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Case studies as pedagogy for reading development within a vocational education context

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Abstract: Case studies often do not receive due recognition as a work-integrated learning (WIL) modality for reading development. This article focuses on the case study as a reading strategy to draw on world of work experience as a means of acculturation to professional knowledge and practice. The purpose of this research project was to determine whether case studies used at first and third year levels in a Marketing diploma achieved the desired objective of introducing students to workplace dynamics. The findings from student questionnaires revealed that although case studies seemed to be effective in merging the world of work with conceptual knowledge of the field of study, constructing meaning seemed to be illusive for many students due to ineffective reading strategies and lack of textual comprehension. For the lecturer, case studies were affordances for learning, but student feedback suggests that case studies might have been missed opportunities for engagement due to minimal interaction with the texts to elicit depth of understanding. This article foregrounds the need for lecturers to incorporate interactive reading strategies aligned with using case studies as a pedagogy for reading development to ensure that both students and lecturers share a common understanding of purpose, approach and intended learning experience.

Introduction

Vocational education might be explained as preparing students for an ever-changing world where divergent employment opportunities require knowledge, skills and attributes to accede to the demands of a knowledge economy. The ability to access information by employing appropriate reading strategies for the task at hand is central to equipping students with knowledge and skills for a fluid knowledge economy. By virtue of their vocational focus, teaching and learning activities in universities of technology (UoTs) aim to merge theory and practice with appropriate professional qualities and attributes. Work-integrated learning modalities such as experiential training, problem-based learning or project-based learning provide students with the wherewithal to merge theory with practice. However, knowledge and competences learned at university do not transfer to the workplace in a seamless linear way (CHE 2011). Knowledge learned at university is packaged differently in different academic subjects and requires intensive interactive reading strategies to develop a sound conceptual disciplinary knowledge base. In contrast, in the world of work knowledge is mainly acquired by engaging in workplace practices and daily activities in which reading is a form of communication and information sharing. The gaps between workplace and classroom practices may be bridged by bringing the ways of knowing, doing and being (Barnett 2009) of the workplace into academic subjects by, for example, incorporating relevant and current reading texts such as case studies into curriculum.

A key challenge of vocational education is how to engage students actively in the course material that will achieve the objective of integrating theory and practice, such that theory informs practice and practice includes problem-solving and innovation contexts for the application of theory. Since most classroom-based activities draw on the various modalities of textual resources, an ability to engage successfully with text is a necessity for optimal learning within a real world problem-solving context. In the case of undergraduate students, the overwhelming majority would not have had access to workplace environments in their chosen professions. The challenge for lecturers in vocational

education is to teach within the context of the workplace environment as a means of introducing students to the world of work and to develop student identities as professionals in practice. While it is acknowledged that the classroom is far removed from realities of the world of work, there are various teaching and learning practices that could contribute to immersing students into the types of cognitive behaviours of the profession. This study focuses on the case study as a pedagogy for reading development within a Marketing diploma at a UoT. While the case study aptly fulfils its purpose as a WIL modality according to the literature, the import of case studies resides in the ability to read with depth of understanding, merge textual information with current knowledge and provide answers to solve real world problems. The caveat presented here is that the use of case studies in teaching and learning should be accompanied by the requisite reading strategies to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. In other words, the use of case studies presents opportunities for reading development and for inculcating reading strategies to foster higher order thinking that could have far reaching implications for academic success. Each case study is different in content, structure and context, and presents itself as a tool for reading development. The literature review that follows draws on perspectives of WIL, the case study as WIL pedagogy, and interactive reading strategies that might be employed for case study engagement. A description of the study, the data generated and the findings provide insight into how the lecturer and students in this study viewed the value of case studies in teaching and learning and whether the desired objectives of case studies as a WIL modality were achieved.

Work-integrated learning

Curriculum development at this site of study draws on complementary domains of knowledge and practice that incorporate aspects of knowing (disciplinary knowledge), doing (disciplinary skills and practices) and being (aligning knowledge, attributes and qualities with the field of practice). WIL could be described as the nexus where all three domains converge. Against this background,

WIL is used as an umbrella term to describe curricular, pedagogic and assessment practices, across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. (CHE 2011: 4)

Workplace learning tends to focus on the more overt practices such as apprenticeships, internships and work-shadowing. In vocational education, work placement is commonly known as co-operative learning or experiential learning. Within the context of this study, WIL is more than incorporating experiential learning into a programme of study. WIL needs to offer different kinds of learning opportunities for students to prepare for and learn from the workplace and to apply disciplinary and field knowledge to workplace contexts. Examples of WIL modalities include work-directed theoretical learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and experiential learning (CHE 2011: 21). This study explores the case study and scenarios as forms of problem-based learning with reference to student perceptions as to their efficacy in merging classroom-based teaching with world of work cognition and practices. It should be noted that the literature on scenarios and case studies as it pertains to this study, i.e. opportunities for learning as a WIL modality, seemed to be sparse as was the case with literature on reading for vocational education. Academic literacy research in higher education focuses predominantly on writing (Hyland 2013; Clarence 2012; Wingate and Tribble 2012; Gourlay 2009; Edwards and Miller 2008; Devereaux and Wilson 2008) with limited resources that explore how reading impacts access to knowledge and concomitant academic success.

