
Developing a WIL curriculum for post-school lecturer qualifications

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ABSTRACT

The South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) published two policies in 2013 and 2015 respectively, on professional qualifications for lecturers at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and at Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) colleges. These policy frameworks require lecturers in TVET and ACET to complete work-integrated learning (WIL) in two settings: teaching (eg in classrooms, laboratories, workshops) and industry-based (eg factory, work sites, offices). Whereas the notion of industry and specialised workplace WIL for TVET and ACET lecturers was welcomed in certain circles, its inclusion in the ACET policy and the associated qualifications were not uniformly welcomed. Antagonism emerged primarily from some universities planning to offer ACET lecturer qualifications, ranging from insecurity about matters related to its implementation to outright rejection. This article draws on the theory of critical discourse analysis (CDA), reflecting on and debating the challenges that emerged during the development of the national curriculum frameworks for industry and the specialised workplace-based WIL component of the qualifications. Three discourses emerged: the first relates to a conflict between adult and community education with the discourse on industry-based WIL; a second relates to differences of opinion about what constitutes appropriate specialised workplace-based WIL for trainee ACET lecturers; and the third relates to the nature of ACET. It is argued that it differs from other forms of education and should not be subordinated to the 'dictates of the state and capital'.

KEYWORDS

Work-integrated learning; adult and community education and training; work placement; education–labour market alignment; discourse analysis; teaching; teacher industry placements

Introduction

Between 2011 and 2015, the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the state department responsible for teaching polices, promulgated three policy frameworks. One was intended for school teachers (South Africa, 2011); a second was developed for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college lecturers (South Africa, 2013b); and a third was geared to adult and community education and training (ACET) educators and lecturers (South Africa, 2015b). Work-integrated learning (WIL) is an element of all three policies and is intended to underlie the construction of teaching programmes (South Africa, 2011:10; 2013b:10; 2015b:11–12). It is also the term used to describe the workplace-based element of all three programmes. The WIL element for school teachers (South Africa, 2011:10) involves spending time at a school, colloquially known as ‘teaching practice’. The policy frameworks for TVET (South Africa 2013b:19) and ACET (South Africa, 2015b:13–14), however, require both teaching practice and WIL experience at a workplace in which a student lecturer’s specialisation is practised.

South Africa has a well-developed history of teacher education and placement of student teachers in schools but not of the development of TVET or ACET lecturers. Historically, university education faculties and schools either developed TVET lecturers through specially designed programmes or incorporated their development into conventional (school) teaching programmes. Educators or lecturers teaching in adult and community education contexts also either completed conventional education programmes for school teachers or specifically designed adult education qualifications offered through university adult education units or schools of education. The policies on TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications (South Africa, 2013b; 2015b) are intended to produce professionally qualified lecturers to serve TVET colleges and the newly created community education and training (CET) colleges. The development of TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications relied on the existing expertise in TVET and adult, community and adult basic education and training being adapted, in addition to the school teacher training that existed at universities.

The absence of an existing practice in specialist workplace placements for TVET and ACET lecturer programmes led the DHET, with European Union co-funding, to commission a research and development project to develop a curriculum framework for the industry or specialist workplace WIL component in order to enable the ‘effective delivery of the work-integrated learning (WIL) component of TVET and ACET lecturer qualification programmes’ (CPUT, 2015:2). This project was implemented between 2017 and 2020. It formed part of the DHET’s Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme (TLDCIP) for the College Lecturer Education Project (CLEP). The TLDCIP CLEP WIL project was an inter-institution research and capacity-building project; it aimed to develop knowledge, competency and resources that would support schools and faculties of education (the intended providers of the qualifications) in implementing the industry or specialist workplace WIL component

of the initial TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications. The curriculum framework was intended to serve as a complete guide for providers of the TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications. It included:

- An analysis of the policy;
- A summary of the literature on the topic of industry or specialist workplace-based WIL;
- Outcomes and assessment criteria for each initial lecturer qualification;
- Student materials; and
- Implementation guidelines for providers.

The project was managed by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and was implemented jointly by CPUT and the Swiss-South African Co-operation Initiative (SSACI).

The plan of the TLDCIP CLEP WIL project was to develop a single curriculum framework for the industry or specialist workplace WIL component of both TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications. But the debates and antagonisms surrounding this element in the ACET qualifications resulted in a separate curriculum framework eventually being developed for each set of qualifications. The curriculum frameworks for the TVET and ACET industry or specialist workplace WIL were developed through six focus-group exercises attended by representatives from universities tasked with implementing TVET and ACET lecturer programmes. Some of the focus groups were also attended by DHET officials, TVET and CET college staff, and individuals representing adult education and community development concerns.

Because the end products were determined through a collaborative process and each focus group included new participants, an exploratory and developmental research approach was used that applied transformational learning theory in an action-research process. However, the aims and outcomes were the result of a combination of both cooperation and contestation, elements of which were never resolved.

