|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Transcription: | 4 |
| Date: | 1 May 2024 |
| Participant: | D |
| Researcher: | Elizna Schulte |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Researcher: | So thank you so much for joining my research. I really appreciate your participation. So just to give you a bit of an, let's say a background of me, I am currently doing my master's in HR and labour relations and for my mini dissertation my topic is the social integration of work integrated learning as community engagement from a postgraduate perspective, I'm not sure, are you familiar with the term work integrated learning? |
| Participant D: | No, I’m not. |
| Researcher: | Okay, so let me give you a brief explanation. So basically, it is an umbrella term that refers to approaches and strategies where theory is combined with practice within a purposefully designed curriculum, so this stretches further than traditional education and enables students do receive exposure to real world environments. And there are few examples of it, it can take place in the form of internships, work placements, practicums, project based learning and service learning. So basically, the purpose of my research in layman's terms is to determine what the postgraduate students of UP have experienced and whether their experienced to work integrated learning have helped them to connect with the community. So yes, first things first, I want to hear from you. So since this pertains to the practicum that you guys had, which is your community project, can you describe a bit what your community project was based on? |
| Participant D: | Yes, so what we did is we went to a recruitment company, Company A, and we had a recruitment drive. So on the day we interviewed, well in our team of four now obviously, we interviewed I think, like 150 people, if I remember correctly. And ultimately, at the end of the day, I think 80% of those 150 people got jobs. So yeah, so that was quite a successful project. We also won the best project for the year. So you're luckily for us everything turned out well, and yeah, so that so we did some recruitment. |
| Researcher: | Okay, well, that's amazing. Congratulations on winning the best project. |
| Participant D: | Thanks. |
| Researcher: | That's very cool. So um, regarding your community project and the recruitment drive, would you say that this community project helped you to combine your academic knowledge with practice? |
| Participant D: | I think definitely, um, you know, at the end of the day during our course, you know, we learn how to how to interview people. How also just you know, how to act professionally. I think that's a big thing. That really sets people with degrees HR degrees apart from people who do not have that. And so, yes, I think having that knowledge, and then actually making it practical, was how... the practice theoretical knowledge helped a lot, even though we also had to do some of our own research prior to the session to make sure that we conduct and do good interviews with the people. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that makes sense. And you've mentioned now that you learned during your community project, how to interview other people. Is there any other skills or competencies that you have acquired whilst participating in your community? In your community project? |
| Participant D: | Yes. I think I guess our recruitment skills is one thing, but also our admin skills and admin is actually at the end of the day quite closely related to HR because a lot of a lot of our functions requires good admin skills and you know, where we had to organise all of the CVS because obviously within those they say 150 candidates, there is let's say 20 different jobs that the people are applying to, or can be used. So just to keep all of those CVs sorted, so definitely admin skills would be one and interviewing skills would be the other one. And also just, ja, being professional and sounding professional because you can imagine we are now let's say 22 year olds, well our other team member was 23 De-identify. But 22 year olds interviewing a person of 50. So that was also quite intense. and so ja definitely also just act professional. |
| Researcher: | So it also helped you to gain a bit more soft skills such as professionalism? |
| Participant D: | Yes. 100%. That was the word I was looking for. |
| Researcher: | That's good to hear. And so my other question, since I want to pinpoint how it enabled you to communicate with your community or engage with your community. Would you say that it allowed you to engage with the wider community and if so, why? |
| Participant D: | yes, definitely, well, I mean, if it wasn't for the community project, we would have never been in a situation where we had to interview 150 blue collar workers and just, ja, to be yeah I think that that's technically forced us to connect with our community. And yeah was actually it was just a lovely project. At the end of the day, and all of us we were like, oh, no, we don't want to do this. We don't want to do a community project. And actually, that was the highlight of our year, at the end of the day. |
| Researcher: | Oh, wow. That's amazing. And what other follow up question so it's good to engage with the community. But how did this practicum allowed you to engage with industry partners? |
| Participant D: | Yes, so, so we could we worked [Company A], with our clients. They are quite a well known recruitment company. So just to work with them, and see how they do things and how recruitment actually happens in the practical world was quite interesting. And other industry partners. Yeah. I think I can only actually say [Company A], yes and no additional comments. |
| Researcher: | If I may ask, how did you get to use [Company A] at the university, refer them or were you expected to find your own recruitment company? |
| Participant D: | So no, they did not refer them we ... we found them I did a three month live internship at [Company A]. last year. So whilst doing the project, I also worked there, which made it a lot easier for our team. And yeah, so that's how we, we decided to reach out to them and do that. |
| Researcher: | Okay. And then I just want to confirm since I did my honours in HR, not in IOP. So we didn't actually do the community project. |
| Participant D: | Oh okay, yes. |
| Researcher: | Yeah. So how did it work? Did they assign you to specific sections of the community project? Let's say this one team need to do a recruitment drive and the other team need to do something else. |
