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Demonstrating quality in HE

What's being done about complex outcomes?

Overview



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- ▶ Complex learning
- ▶ Assessing complex learning
- ▶ ESECT and its work
- ▶ Demonstrating quality

Employability as complex learning



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- ▶ Employability \neq employment

See handout

Complex learning



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- ▶ The achievements employers value are not:
 - ▶ attributable to any one source
 - ▶ certain to happen
 - ▶ precisely definable
 - ▶ quick to grow

- ▶ These are *complex* achievements

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Assessment as measurement



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- ▶ Judgement based on measurement
 - ▶ Measurement theory

Assessment as legal reasoning



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- ▶ Judgement on the weight of evidence

Assessment as connoisseurship



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- ▶ Aesthetic judgement

Judging complex learning



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- ▶ The problem:
 - ▶ Measure and mislead
 - ▶ Judge the weight of evidence — expensive, difficult to generalise, hard to convey simply
 - ▶ Rely on expert appraisals — difficult to generalise, hard to convey simply, issues with public trust

Employability: a false measure



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- ▶ Employment rates
 - ▶ State of the economy
 - ▶ Systemic disadvantage in the labour market

- ▶ An alternative approach to demonstrating quality: focus on educational processes

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From outcomes to processes



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- ▶ Certain teaching and learning processes make it more likely that groups of learners will show the achievements that employers value
- ▶ Apply these process standards *to the curriculum*
- ▶ Judge the degree to which those standards are embedded in a curriculum
- ▶ Demonstrate the quality of curriculum processes

Is this feasible?



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- ▶ Enhancing student employability co-ordination team (ESECT)

- ▶ Draws on “Skills *plus*” project.
 - ▶ 17 departments in 4 UK universities
 - ▶ Entitlements and “tuning”

- ▶ Knight, P. T. and Yorke, M. (2004) *Learning, Curriculum and Employability*. London: Routledge/Falmer

ESECT resources for departments



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- ▶ “Learning and Employability” guides — <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/1433.htm>
- ▶ Briefings — <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/1434.htm>
- ▶ Tools — <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/1440.htm>

Impact in the UK



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- ▶ Scotland
- ▶ England
 - ▶ Learning and teaching strategies
 - ▶ Continuing theme of HE Academy
- ▶ Wales

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Demonstrating quality



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- ▶ Through program quality
- ▶ Through student portfolios and claims to achievement
- ▶ Through employer engagement with universities

Contact



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