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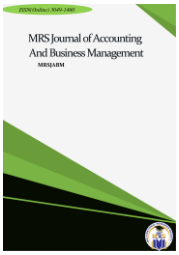

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Pedagogical practices in enhancing employability of N6 Accounting graduates in Eastern Cape

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to explore pedagogical practices and factors that influence employability of N6 Accounting students from TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape. The study was stimulated skyrocketing general and youth unemployment and debates about questionable quality of TVET graduates in South Africa. Therefore, this motivated the researcher to interrogate the pedagogical practices that influence employability of Accounting N6 graduates from TVET colleges. This study was grounded on Brigstock's conceptual model. The qualitative approach and constructivism as a paradigm were adopted to provide a praxis for this research. The data was collected from 15 purposively sampled lecturers who were involved in the teaching and learning of Accounting in 8 TVET colleges in Eastern Cape. A triangulated approach to gather data was adopted where 16 semi-structured interviews with lecturers, questionnaires and classroom observations were also used to extract the data. Findings from the study showed that teaching and learning for the promotion of employability skills is in jeopardy as a result of the lack of teaching and learning resources, rigid assessment practices, excessive use of traditional teaching routines and insufficient industry linkage. This study recommended that there is a need for redefining teaching routines that elevate holistic development of students from TVET colleges, lecturers should impose assessment practices that develop other graduate skills rather than administrating assessments only for promotion purposes.

Keywords: *Pedagogy; Employability skills; Accounting; TVET; Graduates readiness.*

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Introduction

For many developing countries faced with multiple social challenges, pedagogy as a component of education has been utilised as a tool for solution, emancipation and empowerment (Carvalho et al., 2017). South Africa is not immune to challenges facing developing and underdeveloped countries, hence South African education system has been utilising pedagogical strategies to address socio-economic issues which were pointed out by Habiyaremye et al. (2022) such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, racism, malnutrition, global warming etc. Therefore, from these socio-economic issues mentioned above, it is justified to single-out unemployment in relation to employability of TVET college graduates in particular as a point of departure for this research. This was because the concern is that in 2024 as per Stats SA (2024) the general unemployment was over a quarter (32.1%) of the labour force while 45.5% of the youth, which is almost half of youth is unemployed in South Africa. Secondly, the study was triggered by the arguments and debates about questionable quality of graduates in multiple disciplines in South Africa including TVET college graduates.

The arguments and debates about qualities of an employable graduates in various disciplines in South Africa have been heavily studied by researchers such as Mouton and Van Lill (2022), Ramnund-Mansingh and Reddy (2021) and Koloba (2017). For instance, the TVET colleges in South Africa have partially failed to fulfil its mandate because studies conducted by Nkwanyane et al. (2022) and Khoza (2021) agree that the curriculum and learning practices at TVET colleges are failing to produce graduates that are needed by the labour market, struggling in youth skills development and that there is an alarming factor of curriculum irrelevance.

The ignition of teaching and learning practices, curriculum content and experiences may promote employability among students and self-reliance. Radile & Badenhorst (2018) critically dissected the poor academic performance in TVET colleges and dysfunctionality in TVET operations, using an inductive qualitative research approach. The study established that major reconstruction is needed on how TVET operations are performed, starting from the instructional settings (teaching) to corporate governance of TVET colleges. At this point, this might signify that teaching and learning methods at TVET colleges need to be modified in order to suit future expectations of both employers and economic conditions. In their argument, Radile & Badenhorst (2018) proposed that a well-working post-school vocational education scheme is a vital tool for helping school leavers to escape poverty and inequality and maintain a steady development in their careers.

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To the researcher, this figuratively suggests that TVETs have a mandate of producing students that will be able to break away from poverty lines to scrap inequality gaps, to heighten graduates' employability and become independent citizens; this necessitates the production of TVET graduates that are self-sustainable. Although there are such studies on employability and skills development, it can be noted that the majority of the studies had less focus on pedagogical factors that influence employability. Hence, the intention of this research was to explore pedagogical factors that influence employability of N6 Accounting graduates.

Ideally, according to the revised syllabus document for accounting from DHET (2015), accounting students who have completed their N6 at public TVET college in South Africa are supposed to be ready to enter mainstream economy through occupation or through establishing their own accounting practices. This means that public TVET colleges have a mandate to develop students with all the abilities, knowledge, skills, attitudes and attributes, which are needed to enter mainstream economy through employment or by being self-sustainable (independent). The latter claim must be fulfilled by the TVET colleges because Section 29 (1) of the South African Constitution (1996) and Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006 impose such right to students who are at TVET colleges.

However, students that graduate from public TVET colleges struggle to enter labour market or to become independent, for example, Maireva, et al. (2021) argue that even after TVET students are graduates or receive their qualification, they are still subject to hunt for employability skills because most employers perceive them as not ready for labour market. Furthermore, a study conducted by Khambule, (2019:8) revealed that "there has been a slow entrance of TVET graduates into the labour market as some students struggle to complete their qualifications and some are inadequately prepared for industry". Amongst other reasons for the inability of economy to absorb the youth particularly TVET graduates, Adams (2019) blames the mismatch of the skills possessed by these graduates. This raises more questions on strategies or techniques used to produce graduates in TVET colleges in South Africa. To pinpoint the challenge in the Accounting sector, it appears that the subject is skewed to depositing and training procedural content knowledge rather than focusing on the holistic development of the graduate which include pervasive skills as demanded by the employer's needs (Maireva et al. 2021 and Munjeyi & Schutte, 2024).

