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by

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The Place and Value of Critical Reflection in Work Integrated Learning for Sport Management Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the role of critical reflection in a (vocational) sport management internship in the Netherlands. Social constructivism provided the theoretical framework as it takes into consideration the emotional, social, cultural and political contexts of the work integrated learning environment (WIL) to which interns are exposed to and identifies the central active role the student has in the learning process.

The study employs a sequential mixed methods design consisting of a quantitative (Study 1) and a qualitative phase (Study 2, Study3 and Study 4). Within Study 1, the three key stakeholders of WIL (students, educators and WIL-supervisors) were recruited from 20 out of 25 vocational sport management institutes in the Netherlands. Students within these institutes were enrolled in a four year full time program which leads to a Diploma in Operational Sport and Exercise Management. The web-based survey was completed by 113 third year students, 122 fourth year students, 25 educators and 45 WIL-supervisors / possible future employers.

Study 1 adopted a quantitative methodology to assess the relationship between students’ self-perceived ability to critically reflect. The assessment was operationalised in three individual and three social learning dimensions, and their critical reflection as assessed by the WIL-supervisor and their educational institution. Additionally, the perceived importance of a student’s critical reflection was compared by each of the key stakeholders groups by responding to open-ended questions. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), a one way of between groups’ analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the relevant post hoc tests were used to analyse the data.

Results revealed that students performed adequately within the individual dimensions of critical reflection, but lacked the ability to be critically reflective within the social learning dimensions. In other words, interns seemed to be aware of the benefits of reflection during and from their WIL-experience, but were not able to take the cultural, political and social (power) structures of the WIL-environment into consideration. Eighty six percent of all respondents (N=305) agreed that critical reflection played a very important to an extremely important role in their WIL-experience. Four main benefits of critical reflection in WIL emerged from the respondents’ remarks on open-ended questions in the survey: learning, development, improvement and performance.
Three qualitative case studies (Study 2, Study 3 and Study 4) were employed to explain and supplement the outcomes of the first study in the quantitative phase. The studies investigated the extent to which an intern was able to critically reflect within WIL. The qualitative phase of this research focused on the underlying emotional, cultural and social aspects of critical reflection through the eyes of three main WIL supervisors, educators and students. In this phase “how” and “why” questions were the focus of interest for the found discrepancies between the stakeholders’ expectations of an intern’s ability to critically reflect. Each case study group clarified their view of the value and place of critical reflection within a work environment. Ten to fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with each group. Respondents were recruited from five different vocational sport management institutes throughout the Netherlands that offered a similar sport management program. The information from the semi-structured interviews was processed manually via a coding process in order to investigate the diversity of opinions and views within and across the groups.

The findings show that an intern’s critical reflection requires the knowledge and awareness of individual and social requirements in professional practice, and a capacity to act on this knowledge. The findings of the case studies confirmed the results of the quantitative phase of the research and showed that vocational sport management interns develop satisfactorily within the individual learning dimensions, but show limited development in the social component of critical reflection. Employers suggest, this lack of contextual awareness, which is developed through social learning makes interns less employable. Despite the formal educational institute and WIL are beneficial to learning, the WIL-environment provides a better environment in which to develop critical reflection and consequently robust learning of the kind required for effective practice. The findings from this study contribute to a greater understanding of how critical reflection is perceived in sport management education programs and the value it has for both education and professional practice.

It is a recommendation that future research investigates how embedding critical reflection in a WIL-environment can be used to prepare sport management interns for the constantly changing professional environment they will enter after graduation. This research adds to the growing, area of studies into a critically reflective awareness in vocational and higher education sport management programs.

*Key words: critical reflection, work integrated learning, social constructivism*
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

 Jos de Schepper  
 22-01-2015
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My PhD journey at Griffith University started with the encouragement of my wife, Esther Laarakker, for me to undertake a PhD as part of my ongoing quest for professional development. She sacrificed a considerable amount of her time and energy when I had to combine my work and research during those four years. I am very fortunate to be with you.

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Statement of Previously Presented Work Relating to this Research

Material from this thesis was presented at the following peer-reviewed conferences:


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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALACT model</td>
<td>model of Action, Looking back, Awareness of essential aspects, Creating alternative methods of action, and Trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Analysis Of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEL</td>
<td>Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLSI</td>
<td>Basic Learning Styles Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBE</td>
<td>Competence Based Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CME</td>
<td>Critical Management Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Critical Management Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Critical Management Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLO</td>
<td>Centraal Orgaan van Landelijke Opleidingsorganen [Association of knowledge centres for vocational and professional training]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWB</td>
<td>Critical Reflective Work Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>Critical Social Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Critical Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELC</td>
<td>Experiential Learning Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBO</td>
<td>Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs (Higher Vocational Education or University of Applied Sciences)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIPAA</td>
<td>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRD</td>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDE</td>
<td>International Diploma Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANOVA</td>
<td>Multivariate Analysis Of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBO</td>
<td>Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs [Senior Secondary Vocational Education]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAV</td>
<td>Netherlands Association of VET colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>Personal Activity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>Personal Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Regionaal Opleidings Centrum [Regional Training Centre or VET-Centre]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBB</td>
<td>Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs en Bedrijfsleven [Cooperation between Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market, formerly known as COLO]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>School Based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMBO</td>
<td>Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs [Preparatory Secondary Vocational Education]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEB</td>
<td>Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs [the Act on Vocational and Adult Education]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIL</td>
<td>Work Integrated Learning</td>
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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Research

“Management is not just something one does, but is more crucially, who one is and how we relate to others.” – Cunliiffe, 2009, p. 11

The above statement captures the essence of this thesis. The argument is that managing an organisation, is not simply a matter of ticking the boxes or focusing on the goal of profit making or applying learned techniques. Managing a business is much more complex. The practice of management is also about being aware that an organisation is composed of employees and customers with individual identities who need to be managed sensibly in order to sustain an organisation. Developing this awareness is considered to be a learning process that requires us to critically reflect on our experiences (Boyd & Fales, 1983; Gray, 2007; Higgins, 2011). This need for the development of critical reflection applies to students who want to become a manager as well as to those who are more experienced managers. Critical reflection is necessary for students because they often have little actual managerial experience, let alone an understanding of their experiences in practice (Billett, 2009d; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Coulson & Harvey, 2012; Smith et al., 2009). Critical reflection is also necessary for more experienced managers because the development of critical reflection helps to become or to remain aware of the complexity of managing an organisation (Gray, 2007).

Critical reflection is considered to be beneficial in several ways; for the individual student, but also for the other employees and for the organisation itself. First, critical reflection facilitates individual learning as it is a key factor in transferring theoretical knowledge into practice and vice versa (Fook, 2013; Schaap, Baartman, & de Bruijn, 2012). Second, critical reflection fosters social learning as a result of sharing knowledge and discussing ideas with others (Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2008). Third,
critical reflection connects the individual performance with organisational outcomes within a learning organisation (Knipfer, Kump, Wessel, & Cress, 2012) by developing a greater awareness of different perspectives and possibilities (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Cunliffe, 2002, 2004, 2009). This increased awareness is achieved through a process of looking back on experiences and comparing our thoughts with those of other individuals, rather than depending on pre-set judgments. These three reasons expressed above are the main rationale for this thesis.

The general focus of this research is to investigate the role of critical reflection within a sport management curriculum, specifically to determine the place and value of critical reflection in the work integrated learning-environment (WIL).

1.1.1 The nature of contemporary management.

To understand the challenges and contemporary issues in the sport management profession, it is necessary to be aware of the history of management in western society because it is only by having an appreciation of the beliefs, values, ideas, social and cultural structures of the past, that present and future directions can be understood (Cunliffe, 2009). In the early 1900s in the United States of America, a number of academics and practitioners such as Frederick Taylor (1914) and Henry Ford asked themselves how to improve the efficiency of organisations in order to maximise profits. They believed organisations could be managed and organised more effectively by developing a more systematic and ‘scientific’ approach. Research in the 1920s discovered productivity could be improved by considering employees’ social behaviour and by having control over that behaviour (Cunliffe, 2009). The impact of these classical and scientific management ideologies is still present in today’s business school curricula and professional views about management (Berdrow & Evers, 2010; Cunliffe, 2009; Mintzberg, 2004).

The shift to understanding the social aspects of organisational behaviour is also known as the Human Relations School. Management had gained popularity as a profession by the start of the Second World War in 1940 and became a familiar term and a position of status supported by institutional and social norms in the years that followed (Cunliffe, 2009; Fournier & Grey, 2000). This increased status gave individual managers the right to hire, fire, give orders, control, and evaluate the performance of others. Despite the increasing managerialism, a process of establishing control and authority over corporate resources, and the inherently attached systematic logic for gaining more profit and enhancing efficiency, problems started to appear. The demand
for improved techniques and approaches made it inevitable that more professionalism and specialisation was required. A separate body of knowledge and expertise started to emerge. It legitimised management as a field of study and as the basis for establishing formal management qualifications. Managerialism and professionalism of management studies continued to gain currency during the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium. Most business schools continued to centre their programs on techniques, processes, and systems required to increase productivity and efficiency (Mintzberg, 2004).

From the 1980s onwards, however, more and more academics and professionals began to realise that management could also be constructed through interaction. Constructivism became the point of interest. First Piaget (1950) and later Vygotsky (1978) stated that our frame of reference and what we consider as knowledge, is largely influenced by the interactions between our experience and the environment (Amis & Silk, 2005; Antonacopoulou, 2010; Frisby, 2005; Reynolds, 1998). Following these developments, theorists such as Fok and Watkins (2007) were convinced that true constructivist learning did not take place without questioning the cultural and political context. These academics believed it was necessary to be context conscious, such as being aware of underlying organisational values.

The organisational dynamics of the social and political power relationships is the point of focus in Critical Management Studies (CMS) (Antonacopoulou, 2010). CMS is based on critical questioning and the destabilisation of mainstream management studies (Brookfield, 2009; Cunliffe, 2009; Vince, 2010). Amis and Silk (2005) pointed out the discipline of sport management should use a more eclectic and synergistic approach consisting of different ideological, epistemological, and methodological concepts to constantly question and challenge itself (Carson & Fisher, 2006). Without taking into account the socially situated nature of management practice, learning about management is restricted (Carson & Fisher, 2006).

1.1.2 Sport management education and critical reflection.

Sport management has been described as a growing academic discipline (Floyd Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008) with a developing body of knowledge (Chalip, 2006; Downward, 2005), since the foundation of the first master’s program in sport management at The Ohio State University in the United States of America (USA) in 1966. The need for professionally trained critically reflective sport managers has grown considerably as a result of the increasing specialisation and further segmentation of the
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sport market (Billett, 2009a; Hoye, Smith, Nickolson, Stewart, & Westerbeek, 2009; Westerbeek, 2010). In order to meet this demand, tertiary education has designed specific sport management programs to produce graduates capable of working within this fast emerging worldwide industry (Boles, Beck, & Hargreaves, 2005). There are four central reasons why critical reflection should be integrated within sport management education.

First, contemporary education and practice require students and professionals to become lifelong learners. It is expected they can adapt to changing conditions and learn to critically analyse their knowledge and experience (Light & Dixon, 2007), so that improvements and refinements can be made to their future intentions and actions. This expectation requires students to learn differently. It requires students to reflect on their own experiences and become aware of their possibilities and their limitations, so that they can develop these reflections as habits of practice. For students and, most importantly when these students become practitioners, it is essential to develop the appropriate set of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. In other words, a set of competencies is required to perform a job satisfactorily and capably into the future.

A competence based model, focuses on the person and what he or she is capable of performing (Mei-I, Dainty, & Moore, 2005; Soderquist, Papalexandris, Ioannou, & Prastacos, 2010) rather than focusing on the job and its associated tasks. To date however there is no evidence that competence based education (CBE) delivers better prepared students to the workforce. It is not the specific intention of the researcher or of this research to criticise CBE, but to understand the requirements that this kind of education posits. It is expected there is probably a discrepancy between the deliberate educational provision of CBE and critical reflection, a discrepancy that emphasises individuals’ construction and meaning making. However, it could be argued that critical reflection should be part of any given sport management program, whether or not it is to be developed within a CBE framework, and that the implications for involved stakeholders should be investigated in order to maximise the development of individual and social learning in any given environment.

Second, students can experience difficulty with applying general theoretical management models in practice. Mintzberg (2004) and Berdrow and Evers (2010) suggested that learning based on technocratic principles creates a gap between education and the complex practice of management. The role of (sport) management education at tertiary level is to make the transition from student to employee as smooth and seamless as possible (Ferkins & Fleming, 2007). As the profession of sport
management becomes more complex and demanding the need for management education to adjust to this changing environment becomes more apparent (Berdrow & Evers, 2010).

Management is a process of interaction within a specific context that cannot automatically be copied or transferred into another contextual environment (Baldwin, Pierce, Joines, & Farouk, 2011; Berdrow & Evers, 2010; Billett, 2013). Solutions that work in a particular context may not suit the new context (Jordan, 2010). Central to all these processes is the premise that all individuals construct (new) meaning and reflect critically on experiences in relevant or changing contexts in combination with the appropriate management principles.

Hoye et al. (2009), among others (Collins & Trenberth, 2005; Lussier & Kimball, 2009; Pedersen, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2010), identified that sport managers mostly operate within three distinct sectors of sport: (a) the public, (b) the commercial, and (c) the non-profit/voluntary ones. These three sectors intersect and may therefore share the use of management and business techniques. Yet, each sector has unique contextual characteristics and requires specific tools and management concepts. Consequently, business school management and marketing models, applied in the commercial sector, cannot always be simply transferred to the non-commercial voluntary sport sector (Grey & French, 1996; Thiel & Mayer, 2009), as the goals mostly differ. For instance, a commercial sports club can raise money from private investors, but a financial return on investment is expected. Conversely, a voluntary run sports club can seek donations from individuals, foundations and corporations. However, members generally expect a social return on capital. Even within a similar sector there is no guarantee a transfer will occur when organisational cultures differ (Haskins & Clawson, 2006). Critical reflection can create greater awareness of these sector characteristics through critically testing new methods and by discussing and sharing found solutions (Gray, 2007).

Third, traditional sport management education is often focused on the accurate retention of large amounts of content (Ramsden, 1992). Regurgitating quantities of information, or rote learning, will likely not lead to changes in understanding or foster insight (Ramsden, 1992; Roberts, 1996). The traditional concept of internalising a fixed body of knowledge has become outdated. It is expected by educational outcomes and the industry that students become more actively involved in the learning process by reflecting on taught courses and/or work experience (Harreveld, 2010). Therefore, in principle, students should see critical reflection not only as a curriculum requirement,
but also as an investment tool for their future career development. Consequently, students’ ability to critically reflect will most likely enhance their employability, because a qualification from an educational institution is not the only indicator of employability for the current labour market (Harreveld, 2010).

Finally, learning is a social activity and it generally occurs with the aid of others and in relation to and with others (Thayer-Bacon, 2000). The development of critical reflection is often linked to the use of dialogue (Frijters, ten Dam, & Rijlaarsdam, 2008), in which the consideration of the opinions of others is important. From a social constructivist point of view critical reflection should be learned within a society that is constructed by people of various ethnic, cultural, and religious beliefs and backgrounds. Critical reflection contributes to the critical participation in a particular community of practice, as a result of identity development (Ten Dam & Volman, 2004) within that community. It makes the critically reflective person aware there are multiple ways of looking at an issue. That is, there is more than the personal perspective, because there is a relational interdependency between the individual and the social aspects (Billett & Somerville, 2004). By engaging in practice and consequently engaging with the social (e.g., other employees or customers) within practice, these encounters with new challenges and new contexts contribute to an individual’s learning (Gergen, 1994). As a result individuals will create a response that has consequences for both the individual and the practice they enact (Billett, 2008b).

Social interactivity (Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008) and cultural sensitivity (Hoye et al., 2009; Westerbeek, 2010) in the management of sport is important because it enables managers to situate their interactions within new and different cultural and social contexts. It is therefore important to ensure high quality sport management education delivers high quality sport managers (Skinner & Gilbert, 2007). Critically reflective practice in sport management education will contribute to the development of high quality sport managers, as critical reflection helps managers and students to see why they act and react in complex relational situations (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Cunliffe, 2002, 2004, 2009). Critical reflection develops a greater awareness of different perspectives and possibilities (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Cunliffe, 2002, 2004, 2009), through a process of comparing one’s own perspective to that of others through a process of dialogue. For example, when sport management students enter the workforce they will have to be able to communicate and to interact with a wide variety of athletes, coaches, officials and customers. Moreover, the host organisation expects students in
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WIL to work in a team environment and take into account the organisational values (Sotiriadou, 2011). Critical reflection allows students to develop a greater understanding and awareness of this large socio-cultural diversity within the sport industry (Sluijsmans, Straetmans, & Van Merriënboer, 2008).

These four reasons underline the importance of integrating critical reflection in sport management education. Both education and practice require students to reflect on their own experiences. Students need to become aware of their possibilities and that every context may involve a different approach. In order to do this, students in a sport management program must be more engaged in the learning process. By looking beyond their graduation and their own personal growth and through sharing thoughts with others, it is expected critical reflection will not only foster individual students, but also others within practice.

However, it is wise to have a look at the characteristics of how learning in education and practice takes place because it is reasonable to assume that the context of these two environments has an influence on the learning process. The premise of this thesis is fourfold: (a) the workplace environment will prove to be a more appropriate environment for learning and critical reflection than the school-based environment; (b) critically reflective students are more aware of the associated social, cultural and political factors in the workplace and (c) these critically reflective students understand the responsibility required to make a contribution to the organisation in which they enact. As a result, by gaining more industry experience with a more realistic image of professional practice (d) students are able to make a better link between theory and practice (Baartman & Ruijs, 2011).

1.2 Justification of the Research

Within sport management education the role of critical reflection is a restricted one (Alvesson & Willmott, 2012). It is argued in this thesis that critical reflection should be a core element of learning in sport management education. Moreover, critical reflection in school or the workplace can have various forms, and arguably, has the potential to contribute to learning during a workplace experience and at the same time influence organisational norms and values. It is therefore important to present the justification for this research.

First, we are sentient beings. We have the ability to reflect without always being aware of or thinking about it. We construct new mental models when encountering the world with awareness. These mental models provide meaning for our thoughts. By
reflecting critically, mental models become part of an individual’s identity (Brown & Starkey, 2000). However, most of our reflection is influenced by our earlier experiences. Sometimes it is egocentric, biased, uninformed, or even prejudiced (Baartman, Bastiaens, Kirschner, & van der Vleuten, 2007). This could be intentional or coincidental. People reflect superficially or deeply. These different levels of thinking and the impact they have on our learning is one of the issues that is central to being effective in what we do, particularly when engaging in new circumstances or when facing new challenges and are researched in this thesis.

Second, at times we are confronted with the fact we are not alone and our actions might influence other people: This confrontation is particularly so in the connection between individual learning and social learning and the way these modes of learning influence each other. In this study, individual learning is seen as learning primarily for personal growth, while social learning is associated with sharing experiences and comparing your own thoughts and feelings with those of others to create a different frame of reference. We have to think about what the consequences of our actions might be in all contexts.

Third, sport managers are expected to think before making a decision. The nature of their work requires networking, communicating, and performing interpersonal competences to a high level in order to achieve set goals and to be effective as a manager. When students, at school or in work practice, have to perform various tasks as part of their management training they sometimes are required to make decisions on behalf of others. When they do this, they have to consider the impact of their decisions on the future of the people they represent and the implications for the organisation they represent. By reflecting more critically about one’s own and others’ assumptions and actions, sport management (education) can develop more collaborative, responsive, and ethical managers (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Cheetham & Chivers, 1998; Cunliffe, 2002, 2004). According to Cunliffe (2009), managing an organisation and its people is both a relational and a moral practice. It is relational because management is embedded in our relationships and our communications with people. Management is also a moral practice because apart from being aware of the codes of conduct, managers need to realise why, how, and when to apply ethical business issues, and what kind of influence it has on others. Consequently, management is not only about individual learning, but also about social learning. It is about learning with and for others.
Importantly, being aware of who we are as a person and how we became that person will influence the way we will manage and operate in the sport management profession. For instance, critically reflective managers will usually seek interaction with their employees because they are concerned about the opinions and views. Hence, critical reflection or the so-called reflection on and in practice (Schön, 1983) will play an important role in this process, because it means that critically reflective managers will constantly try to pursue the reinvention of their management practices and their managerial identities. They are aware that society, its people and the organisations within it are constantly changing (Cunliffe, 2009) and that management is an embodied practice (Cunliffe, 2004). In other words, management is connecting the cognitive actions with physiological and emotional activities, when theory and practice are joined together through experience in that practice (Cunliffe, 2004).

Finally and arguably most importantly, to cope with the job related requirements in an evolving industry, sport management programs have sought cooperation with industry. Compulsory work placement offers the students the opportunity to practise the application of their school-based acquired knowledge and skills. Educational outcomes state that a graduate student should perform as a work-ready employee by the end of their workplace experience. Despite the reported benefits for possible future employers, such as the reduction of the skills gap and the contribution of a student’s fresh ideas (Martin & Leberman, 2005; O'Shea & Watson, 2007), workplace experience alone does not guarantee a seamless transition from student to employee (Klotz, Billett, & Winther, 2014). Education and practice both continue to struggle to find a solution for the disconnection between theoretical and practical knowledge and the transfer of this knowledge into practice (Billett, 2013; Malloy & Zakus, 1995). For students, the success of transferring theory (education) into practice (industry) largely depends on their ability to critically reflect on their individual learning experiences within an educational institution and also their involvement within broader practice-based (work integrated) learning environments (Billett, 2013).

1.2.1 Critical reflection at the workplace.

Critical reflection has been described as a means to an end, because the process of reflecting critically on experiences is used to facilitate and support individual and social learning. Critical reflection is not a goal in itself as it can be used in any given setting (e.g., school-based or practice-based). The ability to critically reflect encompasses the influence of organisational context and group factors. Critical
reflection may be applicable to learning within a group of fellow students at school or within a group of colleagues at work. When students progress from novice to expert within their working experience and training they will most probably have gradually changed their perspective as a result of more experience. Moreover, constructing a different perception entails more than just rational thinking as critical reflection also incorporates emotional and behavioural aspects (Burns & Bulman, as cited in Carroll et al., 2002). Besides being established as an important factor of learning, critical reflection is also identified as an important aspect of working behaviour within a realistic work context (Van Woerkom, 2004; Van Woerkom & Croon, 2008; Van Woerkom, Nijhof, & Nieuwenhuis, 2002).

Critical reflection is used interchangeably with critically reflective work behaviour (CRWB) or critically reflective behaviour and critically reflective attitude when discussed in a workplace context. All these various terms entail an individual learning component and a social learning component. Within the individual learning component of critical reflection three dimensions are distinguished: (a) experimenting, (b) asking for feedback and (c) career awareness. Three dimensions are also identified in the social learning component of critical reflection: (d) critical opinion sharing, (e) challenging groupthink and (f) openness about mistakes (Van Woerkom, 2004; Van Woerkom & Croon, 2008; Van Woerkom et al., 2002). The operationalisation of critical reflection into these six dimensions is further described in Chapter 4.

1.2.2 Why focus on the role of critical reflection in WIL?

In recent years the focus on critical reflection has been mainly in a school-based learning environment (SBL) and has been focusing on kinds of methods or tools that can be used in teaching with the intention of developing students’ (critical) reflection, such as portfolios or learning journals. However, SBL-environments cannot offer the same contextual stimuli as those found in the work environment. For instance, working with real customers is often absent in a school-based learning environment. The WIL-environment differs from an SBL-environment in the way that students enter a different world of culture and context (Hodkinson et al., 2008). Furthermore, a WIL-environment is not merely a place of work experience, but is also an effective, important learning environment that needs to be understood for its social, economic and personal requirements (Harteis & Billett, 2008). To the best of the researcher’s knowledge there is lack of evidence indicating that (critical) reflection in an SBL-environment leads to the anticipated educational outcomes (Paul, 2005; Willingham, 2008).
The current research adopts another approach and focuses on the use of critical reflection and the impact on (individual and social) learning in the WIL-environment as this approach seems to offer more insight into the value of being critically reflective as a student within both the SBL-environment and the WIL-environment. WIL distinguishes itself from other related terms in literature such as workplace learning or on-the-job learning because of the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in both environments. As the compulsory industry placement during a sport management program is beneficial to all involved stakeholders, work placements are used in vocational sport management programs for adequately preparing students for the job market. The overall learning process is considered to be a shared responsibility of all three involved stakeholders, which are the students, WIL-supervisors and the educators (Ferkins & Fleming, 2012; Martin et al., 2008; Martin, Fleming, Ferkins, Wiersma, & Coll, 2010).

As a result, the focus of this research is on the role of critical reflection in sport management education, in particular the place and value of critical reflection for junior and senior students in WIL-environments. These students in their (pre) final years of training are on the verge of making the transition from student to professional. It is necessary to investigate the impact of critical reflection on their learning experiences and the possible influence on organisational performance. Needless to say the ‘people’ oriented perspective on management in this research is dependent on the learning transfer climate and hierarchical structure within an organisation (Joo & Shim, 2010; Lim & Nowell, 2014). Presumably, displaying a critically reflective attitude within a top-down structure will be challenging. Therefore, the context in which critical reflection is being investigated is believed to have a considerable effect on the results. Moreover, the way students make meaning of their experiences, will also influence their learning process.

1.3 Research Questions, Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to focus on the role of critical reflection in sport management education programs. There is little previous published work specifically about critical reflection in sports education, but there is a wealth of research in related fields from which to form a base (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Høyrup, 2004; Knipfer et al., 2012; Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009; Welsh & Dehler, 2012).
Critical reflection is seen by many authors as an important component of individual and social learning. Critical reflection creates a link between individual and social learning and theory and practice.

WIL is a three-way partnership between educators, students, and future employers (see Figure 1.1). All three stakeholders are part of the study. The circle in Figure 1.1 represents the overall influence of critical reflection.

Each stakeholder has their own objectives for their involvement in WIL programs. It is assumed that education programs seek to better prepare students for their future workplaces by integrating critical reflection into the curriculum. It is suggested that students want to experience what their intended job is all about by critically reflecting on the experiences.

Future employers want to add real-life work experience to what students have learned in their (higher) vocational education institution and to promote critical reflection in their organisation to increase both individual learning and social learning.

Figure 1.1: The tripartite of WIL
In all, it is anticipated that all three stakeholders want to improve and develop the competence of critical reflection for a student to become a professional. To achieve this goal, all three stakeholders within the WIL-environment will have to invest in aligning curriculum, assessment, teaching, learning, and supervision. Based on these initial considerations, in regards to the role of critical reflection in a WIL-environment within the Dutch vocational sport management education, the key questions of this research are the following:

Research questions:
1. In what ways can critical reflection add value to sport management education?
2. What place should critical reflection have in sport management education?

In order to respond to these research questions, the sub questions target each responsible group of stakeholders and their associated perspective on the students’ development and utility of critical reflection in a work environment. The aims and objectives of this research are:

Aims:
1 Can critical reflection enhance sport management education?

Objectives:
- identify a need for the contribution of critical reflection in sport management education.
- identify the responsible stakeholders within the sport management education programs.

2 What do sport management students understand critical reflection to be?

Objectives:
- assess to what extent students critically reflect.
- study the relationship between students’ perceived (self-assessed) critical reflective work behaviour and their behaviour as assessed by the WIL-supervisor and educational institute.
- compare the stakeholders’ expectations, perceived importance, and meaning of critical reflection in a WIL-environment.

3 What allows students to develop critical reflection?

Objectives:
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- establish the important factors for developing critical reflection.
- identify what kind of learning environment is (most) suitable for critical reflection.
- identify the characteristics of a critically reflective student.

4 How can critical reflection be embedded into sport management curriculum to enhance sport management education?

Objectives:
- identify the relationship between critical reflection and the learning process.
- highlight the extent a student’s critical reflection contributes to individual learning and social learning.
- Discuss what is required to enhance critically reflective practice in sport management education.

1.4 Methodology

The research is conducted in the Netherlands. The Dutch sport management curriculum has a large component of workplace learning. Therefore, the workplace environment is used as a research context for investigating the role of critical reflection.

A sequential mixed methods research design consisting of two phases and four separate studies is employed (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). The first phase quantitative is followed by a qualitative phase. Within the quantitative phase the first study uses a web-survey and the qualitative phase involves a multi-case study design, targeting each directly responsible stakeholder within WIL of the sport management curriculum. The multi case study approach consists out of three separate case studies employing semi-structured interviews. The sequential mixed methods research design has a relatively small quantitative phase and a relatively larger qualitative phase. A larger qualitative phase is used because of the importance of investigating the underlying reasons for the utility of critical reflection in WIL. The qualitative data can also provide a deeper and more detailed understanding of the initial quantitative results.
The relationships between each study are highlighted in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2: Overview of subsequently employed studies**

Study 1 involves the collection of quantitative data via a web-based questionnaire administered to all three responsible stakeholders of WIL. Junior and senior sport management students self-assessed their ability to critically reflect within WIL while the WIL-supervisors and educators assessed the students’ ability to critical reflect. The difference between the perceived and the actual individual and social dimensions of sport management students’ ability to critically reflect are measured. The objective in Study 1 is to assess the level of critical reflection used by students in WIL. Additionally, it provides data regarding the perceived importance of critical reflection by each responsible stakeholder within a sport organisation. This perceived importance offers an indication of the learning transfer climate within a particular WIL-environment. It is also the intention to clarify the definition of critical reflection used in this research with the respondents prior to the interview stage.

Study 2 involves the collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. The focus of this study is to reveal underlying emotional, cultural and social aspects of critical reflection through the eyes of the WIL-supervisors.

Study 3 applies the same design as utilised in Study 2. This case study describes the educators’ perceptions with regard to how critical reflection may contribute to learning and transfer in vocational sport management education. As in Study 1, the
focus is once again on identifying the underlying emotional, cultural and social aspects of critical reflection.

Study 4 replicates the design of Study 2 and Study 3 however in this case critical reflection is seen through the lens of the students themselves.

The outcomes of these studies will lead to a greater understanding of the value of critical reflection in sport management education, particularly its significance for interns in organisational settings. Furthermore, it will provide an insight into a better defined definition of critical reflection in a work place context as a result of integrating the social aspect of critical reflection rather than just focusing on the individual benefits of critical reflection. Consequently, students, educators and practitioners will be become more aware of the possibilities and applications of developing the competency of critical reflection in their programs.

1.5 Delimitations

This study focuses in particular on the last two years of a four-year fulltime diploma level vocational sport management program in the Netherlands. The focus is on junior and senior sport management students because students within these years have to perform a specific sport management internship. Dutch vocational institutions offer study programs at four educational levels of increasing difficulty which correspond with years of duration of full-time programs. The lowest level is assistant training (Level 1) and the highest level is lower to middle management and specialist training (Level 4). This fourth level is equivalent to the European Qualification Framework Level 4/5 and prepares students either to start working in a job or to study at the next level which is higher vocational education (Universities of Applied Science). Besides the different levels students can normally choose between a school-based learning path in fulltime education and a part time work-based path in which work and study are combined (Sturing, Biemans, Mulder, & De Bruijn, 2011).

A Level 4 program has been chosen for this research because it is at this level that vocational education institutes offer a sport management program, leading to a diploma of “Operational Sport and Exercise Manager”. Students can specialise in such areas as Fitness and Health (fitness coordinator or health club manager) or Leisure and Outdoor (operational manager in an outdoor company). Again, students, in a four-year vocational sport management program, are trained for jobs in lower to middle management. This issue of being trained for jobs in lower to middle management raises the question of whether future employers will favour attracting a Level 4 vocational
trained sport manager or would prefer to recruit a Higher Education-trained sport manager who is trained for jobs in higher management.

### 1.6 Thesis Structure

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present the need for critical reflection within a sport management curriculum, specifically within a WIL-environment.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature categorised in four parts. The conceptual part first examines the most appropriate paradigm for this research to investigate critical reflection. Next, the three different perspectives on critical reflection in relation to learning are presented, along with the levels of critical reflection. Then, theories of learning and their impact on critical reflection are outlined. The comparison between individual learning and social learning, between formal and informal learning in learning environments, learning in organisational settings and the impact on employability are examined. The chapter ends with briefly describing the constraints of using critical reflection and by presenting the definition of critical reflection used in this thesis.

Chapter 3 provides more contextual insight. It looks into the Dutch sport management program and the compulsory component of WIL within the past and present curricula. It describes the involved direct and indirect stakeholders of WIL and reviews the qualification structure and job profiles of a sport manager.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used in the first study of Phase 1 which employed a quantitative survey. This chapter outlines the sampling procedure, the instrumentation used, and how the data analyses were conducted to assess the perceived and actual level of the students’ critical reflection in WIL.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the survey. The purpose of the chapter is to uncover any potential differences between the three stakeholder groups within WIL and to inform the implications for further qualitative investigation in Phase 2 of the research.

Chapter 6 describes the methodology of Phase 2 that incorporated three separate case studies using semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of the semi-structured interviews. It provides insight into the underlying motivations; each stakeholder group is presented separately.

Chapter 8 revisits the two research questions, draws conclusions, reflects on the research as a whole and suggests recommendations for future research.
1.7 Summary

Critical reflection is considered to facilitate learning as it is a key factor within the transfer between theory and practice. Critical reflection makes students aware of the context in which learning takes place. However, the role of critical reflection in sport management programs is limited (Alvesson & Willmott, 2012). Critical reflection in sport management programs needs to be examined because of the poor connection between theory and practice. Despite attempts to improve the transfer of learned knowledge, skills and attitudes between the educational institution and industry by integrating learning and work in the workplace, a gap still exists (Berdrow & Evers, 2010; Billett, 2013).

Three educational reasons were presented to explain why critical reflection should be integrated within sport management education. First, students are required to critically reflect on their own experiences and become aware of their own possibilities and their own limitations during career and as a lifelong learner (Billett, 2010). Second, students have difficulty in applying theoretical models because learning is highly contextually dependent. Therefore, critical reflection is needed to differentiate between these different contexts (Billett, 2013; Fook, 2013; Gray, 2007). Finally, students should see critical reflection not only as a curriculum requirement, but as an investment tool for their future career development. Supporting a critically reflective stance for students in (higher) vocational education and WIL should be a continuous professional process (Billett, 2008b).
Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the concepts that are central to this thesis. These concepts are categorised into three sections: (a) the dominant paradigm, (b) the definition of critical reflection, and (c) the relationship between learning and critical reflection according to various learning theories. An overview of this chapter is shown in Figure 2.1.
In addition to reviewing the three main concepts, a description of the workplace environment in which complementary forms of learning take place is included in this chapter. The learning in organisational settings is highlighted and the definition of critical reflection used in this research is refined. The conceptual constructs in which critical reflection is used are also explored.

2.2 Paradigms

A conceptual framework situates concepts, assumptions, expectations, views, and theories that inform research (Maxwell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Within a conceptual framework, the underpinning dominant paradigm which largely shapes our understanding can be contextually interpreted. The interpretations and sense making of situations and experiences are the essence of constructivism (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008). Various views on constructivism exist such as individual cognitive orientated views or the perspective of the social co-construction of knowledge. The different views of constructivism and associated theories that underpin the current research are presented in the next sections and subsequently describe the dominant paradigm used.

2.2.1 Constructivism.

Learning and critical reflection are considered from a constructivist perspective, that exists within an interactionist paradigm. This constructivist view means individual learners make their own sense of the world, but they do this within a social context and through social interactions they are involved in (Biggs, 1996; Gijbels, Segers, & Struyf, 2008; Williams & Burden, 1997). The concept of constructivism originates from the theory of Piaget (1950), who argued that meaningful learning only happens when learners actively construct their knowledge and meaning, rather than just receiving and having an unquestioning take on this knowledge and meaning. This early model of constructivism focuses on the cognitive aspect of learning and the personal construction of that learning (De Vries, 2000), also referred to as radical constructivism (Stahl, 2014).

2.2.2 Social constructivism.

Social constructivism, based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), recognises knowledge is personally constructed, and is influenced by cultural experiences and social interactions. On one hand individuals acquire knowledge as result of their
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Literature review

Personal history and epistemology and on the other hand individuals are influenced by the social interactions they have with the related norms and values of these social interactions (Billett, 1995). Critically reflecting on the individual and social aspects of knowledge acquisition develops a sensitivity to and an awareness of the beliefs and views of the world around us (Gijbels et al., 2008). When individual learners critically reflect on the knowledge they have acquired, those learners activate prior knowledge in their attempt to discover new patterns and novel ideas. This process of discovery can create new knowledge and a thorough understanding of the context knowledge (Gijbels et al., 2008). This research accepts the reality that a constructivist learning environment is just one learning environment where learners acquire or construct knowledge. Each student acquires and constructs knowledge in a different way. What might be a ‘perfect’ learning environment for one student may be a less perfect environment to learn for another student (Gijbels et al., 2008; Stahl, 2014; Williams & Burden, 1997). In short, the so-called constructivist learning environments are not necessarily superior to traditional arrangements. Although there is no general scheme that can explain the dynamic social and cultural interactions in a WIL-environment, a social constructivist paradigm is interested in how an individual learner actively develops meaning in the continuously changing learning contexts (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008; Palincsar, 1998). This research investigates the role of students’ critical reflection in a WIL-context; hence a social constructivist perspective is employed to investigate the dynamic interplay between the individual and the socio-cultural elements of a WIL-environment.

From a social constructivist point of view, any learning environment, SBL or WIL, has its own advantages and disadvantages, because a student can construct knowledge in any given setting. However, the use of reflection is considered to be an imperative for constructing knowledge. In agreement with Billett (2008b), the current study argues that learning through and for work can be seen as an interdependent relationship between personal and social factors. Therefore, learning in SBL and WIL is defined as a combination of relational factors, such as the mental, cognitive, and its emotional aspects (Illeris, as cited in Poortman, Illeris, & Nieuwenhuis, 2011).

A social-constructivist approach is considered to be a multi-levelled, self-reflexive, and praxis driven one (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008; Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008). This approach addresses real and context-rich socio-cultural issues that result from an interaction between humans, their individual frames of reference, and an organisation’s ideology. Learning and surviving in a multi-cultural and multi-social environment of practice calls for critical reflection. Without a sense of understanding
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The multiple social and cultural issues that exist within a continuously changing organisation, students for example cannot grasp to any full extent why and how managers act and decide the way they do (Pope, 2010). To fully understand how the practice of management works, students require to engage in critical reflection or reflexivity in their thinking processes at the workplace (Lay & McGuire, 2010).

The underlying importance of being aware and acting consciously within a context of social and cultural issues and the implied influence of these socio-cultural issues on managing an organisation is the very essence of critical reflection. To date, however, there has been limited research into the centrality of social and cultural issues within the academic field of sport management. Instead, the use of cognitive theories are still the leading theories to explain the theory and practice in management (Stahl, 2014). There is a need for a more critically reflective approach in sport management theory and practice that results directly from the problematical engagement with organisational culture (Pope, 2010). It is argued in this thesis that critical reflection within a social constructivist approach would enable sport management students and practitioners to better understand the complexity and variety of socio-cultural issues within the sports industry. In addition, critical reflection would assist in the development of the appropriate cross-cultural and multicultural skills needed by (future) sport managers to manage and sustain an organisation. The development of socio-cultural sensitivity within the field of sport management requires deliberate personal, theoretical, methodological, and practice interventions.

For example, our thinking is sometimes biased or uninformed. The reason for this is that our world and ideas are formed by our past experiences and the people we interact with. Our knowledge is constructed via prior experiences, learning, values, and beliefs. For example as we grow up, we are influenced by our parents, family members, peers/friends, teachers, and coaches; all part of our primary and secondary socialisations (Amis & Silk, 2005; Antonacopoulou, 2010; Brain, 2002; Frisby, 2005; Reynolds, 1998). The concept of socialisation refers to the advanced cultural norms and values of a society. While primary socialisation occurs in the family, secondary socialisation happens within other aspects of society such as through education, at work, and via the media. Consequently, reality is unique for each individual (Williams & Burden, 1997). Thus, social and cultural relationships shape our world (Gijbels et al., 2008; Hodkinson et al., 2008). It is therefore necessary for sport managers to understand that the theories and realities of the world are socially constructed (Amis & Silk, 2005; Antonacopoulou,
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2010; Frisby, 2005; Reynolds, 1998) so they remain aware that managing a company or its people is not just reproducing learned procedures or focusing on the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of an organisation (Malloy & Zakus, 1995).

In view of that sport managers are aware that the practice of management is not simply following a recipe book, a social constructivist paradigm is the main theoretical framework of this thesis. Social constructivism has the capacity to illuminate the qualities of social interaction such as learning to communicate in a proper way and sharing experiences with each other (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008; Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008). Processes such as actively engaging in learning, critical reflection, and reflection (Schön, 1983) are central to the social constructivist paradigm. Learning from a constructivist point of view is learner-centred (in this case student-centred) where the student actively constructs knowledge within a social context and through social interactions (Biggs, 1996; Gijbels et al., 2008; Williams & Burden, 1997). Depending only on a social constructivist paradigm for the current research to explain or to understand how students construct knowledge is limited and a narrow point of view. Not all students will actively construct knowledge by themselves. Some students are not interested in learning or need assistance of their WIL-supervisor or educators. Critical reflection and the process of transfer of learning is a relational activity in a way that individuals should be conscious of their own involvement and need to accept responsibility for how they perceive and act in the immediate encounters they have with the social world. The individual’s awareness of and engagement with this ongoing relational process is what Billett (2009b) describes as being ‘agentic’. He considers these learners need to be engaged and pro-active in the way they construct their knowledge and that they ensure they have the ability to independently assess their actions and outcomes. As a result, the approach to make meaning of their experiences is intentional and effortful.

Sport management education needs to adapt to this change in perceived social construction of knowledge. However, many business education programs continue to rely on transmitting the traditional management principles in a series of functionally-based courses (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Mintzberg, 2004). In a functional model of educational provision, students are positioned as receivers of knowledge rather than as active constructors of concepts and practices. Learning based on functionally based principles creates a disconnect for students between the provision of education and the complex practice of management (Berdrow & Evers, 2010; Mintzberg, 2004). These
business education programs such as Master of Business Administration-programs (MBA) sometimes overemphasise the use of formulas and theoretical models in order to comprehend managerial processes (Mintzberg, 2004). For instance, these theoretical models tend to focus on short term profit making. Therefore, the challenge for sport management programs is to develop a student’s ability to apply the theoretical knowledge in practice and to combine it with communication and (self-) reflection skills. In order to do this students need to recognise and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses by means of self-assessment instruments (Berdrow & Evers, 2010) or through sharing and discussing these outcomes with others. Importantly, self-assessment here is not to be used as a measurement of performance, but as a means for self-development and lifelong learning.

### 2.2.3 Critical constructivism.

The cultural context in which the construction of knowledge takes place is of great importance for critical constructivism. A true constructivist approach to learning would be compromised without considering the cultural and political power structures of the learning environment (Fok & Watkins, 2007). To integrate the theoretical and practical learning in an SBL-environment with the practical experience in a WIL-environment is a constructivist approach to learning that is believed to promote critical reflection in students (McLennan & Keating, 2008). The WIL-environment provides a real-life context for students that entails coping with all the environmental related issues.

CMS (see Chapter 1, section 1.1) is associated with critical constructivism and is based on questioning the cultural, social, and political power structures within an organisation or even an entire society. This kind of educational setting includes the expectation that the students are critically reflective and that they construct their own learning process. This responsibility for the progress of their own learning relates to the social constructivist learning environments that emphasise the practical experience and social interaction, along with being pro-active in learning as a student. Active learner engagement is thought to be at the core of individual and social learning in the process of knowledge construction. When students are actively engaged in constructing knowledge, they need to come up with new and challenging ideas or to question various views and ideas that are present within an organisation rather than passively undergoing an internship in sport management industry. Amis and Silk (2005) suggested that students can expand their knowledge and using this active thinking process will offer...
more useful insights through engagement with the new thoughts. For example, challenging interns to be innovative and to value different social and cultural issues will offer them the opportunity to broaden their horizons. In addition, exploring issues from different angles can offer alternatives to taken for granted rules, norms, and values, about prevailing the management practices of all involved in the sport management industry (Amis & Silk, 2005; Martin & Hughes, 2009; Shaw, Frisby, & Wolfe, 2008; Skinner & Edwards, 2005).

2.3 Critical Reflection

Critical reflection has been recognised as a highly needed proficiency in various fields (Zakus, Malloy, & Edwards, 2007) such as nursing, teaching, and accounting and there has been a growing call for its inclusion in the curricula of business school by several authors (Amis & Silk, 2005; Antonacopoulou, 2010; Braun, 2004; Frisby, 2005) in recent years, however, only a few academic scholars (Frisby, 2005; Skinner & Gilbert, 2007; Zakus et al., 2007) have been promoting the need for critical reflection in sport management education.

