

Industry and Higher Education

Call for papers

Special Issue: Empathy, sensibility and graduate employment – can the humanities help?

Editors: John Edmondson, Piero Formica and Jay Mitra

'Knowledge, everywhere, is coming to be regarded not as a good in itself, or as a means of creating a broad and humane outlook on life in general, but as merely an ingredient in technical skill.' (Bertrand Russell, "'Useless" knowledge', 1935)

'We will still need disciplines, but I think that it's time we focus on a higher mission and the changes needed in academia and research funding to allow more people to work in the wide-open white space between disciplines – the antidisciplinary space.' (Joi Ito, 'Antidisciplinary', 2014)

'A majority of respondents said new hires are not well-prepared to perform at a high level in a professional environment, primarily because of insufficient soft skills.' (Bloomberg Next: 2) This statement is from one of the more recent of a long list of reports and surveys assessing what skills employers want in new graduates compared to the skills they actually possess. In few words it highlights once again the persistent perception that many business and science graduates, although proficient in the specific subject matter of their discipline, are falling short when it comes to social, imaginative and creative capacities. This deficiency may also lie at the heart of many of our dysfunctional, uberized forms of employability, which improve the statistics but fail the society of employed people. The range of the soft skills that lie behind those social, imaginative and creative capacities is broad, but among the most prominent are teamworking, flexibility, problem-solving, verbal communication, written communication, critical thinking, negotiation and influencing others.

While the range may be broad, all soft skills share a common characteristic: they are dependent on the character or personality building of the individual. That character building involves the development or enhancement of empathy and sensibility, without which soft skills cannot exist. Without an understanding of the motivations and feelings of others, for example, one is unlikely to be an effective member of a team, an inspirational manager or an effective communicator. Arising from these soft skills, emotional intelligence and creativity lead in turn to opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intervention and innovative change. As prerequisites for altruism and open-mindedness, they lead too to that important ingredient of 21st century

social and economic development – open innovation (see Formica and Curley, 2018). With empathy and the sense of moral and creative sensibility, individuals do not simply graduate in their own islands; they become part of an organic collective that can help to establish a new governance structure or mechanism for meaningful employability.

Scholars, practitioners and educators have begun to turn their attention to the role of the humanities in developing the empathy and sensibility that lie at the heart of the soft skill set (see, e.g., Badaracco, 2006; Desai, 2017; Morson and Schapiro, 2017). This special issue of *Industry and Higher Education* will extend the debate by examining the theory and practice of how the humanities can be used in business and other non-humanities education, and in workplace settings, to respond to what is certain to be an ever-increasing need for emotionally and socially literate, creative graduates.

We welcome research papers, opinion articles and case studies investigating and/or demonstrating the use of humanities subjects for non-humanities students or for employees in the workplace. For the purposes of the special issue, we are especially concerned with the study of literature, painting, sculpture, music, film, photography and theatre – but other disciplines will be considered.

Authors are invited to submit a **200 word abstract** no later than **31 January 2019**. Paper submissions for accepted abstracts will be needed by **30 April 2019**.

Please **submit abstracts** to: **kjedmondson25@gmail.com**. **Full papers** (for selected authors) should be submitted online at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ihe>. Please include in your covering letter that the paper is submitted to the 'Humanities special issue'. Submission guidelines are available at: <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/industry-and-higher-education/journal202558#submission-guidelines>

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