Arts Graduates and The Future of Work

March 8, 2013

3 Million Stories

Understanding the Lives and Careers of America’s Arts Graduates
• “Everything you've learned in school as "obvious" becomes less and less obvious. There are no absolute continuums. There are no surfaces. There are no straight lines.”

-- Buckminster Fuller
SUCCESS

WHAT PEOPLE THINK IT LOOKS LIKE

SUCCESS

WHAT IT REALLY LOOKS LIKE

Source: w.atbreak.com/pictures-2/success/
Big Picture Themes

Mobile Workforce
Creative Class Workers are Footloose
Survey of recent college graduates report that 75% are moving to a city without job.

Source: Cited in Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*. 
Artists are mobile, but they are also embedded and sticky

• 35.5 % of SNAAP graduates take up residency within five years of graduation in the city where they went to school in order to pursue their careers (2011)
Flexible, Non Traditional Careers Organized Around Project-Based Work
Nonlinear Career Paths

25% of 18-44 year olds held 15 or more jobs in their lifetimes (the average number is 11 jobs)

One-third of U.S. workers say they expect to be working in a different job next year

“We don’t know what we don’t know”

--Donald Rumsfeld, former US Secretary of Defense

• % of recent undergraduates in each major who work in a job closely related to their area of study

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLOSELY RELATED FIELD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<td>Journalism</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>60%</td>
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Source: Survey of Recent College Graduates
We need to train students **NOT** for the job they will get after college, or for the job they necessarily want, but the job that neither they nor we even know about yet
The Precariat Class

“An estimated 1/3 of the labor force in 2013 is comprised of contingent workers – freelance, temps, independent contractors, self-employed.”
Project-based/contract work

- Shift all institutional risk to backs of the worker
- The growth of super-star model (Mathews Effect)
- “Work and talent are useless without marketing skills, clout, charisma, and networks.” --- Richard Greenwald, Sociologist
Skills Mismatch and Labor Shortage
• 52% of U.S. small-business found it difficult to find qualified employees they need (Gallup)

• In Japan and Brazil, more than 70% of employers cannot find the right skills (Manpower Group)
Graying of the Workforce

• Every day for at least the next 17 years, an estimated 10,000 Baby Boomers will turn 65 (Pew Research Center)
• In 2020, the labor force will have 11 million more workers over the age 54; it will have 1 million fewer workers under the age of 54 (BLS, 2010)
• “The pressure to find the right skills in the right place at the right time will increase as working age populations decline and economies rebound. This will intensify the skills mismatch.”

-Manpower Inc’s World of Work Trends.
Under-employment
• 18.1% of workforce is under-employed
• 53.6% of bachelor degree holders under the age of 25 are jobless or under-employed

The Great Decoupling:
Brawny Computers, Brainy Programmers, and Big Data
(Andrew McAfee)
• Quality of life will become more important as quantity of work declines.
From an Elf to a Fairy Economy

• Elf—stable jobs, single employer, specialized skill set, clear division of labor, defined workspace

• Fairy – contingent jobs, work for whomever needs you, do whatever job is necessary, broad and diverse skills, highly mobile
But, Fairies are Fragile...
Creativity and Resilience

Creative individuals are:

• More socially tolerant
• Less ideologically rigid/dogmatic
• Less authoritarian
• More accepting of ambiguity
• More open to experience

----Rubenstein, 2003
Data about arts graduates
(from SNAAP)

• 63% of SNAAP graduates report being self-employed at some point
• 57% of professional artists hold at least 2 jobs concurrently; 18% hold more than 3 jobs.
• 71% of arts graduates who are not professional artists continue to make/perform their art.
“Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next....

Delicious Ambiguity”

Gilda Radner
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