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Employability & Competences

innovative curricula
for new professions

International Conference
University of Florence

Final Event of the Project PRIN2012LAFR3N

Employability and Transitions

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Research started in March 2014

Longitudinal research: June 2014-November 2016



The research context (1)

- The problem of employability and employment of young Italian graduates.
- The employment ratio rose from 8% in 2011 to 12,7% in 2014. A trend reversal occurred in the OCSE Area.
- In the age group 25-34 there is a low University graduate rate: 24% in Italy compared to 41% in the OCSE area. We rank at the bottom with Romania and Turkey. In 2014 the population to graduate ration was the same in Italy and Czech Republic, now Czech Republic is at 29,9% and Italy at 24,2%.
- Dropout rate is 42% in Italy VS 31% in the OCSE area.



The research context (1)

- The trend of Italian graduates who finish their master degree studies in time (regular students) improved between students enrolled in a.y. 2007/08 (34,9%) and those in a.y. 2012/13 and 2013/14 (around 44,5%).
- The Degree remains a valuable investment and a significant advantage in the job market, compared to employment rate of young high school graduates (PIAAC).

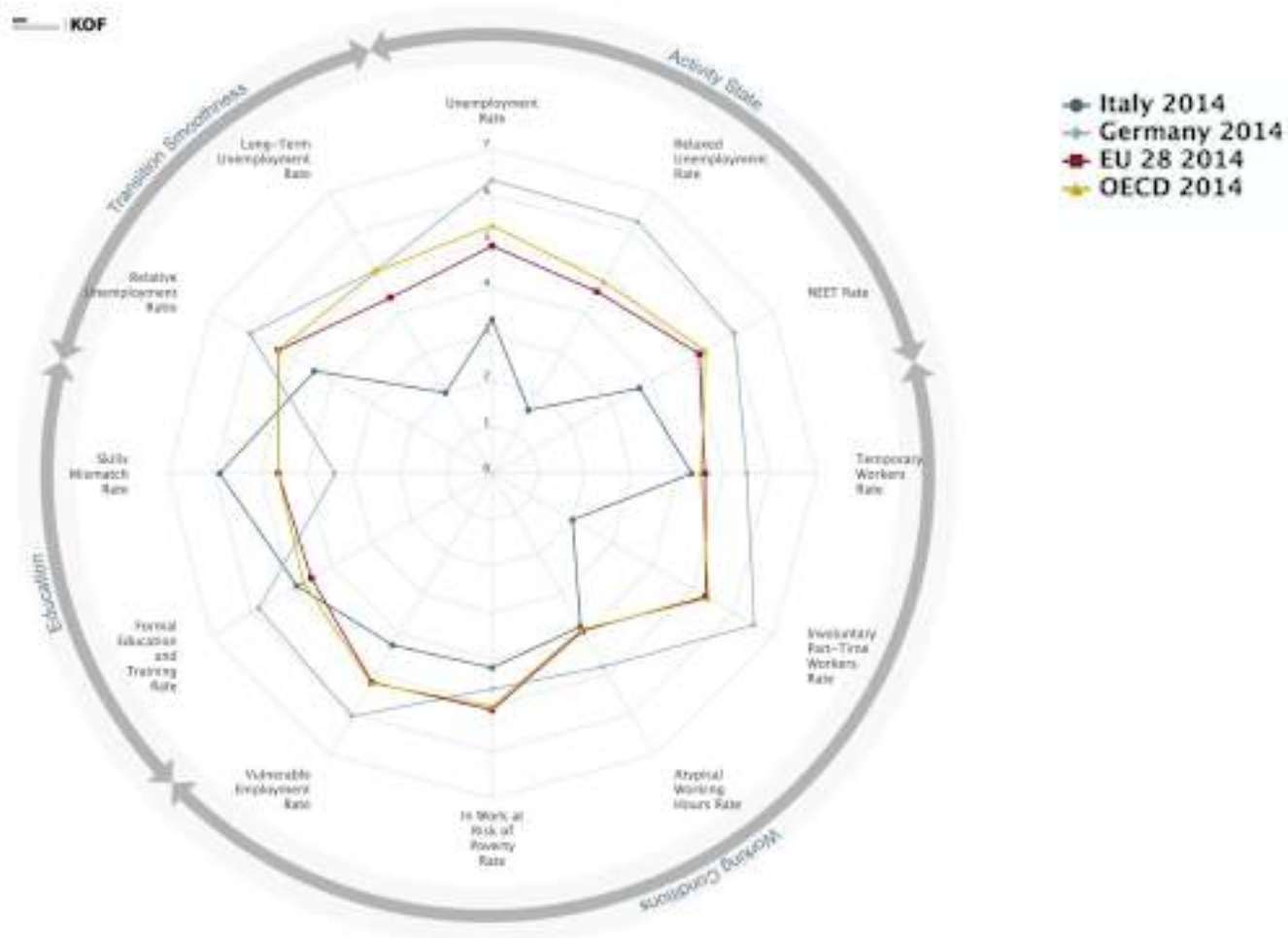


The research context (2)

- At the end of the Degree course, 54% of first level graduates intend continue studying. 3 years after graduation 66% has found a job; among second-level graduates this share is 70%.
- The acquisition of professional competence and career development are the most important element in the job search. After that long-term stability.
- The coherence of the work with the outgoing profile is important for 46,9% of graduates (Almalaurea, 2015). → Absence of correspondence between aspirations and skills with existing labour market opportunities.
- The subject group directed to a plurality of opportunities are engineering and social-political studies.



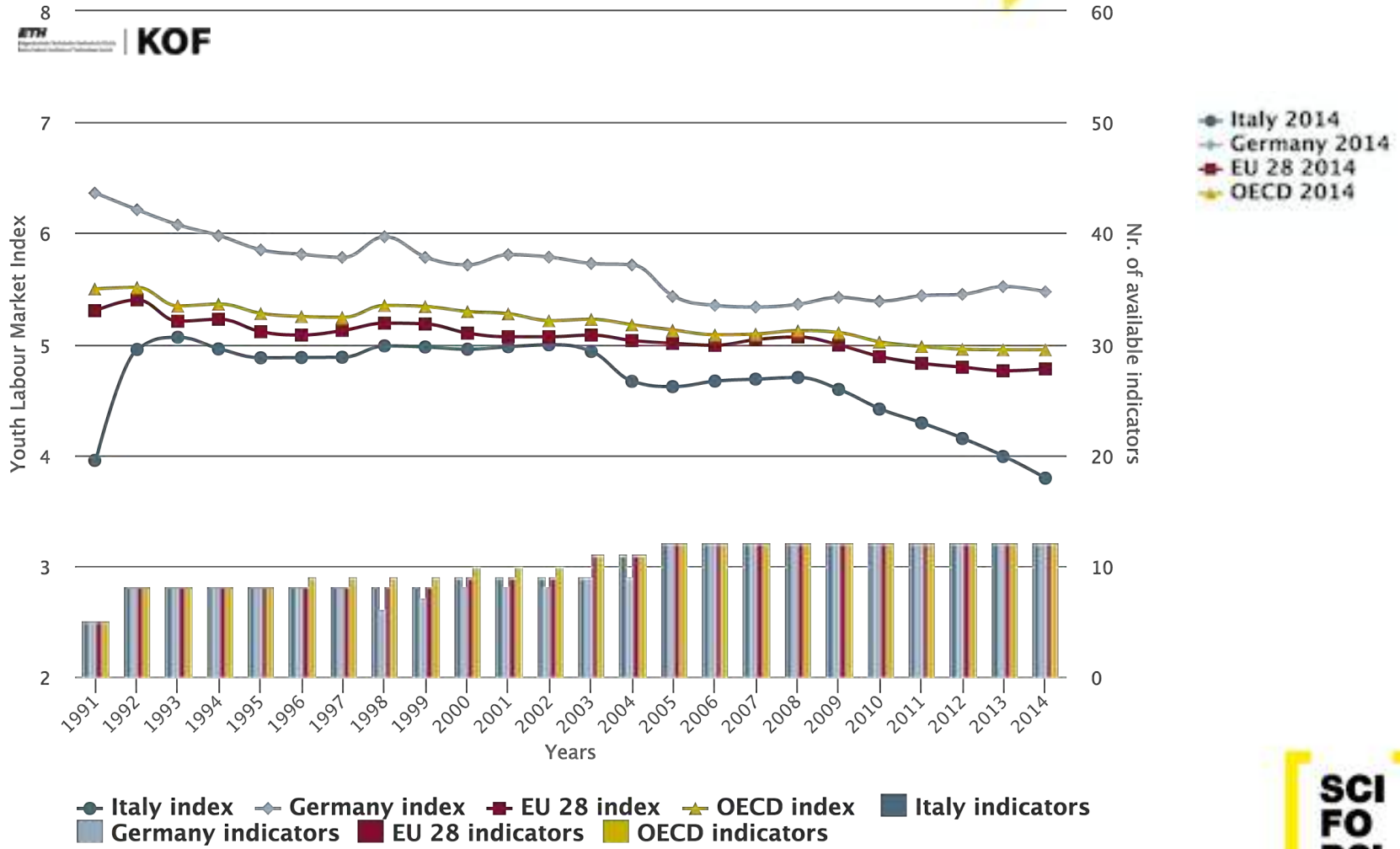
The research context (3)



