Employability: A Contested Concept in Higher Education

David Stoten, Corporate and Executive Development Centre, Northumbria University

Abstract

Employability is a concept that has attracted greater interest in the past two decades as Higher Education (HE) looks to ensure that its output is valued by a range of stakeholders, not least Central Government. The graduate labour market has changed remarkably during the past two decades with global employment becoming an option for some and a threat for others. In addition, the nature of work has changed with a range of technological and employment practices altering the way we work. It is this dynamic and uncertain context that has led many within the Higher Education sector to re-evaluate its purpose and value. A number of universities have drawn-up typologies of behaviours and attributes that characterise their graduates. This paper aims to look beyond the apparent ascendancy of employability and ask why is employability a contested concept within HE? This paper draws from post-structuralism, Positional Conflict Theory as well as liberal-humanist thought. The paper is structured at three levels of decision-making: the macro- that of public policy, the meso- that of the Higher Education sector, and the micro- that of the student.

Keywords: Employability, Higher Education; graduate attributes; post-structuralism; Positional Conflict Theory; Liberal humanism.

Introduction

The Green Paper on Higher Education (HE) published in November 2015 by the Conservative Government declared an intention to give greater emphasis to graduate employability in its future policy agenda. For those who view the fundamental reason to obtain a degree as a means to an end, and in particular to a job, this commitment is to be welcomed. Graduate employability is an issue that is increasingly prominent both within universities as they aim to compete with other Higher Education institutions (HEIs) for potential students, and outside particularly in the labour market. As Matthews (2015) reported, readying students for work is increasingly viewed as a priority by leading universities, and is a concern globally (Bothwell, 2015). Whereas the traditional priority of attending university was to obtain a degree, nowadays a university education is much more concerned with a 'package deal' that prepares graduates to confront the multifarious challenges of the twenty-first century. Employability is one component within the 'package deal' but is likely to become even more important as students become ever-more conversant with the HE market that has developed in recent years and will continue to evolve with differential fees structures. There is, however, still space

to challenge some of the assumptions and claims inherent with the discourse of employability. This paper sets out to challenge the discursive hegemony of employability by presenting a range of dissenting positions, and in doing, invite the reader to reappraise the validity of this concept.

The world economy has been transformed both by globalisation and freer movement of employers from the developed industrial societies to developing countries. As a consequence, the nature of labour has changed. Instead of the historic division of labour into manual and non-manual as defined through mass production, labour is increasingly required to be flexible in terms of its skills set and adaptable to changing demands, both in terms of new technology and daily work processes. Instead of working to a skills-set associated with the industrial age, post-industrial workers are increasingly linked to the service sector and its emphasis on inter-personal soft skills rather than competence-based hard skills. Not only are the expectations of the workplace changing but the nature of the working environment itself has changed. The casualisation of labour associated with zero-hour contracts, sub-contracting in the form 'outsourcing', and changing employment legislation has undermined conceptions of job security for many. This changing context to the working environment has impact most directly on those in work and aspiring to work. For Beck (2000, 15):

> The ethic of the individual self-fulfilment and achievement is the most powerful current in modern society. The choosing, deciding, shaping, human being who aspires to be the author of his or her own life, the creator of an individual identity, is the central character of our times.

Such a position celebrates the idea of personal agency above all else including structural inequality within post-industrial society. It is a position that has been supported by Government bodies across the globe and one that is increasingly a central tenet of social policy. Importantly, however, underpinning this shift in policy has been a movement away from the idea of full employment and the 'demand-side' model of employment towards the 'supply-side' model of a jobs market. Whereas unemployment was deemed to be politically unacceptable in the period up to the ascendancy of neo-liberalism, since 1979 it has become accepted a part of the 'new normal', in which the individual is blamed for their unemployment. In order to understand fully why this discourse of ascribing responsibility of economic failure to individuals rather than Government or national economic systems has become dominant we need to understand the process of knowledge formation and the creation of new forms of rationality.

