

Examining the importance of employability skill development: The case of 3rd year applied English language students

Asma Ounis

Faculty of Arts and Humanities Sfax, University of Sfax, Tunisia
ounisetasma@yahoo.fr

Abstract

Studies examining the importance of employability skill development from students' perspectives are rather limited. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to investigate the basic transferable academic skills, personal attributes and any other crucial employability skills that help future employees be easily integrated in a workplace. As a sample, twenty applied English language students from the Higher Institute of Languages in Gabes, Tunisia constituted the basic informant group. Upon the completion of their internship period, they provided data necessary for this research paper by filling in a questionnaire. The qualitative analysis of the research findings revealed that the trainees valued skill development as they were equipped with considerable knowledge in dealing with ICT usage, in displaying good communication skills and in possessing a rich repertoire of financial and legal terminologies useful for any business field. The findings have also revealed that the trainees held a wide range of intelligences, displayed active problem solving, demonstrated critical thinking skills, showed creative reasoning, and maintained developed self regulatory and metacognitive strategies. Other pertinent factors that help them be integrated within the workplace include the willingness to be cooperative, motivated and flexible.

Keywords: employability, academic skills, employability skills.

1. Literature review

The literature review focuses mainly on displaying a clarification of the concept of employability skills followed by a scrutiny of the intersection of employability with the higher educational context.

1.1 Clarification of the concept of employability skills

Occupying the central interest of “the 21st century workplace”, employability has been viewed as “necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education” (Overtoom, 2000, p. 1). It includes “more potential as a term to signal the qualities needed for success not only in paid employment but also in other domains of life” (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2001, p. 6).

Searching for the major features that might characterize every individual worker (Zegward & Hodges, 2003), various attempts have constantly been made to deconstruct the essential components of employability skills. Yahya (2005) associates employability skills to a number of achievements namely the willingness to cooperate with others, to take part in collaborative work, to be faithful to work ethics, to abide by the instructional rules of work and to know how to interact with others. Sipon (2003) conceives employability skills in terms of being a “team player, respectful of others and good communication skills” (2003, p. 5). According to Baxter and Young (2000), the essential and required employability skills are founded upon positive thinking, adequate professionalism, sound problem solving, qualified managerial skills, promoted interpersonal bonds, and efficient direction. Furthermore, Hapidah and Mohd Sahandri (2011) link employability skills to exploratory attitudes as well as to educational, connectivity and personality traits.

In this respect, developing a set of positive personal characteristics as an essential integral element of employability skills has been echoed in the literature by various researchers (Hodges & Burchell, 2003; Zaharim, 2009; Fugate et al., 2004; Rasul et al., 2010; Lankard, 1990). In this respect, De Grip, Loo and Sanders (2004) argue that recruits’ personal attributes revolve around “the capacity and willingness of workers to remain attractive for the labour market (supply factors), by reacting and anticipating on changes in tasks and work environment (demand factors), facilitated by the human resource development instruments offered to them (institutions)” (p. 249).

Beside its interconnection with supply, demand and institutional factors as it is argued by De Grip, Loo and Sanders (2004), employability is strongly tied to the development of generic skills. The latter refer to “the skills which can be used across a large number of different occupations. They include the key competencies or key skills but extend beyond these to include a range of other cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills which are relevant to employability” (Kearns, 2001). For other scholars namely Australian Learning and Teaching Council (2011), Brand (2005), Taylor (2005) and Esposito and Meagher (2007), employability relates to the possession of basic core ability skills.

A part from the development of generic and core ability skills, Knight and Yorke (2003) pinpoint to another aspect that is quite pertinent to the concept of employability. They stress the paramount role of metacognition which is regarded as “the continued learning that professionals need to do if they are to grow and to keep pace with changes in the demands of their work. Those professionals who lack the reflective capacity are likely to be professionally frozen” (p. 8).

In addition, employability is linked to the development of entrepreneurial, ethical and professional skills (Zepke & Leach, 2010) which guarantee the learners’ smooth future integrity within a business field and develop their sense of risk – taking. As such, the different sub – skills comprised within the notion of employability help in the consolidation of ‘employability competence’ which serve in “perform(ing) effectively in the workplace, including communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills, organisational and process management skills, and management of one’s own knowledge according to the requirements of the job” (Fernández, 2007, p. 43).

