

Join our learning community on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Career Development Learning

The affordances of online learning for Work Integrated Learning of students and professional development of staff



Professor Robert Balfour

Date: 12:15-1:15pm, Thursday 29 September

Venue: Building 8, Room 204, Joondalup Campus

Light lunch to follow, hosted by Centre for Learning and Teaching

Register: [ECU WIL Learning Community](#)

Abstract

COVID-19 compelled North-West University (South Africa) to consider alternatives to the traditional face-to-face excursions associated with WIL. Based on successful face-to-face excursions in the Faculty of Education as part of WIL for first year students, a multi-faculty team considered at the outset the conditions needed for virtual, online excursions to achieve the same outcomes, and to enhance self-directed learning with a view to addressing the professional learning opportunities associated with WIL in Teacher Education, Law and the Health Sciences. Virtual excursions usually refer to learning opportunities where 'a museum, author, park or monument is brought to the student' (Hehr, 2014:1). The virtual excursion in the context of the innovations associated with the three faculties at NWU, was conceived as an activity system (Engeström, 1987) where students' learning was scaffolded across the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), and where their 'social and pedagogical boundaries are stretched or expanded' (De Beer & Henning, 2011:204). This seminar describes the research insights arising from the development and experience of the virtual excursions at NWU during COVID-19.

Facilitated by:

Professor Denise Jackson & Ms Heather Pate

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Robert Balfour Biography

Robert John Balfour read English and History for a BA, a BA Hons in English (1993), and an HDE in 1994 at Rhodes University. He read for a Masters degree in English and Education at the University of Natal which was completed with distinction in 1995. Balfour was made the recipient of a Commonwealth Trust Scholarship in 1997 and completed his doctoral degree in English language (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University in 2000). Working initially English Studies (creative writing and applied linguistics) at the University of Natal, he was in 2004 appointed as Acting Head of School at a critical phase in the post-incorporation of Edgewood Teacher Training College with the University Faculty of Education. Appointed in 2005, as Head of the new School of Languages Education (at the University of KwaZulu-Natal), Balfour went on to transform the School, during two terms as Head of School, before being appointed as Registrar to St Augustine College of South Africa from 2008-2010. He has held three fellowships at the Institute for Commonwealth Studies at the University of London (2003-5), Clare Hall at Cambridge University (2003), and the Institute of Education at the University of London (2014). He has edited three collections of academic essays in three international language journals, published in five scholarly books, edited five books on education, language, and literature. The book on literary-cultural studies *Culture Capital and Representation* (with Palgrave, 2010) was received with critical acclaim. In 2015 the book, *Education in a new South Africa: crisis and change* was published by CUP. Focusing on language learning and literacy, rural education, and post-colonial literature he has also featured widely in the popular press for perspectives on multilingualism and education. In 2011 he was appointed as Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus of NWU before being appointed as DVC (Teaching and Learning) in mid-2017. A co-edited book on *Self-directed Learning in the era of the Covid-19 Pandemic: research on the affordances of online virtual excursions* was published by Aosis Publishers in 2022.

Profiles available at:

<http://RobertBalfour.co.za/>

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