'Personal literacy': the vital, yet often overlooked, graduate attribute

Chris Rust[1] and Lorna Froud[2]

crust@brookes.ac.uk

[1] Head, Oxford Centre for Staff & Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University
[2] Head, Careers and Employment Centre, Oxford Brookes University

Abstract

"*There is no difference between academic skills and employment skills,*" (Jackson, 2011, p.1). This paper argues that there is often a false dichotomy in the minds of academics between employability, and the so-called 'skills agenda', and the teaching of academic disciplines. And even in professional courses, the view of employability can be very blinkered, limited to getting a job and working in the specific profession – e.g. law, nursing, architecture. It is our argument that an explicit focus on the graduate attribute 'personal literacy' – literally the ability to 'read' oneself, to be critically self-aware – can unite the academic and employability agendas and reveal them as one, joint enterprise. We also argue that both the development of employability and the learning of academic disciplines can be significantly improved through the development of students' critical self-awareness and personal literacy. Having made this case, we then go on to consider examples of how this might be achieved in practice.

Keywords: Personal literacy, self-awareness, employability, graduate attributes

Attributes and skills

We suspect there are few, if any, universities in the world that do not claim employability as a goal. At Brookes, we claim "*an appropriate curriculum for the 21st Century enabling graduates to develop the skills and 'adaptive expertise' that will enable them to take up valuable and satisfying careers, and at the same time contribute to society and the economy*".

In Australia, for the last decade or so, attempts to define the curriculum have focussed on what have been called 'graduate attributes' and this term is also starting to be used more widely now in the UK, and there was a brief attempt here in the 90s to try and decide what constituted 'graduateness '. Graduate attributes have been defined as "*the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution*" (Bowden et al., 2000, Executive summary, para. 2). As one might expect, when it comes to identifying graduate attributes (sometimes called graduate capabilities) Australian universities don't completely agree but they have tended to produce fairly similar lists which are likely to include at least the majority of the following: communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving

skills, inquiry/research skills, team skills – but, interestingly, subject knowledge and capability does not always feature. In the UK we have had similar lists, certainly since the 90s, but under a variety of different titles as fashions, and nuances, have changed, including: transferable skills, life skills, enterprise skills, life-long learning skills, employability skills.

Problems with skills

However useful the consideration of such lists of skills may have been in influencing learning outcomes and course design, one major criticism is that they have tended to be generic (i.e. not explicitly related to the subject discipline being studied), and ill-defined, and to have spawned ever more lengthy lists of atomised sub-skills. There is also an argument that many of these skills are by no means the sole preserve, or expectation, of graduates. Communication skills, for example, would be seen to be a core aim of courses at 'O' level, 'A' level, Further Education, and post-graduate level. Any 'graduateness' in the development of these skills at university may come from the context in which they are developed and performed but they are not unique to graduates and therefore do not help to define what a graduate is or what makes a graduate distinctive or 'special'.

Two further, linked problems are that even when universities have these explicit lists, and courses have explicit learning outcomes, and assessment matrices, and the development of these skills is well designed into the courses, evidence suggests that, firstly, many students don't seem to realise or recognise the skills that they have developed and demonstrated and, secondly, they "*find it difficult to identify the transferability of academic skills to the workplace*" (Johnson 2010, p2). And there are similar findings in other countries such as the US, even, in the example of the following quotation, with PhD students: "*Insecurity, and a colossal underestimation of the value of their transferable skills, seem to be universal among the graduate students*" (Bryant, 2005).

Personal literacy and critical self-awareness within current skills development

Let us consider the issue of personal literacy and critical self-awareness, and identify some of the current problems with its development, from the following two examples of approaches to skills development at Brookes.

English Subject Centre's skills enhancement project
A project designed and completed by Oxford Brookes University Careers Centre to address an English Subject Centre's skills enhancement programme for students of English, using recorded mock interviews, provides evidence that would support Bryant's view (above). The qualitative evaluations completed by the students after the event highlighted the perceived usefulness and benefit of the exercise for students (and this was also supported by the observations of the university staff involved, including careers professionals.) The results also showed that the students were broadly happy with their levels of confidence, body language and the way they answered the questions. However, in addition, the student evaluation sheets show that, on reflection afterwards, these students felt they could (and should) have spent more time on some basic research – investigating the nature of the employer, etc. and on preparation for the

interview – this despite the fact that, on their applications, research was identified as one of the key skills that they had developed through their subject. This lack of any research also meant that the students had little idea as to what career paths were open to them as graduates, and some found it difficult to match their skills and work experience with the answers required in a job interview setting.

