

Good morning ladies and gentleman, my name is Thirushen Odayar. I'm an electric/ electronic artisan by trade and currently teach in a TVET college. Due to this experience I will be answering these questions with reference to these trades. Due to time constraints I have skimmed through the information to give you the most relevant info. Please feel free to ask questions during the discussion if you need clarification or more info on any part of my speech. If you have suggestions to problems that I might bring up, please do let me know solutions that you may have found.

How do curriculum providers interface with employers to enhance employability?

The marketing team of curriculum providers plays a major part in this task. They have to meet with employers, seeking clarification on what they require from students in order to improve their employability. This helps create partnerships and provides feeder programmes into industry. By doing this we can cater to specific employers need, by changing the training and skills programmes of students, also they can tell us where students weak points are so that curriculum can be developed or delivered differently to improve students. Colleges with a strong marketing team have better through put rates with employers. We see this with certain college, even though they are situated in Newcastle they are placing students in Durban and places around the country due to their strong industry ties. The input from major stake holders and industry helps workshops and skill courses to be more practically aligned with industry needs and make students more employable. More recent partnerships at colleges has shown that companies that have come on board with training and skills development, where they work through the marketing team and then with lecturer are more pleased with the output of learners. This is due to the hands on approach and suggestions on what needs to change to improve student's capabilities.

How do employers view curriculum providers and what do they do to enhance employability?

Due to the large amount of students seeking employment, employers don't need to force the issue of sourcing students. Due to the limited numbers they can employ, most employers don't approach TVET colleges directly and rely on word of mouth of their current staff, social media platforms and recruitment agencies to spread their current positions that they have available. This is why marketing teams are so important in creating these relationships with employers so they can get these opportunities first. There has been an increase in interest in students due to the tax rebates that employers can claim but has also resulted in an increase in dubious employers taking advantage of vulnerable students. Currently employers are taking in a number of students

but they are not benefitting student's long term, most of them are released after a short period. This is due to complaints we have been getting from employers that the capabilities of a N6 learner is now equivalent to a N2 learner. They have questioned and blamed this on the leaking of National exam papers. Due to this lots of companies are doing amplitude testing at interviews and from feedback that we have received majority of candidates don't make it past the first interview. Industry are now starting to question the qualifications coming out of TVET colleges and now turning to private training institutes to fill their vacancies.

What can we learn from your own experiences that might guide policy and practice?

The biggest problem I'm currently facing is the difference in the 2 Curriculums that we are running, the NCV and the NATED programmes. The NCV programme has a brilliant curriculum merging theory and practical components unlike the Nated programme that only has a theory component. Due to these differences NCV students understands the core subjects better due to the practical components. The challenge is majority of employers recognise the Nated Programme only, consequence of which the students are now abandoning the NCV programme. Another reason is on completion of the NCV programme which takes 3 years to complete to give you a NQF 4 qualification while this same NQF level can be achieved in the NATED programme after 1 year. Entry requirement for NCV is a pass in Grade 9 and the difficulty of level 2 NCV electrical is at a much higher standard resulting in a number of students failing to cope and abandoning the course within the first 2 months. Employers who do come to colleges to speak to learners believe the maturity of the students is a problem (+- 15 years old). We also face a problem of social ills, young students pick up drinking and smoking in colleges and they are left to do so. On completion of NCV level 4, it is equivalent to a matric, on recent talks to a company director, it was said that the level 4 students are more capable than N6 students and from my personal experience in teaching N6 students I tend to agree with that. With regard to business partnerships, giving funding isn't really helping if it is not being used wisely. Business coming in to help with infrastructure, training and setup of facilities would be of much

better use. Also their sharing of knowledge and expertise would help and build better relationships. Equipment that they sponsor to colleges must be followed up to see the progress, equipment being stored in sheds or later sold off is of no benefit to any party. Vacation work or in work training is a must for NCV programme to prosper and improve employability of students. It's been proven that students study harder when they know it can lead to in service training and employment. Career guidance needs to happen at an early age. Lots of students picking careers because of bursaries that are available eg. A student picks commerce subjects in school but decides to study engineering because there is place and a bursary.

Thank you

