A STUDENT VOICE APPROACH IN WORK-RELATED LEARNING. FROM LESSON-LEARNED IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TO SUGGESTIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This paper presents a research on work-related learning through School-work Alternance in Secondary Education that involved researchers of University of Florence, ten secondary Schools, public and private entities in the Province of Arezzo and La Spezia. From the analysis of three case studies, it elicits criteria for an educational model that integrates work-related learning with student voice perspective.

Keywords: skill mismatch, learner-centred teaching, experiential learning, career guidance.

1. A challenging context: from the category of crisis to that of transition

A European and Italian reasoned geography of crisis suggests that we risk answering to the many challenges originated from 2008 international crisis, and continuously changed since then, with 'outdated' responses if we stick to the category of crisis, although quite developed and diversified in literature (Serres 2009; Bauman 2014). In fact, after almost ten years of profound transformation not only in the labour market and economics, but regarding overall citizens' living styles, it might be time to shift to the transition approach (Hopkins 2012). The latter indicates that not only we are not going to leap back to the pre-2008 crisis for structural reasons, but, turned into positive terms, we face the opportunity to build something completely new, that is ecologically sound and sustainable both for human beings and the Planet Earth. Thanks to digital technology, we should work toward the construction of a resilient and empathic society (Rifkins 2010) where all citizens can contribute to new political and economic forms of societies that are more inclusive and fair. In such a trip from what is no longer and something which is still underway, what is the contribution that transformative education (Mezirow 1991) can offer in shaping citizens of the future, as individual and as communities, starting from the phase of their life when they prepare themselves to assume their roles in human society?

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In this paper, we focus on how transformative education and educational models that integrate work-related learning and a student voice approach can contribute to build a diffused human and social capital that can lead transition toward new scenarios, in a framework of open networks and value chains going back and forth from the private to the public spheres of society.

But where are we? How does the panorama appear to be today with such long-term vision? There are definitely plenty of clouds in the sky. Skill mismatch in national and European labour markets is one of them since it hinders young people to develop and thrive while creating stagnation in economies: it originates from insufficient correspondence between workers' competences and the transforming demand of the labour market. Evidences show there is not an acceptable correspondence between workers' skills and the need of the labour market (ILO 2014). European Bank indicates skill mismatch for stressed and non-stressed countries, calculated as the difference in skills between the labour force and employment. Focusing on the more recent evolution, skill mismatches remained at high levels in most euro area countries, especially in the stressed euro area countries, such as Spain, Greece, Ireland and Portugal, where increases already occurred in the first phase of the crisis. In other stressed countries– Italy, Cyprus and Slovenia – skill mismatch has recently significantly increased (ECB 2015).

In such context workers are either:
• Over-skilled i.e. too qualified for available jobs. This leads to brain drain and youth migration toward more solid economics as is the case for Italy as demonstrated in the Fondazione Migrantes Report *Italiani nel Mondo* for 2016.
• Under-skilled i.e. not properly trained to insert into contemporary jobs, putting investors in the conditions to search for human resources abroad, often without a clear governance, or migrants and local unskilled workers compete in the same under-protected market, worsening societal disintegration.

We can highlight another aspect: in a globalized rapidly changing competitive society cross-country mobility flows in the EU are still much lower than those recorded in other highly integrated economic areas, notably the United States, and well below mobility within countries (EC 2015). Migrations and mobility have different social and symbolic weight in general public opinion: the first is connected to poverty and exclusion while the second to the fulfilment of life project, self-improvement and increased wealth. Nevertheless, they both represent ways to foster economies and inclusion, by matching supply and demand in an everyday more globalized labour market.

The phenomenon of over-skilled is significantly increasing in some European countries (3.6% from 2002 to 2012), especially for young people and women. In Italy (ISFOL, PIAAC-OECD 2014) indicates the following data:
- Under-skilled rate is 7.5%, while OECD average is 3.6%
- Over-skilled rate is 12%, while the OECD average is 10%

CEDEFOP (2015, 2010) records indicated that the phenomenon is still rising in Italy compared with previous surveys. In fact, hindering EU and national growth, such phenomenon turned into a challenge especially in Italy, where the percentage of under-qualified workers has become worryingly higher than European average. A wealth of explanations is available: workers' poor digital and technological literacy within a national framework of still fragile lifelong and work-based education and training together with new complex requirements in work organization, job design, career development that have not been met.

