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| Vodcast Transcript 02/04/14 |
| Keynote address 1: Impact: lots of questions, some answers  Ruth Lawton, Birmingham City University Learning and Teaching Fellow for Employability |
| Slide 1: Impact: lots of questions, some answers  Thank you very much. I have to say I have two ex-students here as well so I will be referring to them as I go along.  I want to back up something that Jane said about hosting events. You will see when I am talking about this that I convene a group called employability developers. We do meet sometimes although we haven’t met face-to-face for a long time but the thing with hosting is that people always think I have got to have something to say. No! The joy of hosting is that you get the people with things to say to come to your institution and you steal everything! You don’t have to have the answers. It is a way where you can gather people to ask questions and sort out answers. So definitely get engaged with the Higher Education Academy (HEA). So I’ve called this…I am sorry I am going to move about, is that alright…Impact, lots of questions, some answers.  Slide 2: Content  I have said it’s all about me but I also want this to be all about you. Very much tying with a lot of what Jane said. I want us to think about what does impact mean for us? What does it mean for you? Where is the state of your employability at the moment? What does success mean in terms of your students or whoever your stakeholders are?  So the big picture of measurements. I am only going to very briefly talk about that. What am I measuring? A couple of definitions and the lived experience of employability. What employability means to me and you and what does impact mean to me and you? Because what constitutes impact has changed hugely for me in the last three years. What am I doing and what is Birmingham City University doing? And that’s just a quick slide because of a workshop that we were at yesterday that was actually about the future of employability at our university so I’ve put something on about that.  Slide 3: Some people think that employability is about employment  So some people actually think that employability is actually all about employment. Particularly the Daily Mail but actually any of the newspapers and any of the employer organisations think that it’s very much about employment.  Slide 4: What am I trying to impact?  As far as I am concerned it’s not. It’s not just about employment. There is more to it than that. But I think that a lot of our stakeholders disagree with me and they would say no its about how good you are in doing that job and how it impacts upon me. Particularly if we are talking about patients.  Hello, I am sorry I have just spotted Lorraine…But actually students sometimes coming here definitely whoever is funding them or supporting them, along with the funding e.g. the government and so on. Vice Chancellors, our institutions are very much governed by employment statistics at the six month point when our students have graduated. Because there is a destination survey at that point. What our graduates are doing at that six month point is going to affect funding, it affects league tables, our reputation, recruitment and so on.  Slide 5: What is employability?  I have put up two definitions of employability. Or at least one is a definition of career management. Lorraine will, well one is from Lorraine, and she will give further definitions later on; which is why I have gone for a much more personal key note.  *‘Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose, secure and retain occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Dacre-Pool and Sewell, 2007, 2012)’.*  I put in ‘retain’ as Lorraine did a presentation for us a couple of years ago, June 2012, where she was saying retain is one of the things she would have liked to have added. So I am taking you in vain there Lorraine. But I think that’s really important. It’s not just about retaining this job but retaining the knowledge of how to get a job and how to move on and so on.  I really like the career adaptability definition… ‘*the capability of an individual to make a series of successful transitions where the labour market, organisation of work and underlying occupational and organisational knowledge bases may all be subject to considerable change’* (Bimrose *et al*, 2011).  I think that you could add into that and personal circumstances. Because if your partner moves to Falmouth for a job, there may not be a job in Falmouth for you. So personal circumstances may dictate that actually you have to think on your feet and make a change that you weren’t expecting to make outside of a particular profession for a while or whatever.  Our values change. I used to be a careers advisor. We would get graduates coming in sometimes five or ten years after graduating. There was a set of people who would come in and say I’ve been living this fantastic life, working, doing a lot of volunteer work, not earning a very lot of money, I am about to have a baby, I need to earn mega bucks, tell me what the job is that will enable me to do that. And conversely you would get people coming in and saying I have been out there, in that business machine, earning mega bucks for years, I am about to have a baby and suddenly I want my life to have more meaning.  What we want, our values and our understanding or work changes. We have to be able to manage those things in our lives.  Slide 6: Ruth’s definition (Monday this week)  So I came up with a definition. This is my profound definition as of Monday morning this week (30/03/14). So I can tell you know it will probably vary slightly.  *‘Students* (and again tying in with something Jane said) *being able to recognize, record, evidence, articulate, demonstrate and make best use of their (unique) skills, abilities and experiences, that make them competent and confident to deal with changes in their lives and the world around them, as those changes affect their working lives’.*  I think that’s an absolutely brilliant definition! It’s huge but actually I should have just said it’s all about being able to handle life and the slings and arrows. And the joys of life. I have been reading about somebody called Tony Ghaye, somebody who is a positive psychologist; GHAYE.  He talks about a strengths based model of reflection rather than this deficit model. So it shouldn’t just be about slings and arrows. It should also be about recognizing the achievements, the joys the passions that we feel. So not just looking at our feelings e.g. was I sad, but actually what gives me a real sexy buzz when it comes to work, not just Jonny Depp!  