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| Transcription: | 9 |
| Date: | 7 June 2024 |
| Participant: | I |
| Researcher: | Elizna Grobler |

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| Researcher: | Okay, so hi, thank you so much for joining my research. And thank you for participating in it. So I just like to give you a bit of background as to who I am and the purpose of my study so I am Elizna. I am currently a second year masters student, I'm almost done. I'm so glad. And then I also work full time as an HR graduate where I do recruitment and other HR related administration. So yes, thank you so much once again. And basically, my research study pertains to Work, Work Integrated Learning, and my title is the social construction of work integrated learning as a community engagement from a postgraduate perspective. So basically what that just means it just says that how you guys have experienced your community project as a form of work integrated learning, so I'm not sure are you familiar with the term work integrated learning? |
| Participant I: | Somewhat, but I think further explanation in this regard would be better. |
| Researcher: | Okay, perfect. So basically, it's an umbrella term that refers to approaches and strategies where theory is combined with practice. Within a purposefully designed curriculum, which stretches further than traditional education. And, and the aim is to enable students to receive exposure to real world work environments. So to add to this, it allows students to extend and exert the theoretical knowledge which they have obtained in an academic setting, obviously, then in a professional working environment, and examples can include internship work placements, practicums project based learning as well as service learning. However, as I know you guys have done the community project, which is basically a bit of a practicum. So, on that note, would you perhaps describe what your group had to do for your community project? |
| Participant I: | Yes, so we decided to focus on time management as we saw that there's a great struggle we first identified within the group in the honours group. That was all the new tasks and was that we have evening classes still then. And we really struggled with time management. So we decided for the mental health and the wellness aspect in for us in industrial psychology and HR, and we wanted to focus on, if we help people with time management, they will be okay. It will be a crutch for them mentally and their emotional well being in this process so that they can be the best performers that they want to be. So we tried with the students but it was difficult with the timing. So what we decided then is we did it with high school students, specifically those preparing for matric and grade 11 because it's quite tough. So we did it with [School A], and one private school and we then did the community service with them, and we ran through the whole programme. So we as a group went for further certification on time management. And then we applied it within our section in our sessions that we had with the school students, just to help them with proper time management and how it can actually help you at the end of the day to relieve the stress that you experience. Okay, |
| Researcher: | That sounds like a very good community project where you actually reach out to your community as well. So I would also like to know from you how did this practicum module allow you to combine your academic knowledge with practice? |
| Participant I: | It was interesting, in the beginning it was you were thinking out early time management and then we started realising but we have touched on aspects of this in leadership where it is an important part for people to be able to time management properly. And then when we started looking because we first didn't realise looking at the Wellness, we thought of it in aspect of productivity. And [Dr Name] actually suggested that we call for mental health, the mental health side of things because people are really struggling with stress due to this and anxiety. So we were able to use the counselling module as well. And then approaching this ethical manner as as well working with the children and sharing ethicality the whole time. So we actually, with this group project we were able to use four other modules' information and integrate it to create this overall model of ours for proper time management. So it was interesting. So in the beginning, it was a bit confusing to understand where to apply your knowledge, but as you got into the process, it actually got much better and easier for us to identify it. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that's interesting. I'm actually glad you mentioned the counselling module and the ethical things that you have learned which you need to consider as an IOP. Regarding the counselling module, what certain aspects helped you to do the community project? |
| Participant I: | With the counselling it makes makes your way of being present and actually listening to what the people are experiencing and put yourself into the world and understanding where they are coming from. Because for one person, a task will seem very easy and how can you struggle with that task? Whereas for another, it might be the most difficult thing because they do not know where to start or they don't grasp the idea. So with the counselling background, we were actually able to be more supportive towards the student that really struggled. And because sometimes you get your I'm gonna say your shine students that like, pick it up. So quickly, and they can just run with something. And then those that struggle, they get left behind. And with the counselling, we were able to see those students and then approach them in a respectful manner, and actually go visit the world. And they were more receptive of our information at the end of the day. |
