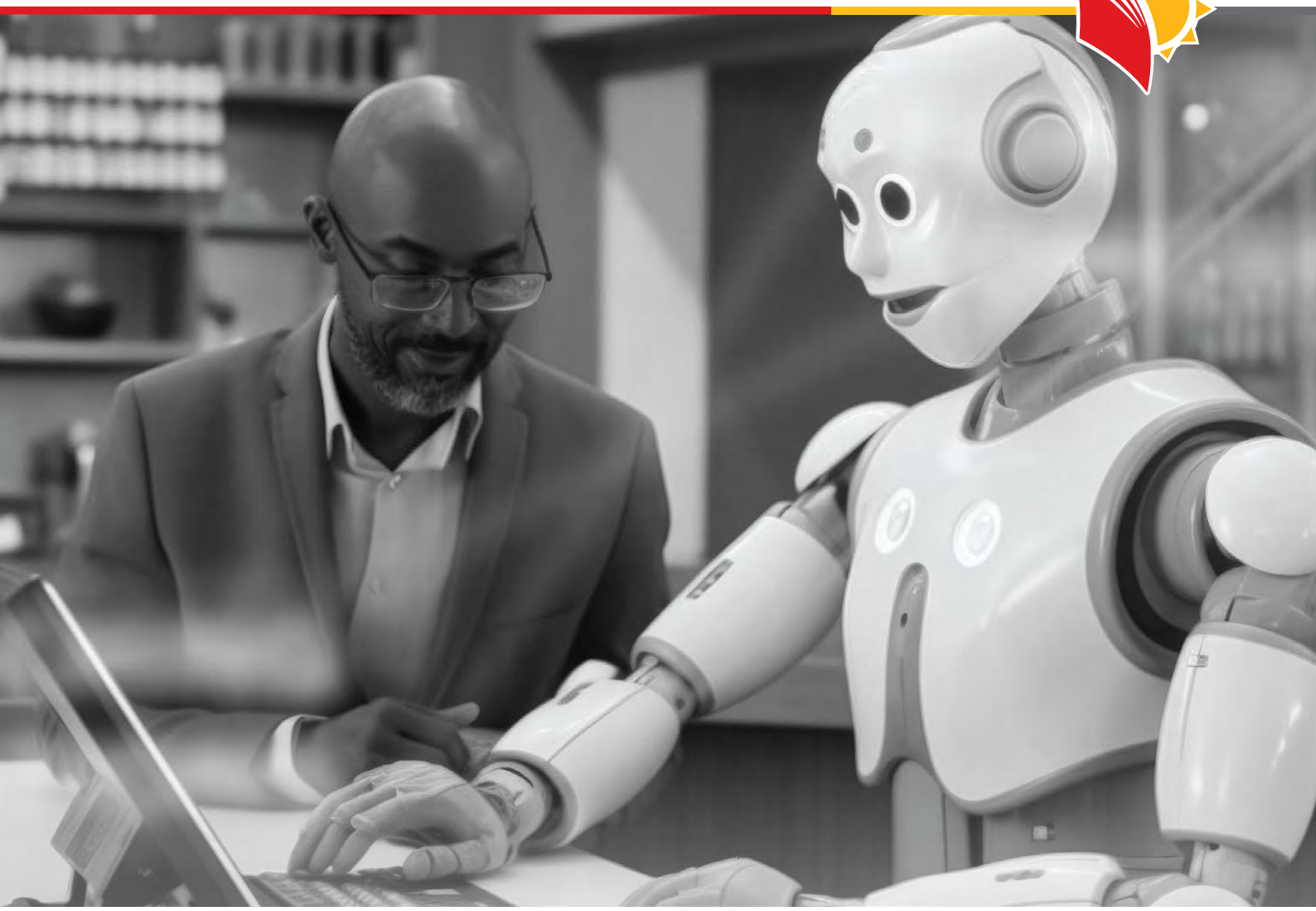
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN LEARNING AND TEACHING (CILT)

PROGRAMME



3rd CILT Biennial Conference on Innovation in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education 2025

Bridging Higher Education and Industry for a Sustainable Future

Date: 19 - 20 November 2025

Venue: Windhoek Country Club Resort (WCCR), Windhoek, Namibia

Zoom Link: Https://zoom.us/meeting/register/2Ln-F-20QpieN1WwMnO8iA
Registration: https://forms.office.com/r/N5XxBarbhm

WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2025	
Time	Activities
08h00 – 08h30	Participants Registration & Welcome Director of Ceremonies: Mr. Simon Namesho Manager: Public Relations & Media Operations, University of Namibia, Corporate Engagement and International Relations (CEIR)
Session 1 Dr LN Nghipandulwa Dr Nalisa Mwanga Ms Josephine Nghipandwa	
08h30 – 10h40	<u>UNAM – Industry Forum Launch</u> 1) Introduction (Dr Nghipandulwa – UNAM CWIE Coordinator) 2) Dr Mwangala (Lecturer) on the stakeholders and student platform 3) Ms. Kashiwanwa Neshila Immanuel - UNAM Alumni Coordinator 4) Ms Jennie Lates - HoD: Department of Pharmacy Practice & Policy - UNAM Focal Person 5) Q&A
10h40 – 11h00	Health Break

Session 2 Chair: Mr Erkkie Haipinge Rapporteur: Mr. Owen Lisulo	
11h00 – 11h40	KEY NOTE SPEAKER 1: Dr. Henri Jacobs, Director: WIL and Industry Liaison, Central University Technology, South Africa. *A strategy to optimise the contribution of WIL as pedagogy towards the employability of students.*
11h40 – 12h20	KEY NOTE SPEAKER 2: Ms Dalia Mwiya Director of TVET Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth ,Sport, Art and Culture, Windhoek, Namibia *Implementation of WIL in Namibia: National Policy Perspective*
12h20 – 12h40	Presenter 1: Stephanie Lathe *Medical 3D Human Anatomy & Physiology.*
12h40 – 13h00	Presenter 2: Gift Mubita *Empowering Education Through Simulation and AI Technology: Bridging Academia and Industry.*
13h00 – 14h00	Lunch Break
Theme 1 – Measuring WIL Impact Theme 6 – Role of AI and Emerging Technologies in WIL **Session 3** Chair: Ms C Mayumbelo Rapporteur: Ms Emelda de Klerk	
14h00 – 14h20	Presenter 1: Carla Ralph *The Impact of AI on our Future.*
14h20 – 14h40	Presenter 2: Helena Miranda & Natalia Intja *Facilitating the Development of Research Skills in the Digital Era: Leveraging AI Tools for Programme Management, Assessment and Student Feedback*
14h40 – 15h00	Presenter 3: Daniel K Mbangula *Application of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality in work-integrated learning: Digital transformation of the curriculum development and digital mentoring in universities.*
15h00 – 15h20	Presenter 4: Abel Moyo, Fine Masimba and Tranos Zuva *Systematic Analysis of Cyber Threats to Financial Systems in Developing Countries: Leveraging AI to Enhance Business Operations and Mitigate Vulnerabilities in Small and Medium Enterprises.*

