



# Experiencing Higher Education, Transitions and the Graduate Labour Market: The Non-Traditional Student Perspective

## **BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

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## **Training for the labour inclusion of refugees: a response from the university.**

**Celia Álvarez-Moraleda** – University of Pablo de Olavide, Seville, Spain

**Rafael M. Hernández-Carrera** – International University of La Rioja, Spain

During the last years the migratory movements have been increased dramatically in an exponential growth. In addition to this thousands of people have been forced to cross the borders to escape the war or different kind of armed conflicts. Due to this situation new social needs have appeared in the destination countries linked to this people: nutrition, a place to stay and of course a way to make a leaving to begin again. In other words, an employ that permit those people to rent a house, to feed their families and to build a new project of life.

Through this training project we try to response to this need of employ from a proposal of partnership between the university and different international organism of acceptance of refugees as the Programme of Temporary Acceptance of International Red Cross. In order to get this goal a soft skills training project has been designed. It is focused on labour inclusion addressed to refugees providing them with tools to get an employ. In this framework the university and the social actors have the opportunity of facilitating the transit of these people to a normalization of their lives through the work.

During the diagnosis phase several needs have been detected as how to communicate with other people, how to act in different situations, self confidence, how to know the others and themselves, and how to be prepared to find a job. In order to face these needs the project is focused on working the social skills because they are able to boost the possibilities of building satisfactory relationships, feeling good with others and learn to communicate. All this skills are necessary to reach the goal of finding a job.

# **“I’m not a blond Swedish woman “– Struggles with ethnicity and employability on the Swedish labour market.**

**Agnieszka Bron** - Stockholm University, Sweden

**Camilla Thunborg** - Stockholm University, Sweden

This paper deals with issues of employability and the struggles students with another ethnical background than Swedish experience in becoming employable on the Swedish labour market.

The paper takes its point of departure in the discourse of employability. The concept of employability means that the individual is responsible for gaining the right competencies needed on the labour market. This means that they also have to market themselves and their social, personal and cultural capital. Competencies like flexibility, adaptability, communicative skills etc. seems to be seen as general competencies for becoming employable. However, there seems to be a lack of studies discussing being the right person in relation to demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnicity and physical characteristics.

In this paper we especially focus on the voices from students with another ethnical background than Swedish and their struggles in not being the right person for becoming employable.

The aim of this paper is thereby to understand the discourse of employability through the biographical experiences from students with another ethnical background than Swedish. The paper deals with the following questions:

- What stereotypes do students with another ethnical background than Swedish have about employability and about being the right employee on the Swedish labour market?
- What struggles do they express in becoming employable?
- What identities are formed in relation to these struggles?

The paper is based on biographical interviews with four students, having another ethnical background than Swedish, studying within the PAO-programme (A bachelor programme in Psychology, Sociology or Education within the area of Personnel, work and organization) at Stockholm University. The PAO programme is expected to lead to positions in HR on the labour market, which makes it especially interesting as the graduates both are expected to have a good knowledge about the labour market in general but also are expected to work in positions that are responsible for recruitment.

# **Immigrant youths between early leaving and continue their studies.**

**Alessio Buonomo** - University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy

**Salvatore Strozza** - University of Napoli Federico 2, Italy

**Giuseppe Gabrielli** - University of Napoli Federico 2, Italy

School enrollment and early school leaving are crucial issues in many EU countries, particularly Italy. According to Eurostat data (European Labour Force Survey - EULFS), in 2011 Italy was ranked 28th out of 33 countries for early leaving from education and training (ELET). High school dropout rates, low academic achievement, and loss of school years (which are all directly reflected in the labour market) are the main issues that the children of immigrants face in Italian schools. This paper contributes to the growing literature on these issues and highlights their main characteristics and determinants.

The main source of this work is the first (and only) survey on the Condition and Social Integration of Foreign Citizens in 2011-2012 of ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics in Italy), which was released in 2017. The survey collects data on families with at least one foreign citizen and provides unprecedented information on foreigners living in Italy. We analyzed ELET and the intention to enroll in university of young people of foreign citizenship. This paper evaluates the importance of some individual demographic characteristics, the family socio-economic context, school inclusion, and (or) the average level of family integration.

The results showed that the risk of ELET was significantly lower for girls; increased with age and on arrival in Italy; was higher in Southern Italy; and was higher for those encountering problems with the language. Family characteristics played a decisive role: young foreigners living either without parents or with poorly-educated parents exhibited a greater risk of early leaving from studies. The analysis also showed that the risk of early leaving from studies affected young people who arrived in Italy between the ages of 13 and 17, especially Albanian or Chinese citizens. When analyzing the intention to enroll in university, it was also possible to use variables related to the study path of young foreigners. The intention of not going to university is clearly associated with school failure and with low levels of parental interest in following their children's school career.

Although the Italian Government and other institutions have shown high levels of interest in the challenges foreigners face in education, the indicators studied in this paper show the persistence of high rates of school dropout and low education levels of young people of foreign citizenship. As international literature also states, the school represents an extraordinary context for achieving social inclusion and professional success for the young people of foreign citizenship. Introducing school policies to overcome these

obstacles is strategic to achieving a multiethnic and inclusive society. This paper identifies the individual and family characteristics associated with the difficulties around the inclusion of immigrant children in school and allows the knowledge of measures to address the problem.

## **Initiatives to improve employability and promote entrepreneurship: two axes to consolidate labor ecosystems and integrated professional development spaces.**

**M<sup>a</sup> Teresa Castilla-Mesa** - University of Malaga, Spain

The content of this contribution aims to present some of the initiatives related to training and professional orientation focused on improving the employability of population groups of university students, graduates and unemployed, demanding strategies, tools and resources that favor the incorporation of labor and Enable them to develop novel entrepreneurial proposals. In order to do so, it is necessary to improve synergies between the maximum number of agents involved in the various training and recruitment contexts in order to make viable the exchange of resources, methods and knowledge between the different municipal and provincial initiatives that exist in Labor insertion and promotion of employment of all groups, university students among them, and paying special attention to the most vulnerable.

