Developing Employability for Business
Maryvonne Lumley & James Wilkinson
OUP (2014)
Review by Christine Smith

Do you ever ask academics at other universities what they have on their reading lists? 'Developing employability for business' (Maryvonne Lumley & James Wilkinson, OUP, 2014) is newly published and was recommended by an academic at a UK university for use with employability modules.

Written primarily for students, the project-based content could be worked through by a student independently but is designed to support curriculum content on employability and professional skills. Readers are encouraged to reflect on their own skills as they progress, with activities including audits, projects and exercises.

Not only aimed at business students, it is 'your guide to developing the attributes needed for successful job hunting and to making a successful transition into the workplace'. Taking a broad view, the book ends with looking at long-term employability, not stopping at graduation but rather when the first graduate job starts.

Detailed and practical, the writers strive to get a balance between theory and skills, challenging the reader to engage with self-reflection and development whilst also encouraging students to start now and take responsibility for their career. Case studies and comments from employers, students and graduates bring a sense of the realities of the current graduate recruitment market. In a competitive market the book emphasises how employability skills are the differential and takes the reader through how to make them the person who is the desired candidate. Much of the book is taken up with looking in detail at specific employability skills, with an acknowledgement that the content in section 3 such as CVs, cover letters and interviews is probably what most would expect to see in a book about employability.

Where would this resource best fit? Difficult to answer without knowing what already exists within each curriculum. Possibly as a textbook for an employability module or equally, and potentially more powerfully, used at strategic points throughout a degree/post-grad programme to reinforce a cyclical spine of developing employability skills through the course.

The Good Paper – A Handbook for Writing Papers in Higher Education
Lotte Rienecker, Peter Stray Jorgensen, with contributions by Signe Skov
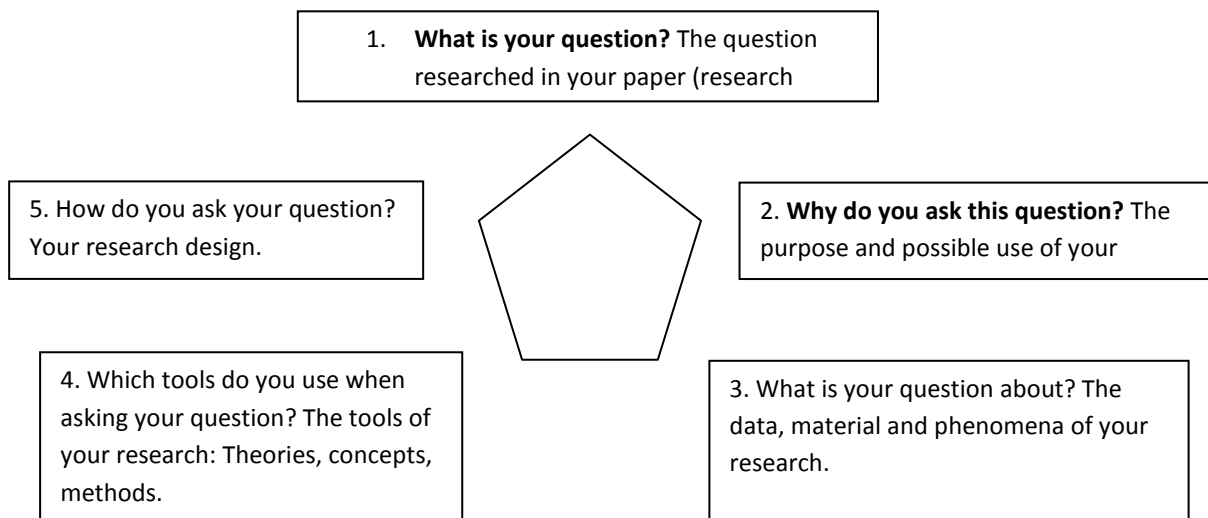Samsfundslitteratur
Review by Cathy Malone

Information literacy is considered a key graduate attribute and now an established central component of undergraduate education. This combined with the rise in approaches and assessment that foster learner independence has led to a popularisation of the undergraduate research paper. This is the focus of *The Good Paper*, a more accurate subtitle

for which would be 'a handbook for writing *research* papers in Higher Education'. This focus on 'the conditions and requirements of independent investigative (scientific) research papers' is the real strength of this book (Rienecker et al 2013: 19). At 400 pages, it is a comprehensive student writing handbook and an explanation of the purpose of undergraduate research.