Slide 7: What is impact?  So what is impact? Is what I am doing having an impact? Is it intended, unintended things that I am doing that are having an impact? How would I know if I am having an impact? On whom am I having an impact? On which of my stakeholders am I having an impact?  I work with students, graduates, programme teams, individual lecturers, employers, sometimes with professional bodies, management of the university, and recipients of our graduates so in a sense I am having an impact or indirect effect upon patients.  How and why might I be having an impact? Which bits are having an impact? Can I actually narrow it down to say that’s the thing that’s having an impact or making a change?  Do students know that I am having an impact upon them? Which is an interesting thought, how would they know? Is it explicit? I talk about explicitness a lot when we are talking about embedding things in the curriculum. The danger in embedding something is that after a while we know that we are doing it to them but do they know that they are getting it from us?  Can I replicate? So Tony Ghaye’s model of reflection says find the good stuff and do more of it and see if you can replicate that. Can I replicate it once I find the bits?  Will what is working there work there? Can I improve on things? Can I make things even better assuming that I have found something that is working well? And what if there is no impact. Is there something happening outside? And this again is the networking at things like this and networking within our institutions. The feedback on the M Ed modules that I teach on the PG Cert every module, every time people talk about the joy of being able to work with people from across the university and have conversations. So however small our little network is having opportunities to sit and talk with someone and share with someone means you will find some inspiration. You will find a shortcut to something you want to do.  Slide 8: Big picture of impact  The big picture of impact, and I forgot to put a date on…I actually woke up at midnight thinking I didn’t put a date on pedagogy for employability; its 2006. The original pedagogy for employability was 2006. Our revised edition was 2012. The HEA summit on employability was in 2012. All of those were talking about and actually calling for us to look at what constitutes, or are we actually doing what we are setting out to do. Are we having any impact? Are we successful in all of the millions of pounds that we are putting into employability?  Finally with great joy a couple of weeks ago I saw that the QAA have announced commission to do some research into the impact of employability measures and so on. Which I think is going to be fantastic. I think it’s a poison chalice. Whoever gets that commission is a nightmare. That is going to be such hard going; what they are expecting for £5,000.00, £50,000.00 sorry. £5k forget it!  Slide 9: The ‘lived’ experience  The ‘lived’ experience of employability. Students and graduates, and I don’t know if this rings bells for you but for an awful lot of our nurses and teaches it seems to be those two in particular. *I want a good job down the road working with lovely people, 36 hours per week, no worries, secure, but not tied down.*  The messages that we are giving them are get experience, any experience; get a job, any job. Another message that we are giving them…I feel this quite a lot with some of our nursing students and actually in terms of any of the professional healthcare students and education is this fitness for practice question. So if you are not fit for practice are you therefore unemployable? I think there is a message to some of our students that this is case. One of my students last year did do some work on that producing a guide for staff on the message we could be giving out. So a slightly different slant on things.  Completion rates for newly qualified nurses. How many nurses are still in the profession three years on? So there are other things in terms of the lived experience that we need to be thinking about. That is employability as well as far as I am concerned. Those three years, that year on…how many drop out at a year?  For lecturers, Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) and government…*I want to do a good job teaching my subject, with time to stay in touch with practice and keep up-to-date. I want a good job down the road working with lovely people, 36 hours per week, no worries, secure, but not tied down.*  Is there really a difference in our messages? The destination of leavers from higher education (DLHE) survey that I mentioned earlier that happens at the six month point is a big lived experience of employability as far as we are concerned. Increasingly the targets to do with the number of our graduates who go into jobs, full stop and then the number of our graduates who are going into graduate level jobs.  League tables that lead to league tables. The Key Information Sets (KIS) data that includes salary data that comes from the DLHE survey. What employers want as well? So the ‘lived’ experience is that, that employer is looking for this, yet is that employer factoring in what they employer may want in the future or what do we think we might need in the future. Either in terms of the economy or in terms of the local economy, or indeed the national economy or the global economy.  Slide 10: My ‘lived’ experience.  My ‘lived’ experience of employability. I had part time jobs. I worked in a chippy and in a baker’s when I was at school/college/university. I had a disastrous first graduate job – I joined the police. I realized that volume and size wise I looked very suitable in the police but values and behaviours wise, completely not. I won’t talk about my drug habit – but you know!  They were not happy with me and I was not happy with them. So that was a big mismatch. The issue then was that I was in Skunthorpe and because I had a not very good or helpful encounter with the careers advisor at my university I had no idea what to do. I was away from home. I didn’t know what to do so that was a case of finding a job, any job!  I then by very good fortune went to work by near Chippenham and it had a careers service that had a shop front on Chippenham High Street. Their careers service saw adult clients which many didn’t at that time. I went in there, had careers advice and the second time I went I was asked if I had ever thought about doing this, No! But what a great way to find out about a good job. I wasn’t that interested in being a careers advisor but being a careers advisor meant that I might find a better job.  