

# **“Recognising and developing employability skills”**

**Stuart Moss**

Senior Lecturer & Teacher Fellow

Courses Leader BA (Hons) Entertainment Management  
at the Leeds Beckett University & co-author of  
Employability Skills

Author: The Entertainment Industry: An Introduction



# **Climbing the Ladder of Life Long Learning**

***Recognise, Develop and Sell Your  
Employability Skills***

**Stuart Moss**  
**Leeds Beckett University**

**s.moss@leedsbeckett.ac.uk / @stuartmoss**







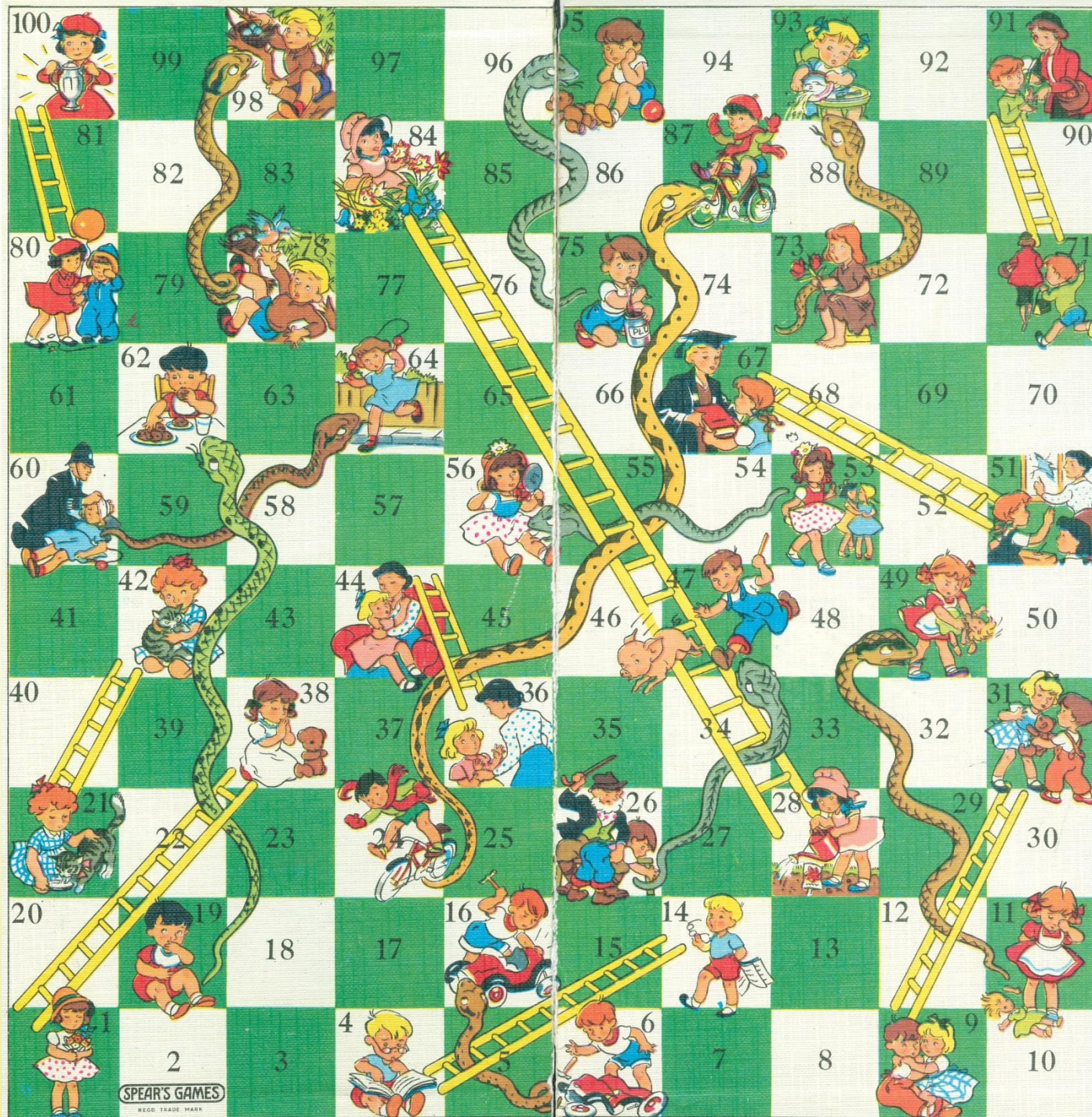














# A Familiar Story?

‘There were four people named EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY and NOBODY.