As well as a manager’s ability to be aware of the cultural, social, and emotional aspects within the field of sport management, there is also a theoretical perspective that offers a different view on critical reflection. Critical Management Education (CME), a pedagogy based on Critical Theory (CT) and closely related to CMS, highly values critical reflection, but considers critical reflection mainly as a tool for questioning established power structures within an organisation. One can argue this understanding of power structures is a goal beyond the reach of sport management students, but it cannot be denied that power politics are part of reality and as such, need to be understood. Empowering students to understand there are alternative ways of doing things (e.g., by reflecting critically on organisational politics), is one way of enhancing their capacity for learning. They will learn to effectively apply their theoretical knowledge by comparing their own perspectives to various alternative organisational views. As a result, they will better understand the effect of their objectives in practice (Ferreira, Keliher, & Blomfield, 2013). Sport management education should make students aware of the processes that go on beneath the visible surface of management practice, because these processes have a direct influence the organisation’s norms and values, and indirectly influence the way an organisation should be managed. Educators and possibly future employers expect students to integrate the learned theoretical and practical knowledge into the work environment, and vice versa. Also, students are at the
start of their professional career and are on the verge of developing their professional identity.

To conclude this section; those in the discipline of sport management need to understand that it is essential to develop sport managers for the future, who are able to solve today’s problems and meet the challenges of tomorrow (Light & Dixon, 2007), and this development needs to start early in their career. There is a need for greater insight into the role of critical reflection for all who are involved in vocational and higher education sport management programs.

The terms critical thinking, reflection, critical reflection, reflective practice, reflective thinking and reflexivity are used interchangeably in the literature (Argyris & Schön, 1976; Brookfield, 2009; Dewey, 1933; Habermas, 1984; Mezirow, 1990). It is challenging for stakeholders in WIL to differentiate between different types (breadth) of reflection and levels (depth) of reflection, or to discuss the ideas as a clearly generalised and defined concept. Not only is the concept complex, but also the use and development of critical reflection is contested. Therefore, these different terms will be expanded upon in order to provide the definition of critical reflection used in this research.

2.3.1 Critical thinking and reflection.

The process of reflection is concerned with thinking about previous experiences. Reflection is often seen as learning from experience. According to Dewey (1933), reflection is a meaning making process, which happens in interaction with others and provides the learner with a deeper understanding. The main difference between critical thinking and reflection is that critical thinking puts more emphasis on the rational component of thinking, while reflection focuses on the emotional and behavioural aspects of thinking (Burns & Bulman, as cited in Carroll et al., 2002). The process of individual, logical, structured cognitive thinking predominantly emerges from a cognitive perception, while emotional and behavioural components of reflection are more likely to be part of a philosophical perspective because they occur through social interaction.

2.3.2 Reflective practice.

When reflection is used within a practice related situation, reflection can be done during (or reflection in-action) or after the experience (or reflection on-action).
Reflective practice (Schön, 1983) is considered as a deliberately developed process for education settings (Askeland & Fook, 2009, p. 290). To be a reflective practitioner is seen as an essential characteristic for both a student and a competent professional (Mann et al., 2009). By being reflective in practice one constantly refreshes and renews his or her knowledge and skills. Traditionally in education the pedagogical perspective on reflection has been mainly cognitive but reflection can also be seen from a philosophical or emancipatory point of view. The emancipatory approach questions the so-called objective truths and attacks the social, cultural, and political power structures of society. From the point of view of critical theorists reflection is therefore not critical by definition (Brookfield, 2009).

### 2.3.3 Reflection in critical theory.

If reflection in CT is to be critical, the social, cultural, and political power structures should be carefully observed (Reynolds, 1998). The word critical in the concept critical reflection relates to the fact that a person is aware of his or her reflection, whether it is before, during, or after a (work) learning experience. Above all, the word critical also points to the fact that reflection on an experience or existing frame of reference should be questioned cautiously and from alternative points of view, rather than a one-sided personal perspective which limits interaction of ideas. For example, sport management students should not accept things at face value. They should be aware of any existing or encountered equalities and inequalities within their daily life-or work experiences. Critical reflection is asking questions to measure the answers against personal standards and against organisational standards. To Critical Theorists who promote critical reflection, there is no absolute truth, assumptions and arguments should be critically assessed (Agger, 1991; Brookfield, 2005; McLaughlin, 1999; Mezirow, 1981).

### 2.3.4 Critical reflexivity.

Finally, the most profound level of critical reflection is related to the term of (critical) reflexivity which relies on Critical Social Theory (Lay & McGuire, 2010) (CST). Reflexivity and critical reflexivity relate to the fact that individuals needs not only critically reflect in and on the organisational structure, but are also aware of and questions the assumptions underlying their actions, and the impact of those actions on themselves and others (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Cunliffe, 2004; Holmes, Cockburn-Wootten, Motion, Zorn, & Roper, 2005). For WIL-supervisors, educators, and students
to engage in dialogue is considered the most important aspect of being critically reflexive (Lay & McGuire, 2010). Critical reflexive practice expects students to question their own beliefs, norms, and values, along with asking themselves how they developed these beliefs and acknowledge the broader social and cultural norms within an organisation. Both WIL-supervisors and educators should facilitate reflexive practice and to similarly question themselves to ensure collaborative learning processes in WIL (Lay & McGuire, 2010; Loyens & Gijbels, 2008). The current research looks at these elements of critical reflexivity such as the influence of dialogue, questioning your own assumptions, and the co-creation of knowledge because that is what ensures students to make the most of their internship experience in WIL.

2.4 Theories of Learning

For the purpose of this research, to understand how students learn for example in SBL-environments or particularly in WIL settings, theories of learning provide explanations as to how to interpret students’ learning processes. Different theories, models, approaches, dimensions, and domains of learning are investigated within this section and how these different concepts inform the research into students’ critical reflection in WIL. It is good to take different perspectives into account when learning at the workplace is to be explained such as the personal beliefs of the learner, the norms and values of other members of an organisation and what is expected from the learner when given a task to perform (Berings, Doornbos, & Simons, 2006). Theories of learning vary a great deal in the extent to which they emphasise the elements of the individual and the social elements of learning. Many theories (e.g., social learning theories) exist about how people learn. The more traditional model of teacher centred education relating to the psychological cognitive learning approach is associated with internal processes of learning such as intrinsic motivation and metacognition (Boekaerts, 1999). In this teacher centred learning it is the educator who leads the learning process with regard to the content and how it is presented. For the student who is involved in this learning process, learning takes place by remembering facts and figures and the learning is more individual (Malloy & Zakus, 1995).

The behavioural model of learning is quite different to the psychological model. The behavioural approach sees learning as programmed instruction and conditioning that is equally focused on the internal processes of learning. The external interaction processes with the social and cultural environment are important to the humanist and constructivist approaches to learning; learning takes place in dialogue between educator...
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and student. Facilitation of learning through external motivation such as the use of encouragement, the emphasis on social goals, and the design of challenging tasks by the educator are important for students’ involvement in external processes of learning (Boekaerts, 2001). Both learning theories of humanism and constructivism see a person as a whole and that learning only occurs when both the cognitive and affective domains are involved. For example, Illeris (2009) states that learning requires the integration of external interaction and internal psychological processes. Additionally, Illeris (2009) distinguishes three dimensions of learning and competence development: the content, the incentive, and the interaction dimension, as is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

![Diagram: Three dimensions of learning and competence development](image)

**Figure 2.2: Three dimensions of learning and competence development**  
Source: Illeris (2009)

For learning to take place, involving all three dimensions are required. The content dimension is where things are learned and deals with theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, and meaning making. This meaning making of experiences implies that interaction is needed between the learner and the environment. Learning can happen in any environment, whether it is in an SBL or WIL-context, but is always dependent upon a learner’s capability to translate experiences into valuable knowledge construction. The incentive dimension is the affective or emotional side of learning. It encompassed how the situation is experienced through emotions and feelings. The affective side is influenced by motivation and commitment which in turn is affected by
external or internal incentives. The interaction dimension integrates the content and incentive dimensions. Similar to critical reflection and social constructivism, the integration of the three dimensions (content, incentive, and interaction) involves the awareness of an individual of the social and cultural contexts in which learning takes place. The process of critical reflection makes it possible for learners to compare, integrate, and meaningfully apply conceptual knowledge into a particular context. Learners who are incapable of reflecting critically on their own experiences, learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes remain on the lower levels of learning such as being reproductive, rather than reaching the higher levels of learning (Boekaerts, 1999, 2001) such as the integration of new and old information.

Learning occurs on different levels, but is mainly dependent on the engagement of the learner in the learning process (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Billett, 2008a; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Noe, Tews, & McConnell Dachner, 2010; Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, & Diehl, 2009). The process of critical reflection occurs at the higher end of the learning levels, and is ideally shared and discussed with the help of and for others. Therefore, in a workplace context the learning levels may be categorised into four subsequent levels (Sadler-Smith, 1996): (1) the learner’s reaction to the learning experience, (2) the acquisition of new attributes, (3) the ability to apply the new learning in a specific context, and (4) the effects of learning on personal and organisational values. Illeris (2009) has made a similar categorisation. The first level of learning according to Illeris has no context or has no personal meaning to the learner and is called mechanical or cumulative learning. When a new experience is linked to something which is already known or what has already been learned within a particular context, the second level of assimilative learning is reached. To apply the learned knowledge in another context is still difficult. The third level consists of the ability to break down internalised mental schemes. At this level the learner is capable of applying learned knowledge or skills in a different context. To learn at this level, learning entails more effort and requires more awareness. The fourth and highest level of learning is considered to be transformative learning (Illeris, 2009; Mezirow, 1990). This kind of learning is generated by critical reflection.

Critical reflection is one of the more difficult aspects in the development of intellectual abilities and skills. Critical reflection is not a well-defined concept, because it is dependent on the context (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004) and framework (Barnes, 2005; Ten Dam & Volman, 2004) in which it is used. Depending on which framework or theory of learning is being used, the meaning or definition of critical reflection will
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vary accordingly. Three schools of critically reflective thought are usually distinguished: a psychological cognitive perspective, a philosophical holistic point of view, and a critical pedagogical approach. The integration of all three is crucial for the development and use of critical reflection. The next section outlines the main theories of learning in relation to critical reflection.

2.4.1 Learning and cognitive critical reflection.

From a psychological point of view, critical reflection is mainly a cognitive skill and relates to clear, logical, rational thinking. These types of thinking are also known as problem solving or reasoning (Siegel, 1989). Within cognitive psychology two approaches to the study of thinking are known: descriptive and prescriptive. The descriptive approach tries to prevent fallacious thinking by using a set framework and the prescriptive approach attempts to use scientific principles of evidence to enforce good thinking (Halpern, 2001). The similarity between the two approaches is that improvement in critical reflection is built upon a model of thought and knowledge. Learning happens through a process of embedding meaning of experiences in memory, also called knowledge structures or concepts (Alexander, Johnson, Albano, Freygang, & Scott, 2006). By using a process of critical reflection to look back on new experiences, a learner can make new connections and new knowledge structures are formed. The learners’ use of these cognitive skills to understand and control their cognitive processes, is called metacognitive knowledge (Ku & Ho, 2010). Zohar and David (2009) noted that metacognition is a relational concept, as the formation of meaning happens in a particular context. Metacognition is the ability to look at and regulate your own cognitive processes. For example learners with high metacognitive skills can plan and evaluate more efficiently and more effectively than learners with low metacognitive skills (Ku & Ho, 2010). When critical reflection is viewed from a cognitive approach the level of metacognition associates strongly with critical reflection (Ku & Ho, 2010). Although metacognition is not part of the investigation in this research, it is part of critical reflection as critical reflection in the current research is seen as a combination of cognitive and affective processes.

In education and learning, one of the often cited authors on theories of cognitive learning is Benjamin Bloom. His theoretical (1956) framework is based on learning taxonomies. This framework, Bloom’s Taxonomy, describes the stages of the processes of cognitive learning, and distinguishes between lower order thinking skills and higher order thinking skills. The learning process within education is mostly categorised into
six hierarchical levels (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956): The lowest category of the learning process is (1) knowledge, followed by (2) comprehension, and (3) application; the higher levels of learning are (4) analysis, (5) synthesis, and (6) evaluation. These upper three levels of learning are also often referred to as critical reflection skills (Ennis, 1993).

As a rational concept, critical reflection is considered to be primarily a skill in reasoning and logical structured analysis. This rational concept of critical reflection is often claimed as the basis of much critical reflection pedagogy and often taught in philosophy departments.

Apart from categorising the cognitive domain, Bloom (1956) also categorised the affective and psychomotor domains, but the cognitive domain is the better known and more commonly used one in education and learning. Over the years Bloom’s model has been modified by Krathwohl and Anderson (2002). They changed the nouns to verbs, slightly rearranged the categories, and renamed some of the skills. The original (Bloom, 1956) lower order thinking skills of knowledge, comprehension, and application were changed into remembering, understanding, and application; the original higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were altered into analysing, evaluating, and creating. The lower order skill of remembering is when students are able to recall or to recognise the taught information. When students can describe what they have learned in their own words and are able to use or apply theoretical and practical knowledge in a similar situation as the one in which they initially learned it, students have achieved the skill of understanding and application. For students to master the higher order skill of analysing involves them being able to examine in detail how components of a system interact in order to discover meaning. They would know how to form that system and how these components that belong in the system contribute to new knowledge and skills. Evaluating, another skill, includes making changes and reconsidering how to use or apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills in novel situations. Finally, creating, the last stage of the model of cognitive learning encompasses the production of something original by reflecting on experiences. For example, learners who master this level of creating can expand their knowledge by looking at things differently and are able to come up with different solutions to a problem or they can contribute to an organisation by forming innovative ideas.

Bloom’s taxonomy is predominately based on the cognitive domain of learning (Krathwohl, 2002; Reeves, 1990). This cognitive approach to learning implies that less
cognitively able students would have difficulty with thinking clearly and rationally. It also implies students with high cognitive abilities would have no difficulty being critically reflective. According to Argyris (1991) for students with a high intelligence quotient (IQ) being equally high in critical reflection is a misconception and it is rather the opposite that occurs. Some of the most highly skilled professionals, who are extremely motivated and proficient in solving problems, are sometimes the worst reflective thinkers. Argyris suggested that because this type of person rarely experiences failure, so they have not learned how to learn from making mistakes. People with high cognitive skills are very good in solving organisational problems, but might be incapable of looking inward and learning from mistakes, as they tend to get defensive when confronted with one of the few mistakes they make. These so-called “defensive routines” (Argyris, 1986, p. 541) such as sending mixed messages can occur intentionally or unintentionally but are still one of the main mechanisms that prevent those people from learning; and which thereby reduces social learning.

Despite Bloom’s taxonomy being seen as too vague to assess critical reflection (Ennis, 1993), it is still widely used (with modifications) within education, as it provides a simple structure, it is easy to remember, and is easy to use. Psychologists tend to use development in learning as a development of the cognitive abilities. This view relates to the rational school of thought in critical reflection. Learning is based on development of cognitive skills and includes the recall or recognition of facts, patterns, and concepts.

Teaching students to think (Garnham & Oakhill, 1994; Ramsden, 1992, 2003), especially critically and reflectively (Dewey, 1933), is considered to be one of the key goals of education. Critical reflection relates strongly with learning and education. It is also often used as a synonym for good, clear, rational thinking (Halpern, 2001). Being critical is not the same as being negative, but provides more alternative ways and draws attention to taken-for-granted aspects of reality or knowledge. Critical reflection is concerned with looking at different sides of an issue, having an open view on matters and accepting new evidence for existing ideas (Willingham, 2008). Dewey (1933) used the term reflective thinking for good thinking that resembles the definition of cognitive psychology which is individual, logical, structured, and cognitive thinking. While Dewey emphasised the cognitive side of critical reflection, he also identified three characteristics or attitudes of people who are reflective. These attitudes are being open-minded, taking responsibility, and showing wholeheartedness in their thinking.
These attitudes can be considered as dispositions, besides being rational and logical. These attitudes are the basis for this research into measuring critically reflective behaviour. It should be emphasised, however, that the purpose of this research is not to pose the idea that dispositions are more important to critically reflective behaviour than cognitive rational skills, but rather the purpose is to suggest that critically reflective behaviour ideally combines dispositions or attitudes and cognitive skills. This view is consistent with developmental psychologists who argue that the development of cognitive skills depend heavily on attitudes (Siegel, 1999). However, Siegel (1989) only saw the importance of a disposition to critical reflection, as a commitment to seeking reasons and evidence. He acknowledged the combination of skill and attitude, but suggested both should be targeted for rational action as an ultimate goal.

As higher order learning is related to critical reflection, lower order learning is synonymous with learning by sheer association or rote learning. Paul (1992, 1995) argued that most learning at college or university is lower order learning. The ‘good’ students have developed skills to memorise and reproduce facts; the ‘poor’ students are not even capable of achieving that. He took the view that critical reflection is a way to acquire knowledge and insight. The two levels Paul brings forward are critical reflection in a weak sense and critical reflection in a strong sense.

According to Paul (1992), a weak sense critical thinker only thinks about their belief systems and frames of reference in order to support their arguments. The weak sense critical thinker is egocentric and is mainly extrinsically motivated. A strong sense critical thinker is someone who is mainly intrinsically motivated to use critical reflection as a tool to compare their frame of reference to other or different frames of reference. Above all, a strong sense critical thinker is not using the analysis and judgment solely for his own use but tries to interconnect the different views. In the case of a strong critical thinker, critical reflection is used as to take the diverse interests of individuals or groups into account. Critical reflection helps someone to be less egocentric and less socially biased.

2.4.2 Learning and philosophical critical reflection.

A philosophical perspective on critical reflection considers it to be more than just a skill, because the skill becomes part of one’s identity and attitude towards learning. According to Ramsden (1992), who adopts a more holistic approach to critical reflection, students who are more engaged with the learning task, will develop a deeper understanding. He acknowledges that mere reproduction of information, within the
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three lower levels in Bloom’s taxonomy, will not lead to changes in understanding. Furthermore, students’ engagement and understanding is partly dependent on their environment and how they perceive that environment. This implies critical reflection is more than just a skill. As a response to learning in an educational environment, Ramsden (1992) identified two levels of approaches to learning. In the lowest level of surface approach to learning students understand the key concepts of information. The engagement with the environment is low and the student has to be extrinsically motivated. The ability of going beyond the orthodox and expected is considered to be a deep approach to learning. The deeper approach entails bringing information together; the student is more engaged with the learning environment and is more intrinsically motivated.

A theory that combines the cognitive aspects of learning and the environment, was Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory. His constructivist learning theory is represented by a four-stage Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) in which he views learning as an integrated process with each stage within the process being mutually supportive of and feeding into the next. Kolb emphasised the importance of experience, reflection, and feedback in learning. Later on the Basic Learning Styles Inventory (BLSI) of a learner was developed in which 4 types of learning preferences could be distinguished (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Kolb, 1984; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001).

According to Kolb, every person uses the four learning styles in different ways depending on the level of expertise. The ELC and BLSI are shown merged in Figure 2.3.

![Figure 2.3: The ELC and BLSI combined](image)

Source: Kolb (1984)
Korthagen (1985) developed the ALACT model for reflection, naming after its five consecutive phases of (1) action, (2) looking back, (3) awareness of essential aspects, (4) creating alternative methods of action, and (5) trial. The five phases can be found on the diagram below in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: The ALACT model
Source: Korthagen (1985)

In relation to critical reflection, Argyris and Schön (1976) distinguished three types of learning: (1) single-loop-, (2) double-loop, and (3) triple-loop learning. With each subsequent ‘learning loop’ the level of reflection increases. Single-loop learning is about correcting an action without examining or challenging the underlying beliefs. This first type of loop learning looks at technical and external causes. In contrast, double-loop learning also includes a process of correcting the underlying causes behind the problematic action and takes into account the cultural and internal grounds of an issue at hand. Triple-loop learning is all about the principles of asking why things are done this particular way and the role a person plays within that situation, understanding the socio-cultural context, and how a person act and reacts within these contexts.
In other words, single-loop learning looks at the ‘what’, double-loop learning looks at the ‘why’, while triple-loop learning reflects not only on the what and why of the actions, but also on the person behind the actions. Figure 2.5 depicts these processes.

**Figure 2.5: Three types of learning**
Source: Argyris and Schön (1976)

For sport management internships single-loop learning entails that an intern for example would abide the rule of not being allowed to attend a staff meeting, without question, whereas during the process of double-loop learning the intern would question or even challenge this organisational value position. In single-loop learning an intern is obeying the rules, following procedures and is complying to set values and norms, whereas in double-loop learning the intern is looking at insights and patterns and why certain procedures are followed. When the intern comes up with suggestions for changing the procedure and possibly proposes how improvements could be made, the processes of third reflective loop learning would be occurring. Third loop learning involves sharing ideas about different working methods, thinking about how improvements can be made, and what impact such changes could have on the organisation and its members.
2.4.3 Learning and critical reflection in critical theory.

In the former paragraphs critical reflection is seen as a general educational goal. Within the management education literature critical reflection is mainly a sub-discipline of CMS, which calls for a need to incorporate critical reflection within management education programs. CMS (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Cunliffe, 2004; Dehler, 2009; Fournier & Grey, 2000) is derived from critical theory that was developed by members of the Frankfurt School between 1930 and 1970. The Frankfurt School, a school of thought at the German Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, was established as a reaction to the increasing power of scientific management during those years.

The emergence of CMS in the United Kingdom (UK) happened in the early 1990s (Fournier & Grey, 2000), at a time when management and organisations possessed social and political power. CMS is dedicated to the foundations of CT, but has three distinctive starting points. The first point is a process of questioning performance measurement within management. Anti-performativity would put more emphasis on knowledge and truth rather than focusing on production, efficiency, and short term profits. The second point is to cause a transformation of mainstream management theory (with a focus on production, efficiency, and short term profits) in order to question authority. The third and last point of CMS is reflexivity, which promotes alternative ways of looking at things (Fenwick, 2005; Reedy, 2008).

Critical theory combined the radical Marxist social science with views from radical philosophers and economists (McLaughlin, 1999). During the four decades between 1930 and 1970, the autonomy of the individual, creativity, and freedom of thought were severely threatened. This threat was the main inspiration for an emerging resistance against the so-called totalitarian state (Brookfield, 2005). For Critical Theorists, capitalism was considered the root of all evil, because it made people falsely aware of the fact that complying to social norms and consumerism were the only way to survive in an advanced technological society (Agger, 1991). When management education adjoins with critical theory, it is called Critical Management Education (CME) or Critical Management Pedagogy (CMP). From a Critical Theory point of view critical reflection focuses on power or gender issues within an organisation. While these issues are indisputable part of reality it is not the purpose of this research to focus on these organisational power and gender issues.

Students will inevitably recognise power within a WIL-environment. In a WIL context, critical reflection should not be conceived as a goal, but rather as an instrument for processing experiences (Fenwick, 2005). Critical reflection is to enhance learning or
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to make students more aware of the fact those issues of power and gender imbalances or other biases exist, that these biases create difference, and most often inequity (Fox, 2009).

Jürgen Habermas (1984) made the distinction between three interrelated adult learning domains or three cognitive interests. These three learning domains or cognitive interests determine how learners acquire knowledge. First, the learning domain of technical or work knowledge refers to how someone controls and manipulates his or her own environment, which involves instrumental action (Habermas, 1984; Mezirow, 1981). Such instrumental action is based on the empirical investigation of the social and physical environments. The use of instrumental action in learning is also known as instrumental learning (Mezirow, 2003). Choices are being made rationally and the choice of strategy depends upon assessing the alternatives. This kind of task oriented problem solving provides individual learners the tools to assess how to do things in relation to our goals, beliefs, and values.

In the second learning domain of practical knowledge, information is gained by social interaction and determined by social norms and values of each of the involved stakeholders of the environment where learning takes place. Communication is an important factor within this learning domain and the use of communication for learning is therefore sometimes referred to as dialogic (Mezirow, 1981) or communicative learning (Habermas, 1984).

The third and most distinctive domain is characterised as emancipatory learning (Habermas, 1984), self-reflective learning (Mezirow, 1981) or transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1997). In emancipatory learning, knowledge is added when the concept of self-reflection is administered by the learner. In critical theory, self-reflection is seen as an interest in self-knowledge and critical self-awareness. Learners become aware of the forces that have brought them to their current position within society and are able to reflect on their own ideologies. Critical reflection promotes the questioning of the current belief systems and is seen by Gray (2007, p. 495) as a “process that mediates between experience, knowledge and action”. The last domain of self-reflective learning is of particular interest for this research, as this type of critical reflection in the domain of emancipatory knowledge, is also known as transformative learning.

2.4.4 Transformative learning and critical reflection.

As shown in the model of transformative learning theory of Mezirow (1990, 1997), the resulting process of change in a person’s frame of reference is dependent
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upon their level of ability to convert their existing frame of reference. Thus, critical reflection is inherently associated with transformative learning. This type of learning requires a change in personal norms and values or an awareness of social and organisational norms and values (Illeris, 2009). A frame of reference includes three components, a cognitive, a conative, and an emotional component. In addition to these three components, a frame of reference can occur on two levels, points of view, and the more durable and more difficult to change, habits of mind. During our lifetime our frame of reference has been shaped by a multitude of experiences. By reflecting on these experiences and transforming them into structures of assumptions, we are able to better understand and live our lives. The challenge is to change our established perspectives or assumptions by looking back at all or some of these experiences.

Becoming aware of what is reflected upon, is what Mezirow (1998) considers critical reflection. This process of being aware of our own thoughts makes learning socially and personally transformative. There are, however, some contrasting views on how this awareness can be achieved. Whereas the rational more objective process of critical reflection is important to Mezirow, Dirkx focuses on the spiritual component of transformative learning, which has a largely subjective nature, in order to fundamentally transform a frame of reference (Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006).

A premise of transformative learning theory stresses the importance of emotion in the whole learning experience. Research by Taylor (2007) and Illeris (2009) recognised the need for both personal and sociocultural contextual experiences in transformative learning. They further acknowledged the need for undertaking more research to investigate critical reflection within other settings, such as those in WIL-environments. Choy (2009) and Roussel (2014) argued the context is much higher in these environments such as the occurrence of ambiguity, constant change, and of confusion, compared to more formal educational settings which are more structured and uniform. The learning contexts in WIL are more informal, that is they are less controlled by the educator or instructor and more inclined to change due to external influences (e.g., pressure of other market competitors, demographic changes, dissatisfied customers) (Berings et al., 2006; Marsick & Watkins, 2003).

Though the context is more complex in WIL than in the SBL-environment, Marsick (1988) warns the workplace is certainly not the easiest environment for critical reflection. In WIL, students must learn how to relate to the organisation. In a similar way that transformative learning is an attempt to establish a transfer of information from
theory to practice within the individual, transformative learning can also be applied to the transfer from individual learning to social learning and vice versa.

To complement the main theoretical framework of social constructivism, transformative learning theory as defined by Mezirow (2003) and social learning theory as outlined by Bandura (1977) will be drawn upon in this thesis, as they are related to social constructivism. These theories contribute to the meaning making processes and acknowledge the importance of the sociocultural contexts (Billett, 2013; Choy, 2009) that are the essence of critical reflection. Social learning theory emphasises the influence of role model learning (Bandura, 1977; Hanna, Crittenden, & Crittenden, 2013). Hanna et al. (2013) showed that role models such as WIL-supervisors at the workplace reinforce their displayed behaviour in students as a result of model learning. So, when WIL-supervisors have a strong commitment towards critical reflection, this commitment has a positive effect on the students in displaying a similar commitment. Transformative learning emphasises the responsibility of an individual to transform their own frame of reference as a result of their interaction with the sociocultural environment (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008). Both social learning theory and transformative learning acknowledge the mutual interdependency between the environment and the individual.

### 2.5 The Learning Environment

Learning takes place through everyday activities and always occurs in ways that are embedded in the context and through participation with other individuals (Billett, 2010). Learning in practice or in a workplace setting is one of the key concepts of the social constructivist paradigm, because this type of synergistic (e.g., learning and working) environment is more likely to provide the necessary social, cultural, and political influences. One of the characteristics of WIL is the creation of these real life problems and the merging of the theoretical knowledge into practice (Sluijsmans et al., 2008). The extent of merging or transfer of learning will vary depending on the environment in which the learning takes place (Roussel, 2014). Social constructivist views have argued that facilitating critical reflection in WIL-environments could prove to be more suitable for assessing and developing the ability to critically reflect in an organisational context rather than in a school-based environment. When viewed from a perspective of critical theory, power structures are more likely to be felt or be experienced in the broad range of environments that can be found in the workplace, where a student is part of a team, than in a relatively clearly defined, individualised
educational setting. Students are more prone to encounter a number of social or political power structures in the real world (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Fox, 2009).

The difference between formal learning and informal learning, and also the difference between individual learning and social learning are described in the following sections. In addition the complementary nature of these different types of learning in organisational settings is explained. Clarifying the types of learning is important as they are used to form the definition of critical reflection used in this thesis (see section 2.8).

Intentional or formal learning is still one of the main objectives in vocational or higher education (Tynjälä, 2008). Many of the learning processes in formal types of learning are explicit, intended and goal-oriented. In formal education students at these institutions are mostly aware of the fact they are expected to learn (Høyrup, 2004). Although currently courses in formal settings are more contextualised and include extensive periods of supervised work experience, a gap remains between learning as a student and learning as a practitioner. This gap cannot adequately be addressed by formal coursework (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Learning in vocational or higher education is formal learning, with pre-determined or desired outcomes. One of the characteristics of formal or intentional learning is that this type of learning mainly targets the development of explicit knowledge or focuses on the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practice (Aarkrog, 2005).

Informal learning mainly produces implicit knowledge. For example, when a student gains new knowledge and reflects on this knowledge, implicit means it is not made explicit and shared with others. Perhaps a student has questions about a particular situation during the WIL-experience, but when these questions remain implicit, the student is left with his own feelings and possible doubts about the issue as these questions are not shared with other member of the organisation. Within the context of WIL, learning in the workplace takes place in a more non-intentional or informal way (Berings et al., 2006; Marsick & Watkins, 2003). At the same time, learning in the workplace is often ill-planned, not intentional, nor highly conscious (Berings et al., 2006), although such claims are often based on assumptions and premises found within an educational paradigm that wholly misunderstands and misrepresents workplace settings as learning environments (Billett, 2002). It is the researcher’s view that in most learning environments features of formality and informality will be present, and that one
The place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum

cannot do without the other. Additionally, these processes of learning will occur
differently depending on the diverse levels within the organisation, such as the
individuals, group members, networks, affiliates, and associated organisations (Tynjälä,
2008). Both types of learning will not always be evenly represented or even be present
for that matter.

Despite the view that informal learning is more difficult to measure or to assess
compared to formal learning (Harreveld, 2010), there is much to expect from informal
learning on the job, socially, or through dialogue when implicit knowledge becomes
explicit (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Hence, learning at the workplace, whether it is
informal or formal seems to have great potential. This calls for an approach that fosters
learning in the workplace rather than one relying on the transfer of school-based
learning as an efficient tool for developing professional skills (Van Woerkom et al.,
2002).

An overview of the differences between formal and informal learning can be
found in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Differences between formal learning and informal workplace learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning in formal education</th>
<th>Learning in the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Intentional (+ unintentional)</td>
<td>• Unintentional (+ intentional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prescribed by formal curriculum, competency standards, etc</td>
<td>• Usually no formal curriculum or prescribed outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Un-contextualised-characterised by symbol manipulation</td>
<td>• Contextual-characterised by contextual reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focused on mental activities</td>
<td>• Focused on tool use + mental activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produces explicit knowledge and generalised skills</td>
<td>• Produces implicit and tacit knowledge and situation-specific competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning outcomes predictable</td>
<td>• Learning outcomes less predictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasis on teaching and content of teaching</td>
<td>• Emphasis on work and experiences based on learner as a worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual</td>
<td>• Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theory and practice traditionally separated</td>
<td>• Seamless know-how, practical wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separation of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>• Competencies treated holistically, no distinction between knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The learning settings of SBL and WIL are seen as complementary in this thesis
as there are potential benefits that can be expected from learning in both educational and
practice settings (Aarkrog, 2005). When both environments are combined learning is
enhanced. However, the advancement made here that the interplay between these two environments and various forms of learning can only be beneficial when learners critically reflect on their experiences, is central to this thesis.

Apart from realising that learning occurs on a formal level and on an informal level, learning can also be distinguished as individual learning and social learning. Education or a formally organised learning program is primarily concerned with providing students with a formal qualification at the end of their studies. In formal programs students are predominantly assessed on their individual performance (Doornbos, Simons, & Denessen, 2008; Tynjälä, 2008), because in the end it will be the individual student who will receive a certificate, diploma or a degree. This kind of learning can be seen as predominantly individual learning because the result is personal growth and development. Learning at the individual level has been a main focus point for psychologists, linguists, and educators (Kim, 1993). Gray (2007) considered reflecting on experiences and prior knowledge as a form of individual development.

In a WIL-environment, students are part of an organisation that is concerned about the sustainability of organisational productivity or performance. The effort of all individuals (e.g., employees, interns, or apprentices) in an organisation will most likely determine whether the organisation as a whole will continue to be sustainable. In other words, organisations expect these individuals work together in order to contribute to the overall organisational goals (Doornbos et al., 2008). In short, this working together as a team, sharing and discussing ideas, and providing feedback to each other are considered examples of social learning.

For adult learners, individual learning through educational programs often takes place in formal settings, such as vocational and higher education institutions. As Billett (2010) noted,

However, it is important to be reminded that the range of experiences and activities occurs outside of educational programs, and many of our requirements for effective life-long learning cannot be realised through educational provisions, or even direct teaching. That is, there is much knowledge that has to be learnt and not taught. (p. 403)

This statement highlights that both learning in a theoretical environment and learning in a practical work environment complement one another. As Billett (2010)
further acknowledges, critical reflection remains an essential component of that so-called agentic life-long learning. In theories of adult learning, critical reflection is considered to be a link between the individual theoretical setting and the social practical surroundings of an organisation. Sometimes students will use the practical learning experience in a formal setting; that is, at the workplace they will have to transform theoretical knowledge and make it more applied. Individual learning and social learning will change according to the changing needs and contexts.

It is anticipated that an organisation that fosters critical reflection and is more interested in the long term goals than short term profit making, will be more receptive to critically reflective students or employees. Managers who lead organisations and who encourage individuals to be conscious and autonomous in their decision making processes should be able to facilitate the process of making the shift from individual to social learning within the organisation. Within an organisational climate in which social learning is found to be important by its individual members, reflection is no longer the process of an individual but rather it is a process of an entire organisation (Gray, 2007; Vince, 2002). Rather than acting as separate types of learning, individual and social learning will therefore be a joint venture and will complement each other.

It should be noted, that these processes take time and effort (Kerno & Mace, 2010), and are highly dependent on organisational hierarchies and sociocultural characteristics (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Roberts, 2006) such as the learning transfer climate within an organisation. It is essential to recognise learning is composed by individuals through their experiences and is influenced by their social interactions, and can be regarded as a dynamic interplay (Wenger, 2000) between individual learning and social learning within a certain context. Van Woerkom et al. (2002) found that by critically reflecting in a work environment, the individual and social (Van Woerkom called it organisational) aspects of learning contribute to Human Resource Development (HRD), because they have a relationship with the individual and the organisational performance (Knipfer et al., 2012; Van Woerkom, 2004). On the one hand, the dimensions of experimenting, asking for feedback, and career awareness (Van Woerkom & Croon, 2008) are considered as contributing to individual learning and performance. On the other hand, dimensions such as critical opinion-sharing, openness about mistakes, and challenging groupthink awareness (Van Woerkom & Croon, 2008) are part of social learning and performance (Knipfer, et al., 2012).
The influence of social learning and the role of reflection within the organisation suggest an individual student will have to adapt to the organisational environment in which he or she makes meaning of the experiences. The main concern for education (theory) and industry (practice) is how individual learning is transferred to the organisation (Kim, 1993). All organisations are composed of individuals. All individuals learn, so organisations become learning organisations. It is a fact that organisations learn and develop through their individual members or employees (Kim, 1993). However, social learning is much more than the sum of the individual learning, as there are multi-levelled processes involved. The few empirical studies into the relationship of learning and (critical) reflection (Leung & Kember, 2003), and the relationship between critical reflection and the quality of performance in practice, indicate there is a strong association between these concepts (Elsayed, Sleem, & Elsayed, 2011). Hence the individual and social dimensions of critical reflection are the basis of the current research; taking into account the contextual background in which critical reflection happens.

2.6 Learning in Organisational Settings

Aside from the fact that learning is considered to be predominately informal or formal and consists of the dimensions of individual or social learning, learning in organisational settings is inherently contextual. Learning is contextual because a workplace environment is not for all learners the same. Learners come from different age groups, with different educational and professional credentials, and experiences. Furthermore, each organisation has its own working and learning culture (Tynjälä, 2008). Together these contextual elements have a large influence on how work is organised and how learning (transfer) occurs in organisational settings (Tynjälä, 2008).

The need for employees to be pro-active, innovative, and flexible in their thinking and practice is one of the requirements (Høyrup, 2004) for an organisation if it is to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive and continually changing business environment. In order to adapt to this challenging situation of discontinuous change, companies heavily invest in creating a learning organisational culture (Joo & Lim, 2009; Kontoghiorghes, 2014; Lim & Nowell, 2014; Roussel, 2014). A learning organisation is defined as an organisation that constantly improves itself by promoting and facilitating its members to develop and to share knowledge through a collaborative

*Literature review*  46
learning process (Joo & Shim, 2010; Lim & Nowell, 2014). Three main factors need to be addressed through this collaborative process in order to maximise the potential for learning transfer to occur for employees and interns in WIL: the design of (vocational) training, the characteristics of the learners involved, and the organisational learning transfer climate (Lim & Nowell, 2014). This learning transfer climate is dependent upon several components, such as opportunity to learn, ability to perform, as well as supervisor and peer support (Lim & Nowell, 2014; Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Schippers, Den Hartog, and Koopman (2007) stated that team reflexivity is an important cornerstone of effective and fruitful organisations. By reflecting upon themselves, teams become more effective. Hence, they become a key element in a learning organisation.

Not all organisations recognise critical reflection as an important cornerstone. When productivity and results are the primary purpose, critical reflection is seen as intangible (Marsick, 1988), soft, and irrelevant (Van Woerkom, 2004). Many businesses remain reliant on the bottom line of making short term profits and consequently neglecting the influence of intangible factors such as goodwill, commitment of staff to the organisation, and independent thinking on longer term productivity (Marsick, 1988). In addition, there is little room for innovation when an organisation has constricted job descriptions, restricted or inflexible procedures, or is managed from the top-down. If this is the case, it would most likely impair an organisational learning culture (Aarkrog, 2005).

For leaders of an organisation with the intention of growing into a learning organisation, this process of transfer from individual learning to social learning is a small but crucial part. Researchers who advocate that (workplace) learning requires critical reflection indicate that a model of workplace learning in an organisation should not be a mechanistic behavioural one (Marsick, 1988). Within this so-called technical paradigm, where the bottom line of an organisation is productivity and results, education consists of the transmission of pre-defined knowledge and skills. Carr and Kemmis (as cited in Marsick, 1988) advocated a paradigm shift towards an interpretative or a strategic paradigm. In the interpretative paradigm, the focus of learning is on comprehension of the meaning of experiences through a process of interaction. The manner in which the individual interacts with the social environment and other influences is significant. The strategic paradigm is influenced by Habermas’s (1984) critical social science. In such a paradigm the key for the organisation is to be
aware of the fact that its individuals are highly influenced by social, cultural, and historical forces, and norms that emanate from within that organisation. As a result, a learning transfer can only be realised by integrating social learning and learning for personal growth (individual learning). Ji Hoon and Chermack (2008) see individual learning as the agent of the social learning process.

The interpretive and strategic paradigms also correspond to Mezirow’s three domains of learning. The social learning dimensions of critical reflection contribute to the critical participation in a particular WIL-environment, as a result of personal identity development (Ten Dam & Volman, 2004) within that environment, as this identity development cultivates greater inter-personal skills, inter-cultural skills, and ethical sensitivity (Zlotkowski, as cited in Seider, Gillmor, & Rabinowicz, 2011). Within these organisational learning settings the perception is that employees will share newly developed techniques and innovative ideas with others within the organisation. As work constantly provides new challenges or is managed from the bottom-up, it will offer numerous new learning opportunities (Tynjälä, 2008). When learning is indeed one of the main motivations of an organisation, many authors (Cheetham & Chivers, 1998; Gartmeier, Kipfmueller, Gruber, & Heid, 2008; Ten Dam & Volman, 2004) have regarded critical reflection as a fundamental competence for learning; both for individual learning and social learning, and as a driving force for organisational best practice (Knipfer et al., 2012).

Both vocational and higher education programs offer their students work-based experience. These WIL-experiences differ in the way they are offered, in their duration, and in the methods of assessment. More information about the structure of work integrated learning is to be found in Chapter 3, section 3.3. It is theorised, with regard to the previous mentioned perceptions of individual and social learning, both educators and workplace supervisors should be aware of the various connections between both types of learning. Educators and workplace supervisors should also realise, that critical reflection provides all learners with a deepened understanding of how and why things are done in a certain way, and the values that behaviour reflects. Brown and Starkey (2000) advocated critical reflection as a fundamental task for (sport) managers intending to create a learning organisation identity. The result is an organisation that is self-reflective and intelligent, and strong enough to keep up with potential organisational changes (Brown & Starkey, 2000).
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In all, the development of socio-cultural sensitivity within the field of sport management requires employees who are ground-breaking and creative (Høyrup, 2004). It is therefore important for students to be aware (by reflecting critically) of this duality: learning in WIL as a student and performing in WIL as an employee (or contribute to the organisational outcomes as a student).

WIL-environments accommodate the demand of employers for motivated student workers and the need of education for the development of competences in work settings (Martin & Hughes, 2009). The ability to identify underlying organisational values, independent thinking, commitment, an understanding of personal relationships, along with the ability to identify productive and alternative ways of becoming better organised in the workplace are important competences in organisations (Bierema, 2002; Marsick, 1988). The similarity of this series of points is that only by critically reflecting on these matters will students become aware they have to play an active role within the organisation if they are to contribute to their own learning and to that of others.

Students in the final stages of their education need to take control of their own level of employability. One of the reasons articulated in educational outcomes is that students are expected to be work-ready by the end of their education. They are considered to be on the cusp of becoming a professional worker and finding a job. Jobs are not a certainty in today’s society and regardless, there is an expectation that students and newly graduated job seekers will want to find a job. Students need to exercise agency in their work and working lives because the nature of work is constantly changing. Moreover, simply having a degree does not guarantee a job because employers expect more than technical know-how and cognitive skills (Tomlinson, 2008). To maximise the opportunity for finding a suitable job, students need to be responsible for their thinking and their actions (Hendry, 2006).

Apart from being knowledgeable about their career options, some people in the industry and in educational institutions would hold that such learners need to contribute pro-actively and constructively to society and in the work environment. They should also know when to be critically reflective. In addition, with regard to work purposes, they need to know when it is appropriate or not appropriate to be critical of the culture and procedures within an organisation. Students need to be aware of and to learn the social and political structures within the organisation. Critical reflection could help
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students to realise what role their self-image, self-control, and self-esteem plays within the whole concept of individual and organisational identity awareness (Berings et al., 2006; Brown & Starkey, 2000; Gray, 2007). Students need to realise that learning and creating new knowledge and possibilities is not only dependent upon their involvement, but on other factors, such as the nature of the organisation in which they are participating (Tynjälä, 2008).

Neither individual nor social learning does not always occur automatically. It might well be that a student in a WIL-environment is not receptive to the potential learning situation. For learning to become effective, an individual needs to reassess new experiences and acquired knowledge, and to understand the social and cultural norms (Habermas, 1984). Again, without (critical) reflection, a situation of non-learning or non-reflective learning will occur. In this case, learning will not happen as the mental models of an individual, the meaning-making processes within a person’s mind, has not been modified (Gray, 2007). It is important to take into account limitations that internal and external factors pose on critical reflection and learning.

2.7 The Barriers for Critical Reflection and Learning

The literature reviewed suggests there is no negative side to critical reflection. It appears that every individual and organisation would applaud the use of processes of critical reflection as they can elevate learning (Brookfield, 2009). However, when critically reflective processes are not skilfully managed, the process can also create barriers for the individual that can potentially threaten the organisation’s cohesive identity. Not every stakeholder in WIL wants to or is able to act critically, nor is this position always appreciated. To some people critical reflection is about being negative. To others, the word critical in critical reflection is reflected in the spirit of CMS; questioning power structures within organisations or questioning gender issues. Moreover, learning does not always happen as it is intended. Both learning and critical reflection are subject to various internal and external factors that can make it complicated to comprehend or to control (Illeris, 2009).

Apart from multiple forms of intelligence (Gardner, 1985, 1999; Gardner & Hatch, 1989) and individual learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Kolb, 1984) other individual features such as age and gender have an influence on learning opportunities (Illeris, 2009). Aspects of learning such as being receptive to the potential learning environment or being relevant to the learner when they are acquiring or constructing
new knowledge are all part of the internal processes. It could also be that the potential learning situation is mentally or physically too demanding for the learner, too confronting or too overwhelming (Illeris, 2009). Especially when individuals think they have a lesser cognitive or emotional intelligence, or have less practical work experience than someone else, students may feel as if they lack the maturity, experience, or knowledge, to engage in critical reflection. The perception not to be on the same level as the more experienced colleagues, and therefore not worthy to be (critically) reflective, is mostly the case when a student is introduced into a new learning environment of the WIL-organisation (Brookfield, 2009).