Therefore, employability skills encapsulate a range of characteristics that make an employee seems attractive to potential employers (Bridgstock, 2009). They can be summarized into “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” (Knight and Yorke, 2006).

1.2 Employability and the context of higher education

The concept of employability needs to need nurtured and incorporated within educational curriculums (Hind et al., 2007) in order to meet the requirements of the business field and labor market (Kasa, 2006). The proliferation and development of competent future professionals cannot be achieved unless universities succeed in accentuating the learners’ employability skills (Knight and Yorke, 2006; Ryan, 2005; Riveira Rico, 2004; Kokkos, 2013; Tuning, 2010). In this respect, Kirby (2000) maintains that “education and training are the main instruments available to governments and the community to prepare individuals for a rapidly changing, increasingly demanding world of work, and to improve their employability” (p. 37). When examining the characteristics of a number of graduates, Riveira Rico (2004) finds out that among the employability skills which might be useful in future workplace are the quest for knowledge and the devotion for making progress. Once they are at the workplace, recently graduated workers are encouraged to make use of the set of knowledge and skills that have already been acquired from their universities (Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, and Cragolini, 2004a). The importance of integrating employability and generic skills in university courses where the focus is on the development of “Key Competencies (which) are not only essential for participation in work, but are also essential for effective participation in further education and in adult life more generally (Australian Education Council, 1992, p. 7).

1. Experimental part

The experimental part specifies the central research questions, describes the major research objectives, presents the basic informant group, provides an idea about the main research elicitation instrument and outlines the carried out research method.

2.1 The research questions:

The present paper seeks to address the following research questions:

- What are the basic transferable academic skills that learners make use once they are in a field work?
- How do employability skills facilitate the integration of learners in a work place?

2.2 Objectives:

The major objectives of this research paper reside in the following:

- Learners succeed in transferring a number of skills they have developed at their educational settings to their benefits when they are enrolled at any work place.
- Employability skills play a significant role in the assimilation of learners into their future workplaces.

1.3 Participants:

Twenty applied English language students (business learners) studying at the 3rd year university level took part in this study. They were enrolled at the Higher Institute of Languages in Gabes, Tunisia. Their voluntary contributions and participations constituted the main thrust of the present research paper.

1.4 Research instrument:

A questionnaire survey is the basic research instrument used in this study for the elicitation of the learners' responses. The questionnaire includes four major questions that help in achieving justifiable replies to the previously mentioned research questions. The specified questions seek to determine the academic subjects that were practically helpful, find out the different skills and types of intelligences the trainees relied on for the accomplishment of their work assignments, identify whether the trainees managed a number of problems solving situations and specify the factors that assist their integration into the workplace.

1.5 Research method:

By the end of the academic year, the 3rd year applied English language students are compelled to carry out internship training in any official institutions such as Tunisie Télécom, maritime ports, banks, ect. When the internship training is over, they are expected to write a brief memoire in which they report, discuss and evaluate the tasks and the experiences they

witnessed. Through random sampling, 20 learners were included in this study upon the completion of their internship period. They were requested to fill in the questionnaire survey in order to know more about the basic academic skills they transferred to work and to come up with a potential set of employability skills that learners might have needed for their integration in their actual work situations.

2. Research findings and discussion:

Concerning the informants' abilities in putting into practice the knowledge acquired from their university courses, the questionnaire findings reveal that all the participants in this study succeed in transferring a number of academic concepts, skills and principles to the workplace. The different internalized ESP courses strengthen the trainees' mastery of key competences that prepare learners to go along with the demands of the job market. As such, a clarification of some examples of useful courses comprises the following:

- Courses of oral presentation help the trainees gain the skills necessary for conducting and managing verbal communications, discussions and interactions with others. The trainees did not only benefit from structuring convincing and coherent speeches but also held adequate non – verbal communications at work. Consequently, they were endowed with good strategic planning and logical transmission of information that supported them in getting into contact with other co – workers.
- Courses of financial English help learners put into practice the theoretical basic content knowledge of finance, deal with different types of written and oral documents (corporate, academic, press) related to finance, comprehend and communicate appropriately in a corporate context related to finance and use adequately the suitable lexical jargon related to finance in its appropriate context.
- Courses of Legal English help students enhance their knowledge of the business world, with a special focus on law. They also enable learners to gain some basic content knowledge of law by internalizing a set of basic vocabulary related to law. These courses support the learners' understanding of different types of written and oral documents (corporate, academic, press) dealing with law. Further, they back up the trainees' abilities in expressing themselves about issues pertinent to law in a corporate context.
- Computer science courses (dealt with in the first years of the university level) enable the trainees to acquire a basic set of ICT skills which serve for management and organizational purposes. The workers' endowment with a range of technology skills contributes to the successful accomplishments of work tasks.