Spiderweb Chart of Schores from KOF Youth Labour Market Index (KOF YLMI) (Renold, Bolli, Egg, Pusterla, 2014)



The research context (4)



Spiderweb Chart of Schores from KOF Youth Labour Market Index (KOF YLMI) (Renold, Bolli, Egg, Pusterla, 2014)





The research question @UNIFI

Micro: The graduate perspective

How do young people approach the work transition?

Meso: The Curricular approach

Are curriculum and core skills developed in the Master Degree course in Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences (LM-57 & LM-85) are adequate for the development of graduate employability?

Macro: The institutional perspective

The University role in the construction of *employability*



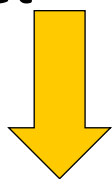
Research actions

- Understand the needs of the labour market in the field of Social Economy (Human Services, Cooperatives of Services, Training Agencies).
- Analyze the world of education and care professions.
- Assess the situation of job-search following the Degree LM-57 & LM-85.
- Draw up an inventory of the skills required by the labour market for the Professional Profiles for the Educational Sector and the Social Economy: new professionals/ entrepreneurs/ experts.

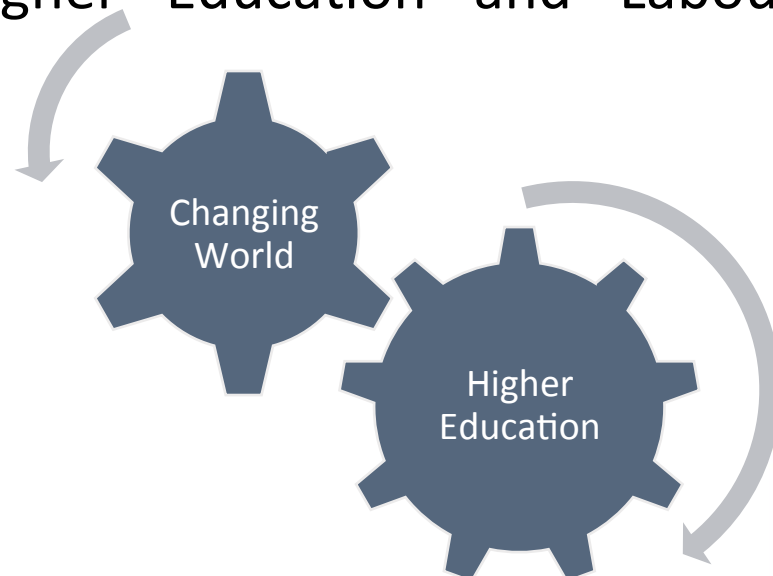
Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (1)

→ The term of **Employability**

- UK: Robbins Report (1963)
- Relationship between Higher Education and Labour Market



HIGHER EDUCATION IN A
CHANGING WORLD





Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (1)

→ The definitions of **Employability**

1. **Employment-Centered**

«a combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or enter employment, to stay in employment and to progress during their career» (Education and Training 2020)

2. **Competence-Centered**

«a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations» (Yorke, 2006)

