A model to operate an on-campus retail store for workplace experiential learning

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Many retailers argue that university students do not have the practical experience and skills required in the workplace when graduating. This paper reports on research undertaken to address this issue and to identify a model to guide development and implementation of a retail store, on a university campus, to be used for work-integrated learning. A literature review was undertaken before a qualitative survey was conducted with 22 respondents, including retail lecturers, retail chain staff and other learning and retail experts. Data collection was via questionnaires, administered during semi-structured interviews. Lecturers provided details on activities and assessments used for practical assignments. Peer feedback via focus groups critiqued the findings once analysis was complete, increasing the trustworthiness of findings. A model was proposed that best suited the needs of retailers, learners and the university. Suggestions for further research are provided. *(Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 2017, 18(1),43-57).*

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The structure of the South African education system after the school-leaving certificate has, for the most part, separated the academic/theoretical component from the practical/workplace component. This has resulted in South African youth who enter the job market having academic qualifications but no practical work experience. The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training therefore stresses the link between learning and workplace requirements with learning within the workplace becoming critical (SA Board for People Practices, 2016). A key feature of the *National Development Plan, 2030* (Republic of South Africa, 2011) is that the youth who graduate from South Africa's universities and colleges should have the skills and knowledge to meet the present and future needs of the economy and society. In 2011, this National Plan argued that there were three million young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four who were not in employment, education or training. This high level of youth and graduate unemployment is an indication that universities and colleges, in the face of skills shortages, do not produce graduates who are able to meet the needs of society and industry (Republic of South Africa, 2011). Enhancing the employability of the South African youth is therefore a major priority (Blom, 2013).

The *White Paper for Post School Education and Training* (Republic of South Africa, 2013) states that employers argue that students do not have practical workplace experience and the skills required to cope in the workplace, both from psychological and technical capability viewpoints (Blom, 2013). Employers are thus unable to use these graduates to fill their skills requirements because of their lack of practical skills and experience. Universities produce the wrong type of graduates who are not of high quality and not suited to specialized positions (Blom, 2013).

This study grew out of the need to develop a model to guide the development and implementation of a retail store on the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) campus, aimed to improve the work-integrated learning of CPUT students studying for the Retail Business Management diploma. This store would be used as a center where students

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could gain the work experience required for their retail qualification and to improve their successful employability by the retail industry. Incorporating work-integrated learning into a business curriculum has now become a popular way of improving university graduates' employability (Seethamraju, 2012). If every young person gained an opportunity to undertake some form of work experience the unemployment rate in South Africa and elsewhere would be reduced (Blom, 2013).

A retail store on the CPUT campus would give students at the campus the work experience that is needed for the completion of a holistic retail-learning program qualification, as well as serving the retail needs of students and others who wish to purchase basic food items such as snacks and treats on the campus. The work experience students gained from working at the on-campus retail store would assist them to obtain work more easily and be of greater value to their employers than employees who have not had work experience (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2015).

Although such a store could obviously be beneficial to student employability, the key question is 'how can work-integrated learning bridge the gap between practical work experience and academia and ensure that students at a retail store situated on an academic campus are able to gain workplace experience?' Furthermore, what type of model would best suit such a store, and how should it be implemented to be most effective, most quickly?

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL)

Definition of WIL

According to Council on Higher Education (2011, p. 78). WIL is "an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces." It is a general term given to any university, college or other academic program that integrates theoretical learning with the world of work, enabling students to apply the theoretical knowledge learned in their academic studies to the world of work. According to Garraway (2010), knowledge at work and knowledge in the university are recognized as being differently structured, differently acquired and used for different purposes.

Bibby (2007) argues that theoretical learning acquired through traditional programs could be difficult to apply in the workplace. The need for a knowledge-in-practice type of learning is essential (Grosjean, 2007). He refers to knowledge gained in a practical environment as Mode 2 learning, which is a context-driven, holistic form of knowledge and relates to learning outside formal institutions. Mode 2 learning engages personality, intellectual and craft skills (Rochford, 2007).