After that I trained and moved into Higher Education careers. I was promoted into career service management and then I moved into learning and teaching. That’s my lived experience of employability.  Since I’ve been at this university; I joined this university in 1991 I’m on my fourth profession really. I started as a careers advisor, became management, head of the careers service. I moved sideways into educational staff development and I now lecture. I do see those as two different things. I see this as a fourth profession. I have membership in a number of different professions. All of that, while moving…actually I did have an office on this site when I first started but really I have moved about five hundred yards in the last twenty years but four different professions; it’s interesting.  Slide 11: Your lived experience of employability  So what is your lived experience of employability? How much of your experience was a conscious choice? Do you know where you want to go next, is that a conscious choice? Or are you going to let it be a conscious choice?  I would like you to just take a minute to think about that question. I’ll tell you when the minute is up and then just have a very quick conversation with somebody next to you about whatever you want to share. About what came into your mind while you were thinking in that minute?  So that was your lived experience of employability. What I am trying to set up here is for you to be thinking about these things through the day today. I was so pleased when Jane was speaking about your own employability and so on as it reflects what I was doing.  Slide 12: How I have changed my definition of impact  How I have changed my definition of impact. My definition of impact used to be how many staff can I…once I moved into this particular role, as a careers advisor it was how many students I came into contact with, or graduates. When in moved into educational staff development or the work I am doing now with the M Ed modules it is how many staff I am having an impact on. How many people have I reached?  I used to be a complete tart about that! I still will be a complete tart! If somebody rings me up and says Ruth I want to talk about this, can you help with that or whatever then absolutely, that is part of my job but it’s also because I very much love doing that. But it was very much about…we had at one point nine different sites and I at one point would be quite happy to just go and sit in a foyer for an hour at lunchtime and do drop in’s. Or I would run morning workshops, afternoon workshops, evening workshops, lunchtime workshops. I would run them for whole days, half days, hour long…whatever I had to do to, to try and be where academic staff were. We did several things with students as well and I would do that. Anything being better than nothing. And chocolate biscuits totally bribe people, totally works!  But now my definition is much more qualitative. I think the whole thing is about having time. Giving people time and in fact not to talk to me, not for me to tell them but giving people time for them to work it out for themselves. Having a sort of scaffold and a structure that people can work in where I might be chucking in ideas or giving them opportunities to sit around a table, share with other people and find out that they in the art and design faculty are doing what you want to do and how have they done that. Was that working and can you adapt that for your practice?  Now the carrot that I have for this is assessment. So the reason why I get to give people huge amounts of time and an incentive to really think about their practice is because I give them credit for it. It is assessed explicitly and I believe this, I believe it should be embedded in the curriculum otherwise we are not valuing it. So I am living that dream! I am forcing or have forced two of the people in this room to do this, to go through this!  Slide 13: EEYP  The particular course I am thinking about there we have got employability as a core day now on the PG Cert that is a whole day that is about employability in terms of embedding in into the curriculum in learning and teaching. There is an optional day on career management, on your own career management. But the course I am thinking about is an M Ed module, Embedding Employability in Your Practice (EEYP). It is about people thinking about what they do, reviewing that and if it is possible to improve on it to make it more effective more efficient both for you and for your students or for your clients and/or stakeholders.  So giving my students…so my students are lecturers. They come from student support, they come from the student union, and they come from NHS practice. So they come from right across my university and beyond and indeed from other universities.  So what I am giving them is time. Rehearsal time, practice time. Feedback from stakeholders, from me, from their peers in particular peer groups. And the opportunity to drop clangers without any sort of penalty because what I am looking at is their reflection. So clangers are brilliant. Making mistakes is brilliant for reflection. And that is what I am assessing, their reflection on their experiences of the module.  Slide 14: EEYP aims  Its aims. Actually I am not going to say too much about this. I have brought some stuff about this if anyone wants to see what I am doing.  Slide 15: Its learning outcomes  Its learning outcomes. Critically review an area of academic or professional provision of your choice to enhance the employability of your students/stakeholders. Create a highly developed informed action plan to demonstrate continual professional development and augment your employability profile. So one of the things that you have to do if you are a student on the module is think about your own employability. And make explicit and effective use of feedback.  Slide 16: Role models  What I am trying to do or what I have realized is that my way of having impact is actually about trying to generate, with my own examples, sometimes poor but, a league of super fighters, a league of super heroes who are role models for employability.  