The learning theory in communities of practice introduced by Lave and Wenger (as cited in Aarkrog 2005), focuses on the role of the student as a newcomer in an organisation. Here, the organisation is identified as a “community of practice”. Wenger (2006) defines a community of practice as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1). According to this theory, learning, and therefore critical reflection, is seen as interactive participation in and for the organisation. For newcomers to become accepted by the members of the “established” environment, they need to adapt or develop matching frames of reference. In other words, they need to become aware of the unwritten norms and values of the workplace. Furthermore, Lave and Wenger’s theory (1991) states that learning, and hence critical reflection, is dependent on and limited to the norms and values of the organisation, and of that particular community of practice within the organisation. These organisational norms and values can be considered as part of the external factors that influence learning.

Learning at college or university occurs in a different community of practice than the community of practice of the WIL-environment (Light & Nash, 2006). The differences in the two environments (SBL and WIL) make it difficult to transfer previously learned skills and understandings into another community of practice. As a result, the specificity of the learning environment limits the possibilities for learning in that particular context (Aarkrog, 2005). This specificity of the environment is not necessarily a disadvantage, as the context also depends on the uniqueness of the particular WIL-environment. Students have to deal with situations they have not anticipated or learned in a formal, theoretical, educational environment or even in simulated practice, and thus prior learning can be insufficient or difficult to transfer.

When students remain unsure whether to speak up or be critically reflective in a new environment they will first try to adapt to the community of practice and will try to
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fit in. Once included in the group, team, or community of practice, they will become more self-confident. However, when the individual student does speak up and tries to challenge groupthink, the danger of being excluded from the group is apparent.

The fear of being excluded from the peer group is the threat critical learners perceive when they question conventional assumptions or agreed upon social and cultural norms. Critically reflective learners can be considered as a threat to the existing frames of reference (Brookfield, 2009). They can be excluded socially from the group and be seen as troublemakers. The danger of challenging the dominant paradigm within an organisation is a risky business. When questioning authority or the status quo, not only can one be considered a threat to colleagues, but also to one’s supervisor (Dehler, 2009).

It is sometimes hard for students to act critically. The awareness or notion that you are, seemingly, the only person that realises what’s going on in an organisation or that things can be arranged differently is difficult. The initial enthusiasm for the prospect of changing things for the better is diminished (Dehler, 2009) when confronted with the above negative reactions such as being considered a threat to others by peers (e.g., within a formal setting or at a WIL-environment). It is therefore important for students who just started their WIL-experience to find peers who share the same critical attitude. Many people do not disclose their beliefs and values and are afraid to question the agreed upon norms and values (Schön, 1983), for fear of being expelled from the community.

This social pressure within a learning community can impose a passive conformity on each member of the organisation. Conversely, the outcome of avoiding uncertainty and problems as a result of innovative learning can result in a conservative learning process. For the individual student it is important to be strong and confident when being critically reflective. The previously mentioned barriers are an illustration that emotional, social, and cultural aspects of learning cannot be ignored when investigating critical reflection. It is important to continuously take a critical stance toward the entire research process.

2.8 (Re) defining Critical Reflection

The former statements about learning (theories), reflection, critical reflection, and terms alike clearly indicate that accepting the view of interpreting critical reflection as only a cognitive skill would be taking too narrow a view. Whether the concept of critical reflection is looked at from a cognitive, educational, pedagogical, philosophical,
or emancipatory point of view, the general consensus is that in order to learn, to change, to transform, to adapt, or to assimilate, a person has to become aware and thus critically reflect on experiences within the context in which learning takes place. Moreover, any change that occurs should be initiated by the person. Existing literature supports the view that critical reflection involves cognitive, dispositional, and metacognitive components (Brookfield, 2009; Facione, 2007; Mezirow, 1990).

The above concepts cannot be seen as separate entities; rather, they are all interrelated and complement each other. However, the various types of reflection should not be treated as equally significant. It is important to recognise there are important differences between the types (Taylor, 2007). By recognising the differences, educators and instructors can and should adapt the teaching and learning strategies they apply towards a more student centred learning approach, rather than a teacher centred learning approach. Considering the different meanings and contexts from which critical reflection can be interpreted, the definition for critical reflection in this thesis will be:

*Critical reflection is a learning process through which one is able to apply skills, attitudes, knowledge, experiences, and dispositions in order to critically assess one’s existing frames of reference, which fosters individual and social learning, and contributes to organisational norm and values.*

The last part of this definition emphasises that in a work context critical reflection should strive to make a contribution to the overall organisational norms and values. Therefore, critical reflection in this thesis is defined as an interaction between individual learning and social or collective learning through the environment of WIL. In turn, critical reflection is considered as a catalyst for organisational learning (Høyrup, 2004; Knipfer et al., 2012).

### 2.9 Summary

The review of the research literature has identified that there is sufficient potential for the use and development of critical reflection in relation to learning in a WIL-environment for students. As learning in WIL occurs within a highly contextual social environment, the use of critical reflection is seen through the dominant paradigm of social constructivism. Rather than focussing on the individual learning aspects of critical reflection, it is essential that the social aspects of learning are included.
Critically assessing one’s existing frames of reference and becoming aware of one’s individual needs as well as taking into consideration the norms and values of the organisation is a recognised process of critical reflection. Various theories of learning in relation to critical reflection have been highlighted by the researcher in this chapter. Transformative learning was considered the highest level of learning. Transformative learning requires a change in personal norms and values or an awareness of social and organisational norms and values. Sport management students need to be conscious of the fact that learning in organisational (WIL) -settings requires a shift from the individual aspects of critical reflection to the social aspects of critical reflection in order to gain contextual awareness.
3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the contextual framework and explains how the vocational sport management program and WIL are organised in the Netherlands. Dutch competence based education is described in the first section. An overview of the number of hours of work experience required in WIL, the way a contract between the stakeholders is set up, and what is expected of a student in WIL regarding curriculum related assignments within WIL is presented in the following section. A description of the related job profiles and insights into who are the (in) direct responsible stakeholders of Dutch vocational sport management education, how the qualification structure within vocational sport management education is organised, and what is required of a vocational sport manager in practice is provided in the last section. A visual impression of the contextual review can be found in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Contextual review topics
3.1.1 The learning context.

The context in which learning takes place (e.g., WIL) plays an important role in how students shape their learning process. Critical reflection is considered to have a considerable impact on the value of work placement in an organisation by not only enhancing students’ learning and skills acquisition, their short term career and employability prospects, but also the worth of employee performance and related organisational outcomes for the WIL-organisation. To enhance the employability of junior and senior students in a theory-to-practice pathway (Calibris, Kenwerk, & Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven, 2012), WIL is said to integrate the learned theory and practice acquired in formal educational settings into the situational contextual environments of the industry (Schaap et al., 2012).

The context in which students need to perform their internship is therefore a complex one. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the context of WIL and illustrates the areas where students need to navigate the landscape between the expectations of two different, but ultimately complimentary environments, each with its own set of characteristics (see Chapter 2, Table 2.1).

![Figure 3.2: The context of WIL](image)
Both of the learning environments (SBL-environment and WIL-environment) within the context of WIL provide opportunities for learning in different settings and with different objectives in which critical reflection remains fundamental (Cheetham & Chivers, 1998; Gartmeier et al., 2008; Ten Dam & Volman, 2004) for a student’s individual and social learning.

Learning at school is more formal and individual, while learning in practice is more informal and social. Furthermore, learning in practice is more contextual and is more likely to foster the awareness of contextual differences for a student’s employability. Finally, within a workplace environment, students encounter more social, cultural, and political organisational differences than in their school-based environment. In order to prepare students to better deal with these contextual differences, competence based education has gained popularity within vocational education in western society.

3.2 Competence Based Education

The concept of developing competencies in education has been embraced across numerous countries (e.g., USA, Australia, and Europe) because many stakeholders within Vocational Education and Training (VET) have the expectation that this type of education will diminish the gap between the labour market and education (Biemans, Nieuwenhuis, Poell, Mulder, & Wesselink, 2004). It is believed that this type of education will better align teaching, learning, and assessment, as already promoted by Biggs in 1996.

The focus on the development of capabilities deemed to be essential to perform well after graduation in the industry and in adult life instead of just acquiring a qualification has also gained popularity in the Netherlands. To prepare students for a changing economy and to make the transition from education to work as smooth as possible, the Dutch government demanded a change in education programs. From 2010 onwards it has been mandatory for the VET system in the Netherlands to offer CBE. This change to CBE poses some challenges to educators and curriculum developers who are used to offering programs in a more conventional way in which knowledge and skills transition are presented in isolation. Despite the fact sport management programs in vocational institutions are already offered in a more contextual environment and the current WIL-component is relatively large, competence based assessment procedures are falling behind (Baartman et al., 2007).
Theories of CBE suggest the use of assessment procedures for the processes of learning, but assessment of learning outcomes is still the dominant theory-in-use (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). Only superficial changes have occurred in VET since the introduction of CBE (Wesselink et al., as cited in Mulder, Weigel, & Collins, 2007). As a result, teaching is still for assessment rather than teaching for learning (Birenbaum et al., as cited in Baartman et al., 2007). Assessment procedures should reflect the integration of skills, knowledge, and attitudes, which is a key goal of CBE. According to Mulder, Weigel, and Collins (2007), skills can be defined as functional competence, knowledge can be described as cognitive competence, and attitudes and behaviour can be seen as social competence. The central criticism of the use of competence as an educational outcome is that the danger is there is too much emphasis on competencies. When this situation of overemphasising competencies occurs, the knowledge component in programs becomes neglected and rather than integrating the components, there is a tendency by curriculum developers to again divide the elements of skill, knowledge, and attitudes for students. This tendency for separation by curriculum developers is a reaction on the difficulty of integrating the different components in competence based assessment. In addition, there is a very uneasy relationship between a historically based behavioural approach to organising, promoting, and assessing learning, such as the approach taken in Anglo-Saxon CBE, and a critically reflective approach that is advocated for example in Germany and the Netherlands (Biemans et al., 2004).

The Dutch CBE claims to have a more holistic approach to competence than its counterparts in The UK or Australia (Biemans et al., 2004). This holistic approach refers to the practice of looking at the learning process of an individual emphasising the importance of the whole process rather than by separating the process into isolating parts. The holistic way regards learning not merely to be the result of knowledge construction at a cognitive level, but involves the integration of the entire person such as feelings, beliefs, and consciousness within a social and cultural context. Learning arises from a transactional process between the individual and the environment (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). Therefore, concepts of Dutch CBE align with notions of social constructivism, life-long learning, employability, the role of self-responsibility critical reflection, and learning in a WIL-environment (Biemans et al., 2004; Wesselink, de Jong, & Biemans, 2010).
3.3 Work Integrated Learning

In the Netherlands, SBL is combined with an extensive part of WIL (Schaap et al., 2012) and as a result of this integration the WIL-experience for students has been legally assigned a major role in the vocational sport management curriculum in the Netherlands (Schaap et al., 2012). This legislation means that students are required to spend at least one fifth of their learning experience in the industry through actual placement on the work floor.

It is important to understand how placement in practice in a Dutch WIL-context is organised because the context influences how critical reflection is valued.

3.3.1 WIL in the Netherlands: a historical overview.

The implementation of the Act on Vocational and Adult Education (WEB in Dutch) in 1995 in the Netherlands by the Ministry of Education created an integrated system of senior secondary vocational education (MBO in Dutch). The result was a fusion of approximately 400 small separate vocational schools into about 40 large regional VET-centres (ROC’s in Dutch). The fusion of schools led to the formation of one system, in which school-based VET and apprenticeship was combined. The WEB governs the amount of time required for workplace learning linked with four different levels and pathways within the courses. As a result, two main learning pathways exist within the national qualification structure for vocational education. The school-based pathway accounts for 20-60% of workplace learning of the total number of hours during the entire program. The work-based pathway accounts for a minimum of 60% of workplace learning of the total number of hours. The main difference between the two pathways, apart from the percentage of time spent in practice, is that the work-based pathway involves an employment contract between the student and the host organisation. It has to be noted (Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010) that in some circumstances, when students perform well in WIL, they are offered a limited employment contract during a school-based pathway. There are no clear differences in learning processes or learning outcomes between the two pathways (Poortman, 2007).

Both pathways require a partnership between the ROC and the (possible future) employer, with both parties sharing responsibility for training, supervising, and assessing the learning outcomes for students. The VET institute is responsible for the realisation of the contract and the assessment of learning outcomes. The work experience provider is responsible for offering a learning environment and to provide a
The place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum

supervisor who coaches the student during the placement of half-a-year and on occasion up to two years. WIL-supervisors need to agree to monitor and communicate with the school about the student’s performance. WIL-supervisors assess the students on the basis of their professional approach, commitment, communication, and planning skills during the students’ time in WIL. The ROC is required to visit the organisation and assure that the work experience has a strong link with the vocational curriculum.

Educators within SBL are responsible for supporting students to acquire prerequisite knowledge and skills. The role of educators within WIL is to guide, assess, and mentor students during their WIL-experience and discuss their experiences at the institution in order to develop their critically reflective attitude (Bay & Macfarlane, 2010). Sharing work and learning experiences with fellow students also takes place in the SBL-environment. For example, what students might have experienced as difficult, challenging, worthwhile or helpful at the workplace is discussed in the classroom among fellow students and guided by the educator. These sessions to discuss and share workplace experiences of students are intended to facilitate multiple views on a particular subject. Listening to other students’ perspectives on an issue could potentially lead to an individual student’s solution of a problematic experience in WIL or a better understanding of what is required from students by WIL-supervisors.

It has been established the WIL-environment offers the student a different perspective and a more realistic picture of the potential complexity of the future job (Baartman & Ruijs, 2011) than the school environment because of the intricacies of the range of social, cultural, and political factors associated with professional practice. However, undergoing the WIL-experience does not necessarily guarantee students will learn to put theory into practice, and will gain new knowledge and a deeper understanding of their emotions, or that they will contribute in any meaningful way to the organisation.

To enhance the transfer between theory and practice more is needed than simply offering students a WIL-experience. WIL-supervisors and educators implicitly expect students to develop a critically reflective approach to facilitate the following outcomes: development of continuous individual learning, contribution to the sport organisation in which students perform their WIL, and demonstration of individual and collective benefits for other employees in the organisation of their future employ (Hodkinson et al., 2008). The argument is that critical reflection is more than just applying rational thinking strategies, merely for the purpose of one individual. Critical reflection is a process of connecting new meanings to experiences and understanding the context of
new communities of practice. Such context is ineradicably social and critical reflection therefore relates to broader processes like social learning, contextualisation, and socialisation. As a result, critical reflection incorporates dimensions of individual and social learning, specifically in a WIL-environment. Hence, these dimensions of critical reflection are linked to the current thesis.

3.3.2 WIL in vocational sport management programs

Educational institutes with a large component of workplace experience in their curriculum are looking for ways to enhance the transfer of learned theory into practice. The emphasis in (higher) vocational programs has been on developing and sustaining transferable skills across the curriculum in order to deliver work-ready graduates (Fallows & Steven, 2000). Within the vocational sport management program students are expected to perform tasks within the WIL-context that are compulsory components of the curriculum. This expectation means that what is taught and learned in an SBL-environment should be aligned with the tasks students have to perform within the environment of the workplace.

WIL-supervisors assess these tasks and report back to school about the progress that is being made by the student during and at the end of the internship. Students are expected to prepare, coordinate, execute, and evaluate a large sport event and various smaller events within the host organisation. To accomplish these sport events, often students will have to liaise with regional and national sporting bodies, prepare a communication plan, or supervise volunteers. There is a strong alignment between the WIL-organisation involved and the sport management curriculum because the student performs the work in the field and the assessment of learning and work contributes to the required curriculum outcomes.

In general, competencies (elements of competence) are requirements set by professional practice (Biemans et al., 2009) or in this case the possible future employers. As discussed previously, the possible future employers host the students within their organisation so it becomes a work-learning environment. Despite the fact the work, and learning experience is described as integrated, it should be noted that the integration, in agreement with Cooper et al. (2010), may be more aspired to than existent. It might be more accurate to talk about alignment rather than integration. For the student, the placement in WIL is usually one to three days a week for a period of half a year up to one year. In most cases students commit themselves to perform their
WIL-experience for a year. In their junior year, which is the third year in the four-year sport management program, students perform their WIL for one to two days a week for a year. Senior students are required to complete two to three days a week in their final year of the program. In some cases students remain and complete their entire internship at the same WIL-organisation for a second consecutive year. Such an arrangement for students to perform an internship for two years with the same WIL-organisation is often the result of a satisfying performance of a student’s initial period of internship at the organisation. Some students may find paid, unpaid, or partially paid employment with the organisations in which they conduct their learning at the workplace. However, most times these employment contracts are for various operational tasks within the organisation such as teaching sport classes rather than sport management related tasks. Nonetheless, employing students during their internship can be a significant benefit to the (possible) future employer as experienced students often need little or no training when they begin regular employment. During the four years of training in the sport management curriculum there is an increasing amount of time that is spent on workplace experience. As pointed out in section 3.3.1, legally the WIL (i.e. placement in industry) component within a vocational full-time sport management program can vary between 20% and 60% of the total number of hours of the four-year program. Each sport management college can decide how the number of hours of workplace experience is divided over the four years, as long as the workplace experience remains between the minimum of 20% and maximum of 60% of the total number of hours. Table 3.1 on the next page provides an overview of the contact hours (SBL and WIL) and self-study hours of a sport management program at one of the participating colleges in the research, which is representative for other institutions that offer a similar sport management program in the Netherlands.
Table 3.1: Overview of hours of a vocational sport management program (in SBL and WIL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact hours (supervision and assessment)</td>
<td>1. School-based Learning (SBL) (total number of hours which is dedicated to learn activities including supervision and assessment).</td>
<td>760*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) (total number of hours spent in the workplace including supervision and assessment)</td>
<td>190*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-study hours (at home)</td>
<td>3. Total number of hours spent for self-study.</td>
<td>650*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>1600*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= ranges of hours, can differ per educational institute, in this table these are precise figures of one particular institute

**=precise number of hours, legally required

On average students enrolled in a four year vocational sport management program spend between 35-40 % of the total number of hours of the four-year program in an SBL-environment (at the institution), 20-25% of the total number of hours of the program in a WIL-environment (at the workplace), and about 40% of the total number of hours of the program is dedicated to self-study (for example at home). Students in their introductory year of study in these programs are required to spend about 100-200 hours in work related sport practices. For example as a referee in a sport tournament organised by a local sport organisation or assisting staff at a major sport event like the
European Gymnastics Championships. Each year a student progresses through the program the number of hours in WIL increases. Formal contracts need to be signed by the student, their educational institution, and the supervising organisation. A company wishing to be accredited as a WIL-organisation, must fulfil the conditions laid down in formal regulations for accreditation by Calibris, the national controlling body for the sport sector in the Netherlands. Once a company has been officially accredited, it is included on the register of accredited work placement companies. A full-time vocational sport management program in the Netherlands consists out of 1600 hours of training per year. Sport management students are required (within their second, third, and final fourth year), to spend on average 350, 450, and 600 hours per year respectively in a WIL-environment. The reason for including third year and fourth year students in the current research is the increasing number of WIL hours in the junior and senior year and the fact that increasingly they are expected to perform several sport management tasks during these years. Students’ final year mainly consists of WIL and they carry out a final thesis project (e.g., writing a business plan and coordinating a large sport event) within the WIL-organisation. It can be argued that the more practical experience a student has in life, the more aware the student will be of the environment in order to be more (critically) reflective (Akkerman & Bakker, 2012; Schaap et al., 2012).

3.4 WIL and Sport Management Education

A major goal of a (sport management) curriculum both in SBL and WIL is that students make gradual progress in their ability to perform work tasks and to learn from their experience in order to transfer theory into practice, (Jowdy, McDonald, & Spence, 2004). Billett (2013) suggested the term transfer of knowledge (theoretical and practical) is viewed as a process of intra-psychological (individual) learning and inter-psychological (social) learning. In addition, transfer of knowledge should be viewed more holistically (e.g., embodiment of knowledge through personal and social interpretations) rather than perceiving knowledge as something that consists of rational facts and concepts. Students in WIL are endorsed through the multi-faceted socio-cultural contexts that comprise workplaces. These contexts are shaped by contributions from students and their workplaces, students’ personal histories or ontology, their personal objectives, and how these contextual aspects engage with and learn through negotiation with workplace factors and affordances that are constrained by workplace type (Billett, 2009c, 2013). The desire to work and learn is not only dependent on objective labour conditions, but is influenced by complex patterns of social interaction.
between the students and the environment they interact with, including the effect of a constant contingency of interpretations of every person involved (Lehtinen, 2008).

Some authors (Billett, 2013; Brown et al., 1989; Lave, 1988) have considered the expected transfer from formal learning in SBL to WIL to be questionable as learning in practice is situated and therefore barely transferable. It is suggested that more attention should be on learning in (WIL)-practice instead of SBL for more efficiency in developing professional performance (Van Woerkom et al., 2002), because the learning in practice by far exceeds the learning in a formal environment like SBL (Collin, 2002). However, other studies show that school learning supplements learning in practice and vice versa (Billett, 2008a). In this study, the two learning environments, SBL and WIL, are considered to be complementary. On the condition that both learning environments are treated as being equally important and that what is being learned at school and in practice is clearly specified and that both learning settings are an extension of one another (Aarkrog, 2005), learning in both settings can be complementary. Chan (2013, p. 8) called this negotiation of encounters within the enactment of WIL “belonging to a workplace, becoming and being” and said the process resembles the progressive development from novice to expert. Students begin the move from novice to expert, when they first encounter the work environment in which they seek employment as a sport manager. Dehing, Jochems, and Baartman (2013) called this process of continuing development the “professional identity development” (p.44) containing an individual and social element, comparable to the definition of critical reflection used in this thesis.

Based on the information in this section for students’ transfer of knowledge (and skills and attitudes) to be potentially successful from one context to another and to develop their professional identity as required by the possible future employers, critical reflection for sport management students is needed to negotiate between all the individual, social, historical and cultural influences within the WIL-environment.

3.4.1 Direct WIL stakeholders in the sport management program.

The direct stakeholders in WIL were identified as being the WIL-supervisors, the students, and the educators. WIL is considered to be beneficial to all stakeholders involved in the social learning environment (Ferkins & Fleming, 2007). Students gain work experience in professional practice; the partnership between programs and practice serves to elevate the program’s reputation, and employers can trial future possible employees. Work placements are used in vocational and academic programs to adequately prepare students for the job market and to meet the employers’ needs (Boles
et al., 2005). Work placements accommodate the demand of employers for motivated student workers and the need of education for the development of competences in work settings (Martin & Hughes, 2009). At the same time, members of all three stakeholder groups are thought to be equally responsible for learning overall, not just in the WIL-process.

3.4.2 Indirect WIL stakeholders.

The indirect stakeholders are represented by the Netherlands Association of VET colleges (NAV, in Dutch: MBO-raad) who promote the collective interests of the sector and Calibris, an organisation that, among other responsibilities, controls the qualification structure of the vocational sport management curriculum. A review of the documents relating to the qualification structure showed no mention of reflection or critical reflection as one of the many educational outcomes in the sport management curriculum as laid down by Calibris. The NAV represents all secondary vocational colleges and plays a major role in the remodelling of vocational education to competence-based vocational education and training. Vocational sport management programs in the Netherlands are required to comply with documents developed by the indirect stakeholders (e.g., NAV and Calibris). Although the indirect stakeholders are responsible for the overall qualification structure of the sport sector within the Netherlands, the sport management educators within the separate educational institutes translate the educational outcomes into theoretical and practical exams. The educators are also responsible for preparing and executing the sport management lectures.

3.4.2.1 The NAV.

The NAV represents all government-funded colleges for secondary VET and adult education in the Netherlands. On behalf of its members (the VET-colleges), the NAV promotes the collective interests of 17 different sectors (e.g., building industry, commerce), supports common activities of the colleges, and acts as an employers’ organisation. The association negotiates labour conditions for the sector with the trade unions and signs collective labour agreements. The NAV has a major role in the remodelling of vocational education to competence-based vocational education and training. A leading document for learning and transfer in vocational sport management education are the educational outcomes, as outlined in the qualification structure by the governing body Calibris.
3.4.2.2 Calibris.

Calibris is one of the 17 Dutch Centres of Expertise in the field of VET. These centres of expertise work together with the labour market in their association named Cooperation between Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB, formerly known as COLO). Centres of expertise are sectoral organisations that represent over 40 branches of industry (e.g., carpentry, nursing, or tourism). The SBB attempts to achieve a better connection between senior secondary vocational education and professional practice. The expertise centre, Calibris, functions as a controlling body and determines the outcomes of a sport manager Level 4 on a vocational diploma level. All vocational sport management programs in the Netherlands have to comply with a set of vocational qualification structure documents that Calibris develops. Together with employers, employees and educators, Calibris fulfils a key role in structuring senior secondary vocational education.

Besides developing a qualification structure for the sport management curriculum, Calibris also has the important task of accrediting work placement organisations. An organisation wishing to be accredited must fulfil the conditions in accordance with the regulations for accreditation laid down by people who work at Calibris. Once an organisation has been officially accredited, the organisation is included in the register of accredited work placement organisations and it is qualified to host students for work experience.

Other responsibilities of Calibris include carrying out the Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL), International Diploma Evaluation (IDE) and developing courses and workshops to advise and support (practical) training coordinators. Within that process, together with employers, employees, and educators Calibris draws up a qualification structure for each sector. All senior secondary vocational education programs in a given sector are processed into a coherent system known as the qualification structure.
A VET qualification structure operates at four vocational levels, which are based on high school scores, irrespective of the sector:

- Level 1: assistant’s program
- Level 2: basic vocational program
- Level 3: professional program
- Level 4: middle management program or specialist program (e.g., operational sport manager)

This structure specifies what a student must know and must be able to do, as well as outlining how students can transfer from for example a Level 3-course into to a higher Level 4-course.

3.4.3 Qualification structure.

A qualification structure is an ordered and coherent collection of qualifications and partial qualifications for secondary vocational education. A qualification describes exactly what a student should know in order to be able to hold a professional position as effectively and responsibly as possible. The qualification structure for each individual sector consists of qualifications and partial qualifications, elaborated in terms of competencies and attainment targets. Attainment targets describe the knowledge and skills for any beginning professional practitioner. An overview of competencies and related attainment targets for one of the core tasks of an operational sport manager can be found in the Appendix A. Calibris is responsible for improving the connection between the labour market and education sectors such as health care, social care, welfare and sport. In the old educational system (post 1995, see section 3.3.1), students were trained for a single sector, and for a single specific position. Because today the sector boundaries have become blurred, employers, employees and educational organisations have decided to develop a qualification structure in which the students are taught on a broad basis. The result of this decision is that graduates can be deployed in a range of sectors.

The qualifications and partial qualifications are based on the needs expressed by the labour market. In response to the requests from those in the market place, Calibris has developed qualifications that are broadly applicable and have a focus on life-long learning; these are the points of departure employed by Calibris in developing qualifications. A qualification can differentiate between basic, generic, or partial qualifications. In the partial qualifications, students acquire the general knowledge and skills necessary for the vocational qualification and employ these skills and knowledge
in relevant situations. In addition, in acquiring the skills necessary to achieve partial qualifications, students also acquire general knowledge and skills for the use in other levels of their qualifications. The knowledge and skills they acquire include social and cultural qualifications and transfer qualifications; job-specific partial qualifications: in these partial qualifications, students apply their general knowledge and skills within the relevant task areas of the profession; possible differentiations (e.g., operational sport manager): here, the students focus on the specific knowledge and skills of the target group, work setting or nature of their activities.

3.4.4 Job profiles in the field of sport management.

Detailed task descriptions are included in the job structure. The levels for the qualification in the area of Sport within the sector of Health Care, Welfare, and Sport are derived from this job structure. To determine levels, use has been made of the “classification table qualification structure secondary vocational education” format. The format identifies five tertiary vocational levels, described according to the increased levels of responsibility, complexity, and transfer of the duties. Level 1 is the lowest level of vocational education and Level 5 is the highest level of vocational education in the Netherlands, also referred to as Higher Professional Education (HBO in Dutch) and known as Universities of Applied Sciences. Students can, depending on which of the six hierarchical levels they were in at high school, can proceed to one of the five hierarchical levels in vocational education. Students who graduated from the highest level at high school (Level 6) are allowed to enrol in a research university.
To better understand the qualifications within the Dutch VET system an overview of the qualification structure within the sector of welfare, health care and sport can be found in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Overview of the Dutch profession based qualification structure (within the sector of health care, welfare and sport)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>HEALTH CARE</th>
<th>WELFARE</th>
<th>SPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 HBO</td>
<td>Health Care Assistants</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Social Care Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Care</td>
<td></td>
<td>TRANSFER TO HBO LEVEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 MBO</td>
<td>Pharmacist’s assistant</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Operational Sport and Exercise Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle management training</td>
<td>Doctor’s assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dentist’s assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Operational Sport and Exercise Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 MBO</td>
<td>Health care worker</td>
<td>Child care worker</td>
<td>Sport and Exercise worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional training</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social care worker</td>
<td>Sport and Exercise worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 MBO</td>
<td>Health and Social care helper</td>
<td>Social care worker</td>
<td>Sport and Exercise helper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic vocational training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 MBO</td>
<td>Care helper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant vocational training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMBO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MBO=senior secondary vocational education, HBO=higher vocational education (Universities of Applied Science), VMBO=preparatory secondary vocational training

Source: (Calibris, 2013)

The sport manager is one of the possible differentiations or job variants within the middle management diploma (see MBO-Level 4 in Table 3.2). In this thesis the operational sport and exercise manager is called sport manager. In this role, the manager is involved in managing and coordinating tasks, for example for outdoor sports organisations (e.g., preparing rosters), sport clubs (e.g., preparing and conducting sport events), sport and exercise centres or fitness centres (e.g., fitness co-ordinator, sales and marketing), tourism and recreation (e.g., event planning). The nature of the job required for the provision of sport and exercise activities and the supervision of sport.
and exercise participants is expressed in the planned, specific and methodical structuring of those activities. A detailed job profile with related duties of an operational sport manager can be found in the Appendix B.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has focussed on exploring the Dutch context in which this research takes place. A comparison is made of the two main learning environments (SBL and WIL) for vocational sport management students within a competence based education landscape in the Netherlands. It has been suggested that WIL has the potential to be a more appropriate environment in which to investigate the role, particularly the place and added value of critical reflection than the school-based environment. The workplace environment offers the student a different perspective and a more realistic picture of the complexity of the future job as a sport manager. When learning is integrated with work it is considered to be beneficial to all involved stakeholders within the social learning environment. Students gain work experience in professional practice; the partnership between programs and practice elevates the program’s reputation and employers can trial future possible employees. Learning in practice is more social, informal and inherently more contextual than in SBL. By encountering a number of social or political power structures in the ‘real’ world the employability of students is enhanced.
Chapter 4. Methodology: Phase 1 - The Survey

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology of the research, particularly the methodology of the first study employed in Phase 1 of the research in order to address the two major research questions:

Research Question 1: In what ways can critical reflection add value to sport management education?

Research Question 2: What place should critical reflection have in sport management education?

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section the sampling procedure and the participants are described. Next, the instrumentation used to measure the level of students’ critical reflection is explained. The data analyses are presented in the third section. A summary concludes the chapter.

4.2 Research Design

The phenomenon to be investigated is the role of students’ critical reflection in vocational sport management education, in particular the place and value of critical reflection within a WIL context. As the two research questions focus predominantly on the underlying emotional, social and cultural aspects of critical reflection, the dominant paradigm of this current research is qualitative. Moreover, qualitative research is associated with constructivism (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Hence, the current research is seen through the lens of social constructivism.

Nevertheless, to capture the contextual complexity of the role of students’ critical reflection in practice four studies were conducted using a sequential mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006). A mixed methodology involved combining elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches for exploring relationships and to triangulate results of the same fundamental phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Convergence of data sources (survey and interviews with three
The place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum

groups of stakeholders) was used to strengthen the validity of the findings and results of this current research. In order to collect the data two separate phases (Phase 1 and Phase 2) and four separate studies (Study 1, Study 2, Study 3, and Study 4) of data collection were undertaken:

- **Phase 1: Quantitative phase**
  - Study 1: a survey (completed by the three groups of direct stakeholders: WIL-supervisors, educators, and students) measuring to what extent students are critically reflective in WIL

- **Phase 2: Qualitative phase**
  - Study 2: semi-structured interviews with WIL-supervisors
  - Study 3: semi-structured interviews with educators
  - Study 4: semi-structured interviews with students

The next sections present the methodology and methods used in Study 1 of Phase 1.

### 4.3 Methodology

Study 1, the survey, involved the collection of quantitative data via a web-based questionnaire that was administered to all three responsible stakeholder groups of WIL. The quantitative study was used to understand the extent vocational sport management students were able to critically reflect on their work place experiences. The researcher wanted to determine the level of students’ critical reflection in WIL, because investigating students’ critical reflection quantitatively would provide insight into the level that students were able to perform and act within the perceived and actual individual and social learning dimensions of critical reflection. It was anticipated by the researcher that the results of Study 1 in Phase 1 could provide an objective starting point for the research in establishing the current level of students’ critical reflection used in WIL. Valuable information about any differences within and across groups of stakeholders about the level of junior and senior students’ critical reflection would become more eminent because the students’ perceived (self-assessed) level of critical reflection was compared with the assessment of the students’ critical reflection by WIL-supervisors and educators. As a result of this comparison of perceived and actual use of students’ critical reflection in WIL between the three groups of stakeholders, the quantitative data and the analysis of this data from each group of stakeholders provided a base for refining the interview questions in a subsequent Phase 2. It was anticipated
that supporting evidence would be found to strengthen the findings from the interviews in the following qualitative phase (Phase 2).

4.3.1 Study 1: data collection participants.

In order to ensure the results of the research were applicable to the Dutch situation, all 35 vocational colleges of sport and exercise in the Netherlands were contacted at the beginning of 2011. The researcher wanted to include all WIL-supervisors, educators, and students from the educational institutes that offer a Level 4 vocational sport management program in the Netherlands. By calling the colleges and by visiting their websites the researcher established whether they offered a sport management program. Contact (via email and phone) was made with the Heads of School in order to seek permission for conducting the research in their institution. The aim of the research was explained by attaching an information flyer to the email that was sent to the Heads of School (see the Appendix C). Eventually, the Head of Schools of 20 out of 25 colleges that offer a sport management program agreed to participate in the research after being informed by the researcher that the research involved a quantitative (e.g., survey) and qualitative phase (e.g., interviews). Each Head of School of a vocational college with a sport management program was contacted by phone, email, or in person to request the contact details of the college’s sport management program convenor or another member of staff who had access to contact details of potential respondents. Once a primary contact person was identified, the researcher sent an email to each contact person including information concerning the purpose of the research (e.g., main research questions, time involvement for potential respondents), and details about the survey (e.g., time involvement to complete the survey, personalised click-through survey link to show what the survey involved). The information in the email also sought the participation of the institution in the research and gave an assurance that their cooperation would be completely voluntary and confidential.

In addition, the researcher requested the email addresses of all members of all three stakeholder groups WIL-supervisors, educators, and students) from the primary contact person. The researcher made clear to the primary contact person that with regard to the educator group, only those educators who worked closely with the sport management students as a coach or mentor and/or those who visited the WIL-organisations should be asked to participate in the survey. All stakeholder groups (WIL-supervisors, educators and students) were contacted through the use of a list held by the
The place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum

Educational institution which was provided by the college’s primary contact person. When a primary contact person indicated that sharing or disclosing contact details of potential respondents with the researcher was not part of the college’s policy, the researcher’s email invitation to the members of the stakeholder groups was sent through the primary contact person. In all other cases the emails were sent by the researcher to the members of the stakeholder groups who were potentially willing to participate.

Potential respondents were issued a non-identifiable personalised (e.g., dear student, educator or WIL-supervisor) email invitation including the institute’s logo, informing them about the research project (a letter and an info flyer inviting them to express an interest in the project, sending them formal recruitment and consent materials, and also the questionnaire or data collection instrument with a click-through survey link). The invitation that was sent to the WIL-supervisors and educators was more formal (e.g., use of language, stressing the importance of the research) than the letter that was sent to the students. For example, the information for WIL-supervisors and educators stressed the importance of the research and the applied character of the research findings for the industry. As a result of sending a more formal letter to the WIL-supervisors and educators a higher response was expected within these two stakeholder groups. A reminder by email to all respondents was sent to the primary contact person after three weeks. The researcher prepared the reminder so the primary contact person had only to send through the email to the potential stakeholder groups participants. Instead of sending a hard copy letter, an electronic letter was used.

Multiple cluster sampling was used to carry out the identification of potential respondents on the basis of their status as one of the three involved groups of direct stakeholders: third year (junior) students and fourth/final year (senior) students in a diploma level vocational sport management degree, educators who mentored these students, and WIL-supervisors who supervised the students of the corresponding institutions. All three stakeholder groups share a responsibility for the learning process within the WIL-environment and are therefore the target populations in this research. Only educators who (had) mentored students during their WIL-experience were asked to participate in the survey. Educators who taught classes but were not involved with mentoring students in WIL were excluded from participation. It was anticipated by the researcher these educators did not did not know the students well enough to have the insight required to assess students’ ability to critically reflect.
The web-based survey was completed by third year junior students (n=113), fourth year senior students (n=122), educators (n=25) and WIL-supervisors, also referred to as possible future employers (n=35). Response rates were respectively 34%, 45%, 50%, and 9%. The response rate of the WIL-supervisors was low compared to the other groups. Despite the response rate in percentages being low, the actual number of WIL-supervisors who completed the survey was sufficient to conduct the necessary quantitative analysis (see section 4.3.3). One of the reasons for such a low response rate from the WIL-supervisors can be explained by the relative ease with which the primary contact person was able to obtain email addresses for students and educators because all students and educators had school email addresses and these addresses were administered well. In comparison, obtaining the email addresses of the WIL-supervisors from each primary contact person was considerably difficult. Another reason for the less than optimum level of response from the WIL-supervisors is concerned with their workload. This concern expressed by WIL-supervisors is illustrated by their feedback to the researcher when he contacted some of the some of the WIL-organisations by telephone. The researcher asked the WIL-supervisors whether they had finalised the survey. The contacted WIL-supervisors said that participating in a survey was not their first priority because they were too busy. One other reason that was mentioned was the fact WIL-organisations received numerous requests during a year to participate in surveys.

4.3.2 Study 1: data collection instrument.

The survey contained three subsequent sections: (1) a demographic section, (2) a section with the questions based on the survey of Van Woerkom and Croon (2008) and (3) a section containing questions that asked the respondents the perceived level of importance of critical reflection in WIL.

The first section of the survey asked the participant to respond to questions concerning the institution they currently attended, the context of the WIL-environment (e.g., leisure and outdoor, fitness and health, sport development), age, and current year of study. With regard to the WIL-supervisor and educators, questions were added regarding years of experience as a teacher and in the supervision of students and the type (junior or senior) of student/s supervised.

In the second section of the questionnaire a validated survey instrument on critical reflection (including the individual and social learning dimensions) was used.
The study by Van Woerkom et al. (2002) originally contained seven operational dimensions that included 49 items and was based on case studies. Van Woerkom et al. (2002) conducted research from a Human Resource Management –perspective (HRM) in various service and industrial organisations with their managers and employees. A new refined survey instrument was developed by Van Woerkom and Croon (2008), which was used in the current research, containing six dimensions and 37 items (see the Appendix D).

Each of the six dimensions contains several items/questions, some of which are negatively posed. The first three dimensions (experimenting, asking for feedback, and career awareness) are associated with individual learning, while the remaining three dimensions (challenging groupthink, openness about mistakes, and critical opinion sharing) are linked to social learning.

The items are described in terms of concrete behaviour in order to minimise subjectivity. Examples of statements for response from students are: “I make suggestions to my colleagues about different working methods” or “I discuss with my colleagues what I find important in my work”. In the statements for WIL-supervisors and educators the “I” was replaced with “the student”. For example: “the student makes suggestions to colleagues about a different working method” or “the student discusses with colleagues what they find important in his/her work’. Responses were measured on a six-point Likert scale, anchored by 1 (totally agree) to 6 (totally disagree) or comparable descriptions of scale points such as ranging from 1 (just like me) to 6 (not at all like me). In order to replicate the validated study of Van Woerkom (2008) a six-point Likert scale again was used and as much as possible the same wording was used. Consequently, respondents could not opt for a neutral response and were forced to respond in either a negative or positive way. However, the choice for the number of scale points has no effect on either the reliability or the validity of the instrument (Matell & Jacoby, 1971).

The six dimensions of critical reflection used were: (a) experimenting, (b) asking for feedback, (c) reflecting on career ambitions, (d) challenging groupthink, (e) openness about mistakes, and (f) critical opinion sharing. These dimensions are explained in detail in Chapter 5, section 5.2 (three individual dimensions of critical reflection) and in Chapter 5, section 5.3 (three social dimensions of critical reflection).
Information on the third section of the survey about the learning transfer climate for critical reflection can be found in the Appendix E. Responses to these questions were based on a Likert scale ranging from 1-6: 1 (not at all important), 2 (very unimportant), 3 (somewhat unimportant), 4 (somewhat important), 5 (very important), and 6 (extremely important). Also two questions were asked about the support of the supervisor for critical reflection and the support of the organisation as a whole for critical reflection. An open-ended question about why they found critical reflection to be important concluded the survey. The survey was conducted between December 2011 and March 2012.

4.3.3 Study 1: data analyses.

The analyses included all stakeholder groups with responsibility for the learning process within the WIL-environment. The groups were identified as WIL-supervisor, educator, junior student, and senior student. Although the sample sizes of the WIL-supervisors (n=35) and educators (n=25) were relatively small compared to the sample size of the junior (n=106) and senior students (n=124), they satisfy the assumptions for the parametric tests being conducted in this study. With regard to sample sizes greater than 5 or 10 per group, the means are approximately normally distributed regardless of the original distribution, even when the distributions are highly skewed non-normal (Norman, 2010). Additionally, empirical studies for robustness for ANOVA were found to be robust even in cases of small sample sizes (n=4-10) (Norman, 2010).

As the purpose of this study is to compare the means (simultaneously) of (critical reflection) variables between four groups, MANOVA and ANOVA are appropriate statistical tests for the analyses (Field, 2009).

4.2.3.1 MANOVA.

Initially, MANOVA (using test statistic Pillai’s Trace) was chosen for analyses of the collected quantitative data. The main MANOVA was followed up with discriminant function analysis (DFA) using Wilks’s Lambda. The reason to perform MANOVA was that MANOVA compares several dependent variables at the same time, and takes account of the relationship between dependent variables. It provides information about the combination of several variables (Field, 2009). Yet, including too many dependent variables within MANOVA does not always provide empirically meaningful conclusions (Field, 2009).
4.2.3.2 ANOVA.

Separate ANOVAS were performed for every single item within each of the six different dimensions to gain more insight into the collected quantitative data of the survey in Study 1 (Phase 1 of the research). ANOVA looks at every single variable separately and the purpose was to see whether groups also differed along a single variable.

4.2.3.3 Post-hoc tests.

Post-Hoc Comparisons were used to see which pairs of groups were significantly different for the attributes’ group means. At least two of the means in the above six mentioned scales were significantly different to each other. If only two groups are being compared we can automatically assume that they could be significantly different to each other. However, if more than two groups are being compared we cannot ever be exactly sure which means are significantly different to which others until the findings are explored further with post hoc tests (Field, 2009). Another reason for using post hoc tests was that there were no specific hypotheses about any differences between and within stakeholder groups before conducting this survey. As the sample sizes were different and when homogeneity of variance was met Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s were used as post-hoc tests. When this assumption was violated, Welch’s F was used. At a later stage the means of the items were collapsed and a group-mean (a mean for all the separate means per item) for each dimension was computed. After a reliability analysis on each of the six scales, the scale experimenting (consisting of three items) within the dimensions of individual learning and the scales openness about mistakes (seven items) and challenging group think (six items) within the dimensions of social learning were considered not sufficiently reliable and were discarded. All of these three scales had negatively posed items. In the discarded individual learning dimension experimenting (E) one out of three items was negatively posed. The social learning dimension openness about mistakes (OAM), four out of seven items were negatively posed and the social learning dimension challenging groupthink (CG) had five out of six negatively posed items. To see whether these negative scores would impact the result, all negatively posed scored items were reversed and a group mean was computed on the basis of comparable data. For instance, with regard to the dimension experimenting, the item E3 (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, Table 5.1) junior students scored this item 2.54. The positive score was computed into a 4.46, as items could be scored between 1 and 6.

For the three remaining reliable scales asking for feedback (AFF), career awareness (CA), and critical opinion sharing (COS) in each of the three scales the items

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The collected data from the surveys was used to explore the perceived and actual levels of students’ critical reflection and to uncover any differences between the responses from the three groups of stakeholders within WIL: WIL-supervisors, educators, and students. The quantitative data informed the collection of data in the following qualitative phase of the research (Phase 2). The results of the quantitative analyses are presented in Chapter 5.
5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the analyses of the individual and social dimensions of critical reflection are presented. Each dimension is discussed separately. In each dimension multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), a one way of between groups’ analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the relevant post hoc tests were used to analyse the data (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3).