Employability infers an idealised type of worker for the future labour market. According to Hillage and Pollard (1998, 1), 'employability is having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required'. Capability is variously described in the literature as related to an individual's characteristics (Hillage and Pollard, 1998), skills (Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003; Tholen, 2015), assets (Isopahkala-Bouret, Lappalainen, and Lahelma, 2014), personal adaptability (Fugate et al., 2004). Hawkins and Winter (1995) identified a range of necessary skills for graduates as:

- Self-awareness, self-promotion and self-confidence
- Exploring opportunities and action planning
- Networking
- Matching and decision-making
- Negotiation and political awareness
- Coping with uncertainty
- A focus on personal development and transferable skills

For Fugate et al (2004, 14) employability can be encapsulated as 'three dimensions- career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital'. Although the discourse on employability is often discussed in terms of objectified terms, such as skills, it often fails to recognise the societal context to human and social capital. This discourse has been described by Tholen (2015) in terms of the conventional / consensus perspective that places the individual in an objective environment predicated on fair competition versus alternative views, characterised as conflict theories such as Positional Conflict Theory (PCT). Drawing ideas, such as the inequitable distribution of social capital

within society, from Bourdieu (1997), Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003, 114-115) argue that the consensus view is flawed:

> Employability represents an attempt to legitimate unequal opportunities in education and the labour market at a time of growing income inequalities….Personal qualities are emphasised in an attempt to legitimate the reproduction of inequalities, rather than improve productivity.

PCT offers a powerful critique of the employability agenda that is not simply presented in terms of identifying desirable attributes in the graduate labour force. One useful avenue of future research could be, for example, to explore the approaches taken by a range of universities in order to ascertain how these HEIs operationalise the employability agenda, whilst identifying their relevant conditioning factors.

The macro perspective: the changing nature and raison d'etre of Government in post-industrial society:

Writing following the fall of the Soviet Union, the American Historian Francis Fukayama (1992) proclaimed the end of ideology. Although he did seem to anticipate the end of one period in history, Fukayama was somewhat myopic in his analysis of the end of ideology. In place of the bipolar model of the Cold War era, many countries have coalesced around an economic and social system dominated by the ideals and aspirations of neo-liberalism. The policy agendas promoted by varieties of Government illustrate the changing nature of governance, and its ideological complexion. Supranational organisations, such as the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), have been at the forefront of the re-engineering of policy and the new rationalities of knowledge/power (Feder, 2011). Whereas the OECD has tended to focus on the need for a flexible workforce, and 'the capacity to enhance or support productivity, innovation, and employability (OECD, 1998), the EU has approached employability from a social cohesion perspective. In 2007, the EU (2007) outlined its policy position in terms of meeting four goals: personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability through adaptability. For Fejes (2010, 10):

> Despite differences between the OECD and the EU discourses on employability, we can see how subjects are positioned in a similar way in terms of responsibility and employability.... There seem to be a consensus perspective promoted via these documents where... it is still the individual who is positioned as responsible for becoming adaptable and flexible as a way to become/remain employable. One could say that there is a responsibilisation of the individual.

Although nation-states retain many of the duties of a national government, EU policy, and reports from the OECD do influence the policy-formulation process of national governments. As such, we should recognise that some of the drivers of the employability agenda cross national boundaries and are the outcome of supranational organisations' policy-making and the primacy of neo-liberal thought.

The shift in public policy in favour of neo-liberal notions of governance is most pronounced at national level where national governments have interpreted the future within their own socio-political context. In doing so, the State has been transformed from a provider model- in which the State assumed responsibility for a range of obligations- to a 'de-centred state' (Fejes, 2010, 6)- where the state is tasked with providing enabling citizens to achieve their aspirations through their own efforts (Rose, 1999). This transformation of the State across the globe has had two key outcomes. Firstly, in terms of formal authority-based government structures, the boundaries of the State have been redefined with much of its bureaucratic infrastructure dismantled or outsourced to Government Agencies or private providers. In essence, Government itself has become redefined in terms of governance which leads onto the second outcome. As Fejes (2010, 6) alludes to: 'Government is analysed as something more complex than the government of the nation-state: it involves the government of ourselves'. Whereas the post-war social democratic model of the State was based on rigid structures and rules, the neo-liberal State operates on the premise that responsible citizens can manage their own lives without significant intervention from Government. It is within this political context that employability has evolved.

