Exploring Learning Gain in Higher Education
LEGACY Seminar

Ways to Enhance Students’ Employability

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What is employability?

The 11 UK universities which produce the most employable graduates

Thomas Colson
28.11.2016, 08:00
1,976
What is employability?

From UK HEIs websites

“The University of XXX is proud to announce its best-ever rate for the employability of its students six months after graduation. According to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education report, we've achieved an outstanding 96% employability rate.”

“YYY is in the top third of all UK institutions for employability with 95.3% of its graduates employed or in further study within a year of graduating, a figure higher than the national average.”

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What is employability?

Frequently used term.

Includes those in employment + those (currently) unemployed or studying

Employability is **not** the same as employment rate.

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What is employability?

- Dichotomic employability (from the beginning of the 20th century)
- Socio-medical employability (from the 50s)
- Manpower policy employability (1960s)
- Labour market performance employability (1970s)
- Initiative employability (since late 1980s)
- Interactive employability (since late 1980s)
What is employability?

- Becomes broader over time and has extended beyond the individual with an array of barriers to accessing and sustaining employment more generally.
- Interactive between individual and existing labour market
- Dynamic interaction of individual attributes, personal circumstances, labour market conditions and other contextual factors.
- Absolute vs relative employability
- Objective vs subjective employability
Aspects of employability

Narrow Framework

• Onus on individual to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics valued by current and prospective employers

• Employability is a psycho-social construct encompassing
  - career identity
  - personal adaptability
  - social and human capital
Aspects of employability

Broader Framework

Four elements (Hillage and Pollard, 1998)

- employability assets
- presentation assets
- development of assets
- context

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Aspects of employability

Narrow Framework

- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Self-confidence
- Reflection and Evaluation
- Employability

Broad Framework

- Enabling Support Factors
- Individual Factors
- Employability
- Labour Market Factors
- Individual circumstances

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Aspects of employability

Individual factors
- Basic and soft skills
- Subject-specific knowledge, skills and attitudes
- ‘Employability skills’

Other Individual factors
- Person-centred factors
- Subjective employability
- Adaptability and mobility
Aspects of employability

Individual circumstances
• Work culture
• Regional factors
• Networks
• Transitions

Labour Market Factors
• Labour Demand
• Rules and Regulations
• Employers’ practices
Aspects of employability

Enabling factors

- Labour Market Policy
- Human Resource management, education and training
  - changing labour market and skills requirement
  - skill utilisation
- Different provision in HEIs.
Means to enhance employability

- Careers Advice
- Subject-specific skills and attitude
- Work experience
- International experiences
- Careers adaptability
- Extra-curricular activities

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Summary

• Employability is not the same as employment rates.
• Employability can be defined as finding, sustaining and progressing in employment.
• The concept of employability needs a broad approach to cover all its potential impact factors.
• Responsibility to keep up individual employability is mainly with the individual; however, both the state, HEI and employers are responsible, too.
• HEIs can enhance students employability by Careers Advice; Work experience; careers adaptability; extra-curricular activities; international experiences; and subject-specific skills and attitudes.
Final remarks

Follow me on  

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For further information  www.legacy.ac.uk

The LEGACY employability briefing can be downloaded here  
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/legacy/hp-contents/employability_behle_h_uow_2016.pdf