As it is mentioned above, the trainees are equipped with considerable basic knowledge, potentials and skills that are very instrumental for carrying out their work successfully. Hence, the tertiary level plays a significant role in developing competent and skillful trainees.

By reflecting upon the earlier findings, the present paper challenges a number of previous researches that treat the graduates as individuals who lack the necessary competences needed for the business field (Bakar and Hanafi, 2007; Brown, Hesketh, and Williams, 2003; Crebert, Bates, Bell, Carol – Joy and Cragolini, 2004b; Yusof, 2004).

In addition to the possession a rich repertoire of knowledge about the business field, the trainees' proficiency in dealing with the different work assignments is justified by a number of skills that were practiced during work time. The trainees found themselves able to draw upon their multiple intelligences. The latter makes reference to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) which comprises '*linguistic intelligence*', '*Logical-mathematical intelligence*', '*Musical intelligence*', '*Spatial intelligence*', '*Bodily – kinesthetic intelligence*', '*Interpersonal intelligence*', '*Intrapersonal intelligence*' and '*Naturalistic intelligence*'. Among the previously mentioned types of Gardner's intelligences, the trainees argue for their numerous abilities in:

- Demonstrating the possession of linguistic knowledge which reveals their ability to comprehend and use a wide range of words needed for the type of business they carried out;
- Revealing conceptual and logical thinking;
- Indicate spatial – visual intelligence which highlights their capacity to process images, figures, tables and pictures and to depict the meaning they convey;
- Displaying accurate kinesthetic intelligence which shows their ability to be in command of their own body movements and gestures and to make use of other objects (i.e., PowerPoint) go along with body movements;
- Showing a degree of interpersonal commitment which testifies their ability to maintain appropriate social interactions;
- Maintaining positive intrapersonal attitudes which reveal their capacity to understand and reflect on inward values, beliefs and ideas.

Therefore, the trainees' capacity to draw upon a multitude of intelligences gives an idea about the different talents and mental aptitudes people might possess (Gardner, 2006).

Despite showing a high level of proficiency and competence in performing the job requirements, the trainees pinpointed to a crucial trouble they had faced. The use of English language was not very common in the different organizations they were temporarily enrolled at. In Tunisia, the predominant language that has been utilized in the business field is the French language and to a lesser degree the Arabic language. Despite the existence of such trouble, language choice was not a real hindrance for the third year applied English language learners and did not prevent them from producing high quality work (as it is determined by their company supervisors and university supervisors).

Being equipped with considerable knowledge and high proficiency level, learners express their abilities to solve diverse problems that they have encountered at work. Consequently, the questionnaire findings reveal that every single trainee has experienced problem solving situations. The latter has a pivotal role to play in reducing chaos (Meyer, 2000) so as to reach a solution. The nature of problems that the trainees faced in their workplaces includes technical and human troubles. As far as the technical side is concerned, some informants complaint about the recurrent weak internet connection. Concerning the human side, some other informants report the existence of internal (between co – workers) communication breakdowns inside the organization. In such working situations, the informants argue that they could develop problem solving strategies. In the first already mentioned example, the trainees looked for other alternatives that might help them pursue their work such as the use of faxes.