The focus is on the wide and diverse population of young people conditioned by multiple circumstances and factors that makes it especially vulnerable to access to employment and to develop professionally. It requires a qualified training for employment, for the identification of professional profiles, for the knowledge and acquisition of professional skills and for generating training and management spaces for initiatives that sensitize and foster the entrepreneurial culture. Job inclusion is extremely complex at the moment, and the identification of spaces of professionalization and of emerging environments as new sources of employment is key for those who find it more difficult to incorporate themselves professionally.

It is necessary to make these learnings known to the community, strengthening and coordinating associations, workshops and interested companies and promoting the development of projects of social, educational and productive entrepreneurship. These proposals and future initiatives promote the consolidation of relations with entities,



companies and institutions in order to achieve coordinated entrepreneurial and labor ecosystems in which the training activity is complemented by professional activity and forms of learning and integrated professional development.

## **Employability and non traditional students: A meta-analysis**

**Cesarano Valentina Paola** - University of Naples, Federico 11, Italy

### **Introduction**

Today's times are characterized by recursive, discontinuous and fragmented working socialization processes (Lodigiani, 2010). Faced with this complexity, a leading role can be played by guidance services in the university context, in response to the demands of so many young people who are disillusioned and discouraged to the point of not being able to imagine a job already during the university course (Grimaldi, Porcelli, Rossi, 2014). Even more complex is the encounter between the world of work and university students and non - traditional graduates. It is therefore necessary to carry out orientation pathways in the university context aimed at promoting the employability of non-traditional university students.

### **Purpose**

In the light of this scenario, we chose to make a first meta-analysis of the scientific literature over the last ten years concerning the declination of the employability construct within Higher Education and its operationalization in the vocational guidance courses for Non-traditional University students.

### **Methodology**

It was chosen to carry out a qualitative analysis of the scientific literature on the topic, using the Nvivo software (Richards, 1999) with the aim of exploring the corpus of selected scientific materials systematically. This qualitative analysis carried out in the perspective of Grounded Theory (Glaser, Strauss, 1967) allowed to formulate categories of analysis to reach a heart category.

## **Conclusions**

From the first meta-analysis emerges that the concept of employability is conceptualized in multiple ways and as such multiplicity is reflected in the different orientation paths to employability addressed to non-traditional university students in different countries, from a cross-cultural point of view.

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## **Employability of Non-Traditional students: An Exploration of Class and Race.**

**Masauso Chirwa** - University of Warwick, UK

Race and class inequalities have remained on the political and educational agenda within the area of employability. This paper presents some of the findings of a large European Union project on employability being undertaken by six European universities from Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK focusing on employability of non-traditional students. The aim of this research was to consider the students' perspectives and experiences regarding their potential employability. This was a qualitative study and the findings presented in this paper are based on biographical interviews with 10 non-traditional undergraduates and postgraduates students from the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom. Findings revealed that students believed that the degree offered them opportunities to develop transferable skills that could potentially make them employable. However, many encountered class and race-based disadvantages in the labour market as well as in their internships. Some felt that their socioeconomic

background disadvantaged them as most employers especially in the business and finance industry required them to dress smartly. This was beyond most of those from low social class with the result that they were not employed. The findings presented in this paper suggest that any understanding of non-traditional students' employability must include a consideration of the students' class and race, including in particular gender within the labour market.

## **Non-traditional students' point of view about internship in educative works.**

Comparison with other students, key factors and drawbacks.

**Cristiano Corsini** - University of Catania, Sicily, Italy

**Giuseppe Pillera** - University of Catania, Sicily, Italy

The presented work is the result of a survey conducted over the last 4 years (from the academic year 2013-14 to 2016-17) at the University of Catania (Italy), through the submission of a semi-structured questionnaire to students who have completed the mandatory internship required by the Degree Course in Pedagogical Sciences. Actually, the internship appears fundamental to facilitate the knowledge of the related public, private and non-profit employers and so to support the passage from university to graduate labor market, particularly for non-traditional students, who have got lower economic, cultural and/or social capital than others.

The 110 items of the survey (of which 5 in open response) are divided into 5 areas of exploration: motivation and experience; relationships in the context of work; type of training received and learning level attributed to the activities carried out; past competences; achievements in terms of skills, knowledge and personal satisfaction. This questionnaire represents one of the main tools for monitoring the internship activities provided by the aforesaid degree course to orient itself in the search for a continuous improvement of the learning offer and it is focused on an approach that aims to recognize the subjectivity of the evaluation processes, their situated nature and the role of the evaluated subjects, in a perspective that watches evaluation as recognition of value rather than as simple reporting or, worse, as barren accountability.

Data analysis, conducted using qualitative and quantitative techniques can be summarized in three points that represent the principal emerging issues:

1. the disciplinary content offered by university, which should not be too detached from empirical aspects of professionalism;
2. the methodology of university teaching, which is reported to be too theoretical;
3. the climate of the working environment, the professionalism of the host staff and the quality of their relationships with the trainees, with particular reference to the internship tutors, whose contribution seems to play a key role in students' evaluation on their outcomes.

Carrying out this contribution, the survey data will be further analyzed by isolating non-traditional students, to be understood, in this case, as those students taking longer than expected to graduate, so as to reflect, in line with the aims of the congress, about the similarities and differences between their views and that ones of the students with regular times of completion. Specifically, we will try to highlight the key components for a satisfying experience and the difficulties and limitations detected by the 30 non-traditional students involved in the research, verifying or refuting the aforementioned general results of the 110 trainees participating in the research.

