

Book Review: *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates*.
Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, University of Chicago Press, 2014, 264 pp.

Analysing the world of graduates: Learning lessons from research

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This is not the first time I have read a book on graduates' struggles in trying to find a way to utilize the knowledge and skills they have learned at college in an ever more demanding world. This could be the first impression you get when reading *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates* written by *Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa*. However, what I find particularly interesting about *Aspiring Adults Adrift* is how critical the authors are in challenging colleges and universities to review their own performance to become attractive entities able to promote academic engagement. In doing so, supporting individuals to find a meaningful purpose in work and in relationships promoting social commitment *become* fundamental matters.

But this is not the only reason to motivate and more importantly to prepare students for the job to come. Following the data reported from state-of-the-art research documents emerging adults are not the only ones adrift. Educational institutions guiding these young graduates are also adrift as they fail in giving a sense of what it takes to realize students' goals and skills necessary to gain achievement. The significance of not only developing students' subject-specific skills but also their general abilities such as critical thinking, complex reasoning, and written communication becomes of paramount importance for the current generation of students approaching job seeking.

Another interesting insight in this undertaking is to learn how the faculty commitment in this regard applies to educational opportunities. These opportunities are made possible by technological innovations such as involving peers pedagogies through digital technologies. The role of the faculty staff becomes more demanding than ever as they need to ensure that students understand the relevance of the practical application of education in their lives.

In addition, another relevant and useful aspect I identified for educational staff and institutions that this book deals with is the development of tools such as observation protocols and students' course evaluation to validate the learning outcomes. Although these tools are considered to be systematic and effective instruments for the quality assurance of the study programs, there is a dilemma for the policy makers as these instruments cannot be used to compare long-wise the institutions. More specifically the outcomes in terms of graduation rates, wages or even performance on competency assessment are also features difficult to take into account when benchmarking across the institutions as there are not agreed upon criteria.

In this book, *Arum* and *Roksa* suggest strategies for institutions to improve graduates' early labor market outcomes by expanding, among others, career resources and opportunities for students to gain working experience through apprenticeships and internships. This can be done by enhancing relations with employers and promoting job opportunities in early stages.

Finally, another interesting issue about this book is the production of facts arising from deep investigation over the years. The analysis of these research documents becomes more prominent as the information is illustrated in the form of case studies. The special

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writing style of the book shows stories lively illustrated by Nathan, Seth, or Cory, first-generation graduates interviewed, which allows you, as a reader, to better understand the core of the message of the authors that can be used by faculty members as an eye-opener and as a trigger for change.