

Follow-up Meeting 1 with Participant 7

CH: And [Janine], I don't know if you have got a copy of the interview schedule in front of you...

P7: No.

CH: ...um, but you don't need it if you...

P7: Okay.

CH: It's fine. Um, I am not going to go through necessarily all the questions today, and I am going to keep this, that we finish by two o'clock. Okay. So...

P7: Okay, perfect.

CH: Uh, I do understand: time is of absolute essence and as a, as a...

P7: Great.

CH: ...and I am already sitting in your observation later this evening, so <laugh>, I think you will have enough of me after that. <laugh>.

P7: Yes. I am just praying that we have some students, Chantal, oh, my word. That is all I can say. Do you know that we didn't have students at a national support session for a... Ya. It is really bad. It is really, really bad. I mean, the fact that students don't come to a national support session for an assignment, there is something fundamentally wrong.

CH: Ya.

P7: So, ya. And that, that is about four groups.

CH: Sjo. Okay.

P7: Ya. So, let's pray.

CH: And, and maybe we look at, um, if I do come to that third one, we take the two where there are actually more students.

P7: Exactly. Ya.

CH: I mean, I, you know, with the last one, I participated because you, you needed me to participate.

P7: Exactly. Yes.

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CH: Otherwise, it was going to fall completely flat because you had one student there. So, some of the challenges, and when we get to that question, definitely will be attendance and the system issues that, um, we have faced this year that has impacted

P7: Oh ya. Yes.

CH: So, I am going to work through some of the questions.

P7: Sure.

CH: But as I said, um, we won't work through all of them. And then, the next follow-up will definitely be revisiting some of, of the answers and unpacking them in a bit more detail and aligning it with, um, you know, the, the second observation as well. Okay.

P7: Perfect.

CH: Right. So, I am going to start off with one that I probably would have started off with, with any lecturer if I was sitting in and observing, would be, what do you believe as an online lecturer is your primary responsibility?

P7: My, I believe that it is to engage the student in the course content, but in a, in a way that makes it meaningful to the student.

CH: Okay.

P7: So, to try and bring the student into, they have to cover the content, but it's, it is how you do that. And it is not going through the book. And it is not, um, this is what this means, and that is what that means. It's, it is really, um, engaging with, with the content, um, with a view, with a view to understanding and application.

CH: Okay. And that application, is that quite an important component?

P7: Yes, very much so. Particularly in the marketing side. The marketing assessments that keep changing fundamentally all the time, depending on the developer, um, are 90% of it is application-based. So therefore, the learning has to take place in that kind of application environment.

CH: And what type of applications do they like? Case studies- is that the focus?

P7: Also because it is in marketing and it is also dependent on students and commitments and collaborations, et cetera. We use a lot of examples that are meaningful to the student. So, to give you an example, I had a student last semester who worked for Albany. So, we used Albany. I had a student that had a fixation with Nike. So, we then used Nike., Um, I had a student who worked for Mr. Price. So, then we talk about Mr. Price. So, we put it in a context that students can actually make sense of it. Your marketing is full of steps and stages and terms and jargon, and I mean... In,

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in a classroom capacity, it is really easy and fun. In an online capacity, it is so much more difficult. So, you are trying to make it meaningful to the student. To put it in a context that they understand.

CH: And [Janine], why do you find that the face-to-face is so much easier than the online?

P7: Because you have got more time. So that your, your actual engagement time with students is so much more. What we have found in the online space, um, is more than 40, 35, half... Between half an hour and 40 minutes is enough. Nobody can go longer than that. It is a nightmare. They don't like it. Um, I did some post-grad work for three hours and that was, it was just hell. It just was, doesn't work. So it has got to be shorter and sharper. Um, so the face-to-face, you have got a lot more engagement with the student. You have got the relationship and the continuous, um, development with the student. So basically in a face-to-face, the students are coming to lectures generally, and it is consistent. In the online space, you are not getting that at all now. Not at all, for a thousand reasons, I am sure we are going to chat about. Um, so you are building up a rapport, um, with students and you then building up examples and opportunities to, to teach them and to engage them. So, you get to know them and you go, okay, so you are this and you are that, and let's do it this way. Um, online it has becoming increasingly more difficult to do that. For, for a thousand reasons. Ya. And one of them being time and one of them being the students who actually come to the [webinars].

CH: So, is there a reliance then on the recordings?

