

Open
AccessCheck for
updates

REVIEW ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Language proficiency and literary competence as career capital: Employment, career mobility, and participation in the global economy—a critical literary review of english literature education**Ali Mohammad Ali Alasmar^{1*} & Ibrahim Ali Altamimi²¹English Language Department, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia²Department of Arabic Language and Literature, College of Education, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*Correspondence: a.asmar@psau.edu.sa**ABSTRACT**

English literature programmes cultivate linguistic, interpretive, narrative, rhetorical, and cultural capacities whose professional value is frequently asserted but rarely explained with sufficient conceptual precision. Employability discourse tends either to translate literary study into generic ‘communication skills’ or to defend literature solely through its intrinsic humanistic value. Both positions obscure the more demanding question of how discipline-specific learning becomes usable and recognisable beyond the university. This structured conceptual review examines language proficiency and literary competence as potential forms of career capital for graduates of English literature education. A concept-led search, completed in August 2026, brought together scholarship on literary education, literary competence, graduate employability, career capital, transfer, professional identity, cultural inequality, narrative, and intercultural communication. The synthesis distinguishes possession of a capability from its conversion into opportunity. Close reading, contextual interpretation, narrative analysis, rhetorical judgement, evidence-based writing, and historically informed cultural understanding may support employment and career mobility, but they do not carry fixed labour-market value. Their conversion depends on professional articulation, applied experience, digital competence, networks, institutional reputation, employer recognition, and wider conditions of access. The review proposes a four-stage model linking disciplinary formation, capability formation, conversion mechanisms, and differentiated career outcomes. Seven propositions specify when literature-derived capabilities are likely to become portable career resources and when they remain professionally illegible. The analysis also rejects instrumental accounts that reduce literary study to workplace preparation: the discipline’s professional relevance arises partly from its sustained engagement with ambiguity, perspective, form, value, and contested meaning. Curricular implications therefore centre on making literary practices visible, providing credible settings for their application, and addressing unequal access to the resources through which graduates convert learning into employment, mobility, and global participation.

KEYWORDS: English literature education, literary competence, language proficiency, career capital, graduate employability, career mobility, humanities education, global economy

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 7, Issue 3, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 30 June 2026

Accepted: 22 July 2026

Published: 31 August 2026

HOW TO CITE

Alasmar, A. M. A., & Altamimi, I. A. (2026). Language proficiency and literary competence as career capital: Employment, career mobility, and participation in the global economy—a critical literary review of english literature education. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.58256/7qem5k03>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction: English Literature Education and the Employability Question

English literature occupies an uneasy position in contemporary higher education. Its intellectual practices remain central to the interpretation of language, history, culture, and representation, yet programmes are increasingly judged through graduate destinations, salary indicators, student debt, and claims about economic usefulness. The resulting debate is often poorly framed. Defenders of the discipline may treat questions about employment as an intrusion upon literary value, while policy and institutional discourse may compress the work of literary study into a short list of generic attributes. Neither approach adequately explains what students learn when they read poetry, drama, fiction, criticism, and global Anglophone writing with sustained attention, or how that learning might become consequential in professional life. The problem is not simply whether literature ‘has value’. It is how different kinds of value are produced, recognised, converted, and distributed.

Research on graduate employability has moved beyond the idea that a degree supplies a stable package of skills which employers then reward. Employability is better understood as a situated capacity shaped by knowledge, identity, adaptability, networks, opportunity structures, and the conventions through which competence is judged (Clarke, 2018; Fugate et al., 2004; Holmes, 2013; Tomlinson, 2012, 2017). A graduate may possess strong analytical and communicative abilities without knowing how to describe them in occupational terms, without access to internships that make them credible, or without the institutional and social resources that secure a hearing. This distinction is especially important for English literature graduates because their discipline develops forms of judgement that are often tacit. Close reading, the comparison of interpretations, sensitivity to tone and form, contextual research, and extended argumentative writing become familiar academic routines. Their professional relevance can remain invisible precisely because students experience them as ordinary features of the degree.

A second difficulty concerns the relation between language proficiency and literary competence. Literature programmes frequently deepen lexical knowledge, syntactic awareness, stylistic control, inferential reading, and rhetorical sensitivity, particularly when teaching combines attentive reading with discussion and substantial writing (Carter, 2007; Hall, 2015; Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000; Paran, 2008). Yet advanced proficiency is not the same as literary competence. The latter involves recognising how genre, voice, imagery, narrative structure, intertextuality, historical context, and formal choices organise meaning. Nor does either competence automatically transfer to a workplace. Knowing how free indirect discourse distributes perspective, for example, is not identical to preparing a policy brief; nevertheless, the disciplined attention to attribution, stance, implication, and competing accounts involved in that analysis may become relevant when a graduate learns the conventions of policy communication. Transfer requires reconstruction, not simple export.

The concept of career capital provides a useful way to analyse this reconstruction. DeFillippi and Arthur’s (1994) account of ‘knowing how’, ‘knowing why’, and ‘knowing whom’ directs attention to capabilities, identity and motivation, and networks. Later graduate-capital frameworks show that employability also depends upon cultural resources, social relations, psychological resources, and the capacity to present a credible graduate identity (Tomlinson, 2017). For English literature graduates, career capital may include advanced command of English, literary and cultural knowledge, interpretive judgement, narrative and rhetorical awareness, confidence in a disciplinary identity, and relationships formed through universities, publishing, education, media, cultural organisations, and alumni networks. These resources are not currencies with fixed exchange rates. Their worth emerges in particular fields, under particular conditions of recognition.

The review therefore asks six questions: How does English literature education contribute to advanced language proficiency and literary competence? Which discipline-specific capabilities can function as career capital? Through what processes are they converted into employment, mobility, and professional participation? Which sectors and occupational practices are most likely to recognise them? What institutional, socioeconomic, technological, and labour-market conditions enable or restrict conversion? Finally, how can curricula make professional relevance visible without weakening literature’s humanistic purposes? The article first explains the review approach and then examines literary education as a form of intellectual formation. It analyses language proficiency, literary competence, narrative and intercultural capacities, employment pathways, mobility, and global participation before addressing inequality, presenting a four-stage conceptual model, and setting out curricular and research implications.

2. Review Approach

The study is a structured conceptual review rather than a systematic effectiveness review. Its purpose is to connect bodies of scholarship that usually proceed in parallel: English literature education, literary competence, language development through literary study, graduate employability, career capital, professional identity, learning transfer, cultural inequality, narrative, and intercultural communication. Searches were conducted and updated in August 2026 through ERIC, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and publicly accessible publisher and bibliographic platforms associated with Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Taylor & Francis, Wiley, SAGE, Springer, Emerald, and Elsevier. Search combinations included ‘English literature education’ with employability, ‘English literature graduates’ with employment, ‘literary competence’ with professional skills, ‘close reading’ with transfer, ‘narrative competence’ with work, humanities graduates with career mobility, and career capital with cultural or social capital. Reference chaining from foundational and recent publications identified additional sources.