These findings provide valuable evidence for careers professionals and academics, highlighting the contingent nature of skills acquisition and transfer. The English field students believed they had acquired identifiable skills on their academic course, especially research skills - but in this context they failed to use them. They had also gained other skills through work experience outside their course, but they found it difficult to match their skills to good interview answers.

Embedded 'employability' activities
In many courses 'employability' related activities are embedded. Often these are in vocational subjects where there is an assumption, or presumption, that they lead to a named, identifiable job, or at least an obvious sector of the job market (Publishing, Nursing, Hotel & Restaurant Management, Business). Ways in which they are taught and assessed vary but they often include, as part of the assessment, a presentation, written curriculum vitae (CV) and a reflective written piece. But the Careers & Employment Centre at Brookes have found little evidence that after these courses students are any more likely to be able to write reflectively, present effectively or write a CV that would stand the test of a graduate recruiter. (A key reason for this seems to be, but more research is required to be sure, that the context is inauthentic. Students on these modules do not see the exercises as a 'real' CV for a 'real' job. They see themselves as students not jobseekers.)

For example, in Autumn 2009, it was decided that professional careers staff would 'mark' the CV component of such a professional practice module. Academic staff facilitated seminars on CV writing as part of the taught programme and students were given information on researching jobs, where to find information on job hunting, and writing applications, and help available from the University Careers Centre. Each CV was given extensive written feedback on the document, along with a clear marking sheet. Of the 112 submissions, only 6 were assessed as 'very likely to gain an interview in a competitive market'; the majority were assessed as 'straight to bin'. Three students subsequently came to the careers centre, disappointed, but agreeing with the feedback and seeking help to improve. Forty three complained in writing that the marking was 'too hard'. The rest did nothing, neither complained, nor sought feedback. Students seemed, for the most part, to be acting instrumentally - to get a grade, to pass a module. A different instrumentality is needed in the labour market, which uses different processes, different criteria and different outcomes.

The problem with embedded careers education is that, unless the assessment mirrors that of employers, students can have a false belief that their CV, application form, interview or group exercise performance is adequate for employment purposes. In addition, students' readiness to engage with employment related activity is variable. For many students, engaging with careers education is not seen as relevant for their life now; they are not focussed on the future, but on their life in and outside of university, and they treat the assessment exercise instrumentally, as any other on their course – a hoop to be jumped through.

Employability and learning

It is an easy mistake for those on the edge of policy discussions and debates to assume that employability simply means the ability of a graduating student to get a job. But it does not. We agree with Harvey's conception of employability, that it is "*more than obtaining key skills*" simply in order to get a job, but rather should be seen as "*a range of experiences and attributes developed through higher-level learning. Employability is not a 'product' but a process of learning………. Employability is, thus, more about ability than it is about being employed. It is about developing as a critical empowered learner.*" (2003, p. 2). It is the central importance of critical self-awareness that means that our concerns about employability and concerns over the quality of learning should be recognised as essentially the same concerns. In addition, we should also acknowledge that employers explicitly express legitimate concerns about the lack of critical self-awareness in the graduates they recruit.

A useful example that separating academic and employability capabilities is a false dichotomy is provided by Carl Gilleard, chief executive of the Association of Graduate Recruiters, speaking to *Times Higher Education: 'A graduate today can fully expect to still be in the world of work in 2058. The one thing we can be certain of is that we will be applying skills that we haven't even thought of today. We will have to relearn and relearn and relearn… Being able to think laterally, having good analytical skills, being an effective communicator… employers are beginning to ask 'Where are we going to find these skills?'… Philosophy in particular is one of those disciplines that employers have started to recognise as having more about it that links to the world of work than they might have imagined"* (as quoted in Fearn, 2009).

