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| Transcription: | 5 |
| Date: | 1 May 2024 |
| Participant: | E |
| Researcher: | Elizna Grobler |

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| Researcher: | Hi, um, thank you so much for joining my research and for participating in it. So just to reiterate this research is voluntary and should there at anytie be a question that you feel uncomfortable to answer, then you're more than welcome to indicate that so just to give you a bit of background as to who I am, I am in Elizna Schulte. I am currently doing my masters and my mini dissertation so that's where you come in. I'm also working in an HR graduate role where I'm responsible for recruitment as well as other HR administration. So that's basically myself in a nutshell. So just to tell you a bit more about my about my about my research. So the topic is quite a difficult concept to understand, but I'll break it down a bit. So basically, it is the social construction of work integrated learning as community engagement from a postgraduate perspective. So basically, in layman's terms, that just means how the postgraduate students experienced their exposure to work integrated learning, and also how did it allow them to engage with their community. So I'm not sure whether you are familiar with the term work integrated learning. |
| Participant E: | I have an idea, okay. |
| Researcher: | I'm just going to give you a short definition to just form a good foundation. So basically, it is a term that refers to approaches where theory is combined with practice within a purposefully designed curriculum, and it enables students who receive exposure to real work environments. So basically, it refers to on campus and can also be off campus activities and it can form in a place of internships, work placements, practicums and then project based learning. So for this research interview, I would like to focus on your community project in your honours year. So if you can just tell me a bit what it was about and what did it require of you to do? |
| Participant E: | So we were a group of four people. What we wanted to do is actually make a big impact in of course, our community at that time, so one of my team members, she was working at a recruitment agency, and they connected us with a few people over there. So what they do is once a year, maybe twice a year if they have time. They would do a recruitment drive with blue collar workers in the Pretoria region. So it would focus a lot on the rural areas, mostly, I think was Olievenhout Bosch, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, places like that, and then they would send out the communication via all their communication channels that there's a recruitment drive happening. So they did that in advance. And then what we did is we helped the entire recruitment process so we went in with prep. Then there was interview day, so we interviewed I think, over 200 people that day, which was great, very short interviews, but of course for blue collar workers. So specific things we were focusing on, and then what agency that is they did the placements afterwards. So it's basically just creating a big talent pool. That was kind of the big idea. |
| Researcher: | Okay, sjo. That sounds interesting. I think it must be quite hectic to to facilitate that many interviews on a day. |
| Participant E: | It was interesting. Yes. |
| Researcher: | So my next question is how did your practicum module your community project allow you to combine your academic knowledge with in a practical setting? |
| Participant E: | So since it was very recruitment focused that we were able to take what we have learned from recruitment, and actually apply it so how do you do interviews? How do you prep for interviews? How do you probe because, of course, we have specific information we'd like to know from these blue collar workers. It was also interesting, the demographic we were working with was a very uneducated, uneducated group most of the time, so you kind of had to adjust your recruitment knowledge a little bit to fit that specific demographic, which was also very interesting. One was also very exciting, very insightful. And ya, it gave me a new view of recruitment, seeing how stressed the other person is on the other side, because normally, I would go for job interviews, and I'm the stressed one where now this time, I'm sitting on the other side, and you kind of have to have this sense of empathy the entire time of working with this person. They're also looking for a job their families to take care of things like that. So I think it was the practical side was very insightful. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that sounds very interesting. So you've actually answered my next question. So I would just like to thought from the interviewing skills and the probing skills that you have obtained during your community project. Is there any other competencies competencies you have acquired during the community project? |
| Participant E: | I think it was also understanding the recruitment process a lot better seeing what happens on the back end sites, how the recruitment agency tends to work, they also gave us a lot of insight into how they allocate these candidates to their clients, because they basically just work as a third party. So connecting the different parties with each other, which was also very interesting. So I guess that was something I learned as well. Yeah, and just for me, it was once again the fondness of working with people and yeah, have making an impact on people's lives, which is the original reason why I started to study industrial psychology and that was something that was actually very interesting to see again. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that sounds very insightful. Thank you for your answer. As the topic says, in the topic line, it says where you want to get them and how it allows you to engage with the wider community. So would you say that the community project enabled you to engage with the community? |
