

EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TVET STAKEHOLDERS' EXPERIENCES OF IMPLEMENTING WORK-BASED EDUCATION IN RURAL ECOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) stakeholders' experiences while implementing Work-Based Education (WBE), also known as Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) for students in rural ecology. The study was conducted at two campuses of the Umfolozi TVET College, in the northern KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) is a new and modern qualification offered at Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges since January 2007. It is offered at Levels 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework which are equivalent to Grades 10, 11 and 12. The NCV programmes were earmarked for the study in order to explore the suitability of these programmes for the rural-based learners. Purposive sampling was employed to identify the sample size of six participants, which comprised campus managers, senior lecturers and WBE champions. The findings revealed that college management does not prioritise the needs of TVET students during implementation of WBE programme among rural based students. It was also discovered that college management seems not to understand their role in ensuring compliance with regard to the implementation of WBE. It was evident that there is a need not only to maintain strong ties with existing host-employers, but also to ensure that new host-employers are recruited to help address the shortage of places for students to do their WBE. The study recommends that there should be a clear vision for the implementation of WIL in the rural context, and that the vision should be clearly communicated to all role players to ensure effective implementation of the programme.

Keywords: Work Based Education, Sustainable Learning, Rural Ecology, Vocational Education, Training.

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing concern about the alarming rate of youth unemployment on the continent of Africa (Olaniran & Mncube, 2018) especially in South Africa which is considered to be a major economic player in the continent. The statistics from the Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the second quarter of 2018 revealed an increase in the unemployment rate ((Statistics SA, 2018). The majority of the unemployed youths are graduates from Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) colleges who happen to come from rural hinterland of South Africa. These ever-increasing numbers pose serious challenges to the stability of the country as this might escalate the tension in the labour market. The solution

rests with most TVET colleges offering vocational education for the majority of underprivileged students from different parts of the country. Recent studies have argued that the TVET programme lacks the realistic perspective of what vocational training should entail and accomplish (Peterson et al., 2017). This continues despite the post-1994 reforms undergone by this sector in an attempt to improve the quality of programmes, workforce experience and employment potential. However, very little improvement was recorded (DHET, 2012). There are several complexities, in particular for institutions located in the rural ecology, as they are faced with huge number of students enrolling in the programme. The demand for quality education in line with the needs for rural ecologies remains a daunting challenge that the sector is yet to address with any degree of success. The irony though is that most of these TVET institutions aspire to offer vocational programmes which conforms to urban ecologies but unfortunately irrelevant for the rural skill set and demand (Bourn et al., 2016). By design, TVET programmes are all-encompassing as they often attract students with low levels of academic attainment (Wu & Lou, 2016). This paper argues that most TVET colleges located in rural ecologies should realign their programmes to nurture skills and expertise mostly needed by rural ecology. The question to be asked though is to what extent does TVET programmes are aligned to the needs of the local communities under their jurisdiction? Do these programmes benefit graduates to take up positions in agriculture and aquaculture in order to serve the local industries? The answer appears to be no, because these TVET programmes seem to lack relevant experience for students from rural backgrounds.

The most difficult challenge facing these institutions servicing rural underprivileged communities emanate from the limited work-based opportunities available for students (ACTE, 2015). It can also be difficult to provide students with an acceptable range of career exploration and work-based learning experiences, as many rural areas have only a few employers and industries (Peterson et al., 2017). The TVET strategy as suggested by UNESCO (2014) seeks to strengthen capacities within the sector and focuses on transforming this sector to provide fit-for-purpose programmes, while, in the main, they cater for young people and adults who can build sustainable learning environment. Five major objectives are addressed by the UNESCO strategy with a view to establishing a strong academic programme for rural communities. First, special attention should be given to skills development for youth employment in the rural ecology. Second, there is a need for equitable access to teaching and learning. Third, the image and quality of the TVET sector needs to be improved. Fourth, the sector needs to be better financed, coupled with strengthening innovation and research into the sector. The last objective is to focus on sustainable development. This paper, therefore.