Another compelling factor in the analysis is the impact of digital technologies on labour markets that has boosted part of the population, especially the most innovative niche, but at the same time disoriented the majority of workers, especially elder ones. According to the EU there may be a lack of up to 500 thousands ICT professionals in 2020 (EU 2016). In fact, in an everyday more digital society developing a digital talent pool is crucial for the EU labour Market, both in terms of competitiveness but also for inclusion. According to the same study today, around 45% of Europeans have only basic digital skills. While all sectors of the economy are becoming digital 36% of the labour force has insufficient digital skills. Despite high unemployment rates, Europe also lacks digitally skilled persons to fill job vacancies.

It is arguable then that EU challenge is not just to improve skill levels, but to match people with the right skills to the right jobs It is an European and national priority that requires policies to increase education and training responsiveness to labour market needs. Mitigating skill mismatch in an era of fast-paced digitalisation and automation requires a well-developed skills anticipation infrastructure in countries and an integrative approach to skills governance that should be supported at the central level (CEDEFOP 2010). Among the best strategies that have been experimented to contain and progressively reduce such mismatch, available literature shows that strengthening relations among formal and no-formal education Agencies on one side and employers and the labour market on the other is a priority, in order to strengthen value chains from education, training and the labour market for future workers and prevent skill obsolescence or, even worse, their absence

from the market for those who are already employed (CEDEFOP 2015). Another field of experimentation is to overcome disciplinary borders in education and training and develop workers' soft skills as strategic gear to enter and remain in the labour market, no matter how diverse are the features of each sector (CEDEFOP 2016).

At the euro area level, skill mismatch could also be reduced by encouraging greater labour market mobility – both within national labour markets and across the euro area countries. There is a need to improve the governance of such processes that are indeed already in place and can deliver great benefits not only for autochthonous citizens, but also for migrants and asylum seekers, as stated in the EU Agenda for Migration (EU 2015).

In Italy we have a great opportunity with the model of School Work Alternance that is contained in the Law 107/2015, known as 'La buona scuola'. The law represents a contribution, and have great potential, to transform and improve transition paths from school to work in Italy.

In Europe, different types of transitions from formal education to training and employment make a great difference in youth employment rates as well as in gender equity (Shoon–Silbereisen 2009). In particular, the authors indicate four main approaches that match with as much welfare systems:
• Continental/Central Europe with dual systems that interconnect education, vocational training and labour from early stage of life and put the labour system at the centre.
• Scandinavian universalistic systems with a strong investment on inclusive education and training and open access for all, embedded in the idea of collective social responsiveness that should not leave anyone left behind.
• Anglo–Saxon liberal regimes, that liberalize training opportunities, do not protect youth from risks but bet on competitiveness of individual and market.
• Lastly Mediterranean countries where there is a lack of investment in creating stronger links between vocational training, labour and innovation. Vocational training is culturally seen as a second choice compared to University and there are strong unbalances of high quality courses in different territories.

What is then the vision we can inspire from in facing the challenges? According to the New skills Agenda for Europe 2020 EU aims to:
• Improve the quality and relevance of skills formation
• Make skills more visible and comparable
The Agenda also offers some suggestions on how to proceed that are taken into consideration in this paper, as:

- improve skills intelligence and information for better career choices;
- making Vocational Education and Training (VET) a first choice by enhancing opportunities for VET learners to undertake a work based learning experience and promoting greater visibility of good labour market outcomes of VET;
- a review of the Recommendation on Key Competences to help more people acquire the core set of skills necessary to work and live in the 21st century with a special focus on promoting entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets and skills.

In our research, we put the accent on the reflection on how to go beyond not only discipline-based competence, but also on key competences (EU 2006) that have been partly made obsolete by social and economical change. We assume that investing in the development of soft skills as a strategic element to enter and remain in the labour market (CEDEFOP 2016).

Soft skills in our model complement hard skills related to a particular job or task and can be defined as a combination of transversal competences and attitudes that valuing already existing people' capabilities improve their performance at work, while boosting their social and emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996). School Work Alternance should be based on a clear statement of educational goals to be attained, in terms of soft skills. Intended to be an innovative educational experience that combines knowledge and know-how, School Work Alternance, and all stakeholders involved, should guide students in reckoning their aspirations while opening the guided and evaluated learning to the outside world.