The researcher performed MANOVA because this technique compares several dependent variables at the same time, and takes account of the relationship between dependent variables (Field, 2009). Yet, including too many dependent variables within MANOVA does not always provide empirically meaningful conclusions (Field, 2009).

Separate ANOVAS were therefore performed for every single item within each of the six different dimensions of critical reflection to see whether the three groups of stakeholders also differed along a single variable.

Post-Hoc Comparisons were used to see which pairs of groups were significantly different for the attributes’ group means. As the sample sizes were different and when homogeneity of variance was met Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s were used as post-hoc tests. When this assumption was violated, Welch’s $F$ was used. Another reason for using post hoc tests was that there were no specific hypotheses about any differences between and within stakeholder groups before conducting this survey.

5.2 Individual Learning Dimensions

The individual learning dimensions *experimenting*, *asking for feedback*, and *career awareness* which are aimed at self-development and personal growth are discussed below.
5.2.1 Experimenting.

Experimenting is regarded as one of the individual learning dimensions as it is aimed at self-development. Schön (1983) linked experimenting to reflection-in-action. Exploring options and thinking of alternatives, and being open-minded towards other working methods are considered as some of the significant activities of critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987). Students use their theoretical understanding in practice in such a way that it becomes part of their new reference of meaning. However, by experimenting they could also become aware of the difference between both their own and others’ espoused theory (e.g., what someone proclaims to do) and theory-in-use (e.g., what someone actually does) (Argyris & Schön, 1976). By experimenting in practice students can align these two theories (espoused theory versus theory-in-use) by making the espoused theories tacit and more understandable (Raelin, 1997). When students are trying out conceptual knowledge learned in SBL in practice this knowledge becomes contextualised as a result of their gained experiences in WIL. For example, students learn in SBL that part of the requirement of securing an internship in a WIL-organisation is writing an application letter and a resume and sending it to the organisation by email or post. Such a requirement of writing an application letter and a resume might be an espoused theory (ideal situation) for a particular organisation, while the theory-in-use (in reality) is that most internships in that same organisation are secured by visiting the potential WIL-organisation in person and speaking to the manager in charge. Letters and resumes of potential interns remain unanswered or take a long time to be processed. Students learn through this experience when applying for an internship that the espoused theory is not always the most appropriate way to secure an internship but that in some cases it might be worthwhile to try out other strategies. Knowledge as students know it becomes more abstract or tacit and more contextualised as a result of coming into contact with different norms and values within an organisation.

The self-assessment scores from the junior and senior students for the individual learning dimension experimenting of critical reflection and the assessment by the WIL-supervisors and educators is presented in Table 5.1 below. The dimension experimenting contains three items or attributes, with one of the three items posed negatively (see Table 5.1). Students scored themselves relatively highly on experimenting, whereas supervisors were more moderate in their scoring. Educators agree with the students’ scoring. For example, junior students seem to like trying out
new things (4.14), while the WIL-supervisors scored students at a moderate 3.58. Educators are more positive (3.95) than the supervisors towards this attribute. The difference in scores between the WIL-supervisors and the students would suggest that students overestimate their ability to experiment, when students’ self-assessment scores are compared to the scores of the supervisors.

Table 5.1: Mean scores of students’ individual learning dimension experimenting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable / dimension</th>
<th>Junior students N=106</th>
<th>Senior students N=124</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors N=35</th>
<th>Educators N=25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M    SD</td>
<td>M    SD</td>
<td>M    SD</td>
<td>M    SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIMENTING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1: I like to try things out, even if it sometimes leads nowhere</td>
<td>4.14 1.04</td>
<td>4.17 1.06</td>
<td>3.58 1.13</td>
<td>3.95 1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2: I frequently think about ways to improve my working methods</td>
<td>4.25 1.06</td>
<td>4.51 0.89</td>
<td>4.03 0.97</td>
<td>4.47 0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3: Learning new ways to handle things in the job doesn’t excite me very much (−)</td>
<td>2.54 1.22</td>
<td>2.43 1.20</td>
<td>2.27 0.87</td>
<td>2.30 0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in the table are averages (M) of respondent’s scores and standard deviation (SD) for each attribute (scale 1-6, with 6 highest).

5.2.1.1 MANOVA.

Using Pillai’s trace in MANOVA, the groups differed significantly in outcomes with respect to the attributes E1 and E2 within the individual learning dimension experimenting, $\eta^2_p = 0.68$, $F(9, 843) = 2.16$, $p < 0.05$.

When the three attributes were tested in combination (following up MANOVA with discriminant function analysis), using Wilk’s Lambda, they significantly ($p = 0.022$) discriminated the groups. Two discriminant functions were revealed. The first explained 72.3% of the variance, canonical $R^2 = .05$, whereas the second explained only 27.2%, canonical $R^2 = .02$. In combination these discriminant functions significantly differentiated the groups. When attribute E1 was removed, both of the other attributes were non-significant (E2 in combination with E3, $p = 0.25$ and E3 alone $p = 0.77$). Therefore, the group differences shown by the MANOVA could be explained in terms of three underlying attributes in combination.

5.2.1.2 One-way ANOVA.

In a one-way ANOVA, there was a significant difference between groups on E1, $F(3, 287) = 2.98$, $p = 0.032$. WIL-supervisors were lower ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.080$) than junior students ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.037$) and senior students ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.057$).
5.2.1.3 Post-hoc tests.

Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s Post-hoc pairwise tests revealed the same pattern of results. The only groups that differed significantly on E1 (I like to try things out, even if it sometimes leads nowhere) were the junior students and the WIL-supervisors and the senior students and the WIL-supervisors. The post hoc tests confirmed the results shown in Table 5.1.

5.2.2 Asking for feedback.

Social interaction, particularly having conversations and discussing issues with each other, is important for receiving feedback and for gaining support for ideas that can make things happen (Weisweiler, Nikitopoulos, Netzel, & Frey, 2013). Although this kind of social interaction implies that other people are needed to interact with, the dimension asking for feedback, is targeted on individual performance and learning. Feedback (e.g., performance reviews, best practice tips, clarification of learning targets) from WIL-supervisors and colleagues is used by students to see whether they perform well or to compare their performance with other colleagues. Table 5.2 on the next page shows the descriptive statistics of students’ self-assessment for one of the two remaining individual learning dimensions (asking for feedback and career awareness) of critical reflection and the assessment by the WIL-supervisors and educators. The dimension asking for feedback contains nine items or attributes. Students scored eight out of nine attributes in this variable above average with a minimum of 3.99 and a maximum of 4.73 by the students. The only attribute that received a lower score from the students was the attribute F6 (I ask my customers [internal and external] what they think). Junior students (3.52) and senior students (3.63) are more reluctant to ask for feedback from customers than asking for feedback from colleagues or supervisors. WIL-supervisors agree with that view and scored the students an even lower 3.03. Educators were more positive and scored the students 3.80. The fact that customers were less used than supervisors or colleagues as a source of receiving feedback by students is surprising because in commercial settings, the customers are valuable to an organisation. Overall, the WIL-supervisors are far less positive about the students asking for feedback than the students are.
Results: Phase 1 - The Survey

Table 5.2: Mean scores of students’ individual learning dimension asking for feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable / dimension</th>
<th>Junior students</th>
<th>Senior students</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors</th>
<th>Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=106</td>
<td>N=124</td>
<td>N=35</td>
<td>N=25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASKING FOR FEEDBACK</td>
<td>M   SD</td>
<td>M   SD</td>
<td>M   SD</td>
<td>M   SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: I discuss with colleagues how I have developed</td>
<td>4.29 1.01</td>
<td>4.32 .97</td>
<td>3.65 .98</td>
<td>4.35 .99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: If I think I have not done my work well, I consult my supervisor</td>
<td>4.27 .99</td>
<td>4.46 .86</td>
<td>4.09 .98</td>
<td>4.45 1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3: If I think I have done my work badly, I discuss this with colleagues</td>
<td>4.54 1.04</td>
<td>4.45 .95</td>
<td>4.26 .92</td>
<td>4.55 .76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4: I ask my supervisor for feedback</td>
<td>4.62 .93</td>
<td>4.73 .92</td>
<td>4.53 1.03</td>
<td>4.55 1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5: I ask my colleagues for feedback</td>
<td>4.41 .93</td>
<td>4.60 .86</td>
<td>4.14 .93</td>
<td>4.32 .82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6: I ask my customers (internal and external) what they think</td>
<td>3.52 1.26</td>
<td>3.63 1.18</td>
<td>3.03 1.11</td>
<td>3.80 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7: I discuss with my colleagues what I find important in my work</td>
<td>4.49 .91</td>
<td>4.56 .87</td>
<td>4.00 1.03</td>
<td>4.45 .76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8: I invite colleagues to assess my work critically</td>
<td>3.99 1.12</td>
<td>4.11 1.15</td>
<td>3.49 1.24</td>
<td>3.84 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F9: I discuss with my colleagues our criteria for performing well</td>
<td>4.35 .98</td>
<td>4.59 .87</td>
<td>4.08 .97</td>
<td>4.15 .87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in the table are averages (M) of respondent’s scores and standard deviation (SD) for each attribute (scale 1-6, with 6 highest) for the individual learning dimensions of critical reflection.

5.2.2.1 MANOVA.

Using Pillai’s trace in MANOVA, the groups differed significantly (V= 0.15, F(27, 801) = 1.54, p<.05) with respect to all the attributes, except F2, F3 and F4, within the individual learning dimension asking for feedback.

Following up MANOVA with discriminant function analysis (DFA), using Wilks’s Lambda, all attributes in combination significantly (p=.038) discriminated the groups.

5.2.2.2 One-way ANOVA.

Univariate ANOVAs on the outcome attributes revealed non-significant differences between groups for F2, F(3, 282)= 1.83, p>.05, and F3, F(3, 282) = 0.80, p>.05 and F4, F(3, 282) = 0.38, p>.05.

5.2.2.3 Post-hoc tests.

Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s Post-hoc pairwise tests revealed that the data provided by the group of WIL-supervisors differed significantly with data from all other groups (junior students, senior students, and educators) for attribute F1 (I discuss with colleagues how I have developed). The same post-hoc tests discriminated senior students and WIL-supervisors for attribute F5 (I ask my colleagues for feedback).
attribute F6 (I ask my customers, internal and external, what they think) and attribute F8 (I invite colleagues to assess my work critically). For attribute F7 (I discuss with my colleagues what I find important in my work), there was a significant difference between the junior students and the WIL-supervisors, and the senior students and the WIL-supervisors.

After collapsing the means of the nine attributes of the individual dimension asking for feedback, the post hoc tests revealed there was a significant difference (p<.013) between the data of the WIL-supervisors and the data of the other three groups (junior students, senior students, and educators).

5.2.3 Career awareness.

Students in the (pre)final stages of their education (junior and senior students) need to take control of their own employability. They are on the threshold of becoming a professional and are engaged in the process of searching for a job. Employment is not a certainty, and students need to exercise agency in their work and working lives because the nature of work is constantly changing. Displaying career awareness as a student can maximise their chances of finding a suitable job. As can be seen in Table 5.3 on the next page, the six attributes for this variable career awareness range between 3.61 and 5.47. As mentioned previously in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2, the scores could range between 1 and 6, as a result of a using a six-point Likert scale. While a lower score means that students are less conscious about their future career, higher scores mean that students are very much aware of the importance of being involved with their career. When compared to junior students, senior students scored more highly when they reflected on their career ambitions and seem to be more aware of their career path following graduation. According to the results of attribute A2 (I think it is important to have a job in which I can develop) students find it important to have a job in which they can develop (5.30 and 5.47), but are less concerned with how they performed a year ago compared to now (4.11 and 4.30).

WIL-supervisors are less positive (3.83) with regard to this attribute A6 (I compare my performance with how I performed a year ago). The results show that educators agreed with the students, as their scores are more congruent. As WIL starts in the first year of study, and from year 3 (junior students) the internship includes specific management tasks, students possibly get a good impression of the complexity of the work from the start of the educational program, leading to a better judgement of their
own competence in comparison with the actual job. This increased awareness of the job complexity may explain the higher score of year 4 (senior) students when reflecting on future career options.

Table 5.3: Mean scores of students’ individual learning dimension career awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior students</th>
<th>Senior students</th>
<th>Variable / dimension</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors</th>
<th>Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=106</td>
<td>N=124</td>
<td>CAREER AWARENESS</td>
<td>M SD</td>
<td>M SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4.61 SD 1.77</td>
<td>M 4.82 SD .93</td>
<td>A1: I am consciously occupied with my career</td>
<td>4.24 SD .95</td>
<td>4.95 SD .94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 5.30 SD .98</td>
<td>M 5.47 SD .74</td>
<td>A2: I think it is important to have a job in which I can develop</td>
<td>4.94 SD .72</td>
<td>5.45 SD .60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4.67 SD 1.22</td>
<td>M 4.83 SD 1.09</td>
<td>A3: I think about what sort of work I would like to be doing in one year’s time</td>
<td>4.30 SD .94</td>
<td>4.55 SD .94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4.21 SD 1.26</td>
<td>M 4.44 SD 1.04</td>
<td>A4: I am continually occupied with my career development</td>
<td>3.61 SD 1.08</td>
<td>4.35 SD .93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4.80 SD .76</td>
<td>M 4.82 SD .73</td>
<td>A5: I ponder on what I find important in my work</td>
<td>4.24 SD 1.01</td>
<td>4.85 SD .59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4.11 SD .87</td>
<td>M 4.31 SD .85</td>
<td>A6: I compare my performance with how I performed a year ago</td>
<td>3.83 SD 1.15</td>
<td>4.26 SD 1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in the table are averages (M) of respondent’s scores and standard deviation (SD) for each attribute (scale 1-6, with 6 highest) for the individual learning dimensions of critical reflection.

5.2.3.1 MANOVA.

In MANOVA, none of the groups differed significantly within the individual learning dimension career awareness. Consequently, it was not necessary to follow the MANOVA with DFA.

5.2.3.2 One-way ANOVA.

However, univariate ANOVAS on the outcome attributes revealed significant differences between the three groups of stakeholders for the attribute A2 (I think it is important to have a job in which I can develop), F (3,282) = 2.93, p=.034. A4 (I am continually occupied with my career development), F (3,288) = 4.68, p=.003 and A5 (I ponder on what I find important in my work), F (3,286) = 5.46, p=.001. The data of attribute A1 (I am consciously occupied with my career) showed significant group difference using Welch’s F (3,72) = 3.78, p=.014.
**5.2.3.3 Post-hoc tests.**

Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s Post-hoc pairwise tests revealed that the responses from the group WIL-supervisors and the senior students differed significantly for attribute A1 (I am consciously occupied with my career) of the individual dimension asking for feedback and attribute A2 (I think it is important to have a job in which I can develop). There was a significant difference between the information provided by junior students and the WIL-supervisors, and between the responses from senior students and the WIL-supervisors for the two attributes A4 (I am continually occupied with my career development) and A5 (I ponder on what I find important in my work).

After collapsing the means, the post hoc tests revealed there was a significant difference (p<.001) between the WIL-supervisors and the other three groups (junior students, senior students, and educators).

Figure 5.1 shows the results after collapsing the means of the individual learning dimensions.

![Figure 5.1: Means of the individual learning dimensions](image)

Over all, the post hoc tests revealed there was a significant difference in the responses from the WIL supervisors and the other three groups for the individual dimensions career awareness (p<.001) and asking for feedback (p<.013).
5.3 Social Learning Dimensions

The social dimensions of critical reflection emphasise the role of sharing experiences for the purpose of learning. Social learning arises when individuals share and discuss their (individual) experiences, therefore contributing their unique contextual knowledge to the other members in the organisation and potentially contributing to create or advance a learning organisation culture (Joo & Lim, 2009; Kontoghiorghes, 2014; Lim & Nowell, 2014; Roussel, 2014).

5.3.1 Challenging groupthink.

Power structures are more likely to be felt or be experienced in the workplace where the student is part of a team and where they come into contact with different norms and values than in a relatively safe educational setting. Students have to conform, adapt or find a way to align with these institutional acts (e.g., unwritten socio-cultural norms and values within an organisation, unfamiliar situations, constantly changing conditions). Perhaps critical reflection is developed more in a challenging and sometimes unsafe environment (Case, 1994) as a result of the social (e.g., group dynamics) or political power structures (e.g., level of cooperation, conflict, or competition among managers) encountered in the workplace (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Fox, 2009). In contrast, some authors (Brookfield, 2009; Dehler, 2009) stated that this unsafe environment can also be a limitation for expertise development and learning to some students, especially when students feel they are considered as a threat to the existing frames of reference. They are excluded socially from the group and seen as troublemakers when they try to speak up or challenge the status quo.

The danger of challenging the dominant paradigm in the workplace altogether is a risky business. Not only one can be considered a threat to colleagues but also to one’s supervisor (Dehler, 2009); that is, when questioning authority or the status quo. As such challenging the ideas that a group of colleagues has accepted as inviolable, can leave an employee or student isolated. These inviolable ideas can range from making suggestions to step out of the created comfort zone and to do things differently for a change or to confront the hierarchical leadership structure within a group. Trying to make or suggest changes is always difficult as people tend to adhere to the status quo which may lead to stagnation and organisational ineffectiveness (Argyris, 1976; Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988). Yet, challenging groupthink is an important tool to diminish the lack of progression in an organisation and is related to the principles of Argyris and Schön’s (1976) loop-learning (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2).
Table 5.4 below shows that senior students score themselves a 4.22 on attribute CG3 (When I disagree with the way a colleague works, I say so). While the educators seem to have the same view about senior students on this attribute CG3 (4.20), WIL-supervisors scored students a low 3.44. The second attribute with a large discrepancy between the senior students and the WIL-supervisors is CG4 (When I am the only one to disagree with the rest, I just keep quiet). Senior students score themselves a 2.72, while the WIL-supervisors score the students a 3.51.

Table 5.4: Mean scores of students’ social learning dimension challenging groupthink

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable / dimension</th>
<th>Junior students N=106</th>
<th>Senior students N=124</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors N=35</th>
<th>Educators N=25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGING GROUPTHINK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG1: When I disagree with the way a colleague does his or her work, I keep quiet (–)</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG2: I don't easily express criticism of my colleagues or supervisor (–)</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG3: When I disagree with the way a colleague works, I say so</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG4: When I am the only one to disagree with the rest, I just keep quiet (–)</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG5: I easily submit to group decisions (–)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG6: When I disagree with something at work, I find it hard to say so (–)</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in the table are averages (M) of respondent’s scores and standard deviation (SD) for each attribute (scale 1-6, with 6 highest).

5.3.1.1 MANOVA.

In MANOVA, the value of Box’s test was significant (p<.05) and indicated that the variance-covariance matrices were the same in all groups. Consequently, following up MANOVA with DFA was not used.

5.3.1.2 One-way ANOVA.

However, univariate ANOVAS suggested that group separation for the dimension challenging groupthink could be best explained in terms of the underlying attributes CG3 (When I disagree with the way a colleague works, I say so), F(3, 283) = 6.24, p=.000. CG4 (When I am the only one to disagree with the rest, I just keep quiet), F(3, 281) = 4.45, p=.005 and CG5 (I easily submit to group decisions), F(3, 285) = 3.91, p=.009. The attribute CG1 (When I disagree with the way a colleague does his or her work, I keep quiet) showed significant group difference using Welch’s F(3, 74) = 3.57, p=.018.

Results: Phase 1 - The Survey 90
5.3.1.3 Post-hoc tests.

Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s Post-hoc pairwise tests revealed the only groups that differed significantly were the WIL-supervisors and the senior students for attribute CG3 (when I disagree with the way a colleague works, I say so) and CG4 (when I am the only one to disagree with the rest, I just keep quiet).

5.3.2 Openness about mistakes.

Learning from mistakes can be seen as an opportunity for someone to realise that the current reality may be inaccurate or an opportunity for being conscious or aware about strategies that did not go as expected. For example, being open means that students share their made mistakes with others or they are able to compare their mistakes with alleged mistakes of a colleague. By comparing what went wrong or right in situations students evaluate and learn what works or does not work in practice. Most often managers consider learning from mistakes are imperative for reaching the phase of being or becoming to be a “learning organisation” (Van Woerkom et al., 2002). Contu, Grey, and Örtenblad (2003) pointed out that an organisation can only become a place of learning when a shared understanding of goals is realised within the organisation by its members. Based on the fact that critical reflection is a powerful tool to use for enhancing learning, it can be theorised that critical reflection can be effective only when it is embedded in the learning culture of an organisation and when its importance to individual and social learning is acknowledged by members of the organisation. This acknowledgement to embed critical reflection in the learning culture will be further discussed in section 5.4.

Table 5.5 on the next page highlights the social learning dimension of openness about mistakes. The data gathered from the survey indicate that junior students are forgiving of themselves (2.95), when they make a mistake and that senior students on the other hand, are less forgiving of themselves when they make a mistake (3.49). When junior (4.06) and senior (4.13) students have not achieved something well they try to forget their lack of achievement as soon as possible. The responses from the survey show that WIL-supervisors (2.95) and educators (3.05) have a different opinion.
Table 5.5: Mean scores of students’ social learning dimension openness about mistakes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable / dimension</th>
<th>Junior students</th>
<th>Senior students</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors</th>
<th>Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=106</td>
<td>N=124</td>
<td>N=35</td>
<td>N=25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPENNESS ABOUT MISTAKES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM1: If I do not know what I really should know, I try to hide the fact (-)</td>
<td>3.19 1.29</td>
<td>2.86 1.19</td>
<td>2.79 1.02</td>
<td>2.60 1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM2: I do not mind making mistakes</td>
<td>3.98 1.31</td>
<td>3.72 1.29</td>
<td>3.69 1.14</td>
<td>3.60 1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM3: If I have not done something very well, I prefer to keep quiet about it.</td>
<td>2.93 1.24</td>
<td>3.03 1.08</td>
<td>3.00 1.06</td>
<td>2.55 .83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM4: If people at work see that I am doing something wrong, I have the feeling that I have lost face (-)</td>
<td>3.36 1.25</td>
<td>3.35 1.24</td>
<td>3.50 1.03</td>
<td>3.40 1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM5: If I make a mistake, I find it hard to forgive myself (-)</td>
<td>2.95 1.26</td>
<td>3.49 1.31</td>
<td>2.97 1.04</td>
<td>2.75 1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM6: If I have not done something well, I try to forget about it as soon as possible.</td>
<td>4.06 1.96</td>
<td>4.13 2.08</td>
<td>2.95 1.10</td>
<td>3.05 1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAM7: I get embarrassed if I make a mistake (-).</td>
<td>2.79 1.29</td>
<td>2.98 1.29</td>
<td>3.00 1.05</td>
<td>3.15 1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in the table are averages (M) of respondent’s scores and standard deviation (SD) for each attribute (scale 1-6, with 6 highest).

5.3.2.1 MANOVA.

In MANOVA, the value of Box’s test was significant (p<.05) and indicated that the variance-covariance matrices were the same in all groups. Consequently, following up MANOVA with DFA was not used.

5.3.2.2 One-way ANOVA.

The one-way ANOVAS suggested that group separation for openness about mistakes could be best described in terms of the underlying attribute OAM5 (If I make a mistake, I find it hard to forgive myself), F(3, 286) = 4.17, p=.007. The one-way ANOVA applied to the attribute OAM6 (If I have not done something well, I try to forget about it as soon as possible) showed significant group difference using Welch’s F(3, 82) = 10.53, p=.000.

5.3.2.3 Post-hoc tests.

Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s Post-hoc pairwise tests revealed the only groups that differed significantly for attribute OAM5 (if I make a mistake, I find it hard to forgive myself) were the junior students and the senior students. For attribute OAM6 (If I have not done something well, I try to forget about it as soon as possible) the group difference was significant between the junior students and the WIL-supervisors, and between the senior students and the WIL-supervisors.
5.3.3 Critical opinion sharing.

By sharing one’s vision, suggesting improvements, and discussing this with others, the dimension of critical opinion sharing targets the contribution from the individual to the organisation. WIL-supervisors and educators expect from students that, especially during their senior year, students will perform on a professional level and are work-ready by the time students will graduate. Sharing ideas and suggesting other ways of organising procedures in the organisation are ways of thinking that have been linked to a professional capacity of organisational commitment (Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005).

Organisational commitment is significantly associated with an organisational learning culture or in other words, a positive learning transfer climate (Joo & Lim, 2009). The presence of organisational commitment in an organisational context suggests that students who have a high score in this dimension are potentially more committed to the organisation or more committed to learning than students who have a score low on the item. The results of the social learning dimension critical opinion sharing are shown in Table 5.6 below. Overall, senior students scored themselves more highly on all variables than their younger colleague students. The data obtained from students indicate that students (3.77 and 3.96) question the organisation’s policy. It is clear that WIL-supervisors with only a score of 2.78, think differently. On the other hand, educators with a score of 4.00, educators agree with the senior students. Perhaps students share their questioning of the organisation’s policy with the educators but are reluctant or afraid to discuss this questioning with their supervisors.

Table 5.6: Mean scores of students’ social learning dimension critical opinion sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior students N=106</th>
<th>Senior students N=124</th>
<th>Variable / dimension</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors N=35</th>
<th>Educators N=25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable / dimension</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITICAL OPINION SHARING</td>
<td>4.06 .95</td>
<td>4.38 .88</td>
<td>COS1: I come up with ideas how things could be organised differently here</td>
<td>3.29 1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.85 1.07</td>
<td>4.05 .84</td>
<td>COS2: I make suggestions to my supervisor about a different working method</td>
<td>3.38 1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.37 1.21</td>
<td>4.61 .86</td>
<td>COS3: I give my opinion about developments at work</td>
<td>4.08 .95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.77 1.04</td>
<td>3.96 1.18</td>
<td>COS4: I call this organisation’s policy into question</td>
<td>2.78 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.15 1.04</td>
<td>4.21 1.07</td>
<td>COS5: I put critical questions to my supervisor about the working of this organisation</td>
<td>3.58 1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.92 1.03</td>
<td>4.13 .90</td>
<td>COS6: I make suggestions to my colleagues about a different working method</td>
<td>3.41 .96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in the table are averages (M) of respondent’s scores and standard deviation (SD) for each attribute (scale 1-6, with 6 highest) for the social learning dimensions of critical reflection.
5.3.3.1 MANOVA.

When performing a MANOVA on the attributes of the social learning dimension ‘critical opinion sharing’, the value of Box’s test was significant (p<.05) and indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. Consequently, following up MANOVA with DFA was not used in the social dimension critical opinion sharing.

5.3.3.2 One-way ANOVA.

Performing the one-way ANOVAS the results suggested that group separation for critical opinion sharing could be best described in terms of the underlying attributes COS3 (I give my opinion about developments at work), F(3, 285) = 3.76, p=.011, COS4 (I call this organisation’s policy into question), F(3, 283) = 10.43, p =.000, COS5 (I put critical questions to my supervisor about the working of this organisation), F(3, 282) = 4.69, p =.003, COS6 (I make suggestions to my colleagues about a different working method), F(3, 284) = 5.38, p =.001. Attribute COS1 (I come up with ideas how things could be organised differently here) showed significant group differences using Welch’s F(3, 70) = 9.94, p=.000 and attribute COS2 (I make suggestions to my supervisor about a different working method) showed a significant difference in group means using Welch’s F(3, 69) = 4.76, p=004.

5.3.3.3 Post-hoc tests.

Hochberg’s GT2 and Gabriel’s Post-hoc pairwise tests revealed significant differences in the responses among all of the stakeholder groups for attributes COS1 (I come up with ideas how things could be organised differently here), COS4 (I call this organisation’s policy into question), COS5 (I put critical questions to my supervisor about the working of this organisation), and COS6 (I make suggestions to my colleagues about a different working method). Attribute COS2 (I make suggestions to my supervisor about a different working method) showed a significant difference between the WIL-supervisors and the senior students and in the feedback from the WIL-supervisors and the educators. For COS3 (I give my opinion about developments at work) a significant difference in the information was found only between senior students and WIL-supervisors.

After collapsing the means of each of the social dimensions’ attributes, the post hoc tests revealed there was a significant difference for the social dimension critical
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opinion sharing (p<.013) between the WIL-supervisors and the other three groups (junior students, senior students, and educators).

The results after collapsing the means of the social learning dimensions are shown in Figure 5.2 below.

![Figure 5.2: Means of the social learning dimensions](image)

Over all, with regard to the social dimensions, the post hoc tests revealed there was a significant difference for the social dimension critical opinion sharing (p<.013) between the WIL-supervisors and the other three groups (junior students, senior students, and educators).

5.4 Importance of Critical Reflection

While the first and second part of the survey in Phase 1 respectively gave insight into the levels of the individual and social dimensions of critical reflection, a focus on the perceived importance of critical reflection in WIL is presented in the third part of this present study. The results indicate whether or not the climate for critical reflection within the organisation is present. Indication that all respondents share the recognition and engagement for the use of critical reflection in WIL is illustrated in Table 5.7 on the next page. In order to support active sense-making and knowledge construction in relation to the student, WIL-environments have to provide active participation for all stakeholders (Schaap et al., 2012).
Table 5.7: Level of importance of critical reflection in WIL in percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of critical reflection’s importance</th>
<th>Junior students (N=93)</th>
<th>Senior students (N=98)</th>
<th>WIL-supervisors (N=28)</th>
<th>Educators (N=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unimportant</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that senior students regard critical reflection as more important than do the junior students. The educators are the group of stakeholders who consider the use of critical reflection in WIL to be very important (66.7 %) to extremely important (33.3 %). None of the educators think critical reflection is insignificant in any way. The WIL-supervisors find critical reflection to be very important (64.3 %) to extremely important (25 %).

5.5 Summary: Study 1

The results of the quantitative survey (Phase 1) show that the level of students’ critically reflective ability in WIL was assessed and compared with information provided by members of three different groups (WIL-supervisors, educators, and students). The groups responsible for the learning process to take place within a workplace environment were identified as students, educators, and the possible future employers. Potential future employers also acted as hosts in the various organisations involved with WIL. The main findings for the individual learning dimensions of critical reflection are summarised as follows:

- WIL-supervisors were far less positive about the students’ asking for feedback than students were.
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- Students found it important to have a job in which they could develop, but were less concerned with how they performed a year ago compared to now.
- WIL-supervisors were less positive regarding career awareness compared to the senior students.

The main findings for the social learning dimensions of critical reflection are summarised as follows:

- Junior students tended to more easily submit to group decisions than senior students.
- Junior student appeared to be less confident to share their thoughts about a colleague’s working method than senior students did. WIL-supervisors were even far less positive.
- Educators thought students were not afraid to say something when they differed from opinion with the way a colleague worked.
- Students stated they dared to question the organisation’s policy; Educators shared this students ‘view.
- WIL-supervisors thought differently and were not convinced students were occupied with the organisational norms and values.

Overall, from the data presented it can be concluded that critical reflection in a WIL-environment is understood differently by students and educators compared to those hosting and supervising students in a WIL-environment such as managers and potential employers. The indication is that junior students and senior students in a Dutch vocational diploma level sport management program have an adequate level of critical reflection in the individual learning dimensions, but are not sufficiently critically reflective in the social learning dimensions.

Critical reflection has, according to all stakeholders, an impact on learning, personal and organisational development, and on improved individual and organisational performance. However, when an organisation’s ultimate goal is making profits and focusing on controlling procedures, such a focus constrains new designs based on reflective learning (Antonsen, Thunberg, & Tiller, 2011). Therefore, it is important that critical reflection and learning are reflected in the norms and values of the entire organisation. A learning organisation with reflective students and employees is likely to be one that understands and adheres to its underlying values, is adaptable to change, and produces effective work teams.
Further qualitative investigation into the underlying reasons why there is such a significant difference between the responses provided by the groups is presented in the following chapters. Insight into the views of each separate stakeholder is offered in the qualitative stage of this study (Phase Two). These views will provide a better understanding of the quantitative findings and an opportunity to confirm the results made in this quantitative study.
Chapter 6. Methodology: Phase 2 – Case Studies

6.1 Introduction

An overview of Phase 2 of this research is provided in this chapter. Phase 2 is the qualitative phase of the study, focusing on the gathering of data of the underlying emotional, cultural, and social aspects of critical reflection seen through the eyes of each of the respondents from the three main stakeholder groups within the tripartite of WIL (WIL-supervisors, educators and students). The methods and instrumentation used and the analyses of the data of the qualitative phase of the research are explained.

6.2 Case Study Design

The use of the social constructivist paradigm in this thesis is considered as important for achieving a holistic understanding of students’ critical reflection in WIL. This research is explained through the theoretical lens of social constructivism. In this phase of the research the “how” and “why” questions are the focus of interest with regard to establishing a deeper understanding of the relationship between each group of stakeholders (WIL-supervisors, educators, and students). This qualitative phase explored the outcomes of the initial quantitative phase in greater depth and detail.

Both the experiences of particular individuals and the collective experience of the members of each of the groups of stakeholders are the focus of this study. Each individual within each of the three stakeholder groups were expected to have their own view on what critical reflection entails, how it should be assessed, how and if critical reflection should be used in a WIL-environment and how it should be developed. First the researcher investigated the opinions of the individual members of each group to subsequently establish a group opinion and as a result achieve a better generalizability of views (Eisenhardt, 1989).

A multiple case study approach employing semi-structured interviews was considered an appropriate way to investigate the diversity of opinions within and across
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The researcher believed this multi case study approach to be the most suitable for this phase of the research. Multiple case studies are extensively used in organisational research (Eisenhardt, 1989), because such an approach offers good opportunities to learn about the use and development of critical reflection within the complex nature of the organisational context which is used and made meaningful by a diversity of cases (Stake, 2006). In agreement with Yin (2014) a case study design was chosen by the researcher because: (a) the focus of the study was to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) the behaviour of those involved in the study could not be manipulated; (c) contextual conditions were investigated because these conditions were considered relevant to the use and development of students’ critical reflection in WIL; or (d) the restrictions were not clear between critical reflection and the workplace context in which critical reflection was used and assessed by WIL-supervisors, educators and students. Rather than opting for investigating critical reflection with a single case, multiple cases have the advantage of the ability (a) to discover patterns, (b) to achieve better generalizability of findings, (c) to obtain a holistic understanding of the role of students’ critical reflection in WIL (Garg & Eisenhardt, 2012), and (d) to explore differences within and between groups of stakeholders (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014).

There were several reasons for adopting a multiple case study approach for this second phase of the research. First, sport management students gain work experience through WIL and during this time of work experience, they have an opportunity to make meaning of their experiences in WIL. Subsequently, individual students learn in various organisational contexts. By including all three stakeholder groups (WIL-supervisors, educators, and students) in the survey, detailed knowledge of the perceived relevance and importance of critical reflection was gained for improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment of learning and critical reflection in a WIL-environment. Second, by comparing the student’s self-assessment scores with ratings from WIL-supervisors and educators, information was acquired about possible discrepancies between what students say and do and how the responses from members of the other two stakeholder groups perceive their behaviours. Whether or not it is to be used as a possible assessment tool in future, the comparison made of the findings contributed to a more reliable measurement tool and promoted the validity of these findings.
Additionally, information was gained as to whether or not the climate for developing critical reflection within a WIL-environment was beneficial by scoring the relevance of the place of critical reflection in a WIL-process from the perspectives of WIL-supervisors and educators. To include the investigation of the climate for developing critical reflection was found to be important as the use and development of critical reflection is influenced by the context and the settings of each WIL-organisation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Without considering the context within which critical reflection occurs, the researcher could not achieve an accurate understanding of how and why students were critically reflective in a WIL-environment.

A multiple case study approach was used to gather data to assist the researcher to understand, describe, and formulate the relationship between the three groups of stakeholders (WIL-supervisors, educators, and students) so as to determine the implications for developing critical reflection in and upon each group and the effect those implications have on individual and social learning in WIL. Each group of stakeholders was treated as a separate case study, because the context in which critical reflection was carried out and the ways it was applied influenced the definition of critical reflection given by each group of stakeholders and the way in which they differentiated reflection and critical reflection. What each group considered was the added value of critical reflection or why they found critical reflection to be important for a (student) sport manager or for the organisation in general was the subject for the interview process.

6.3 Method

6.3.1 Data collection process participants of case studies.

The respondents in these case studies were purposely selected in order to provide important information on the role and value of critical reflection from their perspective. Purposive sampling was used to achieve comparability (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). To ensure sample diversity 10-14 respondents from each group of stakeholders were selected by the researcher from five similar educational institutes in different parts of the Netherlands. Because sport management students may experience work placements in various settings, respondents were also selected from a wide diversity of different work placement environments, such as leisure and outdoor companies, local
and national sport government organisations and fitness centres. The number of respondents was based on whether saturation of information during the interviews was achieved.

The first group of stakeholders to be selected for interviews (Study 2) were possible future employers who supervised level four junior –and/or senior sport management students in their organisations. In the second case study (Study 3) educators were selected who taught sport management students within the Level 4 vocational sport management programs. Only educators who were involved in the guidance of students’ workplace learning and who (had) made one to three visits to the WIL-organisations during the students ‘work placement period, were selected for interviews. The third case study (Study 4) included junior-and senior sport management students who were in the (pre) final year of their diploma program in “Operational Sport and Exercise Manager”.

6.3.1.1 Study 2: the WIL-supervisors.

Tertiary students also have to learn aspects of their trade during their WIL-experience that are not readily described or easily quantifiable in formal qualifications (Noe et al., 2010). For example, communication skills learned from a textbook or power point slides in SBL do not fully prepare students how to deal with a variety of clients or customers in practice. Here lies the role for critical reflection. Critical reflection requires not only the knowledge and awareness of individual and organisational requirements in professional practice, but a capacity to act on this knowledge. The realisation of these requirements entails not merely living up to these expectations, but also to develop and evolve students’ critically reflective attitude towards themselves and others and the agency to act upon this awareness of such requirements in the workplace. This thesis posits that critical reflection should be understood (and undertaken) as a combination of individual and social learning processes rather than as a form of hostile criticism. In other words, learning and therefore critical reflection is a conscious and deliberate process requiring learner effort and engagement with an individual and social component (Billett, 2009b). Critical reflection is a key factor for individual and social learning and has the potential to contribute to the organisational productivity (Knipfer et al., 2012). Furthermore, by working in practice the employability is enhanced because a WIL-supervisor learns how the student learns and is able to participate in the particular
context of his organisation, communicates with other employees, and how the student acts and reacts with clients or customers (Noe et al., 2010). Positioning the WIL-experience as a job, career, or vocation is useful within the context of WIL because it helps describe and explain some of the outcomes of students’ identity trajectory across the duration of the WIL contract. However, what critical reflection means to a WIL-supervisor, may be different to how this study defines the term and use of critical reflection. Therefore, a sample of WIL-supervisors was interviewed to explore other possible definitions of critical reflection.

The purpose of this first case study (Study 2) was twofold. First, the case study was undertaken to contribute to a better understanding of the concept of critical reflection and the significance of critical reflection in WIL practice from the perspective of the WIL-supervisors, and second, to investigate the underlying reasons and expectations of the WIL-supervisors on the utility of students’ critically reflective behaviour in WIL.

WIL-supervisors who expressed an interest to be interviewed following their participation in this research’s survey, carried out in Phase 1, were short-listed by the researcher. The initial response rate in the quantitative phase of this research (Phase 1) was low (9%) however, a total of 13 WIL-supervisors indicated they were interested and available for further cooperation in the second phase of the research and were invited by the researcher to be interviewed in Phase 2 of the research. The reason for an initial low survey participation response rate in Phase 1 could be due to the fact that WIL-supervisors said that participating in an educational survey was not a priority for a (commercial) WIL-organisation and perhaps was too time-consuming at the time of the researcher’s request to participate. As mentioned previously, the interview sample for the qualitative phase of the research (Phase 2) was selected purposefully to ensure representation from many WIL-organisations and affiliated educational institutes throughout the Netherlands and from each context in which sport management students can conduct their WIL-experience. A summary of the WIL-supervisors’ demographics can be found in Table 6.4 on the next page.

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#### Table 6.4: Summary of the WIL-supervisors’ demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of organisation</th>
<th>Role within the WIL-organisation</th>
<th>Level of management</th>
<th>Age between</th>
<th>Type of student assessed</th>
<th>Years of experience as WIL-supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial tennis company</td>
<td>Manager/owner</td>
<td>Higher management</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Sport Centre</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports community centre</td>
<td>WIL-supervisor</td>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Swimming Complex</td>
<td>Manager/WIL coordinator</td>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-end commercial Fitness, swimming and Tennis centre</td>
<td>WIL-supervisor</td>
<td>Operational level</td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community centre</td>
<td>WIL-supervisor</td>
<td>Operational level</td>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Sport Centre</td>
<td>Manager and WIL coordinator</td>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District office national football association</td>
<td>WIL coordinator</td>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-end Fitness Centre</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Higher management</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness Centre</td>
<td>WIL coordinator</td>
<td>Higher management</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health centre</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Higher management</td>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Outdoor</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Higher management</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Outdoor</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Higher management</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WIL-supervisors who were interviewed worked in a range of commercial and non-commercial organisations located throughout the Netherlands. In general, the majority of the WIL-organisations were small to medium-sized (businesses less than 20 employees). Respondents worked at different levels (operational to higher management positions) of the organisation and their experience in supervising sport management students ranged from 1 to 10 years. The companies ranged from high-end, all inclusive fitness centres, tennis schools, recreation and outdoor companies, and public service organisations located in large cities and small country towns.

6.3.1.2 Study 3: the educators.

The focus of this case study was the educator’s perspective on the value and place of critical reflection in a workplace environment. Educators shared their thoughts about the utility of critical reflection in an SBL-environment. The findings of related aspects such as the perceived characteristics of a critically reflective student, the level of a student’s (critical) reflection and factors for the development or use of students’ critical reflection in WIL are also presented. Although all respondents in this case study visited the students (once or more) at the workplace during their work experience, they did not observe the students while they were performing their sport management internship in the workplace. In general, the respondents had a conversation with the WIL-supervisor about the student’s performance, but in most cases did not actually see the students performing in a WIL-environment. Compared to the observations of WIL-supervisors in the WIL-environment, the observations of students’ behaviour in WIL by educators was therefore minimal. The implications for the educators’ minimal perceptions are addressed in Chapter 8. The educators’ view of students’ critical reflection was based on (a) the information they obtained from WIL-supervisors working in the WIL-organisation; (b) the comments from the students themselves during conversations with the educators; (c) the interaction with other students in classroom when talking about their experiences in WIL and (d) the written reflective feedback from learning portfolios.

The educators represent the educational institution. Therefore, they present a different view from WIL-supervisors and students on how critical reflection is perceived within the sport management curriculum, especially when the view of educators on students is mainly based on information gained in SBL settings.
Educators who expressed an interest to be interviewed after participation into this research’s survey in Phase 1 were short-listed by the researcher. The response rate of the educators in the quantitative phase of the research (Phase 1) was 50%, representing a total of 10 educators who were interviewed in the qualitative phase of the research (Phase 2). The reason for an initial high survey participation response rate might be due to the fact that educators regard critical reflection as one of the key concepts in a sport management curriculum and that research into this topic is likely to contribute to the enhancement of the sport management program or educational outcomes. The interview sample was selected purposely to ensure representation from multiple educational institutes throughout the Netherlands. Educators were selected on the basis of their involvement in the students’ WIL-experience and their knowledge of what is expected from a sport management student in practice. All respondents were involved in teaching or mentoring junior and senior students. Two educators who were included in the interviews worked in the role of manager before they entered education. One educator had been a bank manager and another educator had owned a company employing over 40 people. Five educators completed or were in the process of completing a Master Degree (Master of Sport Management, Master of Science, Master of Sports, Master of Professionalism and Master of Business Administration). All educators had more than ten years of teaching experience. All respondents made visits or had made visits in the past to WIL-organisations where students performed their internship. Five educators who were included in the interviews taught management classes. These five educators got to teach students who performed their work experience in various settings, such as leisure and outdoor, community sports, and fitness and health. Including educators who teach management classes to students with different work experience backgrounds made it possible for the researcher to compare information regarding students’ critically reflective attitude from different sectors within the sport management curriculum.

6.3.1.3 Study 4: the students.

This study focused on the students’ perceptions of the utility of critical reflection in their WIL-environments. The study revealed the impact of these perceptions on the way students valued and used critical reflection in order to learn and make meaning of their experiences in these practical-based environments. Consequently, students’ perceptions affect the results of their learning. The students were the last group of
stakeholders to be discussed within the tripartite of WIL. Students played an important role in this research, as they were the subject of critical reflection. This study aimed to investigate whether junior sport management students in a WIL-environment perceived the use and development of critical reflection in a different way when compared with the perceptions that senior sport management students had of the place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum. Together, this study identified students’ personal commitment and their commitment to the (other members of the) WIL-organisation in which they performed their WIL-experience, as well as to understand the individual and social factors that guided their personal and professional learning and performance as future reflective sport managers entering the workforce.