There was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was asked to do it.

EVERYBODY was sure that SOMEBODY would do it.

ANYBODY could have done it, but NOBODY did it.

SOMEBODY got angry about that, because it was EVERYBODY'S job.

EVERYBODY thought ANYBODY could do it but NOBODY realised that EVERYBODY wouldn't do it.

It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when NOBODY did what ANYBODY could have done.....’

*(Denny, 1993, p.89)*



This is a GROUP task and  
everybody MUST participate

You will need to use a sheet of A4  
paper per group.

Put yourselves into groups of  
three or four.

In your group elect your leader.  
(30 seconds)



# Task 1

Consider the term 'employability' – what does it mean to you?

How might you describe employability if you had to write a definition?

As a group, write your answer in box number 1  
(2 minutes)



# Definition

- Employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required.
  - For the individual, employability depends on:
    - their assets in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess;
    - the way they use and deploy those assets;
    - the way they present them to employers;
    - and crucially, the context (eg personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work.

(IES, 2008)



# Employability skills

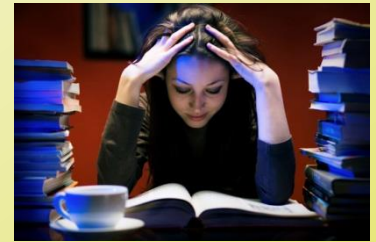
Ultimately skills that make you more employable



**Personal Skills**



**Interpersonal Skills**



**Study Skills**



**Entrepreneurship**



**Management**



**Career Management Skills**

Embedded in your curriculum and demonstrated through your assignments



Second Edition

# Employability skills

by David Hind and Stuart Moss



# Task 2

In your groups, think about how you might develop different skills in your university / college environment.

Write a list of ways that your skills can be developed in box number 2.

(2 minutes)

# When are Your Skills Developed?

- In class
- Through assignments and assessments
- Group projects
- Work placements / internships
- Sports teams
- Clubs and societies
- Part-time jobs
- Mentoring
- Volunteering
- International exchanges
- ???



**I can't get a job because I don't have experience because I can't get a job because I don't have experience**

One third of graduate vacancies are for people with prior work experience (BBC, 2014).

# Task 3

Consider a standard written piece of work that you have carried out, such as an essay or a report.

Think of all the skills that you would utilise in order to successfully do this.

Write a list of skills in box 3.  
(3 minutes)



# *Some* skills utilised when undertaking written assignments

- Scheduling work
- planning
- Information gathering
- Research
- Note-taking
- Referencing
- Writing / literacy
- Time management
- Reading
- Computer skills
- Critical thinking
- Working to deadlines
- and many more...

# Developing Skills Through Assessment

- Presentations:
  - Scheduling work; planning; Information gathering; research; note-taking; Harvard referencing; literacy; time management; I.T.; critical thinking; public speaking; confidence; thinking on your feet!
- Exams:
  - Some of the above; memory and revision techniques; working under pressure; managing stress.



# The needs of the labour market

“A survey of over 250 managers in the UK conducted by the Chartered Management Institute found that graduates whilst in the main were competent with Information Technology (IT) were lacking in basic communication and interpersonal skills, including teamwork, presentation skills, and problem solving”  
(DoctorJob, 2002, p.4).

“The Association of Graduate Recruiters ascertained that over half of graduates recruited into the workplace lacked team working and communication skills, as well as cultural awareness”  
(BBC, 2006).

# The needs of the labour market

“According to employers, newcomers are found to be most lacking in interpersonal skills (41%), and critical IT skills (41%). A quarter of employers even report a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills among graduate recruits”

(Prospects, 2012)

Employers now hold attitude and personality in greater esteem than academic or even vocational qualifications when assessing new recruits

(Cooper, 2012)

“More than half of employers said all or almost all graduate recruits started work without vital attributes, such as team work, communication, punctuality and the ability to cope under pressure”

(Paton, 2013)

# The needs of the labour market

- A survey of 198 UK employers found that soft skills, including confidence and an ability to be analytical were all valued more than technical knowledge by employers at the recruitment stage.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> place – effective communication
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> place – numeracy
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> place – teamwork
  - 24<sup>th</sup> place – technical knowledge
- Further soft skills such as confidence ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and the ability to be analytical ranked 6<sup>th</sup>.