Selection was guided by conceptual relevance, disciplinary significance, methodological credibility, and traceability. Included publications either clarified what literary study develops; analysed graduate employability, career capital, identity, or transfer; examined narrative or intercultural capacities relevant to professional communication; or addressed the unequal recognition of graduate resources. General career-advice webpages, promotional claims about humanities degrees, sources with unverifiable bibliographic details, and studies concerned only with basic English instruction were excluded. The final conceptual corpus comprised 55 scholarly publications and one sector report. No record-flow diagram or exhaustive retrieval count is offered because the aim was theory building across fields rather than comprehensive aggregation of every employability study.

The synthesis proceeded through iterative concept coding. Sources were compared under ten headings: language capability, literary competence, interpretive judgement, narrative competence, cultural knowledge, professional identity, employment pathways, career mobility, conversion barriers, and curricular design. Claims were retained only where their evidential basis and conceptual level were clear. Experimental findings about fiction and social cognition, for instance, were distinguished from broader educational claims about empathy, while labour-market research was separated from normative arguments about the public value of the humanities. This procedure supports analytical transparency, but it has limits. The source base is Anglophone, conceptually heterogeneous, and weighted towards higher-education systems in the United Kingdom, North America, Europe, and Australia. The review does not estimate effect sizes, compare national employment rates, or establish causal outcomes of studying literature. Table 1 establishes the conceptual distinctions used throughout the synthesis.

3. English Literature Education as a Distinctive Form of Intellectual Formation

English literature education is often described through its objects—novels, poems, plays, periods, movements, and authors—rather than through the operations students repeatedly perform. Those operations are more revealing. Students attend to lexical choice and syntax; relate part to whole; track voice, focalisation, genre, and temporal organisation; test interpretations against textual evidence; situate works within historical and theoretical debates; compare translations and adaptations; and revise arguments in response to counter-readings. Culler’s (1975) account of literary competence emphasised the conventions that allow readers to recognise how literary texts generate meaning. Later approaches have complicated any single hierarchy of reading by contrasting symptomatic, reparative, surface, formal, historicist, postcolonial, and reader-oriented practices. Best and Marcus (2009), for example, showed that attention to what texts visibly say can challenge interpretive habits organised only around hidden meanings. The discipline is therefore not one method but a structured encounter with contestable evidence.

This encounter develops a particular relation to ambiguity. In many academic and professional settings, ambiguity is treated as noise to be eliminated. Literary analysis asks when ambiguity is constitutive: whose perspective is available, what remains unspoken, how irony redirects a statement, and why a form can sustain incompatible readings. That does not license arbitrary interpretation. Students are expected to justify claims through textual detail, contextual knowledge, and reasoning that can withstand challenge. The capacity at stake is better described as disciplined interpretive judgement than as creativity alone. It combines openness to alternatives with responsibility to evidence. Such judgement may later matter wherever language carries indirect commitments, conflicting interests, partial testimony, or culturally situated assumptions.

Literary education also joins formal analysis to historical consciousness. Reading Shakespearean drama, postcolonial fiction, modernist poetry, African American writing, migrant narratives, or digital literature requires more than decoding vocabulary. Students examine institutions, genres, intellectual histories, colonial relations, gendered conventions, racial formation, class, religion, publication, and reception. A curriculum confined to a narrow British canon can reproduce cultural exclusion; a broader account of English literature recognises global Anglophone writing, translation, multilingual authorship, minority traditions, and disputes over the category of 'English' itself. This expansion is not only representational. It teaches that linguistic authority and cultural legitimacy are historically produced rather than naturally given.

The seminar and the essay add dialogic and compositional dimensions. Seminar discussion requires students to listen, respond, qualify, and reformulate in real time. The literary essay requires a sustained line of reasoning in which quotation is selected rather than accumulated, claims are proportioned to evidence, and alternative interpretations are acknowledged. These practices help explain why literature graduates may become effective editors, educators, researchers, communicators, and cultural mediators. They do not, however, guarantee professional competence. Academic conventions can remain inward-looking, and students may learn to write persuasively for one assessor without learning to adapt tone, structure, evidence, or length for other audiences. The professional significance of literary formation lies in its potential for recontextualisation, not in an assumed equivalence between the essay and every form of workplace writing.

4. Language Proficiency Developed through Literary Study

Literary study can deepen language proficiency because it exposes students to concentrated, varied, and historically layered uses of English. Poetry foregrounds sound, compression, syntax, and figurative relation; drama links language to interaction and performance; fiction sustains voice, temporal structure, and social register; criticism demands abstract vocabulary and explicit argument. Research on literature in language education has associated literary reading with lexical enrichment, inferential comprehension, stylistic awareness, and opportunities for discussion and writing (Carter, 2007; Hall, 2015; McKay, 1982; Paran, 2008). Hanauer's (2001) work on poetry reading further demonstrates that literary tasks invite forms of attention different from straightforward information retrieval. For students studying English as an additional language, such encounters may widen expressive resources while also making visible the cultural and interpretive assumptions embedded in advanced literacy.

The connection is conditional. Exposure to difficult texts can produce frustration rather than development when linguistic support, pacing, and interpretive scaffolding are weak. Canonical language may be remote from contemporary communication, and silent reading alone does not ensure spoken fluency. Kramsch and Kramsch (2000) traced how literature's place in language study has shifted with changing pedagogical priorities, reminding us that no automatic path runs from reading literature to communicative competence. Outcomes depend on the selection of texts, the quality of discussion, opportunities for extensive reading, feedback on writing, students' prior proficiency, and whether teaching treats linguistic form as meaningful rather than ornamental.

Language proficiency developed through literary study should therefore be defined more precisely than 'good English'. It includes lexical depth, syntactic flexibility, sensitivity to register and connotation, awareness of voice and stance, inferential reading, and the capacity to sustain audience-conscious argument. These features differ from routine conversational ease and from specialised workplace genres. A graduate may analyse rhetorical ambiguity superbly while needing to learn the concise conventions of a press release, grant application, localisation brief, or executive summary. The career value of proficiency lies partly in adaptability: a rich linguistic repertoire can support the learning of new genres, but only when graduates receive occasions to practise that adaptation and feedback from the relevant professional community.

Literary language also trains attention by disrupting habitual processing. Miall and Kuiken (1994) link foregrounding and defamiliarisation to readers' affective and interpretive responses, suggesting why literary form cannot be reduced to the delivery of information. When students explain how unusual syntax, metaphor, rhythm, or viewpoint changes a reading, they practise moving between linguistic detail and larger effect. That movement may later support editing, audience analysis, and rhetorical diagnosis. It remains a pedagogical possibility rather than a universal outcome: students need explicit discussion of form, opportunities to test interpretations, and feedback that distinguishes attentive inference from impressionistic response.

