



**Scalable & cost-effective facilitation  
of professional identity transformation in public  
employment services**

**On-line collaborative learning for professionals:  
developing communities of practice**

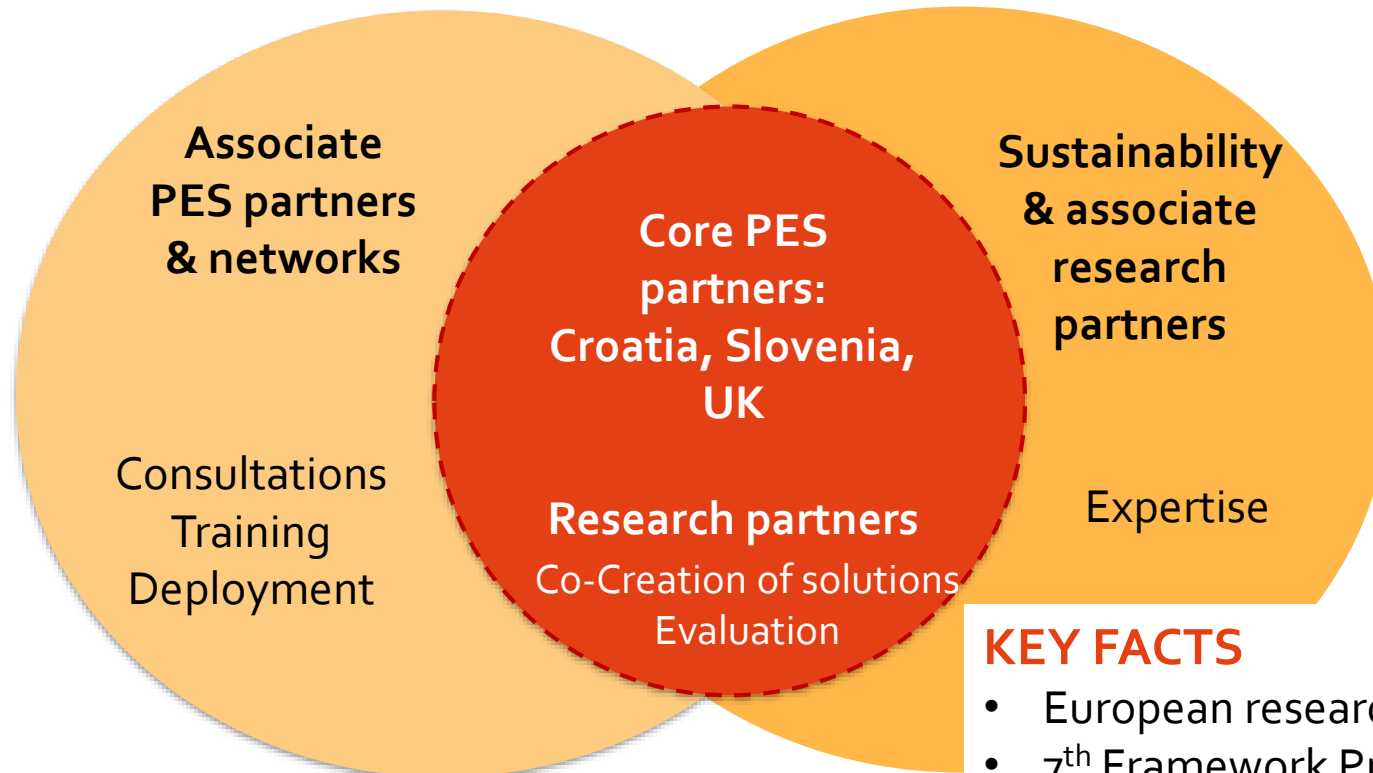
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Padua, 5 – 7 October, 2017 #EmployID

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# An Open Project based on principles of co-construction



**+ additional consultations**

## KEY FACTS

- European research project (5.5 M€)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme
- 4 years (Feb 2014 – April 2018)
- 11 partners, amongst them 3 PES (UK, Slovenia, Croatia)
- 32 associate partners (mostly PES)

## On-line collaborative learning

- Project supporting identity transformation of careers and employment counsellors working in European Public Employment Services (PES).
- Two on-line collaborative learning programmes co-constructed to support identity development for employer advisers and work coaches in a PES.
- On-line tool also developed which allowed both groups to access open and linked labour market information, to transform how PES staff interact with, and are perceived by clients and employers.
- On-line platforms to support communities of practice in 2 PES
- **An international MOOC primarily designed to support individual careers practitioners across Europe (our focus today)**
- On-line peer coaching programmes

Professional identity  
transformation

# International MOOC on Changing World of Work: Collaborative Learning supporting individual practitioners

April – June 2017 (6 weeks)  
Discussions based around:  
Changing World of Work;  
Digitalisation; LMI support;  
Peer coaching; Reflection

Over 400 practitioners, 80  
fully engaged; 40 very active  
contributors (mainly EU; but  
also NZ; Russia; Norway;  
Malaysia)

- Overcoming feelings of isolation;
- Dialogue implications of changing world of work;
- Identity clash organisational roles, past occupational identities and personal aspirations;
- Fragmented sense of community;
- Barriers to / triggers for identity transformation;
- Shifting responsibility for individual career management.