From the results of our research, we see at least three clear advantages in School Work Alternance:

- It starts to fill a gap of communication, mutual understanding and interrelation between school and the world of work. As mentioned above the Mediterranean transition model is still too characterized by a clear cut between the time to learn and the time to work that urgently needs to be overcome.
- It has an inter-generational approach: in Schools the teacher are the only adults that students interact with, while in alternation they are exposed to decision makers, managers, professional, workers and a wealth of stakeholders.
- It fosters local networks and alliances for change among actors who are not so used of keen to working together, especially since their organizational systems are so diverse. The firm work so distinctively from a secondary school: the power relations are different, are expectations in terms of commitment and results. However, after only two years of implementation, there are many open questions that still need a response.

2. Methodology

When confronted with the poor attainment in school to work cooperation, seizing the opportunity of 'La Buona Scuola' (Italian Law 107/2015), we investigate on how to foster the development of soft skills through work-based learning, putting students at the centre in their local communities. The research object is to identify criteria to design a pattern of work–related learning in a student voice perspective, through drawing from lesson–learned in three empirical researches in Secondary Education that involved the University of Firenze and ten Secondary schools in the Province of Arezzo and La Spezia (Galeotti 2016; Esposito 2016). These were School Work Alternance projects realized through action–research and here presented as three case studies.

The method adopted in this qualitative research (Silverman 2002) is the case study, which is «a research strategy comprising an all–encompassing method» (Yin 2009: 14; Yin 2011), rather than a real and proper methodology, able to deal with particular situations within their own functioning, characteristic complexity (Stake 1995). This is an analysis of phenomenon in the real context in which they occur and, as such, uses multiple sources of evidence, with an exploratory purpose and preliminary to future studies, also in a comparative perspective (Yin 2009).

The stages of investigation developed as follows:
- Building the conceptual framework and identifying the variables of analysis
- Collection and analysis of documents, materials and products in the three Schools
- Comparative analysis of the data collected in the three case studies.

As mentioned, case studies refer to three school–work Alternance projects activated between 2015 and 2016 by schools in collaboration with the University of Florence and with a wealth of stakeholders of the territories involved. The first case study called 'Heritage Lab' is linked to the project *Market of Cultural Heritage and the New Generations*, financed by the Tuscany Region and the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio of Firenze. The aim of the project was to identify strategic actions for the development of the cultural sector in terms of strengthening the skills of the various players involved, including those of young people engaged in vocational education and training. Launched in 2011, the project was structured in a first round of research on the cultural sector in the Arezzo area in terms of system characteristics, service offerings, training demand (FCRF 2013) and a second phase (2014–2015) with a research–intervention with several local stakeholders (cultural sector companies, schools, museums,

public agencies, training agencies, etc.). Research–Action on Work School Alternance was developed in the second phase of the project.

Peoplefusion is a complex digital platform (<http://www.people-fusion.it>) that has been designed by the Municipality of La Spezia in collaboration with UNIFI and the firm INFOPORTO in order to facilitate the access of foreign residents to the network of social services available in the local community. Financed by Fondazione TIM in 2014, the project involved in the modality of school–work alternance around 75 young students of secondary school. Their role was not only to collect information on existing services but also to support professionals in making those information available and usable for different sectors of the population. The platform in fact proved useful not only for foreigners (it is translated into English, Spanish, Albanian, Arabic and Bangli) but also to native Italians.

Young Lab is part of the wider project of *Observatory of Social Change* realized by the Municipality of La Spezia with the Scientific support of UNIFI. Its aims are to promote a culture of data and evidence among the social workers of the Service network, through embedded learning and action research. The Observatory yearly collects quantitative and qualitative data on the diverse aspects of social change elaborate them and provide decision makers with recommendations for policy and practices. Young Lab was meant to be a social innovation in previous experience of Observatories: it elicits students' perspectives and ideas on social issues, putting them in the condition of acting as 'junior researchers' accompanied both in training and in action by seniors. Forty-five students in fact were trained, designed and submitted questionnaires, realized interviews and participated to focus groups in order to research the challenges of volunteer associations in facing new needs of the population. The Table 1 briefly summarizes the main features of each project.

The analysis of the three case studies was based on a set of variables derived from two concepts: 'work–related learning' and 'student voice approach'.

The term 'work–related learning' describes a complex educational phenomenon that includes a series of educational missions, a set of activities, a collection of topics and a repertoire of teaching and learning styles (Huddleston, Stanley 2012). In literature there are also other definitions that refer to functional educational strategies for achieving career and career goals, which include times in workplaces, alternating with more conventional learning instances within school institutions (Coll *et al.* 2008); or formal education and training programs for job creation, formal and informal learning in the workplace, continuing vocational training for professional development offered outside the workplace (Dirkx 2011). While carrying a focus on work or

education, these definitions share a bottom line: integrating a practical experience (such as work) with an educational experience (such as upper secondary education) that creates synergies and significant benefits for students and other stakeholders (Gardner, Bartkus 2014).