Researchers such as Mesuwini and Bomani (2021), Mabunda and Frick (2020) and Anthonie (2019) have already explored much on employability skills for Engineering graduates, elements that stimulate the employment of NCV graduates and decolonisation of language skills TVET colleges. However, in the previous studies there is less research emphasis on the classroom pedagogy in terms of skills development that encourages employability specifically for Accounting graduates in a rural context of Eastern cape province. The choice to adopt TVET colleges in Eastern Cape as a case emanates from the fact that Eastern Cape is the province with the highest unemployment rate of 41.9% in 2023 and second highest unemployment rate of 49,1% in 2024 as reported by Stats SA (2023) and Stats SA (2024) respectively. Opting for Eastern Cape as an area to explore was also motivated by the unacceptable trend of being the poorest province in South Africa for five consecutive years from 2020 to 2024), with an average of about 85% living below the poverty line (De Lange, 2022).

This research project explored pedagogical routines that influence employability of TVET college graduates. This study was structured in a manner that it would produce or recommend teaching and learning approaches and experiences that may be adopted by TVET colleges for promoting graduates that are in line with the real world through possession of skills that promote employability. This research is relevant as it closes the literature gap on the south African and global pertaining pedagogical roles in relation to enhancement of employability. TVET Accounting lecturers, students, curriculum developers and government in general were equipped with some practical based solutions on how to shape TVET education especially accounting education in trying to address pedagogical approaches and in trying to address socio-economic problems of this country. The study stands a great probability to be unique since it will be grounded on qualitative approach with triangulated data set which most research haven't utilised. Hence, the research findings and recommendations emanating from this qualitative research method can be meaningful because by definition this approach generate ideas or knowledge from deeper perspectives.

Research question

- Given the introduction and background of the study on pedagogical factors that influence employability of N6 Accounting TVET graduates, the following **main research question** was developed:
- How do pedagogical practices in N6 Accounting influence the employability of graduates?

Literature review

Pedagogical practices in TVET colleges

Teaching is considered as complex process of transferring knowledge and skills and values to individuals. Weinstein et al. (2018) perceive teaching as a science which requires thorough and thoughtful considerations before it can be implemented. It is not surprising that teaching at any sphere requires sound methodological aspect which will drive the teaching process (Mahony & Pierazzo, 2012). Tirri and Toom (2020) see pedagogy is a pivotal part in teaching and believe that when pedagogy is well understood by instructors, the teaching process becomes easy and simplified.

One of the critical performance areas of lecturers at TVET colleges, as stipulated on section A4 of Public Colleges Administrative Measures, is to ensure that students are taught subjects or modules as prescribed for a particular programme. As also argued by Wedekind et al. (2024), lecturers in TVET colleges have a significant role in moulding future graduates. In an attempt to teach the subject content, lecturers are provided with the syllabus to be covered in each module or subject to ensure alignment and constant experience with other students from other colleges who are doing the same programme. The role that has been assumed by the Department of Higher Education and Training in an attempt to improve quality education cannot be ignored. However, the Department of Higher Education and Training (2020), through its report on TVET curriculum alignment to Finance and Accounting Services Sector skills needs attested that there are challenges of pedagogical knowledge by the lecturers in TVET lecturers. For example, this report revealed the significant crisis is posed by the quality of instructional activities where only a few lecturers mix pedagogical competencies with technical

qualifications and industry experience. This implies pedagogical problems with the TVET education which affect quality teaching. Concerns about quality teaching and pedagogy was not only observed by the DHET (2020), scholars such as Vimbela and Bayaga (2023) also noted that quality teaching is negatively affected by the lack of pedagogical orientation by TVET lecturers. Interesting, this study which was conducted by Vimbela and Bayaga (2023) confirmed that there are TVET lecturers in 21st century who still make use of tradition teaching methods.

Through the scholarly work of Nkwadipo and Rabaza (2021), it can be confirmed that the teaching practices by TVET lecturers are questionable and does not align with principles of developing a future employee for 21st century world. The work of Nkwadipo and Rabaza (2021) reveal about six (6) pedagogical factors that influence teaching in TVET colleges. These factors are presented in a form of diagram below to show its significance:

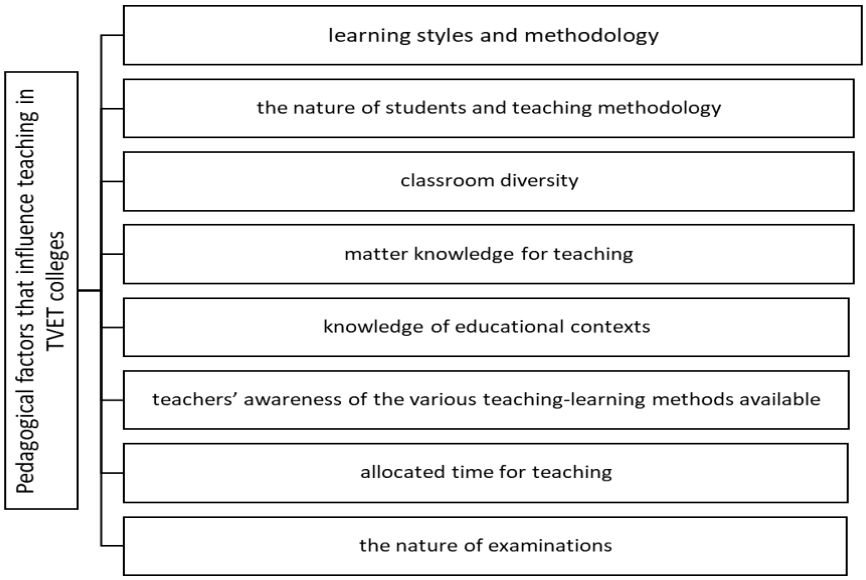

Figure 1

Figure 1: Pedagogical factors that influence teaching in TVET colleges (Nkwadipo & Rabaza, 2021)