I've heard it said that taking a 'coaching approach' to guidance means that there is less need for expertise to sit with advisers themselves as your role is to facilitate clients to find out information for themselves. While I think a coaching approach to guidance is very useful, I think there is a place for careers advisers to hold labour market expertise. I certainly couldn't do my job without all the knowledge I've accumulated over my professional career. The other thing I hear often is that the labour market is changing so rapidly that we're 'preparing our young people for jobs that don't exist yet' - and sometimes this sounds to me like an invitation to overlook LMI. I wonder if I / we could be doing more to argue the case for LMI! I particularly liked this quote from this week's materials: "LMI is pivotal to effective practice, since high quality, impartial, current, expert knowledge about the labour market distinguishes career and employment guidance and counselling from other types of helping."



Overall purpose and desired process is clear! Practitioner identity less so!  
Ideal role is career co-construction but is this on offer from organisations for all or indeed any clients?

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Moving the discussion along:

Segment 1: As \*\*\* observes, even where LMI is not an explicit part of our work, it does play into **career adaptability**, so has relevance for our **professional development**.

Segment 2: [those] advising and supporting students do need **regular overviews**. Great to know that these are being provided on regular basis. \*\*\* sums it up beautifully: '**every client has their own path to follow**'. Thanks to all 3 of you.

Resources / time for clients?

Resources / time for own professional development?

Resources / time for supporting learning and development of other members of the community?

Which community? More questions .....



Thoughts of an experienced practitioner:

I also see a change in my own approach over time. I started with a very cognitive approach where the corner stones were combining information about yourself with information about opportunities (CIP, dots). Later I have moved more and more towards the psychodynamic, humanistic and social learning theories. I usually point this put when teaching careers learning but I'd probably need to make it clearer also in one-to-one meetings.

'Old school' practitioners sticking with their identities as psychologists, matching and use of psychometrics?

Occupational identities clashing with patterns of organisational attachment .....

How well do models of career guidance fit with client behaviour?

What if clients only 'dip' into information?

What about clients who do not make, have or follow clear career plans?

1. 'This comment really got me thinking: "If we accept that not everyone always behaves rationally, then we need to start questioning how sensible it is to give LMI in the way that this 'matching' model of human behaviour suggests." I was thinking that generally how we are consuming information seems to be changing - particularly maybe in the Web 2.0 world. There's more emphasis on user generated content, sharing of information, and perhaps more of a recognition (in terms of web based information) that we are likely to 'dip' into information rather than read from beginning to end. Perhaps this way of consuming information is more fitting with other models of careers guidance (e.g. happenstance) than with matching theories...'
2. 'we relate to information differently and the way we make career decisions also varies, with only some people following clear plans. A focus upon adaptability may be of more help than trying to get everyone to seek a particular job which 'matches' their talents.'







Matching approach as the paradigm of choice for policy-makers.  
Practitioners may also use this as the default paradigm due to time constraints,  
workload pressure even when they believe there is a better way .....

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'While I wish I could share your optimism about the irrelevance of the matching approach today, I can't. I think many career/employment practitioners adopt this approach because they don't have time to do anything else. Policy makers, I know, are still 'stuck' with the notion that matching is what is required for strengthening the labour market - it addresses the skills gap and focuses on the needs of the employers. I think we have a way to go before all professionals can work in the way you describe. Aspirational, in my view. And couldn't agree more that this is an optimal way of operating.'



Other ideas worthy of discussion: how to support a variety of forms of reflection:  
reflection IN action as well as collective reflection on action;  
reflective writing

'I really appreciate the reflection IN action perspective. That's what really differentiates the reflection dimension from overall "evaluation". When we collaboratively evaluate we always try to reflect as well and quite often we adjust things for the future. However, reflecting (and adjusting/improving) in the middle of the process, is much harder, but equally important.'

'I am very much aware that reflective writing is invaluable for personal and professional growth. It is not at all easy to implement in a very busy life that most professionals in our field have.'