15h20 – 15h40	Presenter 5: JM Mwiiyale, I Sitler, and S Karsten *Reviving the profile of a Student-Librarianship: Challenges and Prospects UNAM Library case study*
15h40 – 16h00	Health Break
	Session 4 Chair: Mr. Gabriel Uunona Rapporteur: Mr. Gerson Mwaamukange
16h00 – 16h20	Presenter 1: Rachel Ndinelao Shanyanana-Amaambo and Lukas Matati Josua *Artificial Intelligence-Driven Teaching Practice: A Hybrid WIL Framework* ***for Namibia's Teacher Education***
16h20 – 16h40	Presenter 2: Luiya Luwango *Mentoring undergraduate research using AI: Improving individual research mentorship skills through an auto ethnographic reflective study.*
16h40 – 17h00	Presenter 3: Francis Omujal *Handbook Of Teaching Chemistry To Students With Disability In An Inclusive Education*
17h00 – 17h20	Presenter 4: Frans C. Persendt *Measuring WIL Impact: Industry Satisfaction with UNAM Stude**nts'** Placements (2024–2025)*
17h30 – 18h00	KEY NOTE SPEAKER 3: Prof Dr Ulf-Daniel Ehlers Educational Management and Lifelong Learning at the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State; University (DHBW), Stuttgart, Germany
	End of Day 1

THURSDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2025	
08h00 – 08h30	Director of Ceremonies: Dr Maggy Beukes-Amiss (Director: Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching) Official Opening & Welcoming Vice Chancellor: University of Namibia *Prof. Dr. Kenneth Matengu*
	Session 5: Chair: Dr Havelinus Shemuketa Rapporteur: Mr. Erlich Zauisomue
08h30 – 09h10	KEY NOTE SPEAKER 4: Professor Dr Chris Gomez Kobe University Japan *Decolonizing Tertiary Education, to improve integrated learning*
09h10 – 09h50	KEY NOTE SPEAKER 5: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Internationalisation Professor Per Assmo School of Business, Economics & IT, University West, Sweden *How University West (UW), the leading Work-integrated learning (WIL) university in Europe, represents WIL in education and research*
09h50 – 10h30	KEY NOTE SPEAKERS 6: Professor Klaus Greve, Dr. Astrid Seckelmann & Dr. Maike Dziomba *Linking academia and industries. Experiences in instructing Professional Geography and career orientation for students in Germany.*
10h30 – 10h40	Health Break
	Theme 4 – Designing and Managing WIL Programmes Theme 5 – Student and Graduate Perspectives Session 6: Chair: Dr Esther Nuuyoma Rapporteur: Ms. Martha Jonas
10h40 – 11h00	Presenter 1- Anke JM Slabbert & Carla Labuschagne *Student Voices on Employability: Measuring Office Management Preparedness Against Industry Demand.*
11h00 – 11h20	Presenter 2 - Roswitha Nahutohi Bruno, Lukas Matati Josua and Charlene Kaereho *Traversing the Social Realist Dimensions in Pre-Work-Integrated Learning: A Reflection on Curriculum Design and Management at the Namibia University of Science and Technology*

11h20 – 11h40	Presenter 3 - Lineekela Kandjengo *Enhancing Work-Integrated Learning in Fisheries and Ocean Sciences: Reflections, Challenges, and Opportunities.*
11h40 – 12h00	Presenter 4 - Mwangala Nalisa & Muvari C. Tjiurutue *Challenges and Opportunities for Science Students in the CWIE Programme*
12h00 – 12h20	Presenter 5 - N. H Haufiku *Constructing the Higher Education Student: A Comparative Study of Sixteen SADC Countries.*
12h20 – 12h40	Presenter 6 - Annelisa Murangi, Fritz Andrew Beukes, and Clifford Hlatywayo *Competency profiling model for community engagement: Key lessons from Psychology*
	Session 7: Chairperson: Dr Nghipandulwa Rapporteur: Ms. Josephine Nghipandwa
12h40 – 13h30	Students and Graduate Perspectives at University of Namibia (UNAM): 1. Introducing the UNAM SRC President 2. Mr Felix Nyumbu Siyinda – UNAM SRC President 3. Student Voices 4. Q&A
13h30 – 14h00	Lunch Break
Theme 2– Stakeholder Synergies Theme 3– Green Skills and Sustainable WIL Models Session 8: Chair: Mrs. Selma Limbo Rapporteur: Mr. Pohamba Pohamba	
14h00 – 14h20	Presenter 1: Chenjerai Muwaniki, Leena Ndeyapo Shimpanda, and Wesley Pieters *Perceptions of workplace-based mentors on their roles in Work Integrated Learning in the Namibian Banking Sector*
14h20 – 14h40	Presenter 2: Obrein Muine Samahiya *Bridging the gap between Higher Education and Employment:* ***Evidence from Namibia's Graduate Labour Market***

14h40 – 15h00	Presenter 3: Mwinanu Makalicha, Rakel Kavena Shalyefu and Charlene Kaereho *Factors Contributing to Students' Poor Academic Performance in Open And Distance Learning: A Case Study of the Certificate in Early Childhood Development Programme at the Namibia College of Open Learning.*
15h00 – 15h20	Presenter 4: Anna Kambingangolo and Nambata Namweya *The effectiveness of Work Integrated-Work Learning for students*
15h20 – 15h40	Health Break
Session 9 Chair: Mr Andre Joubert Rapporteur: Mr Alfons Kahuikee	
15h40 – 16h00	Presenter 1: Frederick Simasiku *Innovating University Curricula for the Circular Bioeconomy: A Design-Based Research Approach.*
16h00 – 16h20	Presenter 2: Johanna Nakale ***Factors Affecting UNAM Tourism Graduates' Entrepreneu**rial Intentions*
16h20 – 16h40	Presenter 3: Lydia N. Horn and Ueitele S. Isabella *Spent substrate from Mushrooms as an opportunity for vegetable production and soil amendment to organic matter deficient soils in Namibia.*
16h40 – 17h00	Presenter 4: Erkkie Haipinge *Advancing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Bridging Teaching Practices and Industry Needs to Enhance Student Employability*
17h00 – 17h20	Question and Answer (Q&A)
Closing Ceremony Dr Maggy Beukes Amiss	

BIOSKETCH: KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

KEY NOTE SPEAKER 1:

Dr. Henri Jacobs

Dr. Jacobs is currently the Director of Work Integrated Learning & Industry Liaison at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT). He was a founding member of Universities South Africa's (USAf) World of Work Strategy Group and currently a member of USAf's Learning in Practice Community of Practice and acting director for Work Integrated Learning South Africa (WILSA). He has also served as THENSA's representative on the Occupational Qualifications Committee of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. In addition, he serves on the CHE's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) Community of Practice (COP) for the Development of a Higher Education Practices Standard (HEPS): Experiential Learning and represents THENSA on the national association and research committees of the World Association for Cooperative and Work Integrated Education. He has been involved in Work Integrated Learning for 29 years and obtained his Master's degree in higher education studies cum laude and a D.Tech. in Business Administration with a focus on WIL strategy to enhance the employability of students. He is involved with various national and international research projects on WIL, namely an affiliated researcher of the WIL research group LINA (Learning in and for the new working life) at University West in Sweden, SA research leader of the WIL cluster between South Africa and Ireland as well as between THENSA and the DHIK in Germany and has presented extensively at conferences in this regard. He also acts as reviewer for five peer-reviewed accredited journals.