Above highlights factors that influence pedagogy in TVET colleges is very critical in this study as these factors may shape the findings of this study. Teaching and learning styles or strategies in TVET colleges are pivotal because the studies conducted by Wu and Wu (2020) and Yusof et al. (2015) agreed that the teaching and learning styles form part of the bigger picture in the generation of capable graduates in vocational institutions. Failure to employ good learning strategies in TVET colleges might result to adverse graduate preparation. The latter argument is not new because the usage of inadequate teaching methods has been criticised in the studies of pedagogists such as Mpongose (2020) and Vimbela and Bayaga (2023). The forgoing researchers' outcry revolved around the usage of traditional techniques of teaching yet it's in the 21st century, the ignorance of student involvement in the lessons, the lack of usage of real-life cases and ineffective utilization of teaching aids. This raises some concerns as it might work against the will of cultivating employable and self-efficient graduates from vocational entities in South Africa.

The heart of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system in South Africa is centred in and around Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Terblanche and Bitzer (2018) used lenses of multi-phased mixed methods to validate the need for renewal of curriculum for TVET Colleges in South Africa by purposefully sampling public TVET colleges in Western Cape as the base of their arguments. The call for curriculum renewal by Terblanche and Bitzer (2018) does not come out unthoughtful reasons or arguments. Through data that emerged from the study of Terblanche and Bitzer (2018) using focus groups interviews and open-ended questionnaires, the need for curriculum renewal was stimulated by some critical findings which included the lack of curriculum relevance, lack of employability and lack of instructional leadership in TVET Colleges. For researchers of this study, the point of departure for a relevant vocational education is strong content knowledge which can be emphasised through strong curriculum policies. Curriculum sets the pace

Yanxia (2008) considers change or transformation in education as pivotal exercise because the ultimate goal of change is to make education practice better. In the process of transformation, Holfelder (2019) places an emphasis on sustainable mechanisms and plans in order to remain relevant and viable for a reasonable time. Although the future is uncertain, future relevance and sustainable education is viewed as valuable component of education as it keeps learners to be competent and active for reasonable decades (Holfelder, 2019). However, a change only takes place once the history or current practices, or problems are critically scrutinised. The status quo of teaching and learning in TVET colleges ought to be examined and scrutinised because Gultom et al. (2020) argued that good pedagogical methods contribute to student academic success and holistic growth. Furthermore, there is a need to revive and strengthen good pedagogical practices as Ruzgar (2021) and Zamora and Zamora (2022) see them as a way in which knowledge depositions, cultivation of skills, leadership development, inter-personal abilities can be nurtured and strengthened.

The history of technical colleges emanates from the pressure that was presented by industrial revolutions and developments in the early 1800s (Evans, 2010). The early industrialization in the 1800s resulted in product massification, human migration, globalisation and technological advancements which in turn necessitated human power to manage the results of

industrialization. Training of human capital through technical colleges was then initiated. South Africa is a transforming part of the huger organ of global village (Maphosa & Maphosa, 2020), as it is affected by many international revolutions such as industrialization, globalization, Massification, digitalisation etc and hence it needs to initiate the operation of technical colleges in the early 1990s.

On the global context, China is one of the leading nations when it comes to economy and development in generally. As extracted from the United Nations (2024), China scored a GDP of 17.5 trillion US dollars and 18.80 trillion US dollars respectively. Notable factors in China's strong economic developmental strengths are that it has high population which favors economies of scale in labour costs, booming manufacturing sector, strong economic policies, culture of hard-work, innovation, strong education system, large domestic market and strategic foreign investments (Zhou, 2022)

As noted above, strong education system and a booming manufacturing sector are some of the strengths of China. Therefore, zooming education is justifiable as this research seeks to compare the education system of education (particularly, technical and vocational education) in China with that of South Africa. Education in China has four spheres namely: Pre-school education, Primary education, Secondary education and Higher education. Vocationally and technically based education is located under secondary education where in secondary education individuals elect to take the academic or vocational route. Noticeably, when learners complete primary education, a significant portion opts for vocational education (Jing et al. 2022).

Success in the China's vocational and technical education is evident from its improved alignment with domestic and global economic demands (Nadege, 2025). This is one of the reasons that China has kept if unemployment rate at an acceptable range of the average global unemployment rate. Furthermore, according to Bashir (2024) Abodohoui and Su (2020), Chinese are all over the world because they have strong business mindset and skills which are mostly cultivated during their schooling years in vocational and technical institutions.

Although China emphasizes a multilingual approach in secondary school, it noted that most Chinese schools use mother-tongue for their teaching and learning processes (Lou et al. 2020) and this makes it easy for learners to grasp the actual content or skills and in the process, they also develop the sense of cultural identity and self-worth. Using mother-tongue as an instructional language has also been supported by Walizadah (2025) and Sibanda & Tshehla (2025) who concurred that the use of mother-tongue in teaching and learning assists in facilitating difficult theoretical content or complicated skills.

