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6-2017

Co-op Research Matters

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Rempel, Matthew, "Co-op Research Matters" (2017). *Publications and Scholarship*. 2.
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Article #2

Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context (2017)

Author(s)

Clarke, M.

Journal

Studies in Higher Education, 1-15

Source

[Taylor & Francis Online](#)
(PDF)

Purpose: To develop a framework to help explore and explain the concept of graduate employability.

Methodology: A literature review within graduate employability research was conducted and previous research was integrated in order to create the framework.

Key Findings: Human capital such as skills, social capital such as social class, individual behaviours like career-building skills, and individual attributes like adaptability, all contribute to perceived employability and this, along with labour market needs, contribute to actual graduate employability.

Practitioner's Thoughts by Matthew Rempel (Associate Dean, Career Education and Co-curricular Learning, Sheridan College)

Q: What insights did you gain from reading this article that were useful to you?

A: This model reminds us that the term "employability" is very complex and can be somewhat elusive. We hear this term used in the media, by government, employers, students, parents, and most of us probably use it daily as part of our profession. Some think our graduates will be employable if they develop soft skills or participate in work-integrated learning. While this may be true to a certain degree, Clarke's model should inspire us to consider all the influencers on graduate employability holistically and challenge us to look at higher education programming, including student services, for how we educate, support, and develop our students.

Q: Did this model raise questions for you that require further research or consideration?

A: The role of employers and individual students need to be included in this discussion. How can education and industry come together to promote, maintain, and support the employability of tomorrow's labour force? How can we stress the importance of career self-management upon our students? Lastly, how might we measure graduate employability beyond simply tracking graduate employment rates?

UPDATES

Research Matters will be taking a break for July and August. Stay tuned for our next issue in September 2017!

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

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If you have suggestions for articles or would like to contribute to the practitioner viewpoint on future issues, we'd love to hear from you at watcace@uwaterloo.ca.

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