Student Reflections on the Pilot WIL Partnership Capacity Building Model in a Human Resource Management Qualification

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South Africa (SA) has a population of 50 million people. Nearly 70% are under 35 years old. The national vision aims to reduce youth unemployment using education, training and skills development initiatives.

A work integrated learning (WIL) partnership model was developed to build an industry partner base. The model was piloted in a South African university in 2013 to provide work-ready, qualified and skilled graduates entering the SA economy. Research conducted focused on whether the WIL model was a viable, cost-effective and practical solution for capacity building of potential entry-level staff.

This paper presents an analysis of the self-administered questionnaire completed by the students subsequent to their WIL experience. The background to SA cooperative education and WIL provides the backdrop. The aim of the paper is to reflect on whether the model contributed to economic and social capacity building and industry partnership development.

This paper adds value on a strategic, theoretical and practical level by contributing to national imperatives for human resource development, adding to the body of knowledge on WIL initiatives in SA and outlining a user friendly WIL partnership model to allow students to enter the world of work with confidence.

Keywords: Capacity building, human resource management, industry partnership development, student placement, work integrated learning