While in the second trouble, the trainees admit that they were successful in alleviating the tension between some co – workers and helped them reach a consensus. Therefore, the learner informants argue for their abilities in dealing with the different work conflicts that might emanate. They approached problem solving following a number of steps: identifying the source of trouble, communicating the trouble with other co – workers, trying to offer potential practical solutions or comprehensible plans, deciding cooperatively how to overcome the problem then acting on the agreed upon decisions. Similarly, Toohey (1999) argues that problem solving strategies incite workers “to analyze problems, to generate a range of possible solutions, to evaluate the alternatives systematically before choosing and implementing the best” (p. 138). As such, the informants demonstrate their potentials in developing high – order critical thinking skills and in conducting creative reasoning. Through problem solving, they manage to develop their metacognitive skills (Gelbal, 1991; Schraw, 1998; Ozsoy, 2007, 2008; Flavel, 1976) and to promote their self – regulatory strategies (Williams, 2004; Murtagh & Todd, 2004). The former includes two basic types which can be manifested into ‘*executive management strategies*’ and ‘*strategic knowledge*’ (Hartman, 2001) while the latter refers to the intersection of a number of cognitive strategies such as repeating, clarifying, justifying, grasping, recalling and organizing information (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

Thus, problem solving helps produce good listeners, active members, critical thinkers, dynamic negotiators, strategic workers, solution seekers, reflective evaluators and decision makers.

Concerning the factors that supported the trainees’ integration into the work place, the research findings reveal a positive tendency towards shared collaborative work, a developed sense of motivation and a nurtured willingness for adaptability. Each will be clarified as follows:

In this research study, the findings reveal that learners accentuate on the significant role of collaborative work in their workplaces. The workers’ involvement in group – based assignments has also been stressed by a number of researchers namely Bhave, Kraimer and Glomb (2010), Bell (2007), Frey and Osterloh (2002) and Van Lange (2006). As it is reported by the learner informants, cooperation results in a number of achievements. It helps create respectful and stress – free working conditions where workers can maintain friendly interpersonal relationships. For example, learner (9) argues that “pressure, stress or exhaustion that might emanate from the intensified demands of the work load can be easily surmounted when the tasks are shared with the rest”. Beside strengthening social ties, the proliferation of team work spirit sustains the trainees’ abilities in conducting negotiations or communications whether directly or indirectly (via emails). It promotes information – sharing which ensures better understanding and helps reach joint decision – making. In this respect, Harris (1980) points out that “there are alternative choices to be considered, and in such a case we want not only to identify as many of these alternatives as possible but to choose the one that best fits with our goals, objectives, desires, values, and so on”. Therefore, cooperation in the workplace develops the workers’ positive interdependence which might only lead to bridging the gaps of misunderstanding and minimizing any potential complaints or managerial conflicts. For instance, learner (2) states that “our group discussions and negotiations with our co – workers help us overcome any troubles, whether they are procedural, organizational or

administrative ones, in order to reach common goals”. Consequently, cooperation has a central role in promoting good work ethics (Miller, et al., 2002; Nill and Schibrowsky, 2005). In addition, it leads to the development of leadership skills (Yukl, 1994, p. 5). Similarly, Alban – Metcalfe and Alimo – Metcalfe (2009) argue that a successful team work testifies the effectiveness of “an engaging style of leadership” (p. 14). Thus, cooperative working environments reduce job dissatisfaction (Jha & Bhattacharrya, 2012) and help workers achieve a sense of empowerment that would nurture ‘a sense of competence’, ‘a sense of personal choice’, ‘a sense of personal impact’, ‘a sense of value’ and ‘a sense of security’ (Whetten & Cameron, 2011, p. 472 - 273).

In such reported collaborative working settings, the trainees’ level of motivation soars. In his definition of motivation, Helepotá (2005) refers to “a person’s active participation and commitment to achieve the prescribed results”. In this paper, the questionnaire findings reveal that the assigned work help learners develop perceived higher self confidence, positive self – esteem, increased self – assertion and promoted self – reliance. For instance, learner (17) maintains that “I performed the tasks I had to do with much enjoyment, engagement and passion”. Therefore, achieving motivation at work is necessary as it guarantees the learner trainees’ engagement in performing the job requirements which in its turn might be incremental in increasing profitability (Davidmann, 1989). Similar to the findings achieved in this study, many other researchers have advocated the important impact of motivation on every single worker (Lawler, 1968; Atkinson, 1964; Scott, 2010; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Cho and Perry, 2012; Herzberg, F. 1968; Steers, Mowday & Shapiro, 2004). The present findings indicate that learners’ motivation is depicted through their sense of satisfaction, devotion and enthusiasm which justify their high commitment to work and punctuality. In this case, the learner informants’ motivational attitudes are not linked to financial or material needs (the participants are unpaid trainees) but rather to moral purposes (they enjoyed and loved what they were doing). However, earlier researches tend to associate motivation to high paid salaries or rewards. For example, Taylor (2005) argues that “it is impossible ... to get a workman to work much harder than the average men around them unless they assured a large and permanent increase in their pay”. Therefore, motivation in the case of the 3rd year applied English language students is rather a moral value that is cherished by all members of this study.

