

GUIDANCE SUPPORT FOR UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

by

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In early May of 1993, Mr Andrew Hofmeyr of Junior Achievement South Africa observed the following events which occurred in a regional office of a town council in Northern England.

A group of boys were presenting a case for why they needed a grant of two hundred pounds, to a local representative of the international chemical giant, ICI.

Under the new "education through enterprise" system employed in the UK, school children are supposed to gain experience of the business world through actually setting up their own small businesses. In order to do so, they often require money. They are not necessarily expected to repay grants or even to make a profit on their businesses.

The point of the exercise is to expose them to the ways in which businesses are managed.

The boys presenting the case witnessed by Hofmeyr had come to the conclusion that their school's tuckshop offered only junk food. They had decided to go into competition with the tuckshop and to offer health food as a preferred option. They had canvassed the pupils, decided on which foods were most likely to sell well, contacted local suppliers, and worked out the required costing figures. Indeed, they were so organized that none of the adults present felt the need to offer advice or to correct any misconceptions the boys may have had about how to go about setting up their small business.

The money was duly granted to them without much ado. In fact, the whole presentation took only a very short while. The surprise to Hofmeyr was that the boys seemed so young.

Their average age was seven.

(Hofmeyr 1993b)



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SUMMARY

TITLE: Guidance Support for Undergraduate University Students

CANDIDATE: Peta Lynne Odette von Hörsten

STUDY LEADER: Prof. Dr. C.D. Jacobs

DEPARTMENT: School Guidance

FACULTY: Education - University of Pretoria

DEGREE: Philosophiae Doctor (Career Guidance Counselling)

The implications of the rapid political, social, economic and technological changes at present occurring both in South Africa and internationally demand a review of the traditional approach to university training with regard to its relevance in terms of preparing students both for life in general and for the successful practising of a future career in particular.

The Information Age requires that a shift take place from the teaching only of the mastery skills of previous eras to the encompassing of life or core skills that can be adapted to changing circumstances.

As it cannot be assumed that students will acquire these skills incidentally or vicariously, they need to be consciously and deliberately taught in order to provide graduates with the ability to adjust to and cope with the uncertainties of the future. Universities as a whole need to become involved in an alternative approach to higher education.

The aims of this study are:

- * To employ a life-skills questionnaire that may be used as a diagnostic medium designed to ascertain if and where problem areas lie with regard to university entrants so as to facilitate addressing of said problem areas

- * To ascertain the needs and expectations of both employers and private practitioners in order to identify where the training of graduates falls short of the above with respect to life skills, and to establish what steps both employers and the self-employed are having to take to remedy the situation
- * To suggest the concept of relevant Guidance Support as a means to both address and redress problems surrounding issues of insufficient training of graduates with respect to life or core skills.

The study comprises a title and concept elucidation, methodological justification, formulation of the problem and research hypotheses, an exposition of the aim of the study and an outline of the programme. Perspective is gained on the level of life skills present in university entrants via the presentation of a Life Skills Questionnaire and its possible uses are discussed.

A survey of the needs of both employers and the self-employed, comprising a literature review, a Life Skills Questionnaire aimed at deans of faculties and councils and personal or telephonic interviews, revealed that graduates are insufficiently prepared to meet the demands of the world of work in terms of life competencies and skills.

The concept of Guidance Support, concomitant with the notion of establishing a guidance support department is explored. The value of considering such a concept is covered, followed by a discussion of the functions and the advantages to a university of a guidance support department.

The study contains a number of recommendations with regard to promoting the training of graduates sufficiently skilled to meet the demands of the world of work.

OPSOMMING

TITEL: Voorligtingondersteuning vir Voorgraadse Universiteitstudente

KANDIDAAT: Peta Lynne Odette von Hörsten

STUDIELEIER: Prof. Dr. C.D. Jacobs

DEPARTEMENT: Skoolvoorligting

FAKULTEIT: Opvoeding - Universiteit van Pretoria

GRAAD: Philosophiae Doctor (Beroepsoriënteringpedagogiek)

Die implikasies van die snelle politieke, sosiale, ekonomiese en tegnologiese veranderinge wat tans in beide Suid-Afrika en in die buiteland plaasvind, verg 'n hersiening van die tradisionele benadering van universiteitsopleiding met betrekking tot die voorbereiding van studente vir die lewe in die algemeen en vir die suksesvolle beoefening van 'n toekomstige loopbaan in die besonder.

Die Inligtingsera vereis 'n verskuiwing van die onderrig van net die bemeesteringsvaardighede van vorige eras, na 'n onderrig wat lewens- of kernvaardighede kan behels en akkomodeer en wat by veranderende omstandighede aangepas kan word.

Aangesien daar nie aanvaar kan word dat studente hierdie lewensvaardighede toevallig bekom nie, moet hulle bewustelik en doelbewus onderrig word ten einde die graduandi toe te rus om by die onsekerhede van die toekoms aan te pas en dit te hanteer. Universiteite, in die algemeen, moet betrokke raak by 'n alternatiewe benadering na tersiêre onderwys.

Die oogmerke van hierdie ondersoek is:

- * Om 'n lewensvaardigheidsvraelys voor te lê as 'n diagnostiese medium vir moontlike gebruik om die vlak van eerstejaarsuniversiteitstudente se bevoeghede in

lewensvaardighede te bepaal en om die bepaling van toepaslike optrede met betrekking tot lewensvaardigheds-opleiding te vergemaklik

- * Om die behoeftes en verwagtinge van beide werkgewers en privaatpraktisyns te bepaal om uitskakelings en tekortkominge in verband met lewensvaardighede te identifiseer en die stappe wat hulle neem om die situasie te verbeter
- * Om die konsep van toepaslike voorligtingsondersteuning voor te lê om probleme te identifiseer en te hanteer in terme van ontoereikende opleiding van graduandi met betrekking tot lewens- of kernvaardighede.

Die ondersoek behels 'n titel- en begripsverheldering, metodologiese verantwoording, probleemformulering en hipoteseformulering, 'n uiteensetting van die oogmerke van die ondersoek en 'n beskrywing van die program. Perspektief word verkry op die bevoegheid in lewensvaardighede van eerstejaarsuniversiteitstudente deur die aanbieding van 'n lewensvaardighedevraelys, en die moontlike gebruike daarvan, word bespreek.

'n Ondersoek na die behoeftes van werkgewers en die privaatpraktisyns wat 'n literatuurstudie, 'n lewensvaardighedsvraelys wat op dekane en beroepsrade gemik is en persoonlike of telefoniese onderhoude behels, het getoon dat graduandi ontoereikend voorbereid is om die vereistes van die beroepswêreld met betrekking tot lewensvaardighede te vervul.

Die konsep van voorligtingsondersteuning, sowel as die ideë van 'n voorligtingsondersteuningsdepartement word ondersoek. Die waarde, funksies en voordele van die konsep vir 'n universiteit is bespreek.

Die verslag bevat 'n aantal aanbevelings ten opsigte van toereikende voorbereiding van graduandi met betrekking tot die bereiking van die vereistes van die beroepswêreld.