| Participant D: | So no, they did not, did not do anything like that. They didn't literally just say, you need to reach out to the community. This is what you need to achieve, to basically achieve to make a difference in the community and we could choose our own groups, choose our own in what we want to get into but it had to be IOP related. So all HR related for that matter, because I've been in HR is actually exactly the same in my opinion. So So yes, no, they did not. They did not give any guidance in terms of that. |
| Researcher: | Okay. Okay. And you are currently working now. But would you say that based on your studies and the community project, that you were employable after your studies? |
| Participant D: | Yes, I think I was definitely employable. However, for example, in HR you know, you learn about payroll that there are so many things that comes with payroll, that was a whole new world to me, and also, you learn about it, let's say, SETA the SETA, for example, and now was it was the first time ever I actually had a look at the SETA website and ja learn how to do the SETA submission. So I think what what my studies learned me was basically to know what all of these aspects mean. And for example, that I the ISO, can't remember the numbers, and you learn about that, but you don't actually know what it is. So I think it made me employability in the sense that I have a broad idea of the different things however, the finer details, I had no idea how to do. So it definitely definitely made me employable, but there was still much work to do. |
| Researcher: | Regarding the payroll, would you say that perhaps, let's say the university introduces like a short course which the students need to do, would you think that would be beneficial to the whole curriculum to do like a payroll course and sage 300 Or even Payspace? |
| Participant D: | Yes, 100% No, definitely. Um, you know, I think a lot of a lot of our subjects is actually so you know, it's just so broad and you need to learn this and this and this and memorise this and this and this, where actually we miss the practical stuff. And so no, definitely, I think a short course for even for payroll, recruitment, all of our all of the big HR functions, as mentioned by that is SABPP model. I think it would be so much more beneficial to actually just know how to do these things practically. And for example, just say that SETA submission should happen once a year in before the end of April. So which was something I did not know at all. So no, I think definitely just to make it a bit more practical. That could be a good idea. |
| Researcher: | I hear you, and it's actually good that you've mentioned the SABBP because I think they framework is great and it applies to South Africa specifically. So would you say that perhaps as you've mentioned the SETA their things are specific to South Africa. So perhaps the curriculum can introduce more specific practical things which HR can do? |
| Participant D: | Yes, 100%. No 100%. That would make a huge difference. And also, you know, at the end of the day, at the end of the day, our undergrad degree is a HR degree, so even honours degrees or Your Honours degree, you know, do it in HR. So, yeah, I mean, if you look at accountants, for example, they physically know how to do all of the transactions and all of the practical stuff my brother and works at [Company B] and he went into the organisation and when I did presenting, he literally knew how to do everything, how to do all of the transactions, debit credit, I don't know anything about that, where I felt my degree did not help me as much as his degree did. |
| Researcher: | So just to summarise that, would you say theoretically, your degree learned you a lot but practically, there's a bit of a gap, |
| Participant D: | 100% |
| Researcher: | Thank you for that. So, in terms of the practicum, if we can go back to the community project again, what academic knowledge have you obtained during the practicum? |
| Participant D: | So I think in terms of your academic knowledge, so that was a lot about recruitment. So you know how to how to identify this person, they might not be a good fit, or might not be a good placement. So we actually as our team, we did research beforehand, and also just to make sure that, you know, we don't come there and then we don't actually know what they're doing. So academically, we, we did some research on recruitment and effective recruitment, but that's about it. |
| Researcher: | Okay, and the other side of it, this might be an obvious question, but what practical knowledge have you obtained during the practicum? |
| Participant D: | So, so definitely, practically to interview people to do reference checks. To sure let me think I'll also see, okay, let me start at the beginning so you get the CV then you scan through it, then you say, okay, this person, yes or no. So CV screening, then actually doing the interview, and then doing reference checks. So that those are three steps that we that we did, and, yeah , I think that is the practical things that we got from it. |
| Researcher: | Okay. Okay. And we have touched on a bit about, um, whether you believed you would be employable after your studies. But would you say that the practicum have equipped you for the world of work a bit more? |
| Participant D: | Yes, definitely. Absolutely I'm I think also, especially our community project, it was, it really helped me even in the job that I'm now, recruitment. I'm not scared if I need to recruit someone because I know the steps. I believe in my interviewing abilities and whether I can, you know, get a fair idea of who that person is. So definitely, it definitely helped me a lot. And actually, I do think that we should have more practicums like that during our degrees or Honours Degree, whatever. |
| Researcher: | Okay. From your perspective, as you've mentioned, do you think that you have that you need a bit more practical exposure within your degree. What aspects of the practicums Do you believe should be adjusted to align with industry standards, since you have seen how the world of work actually works? |
| Participant D: | So sorry, can you just repeat the question, but I think it's I think it's on my side, I just missed the middle part of it. |
| Researcher: | No problem. So since you've mentioned that you would like a bit more well you prefer. No, let me rephrase that again, since you've mentioned that the degree might require a bit more practicum exposure, what aspects of the practicum Do you believe should be adjusted so that it aligns with the industry standards? |