And ironically, there is an argument that making the link (between academic and employability capabilities) explicit is even more important now than ever before given the evidence that students seem to increasingly view higher education in narrow terms of employability, and with an instrumentalism which arguably works against, and actually undermines learning (Tomlinson, 2008).

Problems with learning

But the problem of a lack of critical self-awareness and personal literacy is not just an issue of skills development. It is arguably an issue about learning itself, and the quality of that learning.

Newstead lays much of the blame on approaches to assessment, arguing, *"The types of assessment we currently use do not promote conceptual understanding and do not encourage a deep approach to learning………Our means of assessing them seems to do little to encourage them to adopt anything other than a strategic or mechanical approach to their studies."* (2002, p. 3) and *"…students become more interested in the mark and less interested in the subject over the course of their studies."* (Ibid, p. 2).
It has also been argued (Rust, 2000, p.126) that modular or unitised courses especially 'compartmentalise' *"the students' attitudes to what they are learning, 'ticking off' modules as they are taken, and failing to see, or look for, a connection between them."*

But whether or not they are modular, there are certainly a disquieting number of research findings indicating a declining use of deep and contextual approaches to study

as students' progress through their degree programmes (e.g. Watkins & Hattie, 1985; Kember et al., 1997; Richardson, 2000; Zhang & Watkins, 2001; Lieberman & Remedios, 2007). Basically, all of these studies indicate that most university students increasingly take a surface approach to their learning over the length of the course.

Graduate attributes at Oxford Brookes

In recent discussions about graduate attributes at Oxford Brookes University, we have advocated that focus should be kept on what should be distinctive, if not unique, to a graduate, that we keep the list short, and that we concentrate on attributes rather than contributory sub-sets of skills. And that rather than being seen as a distinct attribute, or set of skills, employability should be seen as an overarching, inevitable outcome of the combination of the graduate attributes. To this end we have identified five graduate attributes, and four of them will probably not surprise anybody (although the inclusion of the academic element of the course as one of the attributes is unusual, as has already been said). The four are:

Academic literacy
Disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills, understanding the epistemology and 'landscape' of the discipline, and what it means to think and behave as a member of that disciplinary and/or professional community of practice.

Research literacy
Ability to be a critical consumer of research, and also, where possible, to design and undertake at least a small-scale research project in the discipline, using appropriate methodology.

Digital literacy
The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically to evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.

Global citizenship
Knowledge and skills, showing cross-cultural awareness, and valuing human diversity. The ability to work effectively, and responsibly, in a global context. Knowledge of global perspectives on how disciplinary knowledge is represented and understood within other cultures; cross-cultural capability beginning with an awareness of our own culture and perspectives and the development of the confidence to question one's own values and those of others responsibly and ethically; and responsible citizenship, actively engaging with issues of equity and social justice, sustainability and the reduction of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

But we are arguing for the fifth attribute of *'Critical self-awareness and personal literacy'*:

Understanding how one learns, the ability to assess the work of oneself and others, and to identify one's strengths and weaknesses. The ability to organise oneself and perform as an autonomous, effective and independent learner. The

ability to relate to other people and function collaboratively in diverse groups, including the development of appropriate interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and adaptive expertise.

It is this attribute, including the ability to select and present appropriate evidence, that is intended to bring the five attributes together both in terms of the students' awareness of the attributes and their understanding of their own personal development of the attributes.

This attribute can be seen as similar to, and a development of, the "self-efficacy and personal qualities" component, combined with some aspects of the "metacognition" component of the employability framework developed by the Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (ESECT) funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Yorke, 2010).

It is also interesting to note that it clearly fits with the "Interpersonal and intrapersonal competence" advocated in the US by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and their recommendation that "*All campus educators should ensure the establishment of reflection and other meaning making opportunities for students to examine the breadth of their learning*," (Keeling, 2004, p. 29).

Personal literacy and academic learning

Human beings are not naturally good at estimating their own abilities, and in fact, there is evidence that those with weaker abilities are likely to overestimate while those with greater abilities will underestimate them (e.g. Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Ehrlinger & Dunning, 2003). There is also similar research evidence of a possible gender difference, with men overestimating and women underestimating their ability (e.g. Beloff, 1992; Bennett, 1996), and especially in what have been defined as 'masculine tasks' (Beyer & Bowden, 1997). If students are to learn to the maximum of their potential, we believe that it is vital for students to have an accurate understanding of their abilities and their strengths and weaknesses.