The case study as WIL modality

The case study as pedagogy

Jervis and Jervis (2005) claim that 'pedagogy is often defined in narrow, technicist, terms as a way of teaching, but this definition misses much of the point of pedagogy.' Learning is a process not an event and incorporates knowledge, competences, values and attributes. Students often find it hard to identify with real world examples given the absence of the real world experience and the dynamics of an authentic work environment. Walker (2009: 215) notes that undergraduate students 'often lack a depth of organizational and real world experience to draw on how theoretical models can be observed

in practice.’ The educational background and rural-urban divide of some under-graduate students in South Africa could account for their inability to draw on an understanding of the professional world in practice. Walker (2009: 214) raises two challenges in this regard: firstly, ‘how to actively engage students in the course material’, and, secondly, how best to integrate theory and practice in a predominantly classroom learning environment. For example, the diploma qualification on which this study draws has a workplace-based learning component only in the third year of study. The case study as an approach to teaching and learning could be viewed as a nexus to align theory with practice (Breslin and Buchanan 2009), dependent on the appropriate prompts and support of the teacher as well as ‘the student’s own characteristics and interest in learning’ (Walker 2009: 215). Walker (2009) notes the importance of case studies as a WIL modality by foregrounding the deep learning, problem-solving and analysis that underpins the learning process. [Refer also to Breslin and Buchanan 2008; Kreber 2001; Golich 2000]. Breslin and Buchanan, for example, view case studies as connecting ‘the student to social phenomena, real life experience, and existential situations in a way that helps to sharpen thinking and inform decision-making’ (2008: 37), while Golich asserts that ‘case teaching grounds academic instruction in reality by engaging students in analysis of specific situations’ (2000: 13). Walker (2009: 215–216) cites the advantages of case studies as:

- providing a platform for cognitive engagement using theory as the framework for analysis;
- working with real world examples that require theory to interpret and predict real world events, thereby encouraging deep learning;
- taking students to higher levels of abstraction and analysis by building up from a case based on reality;
- providing ‘a context for understanding knowledge in a field of study and how to apply this knowledge to practical situations’, and
- developing analytical skills to weigh up possible solutions for solving real world problems.

Case studies: A constructivist pedagogy

Proponents of constructivism laud the shift from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning where students are active participants in constructing meaning based on the opportunities provided to do so. Northedge and McArthur (2009: 108) present constructivism as a socio-constructivist, dyadic relationship between the teacher and the student, where the teacher ‘[creates] opportunities for students to experience conceptual dilemmas, solve problems, reflect and engage in explanatory dialogue’ and the student is engaged in ‘an active explanatory process ... to develop their own conceptual modelling of the subject matter.’ [Refer also to Billet 2009; Biggs 2001; Sudzina 1997; Biggs 1996.] Higher education is ‘a complex process of becoming immersed in the ways of thinking and knowing of a knowledge community’ and, to this end, Northedge and McArthur contend that teachers should be ‘creative in designing learning situations to stimulate and support explanatory thinking’ (2009: 108). The role of the case study as constructivist pedagogy resides in the ability of students to engage *with* and participate *in* the discourse of a profession or knowledge community. In other words, inappropriate reading strategies to engage with professional discourse could render the case study ineffectual as pedagogy. Knowledge acquisition is inextricably linked to the ability to analyse disciplinary discourse and to communicate using disciplinary and professional conventions. The importance of engaging with discourse is underscored by Northedge and McArthur (2009: 108) who assert that ‘the student’s advance in knowledge is represented by the extent to which he or she becomes able to participate more effectively in the discourse of the relevant discipline community.’ Since vocational education draws on the academic, professional and social milieu, meaning is grounded in deconstructing and understanding different types of discourse for different purposes. The extent to which these areas are explored through case studies as pedagogy would be considered pivotal to the learning process.

By implication, case studies could provide appropriate learning opportunities given the ‘natural fit with constructivist principles of teaching’ where ‘knowledge and learning [are] interactive, socially constructed, collaborative and problem-related’ (Sudzina 1997: 207). While case studies might engender constructivist forms of pedagogies, this study shows that their effectiveness in use is contingent on students’ ability to engage with appropriate reading strategies to access, acquire and assume a position using academic and professional discourse.

