

Transcript for Group A: Participant 6

Interviewer: You already have the questions, since you requested for them beforehand so it will probably be super, super quick.

Interviewee: Alright. Yes, I'm ready.

Interviewer: Perfect. So you already know what micro credentials are, right? So yeah, basically short courses that you know people can take either online or in person and then you get a micro credential or a digital badge.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Like maybe a certificate or something like that to show that you've completed the course right. So the purpose of this research is to try and not prove just to try and show that entrepreneurs can use micro credentials to just upskill themselves to improve their entrepreneurial skills. Basically because you know, like talking about what, what do you call them? Like traditional university degrees. That takes like three years and it's very focused like on, if I can say like one major thing you should do a degree in. Obviously they teach you other things, but the main thing is, you know, unlike micro credentials, you can do one in marketing one in business management. It's very flexible. So I think it's a great for entrepreneurs, they can use this and entrepreneurs are busy people as well and micro credentials are flexible, usually short compared to like a three-year four year degree. So just thinking along those lines, right when we are having this discussion or this conversation. So the first question is what are the technological skills that you think entrepreneurs need to complete these short courses?

Interviewee: Yeah. OK. So I think. Some of those technological skills would include things like digital marketing because we know that most things are now online. So micro credentials in digital marketing will probably cover skills like what I'm doing, social media marketing. Handing within that, we also cover search engine optimizations, e-mail marketing, so we do a bit of e-mail marketing as well and also online advertising. I think it is a really good technological skill for entrepreneurs because I think these skills would kind of help them to promote their businesses. And then the other skill I'd say would be project management, I think project management is like a really big skill for entrepreneurs. Yeah, so skills like task management, just learning how to collaborate and match projects that would also be a really key technological skill. And then I'd say another one would be knowing how to design websites is also a good technological skill, so I think this would also help entrepreneurs to sort of create and manage their websites. Yeah, and I don't think that's something that like a lot of people are able to do. So yeah, being able to design a website and then one last one I'd say would be data. I'd say data analytics would also be a good skill. So yeah, there's a few technological skills, I think.

Interviewer: Quite a good list there. Thank you so much. Then how much effort do you think it takes to complete a micro credential course.

Interviewee: I'm actually doing one in social media marketing and I also did one last year in English language, second language teaching and sometimes it can take up to months. If your course is, if it's instructor led like the one I did last year, it was a short course through UCT, but it was instructor led, so you had to come into lectures so it was face to face learning, but the one I'm doing now is sort of self-paced. So it takes up to about 8 weeks to complete the course. So I'd say it really depends on whether the course is instructor led or self-paced, but generally it can take up to like 8 weeks to 10 weeks to complete it.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. Then the next one, what are the facilitating conditions that one would need to complete a micro credential course? And by that we obviously mean, you know, like what things do they need? I think I already gave some examples on the questions like you obviously need time.

Interviewee: Definitely an internet connection. Yeah, that's one of the things you didn't mention. So yeah, you definitely need a strong internet connection and then I'd say also, like a dedicated workspace is also important. So they can, like, focus on completing the course. So definitely internet, a laptop, a dedicated workspace, but some courses would also require textbooks. So I think having a little tiny budget for maybe extra resources like some courses will also require for you to have a certain software that you need to work on. So I'd say a little budget for software tools and then also textbooks and a dedicated workspace and internet connection.

Interviewer: Thank you. Then how easy do you think it is to access these short courses? Like how easy are they to find?

Interviewee: Hmm. Yeah. Oh, it's generally straightforward. I'd say the one that I'm doing specifically is very straightforward, it's accessible, easily accessible. And I also think they do that because obviously the course is offered to a global audience. So it's not just for South Africans. So I think that's why they do make it very accessible and straightforward to access. Yeah.

Interviewer: Then. How do you think acquiring micro credentials can contribute to your skills as an entrepreneur?

Interviewee: So I do believe like a lot of short courses focus on leadership and management skills. So through these, entrepreneurs can develop skills in negotiation, collaboration, communication, team building and also skills like decision making. So a lot of courses do offer those aspects.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you so much. We're doing so well. How is training currently conducted in your organization? How are you training yourself? I think you already sort of answered this when you spoke about the courses you're taking.

Interviewee: Yes. My course is offered online through let's say a learning management system. Okay, so we have like interactive videos with the lecturer, they will post a video where she's just speaking through the module for that particular week and then

everything else will be accessible online. All the course material and you can access them at your own pace.

Interviewer: That's so cool. Then which skills do you actually aim to improve? let's talk about the course you're currently taking.

Interviewee: Okay, so the social media marketing course, I'd say skills like social media strategy development, content creation, communication management, so that is where you actually receive and manage online engagements. You track analytics for social media sites. And then I'd say another one would be advertising.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And one last one would also be data analytics.

Interviewer: Okay, wow. You're going to learn quite a lot. I see.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright, that's so cool. Then the next one is I think this one also ties back to the other question where we spoke about how much effort it takes, here we're asking how much time does it take? How long does it usually take to complete a micro credential? I think you already sort of said it depends right on the course.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. Yes. So 8 weeks, 8 weeks to 10 weeks.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah. Then, as an entrepreneur, do you find any value in actually acquiring micro credentials instead of a university degree?