More recently, in connection with politics in both the US and the UK, opinion pollsters (e.g. Alworth, 2009) have identified what they have called 'cognitive dysphasia' – the ability of electors to express incompatible and contradictory desires at the same time. For example, being in favour of increased local democracy and decision-making but at the same time rejecting the notion of 'post-code lotteries' and wanting consistent standards and provision across the country. (This is different to cognitive dissonance in that dissonance is caused when the individual actually does perceive there is a logical inconsistency or contradiction – usually between a belief and a behaviour). Arguably, the existence of this 'cognitive dysphasia' is a metacognitive problem and reflects a lack of critical thinking, reflection and self-awareness.

There is also a strong case that students benefit from understanding how they learn and, in particular, from being 'assessment literate' and that this improves assessed student performance (Price et al., 2010). The more students know about what is being asked of them in assessments, and understand the standards that are being applied, the more effectively they are able to meet the requirements. But it is just not possible for these standards to be unambiguously articulated and communicated (O'Donovan et al, 2004).

The necessary tacit understandings of assessment standards and criteria - those parts of understanding that we find difficult, if not impossible, to articulate in words (Polanyi, 1998) - can only be shared and understood through social processes, involving practice, observation and imitation (Nonaka, 1991).

Alverno, a small, liberal arts college in Milwaukee, has arguably led the way in this regard with its now well-established 'ability-based curriculum' (see http://www.alverno.edu/about_alverno/ability_curriculum.html), which emphasises "learning the abilities needed to put knowledge to use" and deliberately makes significant use of both self and peer-assessment in the process. Without ever, to our knowledge, using the term, we would argue that Alverno offers an exemplary model of an institution developing their students' 'personal literacy'.

These abilities not only help students get the most from their current courses of study, but are also essential if they are to be equipped as 'lifelong learners' (Boud, 2007) with 'adaptive expertise' (Schwartz et al., 2005). And we should not assume that very able, academically elite students necessarily have any greater personal literacy than other students. It is interesting to note that even the director of the careers service at the University of Oxford was talking recently of the "*challenge…to help students understand and make explicit the transferable skills they acquire during their degree.*" (Black, 2010)

Personal literacy and employability

Employers of graduates take individual personal development seriously. They want to see evidence that graduates have shown commitment to developing themselves during their studies and from extra curricular activities. Graduates need to be able to know themselves and their strengths and be able to provide examples of how they have demonstrated these. Examples of how they have changed their approach to something as a result of feedback, when they pushed themselves beyond what was required, when they have persuaded someone else to a different point of view, what skills they brought to a team, how they have motivated others, adapted to a new situation or group, being reliable: showing up on time, dealing with mundane tasks with enthusiasm, diffusing a difficult situation with tact and diplomacy, juggling priorities and implementing back up plans to deal with the unexpected, thinking quickly and using initiative, keeping an open mind, going above and beyond ones own expectations. The relationship between these requirements of employers and theories of emotional intelligence is clear: the ability to read ones own emotions and recognise their impact on others and make decisions, controlling ones emotions to adapt to changing situations, ability to sense, understand and react to the emotions of others and the ability to inspire, influence and develop others and manage conflict.

So how might we best ensure the development of personal literacy?

The challenge now facing us at Brookes is how to move beyond the commitment to personal literacy to deciding on the best ways to ensure its development in the curriculum.

The good news is that some other decisions that have already been taken should undoubtedly help. For instance, the University already has the policy that all undergraduate programmes must have an explicit 'pathway' developing research skills and a commitment to 'research literacy' as a core graduate attribute. And it is very much the intention that this will shape the staff/student relationship, with students seen (and

seeing themselves), from day one, as novice entrants to a community of practice embarking on the common enterprise of the production of knowledge. The University has also recently agreed an 'Assessment Compact' (which can be downloaded at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/2_learntch/assessment.html) which includes a commitment to the development of the assessment literacy of students and recognition that the ability to assess the work of both self and others must be seen as an essential capability for all graduates. But even if successful, neither of these initiatives will specifically require, nor explicitly develop, critical self-awareness and personal literacy.