Lastly, technological developments and innovations in in Asian countries have granted them an upper hand in education (UNESCO, 2023). The study conducted by Huang et al. (2024) showed that the acceleration of technology in China's education has enable Chinese to boost and strike the balance between practical skills and technological abilities since the whole world is functional under 21st century demands. Boosting practical skills with digital abilities is necessary in economic hubs such as China, United States and Japan as their economies relay on mass manufacturing.

Hibatillah and Husni (2022) defined curriculum as a system of planned and unplanned concept, content, skills, work habits, means of assessment, attitudes and instructional strategies taught in the classroom and the variety of school activities in and out of class that influence present and future academic, social, emotional and physical growth of students. For researchers such as Msibi (2021) and Alsubaie (2016), skills inclusion in the curriculum development is critical as the curriculum consumers need the skills to engage with the broader society. This draws the attention into the curriculum development for TVET colleges in South Africa in pursuit of cultivating sound skills for its graduates in order for them to actively participate in the economic activities and in the society at large. Owing to the notion by Williams (2021) and Nkwanyane et al. (2020) that there is curriculum irrelevance in the TVET sector in South Africa, it was therefore critical to dissect curriculum development using stages of curriculum development as proposed Ralph Tyler, who was one of curriculum pioneers in the early 1940s. Curriculum is considered as the heart or an engine of any learning institution. Therefore, Hibatillah and Husni (2022) defined curriculum as a system of planned and unplanned concept, content, skills, work habits, means of assessment, attitudes and instructional strategies taught in the classroom and the variety of school activities in and out of class that influence present and future academic, social, emotional and physical growth of students.

The theoretical model behind pedagogy

To understand the dynamics of employability, Ruth Bridgstock, an Australian researcher, developed a model which he argued that it develops and enhances the employability of graduates. As Reid (2015:1) generally considers employability as "… a set of achievements that provide the potential for graduates to obtain employment and be successful in their careers". Bridgstock's model highlights five interrelated skills which are a prerequisite in achievement meaning employability amongst graduates. As depicted in the illustration below, Discipline-specific skills, Generic skills, Career-building skills, Self-management skills, Underpinning traits and dispositions form part of critical requisites for employability.

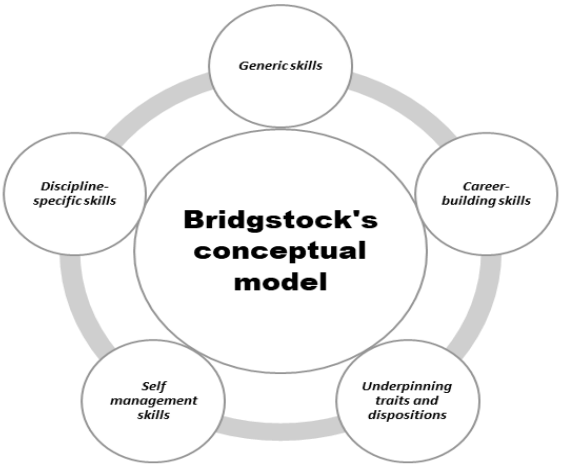

Figure 2: Bridgstock's conceptual model of developing a graduate employability

Pedagogy as a vehicle to emancipation in employability spaces ought to nurture all the variables suggested in Bridgstock's conceptual model. This does not only prepare the graduates for job entrance but also to ensure that they are in a sustainable mode.

Research objective

The main objective of this paper was to understand pedagogical practices that influence the employability of N6 Accounting graduates from TVET colleges.

Methodological aspect of this research

This study was grounded on the case study design, particularly the exploratory case study. The motive behind choosing this design was because the use of case provided the researcher with the luxury to dissect a phenomenon which is pedagogy which promotes employability skills, by the means of variety of lenses as also supported by Crowe et al. (2011). This multi-facet approach was pivotal in this study as the researcher intended to perform a holistic, comprehensive and in-depth understanding of all the research objectives which emanated from the research questions. This is in line with what was advocated by Pearson et al. (2015) and Harland (2014) where they enforce case study in research due to its ability to be flexible to delve into and elaborate further on experiences, circumstances and matters that are complex in nature. 15 human participants in the form of TVET lecturers were purposefully selected to participate. A purposive sampling technique to select research participants was employed because of the quest to extract rich data from knowledgeable participants. The selection of these participants was motivated by the fact that they were knowledgeable about what was occurring at the classroom level in terms of teaching and learning and they were the ones who are supposed to facilitate the process of instilling employability traits among TVET college students. The selected participants took part in face-to-face semi-structured interviews, their lessons were also observed, and they completed open ended questionnaires. The semi-structured interviews were face-to-face, and each interview lasted about 30 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in an office where the participants felt the presence of privacy. Open-ended interviews were completed by the participants who took part in the interviews as this allowed to strengthen the data from semi-structured interviews. Lastly, lesson observations were conducted on 15 participants and each lesson observation lasted about one hour.

