

UNDERSTANDING ENTERPRISE & EMPLOYABILITY IN ART & DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION

The embedding of enterprise and entrepreneurship should not result in neglect of either the conceptual or applied aspects of the subject area, but rather should aim to complement the curriculum and make it relevant to students' aspirations.

Enterprise and employability skills allow students to follow their aspirations and to take the initiative: to aim high rather than fitting in. It is not just about getting a job or starting a business; it is also about having the skills required to develop a successful career and a positive mind-set as, well as confidence in one's abilities and an understanding of self-worth.

Fundamental to enterprise and employability is to be socially, economically and globally aware. This makes up part of the student journey towards awareness, resourcefulness, confidence and creativity; developing a sensitivity to the world in which they practice and finding their way in it.

Enterprise and employability skills also prepare students for a broader context, whether self-employment or conventional work. They must also be transferable to other career paths, so students leave knowing how to practise professionally in the broadest sense possible.

'A real understanding of the context that the students are going to go to is absolutely the key to employability; that students understand the ways of thinking that exist outside of an academic environment and can adapt their own ways of thinking with reference to that.'

Tutor
Camberwell College
of Art and Design

ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOY ABILITY

'Surface Design is a course with a very strong identity which allows students to develop very individual profiles through hands-on experimentation. In addition to supporting traditional surface design skills-loading, the programme is also offering a unique experience for those who want the freedom to explore conceptual issues in a design-based forum. Diversity of approaches has resulted in a healthy mix of learning styles supported by an emphasis on individuality.'

Neil Mussen
External Examiner's Report 2012

THE STUDENT JOURNEY

BA Surface Design

Unit: Self and Identity
Ellen Hancock
Senior Lecturer, BA Surface Design
London College of Communication

Students do not approach their learning in a linear fashion; rather their journey may pass through different stages and may engage with different stages simultaneously. Individual students are likely to have diverse starting points and transition points into the future.

The learning and teaching of enterprise and employability skills in the curriculum should reflect the diversity of the student population via experiential learning opportunities that engage and enhance students' abilities and skills, set within a meaningful and relevant context.

Educators need to be explicit about the outcomes we hope to achieve, and time taken to explain the relevance of enterprise and employability to students' future careers. We need to be sure the language we are using is understood by all when defining these categories of enterprise and employability and articulating learning outcomes so that students understand clearly what is expected of them, particularly when experimentation, flexibility and adaptability are key outcomes.

WORKING WITH INDUSTRY

Students build a practical knowledge of their industry or sector through contact, so the educator needs to be open to industry's influence on course content and delivery. The priorities of education rightly influence industry expectations, and opportunities are available for industry to feed back into the curriculum.

In an ever-changing environment, what is 'right' today may not be right tomorrow; thus, situating learning in a real or well simulated environment provides opportunities to access in a way that is fit for purpose.

Technical Arts and Special Effects (TASE)

Unit: TASE 5 Life Modelling and Advanced Moulding and Casting
Allan Sly
Senior Lecturer, BA (Hons)
Theatre and Screen - TASE
Wimbledon College of Art

'We actually recruit most of our sculptors from Wimbledon. The fundamental sculpting skills that they're learning are very appropriate for our business and they tend to be able to fit in very easily because they've got a very strong foundation in sculpture.'

Liz Malinowski
Production Manager, Merlin Entertainment

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

MA Graphic Moving Image

Unit: Visual Rhetoric
Penny Hilton
Course Leader Postgraduate Design
London College of Communication

Fostering models of collaborative learning and teaching supports new types of understanding, cognitive skill, application and provides a context for knowledge exchange within the student community and across disciplines.

Learning with groups of students or disciplines puts a student's own practice into relief and requires key enterprise and employability skills such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, team-working and communication. Collaboration can also demand enterprise skills such as the development of networking skills.

'By fostering models of collaborative learning and teaching the project supports new types of understanding, cognitive skill, application and provides a context for knowledge exchange within the student community. This project aims to construct a model of cross-fertilisation between Social Sciences and the Arts by providing a framework for student collaboration beyond the disciplines with which they are familiar.'

Penny Hilton
Course Leader, Postgraduate Design,
London College of Communication



Cara Lee Roth
Educational Developer
University of the Arts London

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Publications:
<http://see.arts.ac.uk/about/seepublications/>

'It changes the tenor of a project because there is a client, and with a very definite client there is all kinds of enterprise and employability learning going on; it immediately causes students to think and act in different ways; you can't synthesise it.'

Course Leader
Central Saint Martins
College of Art and Design

WORK OF ART



see

student enterprise & employability