As opposed to previous researches that deal with the resistance to change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Bovey and Hede, 2001; Zander, 1950; Agócs, 1997), the findings in this paper highlight the trainees’ openness to change which is manifested through their adaptive attitudes and behaviour. The latter has been described as “the extent to which an individual adapts to changes in a work system or work roles” (Griffin et al., 2007, p. 329). Learner (4) states that “sometimes, I had to deal intelligently with unanticipated work situations and cope well with the swift nature of work assignments”. Overwhelmed by their desire to fit in working conditions, learners admit their ability to deal with change, which testifies the fact that is a sense of responsibility and interest that ultimately urge them to be active and productive. In the same vein, Oreg, Vakola and Armenakis (2011) emphasize key concepts that have to characterize the workers’ performance. They allude to the vital role of one’s devotion, eagerness, openness, and readiness to change. Other researchers such as Griffin, Neal and Parker (2007), Pulakos, Arad, Donovan and Plamondon (2000) and Ployhart and Bliese

(2006) stress the importance of interpersonal adaptability in the workplace. The latter is defined as “the fit of an individual’s interpersonal behavior, thoughts, and emotions within an interpersonal interaction in order to achieve the goals afforded by the situational demands of the interaction” (Oliver and Lievens, 2014, p. 5). Through examining workers’ performance, Klein et al. (2006) identify a set of interpersonal skills that might be beneficial in producing high quality work. According to them, successful workers should have “goal – directed behaviors, including communication and relationship building competencies, employed in interpersonal interaction episodes characterized by complex perceptual and cognitive processes, dynamic verbal and nonverbal interaction exchanges, diverse roles, motivations, and expectancies” (p. 81).

To conclude, three main elements have been emphasized by the learner trainees in their attempt to identify the real factors that supported their integration in the work place. They can be exemplified through cooperation, motivation, and adaptability which all testify a range of personal attributes that assist in the development of employability skills.

3. Conclusion

In total contrast with a number of studies that stress the failure of higher educational settings in addressing the potential employability skills needed by industries (Oresanya et al., 2014; Mir, Rosell and Serrat, 2003; Robinson, and Garton, 2007; García and Mora, 2004), the findings achieved in this study highlight a close intersection between the basic developed academic skills and employability skills. The different courses taught at the tertiary level have proved beneficial in equipping the trainees with considerable basic knowledge in maintaining ICT usage, in displaying communication skills and in gaining financial and legal terminologies that be used in business. The production of skillful trainees is also justified by the extent to which they were viewed as proficient in carrying out the recommended work tasks. Based on Gardners’ Theory of Multiple Intelligences, the trainees indicate that they are endowed with a wide range of intelligences namely linguistic intelligence, conceptual and logical thinking, spatial – visual intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence. During their internship period, the informants have also displayed active problem solving. The latter testifies the trainees’ high – order critical thinking skills, creative reasoning, and maintained self regulatory and metacognitive strategies. Other pertinent factors that help them be integrated within the workplace include cooperation, motivation and adaptability. In brief, the trainees’ basic transferable academic skills, different types of intelligences, problem – solving skills, various personal attributes assist in the development of employability skills.