(Gurney-Read, 2014)



# The challenges for students

- Recognising and appreciating your own employability skills and attributes;
- being able to search for realistic jobs effectively;
- being able to sell your skills to employers on both applications and at interview;
- and recognising that learning doesn't end after graduation.

# Task 4

On the following slide is some text from an actual job advert.

List all of the skills that the employer is looking for in box 4.

(2 minutes)

# The Job Advert

*“The successful applicant will be determined and energetic, with a high level of numeracy, I.T., literacy, research and presentation skills.*

*They will be capable of working effectively as an individual and as a part of a team.*

*They will have the ability...proven or latent...to manage people now or in the not-too-distant future, and make things happen.”*



# The Job Advert

*“The successful applicant will be determined and energetic, with a high level of numeracy, ICT, literacy, research and presentation skills.*

*They will be capable of working effectively to deadlines as an individual and as a part of a team.*

*They will have the ability...proven or latent...to manage people now or in the not-too-distant future, and make things happen.”*

# So let's study some of those terms...

- **Determined**

- Getting through difficult times; stress; meeting deadlines; achieving high grades.

- **Energetic**

- When did you last do that little bit extra?

- **Numeracy**

- Statistical analysis of quantitative data.

# So let's study some of those terms...

- **I.T. skills**

- Every assignment; you DO have good ICT skills.

- **Literacy skills**

- Reading and writing – when did you last do that?

- **Research skills**

- Academically taught and finely honed research skills; when *didn't* you last have to research?



# So let's study some of those terms...

- **Presentation skills**

- PowerPoint and beyond; public speaking; the presentation of your work; your professional image.

- **Working effectively to deadlines**

- Most of the work that you undertake.

- **Individual**

- Working alone.

- **Working effectively as a part of a team**

- Group work; sports; employment.

# So let's study some of those terms...

- **Manage people**

- Group working responsibilities; relationships with those around you; organisation and managing self.

- **Make things happen**

- Innovation; creativity; problem solving; achievement.

*‘Know your enemy’*

Sun-Tzu (The Art of War)