5. Literary Competence as Career Capital

Literary competence becomes career capital when the practices of literary interpretation are converted into resources that a graduate can mobilise in an occupational setting. The distinction between possession and mobilisation is crucial. Human-capital accounts tend to treat education as an investment in productive knowledge, yet they can overstate the transparency with which markets recognise competence (Marginson, 2019). Career-capital and graduate-capital approaches offer a more relational account. 'Knowing how' includes capabilities; 'knowing why' includes identity, values, and direction; 'knowing whom' includes networks and access (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Tomlinson (2017) adds human, social, cultural, identity, and psychological dimensions, while Clarke (2018) stresses that employability emerges from the interaction of personal attributes and context. Literary competence is therefore not a portable object with a predetermined price. It is a repertoire whose relevance must be demonstrated, situated, and recognised.

Close reading supplies one part of that repertoire. It trains attention to lexical nuance, tone, contradiction, implication, attribution, and the relation between isolated statements and a larger structure. In publishing and editing, these habits can support textual diagnosis; in law-related communication or policy, they can sharpen awareness of scope and ambiguity; in journalism, they can assist the examination of framing and source language; in public relations, they can reveal unintended meanings. The analogy must remain modest. Reading a poem is not the same as checking a contract, and literary expertise does not replace legal, technical, or editorial training. What may transfer is a disposition toward evidential precision combined with methods for noticing how language positions a reader.

Interpretive judgement is a second resource. Literary arguments are commonly made under conditions in which evidence is incomplete and more than one account is plausible. Students learn to compare explanations, calibrate certainty, and explain why one reading is more persuasive without claiming final closure. Barnett and Ceci's (2002) taxonomy of transfer cautions that far transfer is difficult when surface features and contexts differ. A literature graduate will not spontaneously apply narratological analysis to organisational research merely because both involve interpretation. Transfer is more likely when common structures are made explicit, when graduates practise re-framing a disciplinary method for a new purpose, and when a professional community validates the result.

Rhetorical and argumentative competence adds a third dimension. Literary essays require claims, evidence, warrants, counterarguments, and coherent organisation. Students also examine how texts establish authority, distribute sympathy, suppress alternatives, or invoke shared values. Such awareness can inform communication-intensive occupations, but career capital emerges only when graduates can adjust length, register, medium, and evidence to the task. Employers may value 'communication' while evaluating it through unfamiliar genres, rapid deadlines, collaborative authorship, and institutional risk. A polished academic voice can even become a liability if it remains verbose or inaccessible. Conversion therefore involves genre learning rather than simply announcing that essays develop writing skills.

Cultural and ethical interpretation extends the repertoire further. Literary study places language within histories of power and exposes readers to conflicts among values, identities, and perspectives. Nussbaum (2010), Small (2013), and Belfiore and Bennett (2008) defend or historicise the public value of the humanities without reducing that value to earnings. Their arguments matter here because career capital should not absorb all educational purposes. A graduate's ability to interpret cultural memory, contested representation, or the ethics of voice may be useful in museums, heritage, education, media, diplomacy, tourism, translation, and nonprofit work. It also retains civic and personal significance that exceeds employment. The strongest account of professional relevance preserves this excess rather than treating every literary encounter as latent vocational training.

Finally, identity capital influences whether graduates act upon their capabilities. Holmes (2001, 2013) argues that employability is partly a process of achieving recognition as a credible graduate, not merely possessing attributes. Jackson (2016) similarly places pre-professional identity at the centre of employability. English literature students may struggle when public narratives portray the degree as impractical or when they cannot name occupations that fit their intellectual commitments. Conversely, an identity organised entirely around being 'a reader' may be too narrow for a changing career. Career capital grows when graduates can tell a truthful, specific story about what they know, why it matters, where it has been tested, and what further

expertise they need. Table 2 maps major literary practices to possible professional applications while stating the conditions and limits of transfer.

6. English Literature, Narrative Competence, and Professional Communication

Narrative competence deserves separate attention because stories organise far more than literary experience. Bruner (1991) described narrative as a mode through which reality is constructed: events are selected, sequenced, attributed with motive, and made intelligible through culturally available forms. Literary education develops awareness of perspective, voice, characterisation, temporal ordering, genre expectation, metaphor, omission, and unreliable narration. These concepts enable graduates to ask who is authorised to speak, which causes a story privileges, where a beginning is placed, and what an apparently coherent account excludes.

Professional organisations also work through stories. Boje's (1991) study of a 'storytelling organisation' and Polletta et al.'s (2011) review of the sociology of storytelling show that narratives coordinate memory, identity, legitimacy, and collective action. In branding, advocacy, journalism, heritage interpretation, public communication, and policy, the capacity to shape and interrogate narrative can be consequential. A literature graduate may recognise, for example, that a corporate success story turns structural conflict into individual perseverance, or that a tourism narrative converts a living community into a consumable past. Such recognition supports more responsible communication when combined with factual verification, audience research, and domain knowledge.

Claims about fiction and social understanding require care. Experimental research reported that reading literary fiction could improve theory-of-mind performance (Kidd & Castano, 2013), but direct replications produced mixed findings (Panero et al., 2016; van Kuijk et al., 2018). A meta-analysis found a small positive association rather than a sweeping transformation (Dodell-Feder & Tamir, 2018), and subsequent debate continued over mechanisms and replicability (Kidd & Castano, 2018). Broader accounts propose that fiction simulates social experience (Mar & Oatley, 2008; Oatley, 2016), yet no evidence warrants the claim that literature students automatically become empathic professionals. Narrative competence is better framed as an interpretive capacity whose ethical use depends on pedagogy, reflection, and institutional practice.

Narrative understanding also differs from narrative persuasion. Green and Brock (2000) show that transportation into a story can affect belief, which gives literary training a double significance. Graduates may become more capable of crafting memorable accounts, but they may also become more alert to the emotional and causal simplifications through which stories secure assent. Professional communication requires both capacities: the ability to organise material intelligibly and the willingness to examine what that organisation obscures. A literature-informed communicator should be able to ask whether a compelling story misrepresents evidence, excludes affected voices, or converts institutional responsibility into personal drama.

7. Cultural and Intercultural Capital in Global Employment

English literature education can develop cultural knowledge, but knowledge of texts is not identical to intercultural competence. Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) treat intercultural competence as involving attitudes, interpretation, relational knowledge, and the ability to respond appropriately across contexts. Literary study can contribute by exposing students to historically situated voices, translation, colonial and postcolonial relations, migration, religion, gender, race, and class. It can unsettle the assumption that one's own interpretive conventions are universal. A global Anglophone curriculum, in particular, reveals that English is plural, contested, and entangled with unequal histories.