P7: Yes. Yes. So, what the students seem to be doing now, the trend has shifted, and I have seen it specifically post covid...

CH: Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

P7: ...is that the students listen to the recordings in their own time. And then what I do is in, in the timetable for this module, there's a whole lot of videos. So, between the, um, the [webinars], they hopefully are watching the videos. So, it is just a different form of engagement. And the videos are fantastic. They really are fantastic.

CH: Um, so [Janine], just, I haven't, I've, I have registered in your, um, [online platform] space.

P7: Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

CH: But I haven't navigated within it. So, what I decided to do is I didn't want my first follow-up with you to have already had a look around in your...

P7: Oh yes.

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CH: ...asynchronous space because I want you to unpack it a little bit. Um, so do you find that you, you are navigating in that asynchronous space with your students, more so now because they are not necessarily coming to a [webinar] session? So, in other words, do they do activities where maybe there are discussions on a discussion board or a blog and you having to give feedback to try and engage them? Or do you find that that is not even happening?

P7: No, we, the, the four ICE tasks, um, that we do, um, that is probably the, one of the means of engagement. But I want to tell you now that the ICE tasks that were due Friday, um, I would say 40% of people have actually done them.

CH: <Concerned look>.

P7: I know. Honestly, it's, it's, it is such a difference. It is such a slide. Um, the only way that we are engaging well, so, um, I mean me, I am engaging is through contact, through announcements. Um, through the national support sessions. Through [webinars]. And then, please watch this video. Here is an extra thing here, et cetera, et cetera. Um, so trying to add to their, um, ya...

CH: Their resources almost.

P7: Yes. It's the resources. Well, I haven't looked yet- Um, sorry, one moment- I haven't looked yet, but we are finding that students are looking less and less. So, I also want to give you an, um, an example of an ICE task, the ICE tasks. I got an email and I only saw it on Friday morning, because I didn't open my computer over the weekend. I got an email at 23h45 on Friday night saying, "How do I do the ICE tasks? I don't understand." And <laugh> Ya.

CH: It is due in a few minutes <laugh>.

P7: Yes. 15, ya, 15 minutes.

CH: You are 15 minutes before the link falls off. <laugh>.

P7: And I was fast asleep and that was it. And now that you know that, now it is an unhappy student who is now going to fight it and ask for extensions, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But the student has never been online. The student did not attend the NSS sessions. Um, I haven't actually marked the first assignment of that student yet. I am just looking...I am marking at the moment. And we just having, well, I am having no engagement. My only, um, saving grace or making me feel a little bit better is that my colleague doing this particular module as well, is having the same.

CH: Okay. So, it is a shared thing.

P7: It seems to be, ya, it seems to be. And it is worse, much worse this semester than it was last semester. And I have got a theory on that as well.

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CH: Okay. So, so I am going to ask you on your theory there, because, um, would this be the same situation if we had done this, if I conducted this interview last year with you? Would it have been a similar situation or is it entirely different?

P7: It is entirely different. It is entirely different. So last year, um, the modules, so, and I am talking specifically Marketing now, the Marketing modules that had assessments like assignment one and assignment two, then students would generally attend. The modules that have a Portfolio of Evidence like second-year Marketing, they don't come, which is fascinating. It is fascinating. And we have got it again this, this year. So the portfolio of evidence students, um, in Marketing two, they do not attend, um, [webinars]. Why? Because they have got their questions. They know what content they need to do. They are just trying to squeeze this in, in an already busy life. We, from an academic side, are desperately trying to engage and, you know, present them with learning. They don't want to do that. They want to just get it done and get a piece of paper. That seems to be where we are at the moment. Well, from, from, certainly from my perspective.

CH: And that must be disheartening.

P7: It has been horrific. I mean, I must be honest, it has been absolutely horrific this year. And I had a long discussion with [Joan] about it, saying, what is happening? What are we going to do? Something has to change now. And I am hoping that it, it changes from next year. Um, but they, they have to be incentivized to engage. Otherwise, we are not fulfilling an academic role. We are doing nothing. We, I feel like a DJ: you sit and talk to yourself. And then that's not, it is not an engagement, it is not an online engagement. Ya. Ya.

CH: Okay. So, I will come back to, to, um, your responsibility because it's, it is difficult in the context that you literally have found yourself.

P7: Ya.

