



ECER 2015 "Education and Transition"
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'Look on every exit as being an entrance to somewhere else'
- Transitions from further to higher education in Ireland

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**EVERY EXIT IS AN
ENTRANCE SOMEWHERE ELSE**





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Research Focus

- Research explored the entrance and exit points in Irelands FE and HE pathways.
- Irelands two dominant progression routes to HE: the Leaving Certificate Qualification and FETAC qualifications within the Further & Vocational Education sector.
- Within this intersection is the concept of **social capital**.
- The task of bridging the gap between further and higher education is challenged when examining a range of exit routes that are designed to reduce and minimize barriers as the learner enters the next stage on their learning journey.
- The research showed that many learners often seek alternative pathways to enter and exit the education and employment arena.
- The research extrapolates voices from the data that highlights what is happening on the ground as opposed to what is supposed to happen in theory from a policy driven perspective.
- The integral part of this research is transition; therefore, **we look on every exit as being an entrance to somewhere else**

Learner Transition Pathways

- Entrance and exit points in Irelands FE and HE
- Pathways labyrinth
- Irish labour market and economic context
- Dominant progression routes to Higher Education (Leaving Certificate)
- intersection is the concept of Social Capital
- Economic Drivers Model
- Reduce and minimise barriers
- **Voices**

Theoretical Concepts

- **From the Voices**

- Social Capital – ‘facilitation and co-operation within or among groups’ (OECD)
- Bridging Networks
- social networks, norms, shared beliefs and institutional systems (Putnam, 2000)
- Habitus
- Bridging Programmes (local governance) : Highly functional
- Class - social capital; economic, cultural and social (Bourdieu, 1996)

Theoretical Concepts

- **From the Voices**

- Progression, Transition & Trust
- Lack of social bridges can turn communities into eternal outsiders - *linked to Economic Drivers*
- Fear of exit (norms)
- Exit, Voice & Loyalty (Hirschman, 1993) juxtapose Bourdieu's (2000) social agency and political intervention.

Exit & Voice

- **Exit & Voice** themselves represent an active and passive union between social agency and political action. Hirschman employs Adam Smith's analogy of the 'invisible hand'
- Students and stakeholders move silently through Ireland's education and training market, making and breaking connections.
- These voices from stakeholders has born testament to the silence around the student experience, this has far reaching effects on successful transfer and progression
- **Voice** is vocal which gives this expression its potential to be political.
- Choice? – the locked **Exit**

Research Findings

	Research Questions	Focus Group themes	Key words
What?	Should a Programme be designed based on Ireland's Future Skills Needs, National Access Policies and /or SOLAS Strategy or driven by demand at local level?	Programme Design	Social Capital
Why	Should there be progression/ non-Progression options to all of the HEI's Faculties and Schools (e.g.: Engineering, and Computing, Sciences, Business and Humanities etc.)?	Barriers/Economic Focus	Exit/ Entrance Voice
Who	Who do you believe this Initiative should target?	Target audience	SOLAS/ Social Welfare

WHAT?

- Flexible Labour Market
- Fixed Avenues
 - CAO Points (HE Access)
 - Labour market demand vocational programmes from HE providers
 - FET Programmes – vocational in nature (also for HE access)
- Other Flexible pathways, HEAR, DARE
- Exit Drivers
 - Demand
 - Provision

Research Findings - Drivers

Further Education Drivers	Training Drivers
• Market-Led	• Market-Led
• Learner/Community-Led	• Client-Led
• Progression-Led	• Pre-market-Led
	• Support-Led

WHAT?

- In the context of education, it depends on the power of the individual (student) within an educational-organisation coalition (stakeholders).
- Need for a skilled work force, a collective force that is imperative to growth and recovery, at both a local level and at national level.
- Other interventions: JobPath, Intreo

Progression to HE - WHY?

- Academic Standards
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Prior Experiential Learning
- Poor policy implementation (Adult & LLL)
- Core modules Vs Specific modules (at FE level)
- Quality Assurance - on FE side only

Open Exits

- “Proving Hamlet wrong” (Hirschman 2013) is about proving systems wrong and the importance of acting in the face of doubt. Of bringing centre stage our minor students as they try to fit their keys in the transition exit and entrance doors from FE to HE, of highlighting a system that does not serve all learners’ and learning institutes. This is where we act in good faith but in the face of doubt. A Fear of questioning a paradigm system, that has for many been engrained in the culture and trusted to deliver. This requires a thorough review of the education and the training paradigm within the Economic Drivers model. One that requires action, a shift from parallel to perpendicular thinking - one to prove Hamlet wrong.
- We need to voice on stage transitions that are supposed to happen off....on paper.
- Which is our kind of integrity, as we seek to unlock exits, so that they become an entrance to somewhere else.

THANK YOU

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