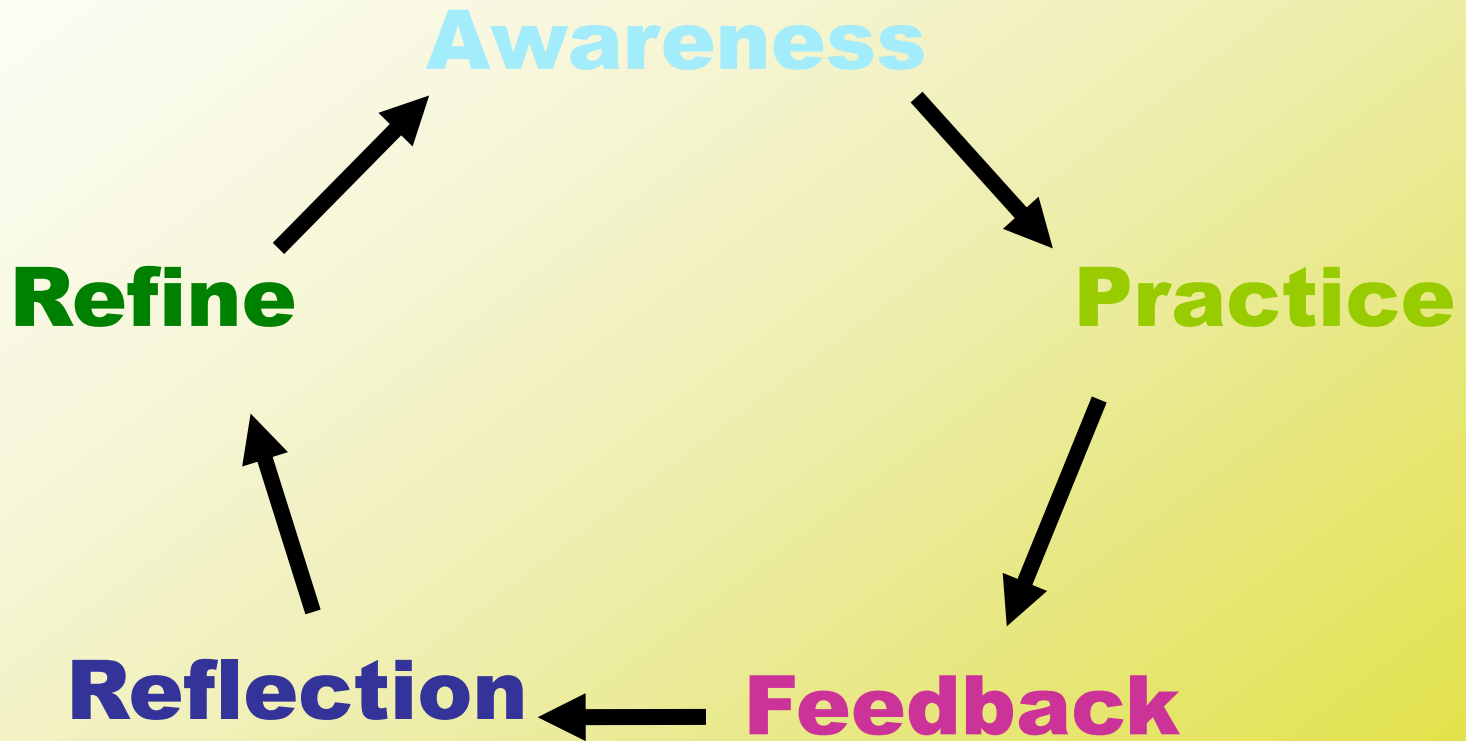
# Feedback

- Everyone should receive feedback, ask for it if you don't automatically get it.
- Stay motivated – stay clear of the crumple zone.
- Talk to other people.
- Learn from your mistakes – and the mistakes of others.
- Carry out the task(s) again – using your feedback as guidance.

# To be Strategic, YOUR Starting Point is Self-Reflection

- You need to:
  - Audit (honestly) your own strengths & weaknesses.
    - Strengths – What do you enjoy? What have you had recognition for? What do other people praise you for?
    - Weaknesses – What don't you enjoy? Could you ever enjoy it? How could you address your weaknesses?
      - Create a realistic developmental plan, then monitor your progress.
- Consider where you want to be, and the path that could take you there.

# Developing your employability skills is a life-long cyclic process



Thankyou

Any Questions???

s.moss@leedsbeckett.ac.uk / @stuartmoss



# Bibliography

- British Broadcasting Corporation. (2006) *Graduate demand outstrips skills*. [Internet] London, BBC. URL available from <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4687030.stm>> Accessed 1st November, 2006.
- British Broadcasting Corporation. (2014) *Job prospects for graduates to improve in 2014, says survey*. [Internet] London, BBC. URL available from <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25712631>> Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2014.
- Cooper, R. (2012) Graduates not equipped for the workplace, say employers, as one in five prefer school leavers. [Internet] London, The Daily Mail. URL available from: <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/news/article-2087270/School-leavers-better-workers-graduates-universities-fail-equip-people-work-say-employers.html>> Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2015.
- Doctorjob. (2002) Ill Communication. *Doctorjob*. Summer 2002, p.4.
- Gurney-Read, J. (2014) Soft skills valued over technical knowledge in graduates. [Internet] London, The Telegraph. URL available from: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/10999619/Soft-skills-valued-over-technical-knowledge-in-graduates.html>> Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2015.
- Hind, D. and Moss, S. (2011) *Employability skills*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Sunderland, Business Education Publishers Ltd.
- Institute for Employment Studies. (2008) *Employability: developing a framework for policy analysis*. London, IES. URL available from: <<http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/summary/summary.php?id=emplblty>> Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2008.
- Knight, P. and Yorke, M. (2003) *Learning, curriculum and employability in higher education*. London, Routledge.
- Paton, G. (2013) University leavers lack the essential skills for work, employers warn. [Internet] URL available from: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10306211/University-leavers-lack-the-essential-skills-for-work-employers-warn.html>> Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.
- Prospects. (2012) Graduates lacking skills for the workplace. [Internet] URL available from: <[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/latest\\_news\\_graduates\\_lacking\\_skills\\_for\\_the\\_workplace.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/latest_news_graduates_lacking_skills_for_the_workplace.htm)> Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2013.
- University of Reading (2008) *Jargonbuster*. [Internet] Reading, UoR. URL available from: <<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/internal/freshers/fr-jargonbuster.asp>> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2008.