The Good Paper is the result of a longstanding collaboration between writing consultants and the Director of the Copenhagen University Writing Centre, and information specialists from the Royal Library of Copenhagen. This brings together in one text a range of expertise and approaches to developing one particular genre. Information specialists have clearly informed chapters on 'Formulating A Research Question', 'Literature and Information Search for your Paper', 'Sources in Your Paper', 'Data in the Paper', and 'Theory, Concepts, Methods and Research Design'. A process approach to writing support informs chapters on 'Writing Processes of Research Papers' and 'Reading and Note taking', as well as a final chapter on 'Supervision, Independence and Ownership'. There is also a strand of linguistic text-based analysis obvious in 'The Paper's Structure and Elements', 'The Paper's Argumentation' and 'Clear and Academic Language'. However, the book goes beyond bringing in different experts like visiting speakers. There is a genuine synthesis and close collaboration here, with practical writing activities suggested throughout covering every stage of research and writing, reflecting a commitment to writing as a means of exploring and developing understanding of a subject. Advice on writing is research-informed and the writing prompts throughout are detailed and challenging. This is combined with a healthy eclecticism at the level of technique and practical suggestions for engaging students in generating and developing text. There is a similarly detailed and academically robust use of exemplars of student papers interweaved throughout the book.

The unifying feature of *The Good Paper* is its definition of genre. The authors suggest all readers start with chapter one, which provides an academic foundation for the rest of the book. It provides a working definition of genre, distinct from text type, and speech act, identifying the genre of research papers as 'a genre with more similarities than differences across fields: a genre with reappearing elements... where argumentation and documentation constitute the two central learning goals for the writer' (Rienecker et al 2013: 15). The authors work on the basis that undergraduate research papers share features that cross subject boundaries; as such they are similar to Research Reports identified in BAWE research (Nesi & Gardner 2012). *The Good Paper* presents the research paper in a map of other common undergraduate genres and text types, and explores in detail the characteristic features of a good research paper. The book uses a pentagon model (see figure 1) to present an understanding of research writing and as a means to guide the writing process.

		1. **What is your question?** The question researched in your paper (research	
5. How do you ask your question? Your research design.			2. **Why do you ask this question?** The purpose and possible use of your
	4. Which tools do you use when asking your question? The tools of your research: Theories, concepts, methods.	3. What is your question about? The data, material and phenomena of your research.	

(Rienecker et al 2013)

A brief scan of the contents list immediately marks this book out as quite different from most Study Skills books available from UK publishers. It is refreshing to see the detail and depth of analysis that is included. There is an intellectual rigour that you rarely see in books aimed at undergraduate students. Notions of argumentation, rhetoric, and meta-communication are introduced and explored. It is assumed that students can understand these concepts and need a working knowledge of them as they shape and define writing at this level. There is also a linguist's close attention to language. Early on the authors state that 'language is more than writing correctly, language is also content and meaning and it indicates whether the paper has been written in the right genre and in a scientific and scholarly manner' (Rienecker et al 2013:23). Within chapters there is an integration of theory and practice, and writing practices are suggested that are research informed. The authors model applying theoretical frameworks with some precision to unpack different layers of the text, and overall the authors' ability to critique is a real strength of the book. Complexity is not avoided here, but used as a means to develop student writing, both to understand the qualities of a highly graded paper and the processes students need to engage with to write their own.

Any criticisms I have of the book are really minor. This is a long book and as a direct translation of the Danish version, it demonstrates occasional infelicities of style. I am unsure how tolerant home students will be of the tone of the book. More substantially I think there is a slight loss of focus when this model is applied to other text types and undergraduate papers, such as the essay.

A great bonus for tutors is the fact that all the writing activities in the book are also available via the publisher's website (Samfundslitteratur.dk). These activities range from simple freewriting activities to 'writing and thinking about your paper's argumentation as a dialogue'. This is a very generous means of support for subject tutors interested in embedding writing development in their courses. While freely available, these resources

make most sense when used in conjunction with the book. There is also an associated website, Scribo, which presents a student version of these resources. The result is a book I would happily recommend to staff and students. The focus on a single genre here is really successful and results in a book that makes a valuable and welcome contribution to the field.

References

Nesi H.& Gardner S. (2012) Classification of Genre Families in University Student Writing. *Applied Linguistics ELTJ* .

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What constitutes 'peer support' within peer supported development?

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Abstract

Purpose: Peer supported schemes are replacing traditional Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT) programmes within some Higher Education Institutions. Peer supported schemes, whilst similar in philosophy to PoT, enable academic and academic related staff to support each other in non-teaching related activities. The purpose of this paper is to explore, therefore, the role of peer support in comparison with that of coaching and mentoring to clearly differentiate the activity.

Design/methodology/approach: In 2010, one UK HEI appointed two Academic Fellows to implement and embed a 'Peer supported Development Scheme' (PSDS) within the institution. Through analysing the implementation process and drawing on activity conducted under such a scheme, this article examines the notion of 'peer support' in comparison to mentoring and coaching. The purpose of this will enable Academic Fellows to be able to better advise 'Supporters' how to work with colleagues and engage in structured dialogue to improve teaching and learning practice.

Findings: The findings highlight that Peer support schemes are tangentially different to mentoring and coaching, however some activity undertaken as part of our peer supported scheme was actually mentoring and coaching. Therefore clearer guidance needs to be given to colleagues in order to steer the process towards 'peer support'.

Originality/value: The PSDS discussed within this paper is only one of a few established within the UK and therefore findings from such schemes and how they are established are still emerging and will benefit other HEIs moving from PoT towards peer supported development.

Key Words: Peer, support, coaching, mentoring, professional development, higher education