KEY NOTE SPEAKER 2:

Ms Dalia Mwiya

Ms. Dalia Mwiya serves as the Director of Vocational Education and Training in the Ministry of Education, Innovations, Youth, Sports, Arts, and Culture. She has played a pivotal role in shaping education policy at both national and institutional levels, with a strong emphasis on aligning education and training systems to meet the evolving demands of the labor market.

With experience spanning multiple industries, and her added Master in Industrial and Employment Relations, Ms. Mwiya possesses a deep understanding of the skills needed to foster employability and drive economic growth. Well-versed in national legislation that supports skills development, she is committed to building inclusive and high-quality systems for workplace learning. She is also widely recognized as a passionate advocate for social dialogue and strategic partnerships that strengthen workforce capabilities and promote sustainable development.

KEY NOTE SPEAKER 3:

Prof Dr Ulf-Daniel Ehlers

Prof Dr. Ehlers is the founder of www.mindful-leaders.net, a serial entrepreneur of social enterprises, and a full Professor for Educational Management and Lifelong Learning at the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW). In 2011, the Ministry of Higher Education entrusted him with spearheading the launch of Germany's first Cooperative University as Vice-President, a groundbreaking initiative that today educates 35,000 students. His innovative spirit led him to establish NextEducation in 2017, an international boutique-research group dedicated to Future Skills, Micro-Credentials, and digital transformation in higher education (www.next-education.org). Ulf has captivated audiences in more than 45 countries with his keynote speeches. He is a prolific author and editor, having published over 18 books and 300 scholarly articles, amassing over 7,500 academic citations. As a trained systemic coach, facilitator, and expert in mindful and non-violent communication, Ulf holds degrees in English Language, Social Sciences, and Education Sciences from the University of Bielefeld.

KEY NOTE SPEAKER 4:

Professor Dr Chris Gomez

Professor Gomez is a full professor at Kobe University in Japan, where he leads the Sediment Hazards and Disaster Risk Laboratory. He was educated in France at Sorbonne University, received a PhD from Paris Diderot University for his work on natural hazards on volcanoes in Indonesia, where he still continues working to this date. He then moved to a postdoctoral program between Berkeley University and the French CNRS to research the Sacramento flood hazards; and then he changed hemisphere to go and work in New Zealand, where he held a position until 2017. He then moved to Kobe University to become a Professor. His research interests lie at the intersection of science, engineering, and social science, and he defines himself as a nomad (in the sense of G. Deleuze) with research grounded in the community, to make sure that academic disciplines do not define his research, but the need of the problem and the community do.

KEY NOTE SPEAKER 5:

Professor Per Assmo

Prof. Assmo is professor in Human & Economic Geography and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation at University West. Professor Assmo is a research leader in the Complete Academic Research Environment of Work-integrated Learning (WIL) at the University, including supervising PhD candidates. Amongst others, Prof Assmo is the editor of the new international research journal named CIWIL – Current Issues in Work-integrated Learning. He also holds a position as Extraordinary Professor at the Western Cape, working with internationalisation of research and education collaboration between Sweden and Southern Africa. As a senior researcher, he has since the 1990's managed numerous externally funded R&D projects in Europe and the African continent. His current research work primarily includes WIL oriented projects focusing on co-creative knowledge production and learning for societal development.



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS 6:

Professor Dr. Klaus Greve, Dr. Astrid Seckelmann & Dr. Maike Dziomba

Prof. Dr. Greve is retired Professor for GIS and Remote Sensing, still active as PI of the project SPEAR (Spaceborne Earth Observation Applications for Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction). SPEAR is a cooperation of the Centre of Remote Sensing of the Earth Surface at the University of Bonn and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) on Disaster Management in Africa. He is a long-standing member of the Professional Association of Geographers in Germany and served on the association's board for many years. At the University of Bonn, he developed and implemented the Career Orientation module for the Bachelor's degree programme in Geography and coordinated it for over 15 years. His main research foci are Environmental information Systems, Geospatial Data Infrastructure and Ecosystems, GIS and Earth Observation in Disaster Management and Spatial Information Policies. Prior to the professorship position he was Head of Information Technology with the Environmental Administration of the State of Hamburg and responsible for the implementation of a state wide Environmental information System and the reorganisation of the ICT support for the environmental administration.

Dr. Seckelmann has been teaching geography at various German universities for more than 25 years and has also held a teaching position at University of Namibia. Her focus is on urban and social geography. One of her research topics was the development of small and medium-sized towns in Namibia after the end of apartheid. Seckelmann is strongly committed to effective university teaching methods and collaborates closely with practitioners. Currently, she is a senior lecturer at Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany.

Dr. Dziomba has a Diplom-Geographin/post graduate degree in Geography Expert at Wagner & Partner, real estate valuation, Hamburg, Germany Active in the real estate industry since 1999 2008–2023 Freelance researcher (CBRE, redos institutional GmbH, Hamburg) Since 2023, expert/researcher with Wagner & Partner, real estate valuation, Hamburg 1993-1999 Studied applied geography at University of Trier 2003-2008 Part-time doctoral studies at Technical University Hamburg, urban planning At the same time, since 2018, Head of administration office for DVAG e.V.(German Association for Applied Geography) Since 2003, spokesperson for the Real Estate working group at DVAG e.V. Since 2001, teaching assignments in Real Estate Geography (Universities of Kiel, Bayreuth, Münster, Frankfurt).

Abstracts

Table of Contents

A strategy to optimise the contribution of WIL as pedagogy towards the employability of students.

Henri Jacobs

Central University Technology, South Africa

The literature on student employability contains numerous studies which confirm the link between Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and the employability of students as well as the preference of employers for students who have completed WIL. What is not clear is the effectiveness of WIL as pedagogy and how this can be converted into a strategy to optimise the contribution of WIL as pedagogy towards the employability of students. This paper is based on a doctoral study completed and experience on how to convert WIL as pedagogy into a strategy to optimally enhance the employability of students. The strategy focusses on WIL as a curriculum matter and how the curriculum, together with various assessment methods, can be used to enhance the employability of students.

KEYWORDS: Work-Integrated Learning, Employability, Strategy, Students, Employers

Implementation of WIL in Namibia: National Policy Perspective

Dalia Mwiya

Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Art and Culture.

Windhoek, Namibia

Ulf-Daniel Ehlers

Baden- Württemberg Cooperative State; University (DHBW).