## **‘When it comes to what employers are looking for, I don’t think I’m it for a lot of them’: Experiencing class inequalities in higher education and beyond into the labour market.**

**Fergal Finnegan** - University of Maynooth, Ireland

**Jerry O’Neill** - University of Maynooth, Ireland

**Barbara Merrill** - University of Warwick, UK

**Scott Revers** - University of Warwick, UK

**Masauso Chirwa** - University of Warwick, UK

Much research on adults in higher education has focused on issues of access and participation. As a result little is known about what happens to non-traditional students after leaving university even though employability has now become the new buzzword in HE research on this topic is sparse. There is even less research which focuses on the voices of non-traditional students and their aspirations and discourses in relation to employability. This paper draws on the findings of two countries, England and Ireland, from a six country European project on employability of non-traditional students using

biographical research methods. Each country has undertaken 40 interviews with both undergraduates and graduates as well as interviews with university staff and employers. The focus of this paper will be on working class students and issues of class inequalities in HE in relation to employability. But we also recognise that class intersects with other forms of inequality such as gender, ethnicity and age. Once in the system there is an assumption by higher education institutions that non-traditional adult education students experience a level playing field alongside their younger middle class counterparts but research indicates that this is not the case, particularly in relation to future employment (Tomlinson, 2012). We begin by locating the research in a socio-economic, political and policy context and move to a critical discussion of employability in HE and beyond into the workplace. A brief overview of key literature in the field will be undertaken. However, the core of the paper will centre on the narratives of students: two English and two Irish. Their stories reveal awareness of class inequalities they face in the labour market in relation to cultural, economic and social capital as well as issues of locality, gender and age. The stories also indicate a sense of precarity in their lifecourse in a society which has become highly reflexive and fluid (Alheit, 1999, Alheit & Dausien, 2002, West, 2016). Despite significant continuities in class experience and structures there is in the narratives a strong sense of the unforeseen and the new. This paradox of continuity and change will be explored. We will outline the broader theoretical implications of the findings in relation to two contending discourses of precarity and class. On one hand we are offered (Savage et al, 2015) a notion of precarity which identifies this with the poorest section of the working class. On the other hand for Standing (2009) precarity is understood as a generalised condition created by changes in economic's, welfare regimes and politics. The paper will conclude with some remarks on theorising about precarity in relation to higher education and argue that employability functions to perpetuate class inequalities both within HE and society as a whole.

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## **Narratives of insecurity in the labour market: precarity and precariousness among non-traditional students and graduates in Ireland and Portugal**

**António Fragoso Almeida** - University of Algarve, Portugal

**Sandra Valadas** - University of Algarve, Portugal

**Liliana Paulos** - University of Algarve, Portugal

**Fergal Finnegan** - University of Maynooth, Ireland

**Jerry O'Neill** - University of Maynooth, Ireland

There seems to be little doubt that work has always been more or less precarious and that a number of “traditional factors” can affect such work deeply. However, the long-term consequences of the implementation of the neoliberal agenda seems to have caused a strong subordination of society to the market (Streeck, 2016) and, more specifically, to the labour market. Recent changes in European employment policies are clear in this sense. Traditional policies of the welfare state were substituted by so-called “active” employment policies. These policies not only diminished countries’ expenditure on employment and social support to unemployment, but also created a new notion: the individual her/himself is to cut “dependency ties” with the state, and to be personally responsible before the labour market (cf. Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). States defined new measures to force either training or an occupation on those unemployed. The financial crisis of 2008 could have exposed Europe’s policies failure in dealing with employment. Instead, the climate of austerity that characterised Europe’s answers to the crisis pushed further the problem: new cuts on expenditure followed and it became clear that the “flexibility” of the labour market was a top priority. The changes seem to have affected mostly the more fragile groups (Valadas, 2012), and left the ones with diminished resources to fight this unequal battle.

Precarity, therefore and in general terms, describes the increased level of social vulnerability and instability created by the long-terms effects of neoliberal globalisation (Bourdieu, 1984). According to Waite (2009, p. 416), precarity ‘conjures life worlds that are inflected with uncertainty and instability’. There is an objective focus in precarity,

related to the changes in the labour markets away from permanent jobs to ones that are more contingent, including contract and part-time positions (Worth, 2016). But there is also a subjective dimension – precariousness – that reveals how unsafe, insecure or anxious people feel in, or about, employment.

In this paper, we analyse non-traditional students and graduates' biographies- either in their transitions to employment or in the first years of their professional careers. Rather than perusing a more objective focus, we will analyse students and graduates' subjective experiences of precarity, to understand the nuances of these feelings of precariousness. We will try to understand if the financial crisis represented a turning point in their lives. Taking for granted there is a natural desire for security in employment and life, we will show how students and graduates are able to cope with insecurity and anxiety while in search of a 'good job' or 'decent work' (ILO). We hope, finally, to be able to understand the role of higher education, if any, in this equation.