The success of the TLDCIP CLEP WIL project clearly relied on the acceptability of its outcome to the project funder, to the DHET, and to the institutions involved. These institutions' acceptance of the project's outcomes was a consequence of the project's acceptance by the programme champions represented in the focus-group exercises. The outcomes, in turn, provided the programme champions with materials with which to incorporate the collectively developed outcomes, assessment criteria and materials into their institutions' curriculum design documentation successfully. The outcomes also helped the champions to defend the developed curriculum documentation to the institutions and also to the three national registration bodies: the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the DHET.

For those who represented TVET lecturer programmes, the project's intention was largely acceptable, primarily because the idea of the placement of TVET student lecturers in

industry as part of their formal preparation was generally accepted. For a significant number of people representing potential ACET lecturer programmes, however, the formal inclusion of specialist workplace placements in ACET was questioned because it was felt that this ignored community education's broader role, which included providing

... nonformal programmes in a wide range of areas, on a 'needs' basis, aligned strongly to local contexts, and to employment and community which are entrenched in Social Justice. (CPUT, 2018)

This article provides a reflective analysis of both the accord and the discord that occurred during the development of the national curriculum framework for industry or specialised workplace WIL for the TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications. An area of both accord and discord related to the purpose of specialised workplace-based WIL, the nature of the workplaces that would be suitable hosts for it, and, for some, even the inclusion of this requirement in the policy. While different interpretations, resulting in disagreements about the purpose of workplace-based WIL, could be ascribed to individual differences, problems related to the nature of workplaces and the inclusion of this requirement in the policy reflected broader views. Underlying them are views on the power of the state, academic freedom, and the purpose of education and qualifications. And they are tied to the way in which education is understood, including its purpose, the types of programme that should be offered, and what this means for teacher education aimed at different sectors. The aim of the article is therefore to provide information on the complexity of the context in which adult and community education is provided that has until now not been recorded; and also on its implications for industry or specialised workplace WIL for TVET and ACET lecturer qualifications.

Brief historical review of the literature on specialised workplace placements for lecturers

Historically, work placement as a form of learning has been associated with vocational trades, primarily those in the building trade, and some professions, including medicine and teaching. Arguments about the placement of teachers in workplaces associated with their teaching specialisations have surfaced periodically since the 1990s, but date back to the 1970s (Wilson, Pirrie & McFall, 1996:18). These have arisen primarily among vocational subject specialists, but they have also been pertinent to certain subjects, such as those in the natural sciences, which have social applications. Work placement for teachers is an international trend that, Wheelahan and Moodie (2012:15–16) argue, is aimed at professionalising the teaching workforce in vocational education and training (VET) as part of an attempt to enhance the qualifications of vocational teachers, but also in the interests of improving continuing professional development.

Reported or published work placements for teachers tend to be limited either to projects or to the establishment of state and quasi-state-based entities. In the United Kingdom, the 1990s saw the coming into existence of teacher placement services (Wilson, Pirrie &

McFall, 1996:18–19) and the Learning Skills Council (Ireland, Golden & Spielhofer, 2002: 2–3) that resulted in ‘professional development placements’ (PDPs) for teachers. At the same time, the embryo of a discourse promoting teacher placements in commerce and industry emerged. In Australia, similar arguments related to the benefits derived from what in that country is known as ‘teacher industry placement’ (TIP) (DoE, 2012:4). The Teacher Industry Placement Scheme in Australia is a state-supported endeavour that is largely aimed at improving the skills of employed vocational lecturers. TIP gave rise to the development of at least one conceptual model (Schüller & Bergami, 2008; Bergami, Schüller & Cheok, 2009; Bergami, Schüller & Vojtko, 2010; Schüller & Bergami, 2011): a teaching-in-industry model based on the communities of practice (CoP) model developed by Lave and Wenger (1991).

In South Africa, the challenge of the need for ‘up-to-date workplace expertise’ (South Africa, 2008:6) was raised in the draft national policy framework for lecturer qualifications and development in further education and training (FET) colleges. Such workplace expertise was then included in the policy frameworks for TVET and ACET lecturers as a requirement for the initial qualifications (South Africa, 2013b; 2015b). With the aim of updating the workplace skills and competencies of practising TVET lecturers, between 2014 and 2016, the Education and Training and Development Practices (ETDP) Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) funded the SSACI with the purpose of implementing the WIL for Lecturers Project. This project involved short placements for TVET lecturers in workplaces related to their areas of specialisation (Smith, 2017:6). In 2016, a conceptualisation of industry-based WIL for TVET lecturers was published (Van der Bijl & Taylor, 2016) using data from the ETDP SETA–SSACI project within frameworks developed from the TIP programme and other applicable international models.