Types of WIL

WIL is a bridge for the student between the academic present and their professional future (Martin, Rees & Edwards, 2011). Coll et al., (2009) state that cooperative education or WIL is a strategy in which students undergo a traditional academic learning program, usually at a higher education institution, and combine this learning with some time spent in a workplace relevant to their program of study and career aims.

Patrick, Peach, and Pocknee (2009, p. 9) refer to WIL as "an umbrella term used for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum". They emphasize that WIL is about more than just

placements and this is reflected in the broad range of approaches adopted, including placements, project work, simulations and virtual WIL.

Blom (2013) explains and summarizes nineteen types, terms and definitions related to WIL that often cause debate and confusion. The very basic definition of WIL, namely, "an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces", published in 2011 by the Council for Higher Education (CHE), is the definition used for this study.

Student Retailing

A student-run business on an academic campus is not a new concept (Di Meglio, 2007). The University of Massachusetts has student run businesses dating back to the 1960s when students were demanding more say on how their universities were run. Universities of Colorado, Maryland and Massachusetts all give students the opportunity to run businesses and thereby get workplace learning. The *Trep Café* at the University of Colorado is a fully serviced café run by business students. The *Alumni and Student Federal Credit Union* at Georgetown University is completely run by students with no help from faculty or administrators. It draws its employees from all over the university, especially the business school. *The Smith Store* at the University of Maryland sells products such as school t-shirts and is fully run by graduate students. *Student Agencies* at Princeton University date back to the 1900s when some students needed services such as laundry, newspaper deliveries or basically any service that might be required on campus. University of Massachusetts Amherst have had student run businesses for three decades, including *Campus Design & Copy* (photocopy and graphic design), *Tix Unlimited* (campus event ticket sales) and *Bike Co-op* (bike repairs). Students gain from these activities by earning money and gaining important business experience and the universities gain by getting campus services at minimal cost (Di Meglio, 2007).

Such student-run stores also occur at universities in other countries. For example, The Lovely Professional University in Punjab (LPU), India, built a cosmopolitan style, multi storied, air-conditioned Student Centre known as *Uni-Mall* on its Campus (Lovely Professional University, n.d). The *Uni-Mall* has shops run and managed by students. The university tries to provide its students with all the resources required for setting up retail ventures. In South Africa, the African Leadership Academy runs a program to help students develop and run a business, called *Chani's Café*, on their campus (African Leadership Academy, 2009), while the *Management Consulting Club* at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, facilitates student participation in events, challenges and competitions to build practical experience (University of Auckland, n.d.). At the University of Macau, student-run shops give students an opportunity to learn how to run a business - students say that running a shop on campus helps them put their knowledge into practice (Government Information Bureau of the MSAR, 2015). Although not formally structured for WIL, these efforts around the world do help students to bridge the divide between their academic and practical learning. This indicates the scope for work-integrated learning at on-campus shops based at training facilities globally.

A retail promotion course offered at a mid-sized US university was used to practice WIL. Students were required to design, produce, operate and analyze the outcomes of a pop-up retail consignment store on campus. A pop-up store offers the added experiences of a grand