| Researcher: | Yes, no, I hear you and that's actually very interesting. Thank you for sharing. I also wanted to know obviously, as your community project your group's objective was to learn the people about time management, but what competencies or skills have you acquired while participating in the community project? |
| Participant I: | I think applying theory in the real world, that was really something that we had to focus on. Because you've got all of these books and you've got all this information and you put this beautiful slideshow together. And then you get there and you realise this slide isn't useful. This thing? How does this look in the practicality the people they don't understand STAR. What's the STAR thing you're talking about? So we realised that some of the academic terms and things that we will learn is not always applicable and you need to use the common jargon to to reach your audience. So that was the first thing that we really had to focus on is taking a theory and applying it to your audience and actually trying to make effective because we had to teach them about time management. When actually we spoke to the teachers when we reach out to them. They said it's part of the life Orientation Syllabus, but they do not have time in the curriculum to actually spend proper time as we are going to on itso they really welcome that we actually went to that household studies, what's that? The where they things and we went to that class as well because I said that students struggle in the practicals to use time management and it's a good thing for us to teach them to us. And we've realised this although that we as students are being taught about time management and in the leadership thing and so time management is crucial for employees to be effective. We do not actually know the people that studying what time management entails in the reality. So that was interesting for me where I saw that we are book smart, but we do not even practice what we are, in our own last what we are learning about and we keep on hearing about the effectiveness of time management, but we practice it as well. So I don't... it's also it was a theory to practical but it was reading all the theory but not applying it to your own life as well. That's what we have discovered there. |
| Researcher: | Sho. So would you say that the community project helped you to bridge the gap between book theory or book knowledge and then practical, how to be practical and how to use your degree in a practical manner? |
| Participant I: | Yes, it did it after certain aspects of the modules like I mentioned before, the ethicals and the counselling, so we were able to work with that information. But I think for all of us it was an eye opener. The world is very different from what we are busy to study and apply it is great. It's massive. A difference from book knowledge because we when you sit with a book, you've got all of this information, and you might understand it in your way but applying it. That's the great difficulty. So going from head to hand if I can put it that way. That was like I said in the beginning we struggle to get a hold on this project. But the moment we started working with the project and actually being actively involved in the project, it became much easier to use theory because then it started coming naturally. So what I would say is if you just go into something for us in the beginning as I can now we use theory we couldn't get anywhere. But once we start with the plan, and as already knowing the theory, it started to come up organically. If that makes sense. So the theory is there, I think we're just so reliant on books because we do not know how it looks in practice in the practice, and that makes it difficult for us to change it from one to the other. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, I understand that. And so I want to hear from you. So the community project that you specifically chose. It helped you to engage with your direct community, but has it helped you to engage with industry partners? |
| Participant I: | There was... no we, weren't, we weren't able to get a hold of HR groups that would allow us because with the time management thing, it was a bit of a fickle thing. There's a lot of people that's got their own systems in place about time management, and there's proper taught people that gives time management workshops. So therefore it was difficult to interact with the HR and the industry itself. But in a sense, we had an effect in the school systems because I can remember one of the teachers specifically, she said, "I actually learned a lot of things. It made my life easier with the children." So we do not practice a lot in the educational industry, but with so it's not typical, but when we worked in there, there was actually an effect in that education. And now one of the other also another teacher said that she actually realised it was right before exams and this was really good for students because she could see them in one of their flip files that actually made a goal setting thing and where they're working towards. So for them and their schedules because as teachers it was quite hectic for them as well as time management for because they had to sit there and supervise us we working with the children. And they actually went and integrate the time management in their own life as well. And I said because of the syllabus being so difficult to get through, we really helped them to... with their time management and ensuring that type get through it. So education industry is not a typical industry for IOP and HR, but they actually benefitted from the work that we do. |
| Researcher: | Yes okay. No, that's very good to hear. So, on that note, I would just like to know, I did ask you know about the industry partners. If you could have done the community project differently. Would you rather than choose a topic or a project that might enable you to engage with community partners? |