It must be noted that to address the research questions in this study, it demanded a diversity in terms of data, hence the decision to seek a research design which minimise data shortage, biasness and unsupported generalization was significant. This study was conducted under the research standards of Tshwane University of Technology as this is the institution which is the source of the ethical clearance. As part of ethical assurance, the researcher obtained the research permission from all the TVET colleges which were involved. Furthermore, participants were informed about the details of the research which included their rights and implications such as potential risks and benefits for participation. This led to attainment of informed consent from the participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were of utmost importance and were maintained by not disclosing the participants' names or their institution in anyway in the study. During the data collection, privacy was safeguarded by interviewing the participants in a private room. Coding of participants where letters or numbers or a special code was developed and assigned to every live participant because Audette (2020) believed that this technique is adopted to enhance and maintain anonymity during human research.

Data presentation

Orientation

The aim of the study was to explore pedagogical practices that have both direct influence and indirect influence in promoting employability among Accounting TVET college students. Therefore, it was pivotal to dissect and explore factors in the pedagogical cycle. This exercise was mandatory because it speaks to factors, practices, cultures, routines of teaching and learning in TVET colleges that impact the holistic development of future Accounting graduates from TVET colleges. Fifteen (15) lecturers that participated in this research are labelled as ***L1*** to ***L15.*** This represents Lecturer number one until lecturer number fifteen.

The table below depicts a summary of the biographical facts of the human participants (lecturers) who were involved in the study. As shown in table below, the study therefore comprised of fifteen (15) lecturers, who formed part of interview sessions of which nine (9) were males and six (6) were females. The qualifications of the participants show that eleven (11) participants had professional qualifications in the field of Accounting, and four (4) participants had qualifications which were not in the Accounting field. Out of the fifteen (15) participants, only 33,3% participants had teaching qualifications, but were practicing in the education field. Surprisingly, one (1) participant was an Indian and the rest (14) were blacks. Out of fifteen (15) lecturers, two

lecturers were approaching the retirement age as per government regulations.

Lecturer	Age range	Gender	Race	Qualifications
L1	*36-45*	*male*	*Black*	*B. Com (Management and Economics)*
L2	*26-35*	*female*	*Black*	*National Diploma (Cost and Management Accounting), PGCE, Advance Diploma (Accounting Sciences) & Advance Diploma (TVET)*
L3	*36-45*	*male*	*Black*	*National Diploma (Accounting)*
L4	*36-45*	*male*	*Black*	*National Diploma (Financial Information Systems), B-Tech (Internal Auditing, Postgraduate Diploma in Tertiary Education & Postgraduate Diploma in Risk Management.*
L5	*26-35*	*female*	*black*	*Bachelor of Education (Economics and Management Sciences)*
L6	*46-55*	*female*	*Black*	*B. Com (Accounting) & PGCE*
L7	*46-55*	*Female*	*Black*	*National Diploma (Tourism Management)*
L8	*36-45*	*male*	*black*	*National Diploma (Financial Information Systems) & B-Tech (Internal Auditing)*
L9	*36-45*	*Male*	*Black*	*B. Com (Accounting)*
L10	*36-45*	*Male*	*Black*	*B. Compt (Financial Accounting Sciences), B. Com Honours (Marketing Management) & PGCE*
L11	*36-45*	*Male*	*Black*	*National Diploma (Financial Management) & PGDA (Accounting)*
L12	*26-35*	*female*	*Black*	*B. Com (Information Financial Systems) & PGCE*
L13	*26-35*	*Male*	*Black*	*B. Com (Economics) & PGCE*
L14	*36-45*	*Male*	*Black*	*National Diploma (Financial Management) & B-Tech (Cost and Management Accounting)*
L15	*46-55*	*Female*	*Indian*	*B. Com (Accounting) & PGCE*

Pedagogical routines for teaching Accounting in TVETs

At this juncture the researcher wanted to understand the teaching practices, teaching methods or teaching strategies that lecturers utilise in their classrooms in order to ensure that employability skills are moulded within the students. The participants were asked about some of the best teaching methods or practices that facilitate and fast-track the development of employability skills. ***L3*** responded as follows:

> *Firstly, like when you are teaching, try to at least communicate with the language what we need to use in examination and as the policy says the language for teaching is English. But when it comes to students who are struggling to speak English, try to also code switch so that they can understand*.

According to ***L3***, the point of departure in teaching is the lecturer's understanding of the language dynamics in his or her class because it plays a significant role in ensuring that the best teaching strategy is utilised in favour of students. The understanding of contextualizing the language was not a dominant argument for most lecturers although under section *5.5.11*, it was raised as an alarming factor that influence the progression of the lesson.

The following lecturers (***L2*** and ***L6***) also had an opportunity to express their understanding and opinion about the best instructional methods for employability skills creation:

> *…here at the campus we try to use two methods of curriculum delivery, maybe we can say traditional approach, the one that everyone has gone through, most of us have gone through and try to blend it with the with the digital approach where we are using technology and infuse technology with curriculum delivery. Yah so e-learning, that what I am trying to say. So, we try to combine those two so that we can strike the balance so that we are able to meet the different needs of students because students learn best in their own pace and their own space and their time. So, we try to balance the two* **[L2]**.

> *I think the teacher-and-learner centred method is too perfect. Because that's where you have to engage.* **[L6]**.

L2 and ***L6*** shared the same sentiments of a "working" teaching method. The two participants are not singling out one teaching technique. They argue that there is no one-size-fit-all approach when it comes to teaching strategies. The use of modern teaching routines and traditional teaching routines serve different and yet important roles. As it comes from the data, a blended teaching and learning approach is viewed as an ideal teaching method for cultivation of significant skills for Accounting students in TVET colleges.