## **Professional transitions of PhDs outside the academia. A research on the meaning of transferable skill.**

**Andrea Galimberti** - University of Milano Bicocca, Italy

In an “age of supercomplexity” educational systems have to face continuously new questions and new ideas about the relationship with knowledge. In particular knowledge actors, roles and networks are constantly changing. Junior academics (e.g. postdoctoral researchers, junior lecturers, PhDs) are at the crossroad of this scenario, facing new constraints and new possibilities. Younger entry level academics are, in fact, dealing with a lack of opportunities regarding long term careers: it is reasonable to agree that the chances of a PhD graduate to eventually have a stable position in public research are hardly higher than a few per cent, and slimmer when geographical constraints are set. This uncertainty inside the academia is often related to a lack of confidence in managing a satisfying professional transition outside the university. Academic experiences, in fact, can be very difficult for a potential employer to read, as much as it is difficult for a researcher to figure which of his/her own experiences can be of interest outside his/her former context. Paradoxically the market itself creates the risk of lack of opportunities even for those who hold those high level competencies that are considered fundamental for the knowledge economy. Over-qualification and skill mismatch are the actual risks of developed economic systems often resulting in lower job satisfaction and psychological

stress. The competence assessment process could be not helpful as the concept of competence by itself is not sufficient to orient and clear the dialogue. The problem worsen when the assessment process start considering not only the "hard skills" but also the so-called "soft", "transversal", "cross sector" or "transferable" skills that are considered as the best way to support professional transitions in an increasingly competitive economy based on "grey capital". These kind of skills entails a more complex dimension directly related to the context that enables a certain kind of performativity. Thus the difficulties to highlight those dimensions are stronger as they involve identifying and describing those tacit and contextual aspects that often lies on the background of the learning experience.

I used this considerations as a starting point for a postdoctoral research aimed at interrogating experiences and expectations of young researchers, academic staff and private companies, in relation to the processes of developing, identifying and valuing transferable competences.

The research is at its initial stage. The first aim is to collect experiences, stories, images, and conversations suitable to form a strong corpus of qualitative data, that could be reliable, valuable, and meaningful for the participants and their communities.

The expected outcomes are related to identify the most common assumptions underlying the transferable competence discourse and their effects on the dialogue between young researchers and actors of professional sectors outside the academia.

## **Analysis of metaphors on the formative experience of mentors from the Dominican Republic.**

**Sandra González-Miguel** - University of Seville, Spain

**Cristina Mayor Ruíz** - University of Seville, Spain

Beginning teachers start with intense curiosities and insecurities, so in the specialized literature, there are training programs with the accompaniment of more experienced teachers (mentors) who can help in the transition process. The mentor teacher is conceived as a teacher with more than fifteen years of experience, with recognized prestige for his teaching excellence and participation in projects of educational innovation. In this paper we present a study based on the analysis of metaphors integrally



linked to the professional and personal development of the mentor in his own formative practice. The general objective is to identify and describe in the context of a teacher training program those subjects involved in the counseling of beginning teachers and, as specific, to describe the figure of the mentor: functions and modalities. The methodology is qualitative, giving meaning through metaphors to the counseling process and to the role of the mentor. We have worked with ten participants and its elaboration has been with the experience of one year playing this figure. As results of this study we can point out that the animal category is the most used to finalize the beginning of the phrase "as a mentor I see myself as ..." followed by that of object and nature. The animal category is generally linked to the flight of the birds to be able to observe from above the educational processes given and thus be able to advance in improving the educational quality of their country, The Dominican Republic. We usually point out that most of them argue that every day in their work they are willing to reach the marked goal. As conclusions, we suggest that they require specific training in counseling and pedagogical content in order to be able to develop and advance in the training process of teachers who are initiated in the teaching profession and contribute to the improvement of the quality of teaching.

## **Students' perspectives on training to enhance employability in Spain.**

**José González-Monteagudo** - University of Seville, Spain

**Ángel Alonso-Rodríguez** - University of Seville, Spain

**Roberto Espejo-Leupin** - Central University of Chile, Santiago de Chile

**Natividad Gutiérrez-Quijada** - University of Seville, Spain

This paper is part of the Erasmus+ EMPLOY project which intends to enhance employability for non-traditional students and graduates. In this context, we have undertaken different research and intervention activities. One of them has been the implementation at the University of Seville (Spain) of training aimed at facilitating transition from HE to the graduate labour market. This training consisted of 10 hours distributed in 3 sessions that took place during 3 weeks. As regards participants, 12 non-traditional students (9 undergraduates and 3 graduates) with different profiles took part in them: mature students (7), first generation or low economic capital students (5) and disable students (2). Such training was based on a handbook which has been designed specifically for this purpose through collaborative work among the six European partners

involved in the EMPLOY project. The handbook includes different sections that enable reflection on one's own employability taking other students' experiences as starting point. Thus, after an introduction of the project EMPLOY and the contents that can be found inside, the handbook encourages students to reflect on their own educational and professional experiences in the first place. Afterwards, employers and non-traditional students' perspectives on employment and employability are offered to the users of the handbook. In addition to this, real testimonies of non-traditional students are included as well as strategies and support services that students who are meant to join the labour market can benefit from.

Following the aforementioned working sessions with non-traditional students, 12 participants have been asked to evaluate the handbook used during such sessions by means of an open questionnaire. The aim being to know their overall impressions including the aspects that they liked most and least as well as suggestions for improvement.

Results show a good level of acceptance of the handbook by the participants. Two main contributions can be noticed: the development of a positive and entrepreneurial attitude towards the professional world and the process of personal reflection arising from the analysis of other experiences with which participants feel identified. Furthermore, the work on the handbook provides the participants with a group vision and raises awareness about both challenges regarding employability of non-traditional students and strategies to overcome them. In this regard, the necessary adaptation to the labour market perceived by the participants has taken some of them to an inner conflict. Hence, the approach followed goes beyond the superficial treatment of contents.

In participants' words, the working sessions have been crucial in this process -even more relevant than the handbook itself- as they have enabled to analyse and reflect on real and diverse experiences in a functional, participative and collaborative manner. Thus, the methodology implemented highly influences results.

Additionally, the design is described as original due to the organisation of content based on case-studies and the structure of activities. Nevertheless, some suggestions for improvement have also been made by the participants, mainly a more work-oriented handbook (e.g. tools or techniques to find a job), participation of employers in the sessions and inclusion of the handbook in mainstream classes.