DIFFERENCES:

- In the first definition the choice about the professional career is postponed after the completion of the higher education studies.
- In the second definition, there is the integration between young adults' equipment and external factors (Higher Education system, labour market, social norms, economic situation)

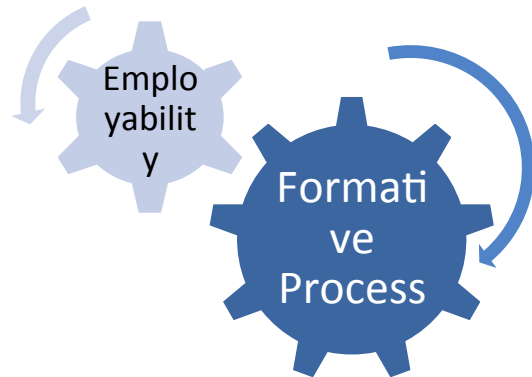


Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (1)

→ The definitions of **Employability**

Employability arises as a specific aspect of the concept of **Formation** (Italian understanding of *Bildung*) (Yorke and Knight, 2006)

«Employability of a *graduate* is the propensity of the graduate to exhibit *attributes* that employers anticipate will be *necessary* for the *future* effective functioning of their organisation» (Harvey, 1999, p. 4).

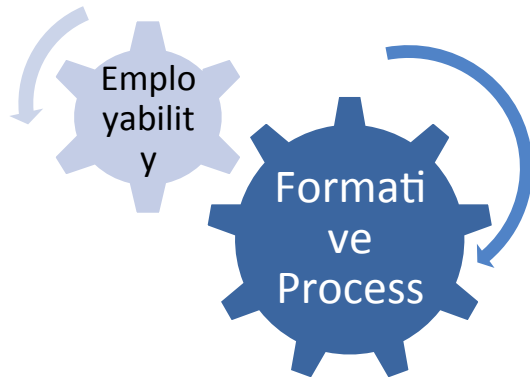




Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (1)

→ The definitions of **Employability**

«employability raises fundamental questions about the purpose and structure of higher education. Employability is not about training or providing add-on skills to gain employment. On the contrary, employability is about how higher education develops critical, reflective, empowered learners. Despite appearances to the contrary, the real challenge is not how to accommodate employability but how to shift the traditional balance of power from the education provider to those participating in the learning experience (Harvey, 1999, p. 13).



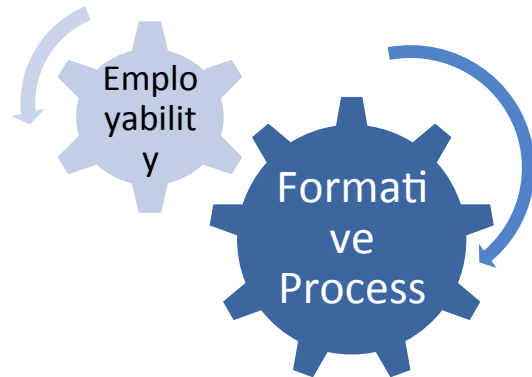


Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (1)