Feeling of being a member of community – hearing of the struggles and triumphs of other practitioners elsewhere in Europe; expressing empathy  
Feeling they are not alone

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'I work in a small team working with European jobs with ever-changing 'goalposts' and it has been a pleasure to see things from other professionals points of view. Digital and technological innovation have certainly changed the way people look for work and the way they do that work in the last 30 years since I started. As things move at such a fast pace and decisions are cast upon us daily, I have taken to heart the reflective part of this exercise as I think it is one of the most important. I remember 'writing alone does not cause changes in your life' 'Challenge your own previous assumptions' 'think about what to do differently in future in order to learn from it'. It sounds simple to apply, let's see if I'm up to the challenge:) Thank you all for your input it has been very worthwhile. .'

'There is a curious paradox that when feel we have no time at all because the demands on us are so overwhelming - that is exactly the moment we need to 'stop the clock' so as to make meaning of our experiences. If you are really pushed, take heart that 5 minutes reflection is better for you than 0 minutes.'

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Wide variation in roles of careers practitioners following digitalisation and organisational restructuring  
Working on the boundary of occupational identity – organisational and extra-organisational factors important; inter-disciplinary and inter-agency working

'My job has been transformed by digital technology just in the last few years. Previously I spent most of my time on face to face training and coaching, but now I run webinars, configure our talent management system, create online learning content and use social media. I'm on a very steep learning curve, and I am not a natural techie, but there is no choice but to keep up. Having said that I do enjoy the way that digital technology creates opportunities to share creative ideas and interact with a much wider range of people'



'I believe we as practitioners need to ensure that the individuals we are working with develop their skills so that they are able in the future to effectively manage their career changes, I am not sure this concept is too widely accepted by the public currently.'

Conclusion: this presentation has focused on the practitioner voice and what is clear is we need such spaces as offered by the MOOC to continue this conversation when the identities of careers practitioners are themselves in flux

'It's unfair to say older generations miss out, but there are large sections of populations still that don't have access to mobile or home-based IT still, *mostly the disadvantaged sections [emphasis added]*.

Keeping up to date to access employment or learning is vital - I know I lag way behind in this. Even a MOOC is new to me (although being rural I have participated in many online learning courses before, but this is a first!!).'



## Decent work, equity and social inclusion: career professionals reflect their client's situation The Digital Divide

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'In my area employers may advertise in local papers but they request an online application and at times when a person tries to apply the web site is not user friendly. I work with clients on a one-to-one basis assisting them in navigating their way through their online job application.

On completion of the application the client's confidence level is raised and I find this method assists them in overcoming their fear of IT. Although a client may attend a basic IT course ...if they are not using what they learned on a regular basis they lose the knowledge.

Also some clients may not have access to IT / Broadband which also excludes them'.





## Decent work, equity and social inclusion: career professionals reflect their client's situation The Digital Divide

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'The way in which employers now recruit has had a major impact on those seeking employment ...they do not feel as confident in the virtual environments they find themselves in when looking for jobs.

This also relates to the on-line guidance services that are being increasingly promoted which I feel are not as effective as the delivery of face-to-face guidance, as how can we know if jobseekers have the ability to interpret the information they gain?

Navigating their way through recruitment websites can be confusing leading to frustration of the user, resulting in them giving up'.





International MOOC April – June 2017 Changing World of Work  
very active learner engagement – thoughtful contributions

Major themes emerging from our analysis – the importance of:

- such a space for overcoming feelings of isolation
- need to continue dialogue about implications of changing world of work
- identity clash between their organisational roles, past occupational identities and personal aspirations
- fragmented sense of community
- barriers to / triggers for identity transformation
- self-perception of expertise
- shifting responsibility for their own individual career management.

# Links to the MOOC

## Massive Open Online Course The Changing World of Work


**The Changing World of Work**

COURSE INFO

Barbara Kiestinger 28 Mar '17 4 Weeks Free Certified

Virtual Classroom

COURSE OVERVIEW



Do you want to be prepared for the challenges of the **changing labour market**?

Do you want to better understand and apply skills related to **emotional awareness, active listening, reflection, coaching skills, peer coaching and powerful questioning**?

Do you want to explore tools for handling **Labour Market Information (LMI)** and the **digital agenda**?

This course has been devised as part of the European **EmployID** project, for Public Employment Services (PES) practitioners and careers professionals. It runs for 5 weeks with an estimated workload of 3.5 hours per week; the total workload is expected to be 17.5 hours.

**Learning Objectives**

The course aims to give learners opportunities to:

- make sense of how the world of work, careers and identities are changing;
- recognise the cultural and the digital agenda changes within PES and career guidance practice;
- support changes in practice, for example those associated with coaching;
- recognise the importance of Labour Market Information (LMI) and Sectoral Knowledge for effective practice;

Accessible from:

<https://mooc.employid.eu/the-changing-world-of-work/>

**Website for further information:**

**<https://employid.eu/>**

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