focus groups include that they yield more in-depth information from the participants given that the comments and statements of each participant could serve to stimulate memories, interpretations and more depth of information (Tewksbury, 2009:47). In addition, they are more focused than multiple interviews. This is because the group members are purposeful selected on the basis that they are known to have been involved in a particular topic-related situation. The technique (focus groups) appears more naturalistic in that it reflects on the processes through which meaning is constructed in everyday life. In so doing, the researcher ultimately develops an insight as regards the feelings of the subjects, looking also at the way individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meanings around it (Bryman, 2016:397).

Still on the benefits of focus groups, they allow for people with certain experience (topic related) to be interrogated, bringing to light other issues that are valued for the research topic area. Moreover, this allows the participants to probe each other's different views, and thus encourages debate, challenging each other's views. In this way, researchers ultimately get more insight into what people think (Bryman, 2016:398). Focus groups are highly efficient and could even cost less, drawing out depth of opinion that might not arise from direct questioning (Bryman, 2016:370).

In the light of the above discussions, one-to-one interviews were used to interview participants such as the HODs, members of SETA, and employers' representatives. On the other hand, focus groups were used to interview the selected groups of students registered for the NATED Programmes (N6). However,

multiple interviews were not used in this study, the researcher not only sought to save time and costs, but was also concerned about the contributions each individual made. In addition, the researcher avoided exerting tight control over the participants. Apart from the use of interviews, observation as a method was also used and is discussed in the next section.

4.3.2.2 Literature study

In line with this section, O’Leary (2014:85) states that although rich knowledge can come from experience, it will be seen as hearsay if it is not set within a broader context, as knowledge is fundamentally dependent on the discoveries of the past. Hence, reading the literature on a topic gives one a broader context, without which it is impossible to build to this knowledge. Similarly, it is pointed out that in a literature review, one discusses how the research emerges from previous research. This encompass the whole process of reading, thinking, organising, analysing, identifying patterns, evaluating and many more (Badenhorst, 2010:155).

It is further noted that a literature review enables one to locate the study within related topics and the methods and theories relevant to the field of study. In so doing, one is able to build one’s work on previous research. However, the work needs to be organised as arguments rather than as a mere description of other studies (Silverman, 2014:391). It goes without saying that in an academic context, *all research work is based on previous research*. Hence one has to situate one’s study within a body of research. Further reviewing the literature allows researchers to find more ideas for a research project, discovering also what research has been conducted, and the gaps identified (Badenhorst, 2010:155).

In the light of the above, the researcher ensured that in this study, extensive literature was consulted, hence committing two chapters (two and three) to the literature review. This was intended to obtain insightful information from the existing literature on the topic, comparing the findings with the data collected using other methods and analysing documents relevant to the research study. Certain methodological paradigms were used to determine the relevant approaches that could help in answering the research question(s). The next section is focused on the trustworthiness of the research.

4.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

In line with the concept of trustworthiness, Bryman (2016:302) states that qualitative researchers ought to be specific in terms of the means for assessing the quality of the research, of which the two main criteria are trustworthiness and authenticity. However, in view of the fact that meanings are constructed and open to a multiplicity of interpretation, it becomes difficult to pin down the notion of truth. In quantitative research the concept of reliability is used to ensure the quality of the results, and thus the replicability of research findings. This means that when using the same or similar methods, the result will still be the same regardless of how many times the process is repeated (Lewis *et al.* 2014:355). However, in qualitative research, the replicability of research findings is naïve, following the complexity of the phenomenon being studied and the inevitable impact of the context. Further, qualitative researchers believe there is no single reality to be captured, so replication is an artificial goal to pursue (Lewis, 2014:355).

Following the above discussions, the concept of reliability was ignored in this study. This is because in a qualitative content analysis (as in this study) the researcher is the boss, making the final decisions on what concepts to measure and how to do so (Neuendorf, 2017:19). Hence, the concept of validity was used in this study as opposed to the concept of reliability. According to Lewis, Morrell, Ormston and Ritchie (2014:356, 358) validity refers to the extent to which a finding is well-founded and accurately reflects the phenomenon being studied. This has to do with the verification, substantiation and correctness of the evidence of the research findings (Brown & Gibson, 2009:59).

Brown and Gibson (2009:59) reiterate that to ensure validity (as in this study), one looks at the relationship between the researcher's accounts and the common-sense knowledge of the subjects being studied. In so doing, people are able to recognise the truthfulness of the accounts produced. Although the concept of validity was embraced, the researcher further adopted the principle of triangulation, helping to assess how well the participants' meanings were captured and interpreted. This is in line with the viewpoint that triangulation is useful for checking trustworthiness and examining the same phenomenon from different viewpoints (Brown & Gibson, 2009:59; Lewis *et al.*, 2014:358).

In keeping with Lewis *et al.* (2014:358), qualitative researchers use triangulation as an approach to the validation of data. In line with this notion (triangulation) is the assumption that the use of different sources

of information will help to confirm and improve the clarity of the research findings. Furthermore, in this study, triangulation helped to compare different forms of data using different methods. For example, the information gained from the focus group was followed up with individual interviews. The various sources used include the interviews, review of literature and documents analysis. The next section explains the four criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative research namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Bryman, 2016:302).

4.4.1 Credibility

In line with the concept of credibility, it is pointed out that a researcher provides participants with the account (his/her impressions and findings) as a way of seeking corroboration; often referred to as respondent validation or member validation (Bryman, 2016: 303). Similarly, the credibility of data generated depends on the recognition of the bias or the purpose of the author (O'Leary, 2014:251). Also that subjectivity is crucial for the analysis documents primarily because what researchers read and draw from the documents is coloured by their live experience (Silverman, 2014:83). In light of the above, the researcher gave the subjects an account of what they had said in the interview and what he had observed. The research findings were also submitted to them to obtain confirmation of the truthfulness of the findings. The next section explains the generalisability of the findings.

4.4.2 Applicability, transferability and generalisability

In line with the concept of generalisation, Thomas (2013:142) states that in everyday life, when we make judgements about the future, we often generalise from experiences we have had in the past. Events that repeatedly occur in certain circumstances enable us to make predictions, they are likely to occur in the same kinds of circumstances in the future. However, according to Lewis et al. (2014:359), there are strict limits on what can be generalised and the circumstances in which this is possible. In general, generalisation can be done in relation to the population from which the sample is drawn (representational), about other settings in which similar conditions to those studied may exist (inferential) and as a contribution to enhancing ideas and theories (theoretical). And lastly, empirical generalisation has to do with concepts such as transferability, external validity, and case-to-case generalisation (Lewis et al., 2014:359).

In the light of the above discussion, transferability (in this study) was ensured through the recommendations and the proposed model for the improvement of the WIL curricula in the HEIs in SA and internationally. This concept (transferability) has to do with generalising the findings to a parent population (Lewis et al., 2014:348). The principle of applicability was then used to avoid generalising the results from institutions with different contextual factors. For example, some TVETCs conducted internal workshops whereas others could not due to the lack of resources (i.e. infrastructure).

4.4.3 Authenticity

Relative to the concept of authenticity is the concept of positionality, which implies that the person conducting research should take a central role in the interpretation. In the discovery of what is referred to as *situated knowledge*, the researcher has an undeniable position, which is likely to cause some bias in the findings and the interpretations of the study. This includes the researcher's background, likes and dislikes, vested interests and expectations (Thomas, 2013:144). Moreover, in this study the researcher adhered to Bryman's (2016:302) criteria for addressing the authenticity of the study. These included, among others, to avoid bias in the study the researcher ensured he did not impose his personal beliefs on the findings. He also distanced himself from the materials and documents obtained, allowing the participants to give their own opinions, feelings and understandings.

According to Bryman (2016:302) the criteria below are useful for addressing the authenticity of the study:

- **Fairness** – the researcher ensured different viewpoints were fairly represented among members of the social setting
- **Ontological authenticity** – the researcher helped members to arrive at a better understanding of the social milieu
- **Educative authenticity** – the researcher helped members to better appreciate the perspectives of other members of their social setting;
- **Catalytic authenticity** – the researcher acted as an impetus for members to engage in action to change their circumstances
- **Tactical authenticity** – the researcher empowered members to take the steps for engaging in action please (Bryman, 2016:302).

4.4.4 Conformability

According to Bryman (2016:303), the concept of conformability has to do with the objectivity of the researcher. This implies that one has acted in good faith, ensuring that personal values do not sway the conduct and the research findings. In line with this, it is indicated that when presenting interpretative research, one should not be ashamed or afraid to accept this subjectivity. This could include aspects such as the researcher's biography, class, gender, ethnicity, ideas and the like and all these need to be made explicit (Thomas, 2013:144). In line with this, it is pointed out that researchers should ensure at all costs that the research findings should not be deceptive. In order to achieve this, one should avoid the misappropriation by subjects, thereby ensuring the information conveyed is clear and unambiguous (Strydom, 2011a:126). Accordingly, all the above information was considered in this study; moreover, conformability was confirmed through the validity of the study as discussed earlier.

4.4.5 Dependability

The concept of **dependability** has to do with ensuring the merit of research, that is, keeping safe all the phases of the research process for auditing, when the need arises (Bryman, 2016:303). Accordingly, in this study, dependability was ensured by means of triangulation; information collected through the various methods was compared against each method, inclusive of the findings from the literature study. The researcher kept all the records in accessible manner, including the fieldwork notes, interview transcripts and so on.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As stated by Strydom (2011a:113–115), ethical consideration is a research principle for ensuring there is a good cooperation between all parties involved in the study. Other factors for consideration include mutual trust, acceptance, and keeping the promises and/or expectations as per agreement. Among others, the researcher should avoid things like deception of subjects, violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality, denial of treatment and the like. All of these were considered by the researcher prior to the fieldwork.

Most HEIs provide the research guidelines for conducting research (Silverman, 2010:153). This applies to this study, as the researcher first obtained the ethical clearance for the study thereby adhering to all the guidelines as stipulated in the university policy. The researcher wrote letters to the principals of the colleges seeking permission to conduct the research and met personally with the college campus managers to set up the dates and times for the interviews, among other things (see Table 1.3 above). Furthermore, he informed the participants of the significance of the data required, reasons for their participations, and what to be careful of when participating. He also ensured that all the promises made were fulfilled. Most of these ethical issues have also briefly discussed in the preceding subsections.

4.5.1 Privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and avoidance of harm

According to Punch (2014:36), research ethics entails the researcher doing what is good, right, or virtuous, paying attention to the particularity of certain complex and contexts issues. Such issues (ethics) are vital for planning, conducting, communicating and following up research. This concurs with Piper and Simons' (2012:26, 28) viewpoint that research ethics is about the protection of subjects from harm and empowering them with democratic values of justice, fairness and respect for privacy of persons and public knowledge. As a result, in this study, the researcher assured the participants that such confidential or illegal matters of would not be reported and that doing so could override their rights. Furthermore, participants were allowed to agree or disagree on the publication of the research material. In the case where they all agreed, they were afforded opportunities to read the research report prior to publication, and were also guaranteed that their names would not be revealed, hence anonymity. For more information, see Table 1.2 in chapter one.

4.5.2 Informed consent and voluntary participation

In line with this section, researchers are expected to communicate to their subjects (or legal representatives) all information regarding the purpose of the investigation, the expected duration of participation, procedures to be followed, the possible risks, and the credibility of the researcher. Most importantly, the subjects should be given the freedom to decide whether to take part or not or even to withdraw from participation if need be (Strydom, 2011a:116).

In the light of the above, the aim of the study and the consequences for involvement were explained prior to data collection. Informed consent forms were distributed, allowing the participants to look at the purpose of the investigation, and to agree or not to take part. Opting-in consent was used to invite different stakeholders of WIL, giving them the opportunity to agree or withdraw from participation. Lastly, implied consent was used to allow students to volunteer to participate in the focus group interviews. The next section addresses an ethical issue which pertained in particular to the researcher – plagiarism.

