Critical Pedagogy and Careers Education

Rosie Alexander
Twitter: @rosie148
rosie.alexander.ic@uhi.ac.uk
Structure of today’s session

• Why are you here?
• Why am I here?
• Traditional approaches to careers education
• Radical and critical approaches
• Some examples and ideas
Why are you here?
Why am I here?

Research into the career and migration pathways of higher education students from Orkney and Shetland

Photo courtesy of Ronnie Robertson via Flickr
Recognises that people aren’t equally mobile - links to inequality in the workplace
Inequality in the workplace

How is inequality perpetuated?

• Unpaid internships
• Requirement for experience for entry level work
• Low paid sectors
• Cultural capital
• Social capital

What proportion went to independent schools?

- Senior judges: 65%
- Junior ministers: 52%
- Diplomats: 52%
- Senior armed forces: 49%
- Public body chairs: 45%
- News columnists*: 44%
- Cricketers**: 43%
- Pop stars: 20%
- Univ vice chancellors: 16%
- Footballers**: 5%

*National, **male/international

Source: Sutton Trust

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48745333
‘There’s more to do here than people think’: Trading the city for Cape Clear

High rents, long commute prompted young teacher to move to island off west Cork coast

© Mon, Sep 9, 2019, 03:00

Áilín Quinlan

Shane O’Neill has just finished his first year teaching through Irish on Cape Clear island off the coast of West Cork. Photograph: Tony McElhinney

Recognising that people make different choices.
Social justice

• Recognising inequalities and differences between graduate trajectories, how can we work ethically as practitioners and educators?
• Do our existing approaches risk reinforcing inequality?
Some things you might hear said...

If you dream it, you can do it...

Never a failure, always a lesson
Careers guidance risks

• Focus on individuals
• Individual qualities and skills are determinants of success in the workplace
• Risk that ‘failure’ is internalised as a personal deficiency even where there are significant structural barriers
Context awareness and community embeddedness
Careers (or employability) education in HE

Do we need to consider not just how to help students ‘play the game’ but raise their awareness of their contexts and help them to ‘change the game’?
Critical pedagogy

• Draws on Friere: Pedagogy of the Oppressed

• Aim of education should not be to replicate power systems

• Education should help students recognise and critically engage with their contexts and challenge inequalities
Training for Exploitation?

BUST YOUR BOSS!*
card for freelance art and cultural workers

During a negotiation about work you have the right:
not to remain silent about money
not to subsidise the production from your own pocket
not to accept a change of agreed conditions without a renegotiation
not to take this job on the promise of a future!

* Warning: In the cultural sector your boss may not look like a boss – they could be your friend/drinking buddy... It might even be you!

In solidarity – Precarious Workers Brigade
www.precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com

Politicising Employability & Reclaiming Education

Junior Graphic Design Voluntary Internship at

Design Studio is looking for a talented, enthusiastic junior graphic designer to join the team as an Intern. This new position is a great opportunity for you to experience a wide variety of design projects at . This voluntary position is offered for a six-month period, three consecutive days a week (preferably Wednesday – Friday), commencing at the beginning of March.

We are looking for an individual with flair and flexibility. Working closely with Graphic Designer, you will need to be an engaged, collaborative, friendly team player, who will be able to assist and contribute to new and existing projects.

You will help with the design for exciting creative projects from across the spectrum of Asset Studios within

→ SMILE AND JUST SAY YES

→ MORE DAYS REQUIRED

→ DO WHAT YOU ARE TOLD
What is a career?
‘other careers’

Deconstructing and Reconstructing notion of ‘career’ Ribeiro, & Fonçatti (2018)
Conclusions

• How are we currently supporting our students?
• Are we reinforcing problematic ideas about careers and the workplace?
• How inclusive are we in the ways we present careers and employability?
• How can we help students to increase their understandings of their context and the careers they wish to enter?
• How can we help students to critically engage with their context and the careers they wish to enter?
• How can we teach them to ‘play the game’ and potentially to ‘change the game’?
Bibliography