The theme of students as active learners is pursued by Billet (2009: 838) who claims that 'they, not their teachers are the meaning makers who negotiate meaning, although their teachers can mediate that meaning.' Billet suggests that mediating learning could take the form of 'affordances' and 'engagements' to 'emphasise the salience of students as agentic learners' (2009: 838). Affordances, according to Billet (2009: 835) relate to creating opportunities, experiences and providing support for learning, while engagements refer to 'how students engage with and learn through what they are afforded.' Vocationally-oriented education should provide affordances and engagements which draw on the conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge which is premised on the norms and practices associated with a particular profession. Yet, the value that the engagement affords is dependent on how students participate in the learning experience, whether students have the wherewithal to engage with discourse, what reading strategies are applied, how learning is mediated by the teacher and whether deep or surface learning is achieved.

Reading strategies: Access to affordances for learning

Crossing boundaries: From school to university

Bharuthram and Clarence (2015), Klapwijk (2015), Oyetunji (2013), Devereux and Wilson (2008), Granville (2001) and Zamel (1992) contend that reading practices at school level do not seem to meet the academic demands of university. Yet most institutional academic literacy support programmes focus on improving writing in the discipline with limited attention, if any, devoted to improving reading practices. The prevailing assumption seems to be that interactive reading is a tacit skill that will be acquired by immersion as students progress through a programme of study. Devereux and Wilson (2008: 127) alert us to the commonly held 'assumption that students can already "read" when they arrive at university, although the texts ... at university are far more demanding, embedded and extensive than those they have met before.' They note that school textbooks are often presented in simpler formats with prompts such as annotated texts and supportive devices. In contrast, texts at university have 'dimensions which are much more complex and challenging, and students need encouragement, challenge and support to go beyond such easily digestible texts' (Devereux and Wilson 2008: 127). In other words, 'the assumption that students can already "read" when they arrive at university' (Devereux and Wilson 2008: 127) needs to be debunked. However, given the unequally resourced school system and the diverse student profile entering higher education, this contention might not ring true for all students. For those students 'who are not able to read and write at school exit level ... reading academic texts presents a huge challenge (Bharuthram and Clarence 2015: 43). It has become necessary to nurture critical readers 'to take ownership of meanings by constructing understandings which relate to their own needs and experience, and to apply and communicate meanings that they have constructed from the source texts' (Devereux and Wilson 2008: 127). Research shows that interactive reading strategies are not acquired by immersion into higher education and need to be explicitly taught for any change to happen (Bharuthram and Clarence 2015; Klapwijk 2015; Oyetunji 2013). By implication, if interactive reading strategies are not 'embedded into disciplinary curricula and discourses in overt and practical ways' (Bharuthram and Clarence 2015: 43), inappropriate school reading practices in students' cognitive schema may be transferred to the higher education context.

Given that case studies are not comprehension exercises and that they are often framed in the discourse of the field of study and the profession, it is argued that students should be taught how to engage with text and how to answer a case study. Passive, rote reading practices as noted in the findings of first year students could no doubt result in missed opportunities for learning. The different learning cultures, different languages, different school environments and different learning backgrounds of the student profile calls for 'teachers to fill in the "gaps" in the background knowledge for learners for whom texts are unfamiliar or culturally alien' (Granville 2001: 15).

Interactive textual engagement: A necessary condition for case studies as pedagogy

Interactive textual engagement as alluded to by Bharuthram and Clarence (2015), Klapwijk (2015), Oyetunji (2013), Devereux and Wilson (2008), Granville (2001) and Zamel (1992) refers to the ability

of students to actively engage with texts by decoding, analysing, evaluating, inferring and drawing conclusions to derive meaning from an own interpretation based on current knowledge schemas. Interactive reading according to Zamel (1992: 465) extends beyond the 'reductive assumption that reading is a matter of identifying and retrieving a set of ideas that reside in and are transmitted in a text.' Such a notion denies a reader engagement with the intricacies of what interactive, critical reading involves. Interactive textual engagement is a two-way interaction 'recognizing that reading has as much to do with what the reader brings to the text and how the reader interacts with the text ... and that understanding means not so much taking away from a text as giving to the text what is not there' (Zamel 1992: 467–417). Textual interaction is characterised by dialoguing with texts to draw inferences and conclusions and extending understanding beyond literal interpretations.