opening and closing of the store location. The purpose of the project was to give students practical experience in planning, promotions, merchandising, logistics, accounting and customer service. The profits from the store funds further research, scholarships and travel grants (Burgess, 2012). It is clear that practical learning is applied around the world, but it is not clear to what extent such practical learning is formally structured within a WIL program.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Global Competitiveness Index 2013 -2014 (World Economic Forum, 2013) rates the quality of the South African educational system as 146 out of 148 countries in the world with low primary and tertiary enrolment rates. Raising educational standards and making the labor market more efficient will be critical in view of the country's high unemployment rate of over 20%, with the rate of youth unemployment estimated at close to 50%. The vital role of education and skills improvement to speed up the effective delivery of skills and training to meet industry demands within a partnership framework (Moletsane & Moloi, 2015) is highlighted by the above statistics. The term WIL was introduced for the first time into a Department of Education document by the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) in South Africa in 2007 (Taylor & Govender, 2013). One of the strategic objectives of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is to provide a dynamic interface between the workplace and learning institutions and to promote quality learning at work, and for work. Employers describe students as lacking in skills which is related to their lack of practical workplace experience. Workplace learning must thus be seen as an integral part of a qualification, and of program design. Skills shortages in South Africa and the increasing focus on information and communication technologies have forced the higher education sector to include WIL to improve graduate employability. The increasing costs of higher education and reduced government funding have led to a greater focus on graduate employability (Seethamraju, 2012).

NATIONAL WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL) POLICY

The *White Paper for Post School Education and Training* (Republic of South Africa, 2013) encourages universities to build strong partnerships with industry in order to promote work placement opportunities. *The National Development Plan*, 2030 (Republic of South Africa,, 2011) states that the graduates should have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the economy and society and that there should be clear linkages between education and training and the world of work. There are currently about three million young people aged 18-24 who are not in employment, education or training. Graduate unemployment in the face of skills shortages is an indication that universities are producing graduates who do not meet the needs of industry and society. As a result, *The National Skills Development Strategy III, 2011 - 2016* was released in January 2011, and included "the inadequate skills levels and poor work-readiness of many young people leaving formal secondary and tertiary education and entering the labor market for the first time" (Republic of South Africa, 2011, p. 6) and "encouraging better use of workplace-based skills development" (Republic of South Africa, 2011, p. 18) as two of its goals. Unfortunately, these policies have been introduced within a policy vacuum (Blom 2013) and WIL is managed differently by different institutions, and also among different universities of technology, both nationally and internationally (Wessels, 2014). These efforts are done within the organizations' own institutional policy frameworks, and are largely an unfunded, informal arrangement, consequently, only a relatively small number of students have benefited from WIL (Blom, 2014).

PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY

The *WIL Good Practice Guide* (Council for Higher Education, 2011) refers to WIL partners external and internal to the university. Internal partners would be the lecturers, placement officers, units that support WIL and the students. The external partners would be the employer, formal or informal institutes that support WIL such as the community, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). WIL then is a three-way partnership between the university, students and the work place organization. The university requires all parties in the relationship to assume definite responsibilities, perform specific functions, and achieve benefits because of the involvement (Martin & Hughes, 2009). One of the problems in such partnerships is that the interactions between representatives from the workplace and academia are not always productive as they come from different worlds and have different motivations, interest and outputs (Garraway, 2006). Knowledge at work and knowledge in the university are recognized as being differently structured, differently acquired and used for different purposes (Garraway, 2010). The Council on Higher Education (2011), distinguish between disciplinary (theoretical) knowledge and situated (practical) knowledge. They argue that students need disciplinary knowledge to ensure a strong basis for practice, but to understand the field of practice, students need situated knowledge. Situated knowledge tends to play a minor and supporting role at knowledge based universities, whereas in professional practice situated knowledge is significant.

According to the Council for Higher Education (2011), the workplace is where students go to learn from experts, not where they go to learn basic level skills (with certain exceptions). The workplace provides opportunities for students to observe experts in their field and to work under their supervision. The workplace is also where students bring new knowledge, insights and fresh ideas. WIL thus provides benefits to the student and the employer, as well as the university. WIL addresses organizational issues, which brings value to both the employee and the organization, as it takes place at work, delivers individual learning and reduces the time taken off to attend training. WIL allows employees to develop and improve their people relations skills and to understand how their particular job influences the workplace and the global world (Spencer, 2007). Learning done at work can provide a richer experience for both the employee and the organization (Bibby, 2007). To grow, an organization must build its strength internally, especially with the employees. If student learning is to be successful, all the role players involved in the work placement (student/employer/university) should have clearly defined roles, and clear and realistic expectations of their responsibilities (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is now viewed as much more than just a work placement. Many universities incorporate WIL into the core curriculum to provide a range of meaningful learning opportunities relevant to the real world (Patrick, et al., 2009). One of the main purposes of WIL is to provide graduates with a comprehensive skill set required by potential employers. Literature however notes that higher education institutions fail to provide students with a comprehensive skill set, especially in behavioral and soft skills (Coll, et al., 2009). Employers require new graduates to have a set of general employability skills and job specific skills (Nofemela, 2015). WIL should thus prepare students to enter the workplace with marketable, relevant, and transferable skills (Sattler & Peters 2013). Healy