Lecturer placement in business and industry has largely been aimed at vocational teachers who are teaching in technical and vocational education contexts. But the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also makes a case for this in community education contexts in its issue paper, *Lifelong learning for adults in South Africa: The role of community education and training* (OECD, 2018:85). It argues:

In the case of vocational subjects, it is important that teachers have relevant experience in their field It provides lecturers with a context for their teaching, and increases their confidence in teaching for their occupation. In line with South Africa’s proposed reforms for TVET colleges (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012[:20]), international experience suggests that vocational lecturers and teachers in all institutions, including the CET system, should be encouraged to spend time at the workplace.

This statement supports the argument for transferring to community-based education the industry or specialised workplace WIL for lecturers associated with vocational education. The articulation of this idea has now become enforceable through the promulgation of the

Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications for Educators and Lecturers in Adult and Community Education and Training (South Africa, 2015b).

Theoretical and methodological considerations

The project developed what the reports on its outcomes called a ‘comprehensive curriculum framework’ (Van der Bijl & Taylor, 2019; 2020): one for the TVET lecturer qualifications and another for the ACET lecturer qualifications. The comprehensive curriculum framework for each set of qualifications included:

- A précised summary of the policy requirements;
- An analysis of related international literature on the topic;
- Outcomes and assessment criteria for each of the qualifications included in the policy;
- Recommended student materials; and
- Guidelines for implementation.

The comprehensive curriculum framework was developed from a combination of literature reviews done by the project’s primary researchers, the CPU and the SSACI, and a series of focus-group exercises. An exploratory and developmental research approach was applied, because most of the universities that had intended to be involved in the project had not finalised their decisions on whether to offer the new lecturer qualifications. Those institutions that had, assigned middle-level curriculum specialists to the project, some of whom were close to retirement or the institutions were in the process of appointing new staff. All of those involved in lecturer qualifications were invited to participate in the project focus groups, as they occupied posts related to developing programmes for lecturers. The data were collected and analysed through the use of an action-research methodology, using what Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009:240) call a ‘snowball sampling mechanism’. An action-research approach was applied because, as McNiff (2002) has argued, it provides a practical way of looking at work and reflecting on it. Snowball sampling was the most viable mechanism for the project because it made it possible to include an increasing number of participants while universities finalised their programme plans and staff compositions. As the project progressed, the number of participants increased from fewer than 20 to in excess of 40.

A discourse on the challenges faced by this particular project is to be found in the discourse on education–labour market alignment (LMA). LMA comprises those

... activities and related outcomes with the goal of ensuring that higher education institutions graduate the correct numbers of graduates with the necessary skills for the job market in a way that supports students’ career goals and is consistent with institutional mission and economic conditions. (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014:3)

LMA, they argue (2014:3–4), requires ‘an alignment of employment vacancies and graduate skills’. They further argue that LMA is the result of a ‘process of balancing complex

stakeholder needs, economic conditions, and other factors' and requires collaboration 'at different institutional levels', across 'different institution types' and involving different 'alignment activities' (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014:6–9). One of the alignment activities they call 'work-based learning', a synonym for WIL.

The alignment discourse is not limited to an alignment between individual higher education institutions and their local markets. The World Bank's (2017:x) report expresses its support for the alignment of its financial-support mechanisms to regions of the world and, through projects, to countries for the disbursement of funds to their universities. The expected alignment is with the 'World Bank's approach and focuses on access and equity, relevance, and quality' (World Bank, 2017:x). Alignment at national, regional and institutional levels, according to the OECD (2018), requires that education provision be planned according to labour market needs, which involves planning in order to provide the number of places targeted for employment.

In South Africa, the alignment of higher education is managed through SAQA and a series of policies and bodies created by the DHET. The alignment of teacher education is enforced by three policy frameworks: one for school teachers, namely the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (South Africa, 2011); another for TVET college lecturers, namely the *Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (South Africa, 2013b); and a third, namely the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications for Educators and Lecturers in Adult and Community Education and Training* (South Africa, 2015b,) for community education and training (CET) colleges, created in 2015. Until the promulgation of these policies, the implementation of teaching policies was largely left to providers, who registered qualifications with bodies created for this purpose, with their own promotion mechanisms. Providers of teacher education are required to align their programmes not only to qualifications as noted in the policies, but also to 'standards' determined by the bodies (CHE, 2011:4).

Education–LMA, Cleary and Van Noy (2014:1) argue, is a 'complex and challenging endeavor' that 'many higher education institutions lack the experience and resources to execute'. But shortcomings in higher education institutions are not the only challenge facing education–LMA: it is also not being implemented. As Cleary and Van Noy (2014:1) note:

... [W]hile the policy and scholarly literature [offer] some insights on how higher education aligns with the labor market, little agreement exists on how to comprehensively define the concept [education–labour market alignment] and fewer resources are available to guide implementation or outcomes measurement.

In South Africa, there is not merely 'little agreement' on education–LMA; there is a well-developed and well-articulated antagonism towards it. Articulating the antagonism, Badat (2009:2–4) argues that 'we live in the epoch of globalisation', which is characterised by the expansion of

economic activities and the international flow of services, information and technology. The epoch is driven by the forces of globalisation and has resulted in a shift in education ‘away from broader academic studies and towards narrower vocational programmes’. The ‘orthodoxies’, he argues, ‘have coalesced in the ideology of new-liberalism’ Badat (2009:2–3). Zarb (2015:23) argues more directly that alignment is another manifestation of neo-liberalism.