Stuttgart, Germany

Decolonizing Tertiary Education, to improve integrated learning

Chris Gomez

Kobe University Japan

Globalization of education has this mesmarizing feel that wherever you go on the planet, you can attend university classes (provided that you are well funded). You can start in Europe, go to Africa to finish a degree, take a Master from India and then the US before obtaining a PhD from China... This incredible flexibility - only offered to the few with deep pockets - also means that education and its tenets and values have been internationalized. But to what cost? Under this apparent breadth of choices and opportunities for all, aren't we just seeing Western post-colonialism anchoring in even the most remote areas of our planet? In the present contribution I will begin with a short review of the unfolding of education evolution since the 19th Century and how a deeply Darwinistic construction of knowledge has spread to every single education system in the World. From this stepping stone, I will explain why it is important to attempt to break free from this status quo, in order to develop educational and learning strategies that are more integrated, in term of multidisciplinary approaches, in term of community needs and aspiration and in term of economic value creation and co-creation. For this purpose, we will see why decolonizing, and reconstruction the representation of Power are two essential tenet of integrated learning, and how this transition is being already forced with the use of AI in the workplace and at the university/school.

How University West (UW), the leading Work-integrated learning (WIL) university in Europe, represents WIL in education and research

Per Assmo

University West, Sweden

This presentation discusses how University West (UW), the leading Work-integrated learning (WIL) university in Europe, represents WIL in education and research. The relationship between work and learning is becoming increasingly important in higher education. A new Master's programme in WIL at University West, develop WIL as a transdisciplinary discipline beyond the mainstream framing of WIL as pedagogy only, to bridge theory and practice into new forms of knowledge and learning. In so doing, work-integrated learning (WIL) benefit of students, traditional disciplines, and wider society by interpreting WIL in relation to discipline-specific forms of knowledge and knower. This co-creation and strengthening of knowledge through WIL can assist in equipping graduates with real-world work experiences and opportunities. Additionally, a WIL curriculum can empower and equip a broader spectrum of graduates with the world of work, with significant potential benefits in terms of academic growth, personal, career, skills, and social development.

Linking academia and industries. Experiences in instructing Professional Geography and career orientation for students in Germany.

Klaus Greve[1], Astrid Seckelmann[2] & Maike Dziomba[3]

University of Bonn[1], Ruhr-University Bochum[2], and Wagner & Partner[3]

Germany

The lecture aims to show how practical elements can be embedded in university teaching in order to make it easier for students to start their careers. The example of cooperation between German universities and a professional association of Geographers demonstrates how practical experience can contribute to the high quality of student education. It combines the perspective of academic teachers with that of applied practice. It focuses on various elements: (i) Concepts for integrating professional practice into university teaching: An overview; (ii) Guest lectures, excursions and teaching assignments integrated into the regular curriculum: Didactic approaches; (iii) The professional association (German Association for Applied Geography) as a reliable partner for universities: From practice to teaching; (iv) Career events as a forum for exchange between practitioners and students: online presentations of Alumni, and (v) Internships as an integral part of curricula: creating commitment.

Medical 3D Human Anatomy & Physiology

Stephanie Lathe

Learning Curve, Education Sales Director, South Africa

As health science faculties expand Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), digital simulation is becoming increasingly essential for developing applied competence, improving employability, and fostering effective stakeholder collaboration. This presentation highlights how Learning Curve, in partnership with Primal Pictures, strengthens WIL through advanced 3D anatomy resources, AR/VR experiences, and specialist educator training. Primal Pictures enables students to practise clinical decision-making and technical skills in safe, simulated environments. Medical students can revise surgical anatomy before placements; radiography students can rehearse patient positioning to visualise specific anatomical structures; and physiotherapy and sports-science students can apply functional anatomy principles using movement-based animations. These tasks support critical thinking and authentic assessment, allowing educators to evaluate applied knowledge and track progression through measurable performance indicators.

We showcase examples from institutions, including virtual dissection tables at Stellenbosch University and AR simulation of patient imaging at Charles Sturt University, to illustrate how this technology enhances student engagement and workplace readiness. The platform creates alignment among academic teams, clinical supervisors, and host organisations by providing a shared, standardised tool for curriculum integration and preparation prior to clinical exposure. Learning Curve's implementation guidance and anatomist-led training ensure that institutions adopt these technologies effectively, embedding them into WIL structures with strong quality assurance and mentorship frameworks. This presentation demonstrates how Learning Curve and Primal Pictures deliver a scalable, evidence-informed digital ecosystem that enhances WIL design, stakeholder synergies, and graduate employability.

The Impact of AI on our Future

Carla Ralph

Magenta SA is Learning Curve's preferred Adobe Training Partner

This presentation explores Adobe's ethical and responsible approach to AI in education, focusing on how its two AI models — Adobe Firefly and AI Assistant — are transforming learning and teaching in higher education. Attendees will gain insight into Adobe's commitment to content authenticity, ensuring creators and consumers can trust the integrity of digital content through transparency, attribution, and ethical AI training practices. A key focus will be on Authentic Assessment, where assessment itself becomes a meaningful learning experience rather than simply its conclusion. Authentic assessment mirrors real-world challenges, measuring learners' ability to think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively — all essential skills in today's workforce. The core principle lies in evaluating how students apply knowledge in relevant, practical contexts, supported by modern digital tools like Adobe's AI technologies. Through live demonstrations, participants will see how Adobe's AI-powered tools enhance both facilitation and student engagement — empowering educators to create more interactive, creative, and future-ready learning environments. The session bridges higher education and industry by showing how ethical AI integration supports sustainable innovation in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Empowering Education Through Simulation and AI Technology: Bridging Academia and Industry

Gift Mubita

Educational Technology Global (Edutec)

In the evolving landscape of education and workforce training, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital simulations are transforming how learners and professionals acquire practical skills. Edutec, in collaboration with the University of Namibia (UNAM), has been at the forefront of developing AI-driven educational simulations that enhance experiential learning across multiple disciplines. This presentation will demonstrate how simulation-based and AI-assisted learning bridges the gap between theory and practice, fostering critical thinking, adaptive learning, and

industry-readiness among students. A key highlight will be the Green Hydrogen Simulation a pioneering AI-enhanced learning tool developed in partnership with UNAM students, who are integral members of Edutec's simulation development team. This collaboration showcases the strength of industry-academia partnerships

in fostering innovation, technical skill development, and sustainable knowledge transfer. The presentation will further explore Edutec's comprehensive process from concept design and AI integration to testing, deployment, and training and discuss how these technologies can be scaled to benefit schools, universities, and organizations nationwide. Ultimately, our goal is to strengthen Namibia's digital education ecosystem by merging AI, simulation, and innovation to prepare the next generation for a technology-driven future.

Facilitating the Development of Research Skills in the Digital Era: Leveraging AI Tools for Programme Management, Assessment and Student Feedback

Helena Miranda & Natalia Intja

University of Namibia, Rundu Campus

Despite the growth of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIEd) and its recognition as a transformative force for personal learning, many educators are yet to learn how to meaningfully use it for successful teaching and learning. Acknowledging this gap that limits the potential of AI and restricts user benefits from innovative digital tools, this qualitative case study explores the ethical integration of AI tools as a complement to—rather than a replacement for—human responsive learning. It shares the experiences of two facilitators who delivered an online capacity building short course on research proposal writing. The study's purpose is to highlight the structure, delivery, student assessment, and feedback mechanisms of the short course using AI-enhanced tools to develop sound research proposals. The practical, hands-on short course consisted of five units, where students submitted an assessable activity after each unit. All five graded tasks were returned to students for improvement, culminating in a final research proposal. The facilitators experienced a major shift in their attitude towards AI, gaining valuable experience in delivering online university courses. Arguing for humans to co-evolve with AI, the paper details the use of AI tools in programme management, assessment, and student feedback, alongside student engagement and reactions. This work offers recommendations for both practice and future research, demonstrating a practical model for integrating AI in academic support services and contributing to the body of knowledge on the role of AI in curriculum development within Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) contexts, aligning with the conference sub-theme on emerging technologies.

Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIEd), Research Skills, Assessment, Student Feedback, Capacity Building

Application of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality in work-integrated learning: Digital transformation of the curriculum development and digital mentoring in universities.

Daniel K Mbangula

University of Namibia, Department of Applied Educational Sciences

This paper examines the role of emerging technologies in advancing digital transformation at universities and particularly how these emerging technologies can be used to match academic programs and industry demands. Artificial intelligence tools make it possible to build a data-driven curriculum, predictive learning analytics, and personal learning pathways that better prepare students to meet the agile needs of the workplace. In this study the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)" technique is going to be employed for a thorough and transparent literature review process. This is going to be done to generalize existing research on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) into work-integrated learning (WIL) to aid the digital transformation of curriculum development and digital mentorship in higher education. In the meantime, VR offers immersive, experience-based learning conditions, simulating professional settings, which gives several chances to students to train their technical and soft skills in artificial but close-to-the-life conditions. Furthermore, the use of these AI-based guidance solutions and virtual spaces will not be limited to particular geographic locations and institutions, and the guidance will be equal across them. With these investigations of technological interventions, the study highlights the potential of these interventions to increase student engagement, better employability outcomes and better university-industry relationships. The findings present opportunities and challenges in terms of using AI and VR to arrive at a digitally transformed model of WIL that is sustainable, scalable, and future-oriented.

Keywords:

Artificial intelligence, virtually reality, digital transformation, digital Mentorship, curriculum development.

Systematic Analysis of Cyber Threats to Financial Systems in Developing Countries: Leveraging AI to Enhance Business Operations and Mitigate Vulnerabilities in Small and Medium Enterprises.

Abel Moyo[1], Fine Masimba[2] and Tranos Zuva[3]

Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Department of Computer & Data Science Technology, Bindura, Zimbabwe[1]

Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Harare, Zimbabwe[2]

Vaal University of Technology, Vanderbijilpark, South Africa[3]

The financial systems of developing countries are increasingly at risk from cyber threats that threaten the stability of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). AI integration in business operations presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly as businesses utilize social media and digital platforms for marketing. However, this digital engagement also exposes them to various cyber threats, such as phishing and data breaches. This study employs the PRISMA framework to systematically analyze literature on cyber threats, capital access, and the transformative impact of AI on SMEs. By identifying how AI can improve operational efficiency, enhance security measures, and provide data-driven insights, the research highlights strategies that SMEs can adopt to mitigate risks while leveraging AI for growth. The findings aim to inform policymakers, financial institutions, and SME owners about the importance of investing in cybersecurity and AI technologies to create a resilient financial ecosystem. Ultimately, this research seeks to provide practical recommendations that empower SMEs to navigate the digital landscape safely and effectively.

Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Threats, Small and Medium Enterprises, Social Media Marketing

Reviving the profile of a Student-Librarianship: Challenges and Prospects UNAM Library case study.

JM Mwiiyale, I Sitler, and S Karsten

University of Namibia, Library

The current university generation are those possessing unique personalities, characters, and preferences, thus opting for internship projects that are not only matching their expectations but also enticing. This paper deduces insights gained when coordinating student-librarianship internship programmes for Library and Information Science students at UNAM. Since 2023, the library work-based/professional adopted a theoretical training approach designed with unmeasurable tasks and undefined/intangible learning outcomes. Both library subject experts and student interns tend to be unprepared, dissatisfied consequently losing interest in the process. The entire internship programme is treated as a mere compliance task of fulfilling the designated credits. Absence of a well-aligned WIL framework tailored to impart students with distinct skills and relevant knowledge continues worsening this practice. Neither a post-analysis or knowledge audit exercise is conducted to measure the impacts: a notable stunt demeaning library staff efforts in improving graduates' competencies and employability portfolios. The authors underscore the value of the exploring a viable WIL framework for advancing the student-librarianship best practices in Namibia. Using a critical-methodological approach, thorough assessment of subject specialisation and career aspiration is key to identity gaps and develop appropriate talent management framework. Retrospectively, findings would shape the formation of knowledge-acquisition tasks measure graduate performance indicators and normative values based on the 4th IR skillsets from a Namibian context. Failure to implement a well-aligned WIL framework at UNAM library would contribute to poor rating of library staff competency, thus closing this gap would increase UNAM reputational portfolio.

Keywords:

Library-based internship; Student librarianship; student-library credit bearing courses; library work-integrated model; library work-embedded framework.

Artificial Intelligence-Driven Teaching Practice: A Hybrid WIL Framework ***for Namibia's Teacher Education.***

Rachel Ndinelao Shanyanana-Amaambo[1] and Lukas Matati Josua[2]

Department of Educational Foundations and Management, University of Namibia, Ongwediva, Namibia[1]

Department of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Namibia, Oshakati, Namibia[2]

Teaching Practice is a vital Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) component in teacher education, offering student teachers experiential engagement in real classroom settings. In Namibia, limited lecturer presence in schools challenges consistent mentorship and feedback. This study aims to develop a hybrid framework that employs AI and digital technologies to improve teaching practices in teacher education in Namibia through a reflective Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experience. The study employs the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), guiding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools into instructional strategies. The latter emphasises learning through experience, reflection, and adaptation. A qualitative design was employed, combining a systematic literature review and document analysis. The review used databases such as ERIC, Scopus, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, targeting peer-reviewed studies from 2020–2025 on AI in teacher education and WIL. Purposive sampling identified 38 relevant studies from an initial pool of 126. Document analysis included national education policies, Teaching Practice handbooks, and institutional reports to assess infrastructure readiness and policy alignment. AI integration enhances student-teacher autonomy, improves lesson planning, and enables scalable mentorship. Student teachers reported increased confidence and engagement, especially in underserved schools. Institutional documents revealed gaps in digital infrastructure and strategic planning. To develop national guidelines for AI-supported Teaching Practice, to train lecturers, student teachers, and school-based teacher mentors in AI literacy and ethical use, to partner with Edtech providers and local, regional, and international institutions to support scalable platforms, and to pilot AI-enhanced Teaching Practice in rural regions to assess impact.

Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Teaching Practice, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), Emerging Technologies, Hybrid Framework

Mentoring undergraduate research using AI: Improving individual research mentorship skills through an auto ethnographic reflective study.