4.5.3 Plagiarism and the competence of the researcher

Strydom (2011a:126) indicates that bearing in mind that the results of the study will eventually be published, researchers need to ensure no one is deceived by them. In fact, research ethics precludes the fabrication or falsification of data, hence the report should be compiled as accurately and objectively as possible. Moreover, one must avoid the manipulation of the results in the attempt to confirm one's viewpoints. In line with the above, the researcher (in this study) ensured all the sources consulted were acknowledged. Computer software (turn-it-in) was also used to scan the dissertation and an acceptable score for unoriginal content was obtained.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Saldana (2010:8), data analysis is the process of searching for patterns in the data or ideas that explain the existence of such patterns. In this process, the researcher deconstructs the data by carefully inspecting them to identify relationships in the data, their connectedness, dependability, compatibility and so forth (Thomas, 2013:273). In this regard, three elements are of relevance to qualitative research, namely, description, analysis and interpretation. As stated by Brown and Gibson (2009:5), description involves producing an account that stays close to the original data whereas the interpretation involves trying to give sense to the data by creatively producing insights about it. Lastly, the analysis systematically produces accounts of key factors and relationships among them, and this goes beyond a description of the data.

Still on the analysis of data, it is pointed out that qualitative researchers explore and interpret data from different sources, that is, interviews, journals, documents, and so on with the aim of creating new

understandings. Researchers do so by organising raw data, getting it coded and searching for meaning, then interpreting and drawing conclusions. In all this, they keep they focus on the research questions, research objectives, theory and the methodological accounts (O’Leary, 2014:290). In the light of this, all these processes were followed in this study. Moreover, the analysis and interpretation of data were discussed in three categories: the preparation and organisation, data reduction, and the visualisation and interpretation of the data analysed. This is discussed in the next section.

4.7.1 The preparation and the organisation of data

According to Bryman (2016:451), qualitative data analysis begins with coding (known as *indexing*). Data coding is about the review of transcripts and labelling the parts with theoretical significance or data with salience within the social worlds of those being studied. Accordingly, four questions are often asked, namely: Are the field notes broader enough? Are there parts that were omitted to be considered later? Are data properly labelled? And were the missing data reconfirmed by another visit to the specific participant? (Patton, 2002:440).

To answer to these questions, the researcher investigated a multiple of perceptions in defined areas of interest, deciding on the participants’ contributions and the management of the whole discussion. He only stopped taking notes when realising that most of the information given was repeated, that is, same questions were asked in different ways but answered more or less the same. To recap what was said, a tape recorder was played repeatedly developing a tree structure to follow up on some of the issues that needed to be clarified. Bodily movements such as the nodding of the head, facial and emotional expressions were taken into consideration and were followed up.

Appropriate questions were asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. Different viewpoints of the various participant categories were broken down into themes and categories and were summarised afterwards. Conversations were studied in detail to understand the interactions within the actual context and to draw the conclusions about the population. Sentences, paragraphs and incidents were annotated with an idea, a name or something that represented the phenomenon. The trends and patterns that emerged from the various focus groups were discovered. Data were analysed further and linked in terms of similarities and differences.

After every interview, the researcher sat and jotted down on the field notes his impressions of the interview, and these were developed into the final product. Each page (notebook) was divided into two columns, one (left) for recording the noticeable expressions and other (right) for preliminary interpretations. The researcher ensured that short phrases, opinions or key concepts were written down in the field notes aids to memory, and when reading the data, he cleaned up where data seemed overwhelming and unmanageable. In addition, the researcher listened to the interview tapes (opportunity for the analysis) and read the transcriptions. All data captured and collected were played, studied, analysed and interpreted, as were the notes on non-verbal behaviour. The results were presented as the findings together with the recommendations and conclusions.

4.7.2 The reduction of data

Schreier (2012:7–8) indicates that most methods for qualitative data analysis are concerned with opening up the data, discovering new things about them, bringing them together as in novels. In that way, they even produce data about data. To avoid this, Silverman (2014:116) states that for the reduction of data, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is the most acceptable method as it focuses the analysis only on selected aspects. Using this method, researchers establish categories and then count the number of instances when those categories are used in a particular item of text. However, when the same body of material is examined, QCA requires categories to be precise such that different coders arrive at the same results (Silverman, 2014:116).

O’Leary (2014:307) further states that to reduce data, QCA helps one to examine data line by line. In so doing, it ensures that raw data is systematically interrogated, building up categories of understanding. In this way, rich data are reduced, sorted into various themes and stacked as superficial heaps to be revisited later as the insights grow. Similarly, Schreier (2012:7) highlights that during data analysis, QCA ensures that data are limited to those aspects that are relevant to answering the research question, also that categories are usually at a higher level of abstraction. Subsequent to the above, QCA was adopted in this study, helping to reduce data into small manageable sets of themes.

Data saved into computer files were later on converted to appropriate text units, and written as final narratives. The researcher looked for patterns in the response to each question, comparing and contrasting the findings from the different categories of participants and rationalising the answers. The analysis took the form of a textual analysis where the wording of different questions (open-ended) led to different types of responses and processes and positions in which the participants placed themselves. Unexpected answers stressed the need to listen, thus enabling the researcher gather data to address the aim of the study. Transcripts, field notes, visual data, video recordings and photography were also used to analyse the qualitative data.

4.7.3 Visualising, representing and displaying the data

In line with the use of QCA, Tewksbury (2009:46) indicates that researchers ought to further distinguish their specific approach in terms of qualitative (QCA) and quantitative content analysis. Although the two could work in combination, they vary in terms of the theories, the researcher's interests and the problems being investigated. A quantitative analysis focuses on the counting of words, whilst QCA aims to classify large amounts of text into well-organised categories, which represent similar meanings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278).

In keeping with Schreier (2012:2–3), QCA is applicable to a range of materials, and thus includes interview transcripts, textbooks, company documents, and so forth. In terms of QCA, it does not really matter whether you generalised it in the process of doing your research or whether you sampled material from other sources (Schreier, 2012:2–3). Nonetheless, the method is said to miss syntactical and semantic information embedded in the text and that it is mostly used as a way to count manifest textual elements, particularly in mass communication (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278).

In spite of the above criticism, QCA was deemed to be the most relevant for answering the research questions in this study. Also, the researcher was not interested in numbers but in developing thick descriptions for more insight. In line with this choice, Bryman (2016: 435) maintains that QCA is the most prevalent approach for analysing documents and searching out the underlying themes in the material. Hence, it is the method most recommended for qualitative studies.

On the use of QCA, Thomas (2013:242) states that a conventional approach works with limited theory or literature for the immersion of data, whereas a directed approach supports the existing theory thereby exploring word usage; thus interpreting the context linked to the use of such words or phrases (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279–1285). Finally, a summative approach is a technique for studying a phenomenon of interest, also providing basic insights into the usage of words (Babbie, 2007:11). So, as dictated by the research questions and the aim of the study, both a conventional and a directed approach were adopted in this study. The next section therefore provides a short summary of the concepts covered in this chapter and further introduces the proceeding chapter.

4.8 SUMMARY

In brief, this chapter focused on the methodological aspects of the research and discussed the research paradigm, research approach, research design and theoretical framework. Other methodological aspects discussed were the research methods, the trustworthiness of the research, issues pertaining to ethical considerations for the research, the limitations of the study and the analysis and interpretation of data. The next chapter is focused on the presentation of textual data, that is, data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research design and the methodology of the study was discussed. In this chapter, the researcher packages together what was obtained from the interviews, regarded as the last phase of the spiral (De Vos, Fouche & Schurink, 2011:418). On the same notion, there is no sense in doing research if the findings thereof are not presented (Welman & Kruger, 2013:25). As a result, this chapter presents the findings of the empirical research conducted in the four selected TVETCs in SA.

When it comes to the presentation of research findings, Schreiner (2012:58) states that one can easily get confused and get lost in the data when trying to keep track of everything all at once. So to avoid this, the researcher developed coding frames for the analysis and the presentation of the results. The research data were categorised into the main and the subcategories that emerged from the process of data analysis. In line with Schreiner (2012:61), the main categories specify the relevant aspects of the study whilst the subcategories specify the relevant meanings concerning the particular main category.

Bazeley (2013:101) indicates that data analysis begins with capturing the essential nature of what was being spoken of or observed. This is followed by reading in which one should pay attention to each element that is covered. As a result, prior to identifying the coding frames, the researcher started by building a sense of the whole, that is, reading through transcripts, sets of notes, and other source documents, reminding himself of the bottomlessness and latitude of its content. The coding process led to the emergence of different themes and subcategories. To avoid get lost in the data, however, the research questions guided the process. In addition, the main research aim helped to maintain the focus of the study, namely, to investigate how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes. On the other hand, the emergence of the subcategories was guided by the research objectives, namely:

- To investigate the challenges for the integration of WIL for Business Studies students at TVETCs
- To determine how TVETCs support and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities
- To determine how students perceive the administration of WIL in TVETCs

- To investigate the perceptions of the stakeholders regarding the integration of WIL (i.e. students, employers and SETAs) in terms of the placement and employability of Business Studies students in businesses
- To explore means to improve the integration of WIL for students in Business Studies at TVETCs.

According to Punch (2014:173) qualitative analysis starts with coding, a process of labelling data using tags or names. In so doing, different meanings are attached to the pieces of data (indexing) which are then stored for easy retrieval. Like coding frames, data are labelled on the basis of one's understanding of the passage to ensure the material not covered by the main categories is no longer visible once the process of analysis is done (Bazeley, 2013:125; Schreiner 2012:61–62).

Schreiner (2012:60, 80, 84) reiterates that in QCA, researchers select certain key aspects of the material to focus on and later on identifies what is being said in the material in the source or topic or both. However, in this study, the research questions specify the themes to be used as the main categories during the analysis. As a result, the coding frames were built according to the research topic as guided by the research questions. At first, data was categorised into what was believed to be relevant and what was not. Material that was found to be unclear (doubtful) was first treated as being relevant and reanalysed later. About five themes emerged from the identified keywords, nouns and verbs as used in the research topics, and these are discussed in detail in this chapter.

The five themes that helped to direct the study are as follows:

- The criteria for helping students gain access to WIL opportunities
- The challenges in relation to the integration of WIL
- Students' perceptions regarding the administration of WIL
- The stakeholders' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of WIL
- The means for improving the current WIL models

Firstly the following research question is addressed: How do South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes? Subjects in the different categories were asked lots of questions about this and their responses were compared for similarities and differences. The participant categories included in this study were college campus managers, HODs of Business Studies departments, HODs of Student Support Services, students registered for N6 classes, students who had already completed the N6 classes, representatives of the different SETAs and representatives of the majority employers of students.

When analysing the interview responses, the methodological steps (as discussed in previous chapter) were outlined. The information extracted from the material was supported by quotes taken from the interview transcriptions: campus managers (CM1, 2, 3 and 4), heads of department (HOD1, 2, 3, 4), college lecturers (CL), student support services (SSS1, 2, 3, 4), focus groups of students (N6FG1, 2, 3, 4), students who already completed the N6 (PN6S1, 2, 3, 4), SETA representatives (SETA1, 2, 3, 4) and Majority Employers (EM) of students (EM1, 2, 3, 4). The numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 were used to identify the participants from the different colleges and/or institutions in which data were collected.