The development of self- and organisational awareness and of the progress of learning for individual and organisational performance within the chosen vocation or workplace is an identified key objective of a WIL program (Chan, 2013). However in applying this objective, educators must question whether students are aware of this objective and if they are aware, whether they are committed to achieving this key objective. It is also important for educators to ask whether students perceive the value of critical reflection within this learning process. Besides looking at the students’ expectations of WIL and whether it mirrors reality, the factors for the development and use of critical reflection is investigated and students score what the place of critical reflection should be within the sport management curriculum. These and other findings as seen through the lens of the students are discussed in Chapter 7 - Study 4, as they determine the students’ perceived value and place of critical reflection in WIL and consequently, the potential impact of critical reflection on students’ learning and transfer in SBL and WIL.

The help and support of WIL-supervisors and educators are definitely essential contributing factors for students experiencing critical reflection (Noe et al., 2010), but the quality of a student’s learning experience, and possibly the quality of transfer between theory and practice, is fundamentally dependent on a student’s interest and commitment (O'Shea & Watson, 2007). In all, the whole process of a student’s learning and working experience in WIL should be a joint responsibility of all three stakeholders. It is also clear the opinion of the students own critically reflective attitude is related to different concepts measuring perceptions of competence such as self-efficacy, self-identity, self-esteem, self-concept, ability beliefs, and expectancy beliefs.
For instance, self-efficacy (Baartman & Ruijs, 2011) relates to the learners’ ideas and perceptions of their performance in a certain domain, not what actually occurs. Baartman and Ruijs (2011) stated that in turn, self-efficacy is influenced by important aspects such as experiences in the past, perceived performance of others, encouragement by others, and affective states. Self-identity relates to students’ individual judgement of their own capacities, which influence intrinsic motivation, choices, effort and determination (Celuch, Black, & Warthan, 2009). Together, it is plausible that the ability to integrate into the organisation as a student can have a large impact on the student’s learning and performance during the whole WIL-experience. In short, despite these above mentioned concepts such as self-efficacy and self-identity influence students’ perception of the value and place of critical reflection, does not mean that students will actually be critically reflective in WIL. Research from Korte (2009) has identified that it is essential for students to first build relationships with their supervisor and other work group employees in order to learn the what, how and why for performing well within the organisation. Examining the nature of students’ experiences when starting or continuing an internship at the host organisation could improve the understanding of how students use and value critical reflection within a WIL-environment. The demographics of the students are described in the next section.

A total of 14 students (five junior students and nine senior students) participated in the interviews in Study 4 of Phase 2. These students were from six different educational institutes and various contexts, such as Leisure and Outdoor, Fitness and Health, Sport Development and Community Sports. Students, who had expressed the idea that for them critical reflection had little or no value, were also invited by the responsible educator to participate. The researcher was very interested in the reasons why these students were reluctant or not interested to use or develop critical reflection during their WIL-experience. A richer and more thorough data analysis was included by adding the views of these students.

6.3.2 Data collection instruments of case studies.

Within a multi-case study approach many data collection instruments (e.g., interviews, observation, and documentation) can be used (Yin, 1994, 2014). For this research semi-structured interviews were chosen with themes related to the two main
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6.3.2.1 The pilot study.

To ensure a systematic approach in the development of the interview instrument, the researcher conducted a focus group pilot interview and four individual pilot interviews. The focus group interview and pilot interviews were completed before finalising the interview protocol.

The researcher used a focus group approach to determine if the questions gathered the information required to address the research questions and related aims. Focus group interviews are considered to promote critical reflection because the interaction and support between members of the group facilitates discussion, argumentation and new ideas (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Furthermore, a focus group or member validation contributes to the credibility, objectivity, reliability, and validity of the outcomes for potential use in practice (Gratton & Jones, 2004). The researcher conducted both the focus group interview and individual semi-structured interviews to better understand the behaviours that facilitate learning transfer and to be able to refine the questions to be used in the interview schedule for the interviews in Phase 2 of the research.

The focus group in this research consisted out of 12 senior students of one particular college located in the south of the Netherlands. The researcher contacted the primary contact person of this college requesting him to ask students to participate in a focus group interview. Once agreement from both students and contact person was confirmed, the college’s primary contact person arranged a classroom where the researcher could conduct the group interview with the students. All students who
participated in the focus group interview had finished the survey in an earlier stage (Phase 1). The focus group interview was held in April 2012. The duration of the interview was approximately 60 minutes. Responses were recorded by the researcher with the use of a dictaphone and notes about the body language (e.g., interested, bored, or enthusiastic) and the group atmosphere (e.g., tensed, relaxed, or engaged) were made immediately after the focus group interview.

The duration of each of the four pilot interviews was between 30 and 45 minutes. The researcher made notes during and immediately after the interviews. They included information about the respondent’s grammar, body language, atmosphere at a particular time during the interview and other non-verbal communication (e.g., hand gestures or smiling) during the interview. This pilot study allowed the researcher to refine the questions used in the interview protocol in Phase 2. As a result minor modifications were made to clarify the wording of two topics which lead to the revised semi-structured interview schedule used for each respondent of each of the three groups of stakeholders (see the Appendix F). In each of the case studies respondents from each group of stakeholders were asked to clarify or elaborate on the results that were found within the quantitative survey.

6.3.2.2 The individual semi-structured interviews.

The individual semi-structured interviews (Phase 2) were conducted between May 2012 and March 2013. Respondents were asked 13 open-ended questions with further probing questions to clarify or qualify responses. The interviews were conducted face-to-face. WIL-supervisors were called or emailed by the researcher to schedule an interview at their organisation in a quiet room of their choice. Students and educators were visited at their own educational institute. To conduct the interviews with the WIL-supervisors at their own organisation and with the educators and student at the educational institution was considered both logistically and time wise the best option for the researcher and the respondents. Educators were called or emailed by the researcher with the request to participate and asked to provide a feasible date and time for an interview. Educators were also asked by the researcher to invite students to participate in an interview. At all times an interview room within the building was reserved by one of the educators to conduct the interviews with each individual educator and student. Responses to the interview questions were recorded verbatim and checked for accuracy and meaning with each respondent before ending the interview. Each interview lasted.
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between 30 and 40 minutes. The researcher made notes during and immediately after
the interviews. The notes included information about the respondent’s use of grammar,
body language, atmosphere in the room during the interview and other non-verbal
communication during the interview.

The structure of the interview and the set of questions were comparable for all
stakeholders. Respondents were told by the researcher that the questions seeked
information about critical reflection and that it was not compulsory to answer the
questions in a pre-set order. When respondents were unable to answer a question, the
researcher tried to clarify the question with concrete examples or proceeded to the next
question. However, all questions had to be answered before the end of the interview in
order to achieve comparability and completeness of the different interviews. Table 6.1
on the next page offers an overview of the main topics used for developing the
interview questions.
The first question of the interview aimed to reveal what the respondent’s definition of critical reflection was, preferably distinguishing the meaning of critical within critical reflection. The next step was to seek the opinion of the respondent with regard to the value of critical reflection for a sport manager or what the value of critical reflection within the sport organisation was. Then, the following questions sought information whether the SBL or WIL-environment was more appropriate for the development and/or use of critical reflection and how could one see a student was in
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fact critically reflective within a WIL-environment? After establishing the definition used and value of critical reflection the respondent perceived, the researcher presented the definition used in this research that distinguishes between individual learning dimensions and social learning dimensions. Additionally information was acquired as to whether students were aware of the social, cultural, and political influences within their experiences and if so, whether they applied their knowledge in the WIL-environment. Information was also sought about whether students moved beyond merely performing for school outcomes and whether their actions contributed in any way to the organisation. Further questions were asked to determine the expectations for each respondent, if any, were there for the students and WIL-supervisors at the beginning of the WIL period and in what way these expectations matched reality? In addition to this question about expectations, information was sought by the researcher about whether a student was more individually oriented or socially oriented and the characteristics distinguishing a (non) critically reflective student. The researcher also believed it was important to identify if the respondent could explain the factors influencing the development and/or use of critical reflection? The interview was concluded with a question about what the respondents considered the value of critical reflection should be in sport management programs and by revisiting the respondent’s definition of critical reflection.

In some cases it was possible to ask additional questions such as those regarding the value of critical reflection in organisational top-down structures. The researcher found this question to be important because all interviewed WIL-organisations who host students are aware of the fact that students who perform their work experience are there mainly to learn. This focus on students’ learning of their experiences in WIL implies a shared view of ideas and this view can be understood as a bottom up approach to learning within the organisation. In the case of a bottom up approach this view of sharing ideas may be considered as a more appropriate climate for the use and the development of a critically reflective attitude compared to a top-down structure.

6.3.3 Data analyses of case studies.

The information collected from the semi-structured interviews was processed manually by the researcher (a process of open, axial, and selective coding) rather than
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through the use of a software program. The reason to conduct the process of coding the information from the interviews manually was that each case study was initially be considered as a separate piece of research for a within case analysis. At a later stage of the research process, analysed results from each case study are compared and integrated to look for any overlaps, inconsistencies, or striking outcomes of individual statements for a cross-case analysis. Gratton and Jones (2004) and Edwards and Skinner (2009) provided a number of reasons why they favour manual analysis over the use of computer analysis of the information from the interviews. First, they considered a manual analysis allows the researcher to experience a greater degree of better familiarity and ‘feel' with the recordings which will consequently make the research analysis less mechanical and less routine. Additionally, most of the available software often fails to locate the context of given responses, while the context is considered highly relevant in this research to explain the role of critical reflection.

The researcher began the data analysis by reviewing and coding each interview (open coding) individually and then across all respondents to ensure that all relevant information was captured. Initial labels were marked by the researcher with a summarising phrase and were assigned to segments to condense the data into categories (Boeije, 2010). In Table 6.2 on the next page an example of open coding is provided. The example concerns an interview with two male WIL-supervisors who responded to the question seeking their personal definitions of critical reflection. At this stage of the coding process categories were not linked as the main focus was on the data.
Table 6.2: Example of open coding of an interview with two WIL-supervisors responding to the question: What is your own definition of critical reflection?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R.</th>
<th>Interview transcript</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>Abbr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes, in our case I would say that students should be able to identify themselves with the organisation...with the WIL-organisation...and relating to the organisation’s point of view. What I do at the moment, does this also benefit the company and maybe they will....reflection should come from more than one point of view...Perhaps also going back to the educational institution. Is it beneficial for the organisation in which I perform my internship? Beforehand there have been conversations between the student and the organisation and there is an understanding between these two parties. I want to become a sport manager....can I do my internship at your organisation and would this be of added value to your organisation. Then, in return...I try to look at it from the point of view of the sport management program, is it worthwhile for my education as a sport manager and the things I have to do for my program. So in short, can I make the transfer from theory to practice and from practice to theory?</td>
<td>Identifying themselves with the organisation</td>
<td>ORG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Added value for the organisation</td>
<td>AV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relating to the organisation’s point of view</td>
<td>ORG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflecting from more than one point of view</td>
<td>RMV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits for organisation</td>
<td>BO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making the transfer from theory to practice</td>
<td>TR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making the transfer from practice to theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oh...that’s a tricky one. Just the concept alone... Well, ok, I notice with myself that when I want to learn things, I will investigate things. I expect a pro-active attitude from students and if they only sit back and wait until I say something, they won’t get that far. So in my first interview with them I clearly state, also towards the educational institution, what kind of student I can supervise here. I always want a pro-active student who is prepared to, let’s say, to work hard, but who also see things which need attention. Look, the student that scored 9,6 out of 10...was working on his assignment from school...but when he noticed that it was busy at the reception, he immediately took action... I didn’t have to say anything. He felt that, do you understand? But I also think, they also need to....I never provide them with the end solution, I provide the questions and give them the opportunity to find the answer for themselves. But I will not give them the answer. They have to do it themselves, and when they have something concrete in writing, I provide them with feedback. Then, I have a look what they do with that information. And that is the thing that I find very important. What do you do with that piece of information I just gave you? And as I was just telling you....Marc, in the past three weeks, has the feeling he has finished with his assignment. His mentor was really satisfied with the result. I think, yes, it’s a fine piece of work, but in practice it’s useless. When I see the description in that book and what he did, but how to execute it...is nowhere to be found. Every week I would like to briefly see what they did. And that is their responsibility. So they have to...critical reflection is...taking responsibility for everything you do, reporting back to your supervisor and show what you do with someone else’s feedback.</td>
<td>Difficult concept</td>
<td>DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigative attitude</td>
<td>IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pro-active attitude</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td>TIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stating expectations</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pro-active student</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflective</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical value of a theoretical piece</td>
<td>PV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taking responsibility</td>
<td>TR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>AC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The codes were assigned with abbreviations, sorted alphabetically and compared to other respondents’ responses. Participant demographic information such as a student’s length of WIL-experience or a WIL-supervisor’s role within the organisation were added, as were memos taken by the researcher noting additional ideas or thoughts expressed by the participants and the researcher at the time of the interview. Categories as they emerged during the initial stage of coding were also included. The initial open coding process was followed by axial coding to refine the categories and to develop themes. The codes were reviewed by the researcher in order to determine whether they covered the data sufficiently and new codes were created. Some of the codes could be linked to the interview questions, but reoccurring codes were also found in other answers to questions that had been prompted by the researcher during the interview. For example, sometimes participants started talking about related issues such as stating examples of their personal learning experiences in the past. Codes that appeared frequently in the data indicated these codes belonged to a dominant or core category. Additionally, codes that did not seem to belong to any found dominant category within one question were compared with codes from data belonging to other questions. In deciding which dominant categories stood out in the findings, the following criteria were used:

- The two main research questions
- The content of the existent literature fitting the theoretical model.

During the coding process new literature was investigated depending on the core categories found in order to test the propositions and to create new thoughts about the data. This synthesis of data through establishing relationships is just as important as the selection of core categories (Boeije, 2010). Related codes and synonyms were merged into categories and themes that were initially too broad were divided into sub-themes (see Table 6.3). As the researcher identified connections between themes, categories were rearranged into a hierarchical structure to group and distinguish between the main dominant themes and the sub-themes. Table 6.3 on the next page is an example of the open and axial coding of a WIL-supervisor’s definition of critical reflection. Codes that could not be categorised into dominant categories were placed into a separate box and were compared to codes used in responses to other questions (Boeije, 2010).
### Table 6.3: An example of open and axial coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Student’s Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relating to both the side of practice and theory</td>
<td>Taking initiative, Pro-active attitude, Investigative attitude, Taking responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Feedback from various people</td>
<td></td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action, to really do something with it or a change of behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting things in perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying yourself with the organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the different culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to the organisation’s point of view</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give meaning to context in order to make reflection possible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the responsibility towards the customer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting from more than one point of view</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-active attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting things into context (yourself, your actions, the company etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the transfer from theory to practice and vice versa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigative attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate conversation from earlier conversations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CR is) feeling with the environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight in your own performance, awareness of own performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of internal and external organisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing argumentation of actions and performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To perform in a certain context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added value for organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at the bigger picture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CR is) working with empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not just do things, but being aware of your actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A matter of feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CR is) feeling with the environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CR is) working with empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer from th. to pr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to both the sides of practice and theory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to the organisation’s point of view</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added value for organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate conversation from earlier conversations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Feedback from various people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action, to really do something with it or a change of behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing argumentation of actions and performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying yourself with the organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once key themes were identified a final review of the data completed the selective coding process (Boeije, 2010) that eventually led to an answer to the main research questions (Boeije, 2010). Key nodes were queried to help identify and test patterns by comparing and contrasting the extent of agreement between participants’ responses. Apart from ultimately finding an answer to the main research questions, establishing relationships during the whole process of the research was considered to be equally important (Boeije, 2010). In identifying the core categories during the selective coding process the characteristics of the core categories overlapped with the main topics of the interview questions. This overlap was consistent with the characteristics of the core category according to Boeije (2010). Boeije (2010) stated that the characteristics supporting the identification of core categories are for example a repeated appearance in the data and that core categories explain a large percentage of the variation in the data found. Examples of core categories found within the current data are various definitions of critical reflection, norms and values in WIL held by respondents, expectations respondents had when performing tasks in WIL, characteristics and non-characteristics of critically reflective students, and dependent factors of critical reflection such as the awareness for the socio-cultural context in WIL. These core categories served as the basis for answering the two main research questions about the value and place of critical reflection within a sport management curriculum.

6.4 Ethical Considerations

6.4.1 Informed consent materials.

The informed consent materials were included in the web-based survey and a link was distributed via email to all potential participants by the researcher or through the primary contact person at each college. To ensure it was evident to each individual member of the three stakeholder groups that the research was conducted under the auspices of Griffith University, the information about the research, the reasons for the research, how the research would take place, and the invitation to take part in the research voluntarily included both the vocational institute’s logo and the Griffith University logo, as well as a link to the Griffith University web site. The questionnaire asked the participants to share personal information. The reasons for using an informed consent package were that informed consent allowed the participant to make an informed decision to
The place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum

voluntary take part or refuse to take part in and to inform the participants that the collected personal information would be treated confidential.

- The questionnaire was only one data collection instrument in a suite of project instruments,
- The collected data was in a re-identifiable form for possible future use of data in the research process.

The informed consent form (see the Appendix G) clearly stated all individual details would be kept confidential.

6.4.2 Ethical considerations.

The research was entirely conducted in the native language (Dutch) of the respondents (as the research took place in the Netherlands). As the primary researcher is bi-lingual (Dutch/English), no concerns or complaints about the translation protocol of the research were expected to arise. Still, to diminish any potential concerns, an external expert translator was consulted to check the translations during the entire research process. The primary researcher had a very sound understanding of the cultural protocols, social norms, and the laws of the jurisdiction where the research project was conducted. To assure ethical conduct, each communicative step in the research process was written both in English and in Dutch and was communicated to both the researcher’s supervisors.

Following clearance from the University Ethics Committee, invitations to each individual member of the three stakeholder groups to participate in the study were sent by e-mail. When a participant agreed to take part in an interview (which could be indicated as a voluntary option within the survey) a meeting was scheduled by the researcher by phone or email. Students were invited to participate via their educator. The researcher assured that participation in the interview was voluntary and the confidentiality of interview details was assured. The participants were told by the researcher that they could remove themselves from the interview at any time they felt uncomfortable or felt unable to continue with the interview. Participants were also told by the researcher that they could refuse to answer any questions for any reason. An example of the letter of consent prior to the participation in the interview can be found in the Appendix G.
6.4.3 Confidentiality.

Institutions did not know the participatory status of individuals as each individual (through the use of a list held by the institution) received a personalised link to the survey. The expression of interest of respondents or the actual participation in the survey was only known to the researcher and not to the institution or any third party.

All data obtained from respondents were kept confidential and was reported in an aggregated format (only reporting combined results and never reporting individual results). All questionnaires were password protected, and no one other than the primary investigator and two assistant researchers (the researcher’s supervisors) listed in the consent form had access to them. The data collected were stored in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it was deleted by the primary investigator.

6.5 Summary method Study 2, Study 3 and Study 4

This section explained the procedures of the data collection and analyses of the case studies. An overview of these methods is shown in Table 6.5 on the following page. The next chapter presents the interview findings of Study 2, Study 3 and Study 4.
### Table 6.5: Overview of Case Study Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Quant/Qual</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Addressed aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>13 WIL-supervisors</td>
<td>1. Can critical reflection enhance sport management education? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. What do sport management students understand critical reflection to be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What allows students to develop critical reflection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. How can critical reflection be embedded into sport management curriculum to enhance sport management education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>10 Educators</td>
<td>As in Study 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>5 Junior students</td>
<td>As in Study 2 and Study 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 Senior students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7. Findings: Phase 2 – Case studies

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results for each of the three case studies are presented. The purpose of each case study is to understand the role of critical reflection in WIL from a different perspective. It seeks out the expectations and realistic utility of a student’s critically reflective attitude in WIL. As a result, this chapter provides data that addresses two research questions: (a) In what ways can critical reflection add value to sport management education and (b) what place should critical reflection have in sport management education?

7.1.1 Addressed interview topics.

The findings of each case study in Phase 2 of the current research are presented by addressing the main topics found in the interviews through the process of coding. The presentation of the findings of each case study follows a similar format. The findings of the WIL-supervisors (Study 2) are presented first, followed by the educators (Study 3) and the students (Study 4). The core categories found in Phase 2 are:

1. Definition of critical reflection, with attention to the respondents’ definition, the individual and social component of critical reflection and related social, cultural, and political aspects according to CT (critical theory);
2. Value of critical reflection in sport management, focussing on the context of the workplace and its possible contribution to the organisation;
3. The most appropriate environment, containing opinions of respondents whether an SBL-environment or WIL-environment is more suitable for the development of critical reflection;
4. Perceived characteristics of a critically reflective student, with attention to the features of a student who displays a critically reflective attitude or the features opposite of a critically reflective student;
(5) Level of a student’s critical reflection, reflecting on the various stages within a professional identity development process;
(6) Expectations and reality of students’ performance, comparing the hopes of WIL-supervisors of students performing their work experience and whether students live to these possible high hopes;
(7) Factors within WIL for developing or using critical reflection, looking at the influences of creating, establishing and sustaining a climate for critical reflection within the sport management curriculum;
(8) Place of critical reflection within the curriculum by revisiting the value, place and definition of critical reflection with the respondent.

7.2 The WIL-supervisors (Study 2)

The specific context determines the opportunities for learning (Billett, 2013), as is the supervisor’s behaviour towards the supervision (Cooper et al., 2010). Supervisor support contributes to the development of a supportive work environment by encouraging, reinforcing and providing opportunities to practise new behaviours (Cooper et al., 2010; Joo & Shim, 2010). Despite the acknowledged positive influence a supervisor’s support can have on the training transfer, it is important to find out what a supervisor defines as critical reflection in order to better interpret the interview findings.

Drawing on Billett’s theory (2008b) that learning is a relational system between the individual and the social in workplace learning, it is necessary to take into account that each employee in an organisation is expected to have a different professional interpretation. Therefore, first the definition of critical reflection used by the interviewed WIL-supervisors is examined. By exploring and establishing the used definition of WIL-supervisors it could contribute to theory development of critical reflection. Additionally, asking the WIL-supervisors’ definition of critical reflection and asking them to distinguish, if possible, between reflection and critical reflection, offers a deeper insight into their beliefs and opinions about what critical reflection involves in WIL in order to answer the main research questions.

7.2.1 Defining critical reflection.

The first question of the researcher for the respondents in the interview was: What is your definition of critical reflection? This question was followed by asking the respondents whether they could clarify what critical meant in critical reflection? WIL-
supervisors define the concept critical reflection as a continuous process of intentionally looking back on experiences. By reflecting on those experiences and focussing on what and how to improve, the expectation is that students should take responsibility for their actions. One WIL-supervisor defined critical reflection as follows:

*I think a student is critically reflective when he or she is aware of his actions, takes a look at the results of those actions and consequently learns because of it*

The process of looking back on experiences is described by one of the WIL-supervisors as follows:

*have the goals been reached within the pre-set time frame, could I influence people and have I been faithful to the structure I have set out, did I stick to the planned strategy?*

Four WIL-supervisors mentioned that acting on that awareness of reaching pre-set goals in order to improve is a prerequisite to call it critical. In other words, it is important for students to implement the result of the reflection, rather than merely being conscious of their actions. The result of all of this action would have to lead to an improved performance of the student. Performance is a difficult term to define, but the improved performance should, according to the WIL-supervisors not be limited to the individual student, as improved individual performance should also contribute to the overall organisational performance (Harteis & Billett, 2008). One of the WIL-supervisors described her expectation of a student’s contribution to the organisation in the following way:

*A student is critically reflective when he or she can identify himself with the organisation and can relate to the organisation’s point of view.*

This above statement about a student’s identification with the organisation supports the work of Chan (2013), who suggests that by extending merely the compulsory component of work experience, a key objective of a WIL program for students is the development of self - and organisational awareness and the learning progress for individual and organisational performance within their chosen vocation and/or workplace.
This development of self-and organisational awareness seems to overlap with the effects of organisational commitment as described by Joo and Shim (2010), such as the power that binds an individual to the organisation. The commitment WIL-supervisors talk about in their responses can be interpreted as the moral or affective commitment of an employee or intern to the organisation and its values (Joo & Shim, 2010; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). In short, WIL-supervisors believe that students should demonstrate an affective bond with the organisation. However, these binding forces such as being proud to be part of the organisation as one of the members might have different origins, meaning that students who perform their work experience in WIL can have different goals or motives for their commitment to the organisation (Joo & Shim, 2010; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). For example, students may feel they have to be committed because they are being assessed by the WIL-supervisor. Students may believe they need a good assessment from their WIL-supervisors to be able to graduate. Students who are being partly paid for their work experience, which may be a motive for their organisational commitment, could have the feeling of being locked into a job contract. Ending their part-time contract would mean students would not only lose their job but also risk losing their work placement. This loss of work or internship may influence the way students critically reflects on their work-learning experience. Students need to develop a reflective approach towards their WIL-environment whilst developing their understandings of a professional attitude and the related professional obligations (Higgins, 2011; Schaap et al., 2012). One of these professional obligations is for example organisational commitment. This process of commitment develops through individual and social encounters (Billett, 2008a) within the two main related learning environments of SBL and WIL.

7.2.1.1 Individual and social aspects of critical reflection.

The relation between the individual and social aspects of critical reflection is important to report about, because this relation is one of the found themes within the coding process. All respondents agree that critical reflection can be operationalised within the three individual and three social dimensions. WIL-supervisors mention the fact that when students start their work placement students are mainly individually oriented, rather than thinking about their personal role within the organisation. During the course of work experience students progressively develop their critically reflective attitude towards the social oriented aspects of critical reflection such as critically sharing opinions with others, being open about making mistakes and challenging
groupthink. WIL-supervisors believe when students are displaying these kinds of social behaviours (e.g., sharing opinions), students are becoming aware of the group process, which is considered by the WIL-supervisors to be an important factor of being professional within an organisation. One WIL-supervisor formulates the display of students’ social behaviour the following way:

Yes, I think that is a logical development process [from the individual into the social aspects] ...Students start as an individual, they bring their own individual qualities into this organisation ....and of course, it depends a lot on the individual student. Some students are not ready for it yet. One of my work experience students said: I am who I am and I am happy to contribute to the team, but don’t ask me to do things I can’t do yet. His input lifted the team effort and it contributed to the group process by reacting how he did, because they accepted his argumentation.

There’s also a natural development of course. They [students] get older and gain more confidence, more knowledge and I guess they gradually become more aware of the group process.

This statement reflects the opinion of WIL-supervisors that students, whether they are an employee or an intern, should be aware of the importance of the social aspects of working and learning in an organisation. According to the respondents, students need to be critically reflective to see the links within the whole organisation. Two supervisors mentioned the importance of the organisational context and being conscious of your own abilities as a student, because by knowing what you can do or cannot do within that context determines a great deal the ability to critically reflect. For example students should know first how to personally improve before seeing ways to improve performance in others or supervise other people or colleagues within the organisation.

7.2.1.2 The influence of critical theory on a student’s enactment in WIL.

Critical theory claims that when critical reflection is to be critical, the social, cultural, and political power structures should be carefully observed (Reynolds, 1998). One of the interview questions with regard to a student’s enactment with the WIL-environment, was whether students were also aware of the various social, cultural and
political power structures within an organisation? WIL-supervisors considered this question to be a complex one. Therefore, when a respondent had difficulty understanding this question, examples were provided by the researcher (e.g., the existence of hidden agendas of colleagues or the influence of internal and external organisational power structures) to illustrate the social, cultural and/or political aspects of work. According to Fox (2009) this awareness enhanced learning or made students more conscious of existing issues of power and gender imbalances or other biases held by the members of the organisation. Students in WIL would inevitably be confronted by power issues and the WIL respondents acknowledged that only a limited number of their supervised students were conscious of these power issues; however respondents indicated that acting and incorporating that awareness into the students’ future actions is a goal that cannot be achieved by most students:

*I think at the moment it is too complicated for a student. On average they are 18, 19, 20 years of age.....no, they are not involved with those things as we are.... That is my opinion.*

*No, probably...., whether they are aware of it, is one thing, I think they are....on the other hand, will they act on it.....?*

WIL-supervisors do see the importance of being aware of organisational power issues. One of the supervisors describes the students’ awareness and dealing with various power influences as a way of conflict management that is part of the organisation’s dynamics. This WIL-supervisor believes that the existence of power structures in an organisation is part of an organisation’s sustainability. As much as he believes students should be made aware of the existence of the “external” (as the WIL-supervisor calls it) factors he and one other supervisor think that students need to be protected against these power structures because students are still in their learning phases, especially when students perform their WIL in their junior year.

*Sometimes in conversations with students you notice at a certain moment they realise....oh, so that’s how it works...than you realise students are looking at the bigger picture for the first time. You see that they are aware their activities or assignments are not just an isolated activity, but that the activity is part of the greater whole*
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It’s good to confront them with these issues, but gently….It is still a work/learning experience for a student…

The WIL-supervisors see students’ realisation of being part of a greater whole as one of the desired outcomes of a student’s critically reflective attitude towards their experience in the workplace, as in their opinion it adds to the organisational productivity. From the responses of the WIL-supervisors it is clear that WIL-supervisors believe students are not ready yet to be exposed to this kind of critical reflection. Despite all respondents from the stakeholder group of WIL-supervisors agree that students in an ideal situation need to encounter these social, cultural and political aspects within an organisation, they also all agree that students who are aware of these power structures and act on this awareness are an exception to the rule.

One supervisor, who also supervises university sport management students, suggests

Even for university students it [recognising social, cultural and political power structures] is a bridge too far. It are only the better students who ‘know the score’ here. University students perform during their 2-year internship within each sport sector [profit, not-for profit and non-profit] and we ask them: can you see the difference between these three sectors? They find it very hard to answer this question, it is pretty abstract thinking. However, the better students are very aware of the fact what they did in a commercial context, they cannot behave the same way in this setting. This is not the language they speak here. But the ones who are aware of these unwritten rules, are an exception to the rule.

Only students who are advanced sufficiently in their abilities to critically reflect are able to become aware of these influences and act accordingly. The question that remains is whether a student’s critically reflective attitude could be better developed or used within an SBL-environment or would a WIL-environment be suited better? The next section goes into this issue of what the most facilitative environment for critical reflection is and describes the related themes found in the responses from the WIL-
supervisor in order to obtain more information for answering the place of critical reflection within the sport management curriculum.

### 7.2.2 SBL or WIL?

One of the questions for the WIL-supervisors in the interview was whether an SBL or a WIL-environment would be more suitable to develop or to use students’ critical reflection as a tool for the process of learning of students. Ten out of 13 supervisors found the WIL-environment more adequate and appropriate for the development or use of students’ critical reflection. As a result of performing their internship at the workplace, students are forced to think and reflect about their actions more often in a WIL-environment than in an SBL-environment. Although the researcher mentioned the important link between SBL and WIL and that critical reflection should be used in any environment or situation, the main reason why supervisors believe a WIL-environment is found more appropriate for the development and use of critical reflection is the fact that there is a direct link with the organisation and its customers. Respondents described the direct link as an instant reaction from for example customers towards the organisation or employees when customers are dissatisfied with the service they received. Students “cannot run away from our customers”. WIL-supervisors describe it as if there is an (immediate) confrontation with the target group and that the consequences are almost instantly noticeable for the people involved as opposed to an SBL-environment: right

*In an SBL-environment there is always a second, third or fourth chance to do things the right way, …*

*…WIL is not a role play situation, because students have to deal with real customers and their needs and wishes*

According to the supervisors, the majority of students have the desire to be seen as employees during their WIL period, especially towards the end of their WIL experience; as a result, the motivation for students to perform on that employee level is regarded as high by the WIL-supervisors. One supervisor also mentioned that students are more motivated to learn in the “real world” than in a school environment. His interpretation was that, after talking to his supervised student about engagement during WIL, “the majority” of students at school were not motivated. From the supervisors’
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reactions it was clear that the WIL-environment is a more suitable and a more fitting setting for developing or triggering the use of critical reflection than the SBL-environment.

*The school system is perfect for a strategic planner. There is too much emphasis on study results; do I have enough credits to pass? In the real world: mate, you have been late for the third time and I won’t accept that or ……It is a context where it matters. They can derive much more meaning in order to be able and be willing to reflect.*

WIL-respondents say that students in the workplace are confronted with issues that they would never encounter within a comfortable school environment. Another response was that there is a direct effect of students’ actions in the workplace, as the customers who students work with are real customers. The internship for students is not just executing tasks; students notice that communication skills matter in situations when they have to relate to other people and when students have to conform themselves to organisational norms and values.

7.2.3 The value of critical reflection for sport management.

One WIL-supervisor rephrased the value of critical reflection as “being able to show the practical value of theoretical knowledge”. According to the WIL-supervisors the value of critical reflection relates to individual and social learning that contributes to organisational productivity. Kim (2004) stated that without learning of its members an organisation cannot sustain and that the individual members within the organisation are personally responsible for this learning process. This explanation about the relation between learning and sustainability of the organisation relates to the operationalization of critical reflection in this study with its individual learning dimensions and social learning dimensions. The responses of the WIL-supervisors show that the value of critical reflection for sport managers is that by critically reflecting on themselves (student) sport managers learn how to act and react within a certain context (individual learning) and they learn to recognise what their role is within the social organisational relationships (social learning).

*If you are studying to become a sport manager, it means that once you graduate, you want to be in middle or higher management. If you are not able to*
look at yourself in a way that you ask yourself: what can I and should I improve, you don’t belong there……..You have to manage people. When you notice your way of managing doesn’t work, you are going to have to take a long hard look at yourself, how to establish a way to make it work.

The assumption within this study is that the WIL-environment is open towards learning and critical reflection, and that critical reflection may be beneficial for each member of the organisation to the process of learning and working within this environment. However, the researcher was very interested in the WIL-supervisors’ view on the following question: How would you value critical reflection within a hierarchical top-down structure (as this kind of structure limits proactive individual behaviour because higher management dictates employees only to be productive and not to ask questions or to come up with innovating ideas (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010)? In order to determine the value of critical reflection it is also wise to look at its value in organisational learning transfer climates which may be considered as less endorsing towards critical reflection. One of the WIL-respondents stated:

Yes, that is a tricky one…because here [in this organisation] it is mostly all based on a relationship of equals. Look, when decisions have to be made, I will make them of course, but it is always on the basis of equality. But I do think when you have the skills and competence to put your own work into perspective, you will have an instrument to,, so to speak, to do you own your thing within that hierarchical structure. Whether you feel comfortable within that setting, is something else………..

…..It is still possible to deliver good work. And they will probably eventually resign…They will try to find another job with a different organisational culture. The question is, when you are so self-conscious, will you step into that hierarchical structure in the first place?

This statement reflects the importance of being aware of your surroundings and the context you are expected to work and learn in as a student. It is evident that a critically reflective attitude also can prove its value in top-down organisations. Students who are critically reflective may way their options better and make a well-considered decision to comply or to resign from the organisation or may reconsider to apply for a
position in such a company in the first place. However, it poses the question how a supervisor notices what the difference is between a critically reflective student and a non-reflective student or less reflective student?

**7.2.4 Characteristics of a critically reflective student.**

From the previous WIL-supervisor statements it is clear that they regard it important to reflect critically; but what kind of characteristics do critically reflective students have in order to distinguish themselves from non-reflective students in WIL? According to the WIL-supervisors, students who are engaged with the organisation and are pro-active in seeking feedback from the supervisors and other member of the organisation, are better equipped for critical reflection. Other characteristics mentioned by the WIL-supervisors that contributed to the use and development of students’ critical reflection included students’ self-initiative, self-criticalness, and self-responsibility.

*When students become more critical, they become more aware of the environment; they become more sensitive and are more emphatic and in sync with their environment. If this is not the case, they will act as a bull in a china shop.*

*I think that those are the students that don’t live by the moment, but also think of the consequences in the near future. This is the result now, but in order to improve this result we have to do this and this. For development, for growth…. They also are aware of what NOT to do when they make choices.*

These statements are similar to the processes of learning or reflective practice described in theoretical models of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Korthagen, 1992; Lewin, 1951; Schön, 1983). These models suggest that learners go through a cyclic process of subsequent stages, starting with the stage of concrete experience. Reflection in concrete experience is conducted on a personal basis followed by abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, leading into the next concrete experience.

One supervisor made a remark about students who were elite athletes (whom were also in the college’s sport management program and whom he supervised). He believed that these students were the opposite of the average student:
They (elite athlete students) know exactly what kind of choices they have to make in order to reach their goal in their sport career. They are very capable of maintaining that goal or to eliminate those things that endanger that goal. They are good planners and organisers and are self-critical because they just want to reach that particular level within a set time and are able to anticipate on unexpected events. What do I have to do to get there? What do I NOT have to do to get there...

The question was raised by the researcher whether these elite sport students were perhaps more occupied with themselves and their own goals and therefore possibly not aware of the organisation’s collective goals? In other words, are they more individually oriented or also socially oriented?

No, they cut off that part [social orientation]; they don’t look at what is interesting to their environment or others. They set the bar very high for themselves and are not interested in, very black and white, what others feel or do.

Apparently these goal oriented students are very critically reflective towards their individual learning but are reluctant or are less interested in the collective goal (when it doesn’t suit them towards their own goals). The benefit of having these students in a team is that they are considered to be the ‘motors’ of a project and they can occasionally tow along the lesser gods.

Responses from WIL-supervisors also gave some insight when students were not critically reflective. Their responses varied from missing self-initiative, having no realistic world view, being too much absorbed with themselves, having no vision or goals, or not wanting to learn. The codes that appeared frequently in the open coding process were all related to the individual dimensions of critical reflection, which means that students who were considered not critically reflective were not aware of or not interested in the social learning dimensions. These differences in students’ characteristics allow a determination of the level of a student’s (critical) reflection to be examined.
7.2.5 Level of a student’s critical reflection.

Despite having students who are very much aware of their own goals and are consequently more individually critically reflective, they can be unaware or not interested in the collective goals. One of the main comments from supervisors is that students are missing the organisation’s objective and do not seem to relate to the corporate culture.

They are much more occupied with executing their tasks or busy working on their school assignments. Most of the time finishing curriculum related assignments is their foremost priority.

It is expected by industry and educational outcomes that students become more responsible for their own learning process towards the end of their course or WIL experience. The responses indicate that a student’s level of critical reflection intensifies as the process of professional identity development increases. This assumption connects with theories about professional identity development (Dehing et al., 2013), such as the five-stage skill acquisition model (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, as cited in Sykes & Dean, 2012). In this model the five progressive proficiency achievement stages of (1) novice, (2) advanced beginner, (3) competence, (4) proficiency, and (5) expertise are explained. The three-stage apprenticeship model explains the process of (1) belonging, (2) becoming, and (3) being (Chan, 2013).

These professional identity development models (the five-stage skill acquisition model and the three-stage apprenticeship model) suggest that the last stage of development in which the student knows what is required, what needs to be done, and how to achieve that by making refined and distinct judgments in various situations is the final stage. But do junior or senior students ever achieve these final stages during or at the end of their WIL-experience? What kind of expectations do the WIL-supervisors have of students in WIL and what is the reality?

7.2.6 Expectations and reality.

The complexity of the tasks in the workplace increases during their time in the WIL-organisation and it is expected that students become more responsible for their own learning process towards the end of their course. As they progress it is also expected they progressively improve in working more independently, taking more
initiative and ideally, contributing to the organisation as a work-ready employee. At the same time, students are assessed by educators and WIL-supervisors on their tasks they have to execute in order to graduate at the end of the sport management program.

A discrepancy lies in the expectations of the WIL-supervisors and the student’s performance in reality. Supervisors have the expectation that a student will contribute to the organisational productivity and moreover, that the student is aware of his responsibility towards this contribution. The student needs to be loyal towards the organisation and that the student is there to learn from the organisation and vice versa. In other words, they expect that at least a student reaches stage four out of the five stages of proficiency, in which a student develops a stronger emotional involvement and commitment in particular situations or certain contexts. Ideally for WIL-supervisors it would mean that students would develop themselves during the WIL experience as work-ready employees. Vocational and higher education also expect to deliver work-ready graduates. However, according to all respondents this is not always the case.

Yes, I expect from a sport management student, even if it is only an intern, that he is also a spider in the web. So also showcases diversity in his actions and that he is knowledgeable about the internal organisation of our company and also how to keep this organisation sustainable. Who are all those external parties? These students should learn to think like we think

Supervisors want students to learn from the WIL experience and they are aware that they are there as a mentor for the students. However as WIL respondent William noted,

What I expect from a sport management student, is that he dares to challenge certain things in the process and he has an idea how we should be able to tackle those things. That a student dares to criticise the operation of the company and comes up with ideas of how and what, that is very important

It is clear that the expectations of supervisors do not match with reality. Students seem to struggle making an organisational contribution. Also here it can be concluded that students fail to fully develop the social learning dimensions of critical reflection.
7.2.7 Factors for development and/or use of critical reflection.

WIL-supervisors are considered by all groups of stakeholders to be a role model for the students when they start their WIL experience. It is therefore important how WIL-supervisors perceive the influencing factors for the development or nurture of critical reflection among students. Recent research has shown that the more you challenge a student in their assignments, the more positive effect it will have on the learning relationship (Noe et al., 2010). However, there appears to be limitations as to how far a student can be challenged before learning is repressed and no learning will occur. WIL-supervisors mention the importance of choosing the right moment for more responsibility or more difficult assignments during a student’s WIL experience.

When your goal is to bring someone to a higher level, you need to challenge that person constantly. That person needs to be on his toes. Not too much, but just enough to challenge that person constantly...

At the same time, some WIL-supervisors say it is important to discuss the goals and expectations at the start of the WIL experience. By talking about aims and objectives with students beforehand makes the assignments or tasks clearer to both parties. When students know what is expected of them it is easier to reflect on the set criteria. Noe et al. (2010) believe that interpersonal dynamics and the elements that influence relations between individuals like a learning transfer climate are a key factor in student engagement and the success of learning.

When students have said yes to an assignment, if they embrace it, then I think you have realised a successful starting point with each other. This joint agreement on goals and criteria is the basis for a possible student’s critical reflection.

It is important that an organisation is not focused primarily on profit and production. WIL-supervisors acknowledge the importance of making profit as a way to survive and sustainability for an organisation, but all are interested in an employee’s learning process and providing learning opportunities to WIL-students. At the same time, despite organisations offering WIL-experiences to students; they also expect students to contribute to the productivity of the organisation (Schaap et al., 2012).
that productivity would mean focussing more on the short-term financial outputs of an organisation, it would endanger the time spent on learning processes.

**7.2.8 Place of critical reflection within the curriculum.**

The final question asked was: what is the place of critical reflection in the sport management curriculum? In order to get an objective answer as much as possible, it was highlighted that students, beside the right reflective attitude, also needed the required theoretical knowledge and practical skills to perform in WIL.

Then, respondents could state how many points should be awarded for the place of critical reflection within the curriculum, on a scale from 1-10.

*It should have a high mark, must have; especially for the junior and senior students. Critical reflection certainly may have an 8 or a 9 out of 10.*

*When I look at it that way, then critical reflection is an invaluable part in it [WIL] and I would give it an 8 or a 9 out of 10*

These two statements highlight the way all participating WIL-supervisors recognise the importance of critical reflection for WIL-students within a sport management context. However, WIL-respondents are cautious of when to introduce critical reflection into the curriculum. They feel some students are not ready for critical reflection within their junior or senior year:

*Yes! yes. Not just a place in the curriculum but also....it has to be at the right moment......some are just not ready for it.......They are here for 4 years and tick the boxes in 4 to 4,5 years. And when we talk about the moments you really critically reflect, well.....probably zero! So you also have to look within the curriculum....is it the right moment for that individual? Is the moment there, than you would have to be so flexible in your course.......then you should take action.*

In the eyes of the WIL-supervisors critical reflection is considered as an essential component within the sport management curriculum. Yet, the moment of introducing critical reflection into the curriculum should be well considered.
7.3 Summary: Study 2

This case study (Study 2) examined students’ critical reflection, as observed and perceived by WIL-supervisors, during a WIL placement in a sport management context, and addressed questions such as: How do WIL-supervisors define the term critical reflection? Do they concur with this study’s definition? How do they perceive the value of critical reflection within their organisation? Does reality live up to the expectations?

WIL-supervisors have a different perspective of a student’s role in the organisation. In general, student development of the individual dimension of critical reflection matches the expectation of the possible future employers. Yet students show little growth in the social learning aspect of critical reflection which indicates that students are not fully prepared to be sport management professionals. Moreover, there is overall no progress in the use of critical reflection on the sport management profession, when critical reflection would be viewed from a critical theory perspective. In other words, students may be aware of or come into contact with some of the cultural, social and political power structures within an organisation, but very few students have the capacity to act on this awareness according to the WIL-supervisors. It is as six of the supervisors describe: “it is a bridge too far for them [students].”