## **Ladder or barrier? The implications of graduate internships for non-traditional graduates.**

**William Hunt** – University of Warwick, UK

In a congested and positional labour market graduates are increasingly called upon to display markers of employability over and above traditional educational credentials in order to compete in the scramble jobs. Credential inflation linked to labour market change and the expansion of higher education mean that the mere possession of a degree is no longer enough to secure a graduate job. In a meritocratic view of the labour market it is inequality in access to the means of acquiring educational and other credentials that inhibits social mobility. In this view, it is the removal of barriers in access to the means of acquiring these credentials that is key to improving opportunities for social mobility. However, a more critical view argues that patterns of (dis)advantage go deeper than just questions of access to opportunities to develop credentials with social class playing a much more pervasive role.

Graduate internships have emerged as one strategy by which labour market entrants attempt to improve their chances in the graduate labour market. Internships are seen as a way for individuals to gain experience, develop industry specific skills and knowledge, and for employers to test potential recruits. However, at the same time there are concerns that those lacking the requisite social networks and financial resources to forgo wages for any significant duration are excluded from accessing internships and thus key professions and industries. While a number of qualitative studies in the UK appear to provide support for both sides of this ‘dual view’, there has been a dearth of quantitative evidence on the topic.

The current paper aims to address this gap by drawing on quantitative data from PhD research examining the role internships play in the UK graduate labour market. Employing secondary analysis of data from a statutory survey of recent graduates from UK higher education institutions as well as findings from a bespoke survey of creative and communications graduates two to six years after graduation, the findings challenge prevailing conceptions of internships and the operation of the graduate labour market. Firstly, the findings show that not all internships are equal. While paid internships do help in the graduate labour market unpaid internships do not convey the same employability benefits. Secondly, while those from less privileged backgrounds are less likely to engage in internships (paid or unpaid) it is the more beneficial, paid internships in particular that they struggle to secure. This is concerning as it is these better, paid opportunities that help graduates access the best jobs. These findings challenge the ‘conventional’ view of the graduate labour market because they show that even after removing financial barriers and controlling for factors such as institution prestige and grades social class still plays a

significant role in determining who has access to the best opportunities, thus providing support for more critical accounts of the labour market.

## **Universities & Employers: expectations – experiences – reflections.**

**Ewa Kurantowicz** - University of Lower Silesia, Poland

**Adrianna Nizińska** - University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Higher education institution and employers keep searching for new ways of coexistence and cooperation. The important task of finding the framework and solutions to this cooperation became a priority task in the Polish HE policy. There are a lot of organizational and legal changes which include employers to the educational process. What experiences have employers got from universities? Why do they involve to this cooperation? Do (nontraditional) students get any benefits from this cooperation? What are the main obstacles between the academic and work worlds in the perspective of employers and students? We try to answer these questions based on the results of Erasmus + project EMPLOY.

## **Higher studies in social sciences education using CLIL and sharing didactic strategies orientated to internationalize employability and entrepreneurship.**

**Clotilde Lechuga-Jiménez** - University of Malaga, Spain

In the last three courses 2014-15, 2015-15 and 2016-17, Integration of Contents and English has been implemented at the Faculty of Sciences of Education in University of Malaga (Spain), specifically in Primary Education Studies. The initiative corresponds to

the continuity of bilingualism that in the Spanish Education Normative and Curriculum begins with Child schools, continuing in Secondary and High Schools. Consequently, Education Faculty is involved in the preparation of future professional teachers, who not only will be an interpreter teacher with a degree in languages, but with knowledge and content related to the different areas of learning and teaching. That is the reason why Social Sciences Education area is researching in using CLIL and sharing didactic strategies like poster seasons among classroom groups or Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) within different city Institutions as Malaga Museum Picasso, developing the need of being students and citizens part of the scaffolding learning in Higher Studies. Therefore, internationalizing territories in the University, city/town and its Museums will be a goal when talking about innovation for internationalizing employability and entrepreneurship.

### **Objectives of the research**

Due to student's participation which was very active during the course 2016-17 at 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade in Primary Studies, we provide several strategies and experiences carried out by the members of the group, adding references taken from other universities and pedagogical areas. The primary objective of the fact leads us to share selection criteria in the methodology applied known as CLIL teaching and learning methodology proposed in Primary Studies at Malaga University. In order to achieve the objective of handling Higher Education in Further Education and Promoting Reflective Independent Learning in Higher Education (PRILHE) the proposition combines them with other procedures such as participation in city-town Institutions like Art Museums or Science ones as well as in cultural and natural heritage sites. Those experiences could open didactic needs in Spanish towns and cities or abroad where the use of English could be justified. Providing new objectives and possibilities concerning internationalizing employability and entrepreneurship either citizens or teachers/students will approach to citizenship common knowledge and to university in other terms like non-traditional students or experience inequalities.

# **Proposals for improving education and employment policies. A review of Europa 2020 strategy.**

**Dolores Limón-Domínguez** - University of Seville, Spain

**Manuela Pabón-Figueras** - University of Seville, Spain

**Miguel Ángel Pino-Mejías** - University of Seville, Spain

Europa 2020 strategy was launched in 2010 with the principal aim to drive jointly growth and employment: *“the response to the crisis showed that if we act together, we are significantly more effective. (...) In a global world, no single country can effectively address the challenges by acting alone”*. There have been agreed five headline targets that the nations in UE-28 must achieve by the end of this second decade. We emphasize the ones related to the target of increasing: (i) the employment rate of the population and (ii) the sharing of the population having completed tertiary or equivalent education. In fact, there are many empiric proofs and bibliographic references about the nexus between the capital human and the occupational variables.

Our study presents a review of the goals of the new integrated guidelines proposed in Europa 2020 strategy, related to the education and employment fields. We try to determine the implicit linkages that you can infer from these targets; the analysis focus on different countries that are representative of various conditions. In the second part we study the partial achievement of the goals. We conclude with a projection exercise based on past performances. Thus we can identify and characterize several upgrade policies.