CH: Just, uh, maybe a final, um, question. Do you believe that the issues that you have experienced with the system has contributed to this disengagement from the students?

P7: Definitely. Definitely. Um, even now we are still experiencing system problems. I, you know, I couldn't send announcements the other day. I couldn't, you know, the, the whole system, it, it really, I think students are so, um, what is the word? Taken aback by the experience, just trying to register with [the institution]. And I don't know about on the, in, you know, the, the campus side. But the online space has been nothing short of traumatic for everybody involved. Um, and you know, some of the students are only getting access to [the institution's online platform] like three, four weeks into a semester where we have had to reschedule assignments and it just becomes chaos. And I think that there is a definite attitude change from students. Um, they are angry, they are disheartened, um, they are coming in in a very negative light, let's put it that way. And certainly, from my side, I haven't been given the opportunity to change that because they are not, they are not come, they are not coming to lectures. So yes, I believe

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systems and enrollments and [the institution's online platform] and password issues, and I mean the whole system...

CH: It is all connected, [Janine] it is all connected to your system issue. So we are very fortunate that the campuses had a far better, um, not not great, but far better experience. And that is because the online continued with the system registration. Whereas we went manual.

P7: Yes. You went manual. Yes. Ya.

CH: Um, but, but the system issues had a huge impact on everything on your [...] access. So, and, and it is a worry. Let, let's put it out there. There is a big worry and it, it must be a big worry for all the online tutors who have...

P7: Ya. Ya.

CH: ...who literally also had to either self-enroll as one of an option if you had the ability to do so.

P7: Ya.

CH: Or literally wait for someone to enroll you while your class is getting angrier because you haven't pitched.

P7: Exactly. Um, it's, it's, it is, what was I...? I was actually going to, I was going to say, something and I've, I have lost my train of thought. But yes, the students are just, I think they are fed up. They and I, and I am just talking about the one, my, my own experience. But I also wanted to say- that is what I wanted to say-, in the online space, the student engagement varies depending on the assessments, as I said, and the degree of difficulty of the module. So if you are, um, tutoring an Economics or an Accounting or a Finance, whatever, you are going to get more participation hugely because they need it. In Marketing, it, it is different because they go, "Oh, they look so easy. Oh..."

CH: "That's theory. You know, you just learn theory."

P7: Yes. Exactly. And then they are getting 20 and 30%, I mean, the marks! I have never seen marks like this in my life. I have never, it is so disheartening. I mean, I am looking here, um, 31, 34, 0, and my first ever 100%.

CH: Well, congratulations for the hundred percent.

P7: Well, he never came to, to a class. So, it is certainly not about me. You know what I mean? <laugh>.

CH: <laugh>.

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P7: It's got nothing... I was so taken aback. I thought, "Oh, that is the model answer. Oh my word. I am so excited." But it had nothing to do with [the institution].

CH: Hopefully he didn't get hold of the model answer <laugh>.

P7: No, it is better than the model answer. It is better. I want to ask if we can use it next semester for the model answer. Ya.

CH: Okay. So, so let's shift it, because obviously we, we focused on systems and, and...

P7: Yes, yes.

CH: ...it's, it's, it has not been a year that has been similar to, to your previous experience in the online.

P7: No. Definitely not.

CH: And I also have been fortunate, you know, working with you to know that skills are quite an important component, um, for you.

P7: Yes.

CH: So, in preparing students for the 21st century workplace...

P7: Yes.

CH:....what skill-sets do you consider important for these students to develop?

P7: Sjoie. Um, well, the, the one that we always talk about and how it never comes because I have to lecture it at honors level and I have to teach it, is critical thinking. Because it is not happening. So, so to try and get that critical thinking and they don't understand what that is, so we, you know, you don't, you can't use the word critical thinking. You have got to say right... You have got to look at something. You have got to get all the facts in place and then you have got to have an opinion and substantiate it. You know? So, to me, that is the, a really, really important one. The other one is to properly communicate. And I have seen it now as well, and I know we are only talking online, but I can see it in the honors as well. Oh, my goodness. But, um, the proper, both written communication, proper academic, written communication is, is not coming. So how do you go into the workplace, and you can't write anything. You can't even string a sentence together. So, um, I find that a challenge. And I really think that is very, very important. That is what they need to be learning in, in their academic years. And it should be getting better and better. But from Marketing one online to Marketing two, I am not even seeing that. I am not seeing an improvement in written communication, written, um, analysis. Um, ya.