So let us consider examples from a range of UK universities, including Brookes, of different ways that they are explicitly trying to develop critical self-awareness and personal literacy.

Team and Leadership programme at Brookes
In 2009 Oxford Brookes piloted a new, intensive, two-day Team and Leadership programme endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management that explicitly focuses on self-reflection and enables students to practise working in teams on a range of problem solving real world tasks. The programme includes a mix of short, theory-based presentations and practical activities. Teams are randomly selected and work together across the two days with an assessor giving continual individual and whole team feedback on performance. Participants are also required to give feedback to each other and to other teams. At the end of each day, time is reserved for participants to reflect on what they have learned and to identify areas for development. Based on the success of this pilot, the university is running four programmes in 2010 with 200 students. Participant evaluations so far have revealed that engaging in the programme has enabled students to really understand themselves and their strengths, and given them confidence to apply those strengths in future academic work and employment, which does not appear to have been adequately developed previously, elsewhere in the curriculum. The programme is explicit in consolidating learning over the two days, and previous learning outside the curriculum, enabling students to recognise and explain their strengths with more confidence and self-knowledge. The only problems with this course are that it is optional, outside the curriculum, and currently only available for 200 students a year.

'Confident Futures' at Napier University
Confident Futures (see http://www.napier.ac.uk/confidentfutures) comprises a menu of centrally provided workshops that include Knowing yourself and others, Manage yourself, Manage your time, Influencing others, Assertiveness, Networking, and Dealing with setbacks. The university claims that this is an innovative programme of personal development designed to enable students to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development, enhance their approach to learning, engage more deeply with their programme, and relate these to their career and future aspirations. The programme is designed to: Enhance students' ability to succeed, by helping them to develop their self-management skills and attitudes in order to be more successful in their academic studies; and increase their competitive edge with employers. Although not compulsory, or directly assessed, module leaders can select appropriate workshops (customised if they want) to be delivered as part of the curriculum of their course. The total number of attendees at these workshops is now over one thousand students a year, and apparently a number of module leaders have reported statistically improved

student performance in assignments, which they believe is a direct result of these workshops (Westwood, 2011, personal communication).

'World of Work' initiative ('WoW®') at Liverpool John Moores
The WoW® programme claims to be 'a model of higher education', rather than something 'bolted-on'. Its stated aim is "*to ensure that every student is equipped with the skills they need to stand out from the crowd and successfully engage in the world of work*" (http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/WoW). Eight graduate skills have been selected, in consultation with employer partners, and are being taught, practised and assessed, with the support of Faculty-based Skills Support Officers, as part of every undergraduate degree programme, and all programmes have an element of work related learning. WoW® also includes conventional careers advice and guidance with a "Ready for Work" programme - workshops and training in a purpose built training and development facility called the Graduate Development Centre. All students can gain the WoW® skills certificate, validated by employers, which asks students to reflect and attend workshops to complete three written statements on self-awareness, organisational awareness and making things happen (project management). These statements are assessed using criteria agreed with employers. The programme is a labour market matching model designed, developed and delivered with employer partners. The WoW® skills certificate is not part of the university modular framework and the certificate does not bestow academic credit as such. It is assessed against criteria developed by industry and the process ends with a 1:1 interview with an employer who decides whether the student has demonstrated evidence of being employable. Currently 900 students convert their voluntary registration on the WoW® skills certificate module into completing one or more parts of the certificate, and from 2012 the WoW® skills certificate will be integrated into every course programme.

'*Life-wide Learning' at the University of Surrey*
Surrey has a history of 40 years of work-based training and describes all their courses as delivering "professional training". All programmes, in all disciplines, provide opportunities for learners to develop their professional capabilities, either through year long work placements or a curriculum that integrates theory and practice throughout the period of study. Fifty percent of students choose to undertake the one year industrial placement, irrespective of discipline, and in addition the university also offers the Life-wide Learning Award (see http://sceptre2.drupalgardens.com). This comprises a portfolio that describes learning and personal development gained from at least 150 hours of extra curricular experiences.

Centre for Career Management Skills (CCMS) at the University of Reading
The University has included sessions on career management skills in all undergraduate programmes since 2002, helping students prepare for transitions to work or study after graduation. The University claims that CCMS (see http://www.reading.ac.uk/ccms/about/ccms-about.aspx) is building on the University's experience and expertise in this field to promote development and debate in careers education at Reading and across the Higher Education sector.