Teaching students how to read texts critically is a necessary condition for learning (Bharuthram and Clarence 2015; Klapwijk 2015; Oyetunji 2013; Zamel 1992). While various reading strategies to improve comprehension have been developed over the years, the purpose here is to present reading strategies used in research that lecturers might adopt as part of their teaching and learning practice. This section draws on three studies (Bharuthram and Clarence 2015; Klapwijk 2015 and Oyetunji 2013) where the importance of teaching and embedding reading skills into curriculum were foregrounded and show how reading might contribute to improved learning opportunities for students. In her research, Klapwijk (2015) explicates different reading strategies instruction (RSI) and draws on a combination of these to develop an RSI that would support teachers in teaching reading skills at school level. The RSIs that Klapwijk (2015) alludes to are: (1) Reciprocal Teaching, (requiring dialoguing between lecturer and student using four specific reading strategies namely, questioning, clarifying, summarising and predicting); (2) Transactional Strategies Instruction, (requiring students to predict, draw on prior knowledge, ask questions, visualise and summarise, amongst others); and (3) Intensive Reading, (a three-phased activities approach for pre-reading, during reading and post-reading). Using existing RSIs, Klapwijk (2015) developed the EMC² Framework (Establish, Maintain and Consolidate) which includes activities to establish meaning-making before reading, maintaining meaning-making processes during reading and consolidating meaning-making after reading. Although the EMC² Framework was developed to support school teachers with RSI, this is nevertheless relevant to higher education where establishing meaning-making from texts is core to learning. Klapwijk (2015: 3) asserts that it is the responsibility of every teacher to 'instruct reading comprehension ... [and that] comprehension instruction should form part of every teacher's skill set.' By implication, in order to improve students' reading comprehension, a concerted effort should be made to teach and reinforce reading strategies across the curriculum, collaboratively by all lecturers within a programme of study.

In their review of students' and lecturers' understandings of critical reading, Bharuthram and Clarence (2015: 52) found that while lecturers acknowledged the importance of students' being able to engage in critical, interactive reading, they seemed 'reluctant or ill-equipped to take on the responsibility of making their disciplinary reading practices explicit.' It is to this end that Bharuthram and Clarence (2015: 42) argue for an 'overt focus on critical academic reading as part of disciplinary teaching and learning' using 'an academic literacies and knowledge-focused approach.' They contend that academic reading and writing reside within disciplines and contribute to aligning new knowledge with existing knowledge. Reading critically in higher education, according to Bharuthram and Clarence (2015: 45), requires interactive reading strategies of asking questions, probing texts, making meaning and developing critical literacy where students adopt 'stances' in relation to texts. These strategies, are however, contingent on whether lecturers 'are able to incorporate or focus on teaching students how to make sense of disciplinary knowledge encountered in texts ... or develop critical literacies over time' (Bharuthram and Clarence 2015: 46–47). These reading skills speak directly to case analysis where the ability to read critically relates to developing additional understandings of concepts in context and knowledge building. If lecturers are ill-equipped or reluctant to teach critical interactive reading, or if content lecturers view reading support to be the province of institutional writing centres, then improvements in students' reading might remain elusive.

Oyetunji's (2013) study focused on English second-language education students who failed to improve their language proficiency after a year as trainee teachers. Oyetunji (2013: 34) attributed

the lack of improvement to 'an inability to cope with basic reading and their lack of adequate reading skills.' In an attempt to improve reading skills and promote academic advancement, Oyetunji (2013) developed a six week RSI programme. This programme included the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review) method of textual analysis, but drew mainly on the Students Achieving Independent Learning (SAIL) approach to interactive reading. SAIL focuses on reasoning and the interpretation of text, 'and gives several opportunities to practise so that students become independent in strategy use' (Oyetunji 2015: 36). Oyetunji reports that the application of RSIs such as SAIL has been a major contributing factor to students' success in reading comprehension. This is borne out by Oyetunji's study which revealed that students in the intervention group 'showed a consistent improvement ... and their comprehension performance improved significantly' (2015: 41) while the control group showed minimal improvement. Oyetunji (2015: 42) concludes that the improvement in the intervention group 'can only be attributed to the intervention programme ... [that] reading can be taught and [that] explicit strategy instruction is one of the effective ways of teaching comprehension.' However, she acknowledges that 'RSI currently provides little insight about what precisely in the instruction is responsible for the difference' (Oyetunji 2015: 42). This suggests that a particular RSI should be carefully selected and implemented to align with the kind of textual analysis required, commensurate with the language level of students requiring reading support.

In summary, research shows that the gaps between school and university require supplemental RSI as a necessary condition for learning, that not all students are able to read and write to meet the academic demands of university studies and that, ideally, all lecturers should adopt appropriate RSIs for their subjects of study. Studies show that no one particular RSI could be applied as a generic strategy. For case study analysis, for example, any of the RSIs noted above could be applicable depending on the level of study, type of text, length of the text, the text genre, text structure, intensity of content and the inclusion of literal and figurative speech, to mention a few aspects of textual analysis. It should be noted that although this article focuses on texts, there are multimodal representations of information that require RSIs for comprehension and analysis in equal measure. While the importance of incorporating appropriate reading strategies for analysing case studies is foregrounded, providing a checklist of proposed interactive reading strategies would prove reductionist and limiting. Reading is a dynamic, iterative process based on the principles of disciplinary discourse analysis. Different disciplines have different disciplinary and academic literacies that require different forms of textual and RSI engagement.