Neo-liberalism, Chiapello and Fairclough (2002, cited in Fairclough, 2010:256) argue, is the political ideology of the *new spirit of capitalism*. The new spirit of capitalism, it is contended, is the ideology that justifies a commitment to capitalism for people whose only chance of work is by being ‘someone else’s subordinate’. In this context, it is argued further, the ‘world is discursively constructed’ (Fairclough, 2010:11) and is governed by ‘alliances between different authorities’ (Nicoll & Fejes, 2008:13) which exert power, both their own and that with which they align themselves.

The application of discourse as a tool for expressing social power is associated with constructs related to those developed by philosophers such as Michel Foucault and theorists such as Norman Fairclough. For Foucault (1980:93), power relations permeate society and are established through the ‘production and accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse’. For him, too (Foucault, 1979:22), ‘scientific discourses’, knowledge and techniques have become ‘entangled with the practice of the power to punish’ and, by implication, to regulate behaviour. While there is no clear consensus on what the discourses are or how to analyse them, there is a general acceptance of the meaning of ‘discourse’ and ‘discourse analysis’ (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2004:1): a discourse refers to broad social or institutional processes that regularise conduct, or it is a term used to indicate a choice of words and paragraphs, and the structure and meaning of texts (Maclure, 2003:174–192).

Discourse analysis is an analytical tool that was initially used by language practitioners and later by social researchers to analyse the meanings that underlie a text: ‘patterns that people’s utterances follow’ (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2004:1). Many versions of discourse analysis have been developed (Van Dijk, 1997, cited in Fairclough, 2003:2); one of them was developed by Fairclough (1989; 1992a; 1992b; 2001; 2003; 2010), who focuses on the analysis of text and its relation to power. The analysis of text, Fairclough (1989:109; 2001:91–139) argues, involves a description of text, followed by its interpretation and explanation. The basis of interpretation and analysis, he argues (Fairclough, 1989:141; 2001:118), is a researcher’s background knowledge base, called ‘members’ resource’ (which he abbreviates as MR).

As policy discursively constructs and enforces world views, its dissemination and implementation reflect the level of its enforcement. Policy that is accompanied by multilevel dissemination, as Zarb (2015:23) indicates, is a manifestation of neo-liberalism and a tool of enforcement. Foucault calls the enforcement mechanism ‘governmentality’ (cited in Nicoll & Fejes, 2008:6–7, 9). Governmentality refers broadly to the techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour, including the ‘government of souls and consciences, government of a household, of a state, or of oneself’ (Foucault, 1997:82, cited in Rose, O’Malley & Valverde, 2009:1–2).

Implementation and contending discourses

The curriculum framework is a collective interpretation of policy documents and a project with outcomes and procedures approved by representatives of the universities involved and the state officials responsible for its implementation. For this reason, it is a process aligned to the neo-liberal ideology and a discursive tool. Its outcomes and product were, however, merely frameworks, which universities could interpret and adapt for use in the development of their own curricula. The ‘freedom’ that university-based use and adaptation had did not prevent the process from being an exercise in neo-liberal capitalism, a political technology, to use a Foucauldian term. The discursive success of the project, as with any such venture, is determined by the extent to which its outcomes are condoned and accepted by representatives and implemented through curricula at the institutions they represent.

This project was planned around four mediated focus-group exercises, each with specifically defined developmental outcomes, that preceded the supply of readings and which were executed by applying an action-research methodology. Each focus-group exercise was intended to build on the preceding one: conceptualisation and approach were planned for the first focus group; the determination of outcomes and assessment criteria for the second; and student materials for the third. The fourth focus-group exercise was intended to develop ‘implementation guidelines’. This final focus group was meant to be followed by a national ‘launch’ meeting at which the final draft would be distributed to the participants and, more specifically, to invited guests.

The first two sessions were conducted as planned and progress was accordingly made on developing a curriculum framework. However, at the third session, issues were raised that, in the first place, questioned the application of industry or specialised workplace-based WIL in the ACET qualifications. Secondly, it fundamentally questioned assumptions about the nature of workplaces that were assumed to be appropriate to CET college students and, as a result, the areas or workplace specialisations for which the qualifications were preparing lecturers. This led to two additional focus groups being held to examine specifically the issue of industry or specialised workplace WIL in the ACET lecturer qualifications.

The first became the fourth focus group and the second, the sixth. After the first special ACET focus group, it became evident that the curriculum framework would need to be split into two: one for TVET and one for ACET. This split was considered necessary in order to resolve adequately the implementation of specialised workplace WIL in ACET lecturer qualifications.