There is a clear understanding amongst the WIL-supervisors of the value of critical reflection for the field of sport management. It is regarded as a key factor in the learning process in order to contribute to the enhancement of individual and organisational performance. By being more self-aware of their role in the organisation, they would be more competent managers. WIL-supervisors indicated they missed the commitment of students as employees towards the organisation. Students, especially junior students were more engaged with themselves, rather than being aware of the organisational context; their primary goal was on finalising the curriculum related assignments rather than their involvement with organisational performance. Placing emphasis on being critically reflective within the curriculum however should be treated with caution as the development and supervision of critical reflection takes a significant amount of time, effort and expertise. A number of conclusions could be drawn from the interview data, these are:

- Students do not live up to the expectations of their potential employers.
- The WIL-supervisors are satisfied with the students’ development of the individual component of critical reflection, but students stay behind in the social component of critical reflection.
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- WIL-supervisors state this lack of awareness of the organisational context in WIL has consequences for the performance of their organisations
- Ultimately, senior vocational sport management students are found not to be work-ready as a sport manager

These conclusions will now be compared with the views of the educators and the students. In the next case study the findings of the educators are presented.

### 7.4 The Educators (Study 3)

This case study describes the educators’ perceptions (Study 3) of how critical reflection may contribute to learning and transfer in vocational sport management education. The educators’ definition of critical reflection is important because educators have a direct influence on the students during SBL, similar to the supervisors in WIL (Lancaster, Di Milia, & Cameron, 2013). Assuming there is more time to reflect in an SBL-environment than a WIL-environment, students will share their experiences with educators and fellow students during their time in class. Educators ideally influence the transfer from theory to practice by utilising strategies to promote reflection such as learning portfolios. All educator respondents

- have worked in a similar context where students have performed their work experience,
- lecture sport management classes and students share their WIL experience with the educators in class and/or
- visit the students at the WIL-organisation and evaluate the students’ performance with the WIL-supervisors.

#### 7.4.1 Defining critical reflection.

The first two questions of the interview always were: what is your own definition of critical reflection and is there a difference for you between reflection and critical reflection? One educator defined reflection as:

> a continuous process of investigation and analysis of how individuals performed and how individuals compared their own norms and values with the norms and values of other people or compared with the direct environment

The goal of this nonstop reflective process was always a further improvement of professionalism, which he considered an absolute necessity for a student, regardless of
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the field a student would specialise in. All respondents agreed on the fact that reflection was looking back on your own actions and behaviour and what your own part was in that whole process. This process of reflecting was illustrated by another respondent as a three stage process:

Reflection to me is systematically looking back on each of your required competencies. Then, a second step is not just establishing what is happening, but also why it is happening. The third step is to realise what is needed to change, develop and improve that competency or behaviour

This three stage reflective process is similar to earlier mentioned (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.2) ELC model from Kolb (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Kolb, 1984; Kolb et al., 2001) or the five stage ALACT model for reflection (Korthagen, 1985).

A third respondent described the development of critical reflection like this:

Critical reflection to me is prompting for external impulses from my environment in order to improve or adapt internally to these impulses as an individual. In order to call reflection critical, it means that an individual should go to a deeper level. When I would resemble critical reflection to an onion, reflection would occur at the outer rings, while critical reflection happens at the core of the onion.

All respondents agreed that when reflection was to be called critical reflection, students should take action when they realise there is something that needs change. It means that it would be necessary to take extra steps for the improvement of future actions or to change the behaviour or performance which was initially not good enough.

One educator added to the above. He felt that a critically reflective attitude meant that students were not scared to share their opinion and that the change in behaviour, actions or performance should always happen with the help of someone else. This could be a WIL-supervisor, fellow students or colleagues, which mean that critical reflection, apart from having an individual aspect, should have a social aspect. These findings are consistent with this research’s definition of critical reflection:
Critical reflection is a learning process through which one is able to apply skills, attitudes, knowledge, experiences, and dispositions in order to critically assess one’s existing frames of reference, which fosters individual and social learning and contributes to organisational productivity/performance.

Respondents did not specifically mention the latter part of the definition that critical reflection should contribute to the organisational performance. It can be inferred that educators are perhaps less interested in this part of the definition of critical reflection. It might also be the case; less attention is paid in SBL to this part of the definition which would potentially diminish the effect of integrating practice into theory and vice versa. At a later stage of the interview, when the question was asked to the educators whether students were aware they were expected by WIL-supervisors to make a contribution to the organisation, only three respondents thought students were thinking of the organisation as well. However, it was doubted by educators whether students were consciously working towards developing a strong commitment with the host organisation, in order to make a substantial contribution to the organisational performance. The most prominent aspect of defining critical reflection to the respondents was the aspect of taking action. In other words, educators felt that what students reflected upon, was initially used to improve students’ own personal performance, rather than using the outcome of the reflection for potentially improving the organisational performance.

7.4.1.1 Individual and social aspects of critical reflection.

Critical reflection in this research is defined as a combination of individual and social learning aspects. When the question was posed whether respondents recognised these individual and social aspects of critical reflection, the overall consensus was that all respondents endorsed the presence of these two elements. Additionally, the respondents saw a progressive growth in the critically reflective attitude between junior students and senior students. One respondent described it like:

_I think they are more up to it [social interaction] when they have developed themselves personally. They think about others and see themselves as part of a group. We see that for example in our senior students when they are performing coordinative tasks…. so, when they have to coordinate tasks for_
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younger students or take on teaching tasks, then the awareness kicks in: I can apply the things I have learned

He expounded upon his point of view by saying that:

*However, they need to be made aware of this, but then you see a reinforcement of what they have learned and they see the value of what they have learned or perhaps want to invest a bit more effort and time in it.*

Two respondents felt that this was also their role as an educator to instil this awareness of being part of a group and that this could be enforced by communicating with each other.

Although, when expounding on this point of view, three educators specified that the individual and social aspects were not automatically developing in a subsequent order. Depending on the individual student and the situation the student was placed in, the student sometimes was focussing on the individual dimensions and sometimes on the social dimensions.

Some educators provided examples of some of the dimensions of critical reflection. First, the individual dimension ‘experimenting’ was regarded by one of the respondents as a necessary element in the learning process in order to gain experience. However, without enforcing or promoting communication of that individual (learning) experience it would remain something which would not be shared with others. By asking students questions they would be required to reflect on their actions and to share their thoughts on these experiences.

*Everything starts with communication…..We need to extract those thoughts of the individual student….that is most vital…*

Second, the social dimensions ‘openness about mistakes, ‘critical opinion sharing’ and ‘challenging groupthink’ were mentioned by two respondents. They thought the social dimensions of critical reflection were only present in students who were older and who had more life experience:

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Sometimes I see it [social dimensions] happening in the third year and that they grow into it. They gradually take more responsibility and confront people on their behaviour. To challenge groupthink…, it happens once in a while; it’s only for the happy few. I don’t see that happening on a large scale in a Level 4 diploma course. It is hard to reach that [level of critical reflection]

Can you really expect that [social dimensions ‘openness about mistakes and challenge groupthink’] from students of this age???

It could be interpreted that students progress in their critically reflective attitude and move into the stage of social interaction in order to learn, but that it needs to be reinforced by others, especially in an SBL-environment by educators. Facilitating this integration of individual aspects and social aspects of critical reflection in supervision are consistent with the reflective practice approach of Siegers (2002). Reflection is defined as a process of situational meaning making and seen as integration at two levels of the personal and professional dimension of learning or reflection.

Siegers (2002) is more focused on the personal dimension of reflection which has three elements, thoughts, feelings and action. The integration of these three elements is at the first level. At the beginning of students’ training or internship the professional context is not present (yet), and consequently, students are more involved with the personal dimension. The more students are able to be aware of their own role in situations, the more connections can be made between aspects of their behaviour. The more advanced students get in critical reflection, the better they get in connecting the personal with the professional dimension. The integration of the three elements of the professional dimension (individual, profession and the actual situation at work) is integration at the second level. At this level the individual students has integrated both levels and both dimensions into a new professional person with a new identity and the related competent professionalism.

7.4.1.2 The influence of critical theory on a student’s enactment in WIL.

The students’ awareness and questioning of power structures and agendas, as proclaimed in critical theory, within a WIL-environment seems to be only for a select group of students. The next quote summarises the responses of all the educators:
I don’t want to proclaim that not a single student is aware of these things, but the student needs to be....Look, politics and power are pretty abstract concepts. There only a few students who possess a sensor for these things

....and I wonder whether they are very aware of it, or if that has something to do with reflection? But when they become aware of it.....I have experience with a couple of older students who have experience in various companies....., I think they have the capacity to reflect in such a way, if they want to get noticed within the company, then they know which people not to challenge or question those people. And that they need to make sure they get accepted within a certain group. Yes, it seems to me....just very few students

All respondents agreed that for students to become aware and act on the aspects of critical reflection, as proclaimed in critical theory, was only for the exceptional student. The majority of students were unable to challenge the status quo, according to the educators’ point of view. Still, how individual and social aspects of critical reflection are utilised in an SBL or a WIL setting is focused upon in the next section.

7.4.2 SBL or WIL?

The more suitable environment for critical reflection is for all except one respondent the WIL-environment. All respondents share the opinion that critical reflection should be used in both environments, but that the real life situation at the work place offers a more meaningful context:

It [critical reflection] belongs in both environments, but the WIL-environment is the best environment for the development of critical reflection. Especially in WIL, because there the student perform their tasks in a meaningful environment, especially there...Look, in class....a student always sees it differently....SBL or WIL. Sometimes we notice.......students just regard internship as more important. Because they know... that is the real world. And in the real world, there is where it happens. Sometimes these experiences result in some conflicts. That can be very positive, but they need to gain work experience and that is what happens in WIL

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I would put, in order of importance, the WIL-environment on number 1. This is mainly because of the type of student. It is VET and it has a high practical element. I can lecture as much as I want, but the learning effect in the practical phase is much bigger so once critical reflection has descended, my return on investment is larger in SBL. The other way around is less...

Contrary to the opinions of the other respondents, one respondent thought that an SBL-environment was better suited for the development of critical reflection. In his opinion educators were better equipped or trained to guide students into critical reflection than WIL-supervisors as a result of their teacher training and their teaching experience. He had the opinion that compared to eight to nine years before, when the sport management curriculum was more content based than competency-based; there was little focus on behaviour. In the current model of sport management there was more attention on a student’s behaviour and on communication with a student. Before a student could progress from one year into the next students first needed to show or demonstrate they were ready for the next level through conversations with their educator. Students needed to specify why they should be progressing into the next year of the program:

Well, I think us educators need to assess, more than we used to do, the importance of the behaviour and the development of the behaviour. In the past the assessment was mainly targeted at the content of knowledge. Today, that is less the case. Also the assessment of a student’s social skills and whether he can function in a group and how he develops within that group process is important...

Regardless of the proficiency of educators or WIL-supervisors; the attention for critical reflection has grown in sport management education in the past few years. Perhaps as a result of the transformation towards a more competence-based sport management curriculum; the focus is not restricted to theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Communication skills and social skills have become equally important. Still, after investigating the documents of the qualification structure critical reflection is not specifically mentioned as one of the required competencies or educational outcomes within the vocational sport management curriculum. So far, the WIL –supervisors have indicated that they regard critical reflection as a very important aspect of the sport management profession. Critical reflection is regarded as a key factor in the learning
process in order to contribute to the enhancement of individual and organisational performance.

7.4.3 The value of critical reflection for sport management.

One of the respondents who had worked in the Leisure and Outdoor recreation business was convinced that in order to warrant professionalism within the work field it was an absolute necessity to be critically reflective. Without acquiring a critically reflective attitude, students would not improve or get better in a shorter period of time; in other words, to employ critical reflection would lead to a more efficient enhanced performance in their job. Improved performance or getting better in what you were trained for through critical reflection was a reoccurring statement from respondents. By critically reflecting students would become aware of their own action and what should be done in order to grow personally and jobwise. These respondents’ opinions are consistent with Tarrant’s (2013) view of reflective practice as a fundamental aspect of personal and professional development. The concept of ownership of learning is a key component for college readiness and beyond (Conley & French, 2013). Conley and French (2013) explained ownership of learning by using two conceptual models. The first model understands the students’ readiness to learn in an SBL-environment and their further career to be a function of various components organised into four elements, or keys. These keys are in short think (cognitive strategies), know (content knowledge), act (learning skills and techniques), and go (transitions knowledge and skills). The second model explains ownership of learning, which is a sub element of the third key, as being composed of the following five elements: motivation and engagement, goal orientation and self-direction, self-efficacy and self-confidence, metacognition and self-monitoring, and persistence. The first important step in acquiring ownership in learning is the element of motivation and engagement. By being intrinsically or extrinsically motivated students are triggered to ask themselves or others questions and eventually initiated to set learning goals. These elements of ownership of learning return in the next section of the characteristics of critically reflective students and are reflected in the respondents’ statements:

*Every time students should be asking themselves critical questions; continuously asking the why-question. Why am I doing this step? What will the consequences be of my actions?*
Eventually, according to the respondent this would lead into a structured goal setting. Ideally, it would extend beyond graduation (e.g., lifelong learning) when students would challenge themselves to develop within their daily jobs and future life. This referral to employability was also a comment which was used by six other respondents. These respondents made the link between critical reflection and upholding a professional attitude.

As a sport manager or coordinator you are one step up the hierarchy ladder. He is not just executing tasks, but he has to oversee the whole process and is able to manage people....when he is not critically reflective towards his own behaviour, he won’t propagate that to his employees. Perhaps it becomes even extra important to him; besides the fact he should take his own responsibility very seriously, he should also have to make sure that the people he is in charge of take their responsibility seriously.

Two respondents resembled this upholding of a professional attitude as having professional ownership or professional commitment. They saw this commitment as a necessary step into becoming a work-ready graduate or a prerequisite to be considered for employment. These statements of professional ownership and its importance for workplace learning are consistent with recent research by Klotz, Billett and Winther (2014). They referred to the upholding of a student’s professional attitude at the workplace as vocational identity which was found to be aligned with a student’s engagement and job competence.

One respondent made the link between critical reflection and employability and personality:

I really think that students, who enter the professional field, should be made aware of the fact they can also develop a personality; and grow into this personality. So firstly, critical reflection is important in order to develop personality and secondly, it is important for employability reasons.... When you get someone for a job interview who can reflect very well, knows what his goals are and how and why to get there or you can choose someone else who just continually grudges his shoulders and doesn’t know.....That is for me the motivation to pay a bit more attention to critical reflection
Another respondent thought that critical reflection made people communicate more through conversations. Because of these conversations or dialogue as he called it, norms and values became apparent.

_The best thing would be when you could bring it all back into the classroom. So, not that students learn things in WIL...of course that is very important,... but that fellow students benefit from what these individual students have learned in WIL.... That individual WIL experiences can be brought back to school in order for other students to learn from these experiences._

Although the above statement relates to the individual and social learning aspects of critical reflection, it is specifically targeted on the transfer from WIL to SBL. Rather than just the benefits of the transfer from WIL to SBL for the individual student, all the other students could benefit from the experiences of individual students. The respondent hoped that if students shared new ideas and experiences with others, for example students, educators and WIL-supervisors, they would start to understand that issues could have more than one explanation and that it could be possible for one individual to hold multiple perspectives on an issue. According to the respondent, students sometimes realised that their own ideas might have validity, even when, for example they had differing viewpoints with their educator in SBL or their WIL-supervisor. According to Perry (1970, 1997) who developed a scheme of intellectual and ethical development, at this point students have reached abstract or relativistic thinking, or recognizing that different societies, cultures, and individuals could hold different norms and values, and that all could have validity.

At this stage students can, and should, begin to develop criteria for judging the validity—or the desirability—of differing viewpoints. It is also at this point that students should take responsibility for stating criteria by which validity could be judged and how they could set their own goals in future. The Perry (1970, 1997) perspective focuses both on the process of meaning making as an individual and on knowledge construction in a specific social context (Moore, 1994). In the previous comment the respondent was referring to the benefits of peers or peer groups in the SBL-environment, but he also saw the value of critical reflection in and towards a WIL-environment:

_I think that a reflective student is better equipped to determine his own course. What he will be doing after graduation. That he realises....ok, this is_
Seven respondents elaborated on the posed question regarding the value of critical reflection in an organisation with a top-down structure. One respondent shed another light on this issue. He thought that a top-down structure had its advantages for students who were still unsure about their own capabilities or who were still in puberty and in need of structure and in need to be told what to do or not to do:

*There is nothing as nice as when you’re 18 to hear and to be told what you should do….you can get your breath back. They thrive in these kind [top-down] environments. At one point this can change into give me some freedom….but somewhere you have brought something to a close…. Once they can handle that freedom and have developed cognitively, they should be put back in a more bottom-up organisation.*

He noticed that students who had a more critically reflective attitude chose a WIL-organisation that was more focused on development; students who were less critically reflective generally ended up in a more controlling top-down organisation to do work experience.

The other respondents all agreed that even in these kinds of ‘less perceptive’ environments for being critically reflective, it still had value in a sense that critically reflective students could make their own decisions. However, it was also possible that because of this top-down structure some students would give in of being critically reflective:

*At the end of their senior year they reflect where they want to go. If they end up in a top-down structure I am almost positive they will give up their critically reflective attitude straight away because…..ok, I do what I am being told, because that is their own drive so to speak. So, I reckon the structure, the culture of an organisation is very important for a student to persist that critically reflective behaviour or not.*

All seven respondents agreed that critically reflective students would eventually have to face the confrontation with a less receptive structure towards critical reflection.
within a company, but that these students, as a result of being critically reflective, were able to make a well-augmented decision because of their critically reflectiveness.

For employability purposes, it becomes clear that students, who are perceived by educators to be critically reflective, would be better employees. Critically reflective students are thought to be more independent and more pro-active and as a result of this critically reflectiveness they would perform better as a student in both the SBL-environment as the WIL-environment. In the SBL-environment: students who are critically reflective are not afraid to share their experiences (good and bad) with other students; students have a clearer view of what lies ahead in regards to their possibilities in future jobwise. In the WIL-environment: critically reflective students are considered as an added value to the organisation. They are more pro-active, more independent, and are able to provide more input than none or less reflective students. For example, they are capable of pointing out some of the possible existing narrow perceptions of other members in the organisation.

The focus in this section was on the value of critical reflection and these findings were needed in order to answer one of main research questions: What is the value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum? Still, the sport management student is the subject of this investigation into critical reflection. To provide a broader perspective on this matter, more insight into what a student motivates to critically reflect or what a student misses in order to be capable of reflection is also desirable. What makes a student to stand out from the crowd, in regards to critical reflection? How do educators distinguish a non-critically reflective student from a critically reflective student?

7.4.4 Characteristics of a critically reflective student.

It is difficult to describe how and when students demonstrate critically reflective behaviour. WIL-supervisors mentioned that the critically reflective students displayed more motivation, self-initiative, self-criticalness, and self-responsibility than the less or non-critically reflective students. These characteristics of learners are considered to be key factors for a more effective learning transfer (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010; Weissbein, Huang, Ford, & Schmidt, 2011; Yasin, 2014). Educators base their opinion mainly on direct observations in an SBL-environment. These observations of the educators are considered equally important as the observations of the WIL-
supervisors in WIL, because the extent of the transfer between an SBL-environment and a WIL-environment is believed to be dependent from the use of critical reflection. Initially, the existent gap between theory and practice and attempts to improve the transfer of learned knowledge, skills and attitudes between the educational institution and the industry by integrating learning and work in the workplace, was the main compelling motive to start this research in the first place.

Besides being responsible for assessing the school assignments, educators are also required having conversations with students about their school career and how students think how to plan their WIL experience. All respondents mentioned the use of learning portfolios. Students are required to reflect on their WIL experiences and put that experience into writing. These documents are called personal development plans (PDP) and personal activity plans (PAP). The PDP can relate to a student’s personal learning questions and learning questions of professional content. The PAP is derived from the PDP and can relate to individual oriented learning activities and learning activities of subject matter content. The PDP and PAP are comparable to an agenda or a roster, it’s a means to an end and can be changed accordingly (Beroepsonderwijs, 2012). Apart from these documents, students are required to work on assignments (made by the educators and/or WIL-supervisor) during their WIL experience and reflect on these assignments in writing. This document is called the WIL journal. At the end of the WIL period students hand in their copy of the WIL journal in which the hours of work experience has been signed off by the host WIL-organisation. The WIL tasks which are needed to successfully finalise the WIL period has been signed by the WIL-supervisor and by the educator. In short, educators based their opinion whether a student is critically reflective on conversations with the student, the student’s behaviour in the classroom, the student’s performance at the work place based on the views of the WIL-supervisor and the student’s reflections in writing in the PDP’s and PAP’s.

Yes, in class it [critical reflection] is difficult to see. It is possible, in my opinion, to see whether students are actively engaged by asking questions, think of situations in which they themselves….for instance: Yes, sir…I have done this and this and that, is that good? Or should I have done it differently.....That student is not only listening to the general lecture I am giving, but this student relates the lecture on himself. The student makes enquiries about his or her actions in the past, whether that was good. …That is in my opinion reflection, because that student is trying to apply my information on him...
One respondent described it as a three stage process of maturity:

First of all I can notice a difference in non-verbal behaviour. Students where the process of critical reflection has set in.... I don’t have to ask anymore to put off their hats, or not to drink or eat in classroom.... The difference between junior and senior students is big...sometimes it is a shame, in a way, to realise they are starting to grow into adults.
Second, within those two years I teach them I have about five deep conversations with them and before each conversation they have to hand in a reflective journal in writing. They write much more openly and detailed about themselves....
Third, when they become senior student, they start to question my authority, in a good way, they start to challenge the information I share with them. They become critical...

The respondent stated that in the second stage of maturity, students write more openly about themselves in reflective journals. This relates to another respondent’s comment that critically reflective students are more inclined to place themselves in a vulnerable position. In this respondent’s opinion the WIL-organisation is more prepared to invest in students who are prepared to be open about their mistakes and who are not afraid to ask for help. The prerequisite for critical reflection is according to four respondents being engaged as a student. To them it all starts with being interested, in being involved, in being motivated.

Someone who is capable of critical reflection wants to learn and as a result, is always hungry for information and this person just enjoys doing things.
I try to recollect images of my students...but I think that is true...

The respondents also felt that students were starting to become critically reflective at the moment when students related aspects of their work experience to themselves. One respondent noticed that students, who were in his opinion more
critically reflective, would compare their own situation and their actions with other students:

...By talking to fellow students....students will interact through dialogue with other students. Like...this is worrying me, how I handled that situation....how would you have done that?....and that they create an image along the way how they should have handled the situation by talking and comparing their actions with other students

Being aware of the organisational context as a student is considered by the respondents as the main characteristic of being critically reflective, because context awareness requires abstract thinking. When students are capable of noticing the ‘bigger picture’, they become more aware of the objectives and interests of the host organisation. Rather than being absorbed with themselves and as a result remain trapped in the individual dimension, context-aware-students have moved into the social learning dimensions of critical reflection.

Finally, three respondents mentioned that when students were getting older and gained more experience they generally showed an increased level of critical reflection. Students’ enhanced awareness, an increasing display of responsibility and being able of making moral choices based on the existing social norms and values from adolescence into early adulthood can be explained as a result of the changes in the prefrontal cortex which is still in development during these years (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006).

Cognitive executive functions such as discriminative attention and decision-making along with multitask-skills, might advance during adolescence. In addition to executive functions, there is evidence that the prefrontal cortex is involved in several other high-level cognitive capacities, including self-awareness (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). Social functions such as thinking more abstractly and the ability to take on the perspective of another person are also progressively developing towards adulthood (Eisenberg & Morris, 2009). In order to be successful in social communication, it is essential to understand other people’s thoughts, feelings or moral beliefs; above all, it requires being aware of one’s own subjective state of mind (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006).

Some of the previously mentioned characteristics such as maturity and increased experience might also be considered as factors for the development of critical reflection.
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However, based on evidence the characteristics of a student are more internally oriented and part of an individual’s personality, whereas the factors as presented in 7.4.7 are more externally oriented. These external factors are considered to be less controllable.

From the educators’ statements it can be inferred, students who are more self-involved and more easily satisfied with themselves or with their performance than others are less critically reflective. According to the respondents these students are not intrinsically motivated enough to continuously improve themselves. One respondent compared this lack of interest in others with still ‘being’ in the individual aspect of critical reflection.

Despite the assumption humans are herd animals; the individual human being is in fact very involved with his own personal interest and is self-centred

From the many statements respondents made it can be deducted that non critically reflective students are students who are unable to put themselves in the centre of attention, but persevere in placing the situation or task as the main point of attention. They are very descriptive when putting their experiences into writing with hardly any personal reflection on their own actions in a certain situation.

7.4.5 Level of a student’s critical reflection.
The educator as facilitator has a fundamentally significant role in helping students to become reflective practitioners (Groen, 2006). Two educator respondents referred to Dubin’s model (1961) of competence and incompetence in human learners or the conscious competence learning model. According to Dubin, acquiring and developing competences followed a cycle of four stages, starting from unconscious incompetence, through conscious incompetence and conscious competence, to unconscious competence. Figure 7.1 depicts this cycle of four stages.
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The potential fifth stage (Kilgallon & Thompson, 2012) can happen when there is a relapse into the first stage of unconscious incompetence or into unwanted behaviour. The role of critical reflection could be viewed as an overlapping competence for all stages as it enforces awareness. Most students start from a position of unconscious incompetence at the beginning of their work experience. According to the two respondents the first task of an educator or WIL-supervisor is to assist the students to become conscious of their incompetence and become aware of the required skills as a professional. This puts the students in a position to learn and to increase their confidence in what else they need to develop. As they encounter more experiences they become more skilled but still at a conscious level. In the final stage, once being skilled, the level of consciousness decreases again: less conscious control is required for a competent performance. These four stages could be transferred to the individual aspects and social aspect of critical reflection. Some students are very conscious about their individual skills, but are unaware about their incompetence within the social dimensions of critical reflection. Respondents elaborate about students’ involvement with the organisation or rather their lack of involvement with the organisation.

As mentioned in Study 1, there are similarities with various learning theories and stages of development. One respondent made the link of an educator’s facilitating style and the student’s level of critical reflection with Hersey’s and Blanchard’s (1982) situational leadership theory. Hersey & Blanchard (1982) suggested that leaders, in this case educators should match their teaching style to the development level of students being taught. This respondent’s approach towards the development of a student’s

Figure 7.1: Stages of competency

Source: (Dubin, 1962)
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critical reflection was based on the different levels of a student’s competence and commitment towards self-responsibility, which would be expected from the one to two years gained through an intern experience. A difference exists between the junior students and senior students in their ability to critically reflect.

They [students] enter the classroom on a Level S1 or S2 and they leave on Level S3 or S4............ When I try to go from Level S2 towards an S3 with someone, I consider that to be part of the relationship behaviour. When someone is in Level S1 or Level S2, they are in a lower sense of relationship behaviour and I am still a hierarchical teacher. I provide with the ins and outs of the task behaviour what I expect from them. Towards the end of their senior year I do the opposite....

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) categorised all leadership styles into four behavioural types ranging from S1 to S4. They characterised the leadership style in terms of the amount of task behaviour and relationship behaviour that the educator provides to their students. Within the S1-stage a student or group of students is provided by the leader with the what, how, why, when and where to do the task. This stage is best described as a one-way communication process. Little by little, depending on the situation at hand, the leader is gradually providing less task behaviour and introducing more relationship behaviour. In the final S4-stage, the educator is still involved in monitoring the process, but the responsibility has been passed to the individual student or group of students.

All respondents saw an improvement in the level of reflection when students go into their senior year. They noticed that junior students were more realistic of their expectations when going into a new year of work experience in their senior year. The first WIL-organisation had likely introduced students to experience workplace relations, management structures, and workflow processes. As a result, students would choose a new WIL-organisation more consciously on the expected match between their goals and the anticipated objectives of the company and gain a deeper insight into professional (sport management) practice.

They become more critical on their own action, but they also better see the interest of both the company and junior students and fellow senior students

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There was consensus among the respondents that only a small percentage of all students would be able of reaching the level of context awareness and would be capable of seeing the objectives and interests of the host organisation and to be aware of their own role in this whole process. Related to a student’s level are the educators’ expectations and what the situation is in reality, which is presented in the next section.

### 7.4.6  Expectations and reality.

The value of critical reflection according to the educators is that students ideally will continue to be critically reflective once they find a job. However, as one educator said:

*My feeling is that they lack the realisation of what kind of steps they should be making in order to improve. It’s all about the here and now..... Their work at school is all based purely on results: I have to get this grade to pass that course and that....the rest, well, all right...*

It is the same comment which was made by the WIL-supervisors: students (apart from a small percentage) during their internship only do things to pass exams or to obtain a diploma. They are not thinking about the future or how and why they should improve themselves. It is in fact this feeling about students which is shared by all respondents.

*There are always a couple of students who work for a six [6 out of 10 points] ... period. You know, you can lecture all you want, but I only do this because you tell me to.....and that’s it. On a personal level they are nice guys, but nothing more...*

All respondents expect that students, in order to be critically reflective, should have the internal motivation to improve. Respondents feel it is important that students become aware of having done something wrong or that they are aware of what they can improve. Then, students know the reasons why and how to change things in future for not making the same mistakes again.

*A student should at least be self-directive.....and a bit more because he is going to lead others, so....self-directive means you can learn independently and you can self-adjust. When you can’t do this, I guess you can’t lead others.*
Otherwise you get orders from someone else. A manager should be able to work completely independent.

Respondents share the opinion that critical reflection is more appropriate for sport management students than it would be for students who do not do a managing internship or will not have a managing position in the future. The reason for this is having the responsibility of being a role model for the people you need to manage. In accordance with the expectation that students will progress in being critically reflective from their junior into their senior years

Yes, especially senior students….They already have one year of WIL-experience in another organisation. They take along the positive and negative experiences. And when they have their first interview with their new WIL-supervisor at the new WIL-organisation, they certainly take that along.... The ones that critically reflect at the end of their junior year.....these are the ones who will benefit from it when they have their introductory interview for placement at the new address. These students will do that by expressing their expectations and goals...This is what I will be working on this year, this is what I still need to develop and how you can help me with that? However, this is a small percentage, students who can do this...

A common remark of the respondents was that only a small number of senior students matched the expectations of the educators. When they scored the students, overall, on their critically reflective attitude students received only 6 out 10 points. Some students reached the level of 7 points but there were also be students who only reached 5 out 10 points on critical reflection.

I guess we [educators] are on a more abstract level and have higher goals. Students tend to aim for something that is more appropriate for their age: fun and.....the help they need in order to set those more difficult goals for themselves. That they work towards a certain goal and they need our help to reach that goal..

Respondents all say that they have too high expectations compared to what is achievable with students, as they compare with the one or two students within a senior
year who would be able to reach the desired level of critical reflection. Yet, respondents see a progression in the level of critical reflection towards the end of the senior year. From the comments it can be interpreted that they are pleased to see the progression in students. At the same time, some respondents reflect on how to reach the expectations they have about the students’ critical reflection in SBL and WIL. Some of the recommendations or ideas mentioned during the interviews are presented in the next section.

7.4.7 **Factors for development and/or use of critical reflection.**

At the start of this chapter it was stated that adopting a critical pedagogical approach required educators and WIL-supervisors, who would create an environment where students were challenged and were fostered into questioning assumptions, as well as adopting an emancipatory and engaged orientation towards learning (Dehler, Welsh, & Lewis, 2001; Reynolds, 1997). At the same time, being alert on the potential difficult consequences of introducing this approach was needed. In this kind of learning environment facilitators of critical reflection served as co-learners in which all ideas could be contested (Reynolds, 1999). As a consequence, a learning space was created where students became active knowledge producers and were aware of their own role and position within a certain context (Welsh & Dehler, 2012). Only by utilising this critical pedagogy approach towards critical reflection it was possible to stimulate critical reflection in others. After analysing the comments from the interviews, it can be concluded that all educator respondents share this idea of creating an environment where it should be possible to question the status quo. Additionally, they also were convinced that “80-90 percent” of the WIL-organisations had the same vision when hosting an internship.

*It is just a fundamental key part of being able to function within practice and luckily there is sufficient support by many WIL-supervisors and the benefits of critical reflection are certainly being recognised.*

*The owners of the companies we deal with are very accessible despite the fact it are commercial businesses that need to make profit. But they have an open mind towards critique, provided it is healthy critique....when it is well argumented .....The student also learns a lot more in these kinds of organisations.*
It can be inferred from the educators’ statements that the climate for the use of critical reflection is positive. But what is expected from the student and what may be expected from the WIL-supervisor? What additional external factors, besides the intrinsically motivation of a student for learning, could help the development of critical reflection or could enhance the use of critical reflection in a WIL-environment? Attention for the possible advantages and disadvantages is also needed in order to determine the chance on success if a more prominent role for critical reflection in the sport management curriculum is found.

In these kind of (healthy critical) companies they [students] generally get more opportunities to be self-responsible. With healthy critical I mean that you bring forward positive things and discuss points of improvement….

The aspect of providing self-responsibility to students in WIL is a re-occurring statement from respondents. They think that challenging assignments in practice, in which students are really confronted with more responsibility and that they are challenged to think carefully is a factor for the development of critical reflection. According to the respondents, WIL-supervisors should not be afraid of giving students direct responsibility for their own actions and that it is allowed to make mistakes. However, all respondents agree that this increase in responsibility only should be given to students who are able to cope with that responsibility. Additionally, constructive feedback should be provided by the WIL-supervisor.

Because of these obstacles they [students] are forced to think about it. They are being confronted with themselves and they are required to think about themselves and their own behaviour, what it evokes and what the consequences are …..

The potential consequences of giving too much responsibility to students are also mentioned; especially when students do not receive feedback during their internship. Feedback is an important cornerstone in WIL in order to improve a student’s performance or to reinforce a student’s reflection (Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens, & Stijnen, 2013):
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We once had a ski school that left students to their fate and neglected to provide them with feedback. Naturally, a student has a basic level before starting an internship and should be sufficient but….when you never receive feedback then things can go wrong...

Feedback processes are complicated and the effects on learning improvements and reflection are influenced by many factors. Still, independent of any learning theory, constructive feedback is found to be more effective when it is task- or goal-directed, specific, neutral, and given frequently (Thurlings et al., 2013). Because feedback is provided in a coaching context, there is a key role for supervisors in delivering this feedback in a structured and explicit manner.

Respondents state it is important for a WIL-supervisor to be proficient in providing supervision and to be skilled in facilitating critical reflection. Three respondents are worried that the supervisor’s level of knowledge and skills of facilitating critical reflection may not be sufficient. They acknowledge that supervising a student is very difficult. One respondent is not really convinced that students are mentored well during their internship:

When you take a look at all these WIL-organisations, the difference in being professional is very large which means that at sports clubs the quality of students is often way higher….and now I exaggerate a bit, than the supervisors’. When you really want supervisors to reflect, it requires a lot…..

To assure that WIL-organisations provide quality in supervision, Calibris (see Chapter 6, section 6.1) is responsible of certifying host organisations as a WIL-organisation. In short, Calibris decides whether an organisation is allowed to host vocational sport management students as interns. However, respondents are not convinced that this process of quality assessment assures a student gets a good supervisor. One respondent was convinced that Calibris’ certification policy is opposite to the quality criteria schools had. He felt that the quality assessment was made up by policy makers and not by people who worked in practice as an intern supervisor.

Two weeks ago I visited my students at a particular certified organisation and there was someone who claimed he was the manager [cynically]. But when
I see how he interacted with my students, then I am correcting that person! How can you facilitate a student’s critically reflectiveness when you don’t even master it yourself?

...And I also think, and of course that is due to the current economic situation….that the intern is often used for primary processes instead of the learning process. Those are two entirely different things. These two things can co-exist, but the primary process should not take precedence. And I see that often happening.....

Although only one respondent made a unsatisfactory remark about the way Calibris certifies WIL-organisations, it can be interpreted from other statements that there are always organisations that use interns for the primary processes such as profit making rather than the driving idea that an intern is primarily there to learn, some organisations use interns just for the sake of convenience. Except for this one respondent, all other respondents were overall quite satisfied with the supervision of sport management students at the host organisations. Still, based on the statements of the respondents, the critically reflective proficiency of a supervisor is a concern to take into account for the development and use of critical reflection in an organisation. The respondents, who talk about the possible lack of proficiency in critical reflection of WIL-supervisors, never mentioned the possibility that educators themselves might not be proficient enough in critical reflection or able to facilitate critical reflection in students. Research (Gulikers, 2008; Luken, 2010; Mansvelder-Longayroux, 2006; Stokking, Van der Schaaf, Leenders, & De Jong, 2004; Van Eekelen, 2005) into the proficiency of reflection of Dutch (student) educators in secondary vocational and higher vocational education exposed that they had difficulty of being critically reflective themselves and that learning to learn had no significant part in their own education.

Respondents declared that one of the factors which determines the development for being critically reflective comes down to clearly stating the expectations at the start of a student’s internship. Additionally, respondents specifically mentioned the student’s need for weekly feedback sessions during their internship with the WIL-supervisor. According to statements, in the SBL-environment it is necessary to ‘force’ student to critically reflect through learning portfolios and conversations with fellow students to share good and bad experiences during their WIL period. All respondents affirmed that

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students need to be pushed into and made aware of the benefits of (critical) reflection. If not, students would not, generally speaking, take the initiative to critically reflect themselves:

I certainly think that the student’s ownership, the student’s responsibility, but also the input of a supervisor, he [supervisor] just has to initiate dialogue. If you would ignore the student and would only provide technical feedback, there won’t be much improvement. A WIL-supervisor really has to invest time in giving constructive feedback...

Two respondents mention the use of PDP’s and PAP’s in SBL and the requirement of writing reflectively about their experiences in a WIL handbook during and at the end of the internship. Students within the sport management curriculum are required to prepare a personal activity plan at the start of their internship. During the course of their internship students discuss with their mentor (at school) how they think they will achieve the goals they have set. Despite the fact that keeping track of some kind of logbook, which is promoted by the student’s mentor, it appears from the educators’ comments that students regard this as a compulsory activity. Two respondents think that students do in fact improve in their critical reflection verbally, but that students find it very hard to put their thoughts into a structured piece of writing. Research (Cornford, 2002) suggests that reflection does in fact increase the verbal communication of students, but that it does not mean students improve their performance in SBL. Very often students remain too descriptive in writing down their experiences and what their role was in that situation, according to these respondents.

This lack of going into deeper levels of reflection is a result of the context of the organisation. One respondent used to visit healthcare students who did their internship at a medical rehabilitation centre, a nursing home or a centre for autistic children. He made the following statement:

There they [health care students] are continuously, 24 hours a day, occupied with behaviour. They are aware of having respect…..and to the supervisor…they are only concerned with behaviour and they really explore deeper levels.....How come you find it hard to?....or why are you so anxious or nervous?....when you go to a fitness centre, it’s just.. wham, boom...You have to
The setting of a rehabilitation centre is very different compared to that of a fitness centre. It can be assumed that the focus in a rehabilitation centre is more on behaviour than making profit and that a fitness centre has an opposite goal. Still, except for the above respondent, all other respondents are rather positive about the attitude of WIL-organisations towards critical reflection and they think WIL-supervisors see the benefits of being critically reflective in their supervision. In a recent study Koivu et al. (2012) investigated the influence of clinical supervision on job satisfaction and welfare of nurses. Of the 304 female nurses who participated in the research, approximately half of the respondents received supervision. Nurses who received supervision reported a higher motivation and organisational commitment. Additionally they experienced more positive challenges at work, had better social interactions and got more often feedback from colleagues, patients and management. Also, burnout symptoms occurred less often in the experimental group than in the control group (Koivu, Saarinen, & Hyrkas, 2012). The reported (Luken, 2011) valuable factors for supervision to be successful are that

- A supervisor is genuinely interested in the professional relation and the quality of this work related relation with weekly or two-weekly feedback sessions.
- A supervisor is able to connect with the emotional needs of an intern
- A supervisor helps an intern to perform tasks and procedures within the organisation

In summary, there are numerous factors that influence the utility of critical reflection in WIL. Besides internal factors such as a student’s characteristics and creating a critical pedagogical climate, the proficiency of supervisors or educators in facilitating critical reflection is equally important.

### 7.4.8 The place of critical reflection within the curriculum.

The final question of the interview was what the place of critical reflection should be within the sport management curriculum? Respondents were asked to verbally score the importance of critical reflection within the curriculum on a scale from 1-10. It should be noted, that the researcher emphasised taking into account all other aspects, such as theoretical knowledge or practical skills, which were important to become a work-ready graduate, before scoring the place of critical reflection within the curriculum. Every respondent stated that they all had ‘reflective moments’ with their
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students. At the same time, they all agreed that it should be more specifically emphasised within the curriculum and it should be less ad-hoc.

These statements are consistent with findings of research (Luken, 2010; Meijers, 2008) into the place and value of critical reflection in the Dutch education system. In the Netherlands students are, already from high school onwards, forced into reflective activities such as writing reflective logbooks and portfolios (Meijers, 2008). However, these reflective activities are not well guided and conducted randomly without a clear goal (Kinkhorst, 2002). One respondent concurred with these findings of the above mentioned research findings as he suggested that once in a while it would be good to not reflect all the time and to step back and perhaps sometimes just let things happen.

Four respondents verbally scored 7.5 out 10 points for critical reflection. The rest of the respondents scored 8 or 9 out of 10. One of the reason for scoring a 7.5 is that it was viewed as one of the many aspects within a sport management program that should be developed:

So I would score it a 7.5 because it is AN aspect of personality development and how students learn. Other things are also very important such as theoretical knowledge and practical skills and I guess none of these should be scored 10 points, because there are various aspects that make the whole picture complete

All respondents agreed that it was absolutely necessary to pay more attention to critical reflection and that critical reflection should be or become a more vital component of the sport management curriculum. Two respondents found that, regardless of the course a student was in, it should be an educator’s responsibility to teach students to be a social oriented human being by critically reflecting on their personal norms and values and norms and values of others. Critical reflection should not be limited to a sport management curriculum because it helps to develop a broader perspective on the world.

I think that we need to, within limits, to get involved with critical reflection. When people are born with that attitude they will probably come a long way. When it doesn’t come naturally they really benefit when they are made aware of it by us.
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At a point they will stop going to school, and then it’s really beneficial for those people when they have more or less learned to be critically reflective

Respondents share the view critical reflection is important and should have a prominent place within the curriculum, but how it should be part of the curriculum should be carefully monitored.

7.5 Summary: Study 3

This case study (Study 3) investigated the underlying factors of the place and value of students’ critical reflection, as observed and perceived by educators during a student’s WIL placement in a sport management context. Educators indicated that their expectations of a student’s critically reflective attitude was too high and based on the few exceptional students who were able to meet that expectation of being critically reflective in WIL. Educators were more focused on the benefits of critical reflection in the SBL-environment such as sharing WIL experiences with other and fellow students and use the feedback as a point of reference. Despite the high expectations educators had of their students, they reported a considerable growth in critically reflective characteristics during and towards the end of a student’s senior year. Some characteristics that were attributed to a critically reflective attitude were motivation, self-initiative, self-criticalness, and self-responsibility. However, educators should acquire new competencies in being critically reflective themselves and invest in employing self-directed behaviour for conducting dialogue with students and with WIL-supervisors. In order to conduct these dialogues, educators should develop a new professional identity. It involves creating an environment in which every educator is aware of their role.

In general, educators based their opinions of student’s critically reflective attitude on the two or three visits during a year in which students performed their internship at a WIL-organisation. Additionally, they had conversations with the WIL-supervisor and students about their performance as a sport manager in practice. Although most of the educator’s view is based on things that happened in an SBL-environment it sheds a different light on the definition, the place, expectations, and the value of critical reflection. The findings showed that:

- Critical reflection is considered to be a key component of personal and professional development within the sport management curriculum as it enhances self-awareness, self-responsibility and employability.
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- All respondents acknowledged that critical reflection possesses individual aspects and social aspects, which is line with this research’s definition
- The educators see a vast progression in the characteristics (such as motivation, self-initiative, self-criticalness, and self-responsibility) of critically reflective students from their junior year to their senior year.
- The educators agree that only a very small percentage of all students reach the desired level of organisational context awareness of seeing the objectives and interests of the host organisation and to be aware of their own role in this whole process.
- Educators are aware of one the factors which impede the facilitation of critical reflection such as the (possible lack of) proficiency of educators or WIL-supervisors own critically reflective attitude
- Ultimately, they regard critical reflection to be a key component of the sport management curriculum, but that it needs to be well guided and supported.
- The practical consequences of the inclusion of critical reflection such as a separate module or as part of an assessment are deliberated upon.

Significant efforts are needed to meet the standards and to allow gaining the contributions and benefits of critical reflection in full. If critical reflection is to be used in the sport management curriculum critically reflective proficiency of educators and WIL-supervisors should be warranted. Additionally, critical reflection should not be used as a goal but as a means to an end. Critical reflection should be more specifically emphasised within the curriculum and the focus on critical reflection should be less ad-hoc. In short, it would be better to establish a decrease in the number of times a student is ‘forced’ into critical reflection combined with an increase in quality of critical reflection.