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Effective research supervision requires rigorous mentorship skills amid time management skills, interpersonal skills, moral values and mentor research knowledge. Drawing from my personal experience, research supervision has been challenging to navigate particularly when the mentor has not undergone training in research supervision. This auto ethnographic study was conducted to explore effective ways to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve personal skills in mentoring undergraduate research in one university satellite campus. Data was drawn from mentor reflective thought on a fourteen years research experience on undergraduate research supervision process, mentor-tutee email communication, tutees' level of readiness to write and conduct research, tutees' quality of writing in research proposals and reports; and tutee reaction towards mentor's comments on draft research proposals and reports. This qualitative study, through a thematic analysis of personal experience, underlines specific moments of uncertainty in terms of the boundaries relating to the key role of a supervisor, instances of tension and eventually professional growth and transformation in tutee research writing and achievement through the integration of AI in the research supervision process. For the first time, in 2025, my tutees obtained a 75 % grade in their research after using AI to guide them in terms of academic writing. Tutees expressed concern when they realized that the report was to be marked by a different lecturer because they struggled throughout the research process. Findings of this study outline the potential of an ethical integration of AI to improve research supervision amid fear of tutees submitting AI generated reports.

Keywords:

Research supervision, Artificial intelligence (AI), undergraduate research, reflective mentorship, improved academic writing

Handbook of Teaching Chemistry to Students with Disability in an Inclusive Education.

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Promoting inclusiveness within the education system is essential to ensure that every student attains a quality education free from discrimination. However, many inclusive schools,colleges and universities still lack clear standards aligned with international best practices to guarantee accessibility, mobility, and the fulfillment of diverse needs, particularly for students with disabilities. This integrated handbook seeks to enhance the active participation of chemistry teachers, lecturers, and students in inclusive classroom and laboratory environments. It provides guidance based on a thorough assessment of the types of disabilities among students, enabling the design of learning activities tailored to their specific needs. The approach aims to empower students with disabilities to pursue chemistry as a professional career. Furthermore, the handbook demonstrates how chemistry content, teaching methodologies, learning materials, and assessment strategies can be effectively adapted to support students with special needs by leveraging existing university resources, without introducing additional financial or logistical burdens on institutions.

Keywords:

Teaching Chemistry, Disability, Inclusive Education

Measuring WIL Impact: Industry Satisfaction with UNAM Students' Placements (2024–2025).

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This study explores the theme *Measuring WIL Impact* by assessing industry satisfaction with University of Namibia (UNAM) student placements during 2024–2025. The focus is on evaluating the effectiveness of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) initiatives through performance indicators, employability outcomes, and institutional support. Data were collected via a structured survey targeting organizations that hosted students under WIL and Cooperative Work Integrated Education (CWIE) programs. Findings reveal high overall satisfaction, with most respondents reporting being "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied." Key strengths include teamwork, communication skills, and adaptability, while conflict management and emotional intelligence emerged as areas for improvement. Institutional support services received mixed ratings: academic staff availability was generally positive, but follow-up visits and proactive liaison require enhancement. Challenges identified include limited placement duration, insufficient diversity in opportunities, and occasional student absenteeism. Suggestions emphasize extending placements to at least six months, providing annual intake schedules, and improving communication between UNAM and industry partners. By aligning these insights with WIL impact assessment models, the study underscores the value of experiential learning in enhancing graduate employability and institutional reputation. Recommendations aim to strengthen performance indicators and foster longitudinal tracking of WIL outcomes, ensuring sustainable partnerships between academia and industry.

Keywords:

WIL, CWIE, Industry Satisfaction, Employability Outcomes, Soft Skills Development, Performance Indicators, Student Placements

Student Voices on Employability: Measuring Office Management Preparedness Against Industry Demand.

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This quantitative study will explore the workplace preparedness of undergraduate Office Management students, building upon prior qualitative research that identified employer concerns regarding graduates' critical thinking, professionalism, entrepreneurial initiative, and strategic engagement. Based on interviews with twelve industry professionals across various sectors, the preceding study revealed consistent misalignments between academic training and workplace expectations. Drawing on these insights, a structured survey instrument was developed to capture students' perceptions of curriculum relevance, skill preparedness, and alignment with industry demands.

Approximately 170 final-year students at a University of Technology will participate in the study, which employs Likert-scale and categorical measures to assess competencies such as critical thinking, communication, adaptability, entrepreneurial mindset, and professionalism. This investigation, currently underway and scheduled for completion before the conference, compares student self-assessments with documented employer expectations. The anticipated findings will illuminate areas of convergence and divergence, offering evidence-based recommendations for curriculum refinement. The study seeks to contribute to the discourse on aligning higher education outcomes with labour market needs and emphasises the value of sustained dialogue between academia and industry to support student employability and workforce integration.

Keywords:

work-integrated learning, student readiness, industry expectations, curriculum alignment, critical thinking, Office Management, employability

Traversing the Social Realist Dimensions in Pre-Work-Integrated Learning: A Reflection on Curriculum Design and Management at the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

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Blending theory and practice led to the introduction of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) as a catalyst for bridging higher education and industry for a sustainable future. The Namibia University of Science and Technology offers a pre-WIL course, which prepares students for the actual WIL placements. The objectives of the paper are: 1) to examine the structural, cultural, and agential enablements and constraints to effective pre-WIL programmes at the Namibia University of Science and Technology, 2) to explore how pre-WIL curriculum design reflects educational ideologies that prepare students for real-world industry engagement, and 3) to propose strategies to enhance the quality of the pre-WIL course in relation to the national development goals. The paper employed an autoethnographic qualitative method to reflect on the design and management of the NUST pre-WIL context. The data were analysed thematically using a priori from social realist literature. Due to the non-involvement of human participants, there was no application for ethical consideration or informed consent obtained. The reflection revealed that NUST has structures such as the pre-WIL course that prepares students for WIL opportunities in the industry. There is also a culture that prioritizes practical experience and lifelong learning through a supportive environment for cooperative education. NUST has agents who occupy structures and set out the WIL culture, which are WIL Coordinators and WIL Industry Liaison Coordinators who play a pivotal role in connecting students with the industry. This implies that there are social realist domains that may enable and constrain effective pre-WIL activities.

Keywords:

Social Realist, pre-WIL, theory and practice, NUST, Design

Enhancing Work-Integrated Learning in Fisheries and Ocean Sciences: Reflections, Challenges, and Opportunities.

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This presentation offers a reflective overview of the Cooperative Work Integrated Education (CWIE) programme implemented by the Department of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (DFOS) at the University of Namibia. Drawing on feedback from host institutions, it highlights the programme's strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement.

All 20 eligible students were successfully placed, with strong participation from government ministries and industry partners. Students demonstrated excellent work ethics, enthusiasm, and adaptability, contributing to tasks such as data capturing, aquaculture management, and lab procedures. Their engagement and openness to feedback were widely appreciated. Challenges included limited foundational knowledge in marine biodiversity and fisheries concepts, and disruptions caused by overlapping academic commitments. Host institutions also emphasized the need for better orientation, structured mentorship, and improved coordination with UNAM. Recommendations include removing academic modules during internships, expanding placements to sectors like oil and gas, and strengthening the curriculum with practical training in species identification, sampling equipment, and scientific reporting. Enhanced communication between university and host supervisors, along with clear expectations and evaluation tools, was also advised. The extended CWIE duration was well received, offering students deeper learning and smoother transitions into the workforce. The presentation advocates for a more structured, collaborative, and student-focused approach to CWIE, ensuring its continued relevance in preparing graduates for Namibia's marine and fisheries sector.

Challenges and Opportunities for Science Students in the CWIE Programme.