5.2 CHALLENGES TO THE INTEGRATION OF WIL – BUSINESS STUDIES STUDENTS

In this category, the findings respond to research objective 1, which was to investigate the challenges for the integration of WIL for students in the Department of Business Studies at TVETCs. To address this objective several questions were asked, which led to the emergence of other subthemes. However, to maintain the focus of the study, the main research question was used: What are the challenges for the current model(s) of WIL for students in Business Studies? This question was posed to the different categories of participants. Some of the responses are as follows:

CL1: *“Much of the WIL opportunities do not cater for students in the Business Studies, as a result, most of them end up in frustration upon the completion of their N6.”*

CM1: *“Our College is surrounded by some industries, so we do not struggle with the placement of students for the WIL programme.”*

EM2: *“The main problem is the mismatch between the college qualifications and the needs of the employers.”*

- HOD4: *“The period of 18 months required for practical experience is affecting the progress of students, they cannot graduate unless they are employed for WIL first.”*
- SETA1: *“Most of the opportunities for WIL (TVETCs) target students registered for the engineering fields rather than those for Business Studies.”*
- SSS3: *“the challenge lies with the number of employers versus the number of students or job seekers.”*

In line with research objective 1, students who had already completed the N6 were asked various questions, including: What challenges have you encountered in finding a suitable workplace for your practical experience? Because this study focused on the employability of such students, the researcher was more interested to obtaining the views of those were struggling to find jobs rather than those who had managed to be placed. Nevertheless, with regard to those already placed, the researcher also needed to know what they did to successfully obtain placement compared to those who did not succeed. A lot was being on this, which may be summed up by the following:

- PN6S1: *“I did not struggle because I already knew someone working in the company and he always updated me about the jobs advertised - and this is how I got in.”*
- PN6S2: *“I simply distributed my CVs to different companies volunteering to work for free and I was called for the interview on a temporary post.”*
- PN6S3: *“I am the first person to go to school, so, I did not have any job connections, hence still staying at home, hopefully I will help to connect my family in the future.”*
- PN6S4: *“Just like others, I distributed my CVs everywhere, but was neither called for interviews nor to start working.”*

Still on research objective 1, a question directed to some of the line managers was: What challenges did you come across when assisting students to find jobs for their practical experience? Among others, the following were mentioned:

- CL: *“I do not want to lie, lecturers are neither involved in the administration of WIL nor its assessments, our task ends with teaching.”*

- CM3: *“I don’t think the college programmes are still relevant in terms of the needs of the employers, more especially those offered in the Business Studies.”*
- EM3: *“We do appoint students every two years, but most of the programmes offered in the Business Studies are not relevant to our industries.”*
- HOD2: *“It seems our qualifications are not responsive to the needs of the majority employers; hence our students struggle to find jobs.”*
- SETA2: *“The placements for students from the Business Studies is very challenging, most companies are looking for students with practical skills such as hospitality, artisans, etc.”*
- SSS4: *“We try our best to assist students, but only those with good results are likely to succeed, the higher the marks the more chances of being employed.”*

Looking at the responses above, a number of factors are identified as being likely to increase employment for students (Business Studies). This includes the locality of the colleges in terms of their closeness to workplaces (CM1), as well as concerns about employment being linked to whom one knows in the companies (PN6S3). Also the fact that the number of students searching for jobs is higher the available jobs opportunity (SSS3).

5.3 MEANS FOR HELPING STUDENTS GAIN ACCESS TO WIL OPPORTUNITIES

The results in this section were guided by the research objective 2, namely, to determine the criteria TVET colleges use to assist students gain access to workplace learning opportunities. Subsequent to this objective is the research question: how do colleges assist students in completing their WIL curricula? For better understanding, this question was posed in different ways to the different categories of participants. The following provide a good indication of the responses received:

- HOD3: *“As soon as students complete the N6, we arranged them a workshop for job hunting skills and thus it”*
- PN6S1: *“The College asked me to submit my CV and promised to call, to date, I am still waiting for their call”*
- PN6S2: *“Since I submitted my CV the Colleges do not even bother to find out if I finally got a job, all they expect is for me to return the log book for the graduations”*

SETA3: *“Our neighbouring colleges submit some CVs every semester and we assist them getting such students placed, though only the best performing gets assisted with placement”*

SSS4: *“When students complete their N6, we keep their CVS for job searching, and as soon as we find jobs, we contact them for the interviews with the employers.”*

Extending the above question, a related question was asked of different groups of students (focus groups) who were registered for their last semester (N6) prior the commencement of the WIL: What efforts have you taken to ensure you are placed for WIL curricula on time? The question was aimed to determine their preparedness and understanding of the demands of WIL and how this could affect them academically. Among others, students indicated:

N6FG1: *“Our focus now is to pass the N6, but as to what happens afterwards, will see when we get there”*

N6FG2: *“We are really clueless about such, our lecturers concentrate on their subjects and there is no one to induct us on WIL curricula”*

N6FG3: *“The only effort is to know someone in Gauteng, take a taxi and the job will follow when you are already there, but as for our province, there is not hopes for jobs”*

N6FG4: *“There are some workshops running in the campus, though I had it’s for students registered for the NCV qualifications”*

Subsequent to the above questions, a question was directed to those students who had completed the N6 but were struggling to find placements for the practical experience: Who do you think could be blamed for your lack of placement and why? Several responses were given, including the following:

PN6S1: *“Colleges are to be blamed for offering courses that are irresponsive to the labour market”*

PN6S2: *“If colleges are not going to be accountable for the employability of students, they should be stopped from registering students”*

PN6S3: *“I do not understand why WIL is being left out as the responsibility for students (placements), is this not a college module just like others?”*

PN6S4: *“We can blame the state and the colleges for delaying to respond to the challenges facing students in the colleges, something needs to be done”.*

Still on the students who struggled to get placements, a further question was asked: How does the lack of placement affect you academically? Here are some of the answers:

- PN6S1: *“Without a diploma, one cannot register for other postgraduate qualifications with the universities”*
- PN6S2: *“As long as I am not working, it means I will not be able to graduate for my Diploma, and this could disadvantage me worse as many job advertisements require for a full qualification”*
- PN6S3: *“The competition for jobs is turf, we students with N6 (Business Studies) are unlikely to find jobs as compared to those with National Diplomas and above”*
- PN6S4: *“I managed to finish all my theory modules in a record time, but due to the lack of placement, I am now stuck and cannot even graduate”.*

A question directed to the students who had been successfully placed on the completion of their N6 asked: How relevant and beneficial is the experience for the qualification for which you are registered at the college? In asking this question, the researcher was interested to know the relevance of what was done in class (theory) for their WIL experiences. A number of responses were given, including the following:

- PN6S4: *“I am here just to complete the 18 months, but as for learning, what I am doing is different from the course”*
- PN6S4: *“I have registered for management assistant but now working as a cashier”*
- PN6S4: *“The duties delegated to me are neither relevant to my qualification nor beneficial at all, this has nothing to do with my career path”*
- PN6S4: *“I am doing what is relevant to my career path, public admin is my field and so is my job”.*

Research objective 2 sought to determine the criteria TVET colleges use to assist students gain access to the workplace learning opportunities. Most of the participants in the different categories insinuated that little is done to prepare and support students for the world of work. One workshop and the mere submission of a CV is not sufficient to assist students with their employability.

5.4 STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF WIL

Connected to research objective 2 (criterion for assisting students), the researcher further wanted to know the students' perceptions regarding the manner in which WIL is being administrated; this also pertains to research objective 3. To obtain various opinions, different questions were posed to the different categories of students. Among others, it was asked: What are your feelings about the compulsory period of 18 months for WIL in the workplace? Although some of the responses comprise long answers (paragraphs), the following tend to encapsulate the responses given:

- N6FG1: *“This could be more effective if jobs were available for all students completing N6”*
- N6FG2: *“I think is good for other careers apart from the Business Studies, most of the programmes are so irrelevant to the needs of the labour market”*
- N6FG3: *“WIL seems to be achieving the opposite results, instead of increasing the employability, it now increases the un-employability of students due to lack of placements”*
- PN6S1: *“The idea of WIL looks very good, but it is not doable with the current TVET curriculum”*
- PN6S2: *“No matter how good WIL could be, gaining access to the 18 months of practice is the current monster for every student”*
- PN6S3: *“The 18 months' period cannot be considered good if not achievable for the majority students, yet good administration could lead to good outcomes”.*

Looking on the responses above, it would seem that the majority of students agree on the need for WIL but worried about its outcomes when poorly administrated. They voiced the concern that no matter how good the WIL, its success could only be measured by its outcomes, which is increasing the employability of the students.

5.5 STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WIL

Research objective 4 is very similar the research objective 3 (students' perceptions), except that objective 4 excludes students, focusing instead on the perceptions of other participants from different categories, also known as college stakeholders. The participants included here are CMs, HODs, SETAs, EMs, and CLs. The researcher was interested to know their opinions regarding the effectiveness of WIL in terms of

the placement and employability of students from the Business Studies department. These participants were asked several questions including: What are your views on the way WIL is being administrated in the college? Among others, the following responses were obtained:

- CL: *“The exclusion of lecturers in the WIL curricula is a big blunder, the DHET needs review this matter to increase the participation of the academics in the whole teaching process”*
- CM1: *“Most of our students are quick to complete the theory, but as for finding job opportunities for WIL, they really struggle”*
- CM2: *“there is nothing wrong with the administration of WIL but the scarcity of jobs in our country”*
- EM2: *“We do have a lot of jobs, but we need people with innovations to help solve some of our challenges, students from Business Studies are merely administrators”*
- HOD2: *“students in the Business Studies cannot compete for jobs with those in the Engineering wherein the demand for artisans is always high”*
- SETA2: *“We have students in our database but most of the employers only targets for those from the Engineering departments – artisans”*
- SSS4: *“I think the economy of our country is just too bad, there is no employment for everyone”.*

Still on the perceptions of the stakeholders, a question was asked to obtain their views on the impact of the adopted models on the effective integration of WIL: How responsive are the models of WIL in developing students’ capabilities and employability skills? Different views were obtained from the various participants:

- CL4: *“Since we are being excluded from the WIL curricula, my concern goes for students (completed N6) who gets so frustrated due to the lack of placements and jobs”*
- CM4: *“No matter how good the WIL models, our country is struggling economically, there are only few jobs available and this create more frustrations for students”*
- EM1: *“I do not think the problem is with the models, but the relevance of the qualifications offered, they seem to be outdated and there is no demand for such”*
- HOD2: *“I think we are producing students with qualifications for the industries that do not exist”*

SETA3: *“the models are correct, but the lack of partnerships with other stakeholders is the reason students are struggling to find placements”.*

Still on the perceptions of the stakeholders, a further question was asked: What impact could the current WIL models have on students? With this question, the researcher needed to raise their awareness of how students could be suffering when continuing to work on models that do not help to achieve the expected outcomes. Among other responses, it was indicated:

CL: *“The majority of the students who completed the N6, are seen lingering in the complexes and they express how they regret having registered with the colleges, no jobs for them”*

CM1: *“It’s sad that when the students fail to get placed, some of them end up quitting their studies, and this escalate on the school dropouts”*

EM3: *“Most of the students we hired were very clueless about what is happening in the workplace, it takes much time to get them familiarised to the operational issues”*

HOD2: *“No matter how genius students are, when they are stuck with education, they consider other alternatives, a means to survive”*

SETA2: *“The number of students getting placements seems to be far lower than those struggling for placements and this means a lot”*

SSS2: *“The period of 18 months required for WIL is not helping students, the education department should rethink on this”.*

With regard to addressing research objective 4, the majority of the stakeholders maintained that there are serious challenges about the current models adopted for WIL (TVETCs in SA). There are those who blame it on the lack of proper administration of WIL, while others blame it on the poor economy of the country, more especially the lack of positions for placing students.

5.6 MEANS TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT WIL MODELS

The last research objective (5) was to investigate means to improve the responsiveness of WIL for students in Business Studies. Several questions were posed to the different categories of participants, including:

What could be done to improve the responsiveness of WIL curricula for students in Business Studies?
Many responses given to this question, including the following :

- CL2: *““The period of 18 months for WIL could be reduced to allow employers to provide service to the majority students”*
- CM1: *“Industries should employ learners with Grade 12, train them and issue them with the certificates for WIL to be admitted in the colleges and the universities”*
- HOD4: *“I think we need to do some benchmarks with the other colleges internationally and see what models are working best for them and then we could work to adopt them”*
- N6FG1: *“College managers should start considering offering WIL in the form of excursions and this could solve the problem of lack of placement”*
- PN6S3: *“If will is a compulsory module, then the colleges must take the responsibility to place all the students at the right time”*
- SETA2: *“There is a need for more funding to support small business especially those helping students to be engaged on the WIL curricula, i.e. internships”.*

In addressing research objective 5, little was said on the means to improve the responsiveness of WIL, although most participants emphasised the need to investigate other models for the integration of WIL, including international benchmarks to improve the current model(s) that have been adopted.

5.7 SUMMARY

As Silverman (2011:85) states, content analysis produces a relatively systematic and comprehensive overview of the data set as a whole. Having adopted content analysis, the complexity of the coding frames was dependent on the attempt to answer to the research questions. Subsequently, the research objectives assisted in directing and guiding the study. To be concise, research objective 1 investigated the challenges experienced in integrating WIL for students in the Business Studies (TVETCs). Responses linked to this objective pointed to the poor state of the economy of the country, which does not support the current WIL model(s), leading to a lack of placements and jobs for students.