Of course these five brief case-study descriptions can only offer details of curricula changes that have been made. They do not capture what, if anything, the institutions have done to address another major problem – the potential lack of personal literacy in

the staff who are being asked to 'deliver' these programmes, and the fact that they themselves may not be particularly critically self-aware.

Personal Development Planning and the development of 'personal literacy'

In the UK, in addition to the case-study examples above, in many ways, Personal Development Planning (PDP) would already seem to offer, at least in theory, a way of ensuring, within the curriculum, the necessary level of critical personal reflection for all students and to be a logical place for students to integrate, and make explicit, what they have learnt. *"Effective PDP improves the capacity of individuals to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning and to understand what and how they learn. PDP helps learners articulate their learning and the achievements and outcomes of HE more explicitly, and supports the concept that learning is a lifelong and life-wide activity"* (QAA, 2009, p. 2). And as advocates of PDP have long argued, "*if PDP is implemented in ways that learners find engaging, and can be related to real world experiences, it offers the promise of enabling them to develop and practice capabilities that are important to being an effective self-regulating professional."* (Jackson, 2010, p. 1)

However, in practice, we know that embedding PDP in the curriculum has been fraught with difficulties, with academics failing to see its relevance to 'their' curriculum and feeling that it is being 'shoe-horned' in (Johnson, 2010). There are also legitimate questions about who is competent to advise and support students in their use of PDP. And for that reason, in many institutions, PDP has been seen as something of an optional add-on, left largely outside the curriculum, and often based on student engagement with a piece of software (although some can be quite imaginative and engaging, e.g. see www.arts.ac.uk/ppd). Johnson (Ibid), in discussing this problem, questions *"if Personal Development Planning can fit easily into the academic curriculum or whether it resides more comfortable within the employability agenda?"* But, as we have argued through this paper, we believe this is the wrong question based on a false dichotomy. Instead, we need to recognise and build on the similarities between the aims of academic learning and the employability agenda.

And "*the strength of PDP is that it is a method of creating knowledge about self*" (Jackson, 2010 p. 5). Perhaps through the arguments for the importance of personal literacy offered above, both for employability and for learning, we can revisit (and possibly even rename) PDP, and its focus, and how it might be structured in the curriculum.

Certainly at Oxford Brookes University, our suggested 'starter for ten' as to how this might best be done would be as a long, thin module running over the length of the undergraduate programme. This module could possibly borrow and adapt the best elements of some of the various institutional case-studies above, and some of the best good practice from existing PDP schemes, and it should be focussed very much on 'the self' and a combination of employability and reflection on what has been learnt academically – in (our) other words, the development of 'personal literacy'.

References

Alworth, J. (2009). *The quandary for the GOP*, [Web log post]. Retrieved 3rd May, 2010 from http://hoglow.blogspot.com/

Beloff, H. (1992). Mother, father and me: our IQ. *The Psychologist*, *5*, 309–311.

Bennett, M. (1996). Men's and women's self-estimates of intelligence. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *136*, 411–412.

Beyer, S., & Bowden, E. M. (1997). Gender differences in self-perceptions: Convergent evidence from three measures of accuracy and bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *23*, 157-172.

Black, J (2010). The issue is not numbers of graduates, but their skills. *Education Guardian*, Tuesday 13th July, 2010, p. 6. Retrieved from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/jul/13/graduate-jobs-skills

Boud, D.J. (2007). Reframing assessment as if learning were important. In Boud, D. & Falchikov, N. (Eds.), *Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education*, pp. 14-25. London: Routledge.

Bowden, J., Hart, B., King, B., Trigwell, K. & Watts, O. (2000). *Generic capabilities of ATN university graduates* (Report). Retrieved 10th May, 2010 from: www.clt.uts.edu.au/ATN.grad.cap.project.index.html

Bryant, R. (2005). But I have no skills. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 18th, 2005. Retrieved 26th April, 2010 from: http://chronicle.com/article/But-I-Have-No-Skills-/44924

Ehrlinger, J., & Dunning, D. (2003). How chronic self-views I\influence (and potentially mislead) estimates of performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (American Psychological Association) *84* (1), 5–17.