These outcomes depend on how literature is taught. Reading a diverse syllabus does not automatically produce openness; texts can be consumed as cultural information while stereotypes remain intact. Intercultural learning requires contextualisation, self-reflection, dialogue, and attention to the risks of speaking for others (Byram et al., 2002). In professional settings, this distinction matters. Diplomacy, international education, publishing, tourism, localisation, and multinational communication demand more than familiarity with foreign characters or settings. They require the capacity to recognise partial knowledge, seek clarification, interpret conventions without essentialising them, and revise one's account after encounter.

Cultural capital also has a sociological meaning that complicates celebratory accounts. Bourdieu (1986) showed that valued language, dispositions, and cultural knowledge are recognised unevenly within fields.

Familiarity with canonical literature may confer distinction in some occupations, while other forms of literary and multilingual knowledge remain marginal. Global English can provide access to international networks, yet it is also commodified and tied to linguistic hierarchies (Heller, 2003). Kubota (2011) warns against instrumental narratives that present English as a neutral guarantee of economic mobility. Literature-derived cultural capital therefore operates ambivalently: it can enable interpretation and connection, but its recognition depends on institutions that privilege some accents, canons, credentials, and cosmopolitan performances over others.

8. Employment Pathways for English Literature Graduates

English literature graduates enter a wide range of sectors, but occupational breadth should not be confused with proof that every destination uses literary competence. Education, publishing, editing, journalism, media, libraries, archives, cultural organisations, museums, heritage, public relations, marketing, translation, tourism, civil service, policy communication, nonprofit work, diplomacy, and digital content all contain roles in which language, research, narrative, and cultural interpretation may be relevant. Each also demands additional knowledge. An editor needs production and market awareness; a teacher requires pedagogical preparation; a communications officer needs organisational judgement; a translator requires high-level competence in more than one language; a heritage professional needs curatorial, community, or conservation knowledge.

Graduate-outcome analysis must therefore distinguish access to a first job, employment quality, occupational fit, underemployment, and long-term development. A role outside a department labelled 'literature' is not evidence that the degree was wasted, just as employment in a cultural sector is not proof of good conditions. Comunian et al. (2023) show that arts and humanities graduates' work and social engagement are more varied than narrow earnings measures capture. At the same time, cultural and creative sectors can rely on precarious work, informal recruitment, and unpaid experience. The relevant question is not whether a job title names the discipline, but which capabilities are used, how they are rewarded, and whether the graduate can develop a sustainable career.

Employability frameworks also caution against treating sector lists as guidance. Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007) emphasise experience, reflection, and career development alongside knowledge and skills; Bridgstock (2009) identifies career-management capacities as a neglected graduate attribute. English literature graduates benefit when they can research occupational fields, build portfolios, identify missing expertise, and test possible identities through projects or placements. Without such mediation, a list of 'careers for English majors' can deepen uncertainty by implying that broad possibility itself constitutes a pathway.

Sector-level evidence nevertheless challenges the claim that arts and humanities study lacks economic relevance. The British Academy (2020) documents demand for communication, analysis, collaboration, and cultural understanding across a wide range of work. Such reports are useful when they resist a narrow equation between degree title and occupation, but their categories can still make literary practices disappear inside broad labels. 'Communication' says little about whether a graduate can interpret contested language, trace narrative framing, or write for multiple publics. Employment guidance becomes stronger when it links a sector's actual tasks to specific forms of literary learning and states clearly where technical or professional preparation must be added.

9. Career Mobility and the Portability of Literary Capabilities

The breadth of literary education may offer weaker immediate signalling than a vocational qualification but stronger resources for later movement. Career mobility includes progression within an occupation, movement between sectors, geographical mobility, portfolio work, and occupational reinvention. Language, research, interpretation, and writing can travel across contexts, yet their portability is not inherent. Fugate et al. (2004) connect employability with adaptability and career identity, while Ibarra (1999) shows that professional transition involves experimenting with 'provisional selves'. Literature graduates may draw on their experience of reading unfamiliar contexts and revising interpretations, but they still need access to communities in which a new professional identity can be rehearsed and recognised.

Broad capabilities may become particularly useful when roles change faster than specialised curricula can anticipate. A graduate who can learn a domain, analyse its discourse, and communicate across audiences may adapt across publishing, education, communication, research, or administration. Yet this argument can

become complacent. Portability often depends on postgraduate credentials, digital tools, occupational licences, financial reserves, or a willingness to accept entry-level work. Mobility that appears flexible from an institutional perspective may feel like repeated insecurity to the graduate. Career capital should therefore be evaluated through the quality and sustainability of movement, not movement alone.

Professional identity provides continuity without requiring a single occupational destination. Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011) treat graduate identity as a set of values, engagement, intellect, and performance rather than a checklist of skills, while Trede et al. (2012) show that professional identity develops through participation, reflection, and relations with communities of practice. For literature graduates, a durable identity may centre on careful interpretation, responsible communication, or cultural work rather than on one job title. That orientation can support mobility, provided it remains open to learning and does not turn disciplinary loyalty into resistance to unfamiliar forms of work.

10. Participation in the Global and Digital Economy

Advanced English proficiency can facilitate participation in international education, publishing, tourism, media, knowledge work, localisation, transnational organisations, and remote collaboration. Literary competence adds sensitivity to rhetoric, genre, cultural reference, and the politics of representation. Together, these capacities may support cultural mediation: interpreting not only what words denote but how audiences, histories, and institutions shape their force. Digital publishing and platform-based communication have also expanded opportunities for editing, content strategy, research, teaching, and public humanities work.

Participation, however, is structured by unequal infrastructures. Access to reliable technology, recognised credentials, international networks, mobility, and remunerated experience varies sharply. English itself is not a culturally neutral technology. Its global reach reflects colonial history, economic power, and institutional standardisation, while ‘professional English’ may privilege particular national varieties, accents, and stylistic norms (Heller, 2003; Kubota, 2011). An English literature curriculum concerned with global participation should therefore include world Englishes, multilingual writing, translation, and the ethics of cultural circulation rather than presenting Anglophone competence as universally rewarded.

The digital economy also changes what counts as evidence of capability. Graduates may demonstrate editing, research, criticism, curation, or narrative design through portfolios, podcasts, exhibitions, digital editions, or collaborative projects. Such outputs can make literary learning legible beyond the transcript. They also risk normalising unpaid self-branding and continuous visibility. Career preparation should help students judge when a portfolio provides meaningful evidence, when intellectual labour is being extracted without compensation, and how authorship, copyright, attribution, and platform governance affect cultural work.

Translation and localisation make the relation between literary competence and global participation particularly visible. Even when graduates are not professional translators, comparison across versions can sharpen awareness of untranslatable reference, register, voice, and the institutional choices hidden behind apparently equivalent wording. In international communication, that awareness can prevent the assumption that fluent English alone guarantees shared meaning. Genuine localisation requires knowledge of audiences, legal and technical constraints, and the relevant languages; literary sensitivity is an enabling resource, not a substitute for those competencies.