7.6 The Students (Study 4)

This case study identifies students’ personal commitment to themselves and to the (members of the) WIL-organisation in which they complete their WIL experience. It aims to understand the individual and social factors that guide their personal and professional learning and performance as future reflective sport managers entering the workforce. Examining the nature of students’ experiences when starting or continuing an internship at the host organisation could improve the understanding of how students use and value critical reflection within a WIL-environment.
The following markers were used as indicators of critical reflection:

- Examples of any changes in behaviour as a result of reflecting on their experiences
- Statements that the internship should be a win-win situation for both parties
- Show they valued the organisational context
- The ability to identify individual norms and values in relation to social norms and values
- Identifying the advantages and/or disadvantages of a critically reflective attitude

### 7.6.1 Defining critical reflection.

To see if students were able to verbally express their own ideas and thoughts about critical reflection, students were asked: First, what was their own definition of critical reflection and second, could they explain the difference between reflection and critical reflection? Two students initially sought clarification of the question:

*Isn’t that looking back on what you have done,… am I right….????*

*Reflection is looking back on how it went. For example at the workplace, you reflect on your actions and critical is what can be improved. What didn’t go right and making points of improvement….am I looking it the right direction…???

Again it was made clear to the students that there were no correct or incorrect answers or that their own definition was wrong or accurate; the researcher was interested in their own thoughts and ideas. After this clarification the two respondents felt at ease. The remainder of the respondents were relaxed before and during the interview and expressed their thoughts about a critically reflective attitude in WIL and SBL. The overall response on defining critical reflection is encapsulated in the following statement:

*Critical reflection is looking back on your actions in order to assess the good things and the things that went wrong in order to improve them.*
The majority of the respondents indicated that the focus of reflection or critical reflection was on actions that happened in the past. However, three students mentioned the fact that the result of reflection should be improvement for future actions. One student specifically stated the result of critical reflection should be the making of goals for future actions. It seemed difficult for most respondents to describe what exactly made reflection to be critical. The meaning of the word critical to most of the respondents was being more thorough and deeper in the reflection process. One student mentioned the fact it was not only looking at your own actions but also what it meant for the organisation when comparing the student’s outcomes to the norms and values of the WIL-environment. In describing the critical element of reflection other remarks that were made included the need for open mindedness in order to learn and being more specific in what was needed in order to improve future actions.

7.6.1.1 Individual and social aspects of critical reflection.

In the middle of the interview the definition of critical reflection was shared with the respondents. Some examples were provided of concrete behaviours for the individual aspects and social aspects of a critically reflective attitude in WIL, such as asking for feedback from their supervisor or direct fellow employees and sharing and discussing ideas with them. The social aspect of critical reflection and inherently learning is seen as an essential element in the WIL experience. However, it can be concluded from the statements of the respondents that the majority of the students believe that critical reflection refers predominantly to look at yourself rather than to contribute to the organisation.

There is agreement among the respondents that critical reflection involves individual aspects and social aspects, but that the social aspects are more about conversations in order to improve personally or just the fact that it means working together on assignments or projects instead of rethinking about what your own position entails within the whole organisation:

I am more involved with individual learning, because I am the one who needs to graduate; I agree it is important to receive feedback from others, but in the end it comes down you need to do it yourself....
The social aspects of critical reflection, reflecting on and the awareness of one’s own social and emotional involvement within the WIL-environment, and contributing to the organisational productivity, is not a priority to these students. The necessity, as proclaimed within the Social Exchange Theory, to build a social relationship with their supervisor and close colleagues to facilitate learning and integration into the organisation seems not to be important to these respondents. None of the respondents elaborated upon the explained individual and social dimensions of critical reflection. However, one student had an interesting comment and even displayed awareness of social and cultural forces within the work environment. This response will be discussed in the next paragraph.

7.6.1.2 The influence of critical theory on a student’s enactment in WIL.

In Critical Theory, critical reflection can only be called critical when there is an awareness of power relationships, an acknowledgement of the social, cultural and political aspects of experiences, and when personal norms and values are challenged (Reynolds, 1998). Again, as might be expected from the previous comments on the individual and social aspects of critical reflection, all but one respondent stated they were absolutely not involved with the social, cultural and political aspects of their WIL experience. Two students found that these aspects were not part of a critically reflective attitude.

*It has more to do with a deeper knowledge of the company. Of course, it is important to know something about the organisation itself, how the organisation works, what the culture is and what happens within, but I don’t see that it has anything to do with critical reflection, I think critical reflection focuses on the individual and not on the whole organisation.*

The other respondents agreed that they knew it existed, but that in their position as an intern it did not really apply to them or that they expected to benefit from its existence. An important indicator of applying higher levels of critical reflection is the change in students’ behaviours (Carson & Fisher, 2006). This change in behaviour is possible through looking at things entirely in a different way or demonstrating altered responses as a result of increased understanding through experience and (critical) reflection. One respondent talked about her awareness and acting on this awareness of performing her work experience in a different organisational culture. She summarised it like this:
We [my colleague and I] are absolutely aware of the fact that we are interns in a different organisation we are normally accustomed to/familiar with... you really need to look at things in a different way....Organising stuff and different points of interest. That really struck us. We now take things into consideration when we organise stuff...you really need to think differently than you originally would have done otherwise

This respondent (and her colleague student) appears to have made significant changes in her behaviour and demonstrated substantial thoughtfulness towards different norms and values. She attributed these changes directly to critical reflection.

When talking about the importance of being aware of the context of an organisation half of the students can relate to the significance of contextual awareness. The context is described by the researcher as for example knowing with which companies the organisation works with, what the organisational norms and values are, and what kind of hierarchical structure the organisation has. Respondents who were able to provide a more detailed description of their work-learning experience and who also acknowledged the fact they were also there to contribute to the organisation, seemed to be more aware of the organisational context. Acting on this awareness is not automatically apparent when looking at the statements.

When defining critical reflection based on the responses from the students, these responses indicate that students are mainly concerned about reflecting upon their own performance in the WIL-environment. They are not concerned with the benefits of building a social relationship and interacting with their supervisor or other employees on a deeper level. In short, students are more focussed on the individual aspects of critical reflection than the social aspects of critical reflection.

7.6.2 SBL or WIL?

For students in vocational education the school environment and the workplace are the two main learning environments. While in SBL students need to acquire and to integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes and the focus is on personal development (e.g., obtaining a diploma), in WIL they are expected to develop a professional identity and the organisation is mainly concerned with working, making profit and serving
customers. As a result of the two different dominant existing rationales students struggle to combine these two learning environments. Theoretical models which are learned in SBL are not suited to solve the problems encountered in WIL as students lack the abstraction of combining multiple theoretical notions and models with practical insights at the workplace (Boshuizen, 2003; Schaap et al., 2012). One of the respondents referred to this issue through making the following statement:

*It [theory] completely doesn’t add up [with practice]. I said to my lecturer that the theories in class are the essentials what is needed for a sport manager, but that the reality in the workplace, like my internship, entails much more than what has been said in those theoretical models.*

This respondent’s reaction to the mismatch of theory and practice might be the result of a student’s lack of experience in WIL. The way theory is taught in SBL does not allow it to be integrated into the practical environment or alternatively the level of reflection and abstraction may not be developed sufficiently. Students may also find it difficult to recognise what kind of theory fits a particular situation in practice, (Eraut, 2004). This might explain the students ’preference for the WIL-environment. Still, some respondents were pleased with the fact they received information about theoretical models in SBL, as they stated that without applying the theory in practice, it would not be possible to critically reflect.

This concurs with the consensus among respondents that SBL is focused on theoretical knowledge and that this learned knowledge mainly serves personal development. Apart from that, respondents mentioned that in the SBL-environment the possibilities for organising projects were very limited as a result of too many students in comparison to the projects that could be organised.

Another comment that may explain why students regard WIL as more important is that students are not challenged satisfactorily in SBL. The school environment is considered boring, because especially in the junior and senior years, the component of workplace learning increases, and the time spend in SBL is mainly filled with theoretical knowledge:
For Sport Management I have learned much more from practice in the workplace than from the theory here in class. I am just a more practical oriented person. I like doing things instead of reading books.

Placement experience also identifies areas of a ‘knowledge gap’ from the students’ perspective. Students expect that every situation they encounter in practice can be dealt with or explained by a theoretical model that is learned in SBL. The next response of one of the students shows that students expect to apply the theory into practice, which might also be a reason for valuing WIL as more important for the development of critical reflection than the SBL-environment:

When you enter the labour market, it is expected [by educators and WIL-supervisors] you have some theoretical knowledge and practical work experience. You have been taught the theory, but you haven’t been taught certain situational problems. How are you supposed to reflect on that [without the proper experience in practice]???

WIL is valued by all the student respondents as more important than SBL. Respondents commented that they regard WIL as a more valuable learning environment because they:

- are much more involved in projects that really matter;
- experience and learn to respond to challenging situations;
- work with real customers;
- are able to show what they have been taught in SBL to apply in practice;
- can learn from people who have different levels of expertise;
- get valuable feedback on practical situations from their supervisors; and
- are aware they need work experience on their resume for future employment.

All of these respondents’ comments are arguments to explain why the WIL-environment is a more suitable setting for the development and utility of critical reflection than the SBL-environment. For example, one respondent said:

I think WIL is the best learning experience possible, especially within this organisation. You HAVE [emphasis on have] to reflect because otherwise….you work together in a group and when you are not critically reflective not a single
person gets anywhere, so to speak…. Because when everyone is just tagging along and everyone is doing his or her bit, I don’t really think your internship has been worthwhile. You want to know what went wrong, what went ok and what needs to be learned in future. That is the reason why you work together, because maybe that one person might say: I completely look at it from that point of view…and then it’s good to look at it from that perspective.

I guess you reflect a lot in WIL….you really need to be occupied with doing that, because the workplace is a kind of test….not really a test, but you are doing what you want to do in future. I think you can extract a lot of things from that and that school is just theory.

When looking at the responses between junior and senior students it is noticeable that senior students verbally provide a more detailed and more abstract opinion as to why they regard critical reflection as more important in WIL than SBL. The responses illustrate that students show greater motivation for learning in a WIL-context than an SBL-setting. A student’s motivation and the perceived relevance for learning are very important in vocational schools and workplaces (Poortman, 2007; Poortman et al., 2011). As such, when students perceive critical reflection to be relevant and valuable, they will be more likely to put more effort in the development of being critically reflective (Poortman et al., 2011) and as a result, in learning.

7.6.3 The value of critical reflection for sport management.

Students reported ‘knowing what to do as a (sport) manager’, ‘understanding each other better’ and ‘gaining insight from other people’ as valued components of critical reflection in the workplace. One student indicated:

As a sport manager you need to be present…So, it is important [through critical reflection] you know how to act and react when things happen and how you relate to and how to communicate with your colleagues and customers.

For other students, critical reflection was more a way to improve themselves in WIL as a student or employee or to move towards being appreciated as an employee by the organisation. For those students there was a development in knowledge, insight in
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personal and social performance within an organisation, and awareness of norms and values in the wider society:

As a result of being critically reflective you will also be looking back critically on your own personal performance and work performance. In this society it is important to get to know yourself well and that you can point out your own limitations. Hence, it is important to know how to establish that [by critically reflecting].

One respondent reflected on the growth of her contextual awareness as a result of her experience in WIL and reflecting on this experience:

Yes, I actually do two different internships; each one at a different type of organisation. I do the team project [a group of 6-10 university students and vocational students, organising sporting events supervised by a sport management educator. Additionally I perform an internship at a sport agency and it strikes me....and that is nice...along the way you learn how small this world [of sport] is. In fact it’s a very large network; everybody knows everybody and people I run into from my internship two years ago, I approach them via my sport agency. ....And that is kind of funny, I didn’t realise that in the beginning.... You just look at your own company what kind of network they have, you google and you can attract something from the outside...

Another respondent identified the knowledge gained as a result of her work placement experience. She made specific reference to sport event management as an interest and an area for employment after graduation:

I organise a wide spectrum of sporting events including Cruyf court tournaments; street soccer games for the The Hague council. I support sport project-staff in organising tournaments for primary education, sport administration tasks [such as venue selection, budgeting, and recruitment of volunteers], my own assignment and my final WIL assignment for graduation. When I have finished my final assignment, I will be knocking on their doorstep for a job, I am so ready for it....
One respondent was very explicit about the necessity of critical reflection in learning:

*Without being critically reflective, so without being honest and open towards yourself, you cannot learn. You exclude yourself from something you can learn from. You don’t always have to agree with it, but you have to be able to receive it and do something with it…....When you do that right [the ability to receive feedback and act on it], then you are actually learning something. You have a 360° feedback on your performance. If you only look at yourself, you will keep having a blind spot for a lot of things*

The latter part of the statement focused on one of the social aspects of critical reflection; in order to critically reflect, it is good that students assess their own role but moreover, it is also important for students to listen to other people who provide them with feedback, which makes that learning is considered as a collective experience (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). The importance of learning from and with other people within an organisation relates to the development of a professional identity, because learning is an active process in collaboration with other professionals and through participation in different contexts. By sharing ideas with others and deriving meaning from collective norms, values and beliefs, the experience becomes more internalised in a personal professional theory (Schaap, De Bruijn, Van der Schaaf, & Kirschner, 2009). However, the characteristics of a student, such as being motivated for learning, has an important impact on the level of internalising the experiences into a personal theory of learning (Schaap et al., 2012).

**7.6.4 Characteristics of a critically reflective student.**

Students who show ownership of learning in an SBL-environment are considered to demonstrate this in other types of learning environments (Conley & French, 2013). Students who own their learning are described as having more motivation, being more persistent in challenging situations, showing a higher level of reflection, an increased desire to achieve goals and a more developed confidence in their own capabilities in order to succeed (Conley & French, 2013). Students with the previous mentioned characteristics are more likely to reach and sustain a learning transfer between SBL and WIL (Tai, as cited in Yasin, 2014). A student’s ownership of learning in a WIL-environment was mentioned as one of the characteristics of a
critically reflective student by WIL-supervisors and educators (also see Chapter 5, section 5.6.5)

To identify the characteristics of a critically reflective student the respondents were asked to give examples of how they could identify if a student had a critically reflective attitude.

In response to provide examples of a critically reflective attitude in other students, three respondents who were in their junior year talked about their own situation and not about fellow students. They related the question to themselves and gave a description of critical reflection again. By repeating the question and specifically asking whether they could distinguish between a critically reflective student and a less or non-reflective student, none of the junior respondents could add new information. The following quote is representative to their statements:

In his actions and by completing a lot of assignments [to distinguish whether a student is critically reflective]..... I am very much of doing things wrong and that eventually makes you see some points of improvement. That you can see someone’s quality is improving. It’s certainly a process.....

Senior respondents seemed to be more detailed in their descriptions of displaying a critically reflective attitude. Showing more initiative, the willingness to continue learning, setting your own goals after receiving feedback from the WIL-supervisor are a few of the examples that were mentioned by the respondents. One respondent summarised it in the following statement:

A lot of personal characteristics.... You can tell when a person asks more specific questions, when he has more self-initiative. He has read something, doesn’t really get it and asks questions about it because what he has read, could be wrong...those kind of things. I particularly think the commitment and persistence ....I haven't done this and this well....how should I improve or do it better? Asking a lot of questions, be present, show a lot of initiative. People who show this kind of behaviour eventually will be able to self-reflect I guess.....Yes, I think with a lot of other things. It is not just about executing tasks or assignments, also a bit of personal contact and putting more effort in it than what is expected, doing the extra mile so to speak.....
Three respondents identified strongly with their WIL-organisation and felt they were more an employee than an intern. According to those respondents, doing extra things in addition to what would have been sufficient for obtaining a degree/diploma was mentioned as one of the aspects which was highly appreciated by WIL-supervisors. They also said that there sense of responsibility was higher because they felt they were treated as an employee instead of an intern within the organisation. As a result, they felt more at home in the organisation and felt more appreciated, which made them more open towards sharing and discussing ideas with their supervisor.

7.6.5 Level of a student’s critical reflection.

It can be concluded from the previous section that the level of a student’s (critical) reflection relates to a number of personal characteristics such as being self-responsible, taking initiative and commitment. It was also acknowledged earlier in this Chapter (see section 7.1) a wide spectrum of aspects influenced a student’s learning processes in SBL and WIL. Another influence on the learning processes is the learning style of a student, as it has been identified that students learn differently in each of the two learning environments (Schaap et al., 2012).

Learning style is defined as a personal learning strategy in which the students process information, regulate activities, learn concepts and make meaning of their experiences. Three aspects are important to take into consideration when learning in WIL. First, students use different learning styles depending on the situation they are in (Boshuizen, 2003). Second, students also can change their style of learning depending on a student’s expertise level or experience level in a WIL-organisation (Daley, 1999). Third, students can use different learning styles depending on the environment they are in. Learning styles in the work place differ from the ones in SBL.

Four main learning styles in SLB were recognised: reproductive, constructive, versatile and passive learning styles (Slaats, Lodewijks, & Van der Sanden, 1999; Stavenga de Jong, Wierstra, & Hermanussen, 2006). The reproductive learning style comprises reproducing written information or copying educators, while the constructive learners compare information and direct their own learning. The versatile student is extremely motivated and is able to switch between or can combine different learning styles. The fourth, passive learner does not have a particular strategy for learning; in fact, these students are not really motivated and are not clear of how they learn.
In WIL three other learning styles exist: learning by doing, guided learning and reflective learning (Slaats et al., 1999; Stavenga de Jong et al., 2006). The first learning style, learning by doing, is very much practically orientated. These students start their internship without reflecting on their experiences or combining the theory with the practice. This might be a reason why these more practically oriented respondents who reflect on their learning processes in WIL and SBL, mention they are more motivated to learn in WIL. Two junior students mentioned they spent more time reflecting on their WIL experiences than on their time spent in an SBL-environment. The learning style, learning by doing, was identified with the two following statements:

Essentially because I spend more hours thinking about my internship experiences than what I do at school...They matter..... I am only occupied with working on my WIL assignments...organising the actual event happens at the work place..

I guess I am more of a practical person. I just love doing things in practice than just reading books at school.

The students who use a guided learning strategy are dependent on their supervisors for learning and show moderate levels of reflection. They seem to be more dependent on feedback of their direct supervisors. One respondent had a response that showed similarities with the second (guided) learning style in WIL:

If someone neglects to provide feedback or criticism; I just assume it will be ok what I am doing. When someone is in fact critical towards me I can interact with that person and then I can improve myself to a higher level. I am convinced it works that way.

The reflective learners regulate their own learning, are self-guided and as a result, are critically reflective towards theory and practice. Only three respondents showed higher levels of critical reflection, as they specifically talked about one of a manager’s specific task: managing people. According to these three respondents, it was important for a manager to critically reflect on your own behaviour and that you would be aware of your own pitfalls in order to lead or manage people. One respondent put it like this:
You are in between [the two higher and lower levels of management]. As operational manager you belong to the middle management. In fact you have to take punches from both sides; when you planned your strategy right, it pays. You can anticipate towards both sides. By reflecting on these things you can make better use of it....As a result of critical reflection, there is more transfer between theory and practice [carefully choosing the words]; especially the things that you ought to do by the book...when being critically reflective, you can find ways of doing it differently in practice and sometimes you end up with the theory.

This respondent, a senior student, shows evidence of transformative learning through critically reflecting on his experiences in WIL and how critical reflection has the potential to enhance management learning.

Eight out of ten respondents showed little to no awareness of the importance of applying theoretical knowledge in practice, taking the context of the WIL-organisation into consideration, or being aware they need to make a contribution to the organisation. Respondents who were able to provide detailed examples of the transfer of learning within their WIL experiences seem to belong to the reflective learners. The level of critical reflection also seems to be dependent on the level of expertise or the level of experience. When students start their internship, they can be labelled as novices, because they have little to no experience in the workplace.

When junior sport management students start their sport management internships they have had one year of work experience in sport related organisations, but which was not focused on coordinating tasks. From the (three) junior respondent statements it can be interpreted that these students are still at the beginning of their expertise level and consequently at the lower end of the spectrum for critical reflection. The reason for this interpretation is the way they talk about their experiences in WIL and the application between theory and practice. Their responses showed little awareness of linking the individual with the social aspects of critical reflection and little appreciation of getting to know the broader context of an organisation. Korthagen and Kessels (1999) concluded in their research that novice teachers were able to identify the strong and weak points in their behaviour and actions, but failed to draw conclusions on how they should plan and take actions to improve in similar future situations. In short, students did not display high levels of critical reflection. Novice teachers can, to an extent, be
compared to junior students who are at the beginning of their sport management internship. Deducting from the students’ responses, senior students overall showed higher levels of critical reflection than junior students, as they tend to reflect more on their experiences, but also incorporated the views, norms and values of others in their reflections and were able to clarify with examples of the situations they experienced.

7.6.6 **Expectations and reality.**

Students start their internship as a newcomer to the organisation in which they complete their work experience. In line with social constructivist theory it is important that students interact with other social members of a WIL-organisation, in order to become aware of the expectations and normative beliefs of the organisation, as these norms and values also play an important role for utilising a critically reflective attitude (Celuch et al., 2009; Hodkinson et al., 2008). The social dynamics of an organisation are known to have a critical impact on what newcomers or students learn in an organisation (Korte, 2009, 2010, 2011). At the same time, the students’ perspective from which they are expected to reason about critical reflection is always affected by students’ implicit values (Frijters et al., 2008) and their own expectations. It is within these systems of expectations students need to operate (Hodkinson et al., 2008). By linking the awareness of organisational norms and values of Celuch, Black and Warthan (2009), and the existence of expectations of Hodkinson, Biesta and James (2008), with Dreyfus and Dreyfus’ (2005) approach of skill acquisition which highlights the significance of intuitive perceptiveness in learning environments, and the three-stage apprentice model of Chan (2013), critical reflection facilitates and supports this organisational understanding.

Gaining experience in an organisation and feeling emotionally connected to that organisation in combination with critically reflecting on those experiences, leads to progressive learning (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 2005). An example of a student who made reference to this linkage is shown in the following response:

*I have been an intern here for the past two years. I knew which assignments I had to do and what I would need to do to accomplish that within this organisation because before my internship started. I had already worked here part-time for two years. I said: I expect this from you and that you will supervise or mentor me in these [future intern] assignments and give full access*
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to financial figures. I would not have done that if the environment would have been unknown to me.

This student shows he has incorporated his work experience and the knowledge about norms and values into his reflection and had clear expectations about his assignments before and during his internship.

He elaborated on his previous response when the researcher asked him whether his expectations came true:

*Did my expectations come true? Yes and no. I got the responsibility but I did not get the supervision I expected. Because I was known with the organisation..., that was actually a disadvantage, because they assumed I already knew things ... In my junior year here I was executing tasks, now in my senior year I am allowed to coordinate things.*

On the researcher’s questions asked what he had learned for the future, he responded:

*I think it all starts with yourself. You need to be open towards that [to have an open mind]. What it [being critically reflective] can improve is freedom I guess. When you are constantly monitored you will be less critical because there is always someone who checks your actions or decisions. As a result, I think you will be less critical.*

This student had the ability to identify and discuss his performance as an intern as a result of two years of work experience and two years of internship within the same organisation. Having this experience and getting familiar with the organisational culture was an advantage for this student. It illustrates that students learn progressively during their time as an intern.

According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) and Chan (2013), when students start their internship, they have limited knowledge of practice and contextual awareness is lacking or absent. During these early stages, it is best when a supervisor gives specific directions to an intern. By acquiring experience and contextual knowledge, a student progresses from an advanced beginner into a competent intern. At first, learning is
disconnected and methodical but later on it becomes more internalised and increasingly emotionally involved. Once this emotional involvement and commitment remains constant, an intern is able to distinguish which actions have success and which may lead to failure. Their responsibility strengthens their proficiency in making well-considered decisions within the right context. As a final result, an intern has reached expertise.

The expectations of the five junior students and the eight other senior students are illustrated by statements from some of the junior students such as:

*I would like to learn how to prepare a budget and how to look for sponsors...Unfortunately, this [attracting sponsors] is usually done by really important people...* 

*I didn’t really have any expectations. I thought, once I get there [WIL], they will probably tell me what to do.*

Senior students talked about their first year of experience in the following way:

*I expected we would have to work so hard and we would be very busy....* 

*I had big expectations because it was a large high end fitness centre...* 

*I didn’t really talk about any expectations beforehand with my supervisor*

When reviewing their expectations compared with what they really experienced during that year, the overall conclusion could be drawn from all responses that students had either too high expectations or no expectations at all. Students who anticipated they had to work very hard during their first year as a sport management intern were relieved to find out it was not as hard as they expected. Students who didn’t have any or had little idea about what to expect said to have obtained a more realistic picture of professional practice. Some students were surprised there was so much bureaucracy involved in local government organisations or that some large sport events took so long and involved so many procedures:
You really had to do something, really hands on. I expected as much, but that it involved this much and that there was so much to learn, I didn’t expect that. For example: preparing sport tournament schedules for about 150 teams a day, you can’t do that, not me...I would go totally insane. And what about catering, arranging permits, regulations, licensing or financial arrangements or administrative procedures... You start to get a grip how expensive things are. When he [WIL-supervisor] told me the budget was 34000 Euro, I thought he meant 3400.....I just didn’t realise how expensive it was to rent stuff. So, it exceeds my expectations because I can learn so much more....

From the students ‘responses it can be concluded that students ‘expectations before, during and after a WIL experience and the way they reflect on their experiences differ accordingly. The majority of the students stipulated that apart from talking about expectations beforehand, that discussing things with their supervisor or getting regular (once a week or every two weeks for about half an hour) feedback during an the WIL experience made a huge difference in terms of learning from an internship. In short, guidance both in the workplace by a WIL-supervisor, and from school by the SBL educator, is considered an important factor for the development of critical reflection (Groen, 2006; Poortman et al., 2011).

7.6.7 Factors for development and/or use of critical reflection.

What assists critical reflection? Initially, not all respondents could comment on what kind of factors would help to enhance the application or development of critical reflection in WIL. The researcher clarified his question with some examples: was it perhaps because students gained more confidence or was it dependent upon the amount of given responsibility, the difficulty of the assignments, or maybe as a result of writing reflective journals? Students are encouraged to reflect on their workplace experiences by handing in a reflexive report at the end of their year of internship to their mentoring educator. In contrast to conclusions in reflective practice literature (Carson & Fisher, 2006) about the benefits of journal writing, not one of the respondents mentioned this tool as one of the factors for the development or facilitations of critical reflection in WIL. However, they do mention the numerous times of writing evaluations of their assignments during their WIL experience and discussing the evaluations with their WIL-supervisor. Talking and discussing about what went wrong and what went well
with their supervisors are the main factors that come forward according to the respondents in assisting their critically reflective processes.

One respondent was member of a group of so-called ‘team player’ students (6-8 in total). This internship is a joint venture between a university, a college of sports and a WIL-organisation, which is coordinated by a staff member of the university and a WIL-supervisor from the host organisation. The host organisation initially requested to have the university execute and coordinate a large sport event or project for them. The coordinator of the university decides whether the application is suitable as an internship in which university students and college students work together to the completion of the given assignment.

This female respondent’s answer expresses the factors mentioned by many of the other respondents very well, it states:

*First, there is the responsibility factor; you can learn a lot from that. It is nice to experience the magnitude of a project; How to coordinate and execute a project from start to finish. It is certainly not some small meaningless project, so you know you have done it all; everything you have learned what you ever should have learned or done during your training. So every one’s qualities, vision, opinions, consent, etc….So discussing and sharing with each other is in this case very important; communicating with others....*

*When you talk to others, so with various people, you get various opinions, multiple visions and that way you can compare a lot more and a lot faster. It is also possible you don’t get along with your supervisor who tells you that this is not right or that is wrong. Everyone has his advantages, preferences, when you have different people you can draw multiple conclusions. Based on these conclusions you can agree upon a conclusion. I definitely find it very important that these things are being discussed.*

*I feel an employee; purely because we and we alone are in fact the real organisers of this project. Together with your group, a supervisor and a coach you coordinate this project. Last year I felt more like an intern because it was a small scale internship compared to this one; you execute a couple of small assignments, you have a small amount of initiative and that’s it, so to speak. In this internship at the team players project [joint venture of the University and*
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our college] students of the university, a couple of other junior students of our college and even a first year student do their WIL experience.

Her response offers sufficient insight into some of the factors that students regard important for being more critically reflective, these are:

- Increased responsibility.
- Challenging real life assignment to work on.
- Discussing and sharing ideas with peers and supervisors.
- Working with people with different levels of experience and expertise.

Respondents regard these as the main facilitators of critical reflection. Elements of the Social Exchange Theory (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013; Emerson, 1976; Korte, 2010) and professional identity development (Dehing et al., 2013; Schaap et al., 2012) are recognisable within them. For example, that leaders (WIL-supervisors) gradually offer more responsibility to an intern, and in return, an intern becomes more attached to the organisation (Korte, 2010). Another example is that by discussing and sharing ideas with supervisors and peers the quality of relationships between members of an organisation change (Korte, 2009). Similarly they are consistent with Eraut’s (2004) findings about factors affecting learning in the workplace. Eraut (2004) found interrelating factors constructing the context for learning and factors that influenced learning within that context. He noted a three-sided relationship between challenge, support and confidence for learning. The context itself was shaped by social encounters, the structure of work and expectations of performance.
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The Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.3 depict the factors found for the context and the factors within this research facilitating critical reflection. The factor that was considered extremely important for students was feedback and support from WIL-supervisors. A student’s professional identity is dependent upon the experience within WIL, but is strengthened by the amount of given responsibility and encountered challenge of the set task to perform.

Source: (Eraut et al., 2004)

**Figure 7.2: Context factors**

**Figure 7.3: Critical reflection factors**
An example of the need for more responsibility can be found in the following statement:

"I guess the bigger the responsibility, the more you will reflect. We got a budget of 34000 Euros from the council which is pretty big. If you f.... that up they won’t be happy with that...so the responsibility is quite big. And then you wonder more and more.....Am I doing it ok? And when at a youth centre....it goes wrong once, it is not that bad...If your training or lesson is not that good, you just do it better next time. But if you mess up such a big event here [in this internship], than the damage is a lot bigger...."

The guidance and the related feedback from supervisors in WIL is very important for students during a WIL experience (Poortman et al., 2011), especially for developing a professional identity (Dehing et al., 2013). The feeling of being considered as an employee instead of an intern was one of the reoccurring factors mentioned by respondents. To the respondents the feeling of acknowledgement as a member of the organisation was also a sign of belonging to the organisation, which is found to be very important to develop commitment and realisation of the need for continuous learning (Chan, 2013).

The development of a professional identity has similar aspects to the development of critical reflection in WIL, as it also has individual and social aspects and is about reflecting on (new) experiences. While the social dimension comprises skills, attitudes and knowledge about the profession, the individual component is about the student’s professional commitment and ownership. Both comprise rational, cognitive and affective or emotional dimensions. The two main groups of theories on identity development can be divided into the way guidance is organised during the WIL experience (Dehing et al., 2013).

Within the first developmental mentoring model, guidance is highly structured and assured by a supervisor; the student is required to process social organisational interactions. The second self-guiding model provides none to little guidance or interaction from a supervisor. Students are expected to guide themselves in the process of developing an identity. In this model students are expected to actively experiment and find out what is most suitable for them by comparing it to individual standards and external feedback. In contrast to the mentoring model, where there is an agreed and
shared responsibility, the self-guiding model puts the responsibility and initiative with the student. Respondents indicated they were in favour of the first model of guidance as 80% of the respondents specifically mentioned the need for systematic and weekly feedback session with their supervisor. One respondent response showed that not every supervisor had a commitment to critical reflection:

*I didn’t have an interview at that commercial business. He said, just come by then. I came by; he was busy working, still behind his computer. He said, just take a seat...These assignments are for you....My assessments [WIL performance evaluation] took place in the car when we were on our way to an event. I read it out loud and then he said, humour me......, what do you want me to write down ...*

*When someone is neglecting to provide you with feedback, I believe that for the sake of your own development, it is not good. I think, as a student, you would be easily satisfied with your own reflection. Especially when someone looks at you critically, and you can interact with that person based upon that information, you can grow and develop yourself towards a higher level. I am really convinced of that...*

Although respondents, who showed higher levels of reflection during their interview, indicated they needed more responsibility and more challenging assignments towards the end of their internships, they still stipulated they favoured regular (weekly) feedback sessions with their supervisor to discuss their learning and performance progress. This supports evidence of research that identified workplace learning programs need the provision of supervisors who recognise the significant role of learning in order to have a larger effect on the very reasons why WIL-organisations offer a place for interns (Marsick & Watkins, 2003).

*It is a bit dependent upon the project you are working on at the time. I started last year with a project where I was responsible for leading or managing other interns within my group. Now, I have an individual project and I am actually very self-reflective....I need to do it all by myself. I still have my supervisor guiding me and I discuss everything I do with him at the end of the week. We have about an hour, half an hour to discuss and evaluate what my*
thoughts are and what the progression is of the project. It doesn’t have to be personal conversations, it can also be emails, but you need to consult each other, you need to communicate. By sharing views you can evolve...

The response also indicates that the two different models of guidance are not meant to be categorical, in other words it is not implied that a student should be labelled to be self-guiding or supervisor-dependent as the model of guidance will be situational. It can be assumed that the type of guidance will be dependent upon the hierarchical structure of an organisation, the state of mind of a student, the level of expertise and experience of a student, the notion of feeling comfortable within the organisational culture etc. The type of guidance that is received from the supervisor relates with the process of being a dependent novice as an intern towards an inter-dependent intern who is able to carry out assignments; with some guidance to start with and finally practising as an independent work-ready sport manager who is able to supervise and lead other employees within the organisation. This development is similar to the process of belonging to a workplace, becoming and being [a sport manager] (Chan, 2013).

7.6.8 Place of critical reflection within the curriculum.

One question concluded the interview: whether respondents had any remaining questions or remarks? In response to this question one student felt that the interview had opened his mind. He declared to have a different view about critical reflection as this comment illustrates:

I never really did it [critical reflection] because in my opinion it wasn’t really important, but after this conversation I definitely will try to do it, yes....Before this conversation I would have scored it [critical reflection] 3 out of 10, now something along the line of 7,5 out of ten. As I said, I never really gave it much thought before.....

This was not the overall tendency found in the responses. Overall they felt that critical reflection should have a more prominent place within the sport management curriculum. The average score on importance was 8 out of 10 points with 9 being the highest mark and 7 being the lowest point given. Junior students just stated critical reflection required more attention within the curriculum but failed to come up with suggestions how to implement it into the course. Senior students came up with several suggestions:
More needed in the junior (year 3) and senior year (year 4), not in the first two years of the program.

- Develop a module which will be assessed with a clear set of criteria.
- Not just reflection on tasks, but also on personality issues.
- Reflection through interaction with fellow students; conversations.
- More feedback and reflection during and after practical skill lessons.
- Not teaching that reflection is necessary, but teaching HOW to reflect.
- Not every week, but within a short intensified course.

### 7.7 Summary: Study 4

This case study (Study 4) focused on the perspective of the students in regards to the role of critical reflection in WIL. From the data collected in this study it can be concluded that students tend to be more self-involved during their time in a WIL-organisation. They perceive critical reflection more as a tool for personal development than as a contributor for organisational productivity. In short, students are more focussed on the individual aspects of critical reflection than on the social aspects of critical reflection.

Apart from an expected increase in experience and awareness of organisational norms and values, senior students are able to give a more detailed, more abstract, and more well-informed descriptions of the benefits of critical reflection in WIL. Different learning styles (Slaats et al., 1999; Stavenga de Jong et al., 2006) are used by students depending upon the (learning) environment, situation or level of expertise (Boshuizen, 2003). The level of expertise and emotional commitment is also subject to change during the WIL experience and can vary from novice to expert.

Two different models of guidance are associated with the development of a professional identity (Dehing et al., 2013). The majority of students favour a developmental mentoring model, especially in the beginning of their internship, in which guidance is exceedingly organised and guaranteed by a supervisor. The more a student gains confidence and identity the more a self-guiding model takes over, in which a supervisor gives little to no guidance at all.

Students specifically mention that systematic and regular dialogue with their supervisor remains essential for them. Together with an increased responsibility, a challenging real life assignment to work on, discussing and sharing ideas with peers and supervisors, and working with people with different levels of experience and expertise...
these are the factors that students regard to be important for being more critically reflective.

Overall, the findings indicate that students perceive critical reflection as essential for learning, because it makes them understand people better, improves their performance, increases the contextual understanding within an organisation, and enhances their awareness for employability. As a result, students felt that critical reflection should have a more prominent place within the sport management curriculum.
Chapter 8. Conclusions and Reflections

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the key research findings and the theoretical contributions made by this research. Suggestions for utilising the outcomes of the research in teaching and practice (e.g., creating a more critical pedagogical approach in both settings) are provided. The limitations of the study are highlighted. The chapter concludes by making recommendations for future research.

8.2 Overview of the Key Findings

The outcomes of the Dutch qualification framework of tertiary sport management education suggest that when a student graduates they should perform as a work-ready employee by the end of their training (Calibris et al., 2012). Leaders of sport management programs have sought cooperation with sport industry leaders in an attempt to cope with job-related requirements (Schaap et al., 2012). Work placement offers the students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired at school (Jowdy et al., 2004). Three direct stakeholders are involved in the cooperation between sport management education and sport industry: (a) WIL-supervisors, (b) educators, and (c) students (Ferkins & Fleming, 2012; Fleming, Zinn, & Ferkins, 2008; Martin et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2010). To address some of the problems related to the difficulty of the transference of theoretical knowledge gained in an SBL-environment (theory) and to the WIL-environment (practice), this research examined if engaging in the process of critical reflection could enhance learning for students by linking theory and practice. The opinions of WIL-supervisors, educators and students were used to determine the value and contribution of critical reflection in learning. Including WIL-supervisors, educators and students in this research allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the problems related to the transfer between theory and practice.
The extent to which junior and senior students were able to be critically reflective in WIL the quantitative survey (Study 1) found that the individual aspects of critical reflection (experimenting, asking for feedback, and career awareness) can develop adequately in students during the two-year period of sport management internship. However, an analysis of data from Study 1 showed that the WIL-supervisors were dissatisfied with the lack or limited development of the interns’ social learning dimensions (challenging groupthink, openness about mistakes, and critical opinion sharing) of critical reflection.

Study 1 identified a difference in interpretations of critical reflection between the three groups, particularly between the perceptions of the WIL-supervisors and the students. The perceived value and importance of critical reflection was shared by all participating stakeholders (WIL-supervisors, educators and students). All respondents mentioned that critical reflection contributed to learning and individual (and professional) development.

The shared value and importance of critical reflection among all respondents identified that active participation in critical reflection through WIL (Schaap et al., 2012) enhanced the learning experience.

To further determine the value of critical reflection three case studies were undertaken (Study 2, Study 3, and Study 4). The aim of the case studies was to identify what factors are important in facilitating critical reflection in WIL. These studies sought to clarify what constitutes critical reflection across the three stakeholder groups and to identify the rationale for the implementation of critical reflection in WIL.

All groups considered WIL rather than SBL as the better contextual environment for the development and application of critical reflection. Five reasons for this can be identified, these are: (a) SBL is primarily concerned with providing students a qualification and students are assessed on their individual performance, WIL is predominantly social; (b) informal learning in the workplace produces implicit learning which is contextual rich and triggers situational specific competencies, develops practical wisdom, and is more holistically oriented; (c) learning is inherently contextual; organisational norms and values become part of the contextual awareness; (d) the need to improve employability has a greater emphasis in a WIL-environment; (e) organisational power structures are more likely to be encountered in WIL.

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These five reasons intersect with the claims of the theories of CT, CMP, and transformative learning which suggest that critical reflection has a better chance of being developed and applied within the context of the WIL-environment (Agger, 1991; Mezirow, 1981; Prayer, 1993; Reynolds, 1997, 1999). These theories challenged the established definition of critical reflection by including the questioning of oneself and the inquisitorial stance towards power structures within the host organisations.

Interns participating in WIL need to be able to have an understanding of what it means to deliver goods and services in the sports industry and to be aware of the consequences of their role because customer-service has become important in Western culture (Prayer, 1993). Requirements for interns include becoming aware of underlying organisational policies, norms and values, and objectives of the organisations they work with. Students can only develop the required skills for critical reflection that are wanted by future employers, when they realise these underlying aspects (e.g., organisational culture) are part of the context of internship. For example, students in a workplace environment are confronted with the immediate consequences of their social interactions with customers or colleagues as they are encountered in practice. Consequently, students are forced to reflect on their actions. As such, students’ critical reflection should include taking into consideration what consequences their actions have, what kind of reactions their interactions provide and why these interactions could be of assistance in future to themselves and to the organisation.

The data from this study suggested that students’ awareness of their role in the organisation and its impact on their organisational responsibility and accountability towards the organisation is limited. Students become more aware of the norms and values within the workplace as the amount of WIL increases however, they predominantly use this awareness for personal growth and development (read for diploma or qualification purposes). This growing awareness of organisational norms and values by students during their internship indicates that increasing the time spent within organisations may have positive outcomes. Similarly although a workplace experience has many benefits (O'Shea & Watson, 2007), the success of translating these experiences into a more enhanced level of employability and a positive contribution to the host organisation depends on the ability of being critically reflective (Billett, 2013; Malloy & Zakus, 1995). This finding strengthens the necessity of investing in the
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promotion of the social learning dimensions of critical reflection within WIL to facilitate experience in practice.

The employment prospects of students are potentially reduced as a result of students’ limited contribution to the organisation. Students who are on the verge of becoming a work-ready graduate are expected by WIL-supervisors to learn and work concurrently. The relationship between critical reflection and the learning process was expressed within the context of WIL and with regard to the development of professional performance when performing this workplace experience.

WIL-supervisors confirmed the limited development of social learning dimensions by students in the workplace as found in Study 1. Students need to become aware they are part of a team and part of a greater whole. For example, a “nine to five mentality” was used frequently by the WIL-supervisors to describe students’ involvement at the workplace. As such, greater emphasis should be placed on the development of students’ social learning dimensions. Important factors to develop these dimensions are interacting, sharing information, and discussing possible solutions (Amis & Silk, 2005; Antonacopoulou, 2010; Frisby, 2005; Reynolds, 1998). Moreover the development of social learning dimensions should be clearly discussed prior to the commencement of the internship.

The contextual background was also found to be very important for reflection as each environment determines primarily how students ‘interpret and translate’ their experiences into new meanings (Billett, 2010; Roussel, 2014). Understanding this context has substantial learning benefits to both the individual student and the organisation (Hoye et al., 2009).

Chapter 2 (re) defined critical reflection, based on what was found in the literature review (see section 2.8), and identified the need to include both individual and social learning dimensions in critical reflection. Additionally, when critical reflection was to be used in a work context critical reflection should strive to contribute to organisational learning (Høyrup, 2004; Knipfer et al., 2012). Although different perspectives and lenses related to critical reflection and its foundations were debated, a singular definition of critical reflection may imply a static and atomistic point of view. Considering critical reflection has been investigated within a social constructivist approach, the researcher proposes that a singular definition of critical reflection is
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replaced with language such as *the meanings associated with* critical reflection. The use of the meanings associated with critical reflection infers a more dynamic, holistic, and evolving understanding of the concept of critical reflection, derived from multiple points of view (e.g., each stakeholders group had a difference in interpretations of critical reflection) and dependent upon the context critical reflection is used in.

The next sections return to the research questions that guided this study, these were:

1. In what ways can critical reflection add value to sport management education?
2. What place should critical reflection have in sport management education?

8.3 Research Findings and Conclusions

8.3.1 In what ways can critical reflection add value to sport management education?

The key assumption of this research is that critical reflection is a key element for learning in WIL. Displaying a critically reflective attitude contributes to the development of workplace skills that can be applied in practice (Fook, 2013; Gray, 2007; Hodkinson et al., 2008; Knipfer et al., 2012; Schaap et al., 2012). The first issue investigated was whether students were able to reach a level of critical reflection that was sufficient for them to transfer knowledge to the WIL-environment?

The analysis of the data from the survey in Study 1 revealed that there was a strong discrepancy between the perceived level of critical reflection of junior students and senior students and the actual critical reflection of the students identified by WIL-supervisors. Students and WIL-supervisors had a different interpretation of critical reflection. Students talked mainly about the individual benefits of critical reflection such as recognising personal weaknesses and strengths, learning from mistakes, and personal improvement. WIL-supervisors believed that students’ critical reflection should contribute to innovation, social integration, and communication between the members of the organisation.

Accredited WIL-organisations share the vision of creating a learning organisation culture. According to all respondents critical reflection is valued within these organisations. The results of Study 1 showed that all WIL-supervisors regarded a critically reflective attitude as a vital foundation for performance, learning, development
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and improvement within their organisations. These patterns of response (performance, learning, development, and improvement) about the value of critical reflection are comparable to the findings of Knipfer, Kump, Wessel, and Cress (2012). That is, all groups of stakeholders found that (critical) reflection contributes to learning, development, and improvement and may result in increased performance in the future and acts as a facilitator for organisational learning.