| Participant I: | That would have been very nice, because especially with looking at internships now and doing the Masters assignments as well. It is important that you build that a pool, if I can put it not not a talent pool but information pool and I believe is we have integrated more with industry partners, we we would have had a relationship with them. And it would be easier to engage with them and get some tips and tricks on how this industry actually works because we have to step out of the typical environment of the industry. So we didn't gain any knowledge about the industry itself. We gain knowledge about the practices, but I think I would have loved it if I could connect and interact with people in the industry. Because then you don't just speak about time management when you are surrounded with people in the industry, you see the reality of it. They bring up topics and you start learning about new things. And just last night, I was at [Company C] and they actually said something and I never knew about it. But because I was surrounded by people that knew is in the industry I was able to say, "Ah, okay, so that's how this actually works." So just that aha moment, I believe if you're in the industry, you're more exposed to moments like that, that comes up naturally. |
| Researcher: | Yes definitely. And on that note, I would just also like to know, how did you come about? Come across to the sign on time management that the university say to you guys, okay, this group needs to do recruitment or the other group needs to do time management or that you have a lot of freedom to choose your own topic and own let's say target market basically. |
| Participant I: | Yeah. So we had carte blanche that was open everything, we could have chosen anything and we did it everybody did recruitment and a lot of leadership training. And we first thought about doing leadership training with the what's the student representatives. But then we said you know what, this is so typical, we want to go, we want to challenge ourselves to go outside the box. So the idea actually came to me when I was sitting there in that class and we were having evening classes from six to nine every Monday to Thursday. And I was just everybody we weren't coping and I was sitting there, I was making calendars every time and looking and looking at when I'm going to start to finish. And people came to me and started asking, can I take photos of my calendar? And that's when I realised you know what, we do not even ask that in this. We are honest students but we don't even know how to do time management. And that's when the idea came up. It was actually spontaneously in the moment. And after that, we wanted to do it with the honours students, but then looking at the time that we had spent with them and already them not being available. Because we honour students ourselves. And we understand our programme is that when we decided, You know what, it will be better with children because they are all at the same place. That we can get consent from the principles themselves, and that they have to be at school. It's not a difficult that, "Oh, no, sorry, I can't pitch now. No, no, sorry, I can't do this now." Where as you would have with students, the it's more controlled circumstance a in quotations, basically forced to be there. And it made it easier for us to get the group and work with the group. And we knew they were set times that was allowed to us. And this we would have enough people that would engagedwith us as well so that this can be effective. So we were lucky with the students that we had people in the [School Group A] that would have been able to help us and then the like I said with the idea it just came up because I think it's a problem not just in schools. I think it's a problem in many practices in everyday life that we see. |
| Researcher: | Yes. Okay. And the other question I want to ask you is you mentioned you're currently working. Are you working in an IOP or HR related environment? |
| Participant I: | No, actually, I'm changing my career. I did two previous degrees before my IOP journey, and that was in [specified degree field]. So working with special needs children that cannot communicate properly. So I'm a facilitator, a therapeutic facilitator for these children and I work with them close with interaction with the therapists and the doctors to help them with their educational practices and try to help them immediately and during all this therapy, so I do not practice at all, but I'm very closely related with the psychometric reports and applying psychometric reports in practice and what is best, so yes. |
| Researcher: | Thank you for elaborating. That's very interesting, and I wish you all the best in your new career field. On that note, I would also just like to know do you believe that after your honours and considering the experience you have gained with your community project that you will be employable in the IOP type of related field? |
| Participant I: | I think that to certain effect, yes, you will be employable. But what specifically now on the internships that we're looking at, they are speaking a lot about what is your work experience? So a degree only get you that for at the moment you have to work while you're getting that degree, that's coming very evident for me. And when I was the other day, in the interview, the interviewer specifically said, "Oh, but you've been working for six years, this is already a good thing." So they really do look at the aspect that you have worked. So I think only a degree will get you 50% of employability. I think you need to take an initiative and start working even though it took hours and you do struggle to get to everything, but for you to make... to be certain that you get the proper you are really interested, get a work that you really enjoy or where you want to work. I think you have to take initiative outside the university and start working because the universities can only take you that for and different universities it's come up they focus on different things as well. And the other day I spoke to a courses student and she specifically said he is that training on an assessment centre. We only we talked about it theoretically and how it works and we had case studies that we had to do, but they went for a Friday on a Wednesday and they set and they were taught how this thing works. So I believe that helps as well. But again, it's by we all taught again, other things that the other students onto I think with the community project, I was allowed to see how the difference between theory and practice and this is this prepaid me really made it up and to say, I'm going to start my internship now and I know it's going to be different from the theory that I've been taught. But if I just get into it and start practising it, I will myself get more comfortable and the information that I've learned throughout the years will come organically. |