11. Limits and Inequalities in the Conversion of Literary Learning into Career Capital

Career-capital language can imply that graduates simply accumulate resources and choose when to spend them. Sociological research shows a more unequal process. Brown et al. (2003) argue that employability discourse can individualise labour-market problems, while Moreau and Leathwood (2006) expose the gendered and classed assumptions embedded in the ‘employable graduate’. Bathmaker et al. (2013) demonstrate that students mobilise economic, social, and cultural capitals differently within higher education. The same internship, networking event, or overseas opportunity is not equally affordable, accessible, or intelligible to all students.

Institutional reputation further affects recognition. Rivera (2011) found that elite employers use educational and extracurricular signals in ways that reproduce exclusion. For literature graduates, this means that identical claims about close reading or cultural knowledge may be heard differently depending on the university, accent, social confidence, or work history attached to them. Students who must undertake paid

work may have less time for unpaid publishing, theatre, or museum placements that later appear as ‘passion’. Disabled students, carers, migrants, and students distant from cultural centres may confront additional barriers. Career capital is consequently relational: its value depends not only on what a person possesses but on who is authorised to recognise it.

Curricular quality also varies. Some programmes provide extensive feedback, public-facing projects, digital resources, and alumni networks; others leave students to infer the relevance of their learning. Tymon (2013) found that student understandings of employability do not necessarily match institutional accounts. A department may declare that essays develop communication while students remain unable to connect that claim to recruitment tasks. Conversely, aggressive employability messaging can devalue the discipline by implying that literary study requires external justification. The challenge is to name capabilities accurately, create legitimate occasions for their use, and preserve critical debate about work rather than teaching students only to market themselves.

Employer recognition is not neutral. Communication-intensive organisations may praise creativity and cultural intelligence while recruiting through narrow experience requirements. Literary knowledge associated with dominant canons may be rewarded, whereas multilingual, popular, Indigenous, or community-based traditions receive less recognition. Cultural-sector entry may depend on informal networks and unpaid labour. Digital work may widen geographical access but transfer risk to freelancers. These conditions explain why strong literary competence can coexist with underemployment and why graduates’ outcomes cannot be read as a pure measure of educational quality.

A credible model must therefore separate conversion capacity from conversion opportunity. The former includes the graduate’s ability to articulate, demonstrate, and adapt literary learning. The latter includes vacancies, fair recruitment, accessible experience, mentoring, financial support, and institutional willingness to recognise non-standard trajectories. Universities can improve capacity and some conditions of opportunity, but they cannot guarantee employment or correct labour-market inequality alone. This boundary protects students from inflated promises and keeps analysis attentive to structure. Table 3 summarises the principal factors that enable or constrain conversion at individual, institutional, and labour-market levels.

12. A Conceptual Model of Literature-Derived Career Capital

The proposed model contains four stages linked by conversion rather than by automatic progression. The first stage, disciplinary formation, comprises sustained reading, formal and contextual analysis, critical theory, seminar dialogue, research, and extended writing. The second, capability formation, includes language proficiency, literary competence, interpretive judgement, narrative and rhetorical awareness, cultural literacy, ethical reasoning, and the ability to work with ambiguity. These capabilities constitute potential career resources, but potential is not outcome. Their meaning remains partly academic until graduates encounter tasks, audiences, and standards beyond the literature classroom.

The third stage contains conversion mechanisms. Professional articulation helps graduates describe a practice specifically: not ‘I am a good communicator’, but ‘I compare competing interpretations, locate assumptions, and revise an argument for different audiences’. Work-integrated learning, public humanities, editorial projects, placements, and portfolios provide evidence that the capability can operate under non-academic constraints (Billett, 2009; Jackson, 2015). Career learning supports occupational research and decision-making (Healy, 2023). Mentoring and networks supply information and sponsorship. Digital competence allows graduates to work with contemporary forms of publication, research, and collaboration. Credential recognition and employer literacy determine whether these demonstrations are taken seriously.

The fourth stage concerns differentiated outcomes: access to employment, employment quality, career adaptability, occupational mobility, professional identity, and participation in globally connected work. These outcomes should not be collapsed into salary or first destination. A graduate may enter employment quickly yet remain underemployed; another may take longer but establish a sustainable cultural or educational career. Outcomes feed back into capital formation because work creates new knowledge, networks, and identities. The model is therefore recursive rather than a one-way pipeline.

Contextual moderators surround every stage. Curriculum design shapes what students practise; institutional reputation affects signal value; socioeconomic resources influence access to experience; geography

and disability affect mobility; labour-market demand changes occupational openings; public narratives about humanities degrees influence confidence and employer expectations; and linguistic hierarchies shape whose English is treated as professional. These moderators explain why the same curriculum can yield different outcomes and why individual success cannot validate a system that distributes conversion opportunities unequally.

Seven propositions follow from the synthesis. **Proposition 1:** Literary competence contributes to career capital when graduates can translate interpretive practices into context-specific evidence of judgement, analysis, and communication. **Proposition 2:** Advanced language proficiency developed through literary study supports employment and mobility most reliably when combined with genre adaptation, occupational knowledge, and applied experience. **Proposition 3:** Narrative and rhetorical competence are especially portable across communication-intensive roles, but their value depends on factual discipline, ethical judgement, and recognition by the occupational field. **Proposition 4:** Pre-professional identity mediates whether graduates perceive literature-derived capabilities as usable and can present them credibly to others.

Proposition 5: Social networks, institutional reputation, economic resources, and access to paid experience moderate the conversion of literary competence into employment quality. **Proposition 6:** English proficiency can widen participation in globally connected work while simultaneously reproducing linguistic hierarchy; multilingual and intercultural reflexivity therefore strengthen rather than dilute literature-derived career capital. **Proposition 7:** Curricula that make disciplinary practices explicit and provide authentic contexts for their application improve conversion capacity without requiring the vocational reduction of literary study. These propositions are conceptual claims to be tested, compared, and refined, not confirmed causal laws. Figure 1 presents the model and its recursive feedback relation.

13. Implications for English Literature Curricula

The curricular implication is not that literature departments should become business schools. McCowan (2015) asks whether universities should promote employability and concludes that the answer depends on how employability is conceived. A narrow focus on employer demand can subordinate education to unstable market preferences; complete refusal can leave students to decode professional relevance alone. Biesta's (2009) insistence on educational purpose is useful here. Qualification, socialisation, and subject formation cannot be reduced to one metric. English literature curricula can acknowledge employment while retaining aesthetic experience, historical understanding, critique, and intellectual independence as substantive ends.

The first practical step is to make literary practices explicit. Module descriptions and feedback can name the operations students perform: comparing evidence, tracing perspective, contextualising claims, analysing rhetoric, synthesising scholarship, and revising for audience. Reflection should remain evidential rather than promotional. Students might annotate an essay to identify where they made an interpretive decision, then recast the same reasoning as an editorial note, policy commentary, exhibition label, or briefing. The point is not to claim that these genres are identical, but to learn which elements travel and which must be relearned.