As much as the participants preferred a multifaceted method of teaching and learning, participants such as ***L3*** and ***L15*** placed an emphasis on strategies that are grounded on student-to-student principles. For instance, ***L15*** and ***L9*** believed in using the following routines to teach effectively:

> *I use the students to explain to other students using their mother tongue and graphic teaching* **[L15].**

> *Yes, the best method, that I think is the best is that of allowing students to do work themselves. Yes, the teaching must be an outcome based you must give them the task, must allow them to work as a group and achieve what is required of them as a group, and then you guide them if you find that maybe they did this task in some of these tasks were done incorrectly* **[L9]**.

Peer teaching was demonstrated as a method of teaching and learning for participants ***L3***, ***L9*** and ***L15.*** Peer teaching can be used a tool to also develop the ability of students to work in teams. Furthermore, allowing students to work in organised groups present a platform for them to develop human skills such as tolerance, emotional intelligence, self-control and being considerate for others.

Although most college lecturers preferred peer-teaching as they viewed it as the best teaching strategy for enforcing employability skills, an outcry from ***L11*** below suggested that it is a time-consuming exercise as their goals would be to finish the syllabus before consequential final exams or tests commenced:

> *I try to use a method that is learner centred. I let them present in class to boost their presentation skills and also their confidence. However, sometimes we focus on finishing the syllabus and there is no time to explore other teaching methods.*

The responses on the participants regarding the teaching methods that promote desirable 21st century skills for graduates also revolved around the infusion of technology during teaching and learning process. Below, the researcher showed the interconnected ideas of participants when it comes use of technology in the instructional activities:

> *… in my class, I normally give my student presentation. I give them tasks to go and research some information, come back, prepare slides in PowerPoint. Use animation on those slides. Use videos. Come to class, present, print the handouts give to the audience, give to the lecturer, document your information formally. So those are other ways of ensuring that these students, they develop these skills* **[L12]**

The outdated teaching methods were rejected by ***L12*** because he believed that that the use of cutting-edge technology during teaching phase can enhance the technological skills among students. It is also evident that the use of modern technology may assist in ensuring that the learning material is timely available to all students conveniently through use of learning management systems such as Moodle and other learning platforms.

The power of motivation came as no surprise as ***L10*** enforced other employability skills such as communication skills, presentation skills and social skills by ensuring that students are constantly motivated to push their limits. ***L10***'s sentiments were presented as follows:

> *So, what I have tried to do in my class is to make it a point that I motivate them to go into presentation, so that they can have those communication skills. Another thing, I always motivate them to work in groups, so that they can be able to socialize.*

Teaching and learning in TVET colleges must include platforms to nurture debating skills, research skills for students as the 21st century labour market requires a holistically developed graduate. These skills are significant as they come in handy for students when they are faced with persuasion cases in businesses in terms of securing tenders, securing supplier deals, resolving conflict of colleagues etc.

Curriculum is one of the key elements of schooling and general developmental programme in a controlled institution or uncontrolled institution. Likewise, curriculum package is a driving force in ensuring that Accounting students or graduates well developed.

Participants were asked about the relevance of the current curriculum of Accounting. Upon, digesting the data from the respondents, the following graphical representation emerged. Surprisingly, over 66.7% of the participants ruled out the curriculum as irrelevant while 3.,3% were comfortable with the curriculum and viewed it as progressive curriculum.

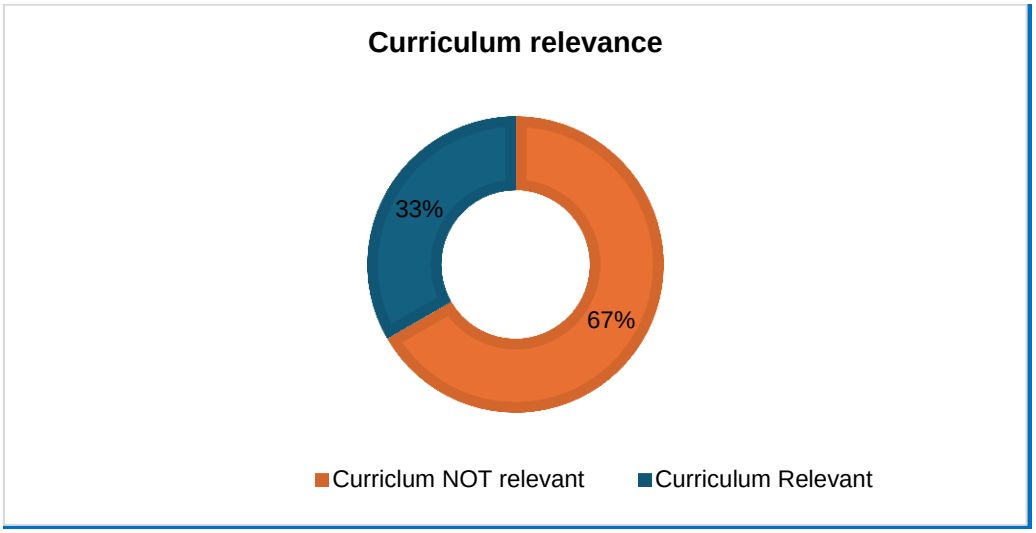

Figure 3: ***Curriculum relevance in TVET as per participants***

The verbal responses of the participants who viewed and agreed that the curriculum of Accounting as relevant were depicted below:

> *The curriculum is relevant because I'm teaching financial accounting, because internationally, we are using the same syllabus, according to Company Act 71 of 2008 so even international, if, even if they can leave South Africa and go to the USA, they will find that the financial statements are still the same as they are* **[L5].**

Despite the fact ***L5*** felt that the curriculum for Accounting in TVET colleges was relevant, ***L4*** viewed curriculum as not completely relevant but he complemented the DHET for its effort to continuously improve curriculum for the 21st Century

> *Well, it is getting improved like last year, it was actually getting upgraded so as to make it 21st century, if I may put it like* **[L4]**

Some participants had contradicting views about relevance of Accounting curriculum in TVET. Strong points emanating from the interviews revealed that the curriculum is poor and irrelevant. These verbatims from ***L1, L2, L8, L12, L10*** and ***L11*** indicated the dissatisfaction about the quality of curriculum:

> *Most of our students are struggling to get jobs immediately after completing N6, the curriculum is not good. We are teaching Accounting which is not in line with Accounting standards yet in universities they teach IAS and IFRS based accounting. So, our students cannot compete in the accounting firms. Remember, companies will prefer a student who did Accounting standards not just general accounting* **[L11].**

Further disgruntlements about the elements were perpetuated by the ***L10*** and ***L11.*** Amongst other things emerging from the participants is that the curriculum is not relevant because it fails to account for the practical component of the subjects, it also does not cater for new Accounting terminologies that come with the everchanging accounting standards and evolving world in general.

> *curriculum doesn't speak to what is really happening on the business world* **[10]**.
>
> *To be honest with you, once again, I don't think that it's quite relevant. I don't think that it's quite relevant because we are a vocational institution. This thing is supposed to be more, more, more, more practical. It's not that more practical you see* **[L10].**
>
> *TVET colleges are emphasizing more on content or theory, yet the curriculum is supposed to be focusing on practical skills* **[L11]**.

As much as the participants would like to adjust the curriculum or their voices to be heard on curriculum, the data from the questionnaires shows that they are not given a chance to participant on curriculum reform activities. As depicted on the table below, 10 (ten) out of 15(fifteen) which is 66.7% of the participants were off the opinion that they do not have any powers to change curriculum. This is not new because Finnanger & Prøitz (2024) affirmed that teachers are excluded in some certain phases of curriculum development.

Statement	***Strongly Agree***	***Agree***	***Not Sure***	***Disagree***	***Strongly Disagree***	***Total Responses***
I have power to change the syllabus.	***0***	***2***	***3***	***8***	***2***	***15***

Discussion

Pedagogical routines for teaching accounting in TVET colleges

As much as curriculum units such as Content Knowledge (CK) and assessments are driving forces for any training in a formal education institution, scholars in the education field such as Sarkar et al. (2024) st ressed the paramountcy of the "know how" or how to teach or what is famously known as Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) for pedagogical practitioners. The findings of this study also tapped into PK in the form of teaching methods, teaching routines and strategies of teaching the content and how skills are transferred or modelled to the students in order to fully capacitate them in developing the much-needed employability skills.

Regarding the teaching methods that lecturers use in cultivating employability skills, the study discovered the following: The use of debates, oral presentations and peer-teaching are prominent teaching styles that are deployed by TVET lecturers. Furthermore, it was noted that there is no one size fit all approach when it comes to teaching strategies. It also came out that the use of modern teaching routines and traditional teaching routines serve different and yet important roles. Lastly, blended approach is viewed as an ideal teaching method for cultivation of significant skills for Accounting students in TVET colleges.

It emerged from the data that debates, oral presentations and peer-teaching are used as teaching and learning techniques for the development of desired employability skills. Lecturers believed that debates and oral presentations were mainly used to instil communication skills and surprisingly these debates and oral presentations also play a significant role in enhancing confidence among students. This finding confirms the views of Najafi et.al, (2016), Mtawa et al. (2021) and Caeiro-Rodríguez (2021) who regarded debates and oral presentations as a stepping stone to improve critical thinking, social skills and decision-making skills. One of the participants also alluded that students who usually excelling in debates and oral presentations subsequently join student politics and become Student Representative Council (SRC) member either at campus level or college level.

Another point of perspective was that students are different and ultimately, they do not learn in the same way and pace. I presume that this is the reason why the lecturers (participants) felt that using different techniques in teaching and learning is a right thing to do. It was also well appreciated that lecturers are mindful of the fact that both traditional and modern routines of teaching still have advantages. It is not only the findings of this study that valued the use of multimodal teaching methods such as hybrid technique and blended approach because Alessa and Hussein (2023) also appreciated the use of both modern and traditional approaches in different content and context because these approaches both offer some certain extent of pros. However, earlier in the literature review, Vimbela and Bayaga (2023) dismissed and discouraged the use of traditional methods to teach. In this light, what was suggested by the participants did not match the practice in class because the findings as per lesson observation indicated that lecturers are still using rigid traditional methods to teach. For instance, the lesson observation showed that students were seated in rows, teachers were preaching the content, there was minimal to no inclusion of technology and no opportunities were provided for cultivating soft skills. This discrepancy on the findings shows that lecturers in TVET college are aware of modern teaching methods such as hybrid approach, blended teaching method, and modern teaching techniques but they are not putting them in practice. The minimal use of or the inability to use modern teaching methodologies could be perpetuated by a supporting finding that out of the fifteen (15) participants, only 33,3% participants have teaching qualifications, yet they are practicing in the education field. However, it could be dangerous to draw such a conclusion since this sample is a merely representation of TVET lecturers of only 8 TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape yet there are over 50 TVET colleges in South Africa.