→ The definitions of **Employability**

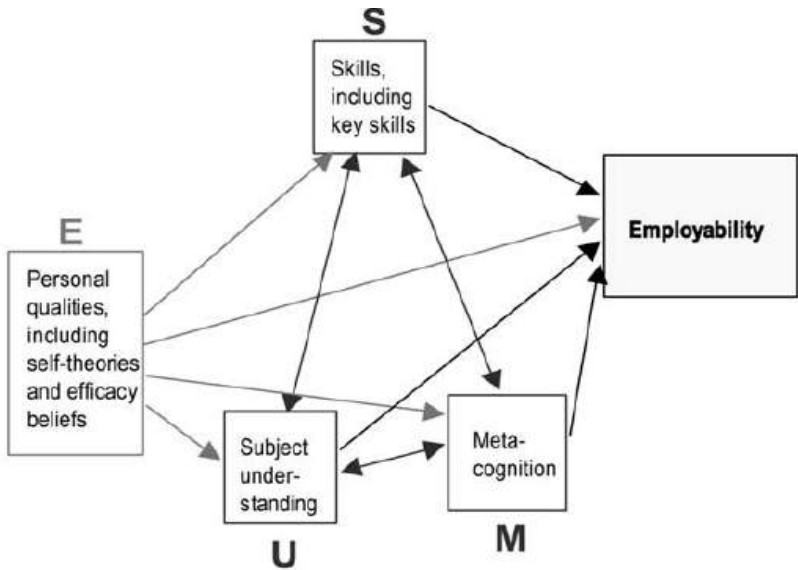
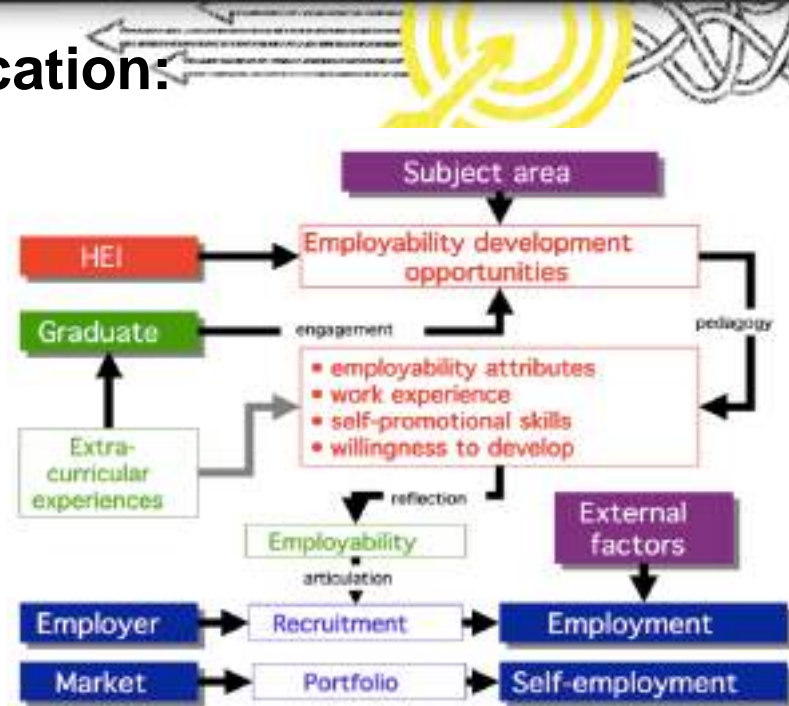
«a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy» (Yorke e Knight, 2005, p. 3).

The Problem of Learning and Teaching, the Problem of a Pedagogical Vision of the Employability (Harvey, 1999).



Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (2)

Graduate Employability Model (Harvey, 2003)

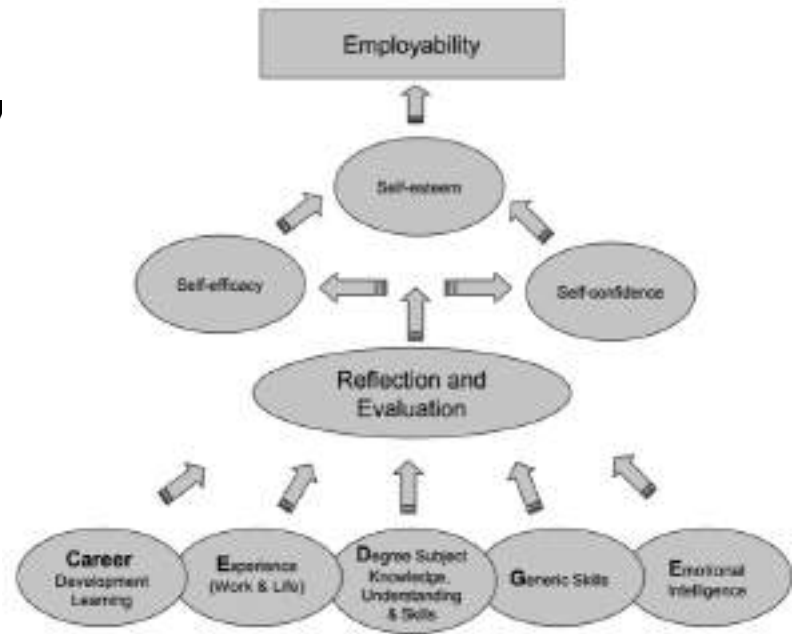


The USEM Model (Yorke, Knight, 2006)