| Participant E: | Definitely. I think we were able to work with a community that didn't that, we didn't expect to work with, which was your rural group, but more like an uneducated, coming from all these different areas where normally when you think of HR you think of corporate and a very educated group. So it was an interesting community to work with. |
| Researcher: | Okay, and the opposite of that question, actually, how has this practicum allowed you to engage with industry partners, |
| Participant E: | I was able to engage with recruiters so people that have been in industry for a long time, that day before they prepped us. So they explained why we asked the specific questions we do for this group of people. How do you probe. What do you have to look for in their CV while you are asking questions when it comes to specific vacancies, what are the type of questions we are asking. What are we looking for. How do you how do you kind of figure out if this might be like a criminal or not. We found out that there were a few criminals that we spoke to as well. So that was interesting. So yeah, I was able to, to work with a few corporate people as well. See the admin in the backend, all that. |
| Researcher: | Okay. So I have a follow up question on that. You indicated in the beginning, that group member of us previously worked with the company. So would you think personal networks plays a very big role in the success of your community project? |
| Participant E: | I think it definitely plays a big role. We were quite lost without this network. We weren't really sure what to do. So having this connection sped up the entire process, I think we were one of the first groups to finish which was great. And yeah, she she, of course, knew all these people. They have done recruitment drives before so a lot of the admin was already, was already sorted. They were willing to work with us because she was working in the company of course at that time, so yeah, it made the process a lot easier. |
| Researcher: | Oh, that makes sense and all currently working now. But would you say the skills that you have gained throughout your studies made you employable? |
| Participant E: | definitely think so. I think the place that I work for us a little bit biassed because there's a lot of industrial psychologists and HR people that I work with. So they of course know the type of skills that you walk out with and the knowledge you walk out with after studying but I definitely believe that this practicum specifically made it made me more employable in recruitment itself because later on, like right after I started working at the company I'm at now, I had to also go through the entire recruitment process and be part of the actual process while employing new new people. So I was actually able to do something for them, which was great. |
| Researcher: | Okay, that's lovely. So just to give you a bit of background as well, I did my honours in HR. We didn't have like a community project, we had to interview certain people on certain topics. So explain a bit to me. How did the community project work? Were you like allowed to choose your own project, or did they tell people to do certain things so |
| Participant E: | We were mostly allowed to choose our own our own topic or the group we wanted to work with. Yeah. And then some of the lecturers would have liked us to work with the university itself. So some of the community projects or the other groups, they worked with student Career centre or something like that. They did things there. But I think it was all dependent on your supervisor or supervisor didn't have an issue at all, as long as we were making impact in a community somewhere. And it had to be related to IOP. Somewhere, that's where the recruitment came in. She was fine with that. In the end, it worked out really well. We did. I think we were the best group in the end. We won the award there. So as long as you're helping somewhere, I guess it helped |
| Researcher: | No, well, congratulations on winning the award. That's amazing. So, the following questions, I think you also might have touched on a bit but if you can just elaborate a bit on that. Sure. So since work, integrated learning is a combined approach within and designed curriculum, what academic knowledge have you obtained during the practicum? |
| Participant E: | So understanding the recruitment process a lot better. I had an idea of how recruitment looked beforehand, but I think there was a lot more in the actual process when you do recruitment itself that I've never thought of. It's like the communication channels that you have to use depending on the group that you're working with. It was the admin behind it. It was the admin afterwards, the actual probing of in the interview, how to probe them, how to make them feel a bit more comfortable, what to look for, while you are interviewing, how to analyse a CV things that I never learned in university that I got to learn there, which was great. So yeah, I I see recruitment a little bit different now. |
| Researcher: | Okay, yeah, that's amazing. It's good to hear that. So obviously, as an IOP, you won't be only doing recruitment. So my follow up question would be on that is would you prefer a bit more practical exposure to other aspects of IOP within your honours year? |
| Participant E: | Oh, yes, I think it would have been great to have your other experiences maybe in assessment or in employee-well being, the different areas that I can't think of right now maybe also a little bit more focused on technology. Integrating into industrial psychology would have also been great, I think. I think that makes you a little bit more employable. Walking out of university. So yeah. |
| Researcher: | Yes, I agree with that. And you are currently doing your masters. Am I correct? Yes, I am. Okay, so I've seen a bit on LinkedIn that you guys are gaining a bit more practical exposure to I think that the company's name is [Company C]. So would you please provide like a description of what you have learned through the training? |