References

- Agócs, C. (1997). Institutionalized Resistance to Organizational Change: Denial, Inaction and Repression, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol.16, pp.917-931.
- Alban – Metcalfe, J., & Alimo – Metcalfe, B. (2009). Engaging Leadership Part One: competencies are like Brighton Pier. *The International Journal of Leadership in Public Services*, 5(1), 10-18.
- Atkinson, J. W. (1964). *An Introduction to Motivation*. Oxford, England: Van Nostrand.
- Austalian Learning and Teaching Council. (2011). Assuring graduate attributes.
- Australian Council For Educational Research. (2001). *Employability Skills For Australian Industry: Literature Review And Framework Development*, Acer, Melbourne.
- Australian Education Council, Mayer Committee 1992, *Key competencies*. Report of the Committee to Advise the Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training on Employment-related Key Competencies for Postcompulsory Education and Training, Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment, and Training, Canberra.
- Bakar, A.R., & Hanafi, I. 2007. Assessing employability skills of technical-vocational students in Malaysia. *Journal Social Science*. 3: 202-207.
- Baxter, M.B. & Young, J. L. (2000). What do employers expect from high school graduates? *NASSP Bulletin*, 66, 93-98
- Bell, S. T. (2007). Deep – level composition variables as predictors of team performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 595-615.
- Bhave, D. P., Kramer, A., & Glomb, T. M. (2010). Work–family conflict in work groups: Social information processing, support, and demographic dissimilarity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95, 145- 158.
- Bovey, W., & Hede, A. (2001). Resistance to organizational change: The role of cognitive and affective processes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 16(7), 534-548.
- Brand, T. H. (2005). *Non-technical Skills and Traits Needed to be Career-Ready Graduates as Perceived by Agribusiness Employers and Recruiters*. Master of Science. West Virginia University.
- Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: enhancing graduate employability through career management skills, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28 (1). 31-44

Brown, P., Hesketh, A., & Williams, S. (2003). Employability in a Knowledge-driven Economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(2), 107–126.

Cho, Y. J., & Perry, J. L. 2012. Intrinsic motivation and employee attitudes role of managerial trustworthiness, goal directedness, and extrinsic reward expectancy. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 32(4), 382-406.

Crebert, G., Bates, M., Bell, B., Patrick, C-J, & Cragolini, V. (2004a). Ivory tower to concrete jungle revisited. *Journal of Education and Work*, 17(1), 47-70.

Crebert, G., Bates, M., Bell, B., Patrick, C-J., & Cragolini, V. (2004b). Developing generic skills at university, during work placement and in employment: Graduates' perceptions, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 23(2), 147-165.

Davidmann, M. (1989). *The will to work: What people struggle to achieve* (2nd ed.) Retrieved from: <http://www.demon.co.uk/solbaram/articles/willwork/html>

De Grip, A., J. Van Loo and J. Sanders (2004). The industry employability index: taking account of supply and demand characteristics. *International Labour Review*, 143, 211-233.

Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R. M. 1985. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.

Dent, E. B., & Goldberg, S. G. (1999). Challenging “resistance to change”. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 35, 25–41

Esposito, A. and Meagher, G.A. (2007). The Future Demand for Employability Skills and the Implications for the VET System. *10th Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association Conference*. 11-13 April. Victoria University Footscray Park, Melbourne, Victoria: 1-10

Fernandez, C. (2007). Creating thought diversity: the antidote to group think. *Public Health Management Practice*, vol 13, issue 6, pp 679–680.

Flavel, J. H. (1976). Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L. Resnick (Ed.), *The nature of intelligence*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Frey, B., & Osterloh, M. 2002. *Successful management by motivation. Balancing intrinsic and extrinsic incentives*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.

Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B.E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 14-38.

García, A. A., & Mora Ruiz, J.G. (2004). University-to-work transition among young Spanish higher education graduates: analytical approaches and results. Retrieved from: http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/10461/1/AC59_1_Valencia-jint.pdf

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind*. New York: Basic Books Inc.

Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons*. New York: Basic Books.

Gelbal, S. (1991). Problem solving. *Hacettepe University Journal of Educational Faculty*, 6/167-173

Griffin, M. A., Neal, A., & Parker, S. K. (2007). The new model of work role performance: Positive behavior in uncertain and interdependent contexts. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 327–347.

Halepota, H. A. 2005. Motivational theories and their application in construction. *Cost engineering*, 47(3), 14-18

Hapidah Mohamad and Mohd Sahandri Gani Hamzah. (2011). Employability Profiles of Graduates: The Malaysia Scenario from an Employer Perspective. The 5th QS-Apple Conference.

Harris, R. (1998). Introduction to Decision Making, VirtualSalt. Retrieved from: <http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook5.htm>.

Hartman, H.J. (2001). Teaching metacognitively. In H.J. Hartman (Ed.), *Metacognition in learning and instruction: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 149-172). Boston: Kluwer Academic

Herzberg, F. 1968. One more time: How do you motivate employees. *Harvard Business Review* (pp. 46-57): Boston.