Data collected from the WIL-supervisors (Study 2) showed that critical reflection was highly valued within the workplace environment, because critical reflection was regarded as a key factor in the learning process with regard to students’ professional development and the improvement of the learning experience for students through WIL. However, students were not able to match the expectations that WIL-supervisors had in terms of being critically reflective in a workplace environment. WIL-supervisors believe the commitment of students towards organisational performance was lacking. For WIL-supervisors the value of critical reflection was specifically about the potential awareness of existing norms and values and moreover, about students living up to these organisational values. WIL-supervisors felt that if students would be more critically reflective, they would be more aware of their individual role within the existing social relationships in order to become a more competent manager. This perceived lack of contextual awareness meant that students were inadequately prepared to undertake the role of a sport manager. WIL-supervisors looked at the value of critical reflection from the organisational perspective. The issue for WIL-supervisors was not the anticipated difficulty of transferring the theory into practice, but rather the absence of the highly welcome student contribution to the organisation.

Data collected from the educators (Study 3) suggested they highly valued WIL. Their view on the added value of critical reflection however is directed at the enhancement of a student’s self-awareness, self-initiative, self-responsibility, and consequently employability. The association with finding employment was especially important to educators. Students who were more critically reflective were thought to be potentially better employees, as a result of the increased independence and pro-activeness they brought to the role. Also the educators’ expectations of the students’ ability to critically reflect was excessively high. The educators believed that students lacked contextual awareness of various socio-cultural and personal perspectives within the organisation. Some of the educators identified this lack of contextual awareness as

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lacked abstract thinking required for enhanced workplace learning. This meant students were unable to see how their own performance was linked with the performance of other members of the organisation, the reciprocal influence of norms and values within an organisation, and the recognition that the WIL-organisation is simply part of and dependent on a greater network across the sport industry.

The data collected from students indicated a difference in expectations between educators and students and between WIL-supervisors and students. This difference can be explained as a result of the value that students accredit to critical reflection. Students are more absorbed with their individual performance in WIL than with their contribution to the organisation. To students the value of critical reflection is in self-development and the development of a professional identity in order to gain a qualification at the end of their internship. Students who are aware of ‘the bigger picture’ are also aware they have a better chance of securing future employment.

Junior students generally are less contextually aware of various socio-cultural and personal perspectives that influence an organisation than their senior counterparts. Consequently, for junior students, the value of critical reflection is more focused on personal growth rather than on employing this progressive growth in favour of the social environment they perform in. Accordingly, students fail to critically reflect on social, cultural or political power structures within the organisation in which they perform their internship, and thus, fail to be aware of or act upon this awareness of wider contextual aspects within an organisation. Questioning their role within the organisation and how it could influence (positively or negatively) the status quo is for students not the first priority during their internship.

All stakeholders regard acting on this contextual awareness of organisational power structures for junior and senior students during an internship as unnecessary. At the same time, WIL-supervisors and educators believe it would be useful for students to become aware of power structures. This awareness has the potential to increase their understanding of the broader context of how and why (sport) managerial decisions are made and what it means to be an organisational staff member. Sport management organisations are, as is any other organisation, part of a broader cultural, political, and economic society (Frisby, 2005). WIL-supervisors and educators consider being aware of the broader organisational context a valued part of critical reflection because it enables students to make well-considered decisions. When students are able to be more
context-conscious, it would positively affect their individual and collective learning and performance in the organisation (Hoye et al., 2009).

In all, an analysis of the data indicated that being critically reflective as a student is a key component for increasing the individual and organisational performance. The ability of students to critically reflect enhances their learning and helps them in developing a broader contextual awareness of what working in a sport organisation entails. Ultimately, critical reflection enables a greater possibility of employment in the sport management sector.

8.3.2 What place should critical reflection have in sport management education?

The second research question explored the place of critical reflection in the sport management curriculum.

WIL-supervisors consider that introducing critical reflection into the curriculum should be treated with some caution as some students are not yet ready to critically reflect and would not benefit from being overexposed to the process of critical reflection. This potential risk of overexposure implies a cautionary approach to the introduction of critical reflection into the curriculum. The appropriate time and amount of exposure to critical reflection is dependent upon the development of an intern’s experience within the organisation and the related individual and social constraints (Brookfield, 2009; Illeris, 2009).

According to educators critical reflection should have a more prominent place within the sport management curriculum. They are in favour of fostering the quality of critically reflection demonstrated by a student instead of depending on assessing the quantity of critical reflection. In other words, they prefer to give attention to just a few deeply enriched and well guided critically reflective moments than frequently having random superficial moments of critically reflectiveness with students. These statements support the findings of Dutch research (Luken, 2010; Meijers, 2008) that suggests that while students are forced into reflective activities such as writing reflective logbooks and portfolios, these reflective activities are not well guided and are conducted randomly without a clear goal.
The findings in Study 4 showed that students believed that critical reflection should get more attention within the curriculum. The focus of reflection however, should not only be on the tasks performed but also on personal issues. Students felt as if there is too much emphasis on the task related issues rather than on behaviour related issues of critical reflection. Students identified linking critical reflection to personal issues as being more important than focusing on the execution and evaluation of assignments. They believed critical reflection should have a place within the junior and senior curricula. Students agreed with the educators that although learning should be critically reflective, how to critically reflect is more significant.

The findings showed that different perceptions of learning and critical reflection exist between the three groups: WIL-supervisors see critical reflection as a tool for organisational contribution, educators perceive critical reflection as a means to transfer theory into practice, and the students predominantly utilise critical reflection for personal growth and development. These differences do not necessarily pose a problem if students, WIL-supervisors, and educators discuss their expectations openly before, at the start of, and throughout the duration of the internship. The earlier these expectations are discussed, the more rewarding the experience will be for both students and WIL-supervisors. Discussing pre-set goals and plans of action provides learning structures for the students. The open discussion gives the WIL-supervisor a reference point for future feedback sessions as to what was agreed upon at the start of the internship and to provide information for discussion with the students or with educators when they make their visits to the organisation. The data suggested that in most WIL-internships these processes of giving, seeking, or receiving feedback can be improved.

8.4 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical contributions of this research are presented in this section. First, the contribution the research makes to knowledge in the field of sport management is detailed. Second, the contribution that social constructivism can make in sport management education in terms of better understanding the role of critical reflection in WIL is discussed.
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8.4.1 Contribution to the knowledge on sport management and sport management education.

The field of sport management has grown over the years, however very few researchers have completed studies examining the impact of critical reflection in a workplace environment as part of the sport management curriculum. In recent years efforts have been made to investigate either the promotion of critical reflection in SBL or the added value of workplace experience in a sport management program (Sotiriadou, 2011; Sotiriadou & Hill, 2014), but not whether students are able to apply that critical reflection sufficiently in the workplace. Although the findings of the current research showed that workplace learning does enhance individual learning, they also showed that students are not yet competent enough to match the expectations of future employers.

This research has identified that if sport management curricula is to deliver the high quality collaborative, responsive, and the ethical competencies that sport managers require (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Cheetham & Chivers, 1998; Cunliffe, 2002, 2004), programs will need to put more emphasis on the social meanings of critical reflection. Focusing on the promotion of social meanings of critical reflection supports a greater awareness of different perspectives and possibilities (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Cunliffe, 2002, 2004, 2009; Knipfer et al., 2012), sharing knowledge and discussing ideas with others (Hodkinson et al., 2008), and connecting the individual performance with the organisational performance (Knipfer et al., 2012).

Although the benefits of critical reflection with regard to individual learning, especially in educational settings, have been well documented (Fook, 2013) little is known about its use and the contribution it makes in organisational settings. Besides learning on an individual level in an SBL-environment, sport management students in a WIL-environment, are also expected to make a contribution to the organisation’s performance (social learning). On the one hand, the SBL-environment is mainly focused on students’ learning processes and on their theoretical and practical insights. On the other hand, WIL-environments do recognise the importance of individual and social learning of students and other members in their organisation but are primarily concerned about the organisational outcomes such as productivity, profit making, and customer service (Schaap et al., 2012). The difference in the approaches to learning adds to the complexity of the relationship between both learning environments.

This research has employed multiple learning theories to provide a more holistic understanding of how learning occurs in a sport management organisational context. Critical reflection involves a combination of emotional, cognitive and social elements.
and has therefore been investigated in a similar context such as WIL (Fink, 2013). Students cannot rely on just focusing on the individual dimensions or a cognitive approach to maximise learning and to fully understand these context-rich elements in an organisation (Cunliffe, 2004; Loyens & Gijbels, 2008; Pope, 2010; Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008). Being aware of your role as a student within the organisation as a whole requires a high level of critical reflection (Illeris, 2009; Mezirow, 1990). It is important that students need to become more actively and socially involved in their learning process to fully understand the context and culture in WIL (Hoye et al., 2009).

The meanings associated with the concept of critical reflection used in this research could provide new perspectives for sport management education, because the concept has drawn upon CT. The findings show that using ideas of CT can explain in part why students struggle with connecting their own ideas, learned theoretical and practical skills and knowledge, and norms and values with the intricacies of learning in organisational settings (Fox, 2009; Vince, 2010).

8.4.2 Contributions of a social constructivist approach.

Current management theory and practice favours a realist paradigm which fails to explain real and context-rich socio-cultural issues (Stahl, 2014) within the practice of management. There is a need for a more critically reflective approach to sport management in theory and practice (Pope, 2010). A social constructivist approach would enable sport management students and practitioners to better understand the role of context and culture in connecting theory and practice (Pope, 2010).

This is the first research to use a social constructivist approach to understand how learning occurs in a sport management context using critical reflection. Critical reflection involves a combination of aspects applied in an eclectic learning field and it is therefore not possible to explain learning and to address various socio-cultural issues in an organisation without using a social constructivist approach in combination with transformative learning, social learning theory and critical theory (Frisby, 2005). This research has shown that social constructivism stresses a student’s responsibility of being engaged and motivated to become aware of social norms and values in each specific context. Understanding these organisational norms and values and acting on this awareness through being critically reflective as a student have been re-occurring themes in the statements of the WIL-supervisors and educators.

An analysis of the interview responses from WIL-supervisors, educators, and students implies that the social dimensions of critical reflection used in WIL has two
layers: (a) social interaction by sharing and discussing experiences with others. The context in which this should happen is clear for students in terms that students can relate to the need to interact with others to make sense of their experiences and they see the necessity of the connection of what they have learned in theory and what happens in practice; and (b) social interaction where the context is more demanding in terms of adapting to the unwritten norms and values of an organisation. Students cannot rely on a theoretical model to explain what happens in practice because the contextual application of the model is different. Each organisation has its own unique behavioural and social patterns and the underlying forces that shape them (Hoye et al., 2009). Identifying, dealing, and adapting to this hidden and difficult accessible contextual layer are very challenging, particularly for students. The data intersects with what Hoye et al. (2009) state about the difficulty that sport managers experience when trying to understand the underlying organisational norms and values of each sport organisation. The current research data suggest that students’ social learning in organisational settings has some restrictions but can be subsequently improved when guided well. Interpreting the results and findings of this research with a social constructivist approach made it possible to explore and explain the social interaction patterns among the three responsible stakeholder groups (WIL-supervisors, educators, and students) in WIL.

This research has demonstrated that when critical reflection is applied in a work place or in a cooperative learning context it needs to include the social dimensions of critical reflection, as well as aspects of CMP in order for it to create a more facilitative climate for learning transfer (Choy, 2009). A CMP approach needs to align with social constructivist theories. Strategies for the facilitation of critical reflection within SBL and WIL need to be modified and improved. Consequently, sport management education will benefit as a result of the gained knowledge and understanding of how to use, develop and apply critical reflection in and through WIL. By applying the gained social constructivist knowledge from this research, practice and theory can both be better interpreted and understood (Cunningham, 2013; Doherty, 2013), particularly when the investigation of sport management students’ transfer between theory and practice has been investigated within the context of sport management (Fink, 2013).

Three separate groups (WIL-supervisors, educators, and students) with three different perspectives of the place and value of critical reflection in WIL have been included in this research. Including each different view has resulted in more depth of
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insight into issues surrounding the problematic application of theoretical learned skills, knowledge and attitudes into organisational settings by students. Incorporating the views of each of the stakeholder groups in a Dutch context may have influenced the outcomes of the research. For example, students’ interpretation of the meaning associated with critical reflection is a result of their interactions between individuals with different knowledge and experience levels (Palincsar, 1998); students sharing their WIL-experiences with peers or educators in an SBL-environment along with discussing their internship’s performance and progress within a work context with WIL-supervisors illustrates the nature of this interdependence between individual and social learning processes.

By exploring and establishing the meanings associated with critical reflection through analysing the responses of WIL-supervisors, educators, and students this research has contributed to theory development of critical reflection. From a methodological viewpoint, employing a sequential mixed methods design also provided a deeper understanding of theoretical concepts such as critical reflection and learning in WIL.

8.5 Practical applications.

This research demonstrates that critical reflection assists in building a link between theory and practice through WIL. However, critical reflection is only beneficial when guided, and supervised correctly. The implications are that changes are required in supervision strategies, specifically (a) influence alignment, (b) achieve student engagement, and (c) establish identification of critical reflection, need to be undertaken in sport management curricula.

The sport management curricula should specify to WIL-supervisors and students what level of critical reflection is required in SBL and WIL, how critical reflection should be measured (e.g., using the survey as a possible assessment tool with clear criteria), and how it can be developed within both an SBL-environment and a WIL-environment.

Supervision strategies should include educating WIL-supervisors about the importance of putting protocols in place. These protocols should describe clearly what is expected from a student when they are entering the organisation as a novice or moving on to being experienced. Depending on the level of the students’ expertise, more (or less) responsibility and supervisory guidance that is provided should be considered. This progressive development of expertise or development of professional

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identities (Chan, 2013; Dehing et al., 2013) during the students’ WIL-experience needs to be acknowledged and explicated by WIL-supervisors.

In terms of influencing the alignment of what is taught in SBL and applied in WIL through critical reflection, a better understanding of what critical reflection can mean for an organisation and its consequences when an organisation is willing to invest in a critical learning environment can inform managers of a host organisation. The question arises whether an organisation is going to shift its priority from a focus on short term goals such as profit making to a culture of interactive participatory learning. Such a shift indicates a more socially oriented perception of managing a business and improving the learning experience and transfer of learning of both employees and interns within the organisation. This change would mean moving away from being rational and hierarchical and that different understandings are shared and discussed. The outcome in this new business environment is not about proving there is only one way of looking at things, but that it is about creating more possibilities for innovation.

The data from this research clearly demonstrates, critical reflection can be better facilitated within a less rational and hierarchical organisational structure. The stakeholders’ different expectations, interpretations, and attitudes of critical reflection must be well deliberated upon. The culture differences between the groups of stakeholders identified in this research must be erased or at least reduced to enable integration and scaffolding of critical reflection into the WIL-experience.

Different levels of breadth and depth of critical reflection can be found in students. The highest level of critical reflection is the students’ awareness of the role they play within the whole organisation which occurs too infrequently. Hence, the question arises whether these higher levels of critical reflection can be achieved or even be taught. The findings indicate that students’ critical reflection, despite WIL-supervisors’ concern, can be improved. To achieve this improvement of students being critically reflective in both SBL and WIL it is necessary to funnel the attention on the development of critical reflection for students in a sport management curriculum.

The data collected from students during interviews in Study 4 showed there was strong support from four senior students for short, intensified, critically reflective sessions rather than having attention to critical reflection throughout the whole curriculum. Students believed focus should be on the quality of reflecting critically

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rather than placing the attention on quantity. Feedback on students’ learning portfolios should be made with care and attention (Kinkhorst, 2002). Only educators who are proficient enough to guide or facilitate critical reflection, should lead or provide this feedback or the dialogue sessions to ensure the right amount and type of feedback is provided at the right moment in an internship’s career (Frijters et al., 2008; Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Rather than making the assessment of critical reflection within portfolios, a process that happens throughout the entire curriculum, assessment should be targeted towards what students have written in relation to their personal WIL-experiences. For students, the method of assessment is found to be a strong influencer for adopting a different learning approach (Gijbels et al., 2008). It should be noted that the research by Gijbels et al. (2008) indicated that students do not change towards a more critically reflective approach in SBL as a result of being assessed in a constructivist environment. Developing a short intensified module in SBL, and assessing critical reflection with a clear set of criteria in WIL rather than assessing it in SBL would prove to be more effective for developing students’ critical reflection that is required at the workplace. Another option could be gradually introducing students to reflection through interactions such as sharing their experiences with fellow students in the first two years, and extending the reflection by feedback and discussion sessions during and after practical skill lessons. In other words, within the first two years teaching students why critical reflection is important, followed by two years teaching students how critical reflection should be undertaken.

Data collected in the three case studies strongly suggest both educators and WIL need to spend more time in explaining how theory and practice intersect. Explaining the intersection of both theory and practice should be seen as a two-way transition of information, rather than a one-way task-related feedback process between a novice and expert (Baker, Perreault, Reid, & Blanchard, 2013; Delva et al., 2013; Molloy & Boud, 2013). Moreover, the result of this intensified dialogue between novice and expert should lead to an actual change of students’ perception and behaviour (Molloy & Boud, 2013). Developing and facilitating students’ critical reflection entails more than just stating reflection as a part of the educational outcomes. It is also about paying attention to the possible problematical consequences of introducing a critical pedagogy. Expecting interns to contribute to the organisation as critically reflective employees entails more than just signing a contract between the educational institution and the host organisation. Facilitation of students’ critical reflection requires the support, proficiency

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and focus of both WIL-supervisors and educators, along with a realistic view from both stakeholders of the possible constraints for the use of critical reflection.

Applying a greater focus on critical reflection which consumes too much time in the curriculum is one of the possible constraints. Educators or WIL-supervisors may reject or fear an increased level of discussion (Choy, 2009; Brookfield, 2009). Students may defy established concepts within the curriculum (Currie & Knights, 2003). A critical approach requires educators (and possible future employers) to create an environment where students are challenged and are fostered into questioning assumptions, as well as adopting an emancipatory and engaged orientation towards learning (Dehler et al., 2001; Reynolds, 1997). Facilitators serve as co-learners in this kind of learning environment in which all ideas can be contested (Currie & Knights, 2003). As a consequence, the researcher suggests a learning environment should be created were students can become active knowledge producers and are aware of their own role and position within a given context (Welsh & Dehler, 2012). Only by utilising this critical pedagogical approach to critical reflection it is possible to stimulate critical reflection in others (Reynolds, 1999).

WIL-supervisors who become frustrated with the lack of expected expertise of interns, should try to invest in facilitating students’ critical reflection within their organisation. WIL-organisations need to ensure their WIL-supervisors have the necessary critically reflective skills and the knowledge and understanding to be able to facilitate others to become critically reflective. The level of facilitation is dependent on the level of proficiency to critical reflect of those providing the feedback on how to critically reflect. In this case the leaders are the WIL-supervisors within the host organisation and educators within the SBL-environment. It means that WIL-supervisors and educators should be trained to create a more critically reflective environment in which every responsible facilitator is aware of their role. Both the WIL-supervisors and the educators should pay attention to the way that the facilitation of critical reflection fits both the students and the organisation in which the students perform as interns. A question arises about whether the supervisors and educators (in SBL or WIL) are proficient enough in (facilitating) critical reflection themselves. Facilitators should be aware of the importance of the level of their own proficiency in critical reflection as social learning theory stresses the impact of role model learning (Bandura, 1977; Hanna et al., 2013). Hanna et al. (2013) suggested that proficient critically reflective role
models at the workplace would be able to reinforce their behaviour in students as a result of model learning.

Of particular importance is the level of dialogue between the WIL-supervisors and the students (Frijters et al., 2008; Marsick & Watkins, 2003), because to a large degree its success is dependent upon the level of expertise the students bring to a guided or self-responsible form of discussion. This process of dialogue would require regular (weekly) feedback sessions, informal or formal, but always with the intention of making students aware of organisational norms and values and the social relationships within a particular environment. Receiving regular feedback has been found to be positively related to the development and use of critical reflection (Doornbos et al., 2008; Van Woerkom & Croon, 2008). The data from the case studies 2, 3, and 4 showed that feedback given for the facilitation of critical reflection is an important factor that can be improved during internship. Moreover, the factors that enhance learning through critical reflection in organisational settings, such as providing feedback and more student responsibility during the internship, cannot rely on informal learning. A more formalised learning should be implemented to enhance learning in WIL which would involve WIL-supervisors investing in more intentional learning strategies.

Generating more contextual awareness is an important outcome from this research. Facilitators, in this case educators and WIL-supervisors, need to assist students to become more aware of contextual aspects of practice. In the SBL-environment and the WIL-environment the context should be a point of discussion within the weekly feedback sessions. Besides discussing the daily (managerial) routines of the organisation, the issues of social, political, or power structures could be included, if the student is ready to share this kind of information. Integrating such issues during feedback sessions between WIL-supervisors and students potentially generates a more holistic learning experience.

The data revealed that the gap between theory and practice is not the anticipated lack of integration of theory into practice in WIL but that different expectations of the whole WIL experience are present among the different stakeholders. The expectations WIL-supervisors want from sport management interns with regard to the development of social learning dimensions of critical reflection contrasts with the ideas of students. Students are focused on the development of the individual learning dimensions of critical reflection in WIL rather than trying to match the WIL-supervisors’ expectations. WIL-supervisors need to realise they need to put more energy into clearly stating
expectations and discussing pre-set goals before students start their internship. Students who demonstrate a lack of development in the social learning dimensions of critical reflection during their WIL-experience are not ready yet to be over-exposed to critical reflection. Based on the findings from the research more personalised supervision within WIL is needed.

When students progress towards the social dimensions of critical reflection, the outcome will have a potential positive impact on their employability. Additionally, students will not only benefit in terms of employability. Students who successfully display this kind of critically reflective behaviour are found to be more detailed in their description of their WIL experiences, more aware of the context, and are appreciated and valued as a better performing intern within the organisation than a non-critically reflective or less critically reflective student.

Students need to adapt to their new environment including to all the related new norms and values within that environment. Students can adapt more easily to changing conditions in practice and are able to analyse newly acquired knowledge and experience when their ability to critically reflect is more highly developed. As a result, students can make well developed decisions about whether or not to stay at that particular organisation. They can better explain the reasons for leaving or continuing, and can communicate their thinking better and ultimately, achieve a better transition into a new job or internship.

Students need to be made aware of various meanings associated with critical reflection and the potential benefits of critical reflection in sport management education. With regard to meanings associated with the term critical reflection, it should be emphasised to students that critical reflection entails individual components and social components and the ways in which students can develop these aspects of critical reflection. Along with the individual and social learning dimensions, students need to become aware that the main expectation of possible future employers is that students need to develop an interest in the organisational norms and values to contribute to the organisation. The benefits of such an interest in and contribution to the organisation are that it potentially increases students’ contextual learning in WIL and enhances their chance for future employment purposes. However, to achieve a better understanding of the meanings associated with and benefits of critical reflection, students need to be more proactively involved in the feedback loop between WIL-supervisors and students. For
example, rather than simply waiting to receive feedback from supervisors, students should request regular weekly feedback sessions with their WIL-supervisor. Additionally, where and when appropriate, students should offer feedback to other members of the organisation, including the WIL-supervisor.

The outcomes of this research have identified the need for a greater alignment between theory and practice. The skills involved with ‘working with people’ is one of the essential aspects of critical reflection as critical reflection makes interns understand people better and able to work successfully with a range of people. Sport management programs need to invest in collaborating with the industry to establish stronger links between education (theory) and industry (practice) to develop and define the learning skills required for students to enter the workplace.

8.6 Limitations of the Research

There were limitations identified in both the quantitative (Study 1) and qualitative phases (Studies 2, 3, and 4) of the research.

8.6.1 Limitations in the quantitative part of the research: Study 1.

In Study 1 there was the small number of WIL-supervisors. Possibly due to lack of time, motivation or priorities, only 9% of the WIL-supervisors took part in the survey.

Although all participating host organisations had expressed very positive views towards the use and development of critical reflection, it should be noted that not all host organisations in the Netherlands necessarily shared this point of view.

The reliability of self-reported data is a contentious methodological debate. Human memory is fallible, and when it proves to be so, it may result in exaggeration or over-reporting of students’ behaviour which can create a potential bias.

Lastly, stakeholders interested in critical reflection participated in the survey more seriously while non-interested stakeholders may have neglected to cooperate fully in the survey. The views of these non-respondents are not known and may be different from those who completed the survey.

8.6.2 Limitations in the qualitative part of the research: Studies 2, 3 and 4.

Four qualitative limitations were identified. First, potential bias should not be neglected when taking into account the possible socially desirable responses of the
participants, especially the students’ responses during the (focus group and individual) interviews.

Second, due to time and logistical restrictions it was not possible to conduct a focus group interview with WIL-supervisors and educators. This would have added additional information and strengthened the results and findings. However, individual interviews have been conducted with respondents from multiple sport management institutes throughout the Netherlands to ensure a more representative sample.

Third, it was unfortunate there was a lack of interest from the two identified indirect stakeholders (Calibris and the NAV). Including the views and perceptions of these two indirect stakeholders would have added to a further increased understanding of the value and place of critical reflection in sport management education.

Finally, the analysis was filtered through the researcher’s lens. The researcher has been a sport management educator, has been making visits at WIL-organisations, and has been supervising students in WIL for over 12 years. This expert perspective has the advantage of providing an insider point of view and more in-depth analysis of the data; however, a certain level of sacrificed objectivity should be considered against this background.

8.7 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this research have the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of how critical reflection is perceived in sport management education programs and the value it may have for both education and professional practice. Future research however needs to be undertaken to better understand how together this may lead to a more aligned, integrated, and comprehensive approach of critical reflection in the learning and teaching process. After establishing the level of a student’s critical reflection, it is important to investigate how this process of applying critical reflection works. Issues such as the contextual aspects of the workplace, the related social and cultural influences, and the interpretations of the three stakeholder groups on critical reflection within WIL, require further investigation. Ongoing refinement of the variables within the individual and social dimensions of critical reflection is recommended. In particular, the identification of the two different layers of social interactions need to be included. The refinement of the measures and the comparison of results will contribute to an even more reliable measurement tool for use in future research.
Research into how critical reflection can be better facilitated within an SBL-environment or WIL-environment should be considered for example in learning portfolios or discussion sessions. While students are forced into reflective activities such as writing reflective logbooks and portfolios, these reflective activities are not well guided and are conducted randomly without a clear goal. Spending more time on the quality of reflecting critically, means there will be potentially less time for conducting the operational aspects of an organisation (such as profit making, taking stock, managing staff, and providing customer service), which poses a potential dilemma. Spending more time with an intern causes a dilemma which means that a strategy would be necessary as to how to best facilitate critical reflection in students or to prioritise learning aspects during their WIL-experience while still able to sustain the organisation. The timing of introducing the use and development of critical reflection to students within the four year program should be investigated. A possible solution could be found in a more intensified collaboration between education and industry. For example, attracting or inviting WIL-supervisors into the classroom to talk about their organisation and educators occasionally teaching and explaining theoretical management concepts at the workplace by restructuring work placement of interns. Research into more effective ways to prioritise the promotion and development of critical reflection should be addressed.

This research has shown that engagement with the social dimensions of critical reflection are also worthy of further exploration. The transfer from individual learning to social learning is seen as a small but crucial part (Ji Hoon & Chermack, 2008; Knipfer et al., 2012) within WIL. Organisational productivity can only be realised by integrating learning for personal growth with a social learning part (Ji Hoon & Chermack, 2008; Knipfer et al., 2012). Research focusing on the organisation’s culture towards learning and performance and why organisations provide WIL to sport management students could provide more insight into the value of critical reflection. If organisations do not recognise critical reflection as an important cornerstone and productivity and results are the primary purpose, critical reflection may not be valued (Marsick, 1988; Van Woerkom, 2004). The purpose of critical reflection is to move beyond the pursuit of profit and to reflect critically on the impact of organisational decisions (Ferlie, McGivern, & De Moraes, 2010; Ford, Harding, & Learmonth, 2010; Gray, 2007; Pope, 2010; Prandini, Vervoort Isler, & Barthelmess, 2012; Skinner &
The performance of an organisation is linked with HRD as it always deals with the impasse between individual and organisational outcomes (Van Woerkom, 2004). A key outcome of this research is that possible future employers are strongly dissatisfied with the level of the social dimensions of critical reflection demonstrated by vocational sport management interns. WIL-supervisors are concerned about the interns’ inability, lack of awareness, or lack of interest to contribute to the organisational norms and values. For these reasons, employers interviewed stated they would not hire a senior student. Here lays the role for critical reflection. Although significant research specific into the area of the individual learning benefits of critical reflection in educational settings, have been well documented (Fook & Gardner, 2013), little is known about its use and contribution towards increasing the interns’ employability in organisational settings. Future research should continue to examine the possible contribution of critical reflection to the field of HRD and consequently further investigate the impact of students’ level of employability.

Finally, the outcomes of this research may also be used in disciplines other than education or HRD such as sport performance programs. The overlap among the individual and social learning dimensions of critical reflection and setting goals, dealing with disappointment and success, knowledge construction, and performance improvement at the individual and social levels has the potential to be a critical point of leverage for all stakeholders involved in sport performance programs. Similar future research may have considerable significance for both coaches and athletes within these programs. Some of the options for future research may be investigating what the relationship is between critical reflection and the impact on an athlete’s sport performance or the impact of critical reflection on a coach’s training philosophy. To what extent can the level of critical reflection of athletes or coaches explain differences in their sport performance achievements?

8.8 Concluding Statement
The opening statement of this thesis attempted to capture the essence of the complex task of managing a business:
“Management is not just something one does, but is more crucially, who one is and how we relate to others.” – Cunliffe, 2009, p. 11

Critical reflection has an impact on learning, personal, and organisational development and has the potential to improve individual and organisational performance. However, when an organisation’s ultimate goal is making profits and focussing on achieving this outcome through the use of controlling procedures, constraints are put on new designs based on reflective learning (Antonsen et al., 2011). Therefore, it is important that this focus on critical reflection and learning is reflected in the norms and values of the entire organisation, and other related stakeholders of WIL. Critical reflection should be central within a sport management education program particularly when sport mangers are constantly engaging with new challenges.
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### Appendices

#### Appendix A: Example of core task 6 with competencies and related work processes and attainment targets of an operational sport manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core task 6: Coordinating the management of the sport &amp; exercise organisation</th>
<th>Work processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>6.1 Manages personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Deciding and initiating action</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Leading</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Coaching</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Caring and understanding</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Cooperating and consulting</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Adhering to principles and values</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Relating and networking</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Persuading and influencing</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Presenting and communicating</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Writing and reporting</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Applying expertise</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Applying technology</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Analysing</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Investigating and exploring</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Creating and innovating</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Learning</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Planning and organising</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Meeting customer expectations</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Delivering results</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Following instructions</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Adapting, responding to change</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Coping with pressures, setbacks</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Showing need for achievement</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Entrepreneurial thinking</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y Business like thinking</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Calibris et al., 2012)
Appendix B: Job profile Sport & Exercise Co-ordinator/Operational Manager

Job profile

**Sport & Exercise Co-ordinator/Operational Manager**

**Level 4**

**General**

The purpose of the Sport & Exercise Co-ordinator/Operational Manager is to produce an employee that carries out co-ordination and operational duties in a sport and exercise organisation independently and in a planned way. The operational manager functions independently within the established policy framework of his/her organisation. In doing so, he/she makes a contribution to creating the optimum situation for providing sport and exercise facilities. He/she can also provide specific, planned sport and exercise (S&E) activities that are geared to the target group and provide the participants with appropriate supervision.

The degree of independence of the operational manager depends on the size and the form of organisation in which he/she is working.

The duties of the operational manager comprise:

- The operational management of the sport & exercise organisation;
- Developing and positioning the sport & exercise programme;
- Managing and maintaining the sport & exercise accommodation and facilities;
- Carrying out organisational and professionally related duties.

**Duties and field of work**

The operational manager is at the centre of activities. Co-ordination and consultation are an important part of the work. He/she has a major role in maintaining internal and external contacts and, within the established framework, is responsible for such things as financial management, personnel management,
marketing policy and management and maintenance of the accommodation. In addition to this, the operational manager draws up sport and exercise programmes, is responsible for implementing these, and evaluates the programme. The operational manager can steer, delegate, work together with various parties and balance the interests of different parties (e.g., municipalities, associations, his/her own organisation, sport & exercise consumers, etc.).

The operational manager works in various posts such as association manager, sport & exercise policy employee (e.g., sport stimulation employee) policy employee or sports association (policy) employee, sports service bureau (policy) employee, team co-ordinator/manager in a commercial or public sport and exercise organisation, accommodation manager or general manager.

Core task 1: Offering sport & exercise (S&E) activities
1.1 Recruits and informs S&E participants
1.2 Prepares S&E activities
1.3 Undertakes S&E activities
1.4 Coaches and supervises S&E participants
1.5 Assesses the skills level of S&E participants

Core task 2: Organising competitions, tournaments and events
2.1 Draws up a plan for a competition, tournament or event
2.2 Adjusts plan containing preparatory activities
2.3 Undertakes a competition, tournament or event

Core task 3: Carrying out organisation and profession-specific tasks
3.1 Harmonises activities
3.2 Applies Sports First Aid and resuscitation
3.3 Undertakes management and maintenance tasks
3.4 Undertakes front-office activities
3.5 Maintains contacts with relevant persons and organisations
3.6 Works on professional improvement and professionalisation of the profession
3.7 Works on promoting and monitoring quality assurance
3.8 Undertakes policy-based tasks
3.9 Evaluates the sport en exercise activities

Core task 4: Coordinating and undertaking sport & exercise (S&E) projects
4.1 Draws up a project plan for S&E projects
4.2 Prepares the S&E project
4.3 Undertakes the S&E project

Core task 5: not applicable to Sport & Exercise Co-ordinator/Operational Manager

Core task 6: Coordinating the management of the sport & exercise organisation
6.1 Manages personnel
6.2 Manages Accommodation and facilities
6.3 Contributes to financial management
6.4 Develops and positions the S&E programme

Source: (Calibris, 2011)
The place and value of critical reflection in a sport management curriculum

Appendix C: Invitation Flyer

Front-side of the information flyer:

Invitation
for your participation in
PhD research

“THe sport of being critically reflective in a synergetic learning environment”

Back-side of the information flyer:

Critical Reflection in a WIL-environment

The research focuses on the competence Critical Reflection, which is a behavior of high value within the fields Operational (Sport and Exercise Management) and WIL programs. Contemporary educational practice requires students to critically reflect in face-to-face learning. The program can develop three dimensions of competency, Critical Reflection is considered to be a bridge between theory and practice and enhance individual and organizational learning. It’s different dimensions of Critical Reflection will be measured. These dimensions are: Reflection of the self, Reflection of the action and Reflection of the other. These dimensions will be measured in the study of critical self-awareness, educators and WIL-assessors.

Operational Sport and Exercise Manager

Every participant needs to actively participate in this independent and silent research. The personal Opinions will be discussed with the participating interviewee. The result into critical reflection and the modifications on habits and organizational training make can only be possible without your participation. Your participating will be mentioned on the website. Please have a head of the best of this brochure for more information.

4. Critical opinion-sharing
5. Openness about mistakes
6. Challenges group think

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Appendix D: Survey Questions

Questions within the individual learning dimensions of critical reflection

Experimenting
E1: I like to try things out, even if it sometimes leads nowhere
E2: I frequently think about ways to improve my working methods
E3: Learning new ways to handle things in the job doesn’t excite me very much (−)

Asking for feedback
AFF1: I discuss with colleagues how I have developed
AFF2: If I think I have not done my work well, I consult my supervisor
AFF3: If I think I have done my work badly, I discuss this with colleagues
AFF4: I ask my supervisor for feedback
AFF5: I ask my colleagues for feedback
AFF6: I ask my customers (internal and external) what they think
AFF7: I discuss with my colleagues what I find important in my work
AFF8: I invite colleagues to assess my work critically
AFF9: I discuss with my colleagues our criteria for performing well

Career Awareness
CA1: I am consciously occupied with my career
CA2: I think it is important to have a job in which I can develop
CA3: I think about what sort of work I would like to be doing in one year’s time
CA4: I am continually occupied with my career development
CA5: I ponder on what I find important in my work
CA6: I compare my performance with how I performed a year ago
Questions within the social learning dimensions of critical reflection

**Challenging Groupthink**

CG1: When I disagree with the way a colleague does his or her work, I keep quiet (–)
CG2: I don't easily express criticism of my colleagues or supervisor (–)
CG3: When I disagree with the way a colleague works, I say so
CG4: When I am the only one to disagree with the rest, I just keep quiet (–)
CG5: I easily submit to group decisions (–)
CG6: When I disagree with something at work, I find it hard to say so (–)

**Openness about Mistakes**

OAM1: If I do not know what I really should know, I try to hide the fact (–)
OAM2: I do not mind making mistakes
OAM3: If I have not done something very well, I prefer to keep quiet about it.
OAM4: If people at work see that I am doing something wrong, I have the feeling that I have lost face (–)
OAM5: If I make a mistake, I find it hard to forgive myself (–)
OAM6: If I have not done something well, I try to forget about it as soon as possible.
OAM7: I get embarrassed if I make a mistake (–).

**Critical Opinion Sharing**

COS1: I come up with ideas how things could be organised differently here
COS2: I make suggestions to my supervisor about a different working method
COS3: I give my opinion about developments at work
COS4: I call this organisation’s policy into question
COS5: I put critical questions to my supervisor about the working of this organisation
COS6: I make suggestions to my colleagues about a different working method
Appendix E: Additional questions within survey for each group of stakeholders exploring the climate for critical reflection in WIL (all on a Likert scale 1-6, except the second and last question)

WIL-supervisors:

- After answering all these questions, hopefully you will have a good idea what critical reflection in a workplace is. Please indicate the relevance/importance of a student’s critical reflection or employee’s critical reflection in your organisation? (Not at all important - extremely important)

- Could you briefly explain why you gave this answer?

- How would you rate the organisation’s culture towards critical reflection? Is this organisation’s environment supportive or non-supportive towards critical reflection? (very non-supportive – very supportive)

- As a supervisor, do you consider yourself to be supportive or non-supportive towards a student’s / employee’s critical reflection? (very non-supportive – very supportive)

- If you have any remarks or comments about the survey or question in particular, please add your comment(s) in the box below

Educators:

- After answering all these questions, hopefully you will have a good idea what critical reflection in a workplace is. Please indicate the relevance/importance of a student’s critical reflection or employee’s critical reflection in your organisation? (Not at all important - extremely important)

- Could you briefly explain why you gave this answer?

- How would you rate the organisation’s culture towards critical reflection? Is this organisation’s environment supportive or non-supportive towards critical reflection? (very non-supportive – very supportive)

- How would you rate the supervisor to be supportive or non-supportive towards a student’s / employee’s critical reflection? (very non-supportive – very supportive)

- If you have any remarks or comments about the survey or question in particular, please add your comment(s) in the box below
Students:

- After answering all these questions, hopefully you will have a good idea what critical reflection in a workplace is. Please indicate the relevance/importance for yourself of you being critically reflective in the WIL-environment? (Not at all important - extremely important)

- Could you briefly explain why you gave this answer?

- How would you rate the organisation’s culture towards critical reflection? Is this organisation’s environment supportive or non-supportive towards critical reflection? (very non-supportive – very supportive)

- How would you rate your supervisor to be supportive or non-supportive towards a student’s / employee’s critical reflection? (very non-supportive – very supportive)

- I feel comfortable to express my critical reflection within this WIL-environment. (strongly disagree - strongly agree)

- If you have any remarks or comments about the survey or question in particular, please add your comment(s) in the box below
Appendix F: Interview Questions

OPENING: Briefing section

- what is the interview about (indicate objectives, address topics),
- why the participant is chosen as an interviewee (explain motivation and purpose of research),
- the interview is expected to last about 30-45 minutes,
- inform the interviewee’s rights as respondents in the research, and
- check that the interviewee consents to take part.

BODY: Questions section

1. The focus of the research is the role of critical reflection; what does critical reflection mean to you?
2. What is the difference for you, if there is one, between reflection and critical reflection?
3. What is in your opinion the value of critical reflection in WIL (especially within a sport management context)?
4. Which environment (SBL or WIL) do you consider to be more suitable for the development or use of critical reflection or are the both environments equally suitable?
5. What factor(s) contribute(s) to facilitate critical reflection in WIL?
6. How do you determine the critical reflectivity of a student? How do you see or notice that?
7. Do the 6 dimensions (operationalization of critical reflection) reflect your opinion of critical reflection? (Interviewer mentions the first three individual learning dimensions and then the other three ‘social’ learning dimensions)
8. Is a student aware of social, cultural, political power structures within the organisation or is that expecting too much of a student?
9. Do you expect a student to contribute to the organisation? If yes, in what way? If no, why not?
10. Is there a difference in expectations (between WIL-STUDENT-SBL)?
11. What level of (critical) reflection does a student have?
12. How would you suggest what the place of critical reflection within the sport management program (classes, examination, assessment, etc) should be?
13. How would you rate the importance of critical reflection on a scale from 1-10?
CLOSURE: Closing section

- the closure of the interview should be brief, but not abrupt
- summarise the main discussed issues during the interview,
- does the interviewee have any final remarks or question(s),
- discuss the next course of action to be taken, and
- thank the interviewee for his or her time
Informed Consent Form

- If you would like to go straight to the test, please scroll to the end of this page and click yes.
- Alternatively, if you would like to know more about critical reflection, please read the text below.

Introduction
This study will collect information about the role of critical reflection on individual learning and social learning in a Work Integrated Learning (WIL)-environment for junior and senior sport management students (diploma degree). Each of the three group of stakeholders within WIL (students, educators, WIL-supervisors) will be involved in this study. Questions for students are designed to self-assess their critical reflection competence. Questions for educators and WIL-supervisors are designed to determine how they expect a student will behave in a WIL-environment, regarding critical reflection, on past experiences.

Who is conducting the research
This research is being conducted by:

Mr Jos de Schepper
Dr Dwight Zakus (Supervisor)
Associate Professor James Skinner (Supervisor)

Griffith Business School
Department of Hotel, Tourism, Leisure, and Sport Management
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Gold Coast campus, Griffith University,
Parklands Blvd, Southport, QLD 4222, Australia
Phone: +61 7 5552 8054
Fax: +61 7 5552 8507 (not secure)
Critical Reflection
Critical Reflection in this study is defined as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour which contributes to individual and social learning. Reflecting critically on experiences does not mean to be negative, but to reflect consciously on experiences of oneself and in relation to others in order to adjust the existing frame of reference.

Procedures
You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about different dimensions of Critically reflective Work Behaviour. In regard to your status as a student, educator, or WIL-supervisor; the questionnaire is made up of approximately 50 questions and will take about 20 minutes or less. This questionnaire will be conducted with an online Qualtrics-created survey.

Risks/Discomforts
There are no risks associated with participating in this research

Benefits and/or compensation
There are no direct benefits or direct compensation for respondents. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about a student's critically reflective work behaviour in a WIL-environment. You will receive, upon request, a copy of the study/research when it is available.

Confidentiality
All data obtained from respondents will be kept confidential and will only be reported in a conglomerate format (only reporting combined results and never reporting individual results). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than then primary investigator and assistant researchers listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Participation
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your student/academic status, GPA or standing with the vocational or higher education institution. If you desire to withdraw, please just close your Internet browser and feel

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free to inform the principal investigator at this email (j.deschepper@griffith.edu.au) or tell him as you leave (if applicable).

**Communication of results**
A summary report will be provided to interested parties from the participating individuals or general public upon request. Academic conference and/or journal papers maybe produced as part of this research. At no time will the communication of results refer directly to respondents in relation to specific findings of the research.

**Questions about the Research**
If you have any questions or require further information about this project, please contact either member of the research team listed at the top of this page.

**Questions about your Rights as Research Respondents**
If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact the researcher's supervisors, Dr. D.Zakus, d.zakus@griffith.edu.au or Ass.Prof.J.Skinner, j.skinner@griffith.edu.au. Alternatively, you may contact the director of Griffith University's Institutional Review Board.

**The ethical conduct of this research**
Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Approval is granted to the application for ethical clearance for the project "The sport of being critically reflective in a synergistic learning environment" (Protocol Number HSL/12/11/HREC) If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics on (07) 3735 5585 or email: research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

**Your feedback**
The findings of the research will be available to all respondents, if desired. As previously mentioned, at no time will the communication of results refer directly to respondents in relation to specific findings of the research.
Informed Consent Form

For the research:

Critical Reflection in WIL by junior and senior students within the sector “Operational Sport and Exercise Manager”

Research team:

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By signing, I declare to have read and understood the information below: In particular, I have taken consideration of the fact that:

- I know what this research involves. I could ask supplementary questions. My questions were answered sufficiently. I had enough time to decide whether to participate or not;
- I know that by participating to this interview, by no means I can benefit in any way related to my education or training at the College of Sport and Exercise;
- I know that my participation to this interview is entirely voluntary and that the information will be held confidential (by no means it can have negative effects related to my education or training at the College of Sport and Exercise);
- I know in case I should have any further question, I can contact the research team;
- I know that participation to this interview is entirely voluntary. I know that I can decide at any moment to discontinue participating (without providing any reason);
- I know I can contact the following person, if I should have any doubts or questions relating ethical conduct of this research: the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)
- I give permission to participate to the research/interview and that the information provided will only be used in favour of this current research;
- I know that certain people (who are part of the research team) have access to my data provided. These people are mentioned by name on top of this letter.

Name: ………………………………………………………Signature:……………………………………

Date:……/……/……....