CH: Okay. Any other?

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P7: Yes. The other thing that I see, or, and I believe because it is a challenge for students, is to be able to select relevant information because there is so much. They are absolutely daunted by information. You can get it anywhere, anytime. And it is the ability to say that is relevant, that is not, um, and use it effectively. Um, so the ability to use relevant, um, information and then application of, of what you have learned. So, um, ya. So, you are saying in the 21st century, if you were given a work problem, how would you apply it and solve it? It is problem-solving skills as well. They cannot problem solve.

CH: And that is what businesses are looking for.

P7: Exactly. Exactly. They want somebody who can communicate, who can analyze information, pull out relevant information, and solve problems when they come. Because as we know, they are always coming. So how are we going to solve them? And certainly, um, in a, in a first-year Marketing module, my goodness, that is not coming out too much. But that if you ask me in general, that is what the 21st century, um, what they need. That is what I would say they need.

CH: The skill-sets. And, and obviously you have already spoken about why you consider those important. It is preparing them for the workplace.

P7: Yes.

CH: Um, any other reason that you consider these important?

P7: Um, I, I think they are also important because I think the environment has changed. I know with my son, he keeps saying, "Ya, fifth year, it is over. It is over." And I want to say, "But it isn't. Your, your life is never going to be over from a learning perspective now." In fact, the new way forward is going to be modularised learning. You are never going to stop learning. You are never going to stop studying or engaging or however it is going to work, however the assessments come, you are never going to stop. So these skills are not just for the workplace, but also because you have to evolve as the world is changing. So, it, it becomes almost a career... A necessary step to making sure that when you are 20, you are valuable; when you are 30, you are valuable; and when you are 50, you are valuable.

CH: Ya. Did I think I would be studying now? <Laugh>.

P7: I know. My word.

CH: What...over 20 years in education and I am studying. <laugh>.

P7: As you say, classic case in point, it never ends.

CH: Never ends. And I remember saying never again, <laugh>.

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P7: Ya. Ya. It's, it is, ya, I was going to say, because you've, you have got one child, but most people do that when they have just had a baby as well. They go "Never again."

CH: Yes. <laugh>.

P7: And, and it's, but it is the same. It is just that learning is, it is that ongoing learning that needs to happen. Very much needs to happen.

CH: And then, um, when we talk about skill-sets such as critical thinking, properly communicating, um, the discerning student who is able to elicit the information that is necessary, problem-solving. So, you have spoken about those four. Um, whose responsibility is it to develop these skill-sets?

P7: You mean from like, when a student is part of an academic institution like it is? Well, technically I would say that it is a, a, a dual responsibility between the student themselves and the um, and the institution. And I mean, that is where I am saying, you know, with, with a face-to-face, I believe I have been incredibly successful in those skills. Um, in the face-to-face side, but not on the online side because you have to have students who engage to be able to, to do that.

CH: So, it has become far more challenging in the online space if you have got...

P7: Absolutely.

CH: ...this disengagement?

P7: Totally. Yes. Yes.

CH: So, we have got to look at how we get online engagement?

P7: Yes...Yes, yes. And so, one of the things that, you know, I spoke to [Joan] about, which really, really bothers me (and it clearly doesn't bother a lot of other people because otherwise we wouldn't have a problem) is referencing. And so, I can see from one assignment to the next assignment that my feedback on assignment one has not been pulled through to assignment two. And you know why? This is what I keep saying. So it is like every other online place that we do all, we all do the same thing, is that the student just looks for the mark, they go, "Whew I passed" or "I got 45%, I will pull it up next time" or "I got 70%". They are not reading what the, the feedback is. So, they are actually not developing their skills because they are not reading them. And I said to [Joan], can there not be a system thing? Of course, we laughed like anything because we can't even get our normal system sorted.

CH: Ya, I know. Irony in this year <laugh>.

P7: Ya. But is there no way of, before they get their mark, they have to go through their feedback, you know what I mean? Or it has to come up at the same time or something

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like that because they are not improving. And every time I get annoyed. I have to do, I have to say the same. I say, "See assignment one. You haven't fixed your in-text reference. You haven't done this. You haven't done it", you know. There is just no development. Because all they do is they look, they go, "Ah, I got 60%. Woohoo." Don't even look.