Central to the debate on appropriate workplaces for specialised WIL for ACET lecturers was the applicability of industry as a site for WIL in the context of CET. Accordingly, a strong argument was put forward that placement in communities would be more suitable. However, although placement in communities was substantiated, the focus group recognised that this, too, would present challenges, as the following submission illustrates:

There is no one size fits all within community models and thus the entry points for WIL need to be flexible and variable. WIL will take place collaboratively with a wide variety of partners using innovative approaches. Each community is based on its own unique set of social norms. These may be considered functional when a community is regarded as safe and dysfunctional when a community is crime ridden. (Anon, 2018)

The statement that follows – which was submitted at the fourth focus group – captures the view of the participants, a significant group that represented dominant views on the purpose of ACET. As is discussed below, their view was in conflict with the discourse on industry or workplace-based WIL (Anon, 2018):

STATEMENT

We recognise the formal provision currently at Community Learning Centres as required by policy and needed by Communities but the policy also recognises the need for nonformal programmes in a wide range of areas, on a ‘needs’ basis, aligned strongly to local contexts, and to employment and community which are entrenched in Social Justice (Education White Paper 2013a) development opportunities in these contexts.

Set of principles and purpose

- ‘Community colleges should be established as part of consolidating the traditions and culture of popular, liberatory and emancipatory practices that are not beholden to the dictates of the state and capital.’
- ACET should be based in the context of ‘strengthening democratic participation, knowledge production and information process beyond state machineries and liberated from the human capital development paradigm’.
- ‘It should focus on building the competencies and practices required to advance collaborative and collective ways of living, active citizenship and activism for social, political and economic environmental and gender justice.’
- ‘This should be based on the imperatives determined by the specifics and the particularities of each community and the agenda and pace set by the community itself.’
- ACET should be informed by and anchored in ‘collective and participatory processes and practices of knowledge production’ and address issues of redress and transformation.

(Extracted from Comments on the Draft National Policy on Community Colleges, Vol 593, No. 381558. Pretoria, 7 November 2014.)

Some participants felt that industry or specialised workplace WIL would be applicable to some subject specialisations only and to others not at all. This view was echoed by Lyster and Land (2018) in their curriculum framework for the advanced diplomas for ACET. The curriculum framework drafted by Lyster and Land was another similarly funded and commissioned inter-university process conducted at the time and constituted by an overlapping group of representatives. Lyster and Land (2018:8) note:

There is some debate about what would constitute specialised workplace settings for an ACET language educator for example. There is an argument to be made that the specialised workplace setting is actually also a learning space like a classroom and that there is therefore no difference between the two. The concept of specialised workplace settings appears to have emerged from TVET contexts and is not necessarily applicable to all ACET subject specialisations. In fact, one view is that this section of WIL is not appropriate for ACET educators, and that the policy should be amended.

However, Lyster and Land (2018) conceded that specialised workplace-based WIL could be beneficial in some situations. They note (2018:8):

... [T]here are some contexts that, if used for WIL, would serve to give adult lecturers-in-training more insight into the needs of adult learners than they would gain in institutions offering formal education to adults, and hence into how to interpret the curriculum and shape their teaching. These may be organisations such as prisons where skills training is offered, or community organisations involved in savings and livelihoods support projects, health organisations, organisations promoting coping skills or trauma counselling, environmental awareness initiatives, or indeed any organisation aiming to extend understanding in any community. Equally, contexts for WIL may include work settings – industry, trade unions, agricultural extension initiatives, and so on. The selection of which organisation would be best for which student would obviously depend on students' specialisations and interests.

Clearly, the political technology (i.e. the policy) applied to realise the state's intention could not be implemented. It required either adaptation or the exclusion of a significant element of the community that the policies were intended to serve. From the two focus-group exercises that specifically focused on the implementation of specialised WIL in the ACET qualifications, three discourses emerged: the approaches towards TVET lecturer programmes, to the ACET lecturer qualifications, and to specialised workplace-based WIL in ACET. These are discussed below.

Industry-based WIL

One discourse is reflected in the approach to TVET lecturer programmes. The link between TVET programmes and industry practice, and also its function in reproducing skilled labour for the formal workplace, among other functions, through work placements, is generally accepted, and it is promoted by the state and the business community. The credibility of TVET lecturers is brought into question by the state in various policy documents through its statements that they need to have up-to-date workplace knowledge and expertise in their subject fields (South Africa, 2008:6; 2013a:17; 2013b:3). For instance, the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (South Africa, 2013a:17) states:

Workplace experience required by lecturers will also be prioritised over the next few years to ensure that their training is up to date with workplace needs and to provide lecturers with a better understanding of the needs of employers in their field.