(2009) argues that universities need to do a lot more work on students' job skills, such as communication, teamwork and problem solving. Basic workplace etiquette such as coming to work on time, organization dynamics, working as a team, critical thinking and business savvy are soft skills required by employers. Many students who come from universities have been so academically focused that they tend to lack the soft skills and real world experiences (Sattler & Peters 2013). Martin and Hughes (2009), Martin, et al. (2011) and Pop and Barkhuizen (2013) have also stressed the need for soft skills.

As part of the implementation of WIL the curriculum needs to show integration of professional and academic skills (Council for Higher Education, 2011). WIL can never cover the full syllabus (Burgess, 2012). However, it should be a reflection of the curriculum (Council for Higher Education, 2011), with student and workplace/employer expectations being carefully managed and planned for. This should be achieved via a logbook, which should include policies and guidelines to guide students and staff (Wessels, 2014), a code of conduct for students at the workplace, compliance with all the requirements of the WIL program, signing a WIL student agreement and specifying the required academic standards. Such record keeping can be enhanced by the student keeping a reflective journal (Martin, et al, 2011). The journal should not just allow the student to reflect on the tasks and experiences they have had during their work placement, but should include evaluations and re-evaluations of their experiences, determining a way forward and plan of action, revisiting their feelings and questioning why they felt, or still feel, in a particular way.

CONCLUSION FROM LITERATURE

This literature study indicates that further studies into work-integrated models and their effectiveness on the long-term work readiness of graduates is necessary. Preparing work-ready students through teaching and learning strategies, including WIL, is a complex and challenging task and requires strategic management and skillful balancing of various educational, administrative and professional demands. One way of meeting these demands for students studying retail, as shown in the literature review, is to offer WIL on campus, in a university owned store. To investigate the feasibility of such an approach, this study set out to answer the question of how WIL can bridge the gap between practical work experience and academia, and ensure that students at a retail store situated on an academic campus are able to gain workplace experience. The study therefore aimed to:

- to develop a workplace experience model for retail students to gain experience by working in the retail store on the CPUT campus;
- to develop a model for the establishment, management and running of the store.

METHOD

Research Approach

The aim of this exploratory research was to delve into an area that is not completely familiar, namely implementing WIL on an academic campus in South Africa. This exploratory research is descriptive in nature and includes an emergent design (Struwig & Stead, 2010). In this way, the research approaches may change during the study because of new information that might influence it. Struwig and Stead (2010) list three possible methods that may be used in exploratory research, all of which were used in this research study. First, an analysis and description of case studies, second, informal survey interviews with individuals likely to

have opinions on the subject under investigation, and third, a study of secondary sources of information to obtain insights into a problem

Sampling

The sampling procedures used focused on the depth and quality of the data, therefore the sample of 22 respondents were selected purposefully (Struwig & Stead, 2010). The sample comprised of five major retailers who expressed an interest in participating in the WIL retail store at the university, twelve lecturers from the retail department at the university, two retail experts and a further three WIL and skills experts. The respondents from the five major retailers were senior or middle management employees within the learning and development divisions. The twelve lecturers from the retail department at the university were chosen purposefully as the scope of the project dictated that the retail subjects they teach needed to correlate with the practical WIL tasks.