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The Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Biotechnology (BMB) at the University of Namibia (UNAM) has adopted Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), also referred to as Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (CWIE), as part of UNAM's strategy to enhance graduate employability and bridge the gap between academic training and industry expectations. While the programme demonstrates significant opportunities for improving professional readiness, challenges remain in aligning stakeholder expectations, ensuring consistent mentorship, and addressing issues of student preparedness. The results shared are based on a report by the BMB department's CWIE coordinators. The findings indicate that host organisations value the opportunity to transfer technical competencies to UNAM students, however the time frame and period selected (November to February) does not ensure workplace adaptability. Collaborative curriculum reviews, strengthened partnerships, and structured feedback mechanisms are required for effective improvement and alignment of academic content with industry needs. Similarly, mentorship frameworks and monitoring tools would improve the quality and consistency of placement experiences. From the student perspective, WIL placements were transformative, fostering confidence, critical thinking, and a sense of professional identity. However, challenges such as limited funding, accessibility barriers, and uneven support across host organisations were reported. These highlights opportunities for stronger partnerships, diversified funding models, and broader engagement with industry partners to ensure inclusivity and sustainability. This review underscores the need for coordinated stakeholder engagement, robust programme management, adaptive-student centred approaches to optimise WIL outcomes and successfully implement in science-based disciplines in higher education.

Keywords:

Employability, Higher education, Mentorship, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), Stakeholder engagement

Constructing the Higher Education Student: A Comparative Study of Sixteen SADC Countries.

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This study addresses the lack of a coherent understanding of how the higher education student is conceptualised across the Southern African Development Community (SADC). While roughly 4.8 million students are enrolled in the region, assumptions of a shared identity underpin regional initiatives such as cross-border educational mobility and the envisioned SADC Higher Education Area. The absence of systematic comparative research on this issue raises questions about congruence in definitions of 'the student' both across SADC countries and within Namibia's national context. The study employs an interdisciplinary comparative design across sixteen SADC member states. Methodologies include critical analysis of policy texts, media discourse, and higher education institutional frameworks, combined with interviews and surveys involving policymakers, institutional frameworks, combined with interviews and surveys involving policymakers, institutional leaders, and students themselves. This multi-actor, multi-level approach enables both cross-national comparison and in-depth within-country analysis. Preliminary findings suggest considerable divergence in conceptualisations of students, with some discourses framing them primarily as future workers in national development, while others emphasise their roles as citizens, and consumers. Variations exist not only between countries but also within them, revealing tensions between policy rhetoric and student self-understandings. The study's implications are threefold: first, it advances a new theoretical framework for analysing constructions of higher education students in SADC; second, it provides a comprehensive dataset to inform regional and national policymaking; and third, it fosters international research networks that can sustain comparative inquiry beyond the life of this study.

Keywords:

Higher Education, Student Constructions, SADC, Comparative Study, Educational Policy

Competency profiling model for community engagement: Key lessons from Psychology.

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After the restructuring, the University of Namibia transformed most of its programs to enhance the practical component of all courses. The Department of Psychology and Social Work also transformed its undergraduate program, adding a 5-week core semester community engagement module. The key question that emerged were the crucial lessons in terms of what the community engagement is expected to enhance in students. This led to the development of a competency profiling model, specifically developed for the Psychology community engagement module. The paper intends to outline the competency profiling model, elucidate on how the components of the model are interlinked to enhance specific competencies ranging from soft skills to technical and knowledge skills and how to measure whether these competencies have been acquired or not. The paper provides recommendations as to how competency profiling modelling can be effectively used, irrespective of discipline.

Keywords:

Community engagement, competency profiling, soft skills, technical skills, knowledge acquisition, Psychology, Namibia

Perceptions of workplace-based mentors on their roles in Work Integrated Learning in the Namibian Banking Sector.

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The study explores the perceptions of workplace-based mentors regarding their roles and responsibilities in facilitating Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in the Namibian Banking Sector. Globally, Work Integrated Learning is essential to the learning experiences of higher education students as it bridges the gap between university and work, contributing to graduate employability. The success of Work Integrated Learning is dependent on several factors, including effective mentorship. To that end, the paper seeks to answer the question of what the perceptions of workplace-based mentors of their role in WIL mentorship. What do WIL workplace-based mentors consider as barriers and enablers in performing their roles? The study focused on mentors working in the Banking Sector. A qualitative research approach was used in the study. Participants were 12 purposively selected WIL mentors. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The study reveals that mentors recognise the important roles they play in mentorship. However, their roles are multiple and extend beyond sharing technical job expertise to include counselling, pastoral care, and career guidance, roles they are not fully equipped to handle. The findings of this study have implications for policy and practice. universities on what workplace-based mentors expect of their mentees. Understanding of perceptions of workplace-based mentors can assist organisations in developing mentor capacity-building initiatives.

Keywords:

Mentorship, Work Integrated Learning, Namibia

Bridging the gap between Higher Education and Employment: ***Evidence from Namibia's Graduate Labour Market.***

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Higher education is generally expected to enhance employment opportunities for graduates. However, in Namibia, the higher education system has not performed as effectively as those in many other countries, with graduate unemployment remaining particularly high among younger generations. Despite these poor labour market outcomes, limited research has examined the relationship between higher education and employment outcomes in Namibia. This study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of higher education qualifications and work-integrated learning (WIL) on the employment probabilities of Namibian graduates. The analysis draws on data from the 2019 and 2021 National Graduate Surveys conducted by the National Council for Higher Education. Employing a probit regression model corrected for individual ability bias, the results show that employment probability increases with educational attainment, with holders of advanced qualifications more likely to secure employment. Women with bachelor's and honours degrees are found to have higher employment likelihoods than men, while the reverse holds true for those with master's degrees. Furthermore, graduates who reported positive experiences with work-integrated learning during their studies exhibit higher employment probabilities than those with less favourable WIL experiences. These findings suggest that strengthening partnerships between higher education institutions and industry through improved WIL programmes could enhance graduate employment outcomes in Namibia.

Key words:

Employment, Higher Education, Work Integrated Learning, Graduates, Namibia

Factors Contributing to Students' Poor Academic Performance in Open And Distance Learning: A Case Study of the Certificate in Early Childhood Development Programme at the Namibia College of Open Learning.

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This study explores what influences academic performance among students in the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL)'s Certificate in Early Childhood Development (CECD) programme focusing on centres in Windhoek, Rundu and Ongwediva. It examines personal, institutional and contextual factors affecting learners in an Open and Distance Education (ODL) environment. The study used Moore's Transactional Distance Education Theory to understand the psychological and communication space between the students and the educators in distance education. This theory is appropriate to analyses the dynamics of learner engagement and institutional support in ODL settings. A qualitative case study approach was employed, allowing for in-depth exploration of student experiences and systemic challenges. The research method highlights the barriers faced by students in semi-urban and rural areas and how they cope. The study proposes various recommendations including adopting hybrid teaching models, decentralising academic support workshops, improving tutor monitoring and increasing financial and technological resources to promote fair learning opportunities and reduce failure rates. The study also contributes to policy reform in Namibia's ODL settings and suggests future research directions in comparing institutions, applying gender sensitive analysis and conducting long-term studies on education reforms.