Employability has a long history stretching back into the early twentieth century, but its purpose and meaning has become remodelled since the 1970s. During the post-war era, Human Capital Theory (HCT) underpinned much of British Government social policy and in its investment into education and welfare pointed to an egalitarian view of social engineering. The fundamental premise of Government policy until the 1970s was that innovations, such as the expansion of the university sector and comprehensive schools, together with high levels of spending was a form of investment in the country's future potential. The economic crises of the early and late 1970s ended this social democratic model of social policy. In his Ruskin College speech of 1976, the then Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan signalled a shift in Government policy with the ascendancy of economic instrumentalism at the core of policy. This emphasis on national competiveness has been translated into new forms of individual competition subsequently by British Government, irrespective of party affiliation. This change was manifest in successive government initiatives that sought to alter the mind-set, as well as skills-set, of graduates. The approach of Conservative governments during the period 1980-1997 was to press universities to adopt pilot initiatives to promote 'employability' within key groups such as scientists rather than impose a new order across the sector. During the 1980s, employability was promoted by the 'competence-based movement' and driven largely by Government Executive agencies such as the Training Agency (Burke, 1991; Isopahkala-Bouret, Lappalainen, and Lahelma, 2014) that identified three key attributes in future workers: entrepreneurship, personal effectiveness and transferable skills. This approach was developed further through initiatives such as the 1987 White Paper and the Enterprise in Higher Education programme launched by the Training Agency in the late 1980s that involved 11 universities and 12 polytechnics, and more recently through the 2011 White Paper. For McNair (1989, 23) such was the promotion of the competence-based agenda that it led to HE being 'forced ...to review its policy and practice'. This movement to demand more of HE in the promotion of 'employability' continues to the present.

The meso perspective: HE, employability and competing traditions within HE

According to Rich (2015, 24):

> Employability is that set of attributes that makes a graduate worth employing: how well a student's learning matches with what the labour market needs. It is the number one outcome that, in increasing proportions, prospective students expect to get from HE.

Such a reductionist view of HE (see also: Hillage and Pollard, 1998) should be challenged for what it is myopic and simplistic; it is however, a viewpoint that has influence over Government policy. At the heart of Government policy is the presumption that unemployed people are the root of the problem of unemployment, be it in the form of those who have not been in employment, education or training (NEETs) or unemployed graduates, instead of the demand for labour within the economy. For Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003, 108), this approach represents the 'democratisation of insecurity'. The most obvious illustration of how this policy shift has impacted on Higher Education during the past two decades has been on the off-loading of costs onto students themselves for their university education.

Collini (2012) asked the fundamental question that lies at the root of this debate- what are universities for? Morley (2001) asked more pointed question: has utilitarianism eclipsed intellectualism in UK universities? Within both questions is the idea that the underlying purpose of a university education is to generate new avenues of interest, questions and research rather than reduce learning to the acquisition of skills, attitudes and closed behaviours. In doing so, Morley (2001) raises a fundamental question: what should we expect from a university education? To be sure, there are possible positive public externalities to be derived from acquainting students to aspects of the workplace, especially in the ancient professions of medicine or law. In this respect, admittedly, these degree disciplines were conceived originally as a means of vocational preparation albeit contained within an academic guise. However, this card may be overplayed by those economic instrumentalists who see HE as little more than a training ground for the professions and quasi-professions. Mason et al (2006) warns against an over-emphasis on the acquisition of skills at university when these are more effectively developed in the workplace. And, furthermore, McCowan (2015, 279) contends that university has little impact on individual attributes and qualities, which are established before

university, and they should focus on the 'development of critical thinking [and]…. the development of values associated with research and scholarship… and the experience of living and working with diverse others'. Such an approach echoes a holistic view of a university education and one that is not reduced to the acquisition of skills or behaviours. This position may be traced to liberal-humanist conceptions of learning as in the work of Dewey (1964), Oakeshott (1989) and Peters (1981). It is a position that is increasingly undermined through Government policy drivers and the vulnerability of HE to shifts in funding and regulation.