# **Integration of highly educated women in the labour market. An European study about the relation between an aspect of the flexibility and employment rates.**

**Dolores Limón-Domínguez** - University of Seville, Spain

**Manuela Pabón-Figueras** - University of Seville, Spain

**Miguel Ángel Pino-Mejías** - University of Seville, Spain

The European countries show significant differences in employment rates by sex, age groups and educational attainment level. The “labour market flexibility hypothesis” (LMF) might explain these differences through institutional national factors: trade union force, protection laws, tax incidence, unemployment benefits, etc. This hypothesis implies that full employment will be achieved if these comprehensive protection measures are weakened. For instance, OCDE (1994) sets out some policy recommendations as “Reduce or remove non-neutral financial incentives for early retirement” or “Increase wage and labour cost flexibility”. Subsequently numerous researches have proposed similar solutions.

On the other hand, the “macroeconomic policies hypothesis” criticises extremely austere approaches that lays down, for instance, in the Maastricht Treaty. These two theories interpret differently the causes of unemployment and, so, they offer opposed solutions.

Galbraith (2006) identifies weaknesses in both arguments and puts stress on the importance to verify the validity of the market flexibility. This author has analysed the behaviour of European wages (17 countries) over 25 years through clustering algorithms and discriminant analysis; “the results force to question the idea that European wages are inflexible”. This conclusion involves a review of different proposals: there seems to be a direct relation between wages and labour force occupation, so these two variables would be coordinated.

In the present paper we have focused on a partial analysis of the question: we try to identify clusters or homogenous sets of European regions (NUTS 2 level) according to the temporal evolution of the integration of highly education women in the labour market. First of all we justify the choice of the variables used in the study: variations of the average salaries and employment rates for the female population; the consideration of highly education women is an innovative feature of our research. We apply Ward’s method to get a data reduction.

The second part of the paper focuses on the detecting of regional and national policies that can have contributed to these different patterns of evolution. We seek common aspects to illustrate the true extent of these policies.

# **Does university reputation affect working-class graduates' access to professional occupations?**

**Daria Luchinskaya** - University of Warwick, UK.

**Chris Warhurst** - University of Warwick, UK.

University graduates' access to the professions is under close scrutiny across countries with mass higher education (HE) systems. In the UK, evidence shows that many professions remain dominated by a small elite section of society, and have become less representative in recent decades, and that working-class students fall behind their middle-class peers throughout school and university education. While policymakers are concerned with access to prestigious universities, research looking at the effects of university type on graduate outcomes suggests the subject studied and degree results have a larger influence on labour market outcomes than does university reputation (McGuinness, 2003). However, recent work on UK graduate employment outcomes (Purcell et al., 2013) suggests that university reputation may still have a role to play.

This paper explores whether attending a university perceived as having an 'elite' reputation evens out the chances of entering a professional occupation (e.g. doctor, scientist, teacher, etc.) for working-class graduates, using detailed information about HE experience and transitions into employment from the Futuretrack dataset. Futuretrack is a longitudinal survey of people who applied to full-time HE in the UK in 2005/06, and the latest available survey wave was conducted in 2011/12, when most graduates would have been in the labour market for up to two years. Using multinomial logistic regressions, this paper estimates the effects of perceived university reputation on graduate employment outcomes. The outcome of interest is accessing a 'professional' occupation, which has traditionally been seen as a 'graduate job'. The main variables of interest are university reputation and social class. Other control variables include prior attainment at school and university, engagement in extra-curricular clubs and activities while at university, subject studied, and other personal characteristics.

Initial findings suggest that working-class graduates are underrepresented in professional-level occupations. However, when university reputation and graduates' prior attainment are taken into account, the social class effect is diminished. This research will improve understanding of the complex factors that affect access to graduate-level employment for students from working-class backgrounds, in a changing and increasingly fragmented labour market and HE context. Such understanding is timely as students are increasingly bearing a higher burden of the costs of HE and take more responsibility in shaping their own paths into employment.



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## **Women and work. A gender orientation to generate generative action.**

**Francesca Marone** - University of Naples "Federico II", Italy

**Maria Papathanasiou-Salata** - University of Naples "Federico II", Italy

**Anna Cucca** - University of Naples "Federico II", Italy

The equal opportunity between women and men is the main principle of European law, which involves all fields of social life, including the working field.

In Italy, the gender issue still takes the form of actions aiming to the recognition of citizenship's rights in their practice. The concept of citizenship seeks to combine multiple levels, from State to organizations, from an abstract and concrete perspective, universal and at the same time specific, individual instances (Gherardi, 1998). Thus, when it comes to gender equality, it stands for the women's right to "be equal and different" and the everyone's right to wake up from the "trap of the gender" such as stereotypes' roles according to gender and the definition of gender identity.

Therefore, after a careful consideration of the Italian situation, the contribution aims to illustrate a gender-oriented model through a pedagogic and feminist point of view (Luke 1992, 2005) in the college within a counseling service addressed to the female students and administrative staff of the University of Naples Federico II. It involves the presentation of a narrative exploratory study (Alehit, 1995, Demetrio, 1997, 2008; Merrill, West, 2009) through the lens of a "generative" work pedagogy (of new knowledge, of value, of an action orientation) through which it is possible to understand the connections that come from the interactions, giving them sense and human planning. We start from the assumption that there is a need to tell, to understand, to comprehend

the political and economic social phase concerning women and discussions about women in Italy nowadays.