| Participant E: | So for this specific training, it was linked to our advanced assessments module. And what happened is currently, our lecture is making sure that the different companies like [Company D] and [Company] are coming in and giving us actual experience and or giving us trainings that we can use later on. So that is specific certifications like Aeon or SAVA that we can use later on for psychometric testing. Something that was also a training situation was [Company D] came to one of our classes. It was an entire day situation where they basically taught us how to give feedback on an industry standard to someone that did a psychometric assessment. So that was also really interesting. Or what they would do is they'd invite guest speakers from [Company C] or [Company D] to come and speak about what the future of psychometrics would look like. So that was also very insightful. Its not textbook which was also great again, and now I'm walking away with extra certificates other than my degree, which I can actually go and use somewhere and it all once again, makes me a bit more employable, which is great. |
| Researcher: | Okay, no, that's good, too. Yeah. So would you think the combination of Your Honours practical exposure and your masters exposure helps you for your future then as well? |
| Participant E: | I think definitely it does. So for honours since there was a really good outcome with a community project, over 200 people got connected to jobs, which was great. So I think that outcome in itself is a great tool that I can use when I'm being interviewed. And then with Masters as well. The certification always helps. I think a lot of companies will look for specific things like that. I also have to apply for IOP internships and having a certificate and some experience in recruitment will always help I'm sure. |
| Researcher: | It's actually good. And you mentioned your IOP internship. So, do you think the practical training that you are currently receiving in your masters are helping you to build personal connections that might help you in the future to get it internship or job some way? |
| Participant E: | I think it does. I think it depends on how you end up using it like I I love LinkedIn, a very big advocate for displaying your professional career on LinkedIn. So those connections that I can build there and I've built a few by now has helped me a lot or I'm sure will help me at some point. I think if you keep all these certifications to yourself and you don't put them on a public platform like LinkedIn, then there's no way of recruiters being able to identify you and then possibly invite you for an interview or beyond bycicle interview for the internships or permanent position, whichever that might be. So I think it's how you use it. |
| Researcher: | Yeah, no definitely, and since you are also working now. So what aspects of the community project specifically do you believe should be adjusted a bit more to align with industry standards, because some students might not have the personal connections to do a recruitment drive or even to work with a company. So what would you say can be adjusted to align with industry standards? |
| Participant E: | I think it'd be great if the university or the lecturers could build these relationships like [the University] already has a relationship with [Company C] and with [Company D] and various other companies out there. So if these connections already built, and there's already arrangements that every year a group or group will come to the company and do a group project and let's say a specific area, then like that arrangement would help a lot. I know it's something that they do in the informatics department. Their final years in informatics, they have module [Insert Module Code here] It's very practical as well, and they have companies like [Company F], it'd be us coming in every year and there's a group project that is done every year with these companies. in mind. So I think having these industry connections will also actually help the students to get a job at some point because now you also have a network because that's extended to you. |
| Researcher: | Yes, I definitely agree. And it gives you a bit of an idea how that company works, so you're not shocked when you get there. Yeah, and you have a job then you already know and you already know people. |
| Participant E: | Exactly. And I know with the informatics students specifically they finally as they can put this entire practical practicum onto their portfolio. And a lot of companies actually asked for that specific [module] project and that they look at that as their portfolio and that determines if they employ them or not. So I think there's a better way that you could do this. I think the university has to kind of create that connection with the companies. |
| Researcher: | Definitely and I think that will help with the internships as well because I know of a quite a few people that struggled immensely to get an internship. If we can establish the relationships and everything. It might not be that difficult in the future. |
| Participant E: | Yeah, no, definitely. At the moment, an internship is kind of all up to you. And I think that to some extent, can be very frustrating if you end up not getting anything where the university could have, I think helped a lot more and created Industry Days or these networking events or things like that, where you can actually meet these are all as we say a practicum for them, then they can already see your skills and then your possible employer or employee, maybe one day. |
| Researcher: | No, I definitely agree Participant E, is that was all my questions for you. Is there anything else that you would like to add on this topic? |
| Participant E: | I think for me, it was a it was just a very interesting experience. I think all of us were very frustrated in the beginning of the process because he doesn't always feel like there's a lot of guidance, you do have a supervisor, but all of the admin and connecting with people in industry is all up to you. Which of course we did have a connection which was great, but we still had to have a few backup plans. So it was very stressful but very rewarding in the end, but I still believe it can be done better. Yes. |
| Researcher: | Okay. No, thank you so much for your interesting insights and your time on this public holiday. And then you must have a lovely day further. |
| Participant E: | Thank you. Thank you. |