Exploring Rural Learning Ecologies

The rural ecology actually deals with the issue of establishing a balance between the rural population and local natural resources (Čustović et al., 2013). Rural learning ecology is a type of learning engagement designed to equip youths with necessary knowledge and skills needed to live in harmony with the environment. South Africa's rural ecologies remain disadvantaged compared to their counterparts in urban areas in terms of resources and opportunities. TVET colleges located in rural ecologies face difficulties that lead to pessimistic attitudes which unwittingly contribute towards vocational education becoming ineffective and producing limited education results. The Department of Higher Education is constitutionally mandated to provide quality education relevant to the local context. Studies by Ndlovu & Gatsheni (2013) is critical of the government's lack of intervention in the restructuring of TVET education for easy access and

relevance to rural students and communities. The study proposed for government to eliminate the rural-urban divide by focusing on the production of knowledge that serves the objectives of sustainable rural development.

Most students in these TVET colleges are sceptical about the relevance of the curriculum. Findings from previous studies shows that there are many challenges, some directly impacting on teaching and learning while others point to a lack of experiential learning. It becomes clear that the vocational training provided on the rural ecology context have not met with the expectation compared to its urban counterpart and this is not sustainable for rekindling the rural economy and sustainable community development (Barlow & Stone, 2011). These students seem to suffer from the aftermath of this so-called knowledge deficiency and marginalisation based on their source of training. In this article, ecological learning is explored through the understanding of stories of champions, managers and lecturers at the coalface of vocational education, which highlights ecological principles, design, and interconnectedness (Holmgren, 2004).

Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning Work Based Education

This study is underpinned by Experiential Learning Theory. This theory can be traced back to the work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget and David Kolb who are regarded as the pioneers of this theory. Dewey (1938) asserts that the idea of people learning by doing or active involvement can be achieved through experience; hence, the term Workplace-Based Experience. Therefore, for Dewey, knowledge is a collaboration of the person with the environment which has a lot to do with the way the person interacts with the environment. In the process, an individual person is actively engaged in predicting and controlling his future experience, adds Sidorsky (1977). Workplace experience can further be explained by Piaget's process of adaptation, which consists of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the process by which a person takes information from the environment into his or her mind and accommodation means the difference made to the person's mind by the process of assimilation (Satterly, 1987).

Kolb developed the Experiential Learning model, where learning is composed of four elements (Malale & Sentsho, 2014; Tennant, 2006). These elements are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. In order for learning to be effective, the educator should take each learner through each element or stage and ensure that links are made between them. At each stage, learning can start with concrete experience that serves as a basis for reflection. Through reflection, the information is assimilated to form abstract concepts. The concepts are used to develop new theories about the world. The theories are then tested. This model of learning can be used in various education settings including vocational and general education (Cherry, 2014; Dochy et al., 2011; Malale & Sentsho, 2014; Tennant, 2006).

Various ways have been developed over the years by educators to enhance the process of experiential learning by facilitating students' critical reflection on experience, by promoting holistic experiences in instructional settings, coaching and mentoring in the midst of experience, and by assessment of the experience (Cherry, 2014).

Dewey (1910) defines reflection as an "*Active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it*". Boud (2000) adapts Dewey's definition but includes experience and not only thought as comprising the reflective domain. Drawing from Boud's (2000) view of reflection, it is apparent that reflection is about students processing their experience in different ways by exploring their understanding of what they are doing, why they are doing it and the impact it has on others.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

The aim of this study was to critically explore TVET stakeholders' experiences of implementing work-based education for students in a rural ecology in order to understand their experiences and implications for employment prospects.

1. What are stakeholders' experiences of implementing Work-Based Education for students in rural ecology?
2. Why do TVET stakeholders have these particular experiences when implementing Work-Based Education for students in rural ecology?