The use of narrative methodologies aims to develop, in relation to oneself and the labor market, socio-cultural frameworks and appropriate emotional registers to invest on own planning and to deal in an appropriate way with changing situations; focusing on the difficulties that obstruct a positive research action, stimulating own planning and professional identity; to overcome of conformism and stereotypes, and to identify aspirations, interests, and capabilities which affect the working fields with the aim of “creating” career prospects in advance, which correspond to personal meanings

According to a bottom up perspective, the advantage of the qualitative method lies on enhancing the perspective of the object of investigation (considered in its peculiarity and uniqueness) by a lens of an experience-based analysis, which is the most innovative typology, created by the feminist approach. Focusing on stories, relationships, stands for intersecting women's voices in social changes to read the present, avoiding the rhetoric of victimization as much as possible, or exalting the women just to underline the surplus economic value.

Listening to female talents, grasping the nuances of young women's “know how”, put us outside the logic of protection and victimization, as well as of a value-making of the so called feminine attitudes, because it implies a virtuous connection between other practices, other forms of decision making and power organization, as well as the need to integrate their experience with their own desire in the love of themselves and of the others.

## **Perspectives of non-traditional graduates about the economic crisis and skills for employability.**

**Isabel María Muñoz-García** - University of Seville, Spain

### **1. Introduction and objectives**

Non-traditional university graduates constitute a diverse group, but they suffer from similar disadvantages and inequalities. This communication is part of a European Erasmus + project involving six European countries on the improvement of the employability of non-traditional students and graduates. The main objective of the project is to study the European situation of training, experiences and good practices on the employability, offering a guidance to manage more successfully the transition from the

university to the labor market for this disadvantaged group.

This communication deals specifically with the voices of the non-traditional graduates from Social and Juridical Sciences of various Andalusian universities, around the economic crisis and skills for employability.

## **2. Methods**

The methodology used for this project has been qualitative, through the use of biographical-narrative interview (Wengraf, 2001; Alheit, 2007). We have analyzed the interview transcripts from fifteen non-traditional graduates of Social and Juridical Sciences, belonging to a larger sample, obtained by non-probabilistic and by "snowball" sampling formed by men and women between 23-30 years, which complies with one or several characteristics associated with the "non-traditional" profile: first-generation college students; working class profile, low incomes, financial problems, work-study combination; disability; migrants or persons belonging to ethnic minorities; gender inequality.

## **3. Results and conclusions**

The results obtained from the analysis identified four main categories related to the economic crisis and its consequences:

*a) Inequality and exclusion.* The students reflect in their narratives many obstacles, including precariousness, garbage contracts, poverty and unemployment. Young people from excluded or low-income households have lower education levels, because they have more difficulties in accessing higher education.

*b) Lack of work experience.* Lack of professional experience is considered as another major problem for employability for non-traditional graduates (Martínez Martín, 2003). Thirteen of the fifteen interviewed graduates have stated that, once the career is over, there are hardly any job opportunities in their professional field.

*c) Role and limitations of the university to improve employability and access to the labor market.* University does not teach professional skills to be able to work in the different professional sectors. Ten of the fifteen interviewees think that they did not have in their degree specific subjects to explain their future job duties.

*d) Gender inequalities.* Gender inequality still exists in the labor market, which negatively affects women (indirect labor discrimination, wage gap, sexual harassment and increased job insecurity). These inequalities are increasingly affecting young women (Torns and Recio, 2012).

We believe that to listen and understand these non-traditional graduate's voices, who call themselves unanimously as a "lost generation", can help us to improve university

education and to establish more and better connections between the university and the world of work.

## **Perceptions and experiences of a sample of non traditional students in transition from Higher Education to the Labour Market in Western Sicily.**

**Silvia Palma** - University of Palermo, Italy

**Enza Sidoti** - University of Palermo, Italy

**Introduction and aim of the work.** In recent years a long economic crisis whipped Europe and, in consequence, it affected the labour market and the occupational opportunities of the young people. Among many negative data registered in Italy, unemployment in the individual 20-34, reached percentage values as high as 40%. The purpose of this work was to investigate perceptions and expectations of a group of nontraditional students to be about to graduate in Western Sicily.

**Methodology.** A Group of 200 students (112F/88M) attending classes of the last years in four randomly selected University Courses of Study for the three years degree. (Economics of Cultural Heritage, Sciences of Education, Biotechnology, Environmental Sciences) were interviewed using a 25 items questionnaire. Individuals characteristic were: be the first graduate in the family; be from an inland area of Sicily; belong to a family running agricultural activity and having deep roots in the territory; be in course not more than 5 years.

**Results.** All the students selected was substantially satisfied by the courses chosen. All were concerned with the post graduation period, as well as all complained for the scarcity of opportunity for employment in general in the southern regions of Italy. The most of the sample (86%), affirmed that certainly they will transfer North, either in Italy or, if possible, in Europe for continuing education and job search. Main obstacles they foresaw in the search of employment were: reduction in the offer of the labour market; low experience and consequently limited info in working conditions, wages, policies and facilities of the labour market requirements; a too rigid labor market; lack of practical competencies; requests of the Employers that do not fit with their competencies; difficult to obtain graduate-level work and to break into the works they were aiming at. Other

difficulties to be worried, were: being woman; coming from south; the southern accent; living in a different place, environment and mentality; missing the support of the family.

**Considerations.** The liberal society and the global market did not secure better quality of life and equality in accessing the labour market and opportunity of employment. There remains a distance between Education, the dynamic of market and Employers. New ideas in the world travel faster than the speed for new ideas are internalized, accepted, realized and become individual opportunity. Efficient investment in human resources by Employers and Institutions should be requested. In this respect, the capability to carry out the education of competent graduates becomes crucial. The relationship between higher education and the labour market has been considered a linear relation. In the modern society, however, complexity of the systems predominate. Different factors interfere and relations cannot be simplified. Education, therefore, needs new pathway of approaching complex systems and new way to produce competencies in the youth higher education to have a better insight in understanding the youth labour market. In any country “successful development ...depends mainly on the ability of a Nation to make good use of human resources” (Becker G., Nobel Prize in Economy).