Hind, D., Moss, S. & McKellan, S. (2007). Innovative Assessment Strategies for developing Employability Skills in the Tourism and Entertainment Management Curriculum at Leeds Metropolitan University. *Paper presented at the 2007 EuroCHRIE Conference*, Leeds, UK.

Hodges, D. & Burchell, N. (2003). Business graduate Competencies: Employers' Views on Importance and Performance. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 4(2), 16-22.

Jha, S. and Bhattacharyya, S.S., 2012. Study of perceived recruitment practices and their relationships to job satisfaction. *Synergy*, 10(1), pp.63-76.

Kasa, Z. (2006). Sustainable curriculum in TVET. *Proceedings International Conference on Technical and Vocational education and training*. Batu Pahat, MALAYSIA.

Kearns, P. (2001). *Generic Skills For The New Economy – review of research*. Adelaide: NCVET.

Kirby, P. (2000). *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria: Final Report*. Melbourne: Department of Education, Employment and Training.

Knight, P. T. and Yorke, M. (2006). *Employability: judging and communicating achievement*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Knight, T. P., Yorke, M. (2003). *Assessment, Learning and Employability*, Open University Press, England.

Klein, C., DeRouin, R. E., & Salas, E. (2006). Uncovering workplace interpersonal skills: A review, framework, and research agenda. *International Journal of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 21, 79-126.

Kokkos, A. (2013). The need of enhancing core skills: the Greek case, *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, 1, 1-11.

Lankard, B. A. (1990). Employability--the fifth basic skill. *ERIC Digest No. 104*. Columbus: Center on Education and Training for Employment. The Ohio State University. (ERIC No. EDO-CE-90-104)

Lawler, E., III. 1968. "A Correlational-Causal Analysis of The Relationship Between Expectancy Attitudes and Job Performance." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 52: 462-468.

Meyer, P. 2000. *Quantum Creativity*. New York: NTC Publishing Group.

Miller, M. J., Woehr, D. and Hudspeth, N. 2002. "The Meaning and Measurement of Work Ethic: Construction and Initial Validation of a Multidimensional Inventory." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 60: 451-489

Mir, P., Rosell, A. & Serrat, A. (2003), El observatorio del mercado de trabajo recién titulados en la UPC en el año 2001-2002. *XI Congreso de Innovación Educativa en las Enseñanzas Técnicas*, Villanova y la Geltru, Barcelona.

Murtagh, A. M., & Todd, S. A. (2004). Self-regulation: A challenge to the strength Model. *JASNH*, 3,19-5.

Nill, A., and Schibrowsky, J. 2005. "The Impact of Corporate Culture, The Reward System, and Perceived Moral Intensity On Marketing Students" *Ethical Decision Making.* *Journal of Marketing Education* 27 (1): 68-80.

Oliver, T., & Lievens, F. 2014. Conceptualizing and Assessing Interpersonal Adaptability: Towards a Functional Framework. In *Organization and management series* p. 52-72.

Organizational and Management Series, Taylor and Francis Group.

Oreg, S., Vakola, M., & Armenakis, A. (2011). Change recipients' reactions to organizational change: A 60-year review of quantitative studies. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47, 461–524

Oresanya, T.O., Omudewa, O.S., Kolade, T.T. and Fashedemi, A.O. (2014). *Vocational Education and Employability: The Nigerian Situation*. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development- An Open Access International Journal*, Volume 3, pp. 158-160.

Overtom, C., (2000), “Employability Skills: An Update”, Center on Education and Training for Employment. ERIC Digest no. 220.

Ozsoy, G. (2007). *The effect of metacognitive instruction on problem solving achievement of fifth grade primary school students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Gazi University Institute of Educational Sciences: Ankara.

Özsoy, G. (2008). Metacognition. *Turkish Educational Magazine*, 6 (4), 713-740.

Pintrich, P. R., & De Groot, E. (1990). Motivational and self regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(1), 33-40.

Ployhart, R.E. & Bliese, P.D. (2006). Individual adaptability (I-ADAPT) theory: conceptualizing the antecedents, consequences, and measurement of individual differences in adaptability. In: C.S. Burke, L.G. Pierce, & E. Salas (Eds.), *Understanding Adaptability: A Prerequisite for Effective Performance within Complex Environments* (pp. 3-40). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Pulakos, E. D., Arad, S., Donovan, M. A., & Plamondon, K. E. (2000). Adaptability in the workplace: Development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 612-624.