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a study that was located within the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative data were generated over a period of two years from 2015 to 2016 from campus managers, lectures and champions. For the purpose of this study, data generated from these participants were considered important and were collected simultaneously.

A qualitative approach was employed to elicit information from the respondents in the sample. It was used since it is concerned with answering the why question through the analysis of unstructured information. This approach was chosen because it does not rely on statistics or numbers as is the case with the quantitative data. The main purpose of the researcher was to dig deep into respondents' understanding of the TVET system in the rural context through their words and actions during the interview process. Open-ended interview questions were used to collect data on the setbacks that TVET college management encounters in implementing the third component of the NCV curriculum structure.

Purposive convenience sampling was used to generate data. Campus managers, senior lecturers and WBE champions had the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions, and they were relatively easy to reach. In this study, two out of four NCV campus managers, six senior vocational lecturers and thirteen WBE champions took part in this research, which constitutes a 50% representation of the TVET colleges in the Northern Zululand region. The reason for using multiple sources of data was to enhance the authenticity of data and achieve a measure of trustworthiness. It was important to protect the participants by giving them pseudonyms to protect their identities as part of the ethical research practices as espoused by Rand Afrikaans University (2002) were observed in the study.

Both theory and data-driven qualitative content analysis were used (Maree, 2014). The aim of the study was borne in mind during the analysis process, which was to determine whether TVET colleges' NCV curriculum structure serves the interests of students from rural ecologies (DHET, 2013) and the impact of the SSACI initiative in offering workplace-based experience for students. The responses to the open-ended questions of the qualitative investigation were captured verbatim on a matrix. Responses were then analysed to identify commonalities and trends with regard to the setbacks campus management encounters when they have to send students for WBE.

RUSULSTS AND DISCUSSION

TVET students undertaking vocational training in their local institutions located in rural ecologies face many challenges that render their educational qualifications questionable. Their programme is expected to integrate theory and practice. However, the nature of programmes offered by these institutions makes it hard for them access relevant in-service training. The

shortage of companies that can offer work-based training remains a serious obstacle for the sustainability of most of these TVET sectors. Nevertheless, lecturers and managers are expected to play a big part in how WBE is administered in order to provide necessary experience for students. The lecturers and managers freely expressed their views with regard to how they run WBE and shared their knowledge of WIL and WBE for rural students and the impact of this initiative on their programme completion.

The Significance of WBE Training

The WBE component is one of the mandatory instruments used by the TVET sector to improve the quality of the training programme and give confidence to potential employers that students are capable of doing the work. The evidence from the findings suggests that WBE officers based in central offices must be more visible on campuses to give necessary support to WBE champions. In 2012, 48 TVET colleges management teams were trained, and a revised WBE manual was produced (SSACI, 2012).

Findings from the in-depth interviews revealed that as not enough training was provided to assist the implementers to understand the programme fully, and therefore boost their confidence in implementing WBE. It was very interesting to learn that implementers tended to be left to find out for themselves how to implement WBE, as shown in the following comments by WBE champions:

WBE champ 4: "I have never attended any training; I was thrown into the deep end as nobody in the programme was willing to assist."

WBE champ 5: "I attended only one training about placing students and was shown the documents to fill for WBE. In my view, it was not training because I was not capacitated for WBE."

It is evident from the above responses that WBE tends to be a paper exercise when an implementer is called for training but is only shown how to fill out documents instead of being capacitated in the implementation of WBE. Most participants had had one training session four years previously, with no refresher training thereafter. Nor had there been training for the new college employees who were expected to run with the programme as the NCV curriculum structure stipulates. Most respondents thought that both training and refresher training should be conducted on a regular basis, because new employees join the college owing (amongst other reasons) to resignations, transfers and college expansion of the programmes. The newly appointed employees require training on WBE. A session once in seven years will not assist champions in understanding WBE as a compulsory component of the curriculum. One interesting view shared by some respondents was that WBE champions must be trained within the industry to be hands-on with the latest technology in order to align what they teach with what industry requires.