## **Strategies for Enhancing the Employability of Non-Traditional Students in HE.**

**Andrew Rothwell** - Loughborough University, UK

**Ian Herbert** - Loughborough University, UK

This paper presents a review of practical strategies to enhance the employability of non-traditional students. To set the scene, we will present a critical review of employability including policy and the graduate labour market. We will then consider three strategies specifically aimed at supporting employability development for non-traditional students, two of which are based on first-hand experience; the third, a proposal currently being evaluated by the UK’s Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: namely, Earn to Learn.

Contemporary higher education systems carry a legacy of significant expansion, driven on one hand by government policies to widen participation and on the other by a lack of alternative options for young people. At the same time, structural economic changes, recession and the widespread offshoring of core employment resulted in a decline in the

availability of good quality jobs. This has created pinch-points in the global labour market, particularly the employment of young people in disadvantaged regions, those from non-traditional backgrounds and those who may lack the employment connections possessed by their more privileged peers. Such concerns have now become global concerns.

Leaving aside policy and rhetoric, this paper focuses on practical strategies to enhance employability. The first is an evaluation of a two-year degree pilot project, delivered more than ten years ago in a 'widening participation' university and aimed at students who had been unable to take up higher education options on leaving school or college. As only two years' fee would be charged, and of course two years living costs, this was a highly cost-effective initiative from the student's point of view. Similar proposals were presented by the Conservative government in February 2017. The second strategy involves the provision of year-long placements for students for whom this had almost never been trialled: international students on a full-time MBA programme. Despite a complex and shifting web of regulations and a lack of prior employer engagement the programme has enjoyed modest success. The third strategy is a radical proposal to re-shore entry level professional work (for example finance or human resources) through the development of business shared service centres attached to universities which would employ students at the same time they are working towards their degrees. This 'training nursery' would enable employers to evaluate potential applicants, support less well off students in the provision of decent work related to their studies, and enhance employability through experiential development. The presentation will take the form of a workshop including facilitated participant activity through a short version of the 'World Café' format, and a written paper.

## **Employability and Non-Traditional Students: A Psychological Contract Approach.**

**Andrew Rothwell** - Loughborough University, UK

This paper presents a critical perspective on contemporary research and practice in relation to the employability of non-traditional students in Higher Education (HE), considers employability in the context of widening participation in HE, where failures have occurred the potential causes of these failures, and proposes a future research agenda anchored on the psychological contract as a context within which promises can be made,

understood and kept. The last two decades has seen a substantial growth in HE participation, initially in the ‘sunset economies’ of Europe and the USA; with subsequent further growth throughout the developing world. While this has potentially enhanced opportunities for huge numbers of individuals from non-traditional backgrounds who were most likely the first in their families to engage with HE level study, the reality of post-degree employment at an appropriate level has eluded many.

The paper begins by considering two major policy challenges. The first is the extent to which employability has a potential smoke-and-mirrors quality, in that it deflects attention from a more significant cause for concern, which is the availability of good quality jobs for ambitious individuals seeking to enhance their social mobility. The second policy challenge follows from the first and lies in the unmet expectations and under-employment currently being experienced by graduates throughout the world, which is exacerbated for those from non-traditional backgrounds.

Employability is then considered as a component of the student psychological contract (SPC), where it is potentially at least an expectation if not a perceived entitlement. A brief review of contemporary literature on the SPC will be considered, from which a model has been developed. This identifies the causes of the SPC as including engagement, expectations (or entitlements), and the existence of alternatives; the content of the SPC as including the extent to which universities are seen to deliver on their promises; finally perceived employability (the expectation of securing sustainable work of an appropriate level) is identified as an outcome of the SPC alongside other attitudinal factors (commitment, satisfaction, security) as well as behavioural outcomes (attendance, participation, retention). Data from an exploratory study will be used to test a potential measure. Finally, a research agenda is proposed which aims to develop a richer understanding of student employability which is more appropriate to challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century labour markets and the expectations, perceived entitlements and even demands of contemporary students.

## **Monitoring of the insertion plans of non-traditional students of University of Seville during their first year of access to the labour market.**

**María Vázquez-Granadero** - University of Seville, Spain

**Teresa Padilla-Carmona** - University of Seville, Spain

**José González-Monteagudo** - University of Seville, Spain

The economic crisis has contributed to increase the access and return of the students to the University in the order to improve their employability. Nevertheless, the unemployed figures of the graduates go on being high, and for this reason, our study aims to analyze the contents and modes of the transitions of non-traditional students from university to the labour market, focusing on the following two dimensions: a) strategies and resources to inclusion in the labour market; b) obstacles students perceive to enter de labour market. However, work experience, nomination of candidates and working processes, services of employment guidance and future prospects.

To do this, has made 8 individual biographical interviews (3 men and 1 woman; four of them are the first generation and three of them have low incomes) to non-traditional students who belong to different knowledge areas of the University of Seville: Health Science (Pharmacy), Arts and Humanities (History) and Social and legal Sciences (Finance and accounting and Journalism). The interviews have a longitudinal approach and have been carried out in two stages. The first interview has been done the last year of the degree. La second interview took place a year later.

According to the second interview, the results show that only one student that four interviewees had completed the university degree and was finishing a master's degree. The strategies and actions to promote their inclusion in the labour market go on being, amazingly, inconclusive and diffuse. The students have not developed strategies and resources to encourage their access to the labour market. On the other hand, they consider it important to acquire complementary training, mainly in idioms and new technologies. Regarding the obstacles they perceive, all of them indicate the lack of work as a result of the economic crisis; to this must be added the limitations derived of personal characteristics more significant in the students with disability.