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RE-THINKING DIGITAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT POST COVID19 – VIEWS FROM THE WORKPLACE

Izzy Crawford, Robert Gordon University, Scotland

Overview

- Doctoral research project with graduate employers
- Twelve in-depth interviews across UK, Germany, and USA
- Before and during Covid-19 first wave, Spring 2020
- Perceptions of global digital competency
- Digital transformation, literacy, and infrastructure
- Remote, flexible working opportunities and challenges
- Re-thinking virtual experiential learning

Introduction

- International virtual workplace – revolutionary change
- Digital knowledge and skills essential
- Higher Education pedagogies must adapt (Bhat and McMahon, 2016)
- Collaborative online international learning (COIL) opportunities
- Employer views echo student perceptions of COIL (Swartz et al., 2020)

Methodology

- Interpretivist research paradigm
- Inductive approach
- Qualitative method

Packer, 2010; Roulston, 2010; Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2012.

Methodology

- Sample – twelve employers from a range of geographical, educational, and employment backgrounds
- Data Collection – semi-structured interviews on Zoom
- Data Analysis – Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Brocki and Wearden, 2006)

Results - Global Collaboration and Remote Working

“I think it (international online collaboration) is important in the workplace because I think increasingly a lot more companies are global; they’re employing a lot more global staff. I think it again comes down to what makes us human and understanding how different people from different cultures perform in the workplaces.”

Results - Global Collaboration and Remote Working

“And, really, to tell you the truth, throughout this whole COVID-19 stuff, I don’t think we would have made it unless we would have saw what other places were doing, and collaborating every day, with what worked and what didn’t work. Even though you had casualties on the ‘what didn’t work’ side, we were taking those as examples and using them.”

“We don’t have the luxury of time, we don’t have the luxury of getting an IT department to make something work for us; we have half an hour a day where we need to do something, so it has to work.”

Results - Digital Literacy and Skill Development

“During this hard time of this coronavirus issue, we have already started talking about working remotely from home. If you have these (virtual) skills, it will help you better because they are planning to start teaching those who have never used Zoom and other things before, they are planning to teach us how to operate this.”

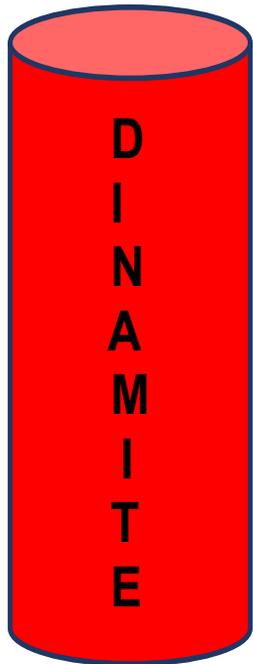
Results - Digital Literacy and Skill Development

“We all need to be digitally skills equipped, especially if we’re going forward. And not a lot of the courses are digitally skills equipped because they don’t really need it, but employers need it.”

Results - Experiential Learning and COIL

“Because of the changes which are happening in the workplace and work environments anyway...a lot of it will come from when they have experience; it’s quite difficult without having the actual experience in the workplace to know it, so it (COIL) will be more important (for students) because nine out of ten times they’re going to be in a situation in which they’re going to have to be dealing with, whether it’s internally or externally, a client or partner who is in a different country or different area and it is a global company.”

New Conceptual Model



- D** **Digital** (possesses strong, versatile, upgradable, digital skills)
- I** **Innovator** (creative, problem solver, confident out of comfort zone)
- N** **Negotiator** (excellent communicator, achieves effective compromise)
- A** **Aware** (self-reflective, empathetic, understanding)
- M** **Motivated** (conscientious, driven, needs minimal supervision)
- I** **Intercultural** (global understanding, culturally aware, sensitive, competent)
- T** **Team player** (leadership ability, adaptable, supportive)
- E** **Ethical** (socially, environmentally, and morally aware, avoids causing harm)

Figure 1. DINAMITE – 8 essential attributes for the global, virtual, workplace [14]

Conclusion

- Digital revolution in homes, schools, and workplaces
- COIL technologies and practices embraced
- Future-focussed mindset for employability
- Theory-practice balance must change

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Thank you for listening

Contact: Izzy Crawford i.c.crawford@rgu.ac.uk