The Challenge of Budgetary Constraints to Implement WBE

Findings on the budgetary allocation for WBE showed that placing students near their homes, especially those coming from rural ecologies, can ease the budgetary constraints of the students, and where circumstances force students to travel to access host-employers, they should receive a stipend. It was evident that campus management should intervene to ensure that

students who cannot afford the travelling costs to get to their host-employers are assisted to attend WBE. The majority of students from poor households with no source of income are the worst affected as stated by one of the campus managers:

CM1: "The DHET allocates a reasonable budget for WBE where a small portion can be given to students as a stipend to cater for transport costs only, though students are asked to pay out from their own pockets, and the college reimburses them at a later stage. This arrangement sometimes is not feasible for poor students, and it always put us at loggerheads with our students especially when we either fail to pay them or pay them late."

CM2: "Implementers on the ground take information from the workplace officials in Central Office. The WBE budget is always estimated to be in line with the budget we receive from SETAs; however, due technical difficulties we fail to communicate with students how the budget integrates the needs of WBE and those of the College."

These are grey areas which pose huge concerns for rural students whose wellbeing depends on these professionals for budgeting for their WBE. It was clear that campus managers do not prioritise the most vulnerable groups studying at their colleges in their budgets. The findings indicate that senior members of most TVET colleges thought that the WBE budget should be dealt with at campus level, as campuses have different numbers of students, with different geographical locations and socio-economic backgrounds. If budgetary planning were dealt with at campus level, it would allow for each case to be considered on its own merits and assist in addressing students' concerns about the lack of transparency on how the WBE budget is allocated per student. The implemented curriculum will benefit greatly from equitable allocation of resources for WBE implementation. This allocation directly impacts on the work done by the WBE champions who felt hampered by the system. Their general understanding on budgetary allocations was that:

WBE champ 6: "The campus is not responsible for the WBE budget. It is done at the college level by the most senior WBE officials. The irony is that these managers have no clue about the socio-economic background of students we are teaching hence there is no transparency in the way the WBE budget is managed."

WBE champ 7: "Lecturers have no knowledge of WBE budget, and that is understandable however they are expected to provide answers when students seek answers. My hope was that few experienced lecturers sit in these forums to provide personal experience about students who come from deprived context as their quality of learning always suffer. Suffice to say that I cannot comment as this is administered at college level. There is no transparency about how much is allocated to each student for WBE."

WBE champ 10: "We do not deal with the budget as there are people employed to do that in Central Office. We act as a link between the campus and WBE officials. Our link does not help in any shape or form in solving everyday complex challenges for rural students."

The issue of funding remains a sore point for the majority of campus managers in this province. No one is prepared to provide a solution that targets students coming from needy communities. Students are regarded as a homogenous group, and this often leads to conflict between students and management. To address the funding crisis, one senior lecturer interviewed suggested a very interesting method of making funds accessible to needy students:

SL 5: "Campuses should establish a fundraising wing ready to assist needy students by meeting them halfway. The private sector needs these students in good shape after completing their programmes. You can imagine the level of frustration when it comes to funding their WBE. The second method could be that the college request some form of direct intervention from the SETAs to sponsor students for WBE."

SL 3: “Most colleges are not used to the idea of listening to students for financial assistance; instead they always refer these students to NSFAS in times of crisis, and this is a reactive approach rather than proactive and is counterproductive. This must change in my view if we want to be relevant and decolonise our education system.

