

## SAMPLE OF VERBATIM SPEECH TO TEXT REPORTING

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Tina Lannin: Employer Engagement  
Thursday 23rd April 2009

I have been working with employers for your session and I suppose that is why I am here. To kick start and to get you all into employer mode. I thought we would do the usual thing of completing a few sentences, coupling up and completing few sentences; normally I would give you these cards with the sentences written on it that you could complete but I have been busy so you will have to complete them yourself. Here are the sentences. You can be honest, silly, provocative, anything you like. I did think to bring my own cards, I should explain. If you pair up. And all you need to do is to think about it and you just want to complete these sentences, employer, our employers are, employers want, employers need, employer engagement means, careers service should engage employers because. Silly, daft, you have only got two minutes to do it. You are thinking too much, you want to be quick.

Okay, are we there?

So employers are.

NEW SPEAKER: Demanding. Human.

NEW SPEAKER: A vital asset to the careers service.

NEW SPEAKER: Important.

NEW SPEAKER: Anything else.

NEW SPEAKER: A pest!

NEW SPEAKER: That is more like it.

NEW SPEAKER: A pain.

NEW SPEAKER: Slave drivers.

NEW SPEAKER: Yes, essential. Anything else. Okay. Employers want.

NEW SPEAKER: It now.

NEW SPEAKER: Everything right now.

NEW SPEAKER: Best graduates.

NEW SPEAKER: Good quality staff.

NEW SPEAKER: Value for money.

NEW SPEAKER: Employers need.

NEW SPEAKER: A bit of flattery.

NEW SPEAKER: Us. Absolutely.

NEW SPEAKER: Professional interactions with the university.

NEW SPEAKER: Prompt service.

NEW SPEAKER: Skilled and cost effective work force.

NEW SPEAKER: Better training.

NEW SPEAKER: Slap! Employer engagement means.

NEW SPEAKER: Get in them involved.

NEW SPEAKER: A wide variety of activities.

NEW SPEAKER: A wide range of activities.

NEW SPEAKER: Involving them with the student body.

NEW SPEAKER: Picking up the phone every two seconds.

NEW SPEAKER: Careers services should engage employers because.

NEW SPEAKER: We need to know what they want and they need to know what students and graduates can offer.

NEW SPEAKER: They provide freebees.

NEW SPEAKER: Indeed.

NEW SPEAKER: We give sponsorship for things we organise.

NEW SPEAKER: Money! Anything else?

NEW SPEAKER: Student employability.

NEW SPEAKER: Isolated from the job market.

NEW SPEAKER: Otherwise we will be isolated from the graduate market. Okay. Inevitably I have prepared a few myself. Most of which actually mirror what you have said.

I have been trying to get careers advisers to, careers staff really to really engage and embed employers into their services, into their thinking for almost 11 years and I haven't managed it yet so maybe that is why I was also asked to do this session.

I think it is very difficult for us to get ourselves into the spirit, into the mind set of employers because we are focused so much on helping our students and we forget that that is not what they are about and that is not actually anything to do with their job. Their job at the end of the day is simply to recruit the right people into their vacancies as cost effectively as possible and that really is their major goal and the only reason that they actually bother to talk to us at all. The phrase, "Employer engagement" which was the topic I was asked to talk about for the whole morning, the phrase really has only been around as a phrase for about slightly over 2 years. Every year the funding Councils of England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland send a letter to the higher education institutions to tell them what -- to tell them how much money they are going to give them but then to also tell them what they would like them to spend that money on. Of course they can't make them spend them on it but they advise them to and so the first time that this word, this discussion about employer engagement actually was written down was in this funding letter in 2008 and the funding Councils talked very much about wanting employers to be much more engaged with higher education and basically it was around a number of key things and primarily, reading between the lines, it is about getting employers to pay for the extension of higher education. The Labour Government is particularly keen on expanding higher education but they can't afford it so they want employers to be much more involved in fronting foundation courses, in funding masters courses and basically getting to grips with the university. It is wrapped up a lot in saying we want you to be involved in course design so that they are appropriate for the market place. We want particularly institutions to engage with the working community because institutions have got information and can be of use to the working community but if you read between the lines, what the driving force really is is about getting employers to pay for higher education. And what that really -- as I say what that means is this is their key thing that they are talking about and just recently some of you English-based services will know that the funding Council has put in a big amount of money and a big project to encourage workforce development which is about universities going into the workforce and delivering their degrees actually in the workforce rather than encouraging the workforce to come to them. But the effect that it had on all of us was that suddenly the wider broader universities suddenly became very keen on the idea of employer engagement and if you were a head of service you used the words "employer engagement" and suddenly, instead of working with employers it was employer engagement and everything used to come under recruitment fairs and stuff like that, you described it as employer engagement because that was the buzz word but I think it is quite useful to know where it came from in the first place. It has not gone away and if anything it has got more important. The letter that came out early this year, it was still there as priority that universities must engage with employers more effectively. Again, the driver was to grow foundation degrees and particularly to think of other ways of doing degrees that would be more effective for employers so they are talking about compressed degrees getting degrees down to be able to be done in 18 months and they are charged with finding other innovative ways of delivering degrees for employers and this year there was a particular emphasis on science, technology, engineering and maths and universities should be engaging with employers to make sure that we were delivering appropriate services around that. But obviously what really happened and what everybody was interested about in the funding letter was priority one and there was at least two pages on what we should be doing about the current economic situation and the funding Council sees the universities as being a great source of being able to help people through this economic crisis and they are particularly keen on universities going out and giving businesses advice in their local regions on how they can weather the storm. I don't know about you but in my institution we are having trouble weathering the storm ourselves and the idea that we can go and teach all our businesses how to do it seems to me to be a bit weird but nonetheless that is one of the things they are keen on us to do. So that leads nicely, that is a nice segue into talking about the recession because obviously any session talking about employer engagement at the moment needs to think about the recession. And this might work, you never know. Why aren't you working!

NEW SPEAKER: Who is our most techie person.

NEW SPEAKER: Tom! What a shame! Don't you just love technology. I will tell you what he says. It is a shame because he says it rather beautifully.

You should never try to be clever should you, I will tell you what he says, it is the head of the management school London School of Economics, what he actually says is that there are four drivers, or four engines of the economy. Europe, Japan, United States and the emerging markets and that this recession is like no other recession we have ever had because whereas normally what has happened is that one or two of