CH: And [Janine], I have just got your solution. You are going to have to create an activity where you load their feedback on. They then have to comment on their feedback received and the adaptive releases the mark <laugh>.

P7: That is a very good idea. That is a very good idea.

CH: But you won't be able to then put the marks in the grade center.

P7:

No. So gosh, how would that work?

CH:

So only, um, a period of, or you could probably hide your marks in the grade center from the students.

P7: Ya. Which we, which we do, we do anyway,

CH: So, so you could do it, but it's, it is going to be, oh, it is additional work for you.

P7: It is, but it needs to be a, it needs to be everybody. You know what I mean? We have to have the same. We have got to have a system where they have to, where we force them to look at their feedback because they are not developing.

CH: Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And that is the purpose of feedback.

P7: Exactly. It takes so long. It takes so long to, to write feedback. And it is very frustrating when it's, it is not taken into account. Now what is interesting when there is a POE and you can change your tasks, so task one, you can, um, resubmit in the final POE, then they look at the feedback because then they can resubmit task one. Um, but if, if there is no mark benefit that they see, it is not going to happen. It is almost like, it is like students don't really want to learn anymore. They just want to get a piece of paper saying that they've, that they have got a degree. And that wasn't the case a few... It wasn't. It was never like that. You always got your disengaged students, and you always had a cohort of those that were really, um, interested. And you would think online would be better because they are adults.

CH: Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

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P7: But I also think that if, if we did an analysis on the age profile of the online student now, I think we would see there would be an age problem. Not a problem. But that part of it is because students are too young now. Remember we were, we used to only say 22.

CH: Yep.

P7: And now, yoh.

CH: Ya. With Covid they have definitely...

P7: Yes. CH:

...you have got 18-year-olds who are now doing online.

P7: Ya. It just doesn't work. There is no commitment. There is no, there isn't enough maturity to make that work. I have had a few students in the past, but they are done now, you know. But um, but if we looked at that, I am sure that that would be one of the reasons.

CH: Okay. And can I...

P7: And load-shedding. Ya.

CH: Oh ya, well load-shedding is another...

P7: Yes. Yes

CH: ...interesting topic. And, and we are so blessed in KZN!

P7: I know. I was so shocked when the lights went out last night, I wasn't ready for it. It was like, "Oah".

CH: Ya. But you have got students coming from Joburg, Cape Town...?

P7: Ya...Oh yes. In fact, the, the one, the very few that I have engaged with this semester, none of them are in KZN. And the thing is, we don't know, you know, you don't know unless you get to know a student. You don't know where they are, what they are doing. You haven't a clue. Um.

CH: Okay, let me go back to the dual responsibility of supporting the development of these skill-sets and, and not looking particularly at, um, your current situation where there is a lack of engagement from your students. If you had to look at, you know, you said the dual relationship between the institution and the students, um, you alluded to one would hopefully see a progression, um.

P7: Yes.

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CH: ...in writing skills. So, your Marketing ones to Marketing twos, you haven't seen that progression. But, but so that, that is making an assumption that generally there is a progression.

P7: Yes.

CH: Would you say that, that support, if you had to put percentages, would you say that the percentages change over the three years while they are progressing to, to complete their qualification? Or do you think the support is a complete 50% dual responsibility between lecturer and student?

P7: No, I think that it, it changes. I think that the, in the beginning, I think that students, there is more from the, from the online tutor to build and put, you know, put in the scaffolding that we all know needs to happen. And then from there, um, you know, the student then grows and then develops more and more. So, I believe in the beginning the, the responsibility should certainly be fueled by the, by the tutor.

CH: Okay. And then coming back to your, your Marketing one and Marketing two scenarios. So, it would be last year Marketing one, they have now articulated to Marketing two.

P7: Yes.

CH: And obviously your current Marketing one students.

P7: Yes.

CH: Would you say in the online space within obviously [this institution], um, that lack of progression in their writing skills, what would you attribute that to? Was there a lack of engagement last year from the students? Or do you think it is maybe a Covid, um, impact, you know? Um, because learning changed so radically...I don't know, just your thoughts on, on why you are not necessarily seeing that progression?