The British HE system is far from uniform; it is a patchwork of different histories, contemporary mission statements and understandings of what a university should aim to be. This pluralist nature of the HE sector has meant that each university has tended to interpret Government policies in its own way. Cranmer (2006) reported on differing responses, with post-1992 HEIs being more inclined to promote employability. For many post-1992 universities, vocationally-relevant education and training are part of their history, and employability is at the heart of its raison d'etre. For some pre-1992 universities, employability has not yet supplanted research as their main concern. For HEIs in the Russell Group of 'research-intensive' universities, their global reputation and revenue streams are primarily based on their standing as research-oriented institutions. Furthermore, Morrison (2014) reported a divergence in the views of academics over the legitimacy of the employability agenda. There is clearly a cultural struggle being played out in universities as they seek to mediate an understanding of employability.

The variations in practice within HE reflect the competing interests that lobby for and against various models of employability. For Cranmer (2006, 174), 'the complexities inherent in the employability agenda consistently undermine attempts to understand how best to develop employability skills in universities'. Employability continues to be contested within HE both as an idea, and in practice. Cranmer (2006) has produced a typology of responses to describe the positions taken by British universities (see Table 1). This typology highlights the different approaches taken in the sector, and implicitly variations in the perceived need for employability-related curriculum.

Total embedding of employability skills delivered by academics	Explicit embedding of skills delivered by academics	Bolt-on professional skills delivered by academics	Bolt-on generic skills delivered by academics	Careers department led parallel study skills	Careers department led general skills
Focus on employability skills	Focus on employability skills	Specific modules facilitating study / generic skills development	Specific modules facilitating study / generic skills development and developed by a career department	Developing study skills, such as using the Web or creative writing	Developing generic skills, such as CV writing, careers guidance and making effective job applications.
Low impact on the curriculum, with no assessment	High impact on the curriculum, together with assessment	High impact on the curriculum and explicitly assessed	High impact on the curriculum and explicitly assessed	Low impact on the curriculum with a separate assessment	Low impact on the curriculum with separate assessment

After Cranmer (2006: 172). A typology of delivery formats for the delivery of employability.

The micro perspective: Students and employability

For Holmquist, Maravelias and Skalen (2012, 194) 'a fundamental problem of contemporary neo-liberal regimes of government is that they promise freedom and equal opportunities while in fact more and more individuals are excluded from full active participation in society'. The questions that emerge from such an analysis are: what is meant by 'freedom', and what are the possible implications of this 'freedom' for students?

Neo-liberal thought presents life as a series of personal choices. The decision to attend university and what to study are part of an individual's journey. However, decisions are rarely rational in nature but the product of social conditioning. Ball and Vincent (1998) reported that often students' choices were 'classed' and imperfectly informed. In advising their offspring, those middle-class parents who are graduates are often better able to provide what Appadurai calls 'navigational capacity' (Appadurai, 2013) in understanding HE. Such an analysis echoes de Certeau's (1984) work on 'tour' and 'map' knowledges and that of Ball and Vincent (1998) on 'hot' and 'cold' forms of social knowledge. For Hesketh and Brown (2004), middle-class students were better equipped to 'play the game' within the HE system, and for Farenga and Quinlan (2015, 4) even when working class students were aware of the 'game', they may not have the financial resources to engage... in extracurricular activities and internships' which are often seen as crucial to the development of the idealised graduate. Moreover, the notion of graduate employability is itself flawed as Morley (2001,132) points out it fails to take account of 'how social structures such as gender, race, social class and disability interact with labour market opportunities'.