Methodology

This research project explored a lecturer's and students' perceptions of using case studies as a WIL modality. Participation in this study was voluntary, participants would remain anonymous and all institutional research protocols were adhered to. Ethical clearance was granted by an institutional ethical committee. Data were generated using questionnaires administered to students; an interview was conducted with the lecturer, and case studies and scenarios used as part of teaching and learning were reviewed. Students at first and third year levels of study in the Marketing diploma were requested to complete questionnaires to determine the extent to which case studies supported aligning classroom-based practices with the world of work. The closed questions explored how students perceived case studies as an introduction to the world of work and open-ended questions explored the reading practices employed when students were given case studies or scenarios to read. First year students and third year students of the same diploma programme were selected as this represented the entry and exit levels of a diploma qualification. The objective was to determine whether students had different perceptions of case studies at third year level than students at first year level, having been in the programme for a longer period of study. The 10-question questionnaire, with three options for responses, was administered in class to two first and third year student cohorts for two years consecutively, to establish differences or commonalities in responses. [Refer to Table 1 and Table 2 for the questions and analysis.] The closed questions were analysed for their frequency of responses firstly, and then analysed statistically using the Chi Square contingency test to determine the correlations that might exist between the two cohorts of the study sample. The

responses to the open questions were collated in terms of the common themes that emerged from the data.

The subject selected was a core component of this diploma programme and was offered across all three years of study. The subject lecturer, who taught this subject at both first and third year levels, was interviewed to provide insight into using case studies as a WIL modality from the lecturer's perspective. The findings of this study were shared with the subject lecturer as well as all other lecturers in the department as part of improving teaching and learning in the department.

Findings

Case Studies and scenarios

Scenarios, used mainly at first year level, are short-structured cases that provide a context in which real world problems are presented and involve the application of knowledge to improve the situation (Walker 2009; Grant 1999). Grant (1999: 36) notes that a scenario 'is not a hypothetical problem, but a real life situation ... and allows the learners to become immersed in the situation with which they have to grapple. This type of case study would be more appropriate at first year level, as part of inducting students into the case approach. Long, structured cases deal with complex organisational or policy problems where there are no clear solutions. Students would need to draw on theoretical principles and concepts to analyse the context and problem(s) presented. Such a case might include extensive details for analysis. This type of case was appropriate at third year level.

The case studies referred to in this study were mainly scenarios or short-structured cases at first year level and longer detailed cases at third year level. The lecturer noted that she used 'current articles [from] newspapers, journals or on the website', relevant to the year of study. At third year level, case studies were used as the basis for research assignments. Case analysis, according to the lecturer, was dependent on research conducted and 'on how much effort they put into analysing the case, identifying the problems, making recommendations and justifying them.' Interview data revealed that at third year level, four credit-bearing case study tasks were allocated for the year, in addition to case studies being used as the format for term tests where 'specific knowledge questions and content questions ... that relate to that specific article' would be asked. First year students were given a case study (scenario) to analyse after every chapter in the textbook. The lecturer noted that scenarios had accompanying questions where students 'relate concepts to the scenario ... so that there's teaching and learning happening by using case studies.' The lecturer held that both case studies and scenarios provided insight into companies and their products as well as marketing concepts and content.

The lecturer's perception of case studies as pedagogy and WIL modality

The quotations used below are verbatim interview excerpts from the lecturer. The lecturer described her philosophy of teaching as, 'students learn by doing and so that's how I teach.' A scenario used at first year level was described as a text with a 'marketing principle within a marketing context ... to contextualise where marketing fits in so that students can have a better idea of what marketing really is.' A case study at third year level 'would require ... more in-depth analysis [using] the knowledge of the three years' for critical engagement. Scenarios and case studies were used to 'contextualise certain things ... and for problem-solving purposes so that students can analyse and put their knowledge into practice.' For case analysis at third year level, students were required to 'identify problems, issues and challenges that the company is faced with and then they have to make recommendations ... must be fully justified and be logical.' This process of case analysis was taught beforehand as 'it's like they've never seen a case study before' and as lecturers 'we can't take anything for granted.' The lecturer was of the opinion that 'it's important that students know how to read a case study, that they are able to extract the main points' as a case study is 'not a comprehension' where the text is largely rewritten in student responses. The amount of learning that occurs, according to the lecturer, is commensurate with 'how much effort ... students put into researching the actual case and identifying the various principles in the case.'