P7: I think for one of the reasons is because they are not reading their feedback. So, um, they're, they are not seeing how to improve, despite how much you penalize them. And, and unless you are, um, what is the word, unless you are handing them over, you know, there, there is very little that happens. I mean, I just said to [Joan], can't we hand everybody over and frighten them? You know, and let's just get them from the beginning, just the beginning. And say, "Right this, that, this, that." Or they have to do a, a pre-online little course which includes referencing and communication and how to write an essay. People don't know how to write an essay. You know, stuff like that. Um, but I think, I think that is one of the reasons. I think the other reasons have been all sorts of issues with regards to technology. Um, the other thing that I am not, why I am not seeing progression is that unfortunately in the distance space, there is no progression of online tutors. So, to give you an example, the students that I have this semester for like [module B], I didn't have last semester for [module A]. So, I am not

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seeing, um, there is no consistency for a tutor to be able to both develop a relationship, um, and a kind of academic thread that we can watch for a student like there is in the online space. You know, like first, second, third year, you know, you know, they can see that that student, "Oh my word, they have done this to..." I just look every semester, I go, "Who are these students?" I have never seen them before. And they just swap us around and it is just a mess. So...

CH: So, would you say that is quite an important design element if we were to try and get this right?

P7: Yes.

CH: That we would have a progression of an online tutor?

P7: Yes. Definitely. Definitely. And one of the things I have said to [Joan], because there has been all sorts of movement, you know, in the online space is that... Ya, I think, I don't know what happened in the face-to-face on the campuses, but sjoe, there was a lot of online tutors that I just thought, "Jeez, this is it! Cheers." You know, they are just, I don't think they could cope. So there has been a lot of movement and change and what have you. And if I look at the online tutors, I don't even know who these people are. You know, I don't know where they come from. But the one thing I said to [Joan], like in the Marketing space, now there are [] of us. It should be consistent. You know, we should be, we do work together. We work together on the national support sessions. We make sure that our groups have the same content. Um, we get together and mark scripts together. You know, there is collaboration. And that is what needs to happen. Um, we found students cheating- one in one group, one in another because we collaborated.

CH: No surprise.

P7: Ya. Ya. But only because we collaborated, you know. So ya, there, it, it is, I think consistency is important. But it, the, the online center doesn't work that way. They just allocate, they say okay, you in group one and they just put the first amount of students in there and the first... And even as a PST, they did that. Like my students changed. I am like, "Are you joking?" I have had three, four year relationships and now, it just doesn't make sense. So consistency would be really good. I don't know if it happens in other areas, but the Marketing side, um, has been a little bit tricky.

CH: Okay. Okay. And we will definitely revisit that because I think that is an important component in the online space. Um, and now moving towards graduate attributes, although we have spoken about skills, what is your understanding of graduate attributes?

P7: Just define what you mean by a difference between a skill and an attribute. So, when you say attribute, what do you mean there?

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CH: Well, that is why I am asking you. What is your understanding of graduate attributes? Is it the same? Is it different?

P7: Well, I think, uh, an attribute is something that you have developed over the, the course of an academic journey. Um, there is one thing I forgot to mention that actually is so incredibly important. And that is creativity. I forgot that. And what I used to do like last year is the first ICE task, I used to ask my students to design an advert of themselves. And you know, it used to blow my mind every time how amazingly creative people truly are. Um, just to get them into the marketing world, you know, because that is what they think marketing is. Meanwhile it isn't. That is the fun side. Everything else is not, you know, but so that creativity I think is also important. But I think if I, if I am understanding correctly, the, the graduate attributes are the, the kind of end result of, of the 3, 4, 5, sometimes six years learning in the online space. Um, and that there would be elements like creativity. Another thing that we don't see that we should see in the online space is to collaborate- to, to actually work together. So, to give you an example, my second-year Marketing group, you, you can do your portfolio of evidence and tasks in a group or not. Out of 18 students, I have only got two groups. They all chose to do it by themselves. Now what student does that when they can reduce their workload? Don't you think that's odd?

CH: I think it is very interesting.

P7: But you know why it's, again, it is my theory. It is because they are not engaged in the work. They, they are just not trying to, well they are not putting it, um, as a priority. And then at the end they are trying to say 'Who's in a group? Who is in a group?' And they actually can't get it together. So, they end up doing it themselves.

CH: So, in other words, they leave things to the last minute.

P7: Oh, you have no idea. You have no idea. And you just wonder as well, is it just the pressure of life, has life got more pressurizing in terms of work? I mean we, if you think about it, you know, why was it different? Why did more students engage two years ago, three years ago, than now? What has changed? You know, is life, um, more difficult or has the nature of the student changed? Or is it because we completely stuffed up [here], the whole [student portal] element? I mean, I don't, have you ever been on *Hello Peter*?