Fearn, H. (2009). More things in heaven and earth, Horatio. *Times Higher Education*, 1st January 2009. Retrieved 21st March, 2011 from: http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=404855

Harvey, L. (2003). *Transitions from higher education to work*. A briefing paper prepared by Lee Harvey (Centre for Research and Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University), with advice from ESECT and LTSN Generic Centre colleagues. Retrieved 26th April 2010 from: http://www.palatine.ac.uk/files/emp/1236.pdf

Jackson, N. (2010). Chapter A6 - Learning to be a self-regulating professional: the role of personal developing planning (PDP). In *Learning to be professional through a Higher Education e-book*. Retrieved 1st February 2011 from: http://learningtobeprofessional.pbworks.com/f/CHAPTER+A6+Learning+to+be+a+Self-Regulating+Professional+-++the+role+of+PDP.pdf

Jackson, P. (2011). In Shepherd, J., Students could boost marks by showing 'corporate skills', *The Guardian*, 3rd January 2011.

Johnson, T. (2010). PDP and employability: leaving the academic agenda behind? *ESCalate News*, Spring 2010. Retrieved 23rd April, 2010 from: http://escalate.ac.uk/6853

Keeling, R.P. (Ed) (2004). Learning reconsidered: a campus-wide focus on the student experience. Washington, D.C.: NASPA & ACPA

Kember, D., Lam, B.H., Yan, L., Yum, J.C.K., & Liu, S.B. (Eds.) (1997). *Case studies of improving teaching and learning from the action learning project.* Hong Kong: Action Learning Project

Kruger, J. & Dunning, D. (1999). Unskilled and unaware of it: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to self-inflated self-assessments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 77* (6), 1121–34.

Lieberman, D. A. & Remedios, R. (2007). Do Undergraduates' Motives for Studying Change as they Progress through their Degrees? *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *77* (2), 379 - 395.

Newstead, S. (2002). Examining the examiners: why are we so bad at assessing students? *Psychology Learning and Teaching*, *2* (2), 70-75

Nonaka, I. (1991). The knowledge creating company. *The Harvard Business Review*, November –December, 1996, p.104.

O'Donovan, B., Price, M. & Rust, C. (2004). Know what I mean? Enhancing student understanding of assessment standards and criteria. *Teaching in Higher Education, 9*, (3), 145-158.

Polanyi, M. (1998). The tacit dimension. In Prusak, L. (Ed.) *Knowledge in organizations*. Boston, MA: Butterworth Heineman

Price, M., Carroll, J., O'Donovan, B. & Rust, C. (2010). If I was going there I wouldn't start from here: a critical commentary on current assessment practices. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.* First published on 20 April, 2010 (iFirst). DOI:10.1080/02602930903512883

Richardson, J.T.E. (2000). *Researching student learning: approaches to studying in campus-based and distance education.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Rust, C. (2000). Opinion piece: A possible student-centred assessment solution to some of the current problems of modular degree programmes". *Active Learning in higher education,* Vol.1, No 2, December, pp. 126-131.

Schwartz, D. L., Bransford, J. D. & Sears, D. (2005). Efficiency and innovation in transfer. In Mestre, J. (Ed.), *Transfer of learning from a modern multidisciplinary Perspective,* pp. 1-51. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2009). *Personal development planning: guidance for institutional policy and practice in higher education*. [Report]. Retrieved on 1st February, 2011 from: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/progressFiles/guidelines/PDP/PDPguide.pdf

Tomlinson, Michael (2008). The degree is not enough: students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *29*, (1), 49 -61.

Watkins, D., & Hattie, J. (1985). A longitudinal study of the approaches to learning of Australian tertiary students. *Human Learning*, *4*, 127-41

Yorke, M. (2010). Employability: aligning the message, the medium and academic values *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability, 1(*1). Retrieved 5th May, 2010 from: http://jtlge.curtin.edu.au/index.php/jtlge/search/authors

Zhang, L. F. & Watkins, D. (2001) Cognitive development and student approaches to learning: an investigation of Perry's theory with Chinese and US university students. *Higher Education*, *41*, 236-261.