Research objective 2 investigated the criteria TVETCs use to assist students to gain access to workplace learning opportunities. Responses to this objective imply that not enough is done to prepare and support students in the integration of the WIL curricula. Also of concern is that opportunities for WIL were largely meant for students registered for the NCV programmes with the exclusion of those registered for the NATED programmes, Business Studies in particular. Moving to research objective 3, the researcher investigated the perceptions of students regarding the administration of WIL (TVETCs). In response, the majority of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with such things as the lack of preparation and support for WIL (i.e. placements and follow ups), the criteria for placement, among many others.

Research objective 4 assisted to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders as regards the effectiveness of WIL in terms of the placement and employability of students in Business Studies. In this regard, the majority of participants emphasised that the current WIL model(s) adopted are not effective and produces opposite results to those intended, that is, bring more stress for the students rather than making them more employable. Lastly, research objective 5 investigated the means to improve the responsiveness of WIL for students in Business Studies. In line with this objective, most of the participants emphasised on the need to investigate other models for the integration of WIL, also to consider the international benchmarks to improve on the adopted model(s).

Schreiner (2012:60, 63) indicates that the themes and subcategories specify what is said about the aspects that are of interest to the researcher. So, in this study, the analysis process led to the emergence of various themes and subcategories which were discussed in detail in the proceeding chapter, namely:

- The models for the integration of WIL for students in Business Studies
- Challenges linked to the effective integration of WIL curricula
- Students' perceptions regarding the administration of WIL
- The perceptions of the stakeholders regarding the employability of students
- Means for improving the WIL curricula

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher writes a report in which the analysed data are interpreted. In line with this, De Vos et al. (2011:418) enlightens that the writing process is an integral part of understanding the *story* as the researcher engages in the interpretive act, thus shaping the raw data. Also that researchers conduct research to clarify the way in which data and concepts fit together, the report (written) remains the mode for conveying the results. Consequently, this chapter is derived from chapter 5, which reported on the analysis and interpretation of data from the interviews. The results of this study are based on information extracted from the various sources from which data were collected.

Bazeley (2013:101, 120) indicates that following data analysis, one continually updates the notes on the issues raised and recorded, writing also about the things *learnt*, and the *ideas stimulated*. In the same way, the researcher reports on the main findings, draws conclusions and makes certain recommendations, given the proposed model for the integration of WIL, particularly for students in Business Studies (TVETCs). In presenting this report, the researcher does not imply that the current model(s) adopted for WIL (TVETCs) are not effective, but rather presents an alternative model, primarily for those colleges where the current adopted model is not viable. The proposed model could help to address the challenges caused by the lack of development of students' capabilities and employability.

As already mentioned, participant categories included: campus managers, HODs (both Business Studies and Student Support Services), college lecturers, students registered for the N6, students who had already completed the N6, SETA representatives and representatives of student employers. These were given certain codes which appear in Annexure A.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

This study endeavoured to answer the main research question: How do South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes? A brief overview of the chapter division was outlined in section 1.13 and is given in more detail here: In **chapter one**, the researcher introduced the problem

statement, the background to the study, the research motivation, the research aims and objectives, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the conceptual analysis, the methodological account and the delimitation of the study.

In a nutshell, the background refers the challenges facing students (TVETCs) in line with the integration of the WIL curricula. Such challenges have led to graduation being delayed and some students not completing their qualifications. The main emphasis of this study was on students pursuing careers in the Business Studies department (section 1.2). The study was motivated by the fact that the researcher had worked in one of the TVETCs (SA) as a lecturer and first experienced such challenges when the college management explained how they struggled to place students for the WIL curricula (Business Studies). This led to many students staying home for years without being placed or employed, and consequently, they were unable to graduate (section 1.4).

Still in **chapter one**, the research aim and objectives were used to direct the study (section 1.6). Subsequent to these objectives, the research questions helped to guide the study in terms of data collection (and analysis), as well as in the development of the proposed model for the integration of the WIL curricula. The section on the significance of the study (section 1.10) shows how the study intended to address the lack of responsiveness displayed by the WIL models for both TVETCs in SA and around the globe. The conceptual analysis (section 1.11) was used to determine what was relevant to the field of study and what was not.

The methodological account in section 1.7 helped to describe and justify the methods used to obtain data. The delimitation of the field of study was done using an analysis of the most important concepts, a demarcation of the scope of the study and by setting a programme for study (section 1.8.2). The limitations of the study (section 1.8) included the fact that TVET policy on WIL is silent on the use of other models (or modalities) for the integration of WIL, with the emphasis being on WPL only. Finally, the ethical considerations (section 1.10) were reflected as the principles for conducting research. Adherence to these principles enabled participants to divulge important information without the fear of exposure.

In **chapter two**, the literature in respect of the various models, namely, WPL, WBL, PBL, PJBL and WDTL, for the integration of WIL was reviewed. These models are so broad that each of them has diverse

modalities and from these HEIs have to decide which one works best for their specific programmes. For the purpose of a clear understanding, the chapter began by elucidating the concept of WIL, adding the benefits of WIL for the college stakeholders (section 2.2). In line with the origin of the WIL curricula, the following concepts were explained: VET, TVE, and TVET (section 2.2), all forming part of the integration of the WIL curricula.

Chapter three was presented as a continuation of chapter two, furthering the review of literature but focusing on the challenges for the effective integration of WIL. A number of factors were addressed including the authenticity of WIL programmes, the mismatch between graduate attributes and employers' needs, the dynamics linked to students' lack of capabilities such as the impact of transitions from the college to the workplace, the lack of leadership qualities among college managers, and the impact of the lack of partnerships and collaborations on the quality of TVET curricula.

Chapter four basically focused on the research methodology, involving the research paradigms, approach and design and the theoretical frameworks. The section on research methods covered the research population and sampling, data collection methods, and the literature on methods for collecting data. Other discussions include the trustworthiness of the research, which entailed concepts such as the credibility of the research, applicability (transferability and generalisability), authenticity, conformability and dependability. And lastly, ethical considerations were discussed, including the avoidance of harm, informed consent and plagiarism.

Chapter five focused on the findings and the results of the interviews conducted. In this chapter the interview results were analysed and interpreted. The analysis of the materials and the data gathered from participants led to the formulation of the findings. Documents used for the analysis included the WIL policies and the log books used during the practical experience (WIL). Finally, in **chapter six**, the researcher presents the findings and the results of the analysis. This entails a summary of the research, as well as the conclusion and the recommendations. This chapter includes a discussion on the proposed model for the effective integration of WIL, as well as suggestions for future research regarding the integration of the WIL curricula.

To sum up then, chapter one introduced the study, the problem statement and the motivation for the study; chapter two presented a review of the literature on the modalities for the integration of WIL; chapter three presented a review of literature on the challenges associated with the integration of WIL; chapter four covered theoretical background pertaining to the investigation; chapter five presented an analysis and interpretation of that data, and lastly, chapter six presents the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study. The next section therefore discusses the main research findings, subsequent to the discussion on the themes and the subcategories that emerged during the analysis of data.

6.3 MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

The researcher assumed that students registered for the Business Studies programmes (NATED programmes) at South African TVETCs could be affected by the WPL model adopted for the integration of the WIL curricula. Supported by the literature on theoretical frameworks (section 1.7.4), an assumption was made and elaborated in chapter one, that is, the problem statement (section 1.3), the background (section 1.2) and the motivation of the study (section 1.4). In an attempt to address this assumption, the main objective helped to maintain the focus of the study, that is, how South African TVETCs integrate WIL curricula in their Business Studies programmes. The main research question that was addressed was: How do South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes? Both the interview responses and the literature were used to explore the various WIL models. Answering this question led to the emergence of five themes which were discussed in more detail, namely:

- Models for the integration of WIL for students in Business Studies
- Challenges linked to the effective integration of WIL curricula
- Students' perceptions regarding the administration of WIL
- The perceptions of the stakeholders regarding the employability of students
- The means for improving the WIL curricula

6.3.1 Models for the integration of WIL for students in Business Studies

In this section, the researcher examines the way TVETCs support and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities. Various responses were obtained, both

empirically and from the review of the literature. Empirically, it was stated: “*We are now completing N6, but there was never a day when told of what happens after the N6, we only heard about log books to be issued after passing the N6*” (N6FG1). Still on this, one of the participants mentioned, “*We wait for students to complete the N6 first, then we start issuing the log books to be used during their practical experience, and that’s all*” (CM1).

According to the TVET Policy on WIL, all students registered for NATED programmes are expected to spend eighteen months (2000 hours) doing WIL in the workplace prior to graduation (DHET, 2011a:11). The literature review revealed that when WIL is conducted in this manner, the model used is WPL (section 2.4.1). In addition, various other models (i.e. WBL, PBL, PJBL and WDTL) are used which also have various approaches embedded in them (sections 2.4.1–2.4.8). For example (see section 2.4) internships, learnerships, community engagement, apprenticeships, action learning, cooperative education, experiential learning, practicum placements or customised accredited workplace learning, service-learning, and virtual or simulated learning (Abdullah & Mtsweni 2013:8, Aiken & Byrom, 2014:272).

Although this study did not aim to compare the NCV and the NATED programmes in regard to WIL, it was empirically found that WBL (campus based) was used for students registered for the NCV programmes and that the outcome was good, helping students to become involved in the WIL curricula without delay. In comparison to the WBL model, the WPL (NATED programmes) relies on certain criteria for selecting best performing students. Most notably, the literature revealed most of the HEIs relied on any of the five models mentioned, using different approaches for different programme specialities (sections 2.4.1–2.4.8.5).

As pointed out by the literature, WIL is perceived to be a means for solving the problems inherent in a struggling economy thereby empowering students to personalise their learning (Blom, 2016:14). So, each HEI needs to choose a specific WIL model in line with programme specifications. Briefly, the WPL model differs from the other models in that it requires students to be physically located in the workplace, whereas others do not have such conditions (CHE, 2011:17). The literature points out that other models of WIL have one thing in common, an assumption that workplace experience contributes to the development of students’ capabilities and employability. Also that students need to be involved in highly authentic simulated environments and to be under supervision.

Still on the differences between the WPL and other models of WIL, literature revealed that the biggest challenge for WPL is the limited job opportunities in relation to the number of students who require placement (Holtzhausen, 2008:228). Further, WPL reliance on 18 months (2000 hours) of practice has been empirically criticised. Nevertheless, it was found that models such as the WBL (as adopted for NCV programmes) helped students gain work experience, one of the objectives of WIL. WBL also helped to engage students in complex work-related issues thereby developing employability skills (CHE, 2011:11; Chisholm et al., 2009:325; Smith & Worsfold, 2014:1071).

Furthermore, it was empirically found that the use of the WBL model was ineffective in some colleges owing to the lack of equipment in workshops. Moreover, the educational value of WBL is well documented, but is lacking in the implementation (Blom, 2016:14). In line with this, it was indicated that to make WBL more effective, its documents should be studied and be applied in the NATED programmes. In so doing, the challenge of the lack of involvement of the students in the NATED programmes could be resolved.

6.3.2 Challenges linked to the effective integration of WIL curricula

In attempting to address the research question: what are the challenges for the integration of WIL for Business Studies students at TVETCs? the results (from the interviews and the literature) led to the emergence of eight subthemes. These were subsequently discussed, namely, the lack of responsive TVET curricula; the lack of involvement of academics in WIL activities, the competition for jobs between TVET and university students; the lack of funding to promote the WIL curricula; the lack of synergistic relationship between colleges and stakeholders, the lack of proper induction and preparation for students, and lastly, unemployment, the major economic factor.

6.3.2.1 Lack of responsive TVET curricula

In line with concerns relating to the lack of job opportunities for the involvement of students in the WIL curricula, several factors were identified. Among others, it was empirically found that *most of the jobs available require students with practical skills rather than the theory, theory being that mostly taught in*

Business Studies. Correspondently, the literature shows that when skills that are in demand are available, jobs are inevitably created (Motala & Vally, 2014:8). Generally, literature blames this on the mismatch between college curricula and employers' needs (DHET, 2013:1). TVETCs were blamed for teaching aspects that are irrelevant to the demands of the economy, and failing to supply the skills required for firm productivity and for economic growth (Klees, 2014:vii). One of the student employers expressed this as follows: “*We need people for the maintenance of equipment, bringing new technologies and the innovation, and not just a mere supply of administrators*” (EM2).