The shift towards neo-liberal conceptions of responsibility and governance infers a change in how individuals are defined as citizens in society. A variety of interpretations are offered to describe contemporary citizenship. Vesterberg (n.d.) defines those individuals who are judged to be employable as 'advanced liberal subjects', whereas van Oort (2013) offers a more collective term, 'the neo-liberal precariat'. Both definitions highlight the economic conception of the individual. For Turner (2001) the nature of citizenship itself is being eroded by this redefinition of the subject. As Isopahkala-Bouret, Lappalainen, and. Lahelma, (2014) note the concept of the citizen is reflecting on the marketisation of the person, with the model citizen expected to be market oriented, competitive and demonstrate individual responsibility. Whereas citizenship has traditionally been described in terms of a social contract with 'full membership with civil, political and social rights and responsibilities [nowadays] citizenship duties are constructed as the duties and responsibilities of an employee' (Isopahkala-Bouret, Lappalainen, and Lahelma, (2014).

The issue of how individuals are conceptualising their role in society and relationship to the State is at the heart of this paper. As such, we can see employability as a device to create meaning and encourage desirable behaviours in the citizenry. Research has identified how the State has created new norms in the age of post-industrial capitalism through the promotion of certain types of identity, as in the case of the 'occupationally disabled' (Holmquist, Maravelias and Skalen, 2012) and immigrants (Vesterberg, n.d.) in Sweden, or the 'older worker' in the United Kingdom (Raich and Loretto, 2009), or the idealised graduate as in the comparative study of Great Britain and the Netherlands (Tholen, 2012). The State now invites its citizens to participate in their identity formation and regulation in order to conform to these new norms of adaptability, market-sensitivity and life-long learning. For Holmquist, Maravelias, and Skalen, (2012, 195):

> Individuals' identities are typically seen as products of the discourses, surveillance techniques, and power/knowledge strategies that surround them and the 'techniques of the self' that are available to them.

Drawing from post-structuralist thought, and specifically the work of Foucault (1977), a range of authors (Barratt, 2008; Fejes, et al. 2010; Holmquist, Maravelias, and Skalen, 2012; Vesterberg, n.d.) argue that although individuals are susceptible to dominant discourses that shape identity through societal norms, they do retain the power to reject these norms and assert their own individuality. For Knights and McCabe (2003, 589), there are 'competing bases of identification', and for Alvesson and Willmott (2002), some skilled identity workers may be able to exploit discourse to present themselves in a more favourable light. However, the fundamental issue remains- to what extent can the

employability agenda shape renewed forms of managerial control through the creation of the notion of the idealised graduate?

Conclusion

This paper set out to explore why employability remains a contested idea within HE. It is clear that there are critiques in play that inform the discourse on employability, and continue to challenge the conventionalised view that is premised on Government-driven economic instrumentalism and which has impacted not only on notions of an university education, but citizenship itself.

Employabililty represents a subtle form of recognition by the State that full employment is no longer attainable in the post-industrial age, and that the individual should bear some of the social costs of that political judgment. Employability was originally conceived during the first half of the twentieth century as supporting the unemployed back to work. It was a concept that recognised the importance both of demand and supply in the labour market and the vulnerability of individuals to changes in the trade cycle and the world economy. However, since the 1980s, the focus within the employability agenda has been largely upon the need re-fashion the individual as a citizen and an economic asset. This transformation of the relationship between the State and citizen has been predicated on ideas drawn from neo-liberal thought. For Isopahkala-Bouret, Lappalainen, and Lahelma, (2014, 96), this:

> neo-liberal reasoning moves away from a rights-based model of citizenship to consumer-oriented, entrepreneurial and economic subjects…. The central feature in neo-liberal reasoning is that the State is entrusted through education to produce particular forms of subjectivity that align with the presumed needs of the economy.

