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Reid, James

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Towards a conceptual framework for understanding power and responsibility in employability

University of Huddersfield

Developed from an INDIVIDUAL TEACHING DEVELOPMENT GRANT
'Developing a variety of approaches to work placement to enhance knowledge and skills for employability'.

Employability:

A mediating institutional technology focussed on knowledge and skills

OR

An empowering, moral and ethical practice?

-- 0 --

Who decides whose responsibilities in relation to who?

-- 0 --

What are the temporal relations?

-- 0 --

How and by whom are employability 'needs' identified?

-- 0 --

Of what do you care in your employability work and how do you take care of it?

A Process for Employability based on Tronto's (1993) Caring Process

4 Phases of Employability	5 Elements of Employability	5 Aspects of Employability
Caring About Employability **Noting and making an assessment of an employability need. If a need isn't recognised employability cannot occur.**	**Attentiveness** Caring about employability requires a person to be attentive to the needs of others AND one's own power and role in the employability project.	**Conflict** Who defines employability needs and how do those who promote and enable employability balance their own needs with those of students who 'receive' employability?
Taking Care of employability **Tutors, mentors, employability organisers and others involved in organizing employability assume a moral, legal and contractual responsibility as an aspect of their work.**	**Responsibility or 'Privileged irresponsibility'** (Tronto 1993, 146) However there are some who are removed from direct, frontline work who exercise power and control in the spheres of attentiveness and responsibility from a distance.	**Particularity and Universality** Employability is a universal aspect of university experience in the UK, yet in its operation there are cultural, gender, class and other social differences.
Enabling Employability **Means coming into contact with students. Simply "caring about" and "taking care of" can be achieved through a financial settlement. Not to move beyond these two phases and to be involved in enabling employability is to potentially 'other' and a consequence of the powerful engaging in 'privileged irresponsibility' (Tronto 1993, 20).**	**Competence** Competence in this regard means both quality practice and a reflexive practice – for example, thinking about how some avoid taking a 'hands on' role in enabling employability.	**Resources** Immanently political and involving conflict, prioritization and cultural, organizational, institutional and other social mores.
Receiving Employability **The student is open to the services and support offered. However this should also include the participation of the end user, e.g., children.**	**Responsiveness** (of the student) This involves understanding employability needs from the standpoint of the students (and end user).	**Standard** How and by whom are outcomes measured and quality set? Integrity is achieved if the employability process is integrated in light of conflict, resource issues and competence.
	Integrity Is achieved when the process fits together as a whole.	**Practice** Employability is not just cerebral or a matter of ideology or individual moral debate; it is work.

This is a representation of what is a complex web of factors identified by Tronto. For example, for the ease of illustration the five aspects of employability have been arranged to correspond with a particular phase or element, it should be noted that each aspect is relevant across the process and not specific to a particular phases or element.

Correspondence to:

James Reid
University of Huddersfield
School of Education and Professional Development
Queensgate
Huddersfield
HD1 3DH

j.reid@hud.ac.uk

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