Table 1 – The three projects of School Work Alternance, Schools, classes and students involved. [Source: Author's own]

Project	Secondary schools	Classes	N. students involved
Heritage Lab	ISIS Buonarroti-Fossombroni, Arezzo IIS "Città di Piero", Sansepolcro IIS "Signorelli", Cortona	3 Technical Institutes 1 Lyceum (Classic) Two class groups and two mixed groups coming from 4 classes	70 with a majority of female students
People fusion	Liceo Scientifico "Pacinotti" Istituto Tecnico Commerciale "Fossati-Da Passano" Istituto Tecnico "Capellini-Sauro" Istituto Professionale Alberghiero "Casini"	1 Professional Institute 2 Technical Institutes 1 Lyceum (Scientific) They were organized in 5 mixed groups coming from 9 classes	75 with a substantial gender balance
Young Lab	Istituto Tecnico Commerciale "Fossati-Da Passano" Liceo Classico "Costa" Istituto Professionale "Einaudi-Chiodo"	1 Professional Institute 1 Technical Institute 1 Lyceum (Classic) They were organized in 2 mixed groups coming from 7 classes	45 students with a majority of female students

The 'student voice' approach (Flechter 2017, 2014; Seal, Gibson, Haynes, Potter 2015; Grion, Manca, 2015; Grion, Dettori 2015; Cook-Sather, Grion 2013), now widely disseminated abroad but still little known in Italy, emphasizes the importance of collecting «any expression of any learner about anything related to education» (Fletcher 2014: 2), or the perspective of students about educational activities and school life in general. Students in fact can offer information and reflections to which teachers and others should listen to in relation to their actions (Cook-Sather 2009). The recognition and legitimacy of the contribution of the concerned stakeholders open up to the possibility of making students more involved and responsible in their school contexts while at the same time improving the quality of training (Cook-Sather 2002; Angus 2006). A literature review of 'student voice' perspective shows different ways to practice it, which were considered in the construction of criteria for case analysis. Specifically, we identified four main areas:
• Learning process: when students plan educational activities and carry out student-led research, for increasing their investment,

ownership, and consequent learning (Flutter, Rudduck, 2004; Fletcher 2004; Bragg, Fielding 2003).
- School culture: involving students as partner to transform the attitudes and systems that underlay the culture of organizations, schools and communities (Young, Sazama 2006; Rudduck 2007).
- Diversity: engaging students to promote diversity of perspectives and the acceptance of cultural, racial, economic, and social diversity (Rubin, Silva 2003; Cushman 2003).
- Civic engagement: students as change agents can lead to the development of skills and abilities to be active citizenship and effective members of their communities (Young, Sazama 2006; Hooks 2004; Freire 1987).

As a qualitative research, data collection and analysis were carried out using the content analysis method (Semeraro 2011), applied to the empirical materials produced during the implementation of the three projects (interviews, analysis reports, self-report of the researcher, activity monitoring cards, student products, etc.), which describe problematic moments and knowledge building at individual and group level (Denzin, Lincoln 2005).

In order to reach a better and deeper understanding of the reality investigated (Coggi, Ricchiardi 2005), the analysis of the collected data was carried out using the interpretative approach (Trinchero 2004), which provided for the aggregation of evidence on the aspects that characterize the work-related learning, based on our reworking of Cooper, Orrell and Bowden proposal (2010). The collected data was then elaborated, combining the work-related learning and student voice approaches, starting with the different declinations of the two concepts in the literature and the theoretical framework of the study to highlight the relationships between them. Subsequently, collected data were analysed in a comparative key to highlight common elements and differences in order to identify research criteria and define an educational model that could combine work-related learning with the student voice approach in the alternance of school and work.