Students' perceptions of reading and case studies as WIL modality

The first and third year students' responses revealed more similarities than differences between the two cohorts, i.e. Group 1 and Group 2 for each level of study. [Refer to Table 1 and Table 2 below.] Third year students indicated difficulties with understanding articles and terminology, but this was more prominent in first year students' responses. First year students seemed to have more difficulties with understanding and interpreting the articles as well as the accompanying questions. These difficulties related to 'difficult terms ... [articles are] difficult to understand unless it's explained in detail ... [reading] without understanding' and the questions were 'a bit tricky' and unclear. Both cohorts of first year students perceived scenarios as positive in providing insight into the world of work and recommended that scenarios be used in other subjects as well. The findings suggest that as WIL modality, scenarios fulfilled the objective of bridging the divide between classroom and the world of work. The majority of first years agreed that scenarios supported learning subject content, although they viewed scenarios as learning activities without recognising the potential for broadening content knowledge base.

The data generated from third year questionnaires revealed similar patterns as first year students across the two study cohorts. While the majority of third year students found case studies interesting, not all of them were convinced that case studies helped to understand the world of work, or that case studies helped them to think about how they would apply what they had learned in theory. Approximately one-third of respondents were undecided as to whether case studies contributed to their ability to solve real world problems in real world environments. The majority of students agreed that reading articles are a good way to learn about marketing in the workplace and what marketing is about. This suggests that students viewed case studies as an appropriate WIL modality to merge the world of work with classroom practices and that case studies provided insight into the world of work. As was the case with first year responses, third year students did not view case studies as a modality for content knowledge acquisition and relied on the textbook and notes for content knowledge. The data show that 50% of third year students were not keen on using case studies in other subjects. This could be attributed to the difficulties that students experienced with analysing reading texts or, as many students noted, case studies were 'difficult to understand', 'too long' and sometimes 'boring.' This suggests that as a learning activity, i.e. pedagogy for learning, case studies did not seem to be the favoured form of problem-based learning.

All four cohorts of students reflected positivity about using reading articles to relate content to the world of work and to provide insight into marketing beyond textbook knowledge. This was reflected in both the questionnaire and comments provided. The statistical analysis using chi square revealed that there was no difference in perceptions between the two cohorts of students at both first and third year level, except for articles being more useful. Significantly fewer Group 1 students of the first year groups disagreed with this statement than Group 2 students. Statistical analysis of data from the two third year groups revealed no differences in perceptions between responses from Group 1 and Group 2. The consistency in responses across the student cohorts suggests that at both first and third year levels case studies provide insights into the kinds of thinking and problem-solving skills required for the world of work, but that students encountered difficulties with interpreting scenarios and case studies. The findings suggest that as pedagogy for learning, case studies and scenarios did not fulfil their objective. The simplistic reading skills applied by students provide insight into why case studies might have been missed opportunities for learning.

The responses to the open questions align with the responses of the closed questions for both first and third year students. Students considered the use of case studies advantageous because they:

- help 'to understand marketing';
- provide insight into 'real world marketing situations';
- keep students updated with the latest trends and give more insight into the industry;
- provide knowledge of marketing;
- provide a context to 'read more about things that really happen and it helps to gain more insight about what is happening in different companies';
- 'Improve general knowledge', knowledge of the economy, broadens knowledge about marketing and provides a 'link of the theory ... and what is actually happening', and

Table 1: First year students' perceptions of case studies as WIL modality.

Survey Statements	Total Valid Responses		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
I find the reading articles interesting.	121	68	90 74.4%	50 73.5%	21 17.4%	14 20.6%	10 8.2%	4 5.9%
The reading articles help me to understand the subject content.	120	70	91 75.8%	58 82.9%	23 19.2%	11 15.7%	6 5%	1 1.4%
I learn about Marketing when I complete the exercises on reading articles.	121	70	92 76 %	48 68.6%	24 19.8%	20 28.6%	5 4.1%	2 2.8%
The articles are sometimes hard to understand.	120	70	66 79.2%	34 48.6%	40 33.3%	23 32.8%	14 11.6%	13 18.6%
The articles help me to understand what I would need to do in the world of work.	119	70	81 68%	40 57%	34 28.6%	26 37%	4 3.4%	4 6%
When completing the exercises, I am able to apply what I have learnt to a real world activity.	120	69	68 56.6%	43 62%	47 39.2%	20 29%	5 4.2%	6 9%
The reading articles help me to understand what Marketing is about.	120	70	97 80.8%	49 70%	17 14.2%	18 25.7%	6 5%	3 4.3%
I learn more about Marketing when I read the articles than when I read the textbook or notes.	121	69	48 40%	26 37.7%	35 29.2%	31 44.9%	38 31.8%	12 17.4%
I think that reading articles are a good way of learning about Marketing in the workplace.	121	69	82 67.8%	48 69.6%	33 27.2%	18 26.1%	6 5%	3 4.3%
I would recommend that reading articles be used more often in other subjects as well.	121	69	70 57.9%	42 60.9%	34 28.1%	18 26.1%	17 14%	9 13%

Table 2: Third year students' perceptions of case studies as WIL modality.