Foucault (1977) and Giddens (1991) have provided theoretical insights into the changing notion of an individual in society. Through concepts such as 'technologies of the self' and the 'reflexive project' Foucault and Giddens each offer a way of understanding how individuals come to terms with their increasingly isolated position in mass society. Although poststructuralist thought highlights the idea of personal subjectivity and individual vulnerability, it also refers the potential for personal agency. For poststructuralists, today's graduates are not to be viewed merely as 'cultural dopes' but co-creators in their own social reality.

In addition to the critique offered by poststructuralist thought, we should also recognise the contribution brought to the discourse on employability by PCT (Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003). Importantly, 'it ignores the fact that employability is primarily determined by the labour market rather than the capabilities of individuals…. Virtually all policy statements on employability fail to grasp the duality of employability' (Brown, et al. 2003, 110). In short PCT contends that, levels of employability as not determined by the skills-sets of graduates but by the general level of demand and supply within the economy. The value of PCT to the debate on employability firstly in its efforts to restore the analysis of the labour market to one based on an understanding of fundamental economic rules, and secondly to recognise the fundamentally unequal and classed nature of the labour market.

Although the critiques offered by poststructuralism and PCT provide powerful arguments to counter the employability agenda, there are other possible reasons for the variation in approaches taken within HE. Firstly, each HEI has its own mission statement and view of its purpose in the education market. HE is a market place with clear 'product differentiation' that categorises some universities as 'research-led' such as the Russell Group, or the post-1992 universities variously as 'community-focussed' or 'vocationally-relevant'. Although these 'validity claims' are not entirely accurate, these labels do reflect the values and goals within many HEIs. Not all HEIs view employability as their raison d'etre but rather to undertake research and compete for a variety of funding streams both from Government and the commercial environment. For these universities, employability is largely implied through attendance at a prestigious university. In these types of HEI, the nature of employability may be limited to those activities provided through the Careers Service, as described by Cranmer (2006). For other HEIs, employability is more of an immediate priority as their market niche is more closely aligned to the local jobs market. Moreover, for many of the post-1992 universities the employability agenda is one with which they have been attuned to historically, and that has influenced much of their curriculum development.

Another possible reason why the employability agenda still faces scepticism in HE (Morrison, 2014) is the idea of the university as a place of learning, not training. In an echo of liberal-humanism, a number of academics (Oakeshott, 1989; Collini, 2012; McCowan, 2015), still see university as a place of liberation and enlightenment rather than a factory to construct the new generation of workers. The future development of the employability agenda will test the relative influence of these competing perspectives in a sector that is increasingly driven by instrumental conceptions of learning and citizenship.

References

Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H. (2002), 'Identity regulation as organisational control: Producing the appropriate individual', *Journal of Management Studies*, 63 (2): 193-217.

Appadurai, A., (2013), *The future as social fact: essays on the global condition*. London & New York: Verso.

Ball, S.J., and Vincent, S. (1998), 'I heard it on the grapevine: hot knowledge and school choice'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 19 (3): 377-400.

Barratt, E., (2008), 'The later Foucault in organisation and management studies', *Human Relations*, 61 (4): 515.

Bothwell, E. (2015), 'Working classes: which campuses are doing the best job of ensuring their students are ready for work'? *Times Higher Education Supplement*, pp. 32-39, 12 November, 2015.

Bourdieu, P. (1997), 'The forms of capital', in A. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown, and A.S. Wells (eds) *Education, culture, economy and society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 46-58..

Brown, P. and Hesketh, A. (2004), *The mismanagement of talent*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, P., Hesketh, A. and Williams, S. (2003), Employability in a knowledge-driven economy, *Journal of Education and Work,* 16 (2): 107-126.

de Certeau, M. (1984), *The practice of everyday life*. (S. Rendall, Trans.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Collini S. (2012), *What are Universities for?* London: Penguin.

Cranmer, S. (2006), Enhancing graduate employability: Best intentions and mixed outcomes, *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 (2): 169-184.

Dewey, J. (1964), 'The continuum of ends-mean', in R. Archambault (ed) *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 97–107.