Data Collection Instrument

In this study, semi-standardized interviews were used for data collection. This is a combination of structured and unstructured interviews (Struwig & Stead, 2010). A semi-standardized interview guide and questionnaire were designed based on the objectives of the study and a review of relevant concepts in the literature. Even though pre-determined questions were set and addressed in a systematic and consistent manner, respondents still had the opportunity to discuss matters beyond the questions and give varied and detailed responses. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013) refers to this as a non-scheduled structured interview in that the list of questions are drawn up prior to the interview but the interviewer is still free to formulate other questions that are appropriate for a given situation.

Data Collection Administration

The study was introduced to the retailers at a focus group meeting, while the lecturers were introduced to the requirements of the project at their monthly management meeting. The questionnaire was emailed to the group. It was necessary to seek further evidence via interviews with two retail experts and three WIL and skills experts to substantiate the findings.

Data Analysis

Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Before analyzing the data, all questionnaires, transcripts and field notes were checked for availability and completion. Hard copy transcripts were used to analyze the data. Open coding was used to organize the data into categories (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). This open coding process involved linking a word or a phrase, or breaking down phrases, from the transcripts, into themes or concepts to form a meaningful finding from all the data collected. When similar codes are found throughout the transcripts, a strong case for the credibility of the research findings can be made (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). The results were collated and checked in order to ensure that the data was not just summarized or overanalyzed.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from CPUT through the W&R Leadership Chair (Clearance Certificate No 2015FBREC306, dated 15 June 2015). All participants in the study were informed verbally about the study and their role in it, and asked to complete an informed consent form, which emphasized their voluntary participation and assured them

that confidentiality and anonymity would be respected. The purpose and objectives of the study and the importance of their contribution were emphasized. Transcripts of the interviews and all confidential material were kept in secure, locked storage and remained the responsibility of the researcher.

Trustworthiness

Janesick (2003) argues that when qualitative research is used, no research design is bias or value free. In order to ensure that bias did not affect the interview and analysis process, the researchers focused only on the questions given in the interview schedule and the answers that pertained to this in the findings.

The lead researcher had previously worked with all sample respondents, who had expressed an interest in participating in the research. The familiar and casual relationship that has been developed over the years helped to build rapport with, and to gain the trust of, the respondents, thus ensuring the collection of authentic and relevant data for the research study. These relationships could have created a lack of objectivity, but when working with qualitative data, subjectivity is acknowledged and embraced (Miller, 2008). Babbie and Mouton (2001) discuss the concept of inter-subjectivity and support the developing of a relationship with the respondents in order to get the relevant data from them.

Two other forms of bias need to be mentioned, that of non-responsive bias and termination bias. There was one case where a lecturer refused to take part or answer some questions in the research instruments and another case where a retailer withdrew from the research before it was completed. Neither case appeared to have negatively influenced the believability or trustworthiness of the findings

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this study grew out of the opportunity to develop a retail store on the CPUT campus that could be used as a center for retail students to gain the work experience required for their retail qualifications and to be successfully employed by the retail industry. As the research project progressed, and the opinions of retailers, educators, lecturers and other stakeholders were collated, the following decisions emerged from the university:

- a non-profit organization on the campus would run a coffee shop in the retail space, and at the same time would manage the retail store.
- the retail store would be managed by a board that would comprise of representatives from the non-profit organization, the university, students and retailers. The board would make decisions on how to run the store so it meets the requirements of all stakeholders.
- four possible models for the retail store were proposed, as illustrated in Table 1.
- Table 2 illustrates the various benefits of each store option and also highlights the weaknesses of each option.