Survey Statements	Total Valid Responses		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
I find the reading articles interesting.	20	50	16 80%	42 84%	3 15%	6 12%	1 5%	2 4%
The reading articles help me to understand the subject content.	22	50	13 59%	32 64%	8 36.4%	14 28%	1 4.6%	4 8%
I learn about Marketing when I complete the exercises on reading articles.	22	49	17 77.3%	25 51%	5 22.7%	19 38.8%	0 0%	5 10.2%
The articles are sometimes hard to understand.	16	50	9 56.3%	21 42%	6 37.5%	18 36%	1 6.2%	11 22%
The articles help me to understand what I would need to do in the world of work.	22	50	13 59.1%	29 58%	5 22.7%	16 32%	4 18.2%	5 10%
When completing the exercises, I am able to apply what I have learnt to a real world activity.	22	48	13 59.1%	28 58.3%	7 31.8%	16 33.3%	2 9.1%	4 8.3%
The reading articles help me to understand what Marketing is about.	21	50	14 66.7%	37 74%	5 23.8%	10 20%	2 9.5%	3 6%
I learn more about Marketing when I read the articles than when I read the textbook or notes.	22	49	8 36.4%	17 34.7%	9 40.9%	15 30.6%	5 22.7%	17 34.7%
I think that reading articles are a good way of learning about Marketing in the workplace.	22	49	18 81.8%	32 65.3%	3 13.6%	10 20.4%	1 4.5%	7 14.3%
I would recommend that reading articles be used more often in other subjects as well.	22	50	11 50%	26 52%	8 36.4%	17 34%	3 13.6%	7 14%

- 'Reading articles has made me more interested in marketing.'

The difficulties that students experienced with interpreting and analysing reading articles did not seem to diminish across the years of study. Both first and third year students stated difficulties as follows:

- articles are 'sometimes hard to understand unless it is explained in detail';
- it is 'difficult to extract pertinent information';
- it 'does not provide all the information required to complete the analysis';
- the 'language use (or situations) might be too complicated';
- '... don't understand the terms' used in the article;
- '...if you don't understand it becomes hard to analyse ...';
- 'Some reading articles are not clear and difficult to interpret';
- 'You misread and you don't understand the article.'

First year students reported more difficulties than third year students with extracting pertinent information, understanding the contexts and providing appropriate knowledge-based responses. First year students seemed to approach scenarios as comprehension texts with answers to be found in the text itself. Third year students approached case studies with more insight to draw on a deeper understanding of what the case was about in relation to what they were required to do. In response to how students engaged with reading articles and what processes they followed when engaging with text, the standard responses could be extrapolated from third year students' responses as follows:

1. 'Read through the case study; read again and highlight critical context; seek further insight regarding the case study; write up report.'
2. 'Read through the article; highlight the main points; summarise the important information; read the questions; find the answers to the questions.'

The first year responses as to how they engaged with scenarios were more routine as if responding to a school comprehension exercise. The comment that the scenario 'does not provide all the information' suggests the expectation that the answers would be found in the text and not by drawing on existing knowledge schemas. The value of teaching students how to analyse scenarios or a case study is noted here. The standard responses relating to textual engagement of first year students were noted as follows:

1. 'Read once; read again; read the questions; find the answers to the questions.'
2. 'Read through the article; highlight the important information; summarise the important information; write the analysis.'
3. 'Identify what the article is about; apply the facts that you have; mark the important words; read the questions; answer the questions.'

Discussion

The discussion below relates to the findings of data provided by the lecturer and students, and is presented in similar order as the findings above, namely the lecturer's perceptions of case studies and students' perceptions of reading and case studies as WIL modality.

The lecturer's description of the purpose and use of case studies reveals a constructivist pedagogy approach (i.e. 'students learn by doing and so that's how I teach'), which presents affordances for learning depending on student input. For example, case studies were used for 'problem-solving purposes so that students can analyse and put their knowledge into practice', suggesting a student-centred, applied learning, activity-based approach.