Support for this discourse is clearly indicated in the WIL for Lecturers Project funded by the ETDP SETA and implemented by the SSACI. This project had as its ‘overall aim ... to improve the teaching and learning in participating colleges through systematic work-integrated learning (WIL) for lecturers’ (Smith, 2017:6). One of its objectives, furthermore, was to illustrate how WIL can be ‘integrated into the new professional qualifications being developed by universities, e.g. the Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching, and the Advanced Certificate in TVET’. In addition, the policy framework for TVET lecturers (South Africa, 2013b) provides directly for workplace/industry-based WIL to be formalised in TVET lecturer qualifications. The view noted by the policy (South Africa, 2013b:10) largely confirmed the discourse:

... all TVET college lecturers need to have up-to-date knowledge of the application and ... relevance to ... the workplace of the subjects they teach. Therefore exposure to ... and time spent in structured experience in workplace/industry settings, are crucial components of TVET lecturer qualifications.

For the supporters of this discourse, WIL in workplaces related to students’ areas of specialisation is a necessary element in the development of TVET lecturers: it is perceived to be an important element of building and establishing their credibility. For these supporters, the challenges presented are technical ones; and the solutions are to be found in empowering academics and their ‘industry partners’, aligning industry placements with placements in college classrooms, and integrating the industry WIL component into the rest of the programme that develops TVET lecturers.

Appropriate, specialised workplace-based WIL for ACET

A second discourse that emerged emanated from the academics responsible for the ACET lecturer qualifications: it reflects an attitude of acceptance of the policy for ACET lecturers

(South Africa, 2015b) in developing teaching staff for CET colleges. The CET colleges are expected to provide 'adults and youth, who are poorly educated, not studying or unemployed', with an opportunity to further their education or learn skills that will enable them to 'enter the labour market' or 'find alternative ways to earn sustainable livelihoods' (South Africa, 2013a:20). Whereas the CET colleges are currently focused on providing formal programmes, they are required to offer a broad range of formal and non-programmes 'on a "needs" basis, aligned strongly to local contexts, and to employment and community development opportunities in these contexts' (South Africa, 2015b:6). The programmes offered, the policy indicates (South Africa, 2015b:6), 'could' include programmes that lead to work. Programmes such as Early Childhood Development, Entrepreneurship, Plumbing, Construction, Carpentry, Electricity, Welding, Auto Body Repair, and Motor Mechanics are examples.

A curriculum system for formal adult education has also been developed for the CET colleges. This includes the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA) (South Africa, 2015a), at Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA), at Level 4 of the NQF (South Africa, 2014a). The GETCA includes academically oriented subjects, such as the official South African languages, Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, as well as vocational subjects, for instance Wholesale and Retail, Travel and Tourism, and Ancillary Health Care. In contrast, the NASCA consists only of academically oriented subjects, which include the official South African languages, the Human and Social Sciences, Mathematics, the Natural Sciences, and Economic and Management Sciences.

This discourse produced two approaches: one is that WIL should be aligned with the students' areas of specialisation. According to this approach, if a student has an academically oriented area of specialisation – a language or a science, for example – then WIL at a college, in the form of teaching practice, commonly applied in teacher education, is sufficient. For students with an area of specialisation that is linked to a workplace – for instance, Business Studies and Tourism Studies, WIL should be completed both in the context of the college and in that of their area of specialisation. Such students are therefore expected to be exposed to both forms of WIL in a manner similar to that of TVET students. The views related to this approach, while expressed in the focus groups, are not reflected in any policy document. In this first approach, it was understood that sites suitable for workplace WIL could include industrial and commercial businesses, government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community-based organisations (CBOs).

The second approach to this discourse focuses on the location of community colleges in communities and, as a result, it regards an ACET lecturer as a type of community worker. For proponents of this approach, ACET students should be exposed to WIL at a college in the form of teaching practice. In addition, they should spend time working 'in communities', doing community work related to their area of specialisation. Proponents of this discourse, again, expressed different views. One view, commonly expressed in the focus groups, is that WIL at colleges, in the form of teaching practice, was sufficient for workplace-based

development. When at a community college, it is argued, students should be exposed to both the classroom and the context in which the classroom is located.

Antagonism towards, and rejection of, specialised workplace-based WIL in ACET

The third discourse is reflected in the ‘statement’ noted earlier. In terms of this discourse, CET colleges are expected to collaborate with other organisations on programme provision; these organisations include NGOs, CBOs, government departments and businesses (South Africa, 2017; Land & Aitchison, 2017). They are expected to do so in order to service the education and training needs of the community in which they are located. Furthermore, as Lyster and Land (2018) point out, this ‘is the most varied feature’ of the South African post-school education landscape, ‘with the broadest scope in terms of target audience, institutional location (including non-formal education), range and types of content’ (Lyster & Land, 2018:4).

The focus of this discourse is adults and their learning needs. International definitions of adult education have shifted over many years and reflect ‘changing priorities and ideological shifts in the conceptualisation of what constitutes this elusive, wide-ranging and yet marginalised field’ (Lyster & Land, 2018:4). For Lyster and Land (2018), ‘adult learning and education (ALE) encompasses all incidental forms of learning and continuing education (undertaken by adults)’, its provision located in ‘the traditions and culture of popular, liberatory and emancipatory practices’. In terms of this discourse, education should be informed by, and anchored in, collective and participatory processes and practices of knowledge production, and it should deal with issues of redress and transformation. Both the tradition and the intention of this educational discourse are contrary to the ‘dictates of the state and capital’ that industry-based WIL supports. It is, furthermore, based on ‘imperatives’ determined by the dynamics of communities as unique entities with a characteristic ‘agenda and pace’.