TABLE 1: Summary of draft models for a retail store on the CPUT campus

No.	Nature of model	Description
1	Mini Mall – Shelves in store	A mini mall with different retailers responsible for their own mini stores. Allocated shelves and space – competing on own brand products.
2	One Departmental Store – Different retailers	One store consisting of a coffee shop with different departments. Each interested retailer responsible for one department on allocated shelves / spaces - No competing of products, with cooperation on workplace learning.
3	Mini Mall - Independent stores	One shopping center with independent stores. Mini mall board with, cooperation between retailers on workplace learning
4	One Independent Retailer for operations	One independent store – open tender for concept and size. Board for cooperation between retailers on workplace learning.

TABLE 2: Benefits and challenges of each model of the retail shop

Option 1 Mini mall - shelves	Option 2 Department store	Option 3 Mini mall - stores	Option 4 One store
Benefits	**Benefits**	**Benefits**	**Benefits**
Retailers train own recruits on their own products and systems	Students get training on all aspects of the business and on business as whole	Retail operators – better management and performance	Retail operators – better management and performance
More retailers involved	One standardized logbook	Students get exposure to all aspects of business & more retailers	Students get exposure to all aspects of the business
	Co-operative environment for participating retailers	Retailers build own Brand and profit centre	Retailer build own Brand and better profit centre
Risks / Challenges	**Risks / Challenges**	**Risks / Challenges**	**Risks / Challenges**
Competitive environment in insignificant small areas	Management of student's workplace experience and completion of logbook	Co-operation between retailers	Support of other retailers in training and research

Following the open coding of the data obtained from the interviews and questionnaires, and from the retail stakeholder and lecturer meetings, the findings were grouped into themes based on the research questions.

Facility Designs and Structures

All respondents preferred different models, with some choosing a specific model because they did not want any form of competition whilst, others saw competition as essential in retail training. Further, some respondents were concerned whether the store would be large enough for the students to get exposure to all aspects of learning if it was split amongst four different retailers. Because of their inability to reach consensus, it was therefore felt that the university should choose the model to be adopted. Based on the retailers' and lecturers' feedback, and the objectives of the exercise, the researchers suggest that either of draft models 3 or 4 would be most suited to the available venue, in that an independent store would be established. The interested retailer/s would run the shop in conjunction with the non-profit coffee shop (Model 3), or, if Model 4 was chosen, simply run the shop on their own. The space would then be completely retail brand neutral and non-competitive, and the emphasis would be on teaching and learning, and not on competition and achieving sales.

Operations and Marketing

It was agreed that the target market would be the ~800 staff members and 15,000 students on the CPUT Cape Town campus and that trading times would coincide with campus opening and closing times, mainly for security reasons. Although some respondents felt this was not consistent with the retailing ethos, and others worried about the potential small returns in terms of profitability, it was agreed that the goal is teaching and learning, rather than generating profits.

A variety of different products should be stocked according to the needs of the target market. This will ensure a regular turnover of products based on the suitability of the target group.

Curriculum Content

The main areas of retail activities can be split into operational, supervisory and managerial levels. For the purposes of work experience, the retail shop activities were also split between the three educational levels offered to students at the university; Operational level aimed at a student's first year of study, Supervisory level aimed at the student's second year of study and Managerial level, the third year of study. It was agreed that each student, for each level, should complete at least forty hours of work (five workdays) at the retail store. The aim here was to ensure that the ~800 students who go through the retail department each year all get some form of work exposure at the campus retail store.

A detailed logbook specifying the activities to be undertaken at the various levels was developed. It was, however, agreed that, due to the small size of the shop and other logistical problems, it would not be possible for all the WIL requirements to be achieved at the campus retail store.

Finance and Responsibilities

All respondents agreed that housekeeping and security would be the responsibility of the university, although with model 4 the retailer could take full responsibility for housekeeping and security. Respondents were, nevertheless, still concerned about theft and how this

would be prevented. Nearly all of the respondents recommended that one pay-point be used and that purchases be reconciled at the end of the day.

