Autonomy through self-awareness: skills as an asset for students making the transition to the labor market

A skills profile for Arts Students at KU Leuven
Melina De Dijn
Intro
Skills profile?
Skills?

"skill means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems".

[Skills] can be described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

( European Qualifications Framework (EQF))
Starting point for the research project

Research question

Are certain skills and attitudes linked to the Arts curriculum and if so, which ones?
Context

Where? Why? Who?
Context
Faculty of Arts’ student numbers have diminished with 30% since 2013-2014.

Some programs have low employability rates.

FAQ at recruiting activities: “What kind of jobs are open for graduates?”

Staff resistance with regard to employability training in academic and traditionally theoretical programs.
European context

• The OECD 'Skills for jobs' report for instance mentions a need in the labor market for several humanities-related knowledge areas (e.g. education and training, communications and media, philosophy and theology, history and archeology and fine arts, etc.).

• Skills and abilities that have become vital for present-day employees such as social perceptiveness, verbal abilities and creativity (cf. OECD-report 'Skills for jobs' /'Higher Education Modernisation Agenda') also seem to link up with humanities profiles.

However, empirical research into the exact set of skills and attitudes that emerge from the humanities' curriculum at KU Leuven faculty of Arts was lacking.
Project team

Eline Zenner  
Researcher

 Liesbet Heyvaert  
Vice dean of Education

Advisor  
(1st year – transition to the labour market)
Methodology and results

How? What?
Methodology

1. Social engagement
2. Language system and proficiency
3. Disciplinary core
4. Sensibility for (aesthetic) nuance and complexity
5. Repertoire
6. Intercultural skills
7. Open view
8. Professional communication
9. Work autonomously and in group
10. Information and source specialist
11. Research methods and techniques
12. Textual skills
13. Critical thinking
14. Structuring and transferring knowledge

n = 1684

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language proficiency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being critical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>multilinguality</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having a critical perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical thinking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic insight</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I can look at things from different perspectives. I know that my own role as interpreter is crucial in my analysis: my understanding of the truth and reality are always in relation to myself.

I can look at and analyse a problem from different angles.

Methodology

- Being critical
- Critical perspective
- Having a critical perspective
- Critical thinking

bottom-up set of skills
- pretest
- hearings
- literature
- policy texts

Translation of skills into meaningful statements

Pilot study
- Supplementing statements from faculty of social sciences
- Supplementing statements from faculty of sciences

Final list of perceived skills
n = 92
Methodology

Translation of skills into meaningful statements

Pilot study

Final list of perceived skills
n = 92

Translation of skills into meaningful statements

Pilot study

Final list of perceived skills
n = 92

Factor analysis
1. Linguistic insight, language proficiency and textual skills
2. Research
3. Open view, nuance and multiperspectivity
4. Distilling and synthesizing information
5. Communication
6. Society, historical consciousness and cultural relativity
7. Autonomous organisation

Faculteit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculteit</th>
<th>n</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Arts</td>
<td>551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Social Sciences</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Sciences</td>
<td>218</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>986</td>
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</table>
Results for three faculties

- Linguistic insight, language proficiency and textual skills
- Research
- Open view, nuance and multiperspectivity
- Distilling and synthesizing information
- Communication
- Society, historical consciousness and cultural relativity
- Autonomous organisation
Comparison: faculty of Arts & faculty of Social Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic insight, language proficiency and textual skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
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## Comparison: faculty of Arts & faculty of Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic insight, language proficiency and textual skills</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Autonomous organisation</td>
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</table>
Linguistic insight, language proficiency and textual skills

Red = not acquired
Green = acquired

Bright colour = needed on the labour market
Light colour = not needed on the labour market

Correcting texts
Translating in a professional way

Alumni
Alumni

Research

Red = not acquired
Green = acquired

Bright colour = needed on the labour market
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Software analyses
Impact

Strategies to raise awareness of skills
GOOD PRACTICES

TEKST EN TAAL
- Taalzicht, taalvaardigheid en tekstbehandeling
- INITIATIEVEN

OPEN BLIK
- Interculturaliteit, nuance en multiperspectiviteit
- INITIATIEVEN

BREED KADER
- Maatschappelijk, historisch en cultureel bewustzijn
- INITIATIEVEN

ORGANISATIELAAG
- Zelfstandig organiseren
- INITIATIEVEN

ONDERZOEK
- Onderzoek en methode
- INITIATIEVEN

INFORMATIEBEHEER
- Informatie verzamelen en analyseren
- INITIATIEVEN

Nieuw model masterproefseminaries in de opleiding Geschiedenis
Lees meer

Onderzoeksstage in de master na master Literatuurwetenschappen
Lees meer

Taalvariatieonderzoek in het vak Sociolinguistiek
Lees meer

Twee soorten stages in de master Musicologie
Lees meer
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Challenge in semester 1
- Extracurricular challenge for bachelor students
- PR campaign/podcast challenge

Event in semester 2
- Extracurricular event for bachelor Students
- Debate night
Plans for the future

Work in progress
JOB INTERVIEW TRAINING
ASSET-H
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING MODULE
The end

• Thank you for your attention!
• Are there any questions?
• Presentation – loaded on conference website
References (1)


• Deegan, M. 2014. ‘This ever more amorphous thing called Digital Humanities’: Whither the Humanities project? *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education* 13, 1-2, 24-41.

References (2)

- Hart Research Associates. 2013. *It takes more than a major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*. Washington.
References (3)

- 6 December 2016.
References (4)


- Tilman, H., and A. Stoof. Communicatie als kritische succesfactor bij het ontwikkelen van competentiegerichte beroepsprielen.