| Researcher: | Okay. I have a few questions for you now based on your answer. So the interview that you went for, was it like an internship type of interview? |
| Participant I: | Yes, it was. |
| Researcher: | Okay. So I have a question on that. From your perspective as a student, let's say you may not have that work experience. Do you think it's fair from an employer to actually require from a candidate who is actually just a student and let's say we consider an internship. Normally it's guided to people that does not have experience, would you say that it's fair to actually require from people or to have like an inherent non spoken requirement that the candidate should actually have work experience? |
| Participant I: | Yes. It gets very difficult to tricky at this point, because, yes, you're not required to have any experience. That's not a requirement. But I think it's a badge that you have, a star, that just in the competitive environment that we're working with. So I really don't think it's a requirement. And they didn't say it's a requirement but the way it comes up so if you have extra training, let's say in the psychometrics, and you have those certificates that again, is an edge on your CV, so they are looking, I think for you to perform in this competitive environment because I know about like, each internship... internship that we're going for, averages about 100 applications. So you need to be able to stand out out of that 100 applications. And that's why that... it's not a requirement from the side. But if you have that, it gives you the edge digital competitive edge that we need, because it's a very competitive environment. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that makes sense. Thank you so much for elaborating on that. So basically, if I understand correctly, the degree might not be enough. But if a person is able to do extracurricular things such as you say, to get training certificates or to get "uhm" to do extra things that help them to be a better IOP then it will also help them to be a bit more employable. |
| Participant I: | Yes, it's exactly that. With one of the interviews there were, I think about five out of the eight that were there that weren't working full time, so I don't think you will not be employable. I just think it will, for me, that's already working. They appreciated me because they said you already understand how work works. If that makes sense. So they really appreciated the fact that already understand how the working process works. So that's something that they don't have to train me on, or that's something that they understand I've already been in this so I don't have that change that I have to go through. So that they appreciate because it makes it easier for them at the day. But if they were five out of the eight that was just students that wasn't doing anything else, they're not full time employees, then it shows you they don't actually treat you negative or unfairly if you're just a student, but understand those students that were they their marks were exceptional, and some of them did part-time things or some of them did something extra that it's a training that was it was the certificate. So I really believe if you want to be competitive in this environment, you cannot just rely on your degree. Yes, you really need to take that extra step. |
| Researcher: | Okay, and then I assume you are currently doing your masters. Is that correct? |
| Participant I: | Yes. In year one, so I wish I was where you are now. |
| Researcher: | No, little steps at a time, but I want to hear from you. I did my masters in HR obviously. So I'm not necessarily sure how the things are working. Are you gaining training from other industry partners as part of your... no let me rephrase that. So with your masters do you get additional training from other industry partners that it's a range through the university? |
| Participant I: | Yes, we had we had to [Company C] trainings. And then we had [Company D] that came to us to the university. And these were all on based on psychometric tests. And then it's not training though, but they really bring in experts in the field to come speak with us. We I think we've had like in the two blocks block weeks that we had we had and virtual meetings as well five opportunities no four sorry, four opportunities of experts in the field that comes to speak with us about the trends in the market and what we need to look out for. So from the university side, they are really exposing us. They are trying their best to expose us to the field and understanding for those that especially those that doesn't work like me, I don't work in the field currently. It really opens my eyes of what they expect me. And when doing the interviews for my internship, I will I'm able to apply that information that I've gained through the speakers and through the training sessions and applied it in my interview so that I still come across as informed of the industry although I'm not in that industry. So from the university side that really helps us when we are trying to get employment. |
| Researcher: | Okay, and then on that note, so you've mentioned now that you do get additional training or additional opportunities to engage with the industry partners. So would you say that perhaps if the community project might a bit be let me say guided that the students should engage with community, ag, with industry partners. Do you think that it will also help you to be more employable and to actually be more prepared after Your Honours that you have the required knowledge about the industry? |