All but one retailer agreed to make an initial investment to cover start-up costs, but they felt strongly that the retail store needed to be self-sustaining after a certain period. It was accepted that the non-profit coffee shop would have the overall management of the shop, but that overall governance would be by a board that would comprise of representatives from the non-profit coffee shop, the university, students and retailers. The board would then make decisions on how to run the store so it meets the requirements of all retailers.

Involvement of Stakeholders

There was general concern about the ability of the shop to cater for the ~800 students studying retail, and about the quality of the students and their understanding of the mechanics of business. For these reasons, the limitations of the store in terms of size and logistics should be taken into account, and lecturers were requested to isolate the most important aspects of learning to be completed by their students in the store. This could then be focused on via the logbook, detailing the store learning components.

There was general consensus that the store manager would serve as mentor to the students and sign off their logbooks. The lecturers expressed some concern about the retail mentor's knowledge and understanding of the syllabus to ensure proper judgment of student performance, whilst the retailers argued that lecturers do not have practical workplace experience within the retail environment, hence they cannot be responsible for practical training. It was agreed that the store manager/mentor could be a retired branch manager, but with an ability to understand an academic curriculum and the work required from the student.

In order for the workplace component to have validity, it was suggested that a mandatory requirement would be that facilitators/assessors need to be sourced from the retail sector. The retailers also offered to provide lecturers, as part of their professional development, with in-house instruction on practical retail at their super stores. The importance of forming partnerships was emphasized.

CONCLUSIONS

The sole purpose of the on-campus store was to promote work-integrated learning thereby combining the academic/theoretical component of the university teachings with the practical/workplace component of the retail store. It was necessary therefore to review the findings of this study relative to the student-run stores as discussed in the literature. This was done in terms of the five themes used in the discussion of the study's findings.

With regard to *Design and Structures* it was concluded that involving retailers was necessary, but that emphasis should be on teaching and learning and not on competing and achieving sales. This is slightly different to the examples from other universities given in the literature, because of our specific focus on WIL.

Although it was concluded that *Operations and Marketing* factors should also focus more on teaching and learning, there was agreement on the target market focus and on having a range of products to meet the target market's needs. This was consistent with the examples of student stores discussed in the literature, which are strongly focused on achieving business goals.

The literature on student-run campus shops is not very comprehensive on *curriculum content*, probably because they are intended to give experience, but are not deeply embedded in the syllabus or closely integrated into course content as is necessary for WIL. A logbook epitomizes this integration, and this is one of the issues that makes an important contribution to the literature.

Issues related to *Finance and responsibilities* in this study were considerably different to those mentioned in the literature, because of the greater potential involvement of retailers in the on-campus store compared to the student-run stores, and maybe also because of the safety and security issues which may be greater in South Africa. What was consistent was the need for some form of governance structures, such as a board.

With regard to *Involvement of stakeholders*, support was provided in some stores by academic staff, mentors or other facilitators, but in others it appears as if students run the stores without such support. However, our research suggests considerably greater facilitator support is needed to integrate the academic learning with the practice in the store, as is required in WIL. This requires academic staff to specify what needs to be learned, retail staff to mentor the in-store activities, and retail experts to assess and moderate the learning.

Thus, one of the main contributions of this study was the development of a more formal structure for when a student-run, on-campus store is to be used as an integration of the academic and practical aspects of learning. It shows that work-integrated learning could bridge the gap between practical work experience and academia, and ensure that students at a retail store situated on an academic campus were able to gain workplace experience. However, the successful development of a model for the establishment, management and running of such a store requires buy in from retailers. Retailer participation, flexibility and enthusiasm for the project was key to ensuring that the project was a success and that WIL successfully supports the overall teaching and learning program.

With the correct model, retailer participation and other stakeholder support, the retail store on the university campus gave students the practical experience that is needed for their retail-learning program and introduces them to the work-integrated component of their learning. In addition, it also served the retail needs of students and others who wished to purchase basic food items such as snacks and treats in and around the campus area.