A second step is to create credible application settings. Public humanities projects, student journals, digital editions, podcasts, community archives, translation collaborations, book-festival work, school partnerships, and commissioned writing can connect literary methods with real audiences. Work-integrated learning is most educational when experience is deliberately prepared, supported, and reflected upon rather than treated as exposure alone (Billett, 2009; Jackson, 2015). Paid or credit-bearing alternatives are essential if placements are not to privilege students who can afford unpaid work.

Third, departments can integrate career learning across the degree rather than confining it to a final workshop. Early modules can introduce the range of literary work and cultural occupations; middle stages can support portfolio building, alumni conversations, and small applied projects; final stages can help students articulate a coherent professional narrative and identify further training. Bridgstock's (2009) emphasis on career-management skills and Healy's (2023) pedagogical principles suggest that students need repeated opportunities to research fields, make decisions, and revise plans. Careers services, librarians, alumni, publishers, schools, cultural institutions, and community organisations should participate without dictating the curriculum.

Fourth, global and digital dimensions need substantive treatment. Students should encounter world Englishes, multilingual literature, translation, postcolonial critique, digital authorship, copyright, accessibility, data ethics, and platform power. Digital humanities can expand research and presentation, but software should

not displace interpretation. A project that maps a novel, curates an archive, or prepares a digital edition should still ask whose categories organise the material and what interpretive claims the interface makes. Such work can demonstrate digital and collaborative competence while preserving literary rigour.

Finally, equity must shape implementation. Departments should audit who gains access to placements, mentoring, travel, equipment, and public-facing opportunities. Remote participation, paid micro-projects, accessible design, transparent selection, and recognition of caring or paid-work responsibilities can widen participation. Employability education should also teach students to evaluate work: remuneration, precarity, inclusion, authorship, and ethical fit are legitimate career questions. The aim is not merely to help graduates secure any position, but to increase their capacity to pursue meaningful and sustainable work while understanding the structures within which choices are made.

14. Research Agenda

The model requires empirical testing at several levels. Longitudinal studies should follow English literature graduates beyond first destinations to examine how capabilities are mobilised during career transitions. Comparative research could test how national systems, institutional prestige, curriculum design, and regional labour markets affect conversion. Employers should be asked to interpret concrete examples of literary work rather than generic skill labels. Graduate narratives can reveal when disciplinary identity supports adaptation and when it constrains occupational imagination. Research is also needed on multilingual literary competence, digital humanities, disability and access, paid versus unpaid cultural work, and the career consequences of curricular partnerships. Mixed methods would be particularly useful: outcome data can map patterns, while interviews, portfolios, and workplace observation can show how a capability is actually recognised and used.

Future studies should also distinguish capability formation from signalling. A curricular intervention may strengthen students' interpretive or rhetorical performance without changing employer recognition; a prestigious internship may improve employment prospects without adding much disciplinary learning. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs can examine specific pedagogical practices, but causal claims about degree-level outcomes will require careful comparison and long follow-up. Qualitative work should attend to failed conversions as well as success stories, including graduates who possess strong literary competence yet face exclusion, precarity, or occupational mismatch. The seven propositions offered here provide a common set of relationships for such research while leaving room for national and disciplinary variation.

15. Conclusion

English literature education produces a distinctive conjunction of linguistic command, literary competence, interpretive judgement, narrative and rhetorical awareness, cultural knowledge, and ethical reflection. These capacities can become career capital, but they do not arrive in the labour market as self-explanatory assets. Graduates must learn to adapt and evidence them; institutions must provide credible settings for application; and employers must be capable of recognising forms of judgement that do not resemble narrow vocational credentials.

The four-stage model developed here replaces the assumption of automatic transfer with a conditional account of conversion. It also rejects the claim that professional relevance requires literature to surrender its humanistic purposes. The discipline's occupational significance arises partly from practices that exceed immediate utility: attending to form, sustaining disagreement, interpreting historically situated voices, and resisting simple accounts of complex experience. Curricula serve graduates best when they preserve those practices, make them intellectually explicit, connect them to authentic audiences, and confront the inequalities that govern who can turn learning into opportunity. Employment, career mobility, and global participation are possible outcomes of literary formation; they are not its guaranteed or exclusive measure.

Tables and Figure

Table 1. *Core concepts and analytical distinctions*

Concept	Definition	Relevance to English literature education	Career-capital implication	Conceptual limitation
Language proficiency	Advanced control of reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, syntax, register, style, and rhetoric.	Developed through extensive reading, discussion, and sustained analytical writing.	Supports genre learning and audience-sensitive communication.	Does not equal workplace expertise or automatic fluency across contexts.
Literary competence	Capacity to interpret form, genre, voice, symbol, narrative, intertextuality, and context.	Core disciplinary practice across poetry, drama, fiction, criticism, and global Anglophone writing.	Supports close reading, interpretive judgement, and cultural analysis.	Transfer requires reconstruction; it is not equivalent to every analytical task.
Career capital	Resources mobilised to enter, sustain, and develop a career.	Combines disciplinary capability, identity, direction, and networks.	Explains how literary learning may become occupationally usable.	Has no fixed value outside a field of recognition.
Human capital	Knowledge and capabilities that may contribute to productive activity.	Includes language, research, writing, and interpretive knowledge.	Provides a capability base for further professional learning.	Can overstate transparent market recognition and understate inequality.
Cultural capital	Valued knowledge, dispositions, language, and cultural familiarity.	Includes canonical and global literary knowledge and modes of cultural interpretation.	May support access to cultural and communication-intensive fields.	Recognition is classed, institutional, and unequal.
Social capital	Relationships that provide information, trust, sponsorship, or opportunity.	Developed through peers, alumni, academics, publishers, schools, and cultural organisations.	Helps graduates locate and enter occupational communities.	Networks may reproduce exclusion and geographic concentration.
Identity capital	Resources used to construct and communicate a credible professional self.	Links literary commitments with possible occupational identities.	Supports coherent articulation of purpose and capability.	Confidence alone cannot compensate for weak opportunity structures.
Employability	Context-dependent capacity to obtain, sustain, and develop meaningful work.	Requires more than possession of a literature degree.	Connects capability with identity, experience, and recognition.	Should not be reduced to first-job acquisition or salary.
Career mobility	Movement across roles, levels, sectors, organisations, or locations.	May draw on portable reading, research, and communication capacities.	Captures long-term adaptability and occupational reinvention.	Movement may represent insecurity rather than advancement.
Global participation	Engagement in transnational, multilingual, digital, or internationally connected work.	Uses English, cultural interpretation, translation awareness, and narrative competence.	Supports mediation across audiences and institutions.	English access is unequal and shaped by linguistic hierarchy.

Note. The concepts are analytically distinct but interact during capability formation and capital conversion.