Drawing on student data and the theoretical underpinnings of case studies as pedagogy, the case study seems to fulfil the intended objectives of drawing on theory to solve real world problems. With reference to comprehension of scenarios, the majority of first year students in the first cohort, i.e. Group 1 (79.2%), and 48.6% in the second cohort, i.e. Group 2, found the articles hard to understand. This could be attributed to the text medium and the medium of instruction (both English) since English was not the students' first language or to the inability of students to employ appropriate reading strategies to access the required information. The lecturer noted that scenarios at first year level were selected for their accessibility to information where the levels of complexity would accommodate second language speakers of English. In response to difficulties encountered with terminology and vocabulary, support structures such as annotations were sometimes used to

facilitate access to complex terms. While student feedback showed that case studies fulfilled their purpose as a WIL modality in linking the world of work with classroom practices, the concern that this study foregrounds is the difficulty that students experienced with interpreting and understanding texts. Although the lecturer indicated that challenges with understanding reading articles could be attributed to either 'knowledge or language', the superficial reading practices suggest that challenges could well reside in not applying appropriate reading strategies. Students presented no evidence of pre-, during- or post-reading activities or interactive textual engagement as described in RSIs, for example, the SQ3R, SAIL or the Reciprocal Teaching methods. The minimal changes in depth of reading between first and third year students suggests that reading is not necessarily a tacit skill acquired and developed during a course of study.

The simplistic sequential textual reading practices reported by first year students, such as 'read once; read again; read the questions; find the answers to the questions' bear testament to a lack of textual engagement that should engender critical, interactive reading. The reading practices of both first and third year students suggest a surface approach to learning and aligns with Zamel's 'reductive assumption that reading is a matter of identifying and retrieving a set of ideas that reside in and are transmitted in a text' (1992: 465), without dialoguing with the author and the text. Student data reveal minimal responses relating to reading for depth of understanding. Reading to find 'the answers to the questions' was the overwhelming response. While case studies hold the promise of being a constructivist pedagogy where students actively construct knowledge from reading texts, this was not evident in the findings. The minimal changes in reading practices and reading challenges between first and third year students suggest that rote, ingrained practices were employed and that RSIs as interventionist support structures might not have been included in teaching and learning. Superficial textual engagement diminished opportunities of case studies leading students to higher levels of abstraction and deep learning as noted by Walker (2009). Given that scenarios and case studies were used so extensively for this subject, it begs the question as to the depth and extent of learning that these WIL modalities offered.

The reading challenges and superficial reading practices noted by students call for appropriate RSIs to support understanding of texts, clarify terminology, assist with extrapolation of salient points and discourse analysis in order to render case studies a WIL pedagogy for learning. Although attempts have been made to support students by scaffolding reading and providing annotated texts, the findings show that a concerted effort should be made to teach students how to read, using interactive reading strategies. A critical understanding of text would nudge students to do more than 'find answers to the questions.' For example, first year students could be introduced to the SQ3R or Reciprocal Teaching methods, while third year students could use SAIL, Transactional Strategies Instruction or EMC² that requires cognition for pre-, during- and post reading activities (Klapwijk 2015; Oyetunji 2013). Irrespective of the RSI selected, research shows reading needs to be taught overtly.

Conclusion

Using case studies as pedagogy has become common practice, not least as a result of the Law School at Harvard which developed and wrote case studies from 1920 to 1925 due to a dearth of appropriate cases at the time (Breslin and Buchanan 2008; Golich 2000). While case studies as analytical, problem-solving activities for teaching and learning cannot be disputed, it could be argued that an inability to: engage with textual analysis, analyse vocabulary in context, extract main ideas, analyse discourse structures and develop a conceptual understanding of the case in relation to content knowledge would render case studies ineffective as affordances for learning. The value derived from case studies as a learning activity might be diminished if assumptions are made that students 'can read', that students know how to engage with case studies and that effective reading strategies are being applied. Students should be encouraged to embrace their role as agentic learners, i.e. that the agency for learning and constructing knowledge resides with them, provided they apply appropriate analytical skills. Similarly, it could be argued that it is incumbent on lecturers to ensure that students are equipped with appropriate skills and practices to deal with the academic demands of higher education and not assume that students 'know how'. As Billet (2009: 838) notes, 'considerations for organising effective learning experiences extend to not only what they mean

to students (i.e. worthwhile and worth engaging with), but also to how learners can be active in maximising what is afforded them'. Opportunities for learning should be accompanied by requisite skills and practices to optimise the learning process for students. From a constructivist perspective, the ability to construct knowledge and meaningful learning experiences could be scuppered if the ability to read with understanding and insight is not addressed. Furthermore, if students are not schooled in the ways of thinking, doing and being of academic and professional discourse, which are all reliant on the ability to read with insight, they may be denied the full experience of being part of and contributing to an academic and/or professional discourse community. While case studies present opportunities for learning, affordances for engagement might be limited due to ineffective reading strategies. In other words, 'the learning that derives from students' participation in any given activity is not dependent upon the affordances of the educational institution or workplace, but on how individuals elect to engage with what is afforded them in both education and practice settings' (Billet 2009: 838).

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