| Participant I: | Yes, I think I would really that could have been very nice if that was a requirement. I think the difficulty in that being a requirement is that many of us were just fresh out of our first degree now and we don't even we have now not a lot of connections to the industry, but we've got more than we had in our honours year now and so as honest students saying you need to go practice with people in the industry. You don't you do not know how to contact these people. And many of them, they're so busy that they are not available for you to go work there. So I think it's a clever idea to ensure that engagement with the people, but on the other hand, I think it makes it very difficult for the students to get a hold of this people. So because I've thought about it just the other day as well, because we have to do a lot of interviews for us as well. And I don't know if the university can do that. But if they can just create a pool of people, a number for those that's not in the industry that can say you you can contact these types of people you need to do the contact you need to all the communication, but here's some guidance for people that are willing to work with you. Because if you just have set like a goal for the industry, where do you start? How do you contact these people just as an honour student because understand now I'm saying I need to do time management or training with your people. And who's going to allow me because I know one of the students in our group that recruitment at this whole recruitment drive, but they were lucky enough because one of them worked at the company. The company always wanted to do this. And they wanted to write it off as their training and they doing it to the community. So it was something that the company wanted to do because the write it off, not tax writing off but you understand. There's certain things that you have to do to BEE and that and they could do that through the students applying the knowledge so both benefited from the situation. So but going off the cuff, how many of the companies do we know does this. We do not know the companies that needs this. So if the I believe from the university side, they've got more contact with these companies and these industries, and if they can maybe between them, liaison and say, we've got this thing that students can help with or adjust to, I don't know there's not a network of this like SIOPSA and stuff, but just for the universities you just close it off but really helped the students and then I think it will help with this going from theory to practice as well. Because the students will not say like us Okay, let's go work with a school that because that's the only option that we have available. |
| Researcher: | So to interrupt you, but my OTTER meeting is going to stop now. I'm just going to start… Perfect, you may continue. |
| Participant I: | It's like, what can you actually do with this? Because you didn't specialise in HR now? That I think it would be good if I know they've got these workshops. In undergrad where you can have these career days, and people introduce to you but I think part of the lecture again, going on the concept that we did with the schools, the children have to be there. |
| Researcher: | Yeah… |
| Participant I: | So in class, the students must be in class you must be 80% of that process. And so if you can inform, or get like 5 speakers for 10 minutes each, just introduce your organisation and say, "What's the trend or what's the reality of the organisation." You will start fostering that interest quite soon. Or earlier, and people just read through that. Five companies 10 minutes each. There already have exposure to five organisations where you can connect with LinkedIn, you can go and connect with those people and they already have a foot in the door. Those are five people for Your Honours that you can use and then let's say they do it in honours but they just do 10 people so they already have a pool of 15 people that you can now connect with. So I don't I don't think it needs to be very accessible. Say, here's 100 people there you go. If they can just have a think between 15 people, there's a lot of people that can gain information from that. And there's other sets in the industry that will not use that 15. So because I understand it's difficult for the university to cater to all of these needs. That's why I say if they can just do it in small increments this introductions and introducing you to the industry. It will those that serious about their studies will take on those what the opportunities Yeah, and they will apply it. But understand again, it's difficult from the university sometimes because some students just out of the 100 this 15 that really takes it seriously and then Who do you actually get to fall? So I don't know. It's a difficult thing. But I think if you just do it in small increments, you will help the students in the long run does that make sense? |
| Researcher: | Okay, so basically the university it would be great if they put in a lot more effort to create a network for the students with industry partners. |
| Participant I: | Yes, I really believe so. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, this is all from my side. Thank you so much. You've provided me with very valuable information that I can use and I would love to thank you for your time and for being such a willing participant. |
| Participant I: | Ah, its no problem, it's good karma. Hopefully I’ll get by this year but yes, I always participate in these research things and I'm glad that I could help you if there's any other questions or something that you need clarifications on please contact me. |
| Researcher: | No, yeah, there's so much I'm going to stop the recording now. But yes thank you so much for your time. |
| Participant I: | No problem, Elizna. |