One of the interesting yet alarming findings that was revealed by this study is that language dynamics within Accounting lessons dictate the effectiveness of teaching and learning which ultimately affects the cultivation of employability skills. In South Africa, the politics of language in education or language of learning and teaching (LoTL) will always come into play in most arenas of education. This is because South Africa is a unique country with eleven official languages. In a normal situation, these eleven languages ought to be use equally in the workplace and in the training institutions. However, the equal use of these languages does not exist as there are languages that are prominently spoken by the majority of citizens (Kekana & Montle, 2022). When it comes to language barriers faced by TVET students, it can be noted that there are similarities between the findings of this research and the research findings of study conducted by Lenyai (2022). These findings are common in the sense that these studies both show a persisting language crisis faced by TVET students especially when engaging with English. This might be caused by what was referred as a language crisis faced by non-English speakers. There is a lot that needs to be done in terms of strengthening language abilities of TVET students because language activates communication abilities. This is critical because Aliu et al. (2021) framed language abilities and other communication competencies as necessary qualities of graduates if they are to fit in the real world of economy.

The findings derived from the data indicate that Accounting curriculum in TVET colleges is poor, lacks practical industry component and requires urgent re-adjustment to suit the needs of the industry. This finding of this study affirms with what Nkwanyane et. al (2020) labelled as "irrelevant", "outdated" and "misaligned" curriculum. It is generally accepted ideology that curriculum is an engine of education, however the findings in this study contrary with how curriculum would shape the nature of graduates from TVET colleges. Researchers such as Nomlala and Mvunabandi (2023) had argued that students from institutions that offer accounting qualifications are expected to be equipped with content understanding so that they can be functional in their duties. However, it has been portrayed in this study that curriculum design is at a compromising state and ultimately the selection of relevant subject content is imminent.

The composition of curriculum variables must be at a centre stage in any education or training institution. One of the key factors that determines the success of an industry exposure for students (trainees) during their work-integrated learning (WIL) period is their ability to understand basic procedures in their line of operation. This is crucial because a suitable curriculum provides confidence for future graduates. Curriculum as a booster for graduate confidence cannot be easily disputed because several studies in the literature including Quigley (2022) pointed that discipline-specific skills that are included in the holistic curriculum are vital as they support in instilling and enhancing procedural

knowledge, semantic knowledge, episodic knowledge and substantive knowledge which is momentous in the workplace. Policies on how WIL is carried out must be adjusted accordingly. This allows proper integration of content knowledge and practical skills development.

Curriculum ignorance is also strongly opposed by Bridgstock's conceptual model of developing a graduate employability which was discussed earlier in the theoretical framework. The model advocates for strong curriculum especially when it comes to subject content and content delivery. Many training institutions including those that aim to produce Accounting professionals imposed that students ought to possess extensive and sound knowledge that emanate from instructional practices of Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Taxation and Auditing. These subject-matter competency and knowledge in students provide the potential employees and rookie graduates with a sound theoretical understanding of their occupations or job lines (Van Dijk et al., 2023).

Recommendations

The project of cultivation and enforcing pedagogical practices for the promotion of employability amongst Accounting students in TVET colleges in South Africa is not easy as it requires multifaceted approaches. Below were recommendations for practice which might positively impact in enhancing employability capabilities of TVET graduates who are rooted in Accounting related qualifications. Lecturers' pedagogical commitment in using modern teaching strategies that develop students in a holistic manner is highly recommendable. Differentiation of teaching strategies to allow students with different abilities is also an avenue that need to be explored by lecturers. Furthermore, misalignments in terms of curriculum, assessment and other factors must be reported or taken to PLCs to engage policy officials. It is also recommended that internal continuous assessment should be used to test competence level of students as opposed to final examinations. Lastly, lecturers should use Professional Learning Communities as a support structure to enhance their teaching methods in order to enhance cultivation of employability skills.

Conclusion

The study emphasises the significance of pedagogical knowledge (PK) in helping TVET Accounting students in South Africa develop marketable abilities. Despite using presentations, peer-teaching, and debates by TVET lecturers to foster confidence and communication, the results indicated a gap between knowledge and actual behaviour in the classroom. In light of the advantages presented by blended and contemporary teaching approaches, it is not uncommon for TVET lecturers to resort to traditional methods, often influenced by insufficient qualifications and external institutional limitations. Furthermore, reflecting the broader issues stemming from South Africa's multilingual landscape, language barriers, especially the use of English as the primary medium of instruction, present considerable challenges to the effective transfer of skills and the engagement of students. This research also confirmed concerns from previous studies by condemning the current Accounting curriculum at TVET colleges as outdated and misaligned with corporate requirements. It asserts that fostering student confidence and equipping them with discipline-specific knowledge, such as financial accounting and taxation, relies on a well-constructed and relevant curriculum. The discourse emphasises the need for curriculum reform and endorses pedagogical progress via individualised instruction, professional learning communities (PLCs), and internal assessments to evaluate student competencies. These recommendations aim to bridge the theory-practice divide and cultivate more comprehensive, industry-ready graduates.

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