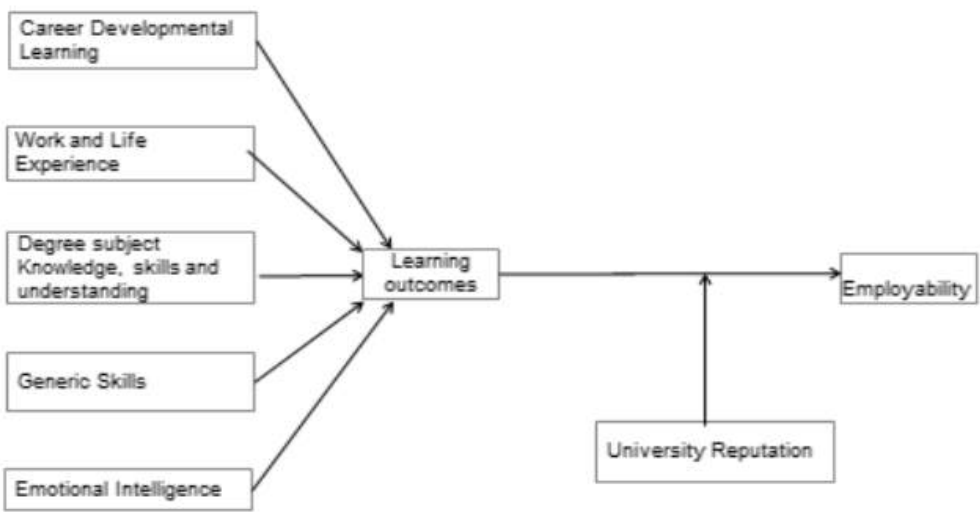


Employability in the Higher Education: Definitions and Models (2)

The CareerEDGE Model (Dacre Pool, Sewell, 2007)



The Employability Model (Sumanasiri, Khatib, Jadibi, 2015)



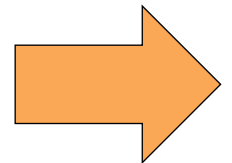
What we mean by Higher Education (1)

The context of Higher Education policies:
- OECD (2016), *Enhancing Employability*

Skill requirements are changing rapidly as a result of structural shifts

Workforce employability is essential to turn structural change into an opportunity

Education and training system, labour markets, workers and workplaces will have to become more adaptable





What we mean by Higher Education (2)

The context of Higher Education policies:

- OECD (2016), *Enhancing Employability*

Anticipating
emerging skill
needs

Reinforce the role
of training and
work-based
learning

Enhancing the
adaptability of
workplaces

Promoting labour
mobility



Introduction

The context of Higher Education policies:

- Yerevan (2015) key priorities (Bologna Process)