In this study, it became apparent that transformation in higher education is necessary considering that implementers of WBE are also critical of the administrative failures in rural areas. There is a need for a coordinated process that is informed by research on the budgetary allocations in these TVET colleges. One can only deduce that students continue to endure discrimination based on affordability. The level playing field is a distant reality as SL3 concluded. In response to this challenge, Wolf (2011) stresses that comprehensive programmes of learning and activity for all young people should be the focus for educational institutions, and for funding oversight. In England, for instance, policy-making, funding and oversight are integrated to encourage young people to focus on their programmes (ACTE, 2015). This would be possible in South Africa if the change from per-qualification to per-student funding were implemented, although it would not automatically provide incentives to minimise effort and maximise revenue any more than it does at university or school level. Wolf (2011) states “*But it will achieve something crucially important for the internal dynamics of an institution, by focusing management and staff attention on student programmes rather the minutiae of individual qualification fees*”. Wolf (2011), in his report on the situation in Australia, also stresses the importance of funding for vocational students to be on a programme by programme basis, with a given level of funding per student, a view shared by WBE Champions 6 and 10 above.

Shortage of Host-Employers for a WBE Programme

Findings revealed that not all levels of the NCV programme are prioritised for the WBE programme. This goes against the principles underpinning the NCV curriculum which requires that students to gain experience from local industries to complete their programme. In-service training is standard practice. However, the lack thereof is attributed to the shortage of host-employers for accommodating the majority of TVET college students. Some respondents thought that placing students near where they stay could help address the funding crisis; however, the fact that industries are generally located in urban areas compounds the problem. That could also help with paying for transport, which comes at a major cost for poor students. Another concern raised was that strong ties ought to be built and maintained between the colleges and the existing host-employers. An effort should also be made to recruit new host-employers who understand the curriculum framework for these NCV colleges. Some interesting strategies were shared by the respondents in helping to deal with this problem.

WBE champ1: “Only Level 4 students are sent for WBE. Level 2 and Level 3 are not sent for work exposure owing to the shortage of host-employers.”

WBE champ 2: “Maybe we can look at the marketing department of the college where print media and radio can be used so that the college develops a lasting agreement with the host-employers, the DHET and the Department of Labour. WBE must be made compulsory for all companies, and the government must subsidise WBE through a skills levy.”

WBE champ 3: “It is a difficult one as most students live far away from local host-employers. Maybe looking for employers in the places closer to where students live may assist, and allowing students to look for their host-employers may assist too.”

Over and above this, most respondents thought these colleges should provide relevant training to students aligned to local industries. Industries refuse to offer students WBE if they are doing programmes that do not benefit their operations. The experience of one WBE champion made this point very succinctly.

WBE champ 5: “WBE officials must first confirm for the employer how this WBE will benefit the industry. That will make industries open doors for our students.”

This view was also shared by one of the senior lecturers:

SL 4: “The campus should establish relationships with relevant host-employers before placement by means of Open Days when host-employers can be invited in order for them to feel part of a bigger family.”

Findings in Marock (2015) revealed that the challenge of a shortage of host-employers affects most TVET colleges. However, the case of False Bay TVET college makes for interesting reading. The False Bay TVET College approaches this aspect by encouraging their students to identify their own WBE host-employers, and only turn to the Job Placement Department when they have exhausted other avenues in sourcing one. This view resonates with that of the WBE Champion 3 above.

Over and above that, another solution can be of valuable assistance in dealing with the challenge of the shortage of host-employers, namely, to utilise ad-hoc work experience in addition to the normal structured three-week placements (Marock, 2015). Ad-hoc work experience will take students to work events and exhibitions, which provide valuable experience and afford them additional training hours, according to False Bay TVET college initiative. The college indicates that through some of these events, they are able to establish niche opportunities for graduates, some of which represent new areas of work. This view can be of benefit in combating the challenge of the shortage of host-employers. Wolf (2011) states that the labour market should understand the importance of genuine employment experience, and does far more than at present to help young people obtain. It should, therefore, be taken very seriously. This view is shared by WBE Champion 5 above.