Doyle, M. (2003), Discourses of Employability and Empowerment: Foundation Degrees and 'Third Way' discursive repertoires, Education line, http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002421.htm

European Commission, European Union (EU). (2007), *Communication of the Commission to the spring European Council: Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2008-2010).* Brussels: European Commission.

Farenga, S.A. and Quinlan, K. (2015), Classifying university employability strategies: Three case studies and implications for practice and research, *Journal of Education and Work*, DOI. 10.1080/13639080.2015.1064517

Fejes, A. (2010), Discourses on Employability: Constituting the Responsible Citizen, *Studies in Continuing Education,* (32): 2, 89-102.

Foucault, M., (1977), *Discipline and punish*, London: Routledge.

Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J. and Ashforth, B. E. (2004), Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications, *Journal of Vocational Behaviour,* 65: 14-38.

Fukuyama, F. (1992), *The end of history and the last man*, New York: Free Press.

Giddens, A. (1991), *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age.* Cambridge: Polity.

Hawkins, P. and Winter, J. (1995), Skills for graduates in the 21st century, Warwick: Association of Graduate Recruiters.

Hillage, J. and Pollard, E. (1998), Employability: Developing a framework for policy analysis, DfEE Research Briefing No.85. London: DfEE.

Holmquist, M., Maravelias, C. and Skalen, P. (2012), Identity regulation in neo-liberal societies: Constructing the 'occupationally disabled' individual, *Organization*, 20 (2): 193-211.

Knights, D. and McCabe, D. (2003), Governing through teamwork: Reconstituting subjectivity in a call centre, *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(7): 535-358.

Isopahkala-Bouret, U., Lappalainen, S. and E. Lahelma, E. (2014), Educating worker-citizens: Visions and divisions in curriculum texts, *Journal of Education and Work*, 27 (1): 92-109.

McNair, S. (1989), Trends and issues in education and training for adults, Leicester: UDACE.

Mason G, Williams G. and Cranmer S. (2006), Employability Skills Initiatives in Higher Education: What Effects Do They have on Graduate Labour Market Outcomes? London: National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Matthews, D., (2015), Bristol programme gets graduates 'career ready', *Times Higher Education Supplement,* pp. 14, 12 November, 2015

Moreland, N., (2005), Learning and Employability, Series Two: Work-related Learning in Higher Education, York: The Higher Education Academy.

Morrison, A., (2014), A class Act? Lecturers' views on undergraduate' employability, *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 35 (4): 487-505.

Oakeshott M (1989), The idea of a university. In: T Fuller (ed.) *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education,* pp. 95–104. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1998), *Human capital investment: An international comparison*, Paris: OECD.

Peters R. S. (1981), *Essays on Educators*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Rich, J., (2015), We need to talk about employability, not employment, *Times Higher Education Supplement,* pp. 24-25, 10 December 2015.

Raich, K. and Loretto, W. (2009), Identity work and the 'unemployed' worker: Age, disability and the lived experience of the older employed, *Work,* Employment and Society, 23 (1): 102-119.

Rose, N., (1999), *Powers and freedom: Reframing Political thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Feder, E. K. Power/knowledge. In D. Taylor, (Ed.) (2011), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts*, 55-70. Durham: Acumen Publishing.

Tholen, G. (2012), The social construction of competition for graduate jobs: A comparison between Great Britain and the Netherlands, *Sociology*, 47 (2): 267-283.

Turner, B. S. (2001), The erosion of citizenship, *British Journal of Sociology*, 52 (2): 189-209.

van Oort, M. (2015), Making the neoliberal precariat: Two faces of job searching in Minneapolis, *Ethnography*, 16 (1): 74-94.

Vesterberg, V. (ND.) Ethnicized un/employability: Problematized Others and the Shaping of Advanced Liberal Subjects, Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organisation, http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/ethnicized-umemployability-problematized-others-and-the-shaping-of-advanced-liberal-subejcts