Rasul, M.S; Ismail, M.Y; Ismail, N; Rajuddin, M.R. and Abdu Rauf, R.A. (2010). Development of employability skills assessment tool for manufacturing industry. *Journal Mekanikal*, No. 30, pp. 48-61.

Riveira Rico, V. (2004) Autoevaluación de factores de empleabilidad de los alumnos de último curso de la titulación de ingeniero industrial. *VIII Congreso de ingeniería de organización*: Leganés, 9-10 Septiembre de 2004, 153-162.

Robinson, J.S. and Garton, B.L. (2007). An Assessment of the Employability Skills Needed by Graduates in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at the University of Missouri. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 49(4), pp. 96-105

Ryan, J. (2005). The student experience. In J. Carroll & J. Ryan (Eds), *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all*. London: Routledge.

Ryan, R & Deci, E. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development and Well-being, *American Psychologist*. 55 (1) .68-78

Schraw, G. (1998), Promoting general metacognitive awareness. *Instructional Science*, 26, 113-125

Scott LN. 2010. *A study on the relationship between ability, motivational and work environmental influences and the degree of transfer of learning of new trainers*. PhD thesis, Capella University.

Sipon, A. (2003). 'Educational strategies for the K-Economy : Laying the foundation for a flexible and competent workforce'. *Journal of Technical Education*, (2)1, p. 1-6

Steers, R. M, Mowday, R. T., & Shapiro, D. L. (2004). The future of work motivation theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 29 (3), 379-387.

Taylor, A. (2005). What Employers Look For: The Skills Debate and the Fit with Youth Perceptions. *Journal of Education and Work*, 18(2): 201- 218

Taylor, F. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. New York: Harper

Toohy, S. (1999). *Designing Courses for Higher Education*. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press, p. 138.

Tuning (2010) *A Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles including Programme Competences and Programme Learning Outcomes*, Lokhoff, et al., (Eds), European Commission, Education and Culture.

Van Lange, P. A. M. (2006). *Bridging social psychology: the benefits of transdisciplinary approaches*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Whetten, D. A. & Cameron, K. S. (2011). *Developing management skills*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall/Pearson.

Williams, B. (2004). Self directed in a problem based learning program. *Nurse Education Today* (24), 227-285.

Yahya, B. (2005). *Integrasi kemahiran employability*. dalam program pendidikan vokasional pertanian dan industri di Malaysia. Tesis Dr. Falsafah. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Yukl, G. (1994). *Leadership in organizations* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Yusof, K. M. (2004). Problem-based Learning: A Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Experience. Paper presented in Seminar On Problem Based Learning at KUiTTTHO.

Zaharim, A., Yusoff, Y.M., Omar, M.Z; Mohammed, A., Muhammad, N. (2009). Engineering employability skills required by employers in Asia. *Proceedings of the Asia 6th WSEAS, International Conference on Engineering Education* Rodos, Greece, July 22-24, 2009 pp.195-201.

Zander, A. F. (1950). Resistance to change—Its analysis and prevention. *Advanced Management*, 4(5), 9-11.

Zegward, K.E. & Hodges, D. (2003). Science and Technology Stakeholders' Ranking of Graduate Competencies Part 4: Faculty Perspective. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 4(2), 36-48.

Zepke, N and Leach, L (2010). Improving student engagement: ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*. 11(3), 167–177.

Appendix:

A questionnaire survey for the 3rd year Applied English language students

By reflecting upon your internship training experience, you are kindly invited to reveal your responses to the following questions.

- **Were you able to put into practice some concepts you studied at university?**

- Yes.
- No.

Explain

.....
.....
.....
.....

- **To what extent were you proficient in dealing with the different assignments allocated to you? Justify.**

.....
.....
.....
.....

- **Were you able to solve some problems that you encountered by yourself? Give examples of problem solving situations.**

.....
.....
.....
.....

- **What are the factors that facilitated your integration into the work place?**

- Cooperation.
- Motivation.
- Individualism.

Justify or state other factors if needed

.....
.....