Discursive demands: Need for a separate discourse on specialised, workplace WIL for ACET lecturers

Faced with these concerns and varying levels of antagonism, the focus group took a decision to separate the discourse on industry or specialised workplace WIL for TVET lecturers from that of WIL for ACET. The former was clearly formulated and aligned with international practice and the experience of placing TVET lecturers in workplaces associated with areas of specialisation. The latter, as with the form of education and training of which it formed a part, were not clear.

For the ACET qualifications, the industry or specialised workplace WIL element clearly needed to include more than the ‘industry-based settings’ (e.g. factories, worksites, offices, etc.) noted in the policy (South Africa, 2015b:13). In the development of the curriculum framework for specialised workplace WIL for ACET lecturers, the nature of ACET, both

as a form of employment and encapsulating the fields of educational specialisation that it supported, was highlighted.

The notion of ACET – in the form of adult education and training (AET) and CET as subsectors of continuing education and training (South Africa, 2015b:5) – and its allocation to that function belie both its complexity and the dynamics of its management. The ‘sectors’ are not merely demographically diverse, which is acknowledged in the policy, but they also include a very broad range of institutions, including NGOs, CBOs, faith-based organisations (FBOs), local government, government departments and agencies, other educational institutions, and employers (South Africa, 2017; Land & Aitchison, 2017). Some learning centres have been funded by various state departments and have been ‘migrated’ to assume control over provincial CET colleges. Others remain self-funded or donor-funded and are therefore not subject to state procedures.

The role players in these sectors are also diverse and include state-based and established institutions with international links to micro-organisations. One participant (CPUT, 2018), representing a national network, argued that the provision of community work differs nationally, regionally and at local level:

- At a national level, community work is dominated by the state, state-funded institutions and international funding agencies. At this level, a number of national NGOs exist, but these tend to have grown out of institutions that do local-level community work.
- At a regional level, operators include established NGOs and CBOs, local government and community-support projects funded by business and other social institutions, including universities and religious institutions.
- Local-level operators include fieldworkers, community workers and activists who support communities or elements within communities. This level of community work most starkly reflects the diversity, pressure and, at times, danger of community-based work. The implications for the placement of ACET education students in identifiable workplaces is that student experiences will differ significantly, depending on the type of institution at which they are placed and the level at which they operate.

In addition to the work of community-based institutions being diverse, institutions that constitute learning centres of provincial CETs and independent providers offer a very broad range of types of learning; these vary in purpose, content, formality, and the type of learner involved. According to the state (CPUT, 2019), the general demographics of community learners have changed: from adults requiring part-time tuition to youths preferring full-time, formal studies. It is to this new demographic that the GETCA and NASCA curricula, CET colleges and, as a result, the policy on ACET lecturer qualifications (South Africa, 2015b) are geared.

Programmes registered by higher education institutions are required to align subject modules to the Classification of Educational Subject Matter (CESM) categories. The CESM categories include a list that shows the ‘fields of study’ and ‘courses that higher education institutions are

obliged to use to classify subject modules, and are used for annual data returns’ (South Africa, 2008:1); these are also used to determine subsidies. For example, the 2014 revision (South Africa, 2014b:5–6) included ‘0707 Teaching, Leading and Researching in Community and Adult Education and Training Contexts’; 0707 is ‘an area of study that prepares individuals to teach, research and/or provide curriculum leadership in the Ancillary Health Care subject specialization in adult learning centres, community education and training colleges and other adult learning settings’ (South Africa, 2014b:20). It indicates subject modules appropriate to ACET for subsidy purposes.

The list included for study in this context is limited to subjects aligned with the state’s national curriculum for adults. Fields related to community education, such as gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS awareness, and civil and legal rights education, are not included. The discursive power of CESM categories means that the pressure of compliance results in the registration of ACET lecturer qualifications that are more likely to be aligned with state curriculum requirements than with diverse and changing community needs.

As a tool of discursive power, the CESM categories not only influence the ‘fields of study’, but also affect the freedom providers have to structure their programmes, and this could, in turn, influence the philosophical approach that underlies what is offered. The titles included in the CESM categories are those associated with conventional theories of mainstream school-based education and its management. Providers are obliged either to align their subject modules to the CESM categories or ‘fit’ content into names included in a CESM category. If providers include content not aligned with the CESM categories, the content would have to be included as additional credits.

The form of adult and community education noted in the statement (Anon, 2018) reproduced above, which was submitted at the third focus group, is a system that is based on ‘popular, liberatory and emancipatory practices’. These practices are aligned with the idea of ‘strengthening democratic participation’ and are ‘informed by and anchored in collective and participatory processes and practices of knowledge production’. This system fundamentally contradicts the structure envisaged by the state, which is reflected in the WIL requirements of the ACET lecturer policy, the post-2015 CET college structuring, the GETCA and NACSA curricula, and the CESM categories.