| Participant D: | So you say you refer to the community project? |
| Researcher: | Yes. |
| Participant D: | I think you're I think, I think I'm a bit more guidance would be nice. For example, if they say okay, everyone should work in this sector. And then we you know, we work with this industry leaders. I think that would also be nice because the community project is so wide like you can literally do anything. Some people went to schools, other people went to so it was really super broad. So I think just to get more in terms, to get more industry specific, there should just be a bit more guidance on that. With the help of the university, obviously, because if it wasn't for my connection with [Company A], we would have never landed up with it. So I hope that answered your questions. |
| Researcher: | Ja definitely. So if I understand correctly with a community project, it's basically the students' own connections and they own perceptions of HR which will guide them for the community projects and let's say they do not have the connections or they might not even think broad to connect with the industry partner, then they won't have engagement with industry partners and |
| Participant D: | 100% you said it good. That's exactly what I meant. |
| Researcher: | Okay. It is there anything else that you would like to add on this topic? |
| Participant D: | Um, no, I think yeah as I said, I think it would be, it would be nice if we can have more things like this within our studies because looking back, yeah, looking back to my even like my undergrad and my postgraduate graduate degree. The one thing that I actually remembered where I actually learned a lot was during this project, so I do think that more of them would be really beneficial towards our studies. |
| Researcher: | Okay. And I actually just remind my reminded myself about a follow up question. So you are currently doing your masters is that correct? |
| Participant D: | Yes, that's correct. |
| Researcher: | And with your masters I've seen on LinkedIn I may be incorrect but that you guys get a bit more exposure to IOP specific things such as training from [Company C]'s and things like that, correct? |
| Participant D: | Yes, that's correct. |
| Researcher: | Okay. And with that, would you say that also helped you a bit more to understand what IOP is and to understand how psychometrics work and things like that? |
| Participant D: | Yes. 100%, right. Absolutely. And I also have told one of my Oh, we actually like a good friend group in our master's group. And we say that that [Company C] session was actually the best out of all the sessions we had through the entire week because it was just so ja industry specific and ja because these people you know, they work every single day in industry, it was just so nice to get that practical exposure where I feel sometimes and I know the professors are gonna read through this, or gotta know what I say now but sometimes in a university setting, it's theoretical, were you on 100% miss the practical of it. So um, that was super nice. And yeah, that was also definitely from from our first block week, that was definitely the highlight for that week. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that's good to hear. So, my last question would be, since you have done the community project, and your honours and since you are receiving a bit more practical training in your masters, would you believe that the combination of these two would help you would help equip you for the world of work? |
| Participant D: | Yes, I think definitely. So because at the end of the day, you need theoretical knowledge and you need practical knowledge. So definitely, I do think that the balance is a bit out at this stage at the university where it's much more theoretical and not much practical, which also makes sense because it's a university it's not it's not the workplace. And so no I definitely, I feel equipped and even moving into my first job. The first month was hectic, but I can do everything now. So, so no, definitely definitely. |
| Researcher: | Okay. No, that's good, to hear And I would just want to know, are you excited for your internship that's coming up? |
| Participant D: | Yes. I'm excited. It's a bit daunting for me at this stage because I'm sort of happy at my current work and because it's more an HR role, I'm not sure if I will be able to you know, get all the psychometrics hours. Even though we work with [Company C] assessments, I need to investigate that before I do anything. So I really hope that I can stay at my current organisation but I'm also going to apply to other places where you can case so I'm excited for it but I'm still unsure. Yeah. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, I did do but it's actually good. And you've mentioned that the internship also provides you with exposure to recruitment, to psychometrics |
| Participant D: | Yeah |
| Researcher: | Um, do you believe that the internship obviously would help you to gain a bit more exposure and allow you to see what you like and what you don't like? |
| Participant D | Yes, definitely. I actually I went through that hpcsa, their document of how your internship should be structured. And it was just so exciting like seeing all these topics and then yeah, I'm super excited for the different things and I think it's, I think, actually the hpcsa even though the admin is really bad. It's a good framework that they have there. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, I get you and that's all from my side. I want to thank you for your time and your patience, especially with the technical difficulties. |
| Participant D: | No problem. |
| Researcher: | But all the best with your masters, I know you will ace it and should you require any help with your research or neither interview participant, I am always available. |
| Participant D: | Thank you. I appreciate it so much. It was actually so nice to be interviewed because we are usually the ones interviewing other people. And as you're as you're asking the questions, I think things I was like, yeah, that probing, excellent. I just I get to see those skills that you're that you are throughing it Yeah, into the interview. So that's actually very inspirational. gonna remember it for my next interview. |
| Researcher: | Thank you so much, and thank you for your positivity and enjoy your off day. |
| Participant D: | Thank you, you too. |