Interviewee: I do. Okay. I think that it's to find, well, you can find job opportunities much quicker than traditional qualifications because as opposed to going to university and acquiring like a four year degree micro credentials allow you to acquire certain skills within a couple of weeks, which makes you like, which makes you employable quicker, let's say and with regards to entrepreneurs, it's really easy to be working and completing the course at the same time simultaneously, I'd say because it's self-paced, you can I guess work around your full time job. So yeah, there's other things I think is beneficial with micro credentials.

Interviewer: A very good point, because I mean, they're quite flexible, right?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright then. When you were actually selecting the course you're doing now, what sort of factors or things did you look at before you chose the course?

Interviewee: Yeah, the one major factor for me was just relevance to my career goals. So I definitely chose a course that would further my career goals within digital

marketing within the digital marketing space. So this social media course would obviously equip me with skills needed to advance in a digital marketing career, so relevance to career goals and then the other thing that I definitely looked at was credibility. So really looking at the reputation of the institution that I'm doing the course with, reading up on reviews, information about the institution. So those two things were definitely what I considered.

Interviewer: That's a good point. Right then the next one, how do you measure your skills? So as an entrepreneur, let's say, how will you when you finish this course you're doing in social media marketing, I don't know if I'm saying that right, but the course you're currently doing, how will you measure that yeah, I now have these skills?

Interviewee: I think for myself, practical exposure, definitely I'd say because with practical exposure you can actually apply the skills that you learned while studying and use that in a practical sense. So definitely years of experience. And just experience in general, yeah.

Interviewer: Then what do you wish to gain from micro credentials? I think you also answered this when we spoke about which skills you want to improve and you mentioned a few. So that's okay, then the next one is how much flexibility do micro credentials allow you in comparison to traditional qualifications?

Interviewee: Oh, definitely a lot of flexibility. You can complete the course on your own pace, which means that you can set your own time limits. Yeah and it's really easy to sort of ask for extensions when you need to submit an assignment late, which is not always as flexible within traditional learning.

Interviewer: Alright, so quite flexible then. Would you say that micro credentials are as credible as traditional qualifications?

Interviewee: It can differ based on the specific needs of employees, I guess. But I'm finding that a lot of companies would like for you to have a combination of both the traditional qualification and a micro credential. So I'd say a combination of both skills are already good. But really, depending on the person.

Interviewer: Alright.

Interviewee: I hope, I hope that answered your question.

Interviewer: There's no right or wrong answer, so whatever you say is right. Yeah. So in the next one, do you think that micro credentials accurately depict a person's skills?

Interviewee: Yes and no. And I'm saying that because I think it's really dependent and influenced by the program, the program that you're doing. So do they cover practical application assessment criteria and industry relevance really? So I think those three things determine whether you can say that a person has this certain skill. So it depends on the program really.

Interviewer: Very good point. Then how can micro credentials increase a person's employability?

Interviewee: Oh, definitely it can increase your employability because it. It really like offers specific skills, so if you are wanting to be a project manager, a micro credential will really cover the specific skills needed to be proficient in project management. I think micro credentials play a really key role in showing that individuals are continuously learning and growing, and I think that's something that employers look for as well. I think when you have a micro credential on your CV, it just automatically shows that you are someone who is continuously wanting to grow and learn and just that you have an open mindset to always learning. So I think that's yeah, that does increase your employability.

Interviewer: Alright then, which method of learning would you prefer between game based learning or a traditional set up in a classroom setting?

Interviewee: For myself, I'd say I'd go for traditional learning.

Interviewer: That's the first time I'm hearing a young person say that, interesting.

Interviewee: Really.

Interviewer: Yeah, most of the young people say traditional setup is boring. I have an elderly person who said definitely traditional. I have no idea how games work. I was like, OK, I understand. Maybe because of your age.

Interviewee: I just think it's just so much better to have someone that you can engage with if you need to ask for guidance. And I think it also just makes you self-motivated, game based or self-based learning can kind of well you need a lot of motivation but having someone in a traditional learning and or learning setup would kind of motivate you. And there's this sort of pressure put on you so. Yes, I do think that traditional learning is what I prefer.

Interviewer: That's a good point on motivation. You have to be to keep yourself motivated to complete these courses because no one is going to.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, exactly. No one's putting pressure on you.

Interviewer: Even worse, no one is forcing you. We're actually coming to the end, almost done. What are some of your business goals as an entrepreneur. Then to achieve those goals, do you think you will need to improve your entrepreneurial skills?

Interviewee: I would love to improve my own business and yes, definitely I'll need to improve my skills if I'm to want my business to do better and make more money. I'll need like project management skills, how to manage people, leadership skills. Yeah.

Interviewer: Alright then thinking along those lines, do you think micro credentials can assist you in gaining some of those skills that you would need to achieve that goal that you have?

Interviewee: For sure. Definitely. I think micro credentials cover a lot of aspects that entrepreneurs need. So I definitely think that it is very helpful in acquiring entrepreneurial skills, yeah.

Interviewer: Perfect. Any last comments, any thoughts? Anything else you want to share?

Interviewee: I will say that this really made me think about my business, it's going to make me think about it a lot.