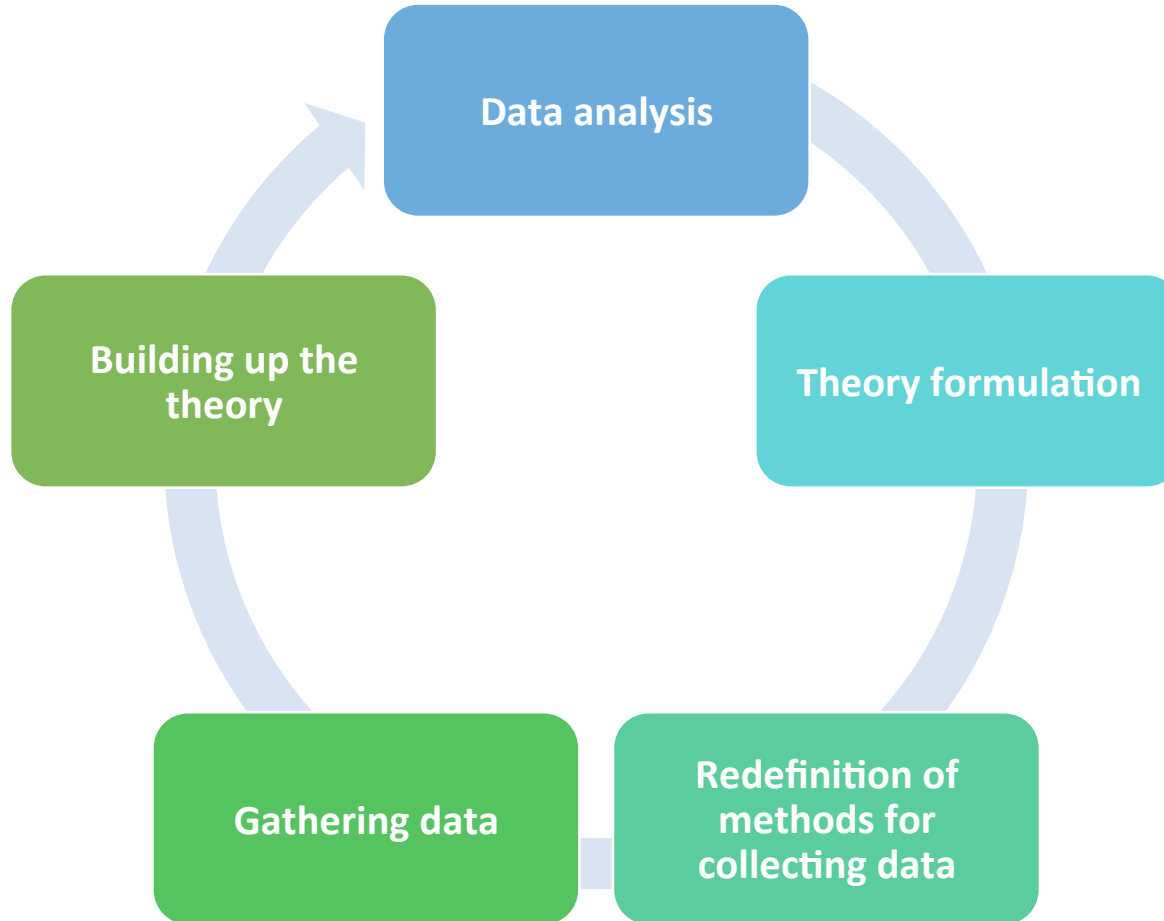


Methodology

The interpretive approach: Job guidance, Placement, Career Guidance, Employability, Transitions, Soft skills.

- Research Method: Qualitative Research
- Epistemological Context: Grounded Theory focused on the person and interpretation of its educational and professional path.
- Research Strategy: Case Study
- Research Tools: focus groups and semi-structured in-depth interviews

Methodology



Own elaboration from Mortari, 2012



Research tools

Focus groups and interviews follow a rigid protocol.
They are aimed at:

1. Description of the phenomena (1 or more) of transition.
2. Identification of interpretative keys to a reading through occurrences of the concepts.
3. Creation of a metadata grid.

Investigate volitions, competencies, channels and strategies, expectations.



Research protocol

- Invitation for email and invitation to participate in the research (15 days to graduation)
- Focus Groups (7 days to degree).
- The researchers of the Research Unit are present in the discussion of thesis.
- 1st round of interviews (7 days to graduation).
- 2nd round of interviews (6 months after graduation).
- 3rd round of interviews (12 months after graduation).
- 4th round of interviews (18 months after graduation).
- 5th round of interviews (24 months after graduation) - only for the first sample of graduates





Graduates

Samples of graduates: all the students enrolled in the Master Degree LM57 & LM85 who discussed their thesis between July 2014 and November 2016.

Path of accompaniment / orientation to the work of 2 years duration (longitudinal) that involves a **relational-communicative relationship** between interviewee and interviewer.

- 10 samples of graduates
- 52 students (30 from Florence University + 2 from Padua University + 9 Wuerzburg University)
- 110 interviews and 10 focus groups.



Comparison at an international and national level

International and national comparison has been done: subjects were involved in Focus group and 2 individual interviews (January 2015 and February 2016) i.e. a longitudinal analysis as for Italian students.

