

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIALS; MOULDING EMPLOYABLE GRADUATES

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Further Education and Training (FET) should strive to achieve three goals: making graduates employable; creating a diverse workforce; and meeting the needs of the country's economy. The 2017 Youth Day theme is; "The year of OR Tambo: Advancing Youth Economic Empowerment". The goals of FET and the theme for the celebration of youth could not be more perfectly aligned.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has been dubbed the era of disruptive technology. As the world becomes more and more connected, its complexity exponentially increases. Complex problems require more implicit knowledge and analytical thinking, and implicit knowledge can only be shared through conversations and observation.

According to Gizelle McIntyre, Director at The Institute of People Development (IPD), a focus on these global shifts is crucial if the goals are to be met. "Knowledge-sharing and narration of work make implicit knowledge more visible," advises McIntyre. "Transparent work processes foster innovation, with the recognition that learning is part of work, not separate from it. Taking care of business means taking care of learning."

McIntyre believes that workplace readiness is, in itself, a skill. It requires personal qualities and people skills, professional knowledge, and technological knowledge. To create *employable graduates*, a comparison must be drawn between work readiness and qualifications. "Africa's young people are much more likely to have passed through the continent's formal education systems than their predecessors," adds McIntyre. "With that comes a challenge for leaders of business and government to provide them with the opportunities to apply their skills – and to ensure that their skills can help them thrive in the changing world of work." This requires critical thinking and workplace integrated learning.

In developing a *diverse workforce*, diversity management is employed to create and maintain a positive work environment, where individuals' similarities and differences are valued. "The biggest driver for higher level diversity strategy is the need to tap the creative, cultural, and communicative skills of a variety of employees and to use those skills to improve company policies, products, and customer experiences." To achieve this, employees must harness each other's strengths, and implement organisational strategies to increase inclusivity.

Workplace diversity increases the available pool of resources - networks, perspectives, styles, knowledge, and insights - that people can bring to bear on complex problems. McIntyre advises that strategies to increase awareness about workplace diversity include: reducing prejudices and use of stereotypes; minimising miscommunications with diverse others; and building relationships with diverse others – all of which contribute to productivity and team cohesion.

To meet the country's *economic needs*, an employable, skilled workforce is essential. With the newest unemployment statistic at 27.7 percent, and more than 60 percent of the graduates in South Africa being unemployed (or employed in a career not linked to what they studied) action must be taken.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) recently revealed the results of a study into the Future of Jobs, which considered the employment, skills and workforce strategies of the future. A summary list of the top ten skills identified for both 2015 and 2020 was compiled, indicating what needed to be taught.

“All public and private learning institutions, must take note of the WEF guidelines or risk having our country's learners left behind in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These core skills are not an addition to existing curricula, but entail a change in approach to career choices, teaching and learning,” concludes McIntyre. “While some countries have made significant strides in implementing programmes to empower their young people in this regard, others, including South Africa, are falling dangerously behind.”

For more information, please contact IPD at trainingenquiries@peopledev.co.za on (011) 315 2913 or visit www.peopledevelopment.co.za.

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Boilerplate:

Founded in 1999, Workplace Skills Solutions t/a The Institute of People Development (IPD) strives to equip, prepare and certify practitioners to serve South Africa's skills development strategy and facilitate the transformation of education and training. Over the years, IPD has become the preferred people development partner to most state owned and private enterprises in Southern Africa. IPD has assisted over 500 public and private training providers across most sectors of the economy to achieve or maintain accreditation through consulting, training and providing published guidelines. For more

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