6.3.2.2 Lack of involvement of academics in WIL activities

Along with the criticism of the lack of quality in TVET programmes is the fact that academics are excluded from actively participating in the WIL activities. This was empirically indicated, “*Our lecturers teach what is in the textbooks as they have limited experience with the workplace; for the worse, lecturers were never exposed to any of the WIL activities at all*” (CM3). In line with this, the literature points out that programme design neglects the context in which academics teach, as most lack industry exposure, and to make matters worse, they were not involved in research activities for upgrading their subject expertise (Duncan, 2018:67; Powell, 2016:4).

6.3.2.3 Competition for jobs between TVET and the university students

One of the factors identified regarding the employability of students was the competition for jobs between TVET students and university students. Among others, it was empirically stated, “*College students attend classes for only eighteen months and expect getting some well-paying jobs, hence we prioritise on the varsity students first, these are expected to be more disciplined and ready for work*” (EM1). Similarly, the literature blames a lack of employment on the competition between college and varsity students (Buthelezi, 2018:14). In addition, students of Business Studies (TVETC) are perceived to have qualifications irrelevant for the needs of employers (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:329).

6.3.2.4 Lack of funding to promote the WIL curricula.

Still on the challenges for the integration of WIL, lack of funding would also appear to be a problem. One of participants mentioned, *“The budget does not allow us to involve lecturers in the WIL, let alone the issues of their workload; they cannot be in the class and also be in the workplace”* (CM3). One of the participants had this to say: *“the management does not expect us to be involved in the WIL activities at all, they say that it is not in our job descriptions”* (CL1). Relevant to this, the also literature maintains that the lack of funding and resources required to promote WIL is likely to affect the quality of the programmes, which in turn affect the employability of students (Ferns et al., 2017:37).

6.3.2.5 Lack of synergistic relationships between colleges and the stakeholders

Regarding the challenges that exist for the integration of WIL, the lack of partnerships between the colleges and the stakeholders was identified as one of the main factors. It was empirically indicated, *“Our College is very far from the workplaces, so, if struggling to access the ATMs, Internet café, etc., how then could we expect to find jobs in this village”* (PN6S3). On the same viewpoint, literature revealed there has been a lack of shared understanding between colleges and employers regarding the purpose, nature and objectives of WIL, hence, organisations struggle to locate suitable skilled students to attend the workplace at the time required by their business cycles (Ferns et al., 2017:37).

6.3.2.6 The impact of the developing areas in contrast to WIL

The researcher assumed that WIL for the TVETCs in the rural areas could be more constraining than those in the urban areas. In line with this, one participant indicated: *“Unless the government brings some businesses into the villages, we are left with no choice but migrating to stay in the township with easy access to jobs and other resources, this is what our forefathers did”* (PN6S2). Another participant was of the opinion, *“the government treats homelands people as if they do not pay tax, how could we expect development in our villages if still struggling for some basic services such as water and road”* (CM1). In support of this, the literature shows that about 60 per cent of TVET **partnerships** are located in the major **urban centres** (Akoojee et al., 2008:257). Furthermore, young people in the rural areas are the most affected by unemployment (Yates, 2011:1681).

6.3.2.7 Lack of proper induction and preparation for students

It was empirically found that one of the causative factors of the lack of responsiveness of the WIL has to do with the lack of proper induction for students. In one of the groups a participant stated: *“We are now in N6, yet there was never a meeting as to what happens after the N6, all we heard is that there are some log books to be issued for the workplace experience”* (N6FG2). In line with this, the literature reveals there is a lack of awareness among students (TVETCs) regarding the demands of the WIL curricula (Ferns et al., 2017:37); also that about 80 per cent of students completing their studies in the TVETCs struggle to find jobs, and a large number of these come from the Business Studies (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:329).

6.3.2.8 Unemployment, one of the major economic factors

In terms of the empirical findings, the lack of employment for students could also be blamed on the economic factors. It was stated, *“Yes we can blame colleges for the lack of employment for students, but what about the unemployed students from the universities?”* (CM4). Another expressed his view as follows: *“Our parliament is dominant of people without tertiary qualifications, so what could we expect from such leadership?”* (HOD3). On the other hand, literature continues to put the blame on the lack of quality in the curriculum, that is, the mismatch between the college and the employers’ needs (Buthelezi, 2018:14; Powell 2016:3). Other factors include the decline of jobs in the private sector (SA), including the fact that there will never be enough employment for every qualified student (Engelbrecht et al., 2017:332; Powell, 2016:3).

6.3.3 Students’ perceptions of the administration of WIL

In line with the opinions of students regarding the administration of WIL, many issues came to light, including, *“Why do colleges make it our responsibility to find jobs, I did not register for job hunting skills but a qualification leading to the available jobs?”* (PN6S1). Relevant to this, the literature revealed most students (TVETCs) could not participate in WIL due to a lack of placement and that some of those who did participate did so in unrelated organisations. Other factors include the lack of supervision for students, inadequate funding and the non-payment of stipends to students involved in WIL (Okwelle & Ojotule, 2018:7). As one participant indicated: *“I completed the N6 in 2016, worked in different places, of which*

some were relevant and others not, so, the total hours all the relevant experience does not make up to the 2000 hours required” (PN6S2).

6.3.4 Perceptions of stakeholders regarding the employability of students

In response to the concern for the employability of the college students, different stakeholders gave different opinions including: *“In the same way as the universities select best students from Grade 12, we also select the best students from the N6” (EM3).* Equally, the other participants stated, *“Some of these students have good marks but failing to express themselves during the interviews” (SSS4).* Relevant to this, literature revealed that the factors contributing to the lack of employment for students include, among others, the demand for credentials, skills profile, and talented individuals with social identity (Brown et al., 2003:111; Tran, 2015:210). One of the participants indicated, *“The reason we put employment prior the graduations is that, we need our students to demonstrate the job hunting skills, thus part of our curriculum” (CM3).*

6.3.4.1 Lack of quality in TVET programmes

In line with the employability of students (TVETCs) some criticism was voiced on the lack of quality in the college programmes. Relevant to this, one participant stated, *“The developers of the TVET curriculum seems to lack some expertise, no wonder they expect a student with a Grade 12 (i.e. bachelor) to register for the NCV Programmes, of which level two (initial) is equivalent to Grade 10” (CL3).* In terms of the literature, most of the assessments done in TVETCs are merely based on traditional practices and fail to test for critical thinking, creativity and reflection. In addition, such factors originate from the competition between the various stakeholders of WIL (i.e. the college, the community and the labour market), dictating the design of the curriculum (TVETCs) (Alagaraja et al., 2014:274).

6.3.4.2 Impact of the state on the autonomy of the colleges

The criticism on the lack of quality (TVETCs) did not leave out the responsibility of the state and the role it should play in this. One of the participant stated, *“No matter how much we try to transform the colleges, the government policies dictate what should happen in our institutions and so, not much could be done”*

(HOD2). Relevant to this, the literature revealed that SA is good at introducing policies (especially in education), but does so without considering the after effects, hence the long-term consequences (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007:5). In addition, universities traditionally exercised autonomy in the design of the curriculum and assessment criteria, but the TVETCs today do not have such autonomy even after being decentralised, now forming part of the Department of Higher Education and Training.

6.3.4.3 Lack of credentials for the managers to improve the colleges

In terms of the findings, college managers were blamed for their lack of credentials, and for lacking the expertise required to develop a responsive curriculum. In line with this, one participant opined: *“Most of our senior managers do not have the credentials to lead, imagine a college principal with a national diploma?”* (HOD1). This was confirmed by the literature which states that good leaders know how to motivate their followers to become more productive; they do not just talk but also act resulting in their followers imitating their good practices. In addition, they (leaders) inspire their followers to work together towards a collective goal, articulating their belief in them and demonstrating concern for them (Arthur & Hardy, 2014:39). A participant indicated, *“The unqualified politicians in the government perpetuates the appointment of unqualified individuals with neither a vision nor credentials to lead and manage”* (CL3).

6.3.4.4 Lack of partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders

The researcher assumed the lack of effectiveness of the WIL curricula may be the result of a lack of partnerships between the colleges and their stakeholders, more especially the majority employers of students. In line with this assumptions, one of participants indicated: *“Colleges isolate themselves, not even to come closer, checking if we could mitigate on their challenges, all we see are their students”* (EM2). The literature similarly shows that close relationships with employers means a curriculum that better reflects work practices and that partnerships and collaborations could change TVETCs into comprehensive colleges that are creative, responsive and anticipatory (Jeffries & Milne 2014:566). In support of this, another participant stated: *“Our College is strategically positioned, we are surrounded by a number of business partners who continually receive some of our students for their practical experience, so, we are just fine”* (CM1).

6.3.4.5 Dynamics linked to students' lack of capabilities

In line with the lack of development of students' capabilities, a number of factors were identified. Among others, as one participant stated, "*we deliberately put WIL (business experience) prior the graduations, because students ought to demonstrate job hunting skills before the awarding of their qualifications*" (CM4). Literature point to factors such as individuals' characteristics, the programme and the workplace characteristics. In addition, the impact of transitions from tertiary education to the workplace environment (Jackson, 2016:200). Other factors include the fact that SA has experienced a sharp decline in the large enterprise and those enterprises that remain demand high-level technical skills. In so doing, more demands are placed on the students in competing for available jobs (Lean, 2012:532).

6.3.5 Means for the improvement of the WIL curricula

In an attempt to get the opinions of different stakeholders on the means for improving the WIL curricula, little was said from an empirical perspective, yet the literature pointed to a number of factors. One of the participants indicated, "*I have no idea about the improvements, but colleges need to take a full responsibility to ensure all registered students are involved in the WIL, or else they should reconsider redesigning their curriculum*" (PN6S1). The literature suggests that TVETCs could develop a database of work placement opportunities for students to seek out their own placements. Alternatively, forms of on-the-job training could be expanded, particularly for the non-artisan fields. But mostly importantly, the entrepreneurial skills required for students to become self-employed should be promoted (Brown & Lyons 2003:60; Jones, 2010:510).

Other factors for improvement include a need for curriculum reform, thus a shift in curriculum policy with increased responsiveness and accountability. Additionally, the active involvement of the academics who should fully understand the working environment as well as the employers' expectations should not be neglected (Ellen & Pilling, 2002:31). Moreover, the role of the state must be clearly redefined for colleges which should adapt their training to local needs and be able to hire managers with good credentials (Adams & Johanson, 2004:79). Further, support for students transitioning from college to work requires a concerted efforts from various WIL stakeholders during their WIL programme (Tran, 2015:207). And

lastly, career counselling should be made an integral component of courses to address such challenges (Yeadon, 2010:44).

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the criticism that has been voiced on the quality of the TVETCs, the researcher recommends it that the NATED programmes (Business Studies) be restructured into a three-year, campus-based qualification) that includes a compulsory WIL programme. The restructuring could be done under the auspices of the nearby universities. In so doing, students would be helped obtain some credits (completed modules) should they decide to continue their studies with the universities. Depending on the programme specifications, WIL could be offered in any of the three phases, see a newly proposed model in one of the proceeding sections (section 6.5).

Should the TVETCs decide to continue with the model (WPL) that is currently adopted, suggestions for improvements have been made in one of the sections above (section 6.3.5). Among others is the need for the workshops do be conducted prior to the placement of students. This could help clarify employers' expectations of the students (i.e. working hours, dress code, attitude, interview skills and business practices). In addition, information regarding available WIL opportunities could be displayed on notice boards together with the online resources available in computer rooms (Engelbrecht, 2003:140; Worsley, 2003:70). This is in line with Geall et al. (1998:10) who state that for students to be adequately prepared, WIL should be conducted as *pre-placement*, *during-placement* and *post-placement*.