Keywords:

Open and Distance Learning, Academic Performance, Early Childhood Development, Transactional Distance Theory, Student Support, Namibia

The effectiveness of Work Integrated-Work Learning for students.

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This research examines how effective Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs at the University of Namibia (UNAM) are in equipping students for the job market, with an emphasis on skill development, readiness for work, and employability. Employing a qualitative research methodology, data were collected from students across different fields who engaged in WIL programs. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of their experiences, challenges faced, and perceptions regarding the programs. The results indicate that WIL plays a crucial role in enhancing students' technical and interpersonal skills, providing them with practical work experience and helping them build professional networks—factors that are vital for career progression. Nonetheless, the study also highlighted significant challenges such as limited opportunities for placements, inadequate supervision during these experiences, and a disconnect between academic curricula and industry requirements. These issues pose barriers for students and hinder the overall effectiveness of WIL in thoroughly preparing them for their future careers.

Results indicates that UNAM should improve the effectiveness of WIL by strengthening partnerships with industry to create more placement opportunities, enhancing training for supervisors to provide better support for students, and aligning the curriculum more closely with industry requirements. By focusing on these aspects, UNAM can foster the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce that is well-prepared to meet the changing demands of the job market.

Key words:

Work Integrated Learning (WIL), job market, industry, job placement, students

Innovating University Curricula for the Circular Bioeconomy: A Design-Based Research Approach.

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The transition toward a circular bioeconomy requires graduates equipped with interdisciplinary, systems-thinking and practice-oriented competencies. However, in many parts of the Global South, including Namibia, university curricula are not consistent with industry needs and national sustainability priorities, limiting higher education's capacity to contribute to emerging green and knowledge-based economies. This paper explores how Design-Based Research (DBR) can support the collaborative design of relevant and future-oriented curriculum innovations that address this gap. The study is situated within the CircBioNam project, a partnership involving the University of Namibia, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Turku University, and the Namibia University of Science and Technology, and applies a DBR approach grounded in a pragmatic paradigm and relational–constructivist ontology. The project engaged academics, researchers, students, and industry partners in iterative cycles of exploration, co-design workshops, validation dialogues, and prototype development. This collaborative process resulted in the formulation of a circular bioeconomy curriculum framework underpinned by experiential learning, providing the foundation for a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) model designed to link academic learning with real-world bioeconomy challenges. Findings from the design phase show that DBR provided a structured and participatory platform that facilitated shared understanding of competency needs, enhanced curriculum relevance, strengthened inter-institutional collaboration, and built stakeholder ownership of the emerging learning model. The process also increased institutional readiness for future experiential learning implementation. The study concludes that investing in a collaborative design phase is essential for developing effective and context-appropriate WIL programs capable of supporting Namibia's transition toward a sustainable, innovation-driven circular bioeconomy.

Keywords:

Circular Bioeconomy; Design-Based Research; Curriculum Innovation; Work-Integrated Learning; Higher Education Partnerships

Factors Affecting UNAM Tourism Graduates' Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Johanna Nakale

University of Namibia

Entrepreneurship within the tourism sector holds potential for economic development and job creation, particularly in countries with high youth unemployment, such as Namibia. Despite the integration of entrepreneurship education into Namibia's tertiary curriculum, the extent to which it influences tourism graduates' entrepreneurial intentions remains unclear. This study investigates the factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions among tourism graduates from the University of Namibia (UNAM), with a focus on the impact of entrepreneurship education, graduates' attitudes towards entrepreneurship, and the institutional environments. Guided by the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE) theoretical framework, the study adopts a mixed-methods design. Quantitative data was collected via structured online surveys from a systematically sampled group of graduates between the year 2001 to 2022, while qualitative data was drawn through focus group discussions and document analysis. The findings revealed that while entrepreneurship education positively influenced entrepreneurial attitudes, significant structural barriers such as limited access to finance, complex registration procedures, and regulatory challenges continued to hinder entrepreneurial activity. Additionally, informal institutional factors, including societal norms and perceived risks, were found to impact graduates' attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The study concludes with policy and curriculum recommendations aimed at bridging the gap between entrepreneurship education and practice, emphasizing the importance of targeted mentorship, streamlined regulatory processes, and enhanced institutional support. These findings contribute to tourism education reform and development planning in Namibia, highlighting graduate-driven entrepreneurship as a vital pathway towards a sustainable and resilient tourism future.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship education, institutional environment, entrepreneurial intentions, graduates' attitudes, Namibia

Spent substrate from Mushrooms as an opportunity for vegetable production and soil amendment to organic matter deficient soils in Namibia.

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University of Namibia, Multidisciplinary Research (MR), Centre for Research Services

In Namibia, mushrooms cultivation is regarded as one of the growing business ventures which has attracted many people of all ages in recent years. One of the major environmental problems in the mushroom producing countries remains the treatment and disposal of the spent mushroom substrates (SMS). About 5kg of SMS is produced for each kilogram of mushrooms. Following its first inception and introduction to the country early 2000, mushroom research and training has been expanding. With the University of Namibia as a leading institution in mushroom cultivation promotion through communities training as well as research and publication. The project has attracted many community members as well as private business who have been coming for training on various mushroom production skills each year. With the increased interest of the public, handling and disposal of waste from the mushrooms production has raised big environmental concern and this has been a challenging exercise to the University of Namibia as well. At UNAM, the spent substrate has been disposed of at the municipal waste dumping site through a contracted cleaning company that collect it from outside ZERI premised on a weekly basis. The Zero Emission Research Initiative strategy was based on a zero-waste emission and no waste should be produced without elimination or proper handling. The project then, managed to turn SMS into compost which is being used as growing medium for vegetable at a greenhouse. After harvesting, the vegetable is sold to the UNAM community to generate income for project related activities.

Keywords:

Disposal of waste; Mushrooms; Environmental pollution; ZERO emission

Advancing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Bridging Teaching Practices and Industry Needs to Enhance Student Employability

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This paper presents a strategic framework from the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) at the University of Namibia that outlines an agenda to advance the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) by bridging teaching practices with evolving industry needs to enhance student employability. Rather than reporting empirical results, the paper outlines a roadmap for fostering evidence-based inquiry into pedagogical approaches that align academic curricula with workforce demands. By promoting SoTL at micro (classroom), meso (institutional), and macro (national/international) levels, the strategy encourages educators to systematically explore how their teaching practices prepare students for successful transitions into the labour market. Key research themes include work-integrated learning, curriculum design responsive to industry trends, and the cultivation of transferable skills valued by employers. The strategy also highlights the integration of digital tools and learning analytics to inform continuous improvement. For university lecturers, this framework offers a structured approach to investigating and refining their teaching in collaboration with students and industry partners. It fosters reflective practice, cross-sector collaboration, and a scholarly culture that elevates teaching quality and student readiness for employment. The paper proposes the need to align SoTL with institutional strategic goals, national development goals and industry expectations, to position higher education as a proactive partner in building a sustainable future through meaningful academic-industry collaboration.

Keywords:

SoTL, WIL, Reflective Practice, Industry collaboration, Employability

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