NCV Curriculum Critique by Industries or Host-Employers

It was apparent from the findings that one of the burning issues about the current TVET curriculum is that it is weak, and not flexible enough to meet the needs of rural ecologies or the requirements demanded by technological changes and diverse needs of different users, as Gewer (2010) asserts. Furthermore, the quality of TVET graduates has declined in recent years owing to poor instructional methods, incompetent lecturers, outdated or inadequate training equipment, lack of meaningful work experience, and lack of supervision during attachment. The graduates of the TVET sector experienced a so-called technology shock when they finally enter the job market (Nyerere, 2009).

Findings confirmed that NCV is not understood by industries, which is part of the reason it is criticised, and not accepted. Most respondents thought that the NCV curriculum was made known to industries from the very start, in order for them to have that sense of ownership which would result in support being given to the TVET colleges. It is relatively easy to give one's support to a programme if one understands the benefits it yields and if one is actively involved. This was found lacking, as is revealed in the following responses:

WBE champ 9: "Some employers are struggling to even define what NCV is, to such an extent that they prefer Report 191 programmes, forgetting that N-courses have no practical component, whereas NCV covers all three components."

WBE champ 10: "We understand NCV as lecturers, but the host-employers do not."

WBE champ 12: "It should have been addressed a long time ago because, in the NCV curriculum, industries should have an input on what is to be taught. In doing so, they would have ownership. Vocational textbooks are written by authors with no industry experience. If technology advances, textbooks become irrelevant, and so does what is taught in the TVET colleges."

WBE champ 13: "Not a lot of marketing was done when the NCV programme was initially implemented. Part of the reason it is criticised is that its strengths and benefits are not known. There is still the negative perception that NCV is only for school dropouts or those who have no way to go further with their studies."

WBE champ 8: "The programme is new in the country, and the Department of Basic Education as the chief employer for the Early Childhood Development (ECD programme) is not fully aware of it."

A serious cause for concern was revealed by the findings below, which raised eyebrows considering the fact that NCV was introduced in 2007. They indicate that the personnel responsible for marketing NCV to the relevant stakeholders did not do so very effectively. One wonders that eleven years down the line, findings have revealed that:

SL 1: "We have some employers who do not even know what NCV stands for."

SL 2: "I believe the criticism because I have encountered it while speaking with the host employer because they do not understand NCV as they understand Report 191."

These responses are similar to the ones given by the WBE champions above. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the college to ensure that students are supplied with necessary protective clothes, not only for WBE but also for the practical training centres where they are taken for the practical component. It is irresponsible, said WBE champion 1, to send students for work experience without the necessary equipment, especially that which has to do with their safety.

WBE champ 1: "Some companies have different safety measures. For example, they require students to have protective clothes before they can be given any work exposure. The College must place orders for Personal Protective Clothes (PPEs) before students are placed for relevant work exposure."

There were no placement requirements when NCV was first introduced. The only requirement for the learner to enrol for NCV was a Grade 9 pass in the General Education and Training (GET) band, which was a challenge on its own. One can argue that a Grade 9 learner is not mature enough to face the challenges of the complex curriculum in the NCV programme. This coincides with the view of WBE champ 11 below that the first intake of NCV was just for filling up the programme. However, on a positive note, what raises hope about NCV is his response concerning noticeable changes observed from the year 2013:

WBE champ 11: "In the beginning, the industrial world had no understanding of NCV. The first intake of the NCV was just for filling up the programme, but later on, relevant placements were made to suit industry's expectations. From 2013 to 2015, the college received good reports about the NCV programme from local industries."

Wolf's (2011) findings on the Australian situation revealed that there is a mismatch between labour market requirements and vocational education provision. Furthermore, it was revealed that this had deteriorated in part because of education and training policies which were at odds with labour market dynamics. It is stated in the report that, at present, England's vocational education provision is seriously ill-aligned with industry requirements and technological developments in some key respects. This is also the case with South Africa.