The need for the *induction* and *preparation* of students prior placement (pre-placement) was emphasised, as was the fact that workplace supervisors need clear guidelines regarding the assessment of students in WIL programmes (Smith, 2011:1). Other factors include the involvement of academics, which could help them improve from relying on the traditional methods of assessments (Peach & Susilawati, 2012:15). It was also suggested that at the end of the term (WIL) students should return to their campuses to participate in reflection sessions (Frontczak, 1998:25). In so doing, students should be able to reflect on their mistakes, working on rectify them for the better practice in the future (Jackson, 2016:203).

On the means for the improvement of WIL, it was emphasised that TVETC stakeholders should understand which aspects of the WIL models contribute to the development of students' generic skills. Moreover, to achieve this, college managers need to study the history, traditions and philosophy of VET programmes. In so doing, TVET curricula could be broadened to become more integrative and responsive to the needs of employers. Another important point is the need for the mentorship and the supervision by both the academics and the workplace supervisors (Dalrymple et al., 2014:76; HRDC, 2014; Powell, 2016a:3).

Furthermore, it was emphasised that TVETC management should visit various employers prior to the placement of students to ensure or confirm their fitness for practice, at the same time giving employers certain guidelines for their involvement (Abdullah & Mtsweni, 2013:7). It is thus expected that each college should have one functional and sustainable industry partnership to enhance the WIL curricula. To achieve that, senior managers (TVETCs) need to continuously assess as to where mutual value is not being explored and where only one-way relationships exist with the employer. In so doing, TVETCs will be able to respond to rapid changes which are likely to affect education (DHET, 2013:17; Jeffries & Milne, 2014:566).

6.5 PROPOSED MODELS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WIL

After having studied the various models and modalities (section 2.4), the researcher found that there are just two models suited to the integration of WIL, namely, the WBL and the WPL. Apart for these two, all others exist purely as modalities (approaches) embedded within either the WBL or the WPL. Furthermore, these two differ in that the WBL model has various modalities, some of which permit students to complete the WIL programme without being physically involved in the real workplace. The diagram below (figure 3) shows the three models of WIL, of which the third (Community Intersectoral Projects) is the one proposed by this study.

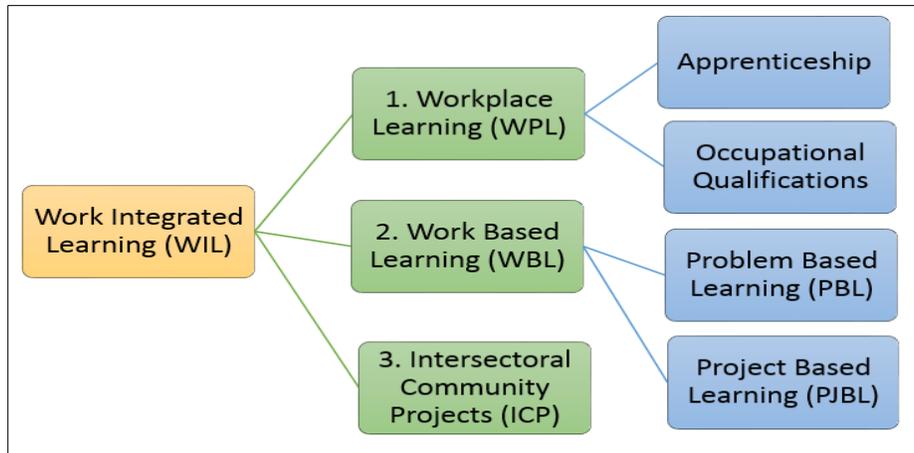


Figure 6.1: The three models of WIL

As opposed to the WBL, the WPL model dictates that students should be physically located in the workplace in order for them to complete the WIL programme. However, students in general are not compelled to complete a WIL programme for obtaining the qualification (or graduating), it all depends on the approach adopted by each institution. For instance, TVETCs in SA oblige their students (NATED programmes) complete a WIL programme first before they can obtain the full qualification and thus graduate (section 1.3), hence this study.

The third model, the ICP, is the WIL model proposed by this research. It is sufficiently flexible to be integrated either separately or in combination with any of the two (WBL or WPL). The researcher is of the opinion that both the HEIs and industry have a common goal, which is to ultimately cater for the needs of the various communities and society as a whole. For example, students graduate as professionals to bring about development of the communities in which they live. The same applies to industry. Goods are produced to be consumed by these same communities. And this does not exclude the government, which intervenes to ensure the fairness of the system, and to protect the rights of the people living in these very same communities (also to promote economic growth).

With this model (ICP), the researcher states that instead of blaming one another for the lack of student support (employability skills), the different sectors (HEIs, businesses, government etc.) could come together to create certain projects in the communities. Such projects could target the challenges experienced in these communities, with each sector volunteering as to how they will contribute to addressing such challenges. For example, the government could help to identify the communities with

special needs, the industries could help to provide sponsorship to pay stipends to students (HEIs) hired to do practical work experience (WIL). Also to provide workplace supervisors for mentoring students in training.

Still on the new model, the HEIs could provide the students with opportunities for practical experience under the supervision of both academics and workplace supervisors. The appointment of these students could be based on the duration of the WIL programmes as stipulated in the policies for each institution. This tripartite relationship could help to expose students to real problems thereby creating new jobs and helping to develop the communities as well. As already indicated, depending on the programme specifications, the new model (ICP) does not restrict one in terms of the specific modalities to be integrated.

As an alternative, the researcher advises that those relying on the use of either the WBL or the WPL could do so in consideration of the three stages (phases) for the integration of WIL as proposed in this study (figure 3), namely, pre-tertiary, during-tertiary, and the post-tertiary phases (models). Most importantly, any of the models of WIL could fit in any of these phases, yet institutions have to decide on the specific approach in terms of their programmes specialities. In addition, the researcher maintains that one approach could be selected for each specific programme. The section below discusses the three phases of the WIL models.

6.5.1 The three phases of the WIL models

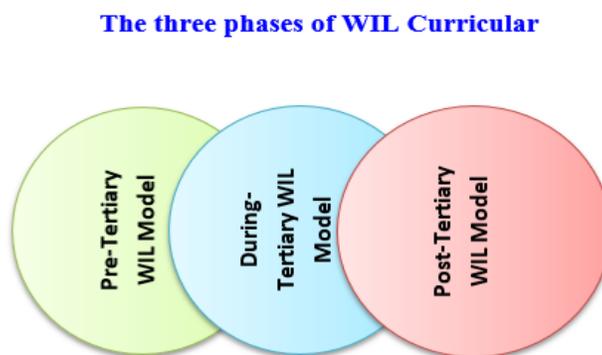


Figure 6.2: Three Phases of WIL Curricula

In this diagram, the researcher emphasises that whichever WIL model is adopted, HEIs should clearly indicate during which phase the WIL takes place. The researcher emphasises that a well-integrated model in any programme should only be reflected in one of the three phases. This means that once the WIL programme has been completed in the first phase (i.e. pre-tertiary), it cannot be repeated in the second or the third phase. For example, if a student acquired the relevant experience prior to registration at any of the HEIs, he or she should be credited with such experience and not have to repeat the module in the future. The following section explains this phase further.

6.5.1.1 Pre-tertiary WIL Curricula

In this phase, HEIs could work together with the industries (WPL) recruiting students to start their WIL curricula first before the commencement of theory classes (TVETCs). In this way, the employer could issue a certificate for the work experience completed, inclusive of the roles and responsibilities, the duration, behaviour, subordination and suchlike. In their turn, colleges will focus on the theoretical aspects of the qualifications, and also working on the improvements of some of the aspects as reflected in the feedback received from industry (individual performance). Although this may seem to be a new approach to WIL, it has long been documented as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in most of the educational policies (DHET 2011a:15) but does not seem to have been properly implemented.

As the DHET (2011a:15) states, through the use of the RPL (Pre-tertiary) approach, students are able to obtain some credits for parts of the modules already completed through previous learning. At the end of the practice, students receive an official SETA certificate indicating the area in which they have developed skills. Although learners often take about two or more years to finish (i.e. learnership), some are able to complete in a shorter time through the process of the RPL (DHET 2011a:15). In a nutshell, this model allows students to do their WIL prior to the entering a formal qualification, as it is at the moment not clear whether TVETCs assist students with this or not. The next section explains the next phase and/or model for the integration of WIL.

6.5.1.2 During-tertiary WIL model

In this phase, WIL activities and/or assessment are integrated in the formal qualification (WBL), often regarded as one of the learning modules towards the formal qualification. The current practice in the NCV programmes is an example of this phase. In this regard, students attend workshops (or classes) to participate in the projects under the supervision and mentorship of academics. In this instance, WIL is offered as a registered module in the same way as other theory subjects; it is plotted on the timetable and students sign attendance registers. Accordingly, one day in a week could be set aside particularly for WIL projects such as simulations, excursions and/or volunteering for community projects.

Unlike the current situation with the NATED programmes (WPL), in which the success of WIL depends on the availability of jobs, the WBL model shifts the responsibility to students who have to decide whether to attend these activities or not. Other activities include inviting guests such as alumni, industry supervisors and so on to address students on certain topics; subsequently, students with maximum attendance, participation and competencies are issued with the WIL certificates. Moreover, the researcher feels that institutions insisting on the use of the WPL should also take responsibility and accountability for all qualifying students to be involved in WIL at the right time. The next section addresses the last phase of the proposed model, namely, the post-tertiary WIL model.

6.5.1.3 Post-campus WIL model

In this phase, the WIL curricula comes after the completion of the formal qualifications. Although this could be offered as compulsory in qualifications, it does not affect students in terms of graduation and employability. However, the absence of WIL experience could affect them when employers require the WIL component to be completed prior to appointment to permanent positions. As opposed to the TVETC NATED programmes in particular, this approach (WPL) does not hamper students from obtaining their formal qualification. Examples of this include students of law, auditing and the like graduate first and serve articles (practical experience) afterwards.

The post-tertiary model is more flexible and could have less effect on the lack of employment among students. As a result, the researcher feels people should stop blaming the WIL philosophies but should

examine the adopted modalities to ascertain whether viable for students. Using a rightful approach will help to eliminate the challenges as discussed. In fact, the WPL model might be more beneficial if the right approaches were used, and thus sufficiently viable to address the crisis in the national economy. This ends the discussion on the proposed model for the integration of WIL. The next section makes a number of suggestions for future research.

6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Importantly, this study was aimed to improve the TVET curriculum in line with the integration of the WIL curricula, and thus address the lack of development of students' capabilities and employability. Conducting this study helped broaden my understanding of the WIL curricula. By exploring the literature and working on the data collected, I gained the deeper understanding and knowledge necessary for my work. However, I also discovered that there is a need to rethink that which has been documented in the education policies but not yet implemented.

In terms of the findings (empirically and literature), it was emphasised that without the businesses required for placement, WIL cannot be effective. As a result, the researcher feels more research needs to be conducted on the means to grow more businesses in line with the demands of the students from the various HEIs. This is because no matter how good the models or approaches, WIL cannot be successful without the businesses. This ends the discussion and is followed by the conclusion.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Deport and Fouche (2011a:110) state that no matter how careful one is, difficulties exist in all studies. For example, working in unfamiliar or risky environments could stress or scare researchers, preventing them from making good ethical decisions. It is for this reason researchers have ethical obligations to the participants and to themselves as well (Brown et al., 2014:104). So, in this study, the researcher conformed to the ethics pertaining to conducting good research, i.e. safeguarding all information essential for the study. In addition, institutions and/or participants were considered for replacement only in cases where access or consent was denied.

Similarly, participants refusing to take part in the study were replaced or responses were recorded as non-responses. Other limitations include that relying on the official documents could limit the findings, particularly with regard to gaining access to such documents regarded as “confidential”. In that regard, the researcher could rely only on documents in the public domain. In addition, some documents did not specify the person responsible (author). So, referencing to such documents (with valuable information) was found to be very challenging. So, the next section therefore deals with the manner in which data were analysed.

6.8 CONCLUSION

In the main, this study investigated the challenges experienced in the attempt to integrate WIL effectively for students in Business Studies (TVETCs) in SA and in the NATED programmes in particular. Further, the focus of the research was on the impact of WIL models on the development of students’ capabilities and employability. The study found that the WPL approach currently applied contributed to such challenges, hence the proposed approaches (or phases) to the WIL curricula suggested here. It is believed that institutions insisting on a WPL approach should also take responsibility for ensuring that all qualifying students are involved (WIL) and without any delay.