LIMITATIONS

Establishing an integrated framework that comprises workplace experience and academic theory has had much talk but no proper action in South Africa. The concept then, of establishing a retail store on an academic campus in South Africa, is relatively new. The value offered by an on-campus shop is limited to exactly what the student can learn within the confines of the store. The size of the store and simple logistics determine what can be covered. Another limitation of this study is the assumption that all stakeholders speak the same jargon. Work-integrated learning, workplace learning, simulations, practical skills component and work component are but some of the terms that have caused confusion and contributed to the varying perspectives stakeholders have. The study does not supply solutions to questions of WIL; rather it focuses only on how WIL could be implemented in a small retail store on a university campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As there are hardly any knowledge centres in South Africa that focus on WIL as both theory and practice, this study has added to current knowledge about WIL in South Africa. It is hoped that this model will inspire further research and serve as a WIL model at other academic institutions. The results of the study may assist higher education institutions and retailers to set up retail stores on other campuses in order to promote WIL and ensure that the education and training they deliver meets the needs of the economy. The study may stimulate further debate amongst stakeholders and encourage research in this area, especially on the importance of partnerships between industry and academia.

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About the Journal

The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education publishes peer-reviewed original research, topical issues, and best practice articles from throughout the world dealing with Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Work-Integrated Learning/Education (WIL).

In this Journal, Co-op/WIL is defined as an educational approach that uses relevant work-based projects that form an integrated and assessed part of an academic program of study (e.g., work placements, internships, practicum). These programs should have clear linkages with, or add to, the knowledge and skill base of the academic program. These programs can be described by a variety of names, such as cooperative and work-integrated education, work-based learning, workplace learning, professional training, industry-based learning, engaged industry learning, career and technical education, internships, experiential education, experiential learning, vocational education and training, fieldwork education, and service learning.

The Journal's main aim is to allow specialists working in these areas to disseminate their findings and share their knowledge for the benefit of institutions, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that will lead to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of co-op/WIL, and promote further research.

Submitting Manuscripts

Before submitting a manuscript, please unsure that the 'instructions for authors' has been followed (www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors). All manuscripts are to be submitted for blind review directly to the Editor-in-Chief (editor@apjce.org) by way of email attachment. All submissions of manuscripts must be in Microsoft Word format, with manuscript word counts between 3,000 and 5,000 words (excluding abstract, references, and tables).

All manuscripts, if deemed relevant to the Journal's audience, will be double-blind reviewed by two or more reviewers. Manuscripts submitted to the Journal with authors names included with have the authors' names removed by the Editor-in-Chief before being reviewed to ensure anonymity.

Typically, authors receive the reviewers' comments about 1.5 months after the submission of the manuscript. The Journal uses a constructive process for review and preparation of the manuscript, and encourages its reviewers to give supportive and extensive feedback on the requirements for improving the manuscript as well as guidance on how to make the amendments.

If the manuscript is deemed acceptable for publication, and reviewers' comments have been satisfactorily addressed, the manuscript is prepared for publication by the Copy Editor. The Copy Editor may correspond with the authors to check details, if required. Final publication is by discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. Final published form of the manuscript is via the Journal website (www.apjce.org), authors will be notified and sent a PDF copy of the final manuscript. There is no charge for publishing in APJCE and the Journal allows free open access for its readers.

Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts the Journal accepts are primarily of two forms; *research reports* describing research into aspects of Cooperative Education and Work Integrated Learning/Education, and *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and give critical explorative discussion around a topical issue.

The Journal does also accept *best practice* papers but only if it present a unique or innovative practice of a Co-op/WIL program that is likely to be of interest to the broader Co-op/WIL community. The Journal also accepts a limited number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.

Research reports should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry, a description and justification for the methodology employed, a description of the research findings-tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance for practitioners, and a conclusion preferably incorporating suggestions for further research.

Topical discussion articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical discussion of the importance of the issues, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.