CH: I have seen, I have seen the *Hello Peters*. So, I am very aware, especially the online space took some serious heat there. Serious heat.

P7: Honestly, I go onto it quite often because I am so terrified I am going to see my name there. Because as an, as a PST, we couldn't help our students. You know, all we did was let people down and let people down and let people down and yoy, fortunately I haven't seen it. But ya, it, it's, it has been so bad that it is just a general attitude. It is just, uh, "You don't care about me. I don't care about you." You know, let's just get it

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over with kind of thing. That is what the students seem to, but that is a personal opinion with only two groups and being a PST. Ya.

CH: No, it is. Look, I understand how hard it actually has been in that space. And in fact, I can't understand truly how hard, because I haven't lived it. I think you really have to live it...

P7: Ya.

CH: ...to truly understand it. We have lived parts of what you have gone through.

P7: Ya, ya.

CH: But the online space was in a very difficult space, whereas at least you can catch the people face-to-face here.

P7: Yes. Exactly.

CH: Whereas in the online space, if you lose that person, how do you connect again?

P7: No, you, you actually don't. And I think that part of online engagement as well has to be, there has to be relationships and community. You have to have what we call an online community. So that is why we set up. So I will give you an example of my [...] group. This group, you know, you, we developed the WhatsApp groups for the students, and we were very, I am very specific about it. I say, "This is not for you to communicate with me. All my formal communication takes place via [the institution's online platform]." Because previous tutors have gotten into trouble for that before. So, we are very careful and everything that needs to be communicated is done on Learn. I said, "This WhatsApp group is for you guys. Chat to each other. Community. You know, help each other. Don't give answers and stuff but just..." My WhatsApp group, somebody was asking about an ICE task, nobody answered. Nobody. There is no community of practice that is being developed. And I don't know whose responsibility that is. I don't know if it is [the institution's] and the online tutor, or you know, we have set up the framework, we have set up the, medium to do it, but it is not being used, not in my groups anyway.

CH: Okay. So, so the, a community of learners is, is critical from my understanding.

P7: Ya. Yes. We know.

CH: Sorry. Give me a moment to switch it off. I don't know who is phoning. Um, in creating your, um, so, so within your particular module, so don't think PST now, think as an online tutor within your particular module, are there any, is there anything there where you have tried to create this sense of community? I know you have created frameworks for the WhatsApp, but where you've, you have attempted to create this community...

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P7: Yes.

CH: ...that you want to share?

P7: Yes. So that is through, um, discussion blogs. And in the past, so we, we have done, um, like an ICE task discussion blog. And I am trying to think of an example where we have made it quite, we have used an example and what have you, and then part of the ICE task is you have to comment. You know, you, so you are commenting on other people's, and you don't get the marks unless you do and what, whatever. And that has been effective in the past. It has not been effective this semester at all.

CH: And that is because they have been disengaged. So, you kind have lost your students.

P7: Yes.

CH: Which is understandable.

P7: Ya. But that is one of the ways that you can get that community of, of, of practice, you know, the, the building on other people's ideas. Um, they just, it seems to be such a isolated, um, what is the word? People don't want to work together. I find that astounding. But maybe they don't have time. Or maybe they, um, don't trust the other people because they don't know them. And their marks might depend on them, you know, if they are doing a POE or something like that. But ICE tasks, I mean that's, that is different because certainly what we have done now with Marketing is that you get your 10% if you do the ICE tasks. We are not marking them. We just want engagement and people to engage with the material. And in the past, those discussions and comments have created that type of community. Um, and a WhatsApp group, I mean, it is such an easy way to communicate. But, um, the students aren't.

CH: Okay. [Janine], on that note, I am going to pause us there and...

P7: Sure.

CH: ...um, we, we can leave the, the rest of the questions because you actually touched on some of the other things. So,

P7: Okay.

CH: And, and what I will do is I will pull it all together in our last follow-up session.

P7: Okay. Perfect.

CH: I want to thank you so much.

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P7: Pleasure. No, an absolute pleasure. I'm, I am sorry I don't have enough students. I am praying... I am going to send a, a thing tonight...a, reminder tonight...

CH: Be there!...Maybe I will stop the recording here because we are about to do a threat. <Laugh>.