Table 2. *Literature-derived capabilities and possible professional applications*

Literary practice	Capability developed	Possible occupational application	Conditions for transfer	Risk of overclaiming
Close reading	Attention to nuance, implication, contradiction, tone, and structure.	Editing, policy or legal communication, journalism, research.	Domain knowledge; task-specific standards; evidential discipline.	A literary reading is not a substitute for technical review.
Contextual interpretation	Relating language to historical, institutional, and cultural conditions.	Heritage, museums, education, diplomacy, cultural policy.	Current contextual research; community consultation.	Historical knowledge can be selective or canon-bound.
Narrative analysis	Recognition of voice, sequence, perspective, causality, and omission.	Branding, advocacy, journalism, organisational communication.	Factual verification; audience research; ethical safeguards.	Narrative skill can be used manipulatively.
Rhetorical analysis	Understanding framing, persuasion, authority, and audience positioning.	Public relations, campaigns, speechwriting, media analysis.	Knowledge of medium, regulation, and organisational risk.	Critical awareness does not guarantee persuasive production.
Comparative reading	Evaluation of competing texts, interpretations, and cultural frames.	Research, localisation, translation, international communication.	High competence in relevant languages and fields.	Comparison may flatten cultural difference.
Critical writing	Sustained claims supported by evidence and counterargument.	Publishing, policy, education, grant and report writing.	Genre adaptation, concision, collaboration, revision.	Academic prose may be too specialised or extended.
Seminar dialogue	Listening, questioning, qualification, and responsive argument.	Teaching, facilitation, client work, collaborative teams.	Inclusive participation and conflict-management practice.	Classroom confidence may not transfer across power relations.
Archival and digital research	Source evaluation, documentation, curation, and interpretive organisation.	Libraries, archives, digital humanities, content research.	Technical tools, metadata knowledge, copy-right awareness.	Access and tool proficiency vary among programmes.

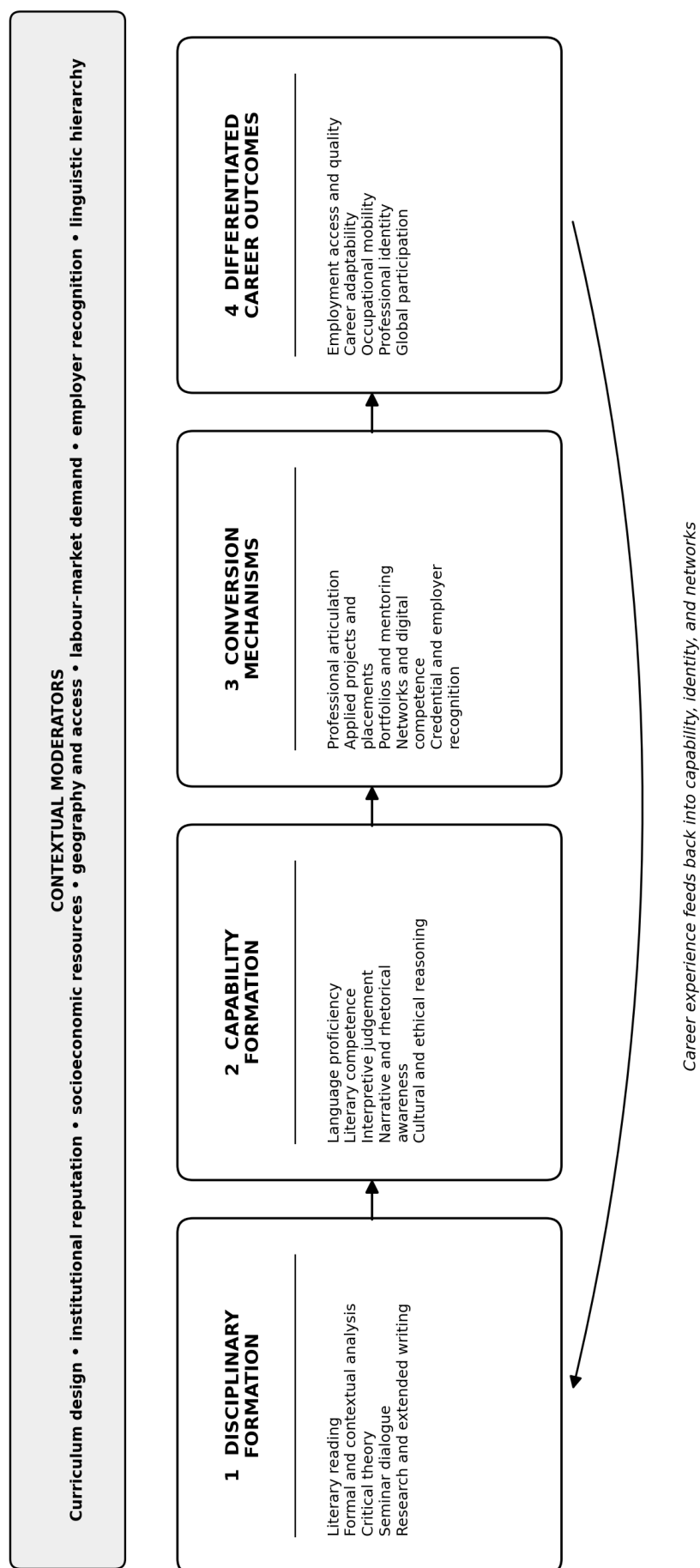
Note. Occupational applications are illustrative. Each requires task-specific knowledge, evidence of performance, and professional judgement.

Table 3. Factors affecting the conversion of literary competence into career capital

Enabling or constraining factor	Individual level	Institutional level	Labour-market level	Curricular implication
Curriculum design	Opportunity to practise and name discipline-specific capabilities.	Assessment, feedback, project design, inclusive teaching.	Influences how clearly graduate capabilities are understood.	Embed application without displacing literary depth.
Professional articulation	Ability to describe what was done, how, and with what evidence.	Reflection, portfolios, interviews, genre translation.	Improves occupational legibility.	Teach specific claims rather than generic self-promotion.
Work experience	Settings in which capabilities are tested under professional constraints.	Placements, commissioned work, public humanities.	Provides evidence and occupational knowledge.	Make opportunities paid, credit-bearing, or equitably supported.
Digital competence	Capacity to research, publish, collaborate, and curate digitally.	Tools, accessibility, copyright, data and platform literacy.	Expands forms of evidence and global participation.	Avoid tool-led curricula and unpaid visibility demands.
Social networks	Access to information, mentoring, sponsorship, and communities.	Alumni, cultural organisations, publishers, schools.	Supports entry and mobility.	Use transparent, inclusive networking structures.
Institutional reputation	Signal attached to the awarding institution or programme.	Brand, resources, employer relationships.	Affects initial recognition of graduate claims.	Cannot be treated as evidence of individual capability.
Socioeconomic resources	Time, money, mobility, equipment, and freedom to take risks.	Access to internships, travel, post-graduate study.	Shapes conversion opportunity.	Provide financial and accessible alternatives.
Employer recognition	Occupational capacity to interpret literature-derived evidence.	Recruitment criteria, assessment tasks, workplace culture.	Determines whether capital is acknowledged and rewarded.	Challenge narrow proxies and credential bias.
Labour-market conditions	Availability, quality, geography, and stability of work.	Vacancies, precarity, regulation, sector funding.	Sets the outer limits of individual conversion.	Avoid promising outcomes universities cannot control.