Setbacks Hindering WBE Implementation

The findings revealed that a shortage of host-employers in the geographical location of the campuses makes it very hard for students to reach employers as they are far from where they stay. It was also clear that it is unfair to reduce the number of days for workplace exposure to a mere week for National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 4 students in contrast to the minimum of three weeks of an ideal placement period in the workplace. The placement of all students occurs mainly in the June-July holidays. One senior lecturer responded:

SL 1: "One of the challenges is that students cannot afford to go to the workplace, so the college must look at a small stipend. For me, one week for work exposure is just a paper exercise."

The growing number of students in the TVET sector makes it even more difficult for the sector to afford all students at all levels a chance for workplace exposure. The attitude of students towards the experience and the attitudes they encounter in the workplace is another cause for concern for some respondents, especially where some employers feel that having students is a waste of time, forgetting that experience cannot be bought. Some employers treat logbooks as a paper exercise, thus indirectly making the whole experience irrelevant and a waste of time for students. In view of this, participants tend to believe that partnerships must be strengthened. SL4 concurs with the notion that:

"Some students do not take WBE seriously: they easily absent themselves from work without any valid explanation. Some even ask, is the kind of experience we need? I will rather stay at home and default if this is how we should be treated."

Marock (2015) shared a similar view about the consequences of failing to manage students' attitudes and expectations as learners' attitudes can have an enormous impact on the college's relationships with host-employers. In certain industries, students are treated as 'tea-boys' and 'girls'. They can easily be discouraged when the workplace does not provide the expected workplace experience. The consequence of this is the negative attitudes and/or underperformance which lead to employers' reluctance to host more students and possible withdrawal from the process.

SL 3: "The College has employed two WBE officials who do not understand the programme. The WBE officials' duty, amongst others, is to show the host-employers how WBE is a win-win situation, how it will benefit both parties involved."

WBE champ 4: "WBE officials based at Central Office have no knowledge of industry. Ideally, there should be officials to service each campus, as the ones based centrally only service some campuses at the expense of others."

A disturbing observation made by WBE champions was that some employers treat students as cheap labour to help them raise their productivity by only emphasising production at the expense of the students exploring the industry and obtaining relevant experience. WBE champions and campus management had the same views with regard to the duties of WBE officials. It was evident from their responses that very little have been done by these officials to ensure effective WBE implementation on campus. The respondents believed that to be a major setback.

CONCLUSION

The article provided an in-depth critical synthesis of results based on the findings obtained from the fieldwork. It is clear that WBE is not effectively implemented because the programmes and pedagogies are aligned with rural ecologies. In most campuses, it is just a paper exercise/theoretical assessment. A criticism of the NCV was confirmed by respondents in that, in sending students out for workplace exposure, many industry people seem not to understand it. The DHET stresses the importance of WBE for students. Ignorance of the policies of the college/campus management results in the vision for WBE, action plans and college WBE strategy not being fully developed. Another alarming finding was the lack of monitoring and evaluation of WBE. As WBE is part of the NCV curriculum structure, it must be assessed and monitored. The shortage of host-employers was another reason for the failure to fully implement NCV. Since the NCV curriculum is relatively new, training is necessary for implementers on the ground to know how the component works. Lack of full support from the campus management and WBE officers in the central office makes implementing this component extremely difficult.

Lecturers should have opportunities to question their specific practices based on their experience. The notion of power and privilege should be changed to service needy rural students. A history of neglect characterises the realities of skill deficiency, classism, and other forms of prejudice. By questioning and examining dominant worldviews and ways of seeing leadership in these TVET colleges, and introducing alternative perspectives of employment opportunities for TVET college students, such as a living-systems paradigm, students can begin to expand their understanding of vocational education.

As the WBE component and the TVET sector are new, constant training must be conducted to assist college employees to fully understand the sector as a whole, as well as the NCV components. Another concern that was evident from the findings is that WBE officers based in central offices must be visible on campuses to give necessary support to the campus management and WBE champions.

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