Moreover, the researcher further suggested the exploration of the other models (i.e. WBL, PBL, PJBL and WDTL), and that institutions could decide on the appropriate phase depending on the programmes. This suggestion to explore other models does not imply there will be no challenges, but such could be easily managed than is the case with current practice. Besides, if the right phase is selected, much progress could be anticipated. As was assumed, the approach to the WPL model not only affected students’ in terms of their employability, but also delayed their graduation, continued education and so forth. This is because without completing the WIL curricula, TVETC students cannot register for any qualification beyond the N6. This is unlike HEIs internationally (i.e. United States of America), which go further to provide opportunities for students to study for the degree programmes.

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ANNEXURE A1: ETHICAL CERTIFICATE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/09/12

Ref: 2018/09/12/32433584/13/MC

Dear Mr Mafaralala

Name: Mr T Mafaralala

Student: 32433584

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/09/12 to 2023/09/12

Researcher(s): Name: Mr T Mafaralala
E-mail address: tmafaralala@gmail.com
Telephone: +27 72 426 4009

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof H Joubert
E-mail address: hendrikajoubert@gmail.com
Telephone: +27 83 407 8546

Title of research:

A model for the integration of work integrated learning in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa

Qualification: D. Ed in Educational Leadership and Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/09/12 to 2023/09/12.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/09/12 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2023/09/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2018/09/12/32433584/13/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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ANNEXURE A2: THE FINDINGS

In the presentation of the findings, the researcher started by breaking down data according to topic and only the parts that addresses one particular topic and/or research question were selected. For the information extracted from the material, the following quotes were used from the interview transcriptions: Campus Managers (CM1, 2, 3, 4), Heads of Department (HOD1, 2, 3, 4), Student Support Services (SSS1, 2, 3, 4), focus groups of students (N6FG1, 2, 3, 4), students who had already completed the N6 (PN6S1, 2, 3, 4), SETA representatives (SETA1, 2, 3, 4) and majority employers of students (EM1, 2, 3, 4).

What are the challenges for the integration of WIL for Business Studies students at TVETCs?

In an attempt to address research objective 1, The following question was asked: What could be the challenges for the integration of WIL for students in the Business Studies? Among other responses, it was indicated:

CC1: *“I think the challenge lies with the number of employers versus the number of students or graduates looking for jobs”*

CC2: *“The state gets too much from our taxes, instead of referring our kids to the private sectors for jobs, they should use our tax money to create jobs for our kids”*

CC3: *“The period of 18 months required for practical experience is affecting the progress of students, they cannot graduate unless they are employed for WIL first”*

CC4: *“Our college is surrounded by some industries around, so we do not struggle with the placement of students for the WIL programme”.*

Still on the challenges for the integration of WIL, students who had already completed the N6 were asked: What challenges have you encountered in finding the workplace for the WIL curricula? Below are the responses of those who had managed to get a placement:

PN6S1: *“I saw the posts advertised for internship on the company’s website, I applied and was called for the interview”*

PN6S2: *“I knew someone who works in the company and he kept informing me if there are some posts advertised”*

- PN6S3: *“Unless the government brings industries into our villages, we are left with no choice but migrating to stay in the areas with easy access to jobs and other resources”*
- PN6S4: *“I distributed my CVs to different companies indicating that I am volunteering to render my services for free, just to get the experience”*
- PN6S5: *“Our college is very far away from things, if we struggle to access the ATMs, WIFI, etc., how then we could expect to find jobs around the village”*
- PN6S6: *“I got a phone call to come for the interviews, it seems the college submitted my CV to the company I am now working for*
- PNCS7: *“the government treats homelands people as if they are not tax payers, if still struggling for water, how then could we expect advanced technologies and jobs here?”*

A similar question was posed to the student support sections, which assist students who have completed the N6 to get a placement: What challenges did you come across when searching for placement opportunities for the students? The following responses were received:

- SSS1: *“It is rare to find a job advert looking for students who completed the N6 from the TVETCs, most of the job targets for students with the National Diplomas”*
- SSS2: *“Almost all the companies I tried say the same thing, “there is no job”, these messages are even written on their gates”*
- SSS3: *“Most of the jobs targets for students with practical skills than our qualifications; The college only assist students with high performance and others are left to find jobs for themselves”*
- SSS4: *“It seems that our qualifications are not needed anywhere, colleges have robbed us offering irrelevant modules”.*

What could be the **challenges** affecting the employability of students (TVETCs) and what could be done to address this?

- PN6S1: *“TVET students have a challenge to compete for jobs university students, and the employers seems to be much interested on the university students, not unless they have less incentives to offer”*

- SETA1: *“Most of the jobs available in the market requires for the practical skills, of which most of the students from the Business Studies do not possess”*
- SETA2: *“Colleges often produce the administrators, but as for the industry, they need people with innovations”*
- SETA3: *“Employability depends on the shortages of skills in the market, but as the programmes offered in the Business Studies (TVET), most of the universities are doing better, putting the challenge on the college students”*

In an attempt to determine the challenges related to the lack of responsiveness of the TVET programmes, Business Studies in particular, a question was posed to the different college stakeholders: How are the lecturers involved in the WIL activities?

- CM4: *“the college budget does not allow us to involve them in the WIL activities, let alone the issues of their workload, they cannot be in the class and also in the industry at the same time”*
- SSS4: *“I don’t remember a time when lecturers were being involved in the WIL, neither do they participant in the design and development of such activities, hence clueless about the demands of the workplace”*
- CL1: *“Not that we are not interested to be involved (WIL activities), we were never instructed to participate in such programmes*
- CLA: *“It seems the management is not interested to see us involved into the WIL activities, hence not reflected anywhere in our workload”*
- HOD1: *“Lecturers were neither exposed into the nor assisted with the mentorship, supervision and or the assessments of students who are involved in the WIL programmes”.*

Extending the question about the involvement of lecturers in WIL activities, college lecturers were asked: At what level are you exposed to the developments in the workplace regarding your subject?

- CM1: *“I only teach what is in the prescribed textbooks, I am so clueless about what is happening in the industries because I never worked there before”*

How do TVETCs **support** and assist students in Business Studies programmes to gain access to workplace learning opportunities?

Still on research objective 2, both students who were registered for the N6 and those who had already completed it were asked: How do colleges assist you in completing their WIL curricula? The following responses were received:

N6FGS: *“I am now completing my N6, but I do not remember a day when inducted of what is happening after the N6, all we heard is that people are given log books to go and complete at the employment and return back after the eighteen months”*

N6FG1: *“Lecturers coming to classes concentrate on their subjects and they say nothing about what happens after the N6”.*

In view of the fact this study focuses so much on challenges, a question was put to those students who struggled to get the placement and/or could not be placed at all: How did the colleges assist you in finding a workplace for your practical experience? Some indicated:

PN6S1: *“The college asked me to submit my Curriculum Vitae and promised to call me for placement, till today, I am still waiting for their call”*

PN6S2: *“All they require is our CVs, and thus it, I kept waiting but now I gave up”*

PN6S3: *“These colleges do not even bother to find out we have been placed elsewhere, all they need is for us to return the log books for the graduations”*

PN6S4: *“I have not been assisted at all; hence I am still not placed”*

What does the college do to ensure all students who have completed N6 are correctly placed on time in the workplace?

HOD4: *“We wait for students to complete the N6 first, then we start issuing them with the log books to be used during their practical experience, and that’s all”*

Subsequent to research objective 2, a question was put to the groups of students registered for the N6: What efforts have you taken to ensure you are placed for WIL curricula on time? Much was said on this question, including the few responses indicated here:

- N6FG2: *“I will see it as soon as I am done with the N6, as for now, I do not want to be frustrating myself”*
- N6FG3: *“I know I must go for practical experience, but up to so far we have not been told what to do”*
- N6FG4: *“I thought it is the responsibility of the college to secure the placement us, immediately after the N6”*
- N6FG4: *“I think of going to market myself in Gauteng, there is no hope for jobs in this province”;*
- N6FG1: *“If they indeed assist students, by now we would be knowing the industries ready to employ us”*

How do Business Studies students perceive the administration of WIL in TVETCs?

In line with research objective 3, a question was directed to students who were still in the N6 class: What are your **feelings** about the compulsory period (18 months) for practical experience in the workplace? Below are some of their responses:

- N6S: *“It is a good idea but with the lack of opportunities for practice, it is seen to disadvantage the students”*
- N6S: *“Practical experience exposes the students to the work environment and prepares them for the future employability”*
- N6S: *“This could be more effective and beneficial if jobs are made available for all students completing their N6”*
- N6S: *“I think we should be starting with the practical experience first and later on go to classes for the theory”*
- N6S: *“I don’t think it is good for careers in the Business Studies because much of the things done could be irrelevant to the theory learnt in class”*

Still on determining the students' preparedness for the WIL curricula, they were asked: What could be the effects for not completing the WIL programme? It was mentioned that:

- N6FG1: *“It seems that one will not be able to graduate without the completing the 18 months of the practical experience”*
- N6FG2: *“Without the practical experience, one will remain with a half qualification, the qualification is regarded incomplete”*
- N6FG3: *“Most of the job adverts require for s National Diploma, of which without the practical experience, it is not possible”*
- N6FG4: *“Without getting the diploma, I will not be able to register for other postgraduates' qualifications with the universities”*
- N6FG1: *“Without getting a National Diploma, universities do not recognise the N6, they instead prefer Grade 12 as their minimum requirements for junior qualifications”.*

Still on those struggling to get placements, it was asked: How does the lack of placement affect you academically? Some indicated as follows:

- PN6S1: *“Failure to get a place for WIL means one will not be able to graduate (National Diploma), and as a result, one could remain more unemployable with a half qualification”.*
- PN6S2: *“As long as one is not placed for WIL programme, one remains with a half qualification that no industry need”.*
- PN6S3: *“The competition for jobs is turf, students with N6 (Business Studies) are unlikely to find jobs as compared to those with National Diplomas and above”.*
- PN6S4: *“Some of us need to further our studies with the universities but WIL makes it impossible for us to get our National Diplomas for further studies”.*
- PN6S1: *“Most of us we are so quick to finish with the theory classes, but get stuck when we are supposed to go for practical experience, and as such delayed for graduations”.*

Subsequent to the question above, students were asked: Who do you think could be blamed for your lack of placements and why? Several responses were given, of which some indicated:

- PN6S1: *“The colleges are to be blamed for offering such modules, which is not doable, WIL must be cancelled”*
- PN6S2: *“The colleges should be stopped to register students if they are not going to be accountable for the placements of students for WIL”*
- PN6S3: *“I do not understand why WIL is being left out as the responsibility for the students to ensure they are placed; this is really unfair for us”*
- PN6S4: *“The college is not really doing much to assist us, all they do is to focus on their classes and once we are done with N6, they hardly call us checking if we are placed”*

In line with research objective 4, various questions were put to the different categories of participants who all attempted to answer the following sub-research question: What are the perceptions of the stakeholders regarding the integration of WIL in terms of the placement and employability of Business Studies students in appropriate workplaces? Various responses were given, including the following:

- PN6S3:** *“TVET qualifications are not helpful, since I completed my N6 in 2016, I never found a job to date, no one wants to hire a practicing manager”*
- PN6S2:** *“When I noticed there is scarcity for jobs, I used the little cash I got to start a small business, it was then that many jobs began to open for me because of the managerial experienced acquired in my own business”*
- SETA1:** *“It’s a fact that companies have strict criterion to select students from the colleges, same as tertiary institutions selecting best students from the Grade 12”*
- EM3:** *“What is shocking is that, some of students have good marks but failing to express themselves during the interviews, also that such people also lack social identity”*
- CM4:** *“It is not by mistake that we put employment prior the graduations, this is one of the skills our students should demonstrate relative to their qualifications”,*

To determine the responsiveness of the WIL models adopted, different participants from different categories were asked: How **responsive** are the models of WIL in developing students’ capabilities and employability skills? Different views were obtained, of which some expressed that:

- EM: *“I do not think the problem is with the models, but the **relevance of the qualifications** offered in the Business Studies, they seem to attract few industries, particularly those not really paying”*
- CM: *“I think the models are correct, but the lack of **collaborations** between the colleges and the potential industries ready to hire the students”*
- SSS: *“To me, the employability of students has to do with the type of qualifications obtained versus the demands of the workplace, but not forgetting the economic challenges, big companies are collapsing”*
- CM: *“No matter how good the models for the integration of WIL, our country seems to be **struggling economically**, students have to compete with the uneducated who offers their skills at a very low cost, this is even worse with the majority of the immigrants in the country”*
- SSS: *“I think that if there was something wrong with our curriculum, the students who complete their studies in the universities would not be struggling as they are perceived to be doing qualifications that are better than ours”*
- CL: *“I think we are just producing students with qualifications for the industries that do not exist, there are only few potential companies hiring people these days”*
- HOD: *“It is a fact that students from the Business Studies cannot compete for jobs with the those in the **Engineering**, there is a demand for artisans than some mere vocational skills”*
- HOD: *“Most of our students are quick to complete their theory classes, but when it comes to them finding the places to do their practical, they are really struggling”.*

To get more understanding on the impact of the adopted WIL model on students, a question was directed to the HODs of Business Studies: What impact could the current models of WIL have on students? Their responses were as follows:

- HOD1:** *“When the students fail to get the placement, some of them end up giving up on their education, one of the reasons we have a lot of school dropouts”*
- HOD2:** *“No matter how genius students are, when they are stuck with education, they consider other alternatives means to change their lives”*
- HOD3:** *“The number of students who do not get placement is often higher than those who get placements every time”*

HOD4: *“The period of 18 months required for WIL is not helping students, the department of education should think twice regarding the period for WIL”.*

Still on the responsiveness of the adopted models of WIL, a question was directed to the students registered for the N6 qualification: How do you perceive the administration of WIL in TVETCs? Among others, students indicated:

N6FGS1: *“I completed my N6 in 2016 but worked in different places on the jobs, which are not relevant to my qualification and all the experienced combined does not make eighteen months, so I could not qualify to graduate”*

N6FGS2: *“I started looking for the job while still in the class, by the time I completed, the employer already waited for me, so I am happy”*

N6FGS3: *“Why do colleges make it the responsibilities of the students to find jobs, I don’t think we registered for job hunting but qualification that will help us to be employable”.*

To get the viewpoint of students who had been successful placed, they were asked: How relevant and beneficial is the WIL experience for your registered qualification? A number of responses were given, including that some mentioned that:

PN6S1: *“The duties delegated to me are neither relevant to my qualification nor beneficiary to me, -as in the career of my choice”*

PN6S2: *“I am here just to complete the 18 months, but as for learning, what I am doing is different from the course”*

PN6S3: *“I am now working as a cleaner, so this is neither relevant nor beneficial to me”*

PN6S4: *“I have registered for management assistant but now working as a cashier”.*

To determine the feelings of the employers regarding the responsiveness of the TVET programmes for Business Studies, a question was asked: How would you encourage students to pursue their careers in the TVET colleges, Business Studies in particular?

- EM1:** *“If interested in the TVET sector, I will recommend one to register for courses offering the practical skills than the theory, of which students struggle getting employment”*
- EM2:** *“TVETCs are well known for producing the artisans and not the duplication of what is done in the universities”*
- EM3:** *“Most often we advised senior management in the colleges of the type of expertise we require from the students, but not much is done to address such”*
- EM4:** *“Yes we do hire people as managers and financial administrators, but as for the practical experience, we cannot hire students for such positions”.*

To get the viewpoints of stakeholders regarding the challenges related to students’ employability, it was asked: How does the college collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the success of WIL curricula?

- CM3:** *“Our college has sustainable relationships with the industries around and this is very helpful for our students who do not struggle to get placement for WIL”*
- CM3:** *“Because of the distance with our partners, we hardly get assistance whenever we require information. Partnerships seems to benefit those working closer to each other, not for us in rural areas”.*

Subsequently to the last research objective, namely, to investigate the means to improve the responsiveness of WIL for students in Business Studies, a question was asked: What could be done to improve the responsiveness of WIL curricula for students in the Business Studies? Below are some of the responses from the different categories of the participants:

- CM2:** *“No matter how much we may need to transform the colleges, these are not like universities, much responsibility relies with the government, i.e. appointment of senior executives, curriculum development and the like”*
- CL3:** *“If we need to see changes in the TVETCs, the government must stop appointing people with lower qualifications on the executive positions, we need doctors and professor to lead the colleges”*
- EM1:** *“Based on the available opportunities, students should be registered for WIL first and then do their theory classes afterwards”*

HOD4: *“Allowing the unqualified politicians to run the country led to the appointment of unqualified individuals with neither visions nor credentials to take the colleges further”.*

What are your feelings about the compulsory period (18 months) for the practical experience in the workplace?

PN6S1: *“If WIL is a compulsory module, then the colleges must take the responsibility to place all the students at the right time”.*

How can the integration of WIL in Business Studies at TVETCs be improved?

What do you think could be done to make WIL a success?

CM1: *“The **placements** opportunities for students should be **secured** prior the registration with TVETCs, in this way, the available jobs will determine the number of intake for students”*

CM2: *“Students could **do their WIL prior the** theory classes, and only those with the certificate on WIL could be accepted for the registrations of theory classes”*

CM3: *“The period of WIL could be a cycle of six months rather than eighteen months”*

CM4: *“Colleges should continually **update their curriculum** making it more responsive”*

EM2: *“Colleges should be equipped with all the resources to conduct the WIL in their own workshops”*

EM2: *“WIL could be offered in the form of excursions thereby removing the period of 18 months, which is currently a serious challenge”*

EM3: *“The period of 18 months in the industry is not working for the colleges, so, the new models for integration of WIL should be investigated and incorporated”*

EM4: *“the period of 18 months should be reduced to allow other students a chance to gain access, in this way, the manageability of WIL could be improved”.*

What could be done to improve the employability of students and their readiness to enter the job market?

CL1: *“Industries should employ learners with Grade 12, train them and issue them with the certificates for WIL to be admitted in the colleges and the universities”*

CL2: *“More funding could be given to those organisation helping students with practical experiences”*

- CM:** *“Relying on the private sector for internships is not sufficient, the state could regulate for all governments departments to get involved into providing for internships to deserving students”*
- HOD:** *“The colleges concentrate on students registered for the NCV, and not much is done to assist the student doing the Nated Courses, Business Studies in particular*
- SSS:** *“There are some workshops running for those in the NCVs, but as for the Nated, no workshop had ever been conducted regarding the practical experience to be done”*
- N6S:** *“The college is not really helpful; most of the students indicate they struggle to find the workplace for practice”.*

ANNEXURE B1**Request for permission to conduct research at Tshwane South TVET College**

The title of my research is: *a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.*

Date: 14 August 2018

The Principal: Mr JT Chiloane

Tshwane South TVET College, 85 Francis Baard Street

PO Box 151, PRETORIA, 0001,

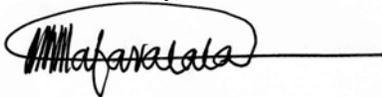
Tel: 012 401 5000; Email: info@tsc.edu.za

Dear Mr Chiloane

I, Thomas M. Mafaralala am doing research under supervision of Professor Rika Joubert, a research supervisor contracted with the University of South Africa in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a doctoral degree in Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). We have funding from Masters and Doctoral Bursary Fund for the study of my doctoral degree. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes. Your institution (Tshwane South TVET College) has been selected because of its vicinity to the researcher, also that your contributions could help to improve the challenges as identified in this study. The study entails the assessment of WIL models for the programmes in the Business Studies. The benefits of this study include that WIL curricula will be improved to assist with the development of students' capability for employability. The study does not have any potential risk to both the selected institutions and the participants thereof. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail making appointment with the participants for some follow up, updating them on the progress of the study and the outcome.

Yours sincerely



.....
Thomas Matome Mafaralala

ANNEXURE B2**Request for permission to conduct research at Capricorn TVET College**

The title of my research is: *a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.*

Date: 14 August 2018

The Principal: Mr KR Madzhie

Capricorn TVET College, 16 Market Street, Private Bag x9674,

Polokwane, 0699, Tel: 015 230 1800

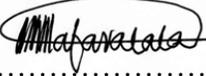
Email: enquiries@capricorncollege.edu.za

Dear Mr Madzhie

I, Thomas M. Mafaralala, am doing research under supervision of Professor Rika Joubert, a research supervisor contracted with the University of South Africa in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a doctoral degree in Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). We have funding from Masters and Doctoral Bursary Fund for the study of my doctoral degree. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes. Your institution (Capricorn TVET College) has been selected because of its vicinity to the researcher, also that your contributions could help to improve the challenges as identified in this study. The study entails the assessment of WIL models for the programmes in the Business Studies. The benefits of this study include that WIL curricula will be improved to assist with the development of students' capability for employability. The study does not have any potential risk to both the selected institutions and the participants thereof. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail making appointment with the participants for some follow up, updating them on the progress of the study and the outcome.

Yours sincerely


.....

Thomas Matome Mafaralala

ANNEXURE B3

Request for permission to conduct research at Nkangala TVET College

The title of my research is: *a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.*

Date: 14 August 2018

The Principal: Mr CM Maimela

Nkangala TVET College, Cnr Haig & Northey streets

P.O. Box 2282, Witbank, 1035

Tel: 013 658 4700; Email: info@ntc.edu.za

Dear Mr Maimela

I, Thomas M. Mafaralala, am doing research under supervision of Professor Rika Joubert, a research supervisor contracted with the University of South Africa in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a doctoral degree in Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). We have funding from Masters and Doctoral Bursary Fund for the study of my doctoral degree. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes. Your institution (Nkangala TVET) has been selected because of its vicinity to the researcher, also that your contributions could help to improve the challenges as identified in this study. The study entails the assessment of WIL models for the programmes in the Business Studies. The benefits of this study include that WIL curricula will be improved to assist with the development of students' capability for employability. The study does not have any potential risk to both the selected institutions and the participants thereof. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail making appointment with the participants for some follow up, updating them on the progress of the study and the outcome.

Yours sincerely



.....
Thomas Matome Mafaralala

ANNEXURE B4**Request for permission to conduct research at Orbit TVET College**

The title of my research is: *a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.*

Date: 14 August 2018

The Principal: Ms Maryna Marais
Orbit TVET College, Fatima Bhayat Street, Rustenburg, 0300
Tel: 014 592 7014; Email: info@orbitcollege.edu.za

Dear Ms Marais

I, Thomas M. Mafaralala, am doing research under supervision of Professor Rika Joubert, a research supervisor contracted with the University of South Africa in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a doctoral degree in Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). We have funding from Masters and Doctoral Bursary Fund for the study of my doctoral degree. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled a model for the integration of work integrated learning in the technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate how South African TVETCs integrate WIL in their Business Studies programmes. Your institution (Orbit TVET College) has been selected because of its vicinity to the researcher, also that your contributions could help to improve the challenges as identified in this study. The study entails the assessment of WIL models for the programmes in the Business Studies. The benefits of this study include that WIL curricula will be improved to assist with the development of students' capability for employability. The study does not have any potential risk to both the selected institutions and the participants thereof. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail making appointment with the participants for some follow up, updating them on the progress of the study and the outcome.

Yours sincerely



.....
Thomas M Mafaralala

ANNEXURE C

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

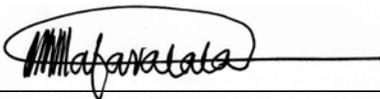
Participant Name & Surname : _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname

Thomas Matome Mafaralala



Date: 14 August 2018

Researcher's signature

ANNEXURE D

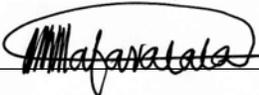
FOCUS GROUP CONSENT/ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I _____ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by Thomas Matome Mafaralala for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group to maintain confidentiality.

Participants' Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: (Please print): **Thomas Matome Mafaralala**

Researcher's Signature: _____ 

Date: 14 August 2018

If you are an adult who gives permission, you **consent** then delete assent

If you are a learner who gives permission, you **assent** and then delete consent