Compromises: Separate curriculum framework for ACET; broader definitions of WIL and sites of learning

After the fifth focus group, the combined TVET/ACET curriculum framework was split into two and the ACET version of the framework was reinterpreted to respond more adequately to concerns associated with the implementation of the specialised workplace WIL requirement in the ACET qualifications. The sixth and final focus group was conducted in 2019, specifically to identify the extent to which the ACET curriculum framework met the needs of the dissenting discourse and, if necessary, to adapt it further to deal with these needs.

Two points of contention appeared to remain. The first was encapsulated in the view expressed in the statement above that WIL is ' beholden to the dictates of the state and capital' (Anon, 2018). While it is accepted that WIL methodologies subordinate practices within education to those of the workplace because the aim is to prepare students for the world of work, 'service-learning' methodologies do not. As with workplace learning, service learning involves learning through placement in another organisation, but, while workplace learning is concerned with work and usually takes place in a business setting, service learning involves community service and takes place in a state-based or community organisation. Service learning, like WIL, involves 'a structured learning experience' that involves providing a community service while also learning about the context in which service is provided, the connection between the service and academic coursework, and a student's role as a citizen (CHE, 2011:76).

While the processes involved in WIL and service learning are similar, the philosophy underlying service learning (civic responsibility) is different from that of workplace-based WIL (work experience). The philosophy underlying service learning, unlike that of WIL, is compatible with community-based learning. Furthermore, the position of the education provider is different: whereas an educational institution is subordinate to a business in a WIL exercise, the university is a service provider when engaged in service learning, one perceived to have knowledge that its community needs and that is provided through service learning. Applying service-learning models is therefore suitable for CBOs, which, it was argued, would free a provider from the 'dictates of the state and capital' (Du Plessis & Van Dyk, 2013:78). Service learning, furthermore, provides development opportunities with regard to data-collection methods commonly used in community work and includes community listening surveys, timelines and mapping exercises.

The second point of contention related to the identification of appropriate 'sites' at which students could be placed, a challenge that was commonly perceived. While Lyster and Land (2018:37) determined that non-industry-based settings for workplace WIL could include 'trade unions, churches, support groups, co-operative organisations, women's groups, prisons, rehabilitation centres, interest groups, libraries and skills training centres', it was generally accepted that it was unlikely that these organisations would have the capacity for WIL or have the necessary experience in service learning.

A suggestion that emanated from the discussion was to use CET colleges for placement both for WIL related to education and for specialist field experience, through setting colleges up as 'anchor hosts'. As an anchor host, a CET college would serve as a place for teaching practice and for community-based, specialised workplace WIL by providing a conduit for students to enter and work with community organisations and businesses through the college's community network.

The anchor host idea has two defining elements. The first is that it simplifies the organisation of WIL. Instead of a university developing separate WIL agreements with CBOs and local

businesses for each student, it enters into an agreement with one college and shifts the responsibility for specialised workplace WIL to it. A danger identified in using CET colleges as anchor hosts is that the specialised workplace WIL component could be subordinated to classroom-based WIL or by any organisational weaknesses of the college. To ensure success, structures, rewards and personnel would need to be put in place in the CET colleges.

The second defining element is that the role of the CET college in providing WIL in the form of teaching practice for ACET lecturers is expanded to include its serving as the site for specialised workplace WIL. Whereas it was acknowledged that the danger with this was that it could confuse specialised workplace WIL with teaching practice, it was nevertheless felt that this could be overcome through the use of different assessments for the two forms of WIL.

The concept of anchor host was accepted at the sixth focus-group exercise, on condition that such an arrangement would be suitable only at community education and training centres (CETCs) that are fully functional, offer programmes in both formal and non-formal contexts, and collaborate closely with organisations and businesses in their local community. A further condition was that the university offering the qualification would have to work closely with CETC anchor hosts in order to ensure that the specialised workplace-based WIL met the requirements of the policy and the curriculum framework.

Conclusion

More than a decade ago, Fataar (2003:33), in his analysis of the alignment of the state's higher education policy with its macro-development plan, argued that a crucial understanding of the alignment of higher education discourse '... is [understanding] the struggle for hegemony within the government over the overall direction of government policy'. However, implementing teaching policy is not a struggle for hegemony within the state apparatus: it is one between a state which has developed into a neo-liberal structure and the educational discourses that supported its inception. As a result, what in other national contexts would be considered and accepted as a dissenting discourse is accommodated instead.

In the case of the curriculum frameworks for WIL for TVET and ACET lecturer programmes, the accommodation was accepted by the assigned representatives from universities from which the dissenting discourse emanated. The outcomes of the various institutional registration processes will determine the extent to which the state's discourse has been enforced.

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