New Employability Attributes

Andrew Smith
CEO, Education Services Australia
❖ Work and employability
❖ Employers perspective
❖ Students perspective
❖ Developing and communicating employability skills
The world of work is changing...

- The phrase "Future of Work," has become a buzz word, there are hundreds of conferences, books, and articles on the topic.

- The reason for the interest is simple: we are in an economic cycle where jobs, as we know them, are rapidly changing. In fact, I'd venture to say we are reaching a time when jobs, as we know them, are going away. Here are just a few of the changes:
  - Mobility
  - Contingent or contract employment
  - Automation
  - Organisation structures
  - Income inequality
Are jobs going away?

• The most common headline about the future of work is that jobs are going away. Nothing could be further from the truth.

• Research shows that for every job that "goes away" another is created.

• Human skills are essential. Deloitte UK research identified 25 critical "human skills" that are expected to become ever-more important as technology evolves.

• Skills such as empathy, listening, communication, critical thinking, innovation and prioritization are essentially human.

• So the future of work is not about jobs going away, its a story about each and of us redesigning what we do to better leverage tools.
What employers are saying...

• Changing dynamics: short-term contracts, graduates recruited for a project.

• Climate of surplus talent: can be more demanding including applied skills.

• Absolute importance that graduates can become fully immersed in a team.
What employers want...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work readiness</th>
<th>Graduate Employability</th>
<th>The New Basics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mason, Williams, Cranmer, 2006)</td>
<td>(Lawrence, 2015)</td>
<td>(FYA, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding that will enable new graduates to make productive contributions to organisational objectives soon after commencing employment.</td>
<td>Relevant work experience Creativity Problem-solving skills Organisation Passion Fit Communication skills Flexibility</td>
<td>Digital literacy, Critical thinking Creativity Problem solving Presentation skills Teamwork Communication skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How are students feeling?

• High concern about employment outcomes, due to competitive dynamics and changing workplace environments.

• Internationally savvy: no longer local, but global which impacts where they want to work.

• Recognise that they have to identify and leverage opportunities to build a portfolio of skills, competencies, experiences and attributes.

• Underlying desire for life and career portability; they seek security through knowledge and skill, but they do not anticipate permanency.
The evidence base on what works...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong evidence</th>
<th>Moderate evidence</th>
<th>Weak evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High quality evaluations showing positive impact</td>
<td>Lower quality evaluation showing positive impact</td>
<td>Insufficient evaluation to provide evidence on impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employer mentoring</td>
<td>• Work experience</td>
<td>• Careers fairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enterprise competitions</td>
<td>• Career websites</td>
<td>• E-mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work related learning delivered in partnership with employers</td>
<td>• Career talks</td>
<td>• Job shadowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• CV workshops</td>
<td>• Part-time work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employer delivered employability skills workshops</td>
<td>• Volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mock interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workplace visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schools and industry

• The key impact of employer engagement reported by schools and colleges are:
  – raising students’ awareness of different industry sectors
  – Increased awareness of different educational pathways

• Larger employers involved in some form of training are more likely to engage with education, compared to SMEs.

• Barriers to participation of employers with educational institutions were reported as mainly the lack of time and resources needed.

• Finding ways of incentivize stimulate and support employer interest in engaging more fully with schools and colleges.

• Brokerage models.
Volunteering helps develop employability skills

Through careful choice of the volunteering experience, students can gain highly valued workplace skills (Hawkings & Gilleard, 2006), including:

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Time management
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Problem solving
- Accountability
- Customer focus
- Experience
Part time employment helps develop employability skills

“Employers tell us is that they do value work experience and wish that students would make more of it on their application forms” (Lawrence, 2015)

Here are some of the skills that you might gain from shop, bar or restaurant work:

• Dealing with customers (courtesy, social confidence, tact)
• Handling money (numeracy, integrity)
• Working under pressure
• Organisation & planning (to meet peak demand)
Career development ePortfolios

- A collection of digital assets or artefacts, that evidences the development of knowledge, skills and abilities over time.
- An opportunity to showcase examples of projects and work that evidence employability skills to potential employers.

**Content and structure of an ePortfolio:**
- Regularly collect different types of evidence, e.g. experiences and feedback
- Select key evidence to be showcased in an ePortfolio.
- Set aside a regular time to make updates.
- Be selective. Too much information can distract from the key evidence.

**Critical reflection:**
Students reflect on their experiences and how they contribute to the development of employability skills
- What have I learnt about [communication]...[problem solving]...through this experience
- What skills do I have that I didn't have before?
- What are my likes and dislikes, have these changed?
- How have I handled difficult situations, and what would I do differently if the same situation arose again?
- What are my goals for the future? How is my current situation leading to my goals?