International comparison

- Graduates in Education
- University of Wuerzburg (DE) (January 2015 and February 2016)

National comparison

- Graduates of the LM50-57 degree course
- University of Padua (October 2015 and February 2016)



Metadata

Subjects: Master Degree Course in 2014, 2015, 2016

Age: 23-30 years old

With Work, Without Work, With Work Coherent and not Coherent

Subjects are searching the work, Subjects are not searching the work

WorkPlace Learning Potential, Employee Value Proposition,

Social Groups, Familiar Groups

Educational Processes, Mobility, Transisheep, Educational Acts,

Analysis (1)



The analysis – done through the transcription of all interviews and the creation of a guiding metadata grid – highlighted:

- 1) Transition from University to labour market is linked with the way of *being, transformation, the inner self, worldview*
- 2) Transition does not begin with the degree yet it is prepared
- 3) Skills are the results of training routes (not always conscious) as traineeships, practise...
- 4) Job placement is always present (i.e. qualified part-time jobs, ...)
- 5) the post-degree period takes 10 months or more



Analysis (2)

- 6) The transition period aims at achieving a fitting goal for the studies undergone
- 7) distance between pre- and post-degree desires
- 8) Awareness of the gap of skills acquired and required by the labour market
- 9) Informal rather than social and formal networks for the job search
- 10) Workplaces as high formative places and with guidance potential



Results



- 1) **Employability is the umbrella category**, it contains pedagogical knowledge on the pedagogical action prior to degree and during the educational process, it is a process of change that can prepare and accompany the transition process itself.



Results



2) Placement is the result of an **educational process**.



Results



3) The **relationship** between training in study courses, university training, labour market **has to be strenghten**.



Results



4) Business culture, professional culture, knowledge of the labour market has to be **implemented in curricula**.



Results



5) Development of **core skills** can be defined in Higher education programmes.





Future perspectives

- Draw up an **inventory of the skills required by the labour market** for the Professional Profiles for the Educational Sector and the Social Economy: new professionals/ entrepreneurs/ experts.
- **Creation of the Steering Committee** made of the most important organizations from the Third Sector
- Steering Committee and Degree Course work **in synergy with** for the creation of the inventory of skills.





VQR > VQD for an adequate *competence supply*

In questi anni l'Università italiana ha accresciuto la sua attenzione verso la **qualità della ricerca**.

Lo stesso ha iniziato a fare in relazione ai processi che generano **qualità e risultati nella didattica universitaria**

Queste sono le premesse per interrogarci anche sull'impatto della didattica rispetto all'occupabilità dei giovani laureati, sulla rispondenza degli studi universitari alla domanda di **competence supply** del mercato del lavoro nazionale e internazionale.



Good Heads for Good Professionals

The Problem of the Competence Supply

In the past, the issue of competence supply has been resolved through the **formation of good heads**.

This corresponded to business models where there were business schools that took charge of the growth of people.

Today most of the companies theorize and practice -for more- **lean training models** and **brain mobility**.

It takes staff with seniority -goods professionisti- and over the short to medium term projects.

This has consequences on the function and the University of **mismatch problems** faced by graduates who are not good professionals.

Interrogativi aperti dagli studi longitudinali



Rare cases of real unemployment: Students are activated

But in all cases, a significant phenomenon which we attribute a symbolic value that force students to extend by one year the period of training for entry into the Labour Market: the long period for entering in the labour market

The year after graduation takes crucial function for encounter with the labor market, with a "consistent" work with investment in training. It is a year in which young people:

Re-define their professional identity (false expectations)

seek alternatives to training, especially when it became work or job (knowledge of MDL segments)

Use and build networks of relationships, dynamic learning



Three issues to raise a dell'employability teaching in support of future transitions of working life of graduates

- You can bring the work culture in the construction of curricula of CdS (without limiting this feature to apprenticeships and to some event or service)? How can you support the construction of a coherent future professional identity through university teaching?
- Since the professional future depends less and less by headhunters and increasingly by social networks (personal, professional, impresarios, institutional) of which young people are part, such as the University may take this into account?
- The happiest cases qualified to work transition are those in which there was a close relationship between teaching and applied research. How can we encourage this practice in a mass university?



*Teaching and Learning for Employability
For the Future of Higher Education*



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Thank you for your attention!

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