Note. Conversion depends upon both graduate capacity and access to credible opportunities for recognition and application.

Figure 1. *Conceptual model of language proficiency and literary competence as career capital*



Note. The arrows indicate conditional pathways rather than automatic or causal progression. Career experience recursively develops capabilities, identity, and networks.

Declarations**Funding**

“The authors extend their appreciation to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for funding this research work through the project number (PSAU 2026/02//42172).

References

- Barnett, S. M., & Ceci, S. J. (2002). When and where do we apply what we learn? A taxonomy for far transfer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(4), 612–637. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.4.612>
- Bathmaker, A.-M., Ingram, N., & Waller, R. (2013). Higher education, social class and the mobilisation of capitals: Recognising and playing the game. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34(5–6), 723–743. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2013.816041>
- Belfiore, E., & Bennett, O. (2008). *The social impact of the arts: An intellectual history*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230227774>
- Best, S., & Marcus, S. (2009). Surface reading: An introduction. *Representations*, 108(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2009.108.1.1>
- Biesta, G. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21, 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9>
- Billett, S. (2009). Realising the educational worth of integrating work experiences in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(7), 827–843. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802706561>
- Boje, D. M. (1991). The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36(1), 106–126. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393432>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.
- Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444347>
- Brown, P., Hesketh, A., & Williams, S. (2003). Employability in a knowledge-driven economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(2), 107–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1363908032000070648>
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448619>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers. Council of Europe.
- Carter, R. (2007). Literature and language teaching 1986–2006: A review. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(1), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2007.00130.x>
- Clarke, M. (2018). Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(11), 1923–1937. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1294152>
- Comunian, R., Jewell, S., Sunmoni, A., & Dent, T. (2023). For what it's worth: European Arts & Humanities graduates' employability and their engagement in society. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 22(2), 211–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14740222231156892>
- Culler, J. (1975). *Structuralist poetics: Structuralism, linguistics and the study of literature*. Cornell University Press.
- Dacre Pool, L., & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: Developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education + Training*, 49(4), 277–289. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400910710754435>
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>
- DeFillippi, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1994). The boundaryless career: A competency-based perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15(4), 307–324. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030150403>
- Dodell-Feder, D., & Tamir, D. I. (2018). Fiction reading has a small positive impact on social cognition: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 147(11), 1713–1727. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000395>
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1), 14–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2003.10.005>
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal*

- of *Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(5), 701–721. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.5.701>
- Hall, G. (2015). *Literature in language education* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137331847>
- Hanauer, D. I. (2001). The task of poetry reading and second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(3), 295–323. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/22.3.295>
- Healy, M. (2023). Careers and employability learning: Pedagogical principles for higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 48(8), 1303–1314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2196997>
- Heller, M. (2003). Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(4), 473–492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2003.00238.x>
- Hinchliffe, G. W., & Jolly, A. (2011). Graduate employability and identity. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(4), 563–584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.482200>
- Holmes, L. (2001). Reconsidering graduate employability: The ‘graduate identity’ approach. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(2), 111–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538320120060006>
- Holmes, L. (2013). Competing perspectives on graduate employability: Possession, position or process? *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(4), 538–554. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.587140>
- Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(4), 764–791. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2667055>
- Jackson, D. (2015). Employability skill development in work-integrated learning: Barriers and best practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(2), 350–367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.842221>
- Jackson, D. (2016). Re-conceptualising graduate employability: The importance of pre-professional identity. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 35(5), 925–939. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1139551>
- Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science*, 342(6156), 377–380. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1239918>
- Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2018). Reading literary fiction can improve theory of mind. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2, 604. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0408-2>
- Kramsch, C., & Kramsch, O. (2000). The avatars of literature in language study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84(4), 553–573. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00087>
- Kubota, R. (2011). Questioning linguistic instrumentalism: English, neoliberalism, and language tests in Japan. *Linguistics and Education*, 22(3), 248–260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2011.02.002>
- Mar, R. A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(3), 173–192. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6924.2008.00073.x>
- Marginson, S. (2019). Limitations of human capital theory. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(2), 287–301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1359823>
- McCowan, T. (2015). Should universities promote employability? *Theory and Research in Education*, 13(3), 267–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878515598060>
- McKay, S. (1982). Literature in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16(4), 529–536. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586470>
- Miall, D. S., & Kuiken, D. (1994). Foregrounding, defamiliarization, and affect: Response to literary stories. *Poetics*, 22(5), 389–407. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X\(94\)00011-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X(94)00011-5)
- Moreau, M.-P., & Leathwood, C. (2006). Graduates’ employment and the discourse of employability: A critical analysis. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19(4), 305–324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080600867083>
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2010). *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton University Press.
- Oatley, K. (2016). Fiction: Simulation of social worlds. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 20(8), 618–628. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2016.06.002>
- Panero, M. E., Weisberg, D. S., Black, J., Goldstein, T. R., Barnes, J. L., Brownell, H., & Winner, E. (2016). Does reading a single passage of literary fiction really improve theory of mind? An attempt at replication. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111(5), e46–e54. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000064>
- Paran, A. (2008). The role of literature in instructed foreign language learning and teaching: An evidence-based survey. *Language Teaching*, 41(4), 465–496. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480800520X>
- Polletta, F., Chen, P. C. B., Gardner, B. G., & Motes, A. (2011). The sociology of storytelling. *Annual Review of*

- Sociology*, 37, 109–130. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150106>
- Rivera, L. A. (2011). Ivies, extracurriculars, and exclusion: Elite employers' use of educational credentials. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 29(1), 71–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2010.12.001>
- Small, H. (2013). *The value of the humanities*. Oxford University Press.
- The British Academy. (2020). *Qualified for the future: Quantifying demand for arts, humanities and social science skills*. The British Academy.
- Tomlinson, M. (2012). Graduate employability: A review of conceptual and empirical themes. *Higher Education Policy*, 25(4), 407–431. <https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2011.26>
- Tomlinson, M. (2017). Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability. *Education + Training*, 59(4), 338–352. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-05-2016-0090>
- Trede, F., Macklin, R., & Bridges, D. (2012). Professional identity development: A review of the higher education literature. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(3), 365–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.521237>
- Tymon, A. (2013). The student perspective on employability. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(6), 841–856. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.604408>
- van Kuijk, I., Verkoeijen, P. P. J. L., Dijkstra, K., & Zwaan, R. A. (2018). The effect of reading a short passage of literary fiction on theory of mind: A replication of Kidd and Castano (2013). *Collabra: Psychology*, 4(1), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.117>