3. Research results

Beyond the different specific objectives of the three projects (cultural heritage, access to services for foreigners, understanding social change and policy design) and the output of the involved teams, the didactic activities carried out within the job alternation became and indoor and/or outdoor labs, where students 'as researchers' were engaged in planning and implementing their ideas and proposals which

could only materialize through their full participation. The methodologies used in the workshops followed the logic and principles of problem-based learning (Barrows, Tamblyn 1980, Barrows, 1988; Woods, 1994) and project-based learning (Krajcik, Blumenfeld, 2006). These two approaches, in some respects superimposable, are both attributable to constructivism (Brandon & All, 2010; Fox, 2001) and in particular to located learning (Lave, 1988; Lave, Wenger, 1990; Brown, Collins, Duguid 1989), active knowledge building (Dewey 1959, 1973), social interactions (Vygotskij, 1980; Wertsch, 1985) and experiential learning (Kolb 1984; Kolb, Boyatzis, Mainemelis, 1999). Both are among the methods of learner-centered teaching (Weimer 2013), and move from a problem that constitutes the starting point of the learning process, which develops through the design and application of a resolution hypothesis of the same. What differentiates them is the greater or lesser attention to the design momentum, namely the search for effective and operational solutions that aim, whenever possible, to produce concrete applications or the production of products consistent with the analysis carried out.

In the three study cases, training goals have been declined in terms of strengthening soft skills with reference to some of the ten areas of expertise deemed necessary by 2020 by the Institute for the Future of Palo Alto (2010).

One aspect that has characterized all the experiences was active involvement in various forms of stakeholders in the territory, i.e. public and private actors other than University involved actively in the realization of laboratory activities. The Table 2 shows the different characteristics of the three educational proposals from their key elements in a comparative way.

Table 2 – Main results of comparative analysis of three case studies. [Source: author's own]

	Heritage Lab	People Fusion	Young Lab
Overall Objectives	Innovate the relationship between higher education and labour market, with a focus on valuing local cultural heritage. To develop soft skills together with disciplinary contents	To capitalize students' perspective in facilitating foreign citizens' access to the Local Service Network through a multi-lingual interactive web platform. Students were asked to collect information, develop relations and create a user-friendly approach, valuing their experience and networks.	To include youth's perspective and experiential living in the analysis of social challenges and needs within the framework of the *Observatory of Social Change* of Distretto Socio-Sanitario 18 of La Spezia

	Heritage Lab	People Fusion	Young Lab
Working/ Learning methodology	project-based learning and problem-based learning	Involve-share common objectives among different stakeholders. – train-apply-reflect-solve problems. The strongest results developed OUTSIDE the School. – experiment meaningful school to work (and back) transitions	Share objectives, value student own experiences, train in basic research methodology, 'know where you live', observe, collect and reflect, cultivate informed citizenship
Output	Design of an E-commerce website for local and traditional artisans A project on territorial marketing to improve youth tourism A project of cultural heritage valorisation to participate in National call of Ministry of Education Co-design of School Work Alternance projects in cultural institutions and organizations	A web-based platform connected to social media whose contents have been collected and selected by students.	A 2016 profile of social change that mainstreams student perspective, particularly in analysing the Civil Society role. Valuing youth perspective on main contemporary social issues, in particular active citizenship and solidarity and intergenerational dialogue
Learning outcomes	Strengthened soft skills: Social intelligence; sense-making, Novel And Adaptive Thinking; Cognitive Load Management. Promoted the transition to Career Management Skills	Strengthened soft skills and citizenship A more informed and active local community especially among youth De-construction of prejudice and prevention of hate speech based on ignorance	Strengthened soft skills, especially 'get to know your environment' and protagonism in promoting change. Understood the best use of participatory research and activation tools as world café, questionnaires, interviews
Specific features	In each activities phases submission of a self-assessment and evaluation questionnaire for reflecting on soft skills 'stimulated' during the activities	Digital skills enhanced through coding Focus on 'digital democracy'	Students see themselves as 'junior researchers' Intergenerational education and learning
Partners	Local and regional entrepreneurs in Cultural Heritage sector	Around 30 public and private service providers with hundreds of professionals involved	Distretto Socio-Sanitario 18 of La Spezia; Volunteer Service Centre "Vivere Insieme" ANTEAS; More than 50 Associations and Cooperatives informed

By analysing how the concepts of work–related learning and student voice have been declined in the three study cases, it is important to note that while Heritage Lab has been included in the curricular activity and has been a pre–requisite for students to enter the selected company, People Fusion Labs and Young Lab laboratories have developed first within the organization hosting the alternation, i.e. the Municipality of La Spezia, supported by UNIFI. Going back the work–related classification previously illustrated, Heritage Lab is a *Learn for work* (QCA 2003) experience that engages and integrates with the curriculum of studies in order to develop skills in a prospect of employability. People Fusion and Young Lab are experiences of *Learn through work* typical of the alternative training device. Considering the student voice perspective, all three cases have adopted it in the planning of educational activities and in civil engagement even if in different ways (i.e. Heritage Lab has focused on the export of cultural heritage for social development − the economics of their communities, while People fusion and Young Lab deepened the aspects of social inclusion and the new social needs of communities. The Table 3 below shows the fertile convergence the two approaches.