Again thinking about your lived experience of employability and your lived experience of impact and influence think about what is your attitude to student employability? What are your feelings about your responsibility for it – if any? What about you as a role model for employability? When was the last time you updated your CV? Do you have a CV? It may not be a CV, it might be you have an e-portfolio, a linked-in profile or something like that. An equivalent of your CV where you are keeping an eye on the things that you do. It is so easy to not put things like this on your CV. To forget what we think of as everyday things. We don’t go back through our diaries and think oh good grief I did that! The reason I can say this to you is because I did an interview for Kerang radio and when I got back to my desk I popped in to see my boss and said oh yes it was OK and she said don’t forget to put it on your CV. I had this du moment…I had done interviews with Kerang before, I had been on Midlands today, I had been on an ITV program at 04:30 in the morning, but it doesn’t matter it was television! I had done Guardian live chats yet these things were not on my CV. I call it my ‘dump’ CV. It’s my portfolio of things that I do so that I can select from when needed for bids. It’s not like I have used a CV for jobs. You have to use your CV now for bidding for things or for things like going for HEA fellow or something like that. You are putting those things together for that, it’s not necessarily for applying out. So I now have a heading on my CV called media experience. Really it should say media star especially after today! So reflect on those questions and talk to the people around you about some of those things. Are you a role model for employability? And in what way? Or how could you be? Go…  Slide 17: EEYP impact from assessment and more  So how do I know I am having an impact? Well the most glorious thing is today. I don’t know whether it’s through a direct result of what Lisa did with the module that she undertook with me but it was part of what has led to today. So that is a fantastic impact as far as I am concerned. It’s about this thing of giving people the carrot of assessment. The incentive of assessment but actually the time of three or four months to develop their ideas.  So unfit for practice is not unemployable. This is something else that somebody has done as a result of having that time and space, producing some guidance for staff.  Hospital HR investigation into dropout rates of newly qualified nurses. New modules validated and delivered as a result of this. Old modules that have been tweaked and gone through minor modifications in terms of assessment building in a bit of reflection or in terms of changing the method of assessment, whatever it might be.  Word of mouth recruitment onto the EEYP module. So there are people coming because somebody else got something from it and somebody else wants the time to look at their practice and what they are doing and this is their way of getting that time.  I see, read and hear the difference. That having that time has made to people. I believe that even making people go through,…making people sounds bad doesn’t it…making people go through the career management day, the windmills day where you are thinking about your employability what you are doing. I flipped the skills framework onto my students that our students are using but I make staff think about the skills that they have. Even just doing those things, experiencing those things, thinking about how difficult some of those things are to deal with, to address. I think that I am creating role models. When you understand how long it takes to update a CV you are far more likely to nag your students to do it in the first year rather than leave it until now, in the final year.  Slide 18: BCU future of employability  Hot off the press. This meeting yesterday (01/04/14) this review of employment, employability and enterprise strategy development and implementation. That’s been going on for about the last four months. They came up with 32 recommendations grouped into six priority recommendations. Culture, accountability and responsibility, student offer and engagement, work related learning experience, innovation and targeting. I have pulled out the culture one because I think this is exactly what I want. All staff throughout BCU have clear line of sight about expectations of how their roles contribute to Partners for Success.  Partners for Success is our partnerships, students, staff and employability is huge in Partners for Success. Because to me, we employ a lot of students via a scheme called OpportUNIty which whoever has been doing this review called a flagship offering that we have. We employ lots of students on campus. We will employ students as gardeners. So the head gardener needs to understand that the feedback he gives that student could impact on that student’s employability. It is every single one of our staff that I think have a role to play in this. So its things like that I am thinking about.  Slide 19: Embedding employability into your practice  So my final one minute… and actually I have done spectacularly on my timing… is you thinking about your employability and your professional practice. Is there somewhere in your professional practice or your role where you think you could make a change? As I said I want you thinking about these questions throughout the day but we do want you to think about this, starting now. Is there somewhere in your professional practice or your role where you think you could make a change that would have some sort of impact on your students or your stakeholders employability?  I hope that hasn’t been to sombre note to end on. Momentarily I was a bit scared then when you were all so quite. But that’s it from me, nicely timed with the arrival of refreshments. I hope that what I have done and I didn’t say I was going to give you all of the answers but probably what you do have is some questions to think about throughout the day. Hopefully the day will raise lots more and some answers. Not just a formal one but other things that people come up with that you can be using in your practice. Whether that’s your personal practice in terms of where am I going, is this a conscious choice, how passionate am I about the things that I am doing, where is the passion in your life? Find that passion and do more of it! Not just Jonny Depp but at work!  Also what can you do in terms of your work with other people? Your team-mates, your colleagues, all of your stakeholders, your graduates, your students, your patients, whoever your stakeholders may be. Your family. Thank you very much, happy day. |