Table 3 – Connection between work-related activities carried out by the three project with student voice prospective. [Source: author's own]

Work–related / Student voice	Learn for work	Learn through work	Learn about work
SV for learning.	Heritage Lab	People Fusion; Young Lab	
SV for school culture	Heritage Lab		
SV for diversity		People Fusion	
SV for civic engagement	Heritage Lab	People Fusion; Young Lab	

If we consider the classification of the range of student-voice-oriented activities proposed by Toshalis and Nakkula (2012), the tree case studies are between 'activism' and 'leadership'. While the 'activism' typology includes identifying problems, generating solutions, organizing responses, agitating and/or educating for change both in and outside of school contexts, leadership typology previews co-planning, making decisions and accepting significant responsibility for outcomes, co–guiding group processes, co–conducting activities youth are understood as leaders. Programs that prepare students to

lead tend to view youth as problem solvers, with the skills and in-sights communities require in order to move forward (Mitra 2009; Osberg, Pope, Galloway 2006).

4. Final remarks and lessons learnt

To conclude, we would like to focus on lessons learnt and sugges-tions for implementing work–related activities with a student voice approach, even scaling up to higher education. Integrating and fos-tering synergies between formal and non–formal agencies and prac-tice results in significant advantages not only for students but also for the rest of the actors involved.

By pursuing a measurable impact of developed and diversified skills for employability, a contemporary learner-centered perspective emerges: students learn through work while teachers, trainers and ex-perts enrich content and didactic through action learning; they are all engaged to build employability paths.

Resuming the definition of work–related learning proposed by Huddleston and Stanley, the presented experiences can be described as the result of the integration between:
- an educational mission directed at the development of professional pathways starting from the valuing of knowledge and disciplinary skills held by students and the resources of a specific territory;
- a set of activities characterized by the integration of active and reflec-tive methods directed at strengthening soft skills;
- a collection of topics that revolve around specific content but which by their nature have an interdisciplinary character and are therefore adaptable to different study paths and economic sectors;
- a repertoire of learning and learning styles that develop through the connection of problem-based learning approach to project-based learning, both of which are related to learner–centered teaching methodologies.

Based on the findings of case study analysis, the main criteria for implementing a work-related learning experience in a student voice perspective are:
- Co–design paths of school work alternance in a participatory way, involving students, teachers and local stakeholders
- Stimulate collaborative research networks between social, edu-cational, economic and cultural organizations and stakeholders within the private and public sector
- Consolidate and build students' soft skills starting from valuing from their previous knowledge and disciplinary skills.

• Develop expert assessment/evaluation tools for traineeship 'as learning experiences' and of the soft skills acquired

The educational model proposed integrates learner-centered teaching, 'learn through work' and 'learn for work' by evaluating students' voices in negotiating *curricula*, in order to develop skills in a perspective of employability. Overall, the model aims at shaping new relationships between School, Enterprises and the Labor Market while integrating knowledge and disciplinary skills with soft skills. It can contribute to:
• Design school-work Alternance with the direct involvement of students and the local community (Fletcher 2014; Seale *et al.* 2015).
• Develop training pathways that offer students the opportunity to explore employment opportunities and career development (Subramaniam, Freudenberg 2007), within the framework of Cultural and Social Economy.
• Give more visibility to the development of soft skills *in curricula* beyond disciplinary skills (Freudenberg, Brimble, Cameron 2011).
• Connect between theory and practice, with positive learning effects.
• Foster motivation through valuing incoming experiences, knowledge and aspirations for further learning.

There is ample room for further research on potentialities and scaling up opportunities of the same model in higher Tertiary Education, especially vocational training. Some have already emerged:
• Promote and disseminate a culture of mutual understanding between Universities, Schools and other key stakeholders of the local community.
• Experiment entrepreneurship and innovation labs for the development of new profiles, product and services of the Transition Society.

Finally, for the Department of Education and Psychology, the model can be exploited to train future teachers, educators, professionals, entrepreneurs and other facilitators on the methods and potentialities of work-related approaches, through models genuinely based on experimentation and evidence.

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