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Abstract

Despite ongoing efforts by universities, challenges and tensions continue to exist in academic discourse, policy and practice around graduate employability. These factors can militate against the sector's capacity to prepare learners for life and the world of work, because they promote unclear, and sometimes counterproductive and competing, courses of action. This article suggests that higher education institutions' approaches to graduate employability reflect at least three concurrent aims. The aims relate to: (i) short-term graduate outcomes; (ii) professional readiness; and (iii) living and working productively and meaningfully across the lifespan. The commitment to each of these aims is often tacit and ill-defined, and varies within as well as between institutions, and over time. This article attempts to navigate a productive path through the multiple aims and agendas in graduate employability, along with the definitional and measurement challenges, to identify pragmatic, workable approaches for universities. It suggests some actionable principles to enhance employability that address the tensions and challenges between the three employability aims.

Keywords

Introduction

Examination of the history of universities shows that they have long contributed to the economies and societies in which they are located, through the creation and sharing of knowledge. This sharing of knowledge includes the graduation of students with capabilities that add value to their economic and social contexts (Boden & Nedeva, 2010). Until fairly recently, graduates of higher education could be confident of obtaining professional employment afterwards, particularly in public service.

However, over the last thirty years, the role of universities has come under increasing scrutiny, with a tighter coupling of educational experiences to economic needs around the world (Smith et. al., 2018). Knowledge and skills have become accepted as drivers of growth in advanced 'knowledge economies' (Australian Industry Group, 2019), and as such governments and employer have demanded evidence of the human capital value and effectiveness of university education. At the same time, universities have become corporatised, with imperatives around competition and efficiency, and also massified, with far greater enrolment numbers than ever before. Massification has been linked to social justice agendas via widening participation and increased access of diverse learners to the equalising effects of education (Stevenson, Clegg & Lefever, 2010). However, the biggest underpinning of massification of higher education is the move to educate more people who can then contribute to the economy as high value workers and consumers.

Graduate employability: Continuing definitional challenges

While scholars debated ideas relating to employability as early as the 1930s (e.g., Clark, 1930), the agenda started to gather momentum in the 1990s, as a direct consequence of the evolving role of the university as producer of human capital (Harvey, 2000). Thus, contemporary definitions of graduate employability tend to be underpinned by human capital theory (Becker, 1964), focussing on the individual possession of skills, knowledge and other

attributes acquired through university education that enable individuals to secure and maintain employment (e.g., Suleman, 2018). These definitions have been criticised for being nearly tautologous, and for overlooking an important additional range of individual influences on employability, such as social and cultural capital, and identity (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2019; Tomlinson, 2017). Cultural capital relates to students' signals of 'good fit' and cultural alignment with the profession and workplace. Social capital refers to their professional relationships and networks and the 'who you know' elements of career building. Identity is a central underpinning factor to individual employability, relating to concepts and narratives students have about themselves, their chosen profession and career, and their broader lives.

A further problem with definitions that emphasise possession of skills to secure employment is that in focussing on employment outcomes they tend to conflate the effects of educational processes with the impact of 'demand side' factors on employment, such as the structure of the labour market, and competition for graduate level work (Holmes, 2001; Suleman, 2018). Some of the strongest influences on full-time graduate employment relate to the local graduate labour market and the reputation of the institution rather than educational factors (Karmel & Carroll, 2016). Thus, the reality is that a graduate can possess advanced level professional skills and knowledge in a field, but may still be more challenged than others in obtaining a job role in their field of interest if (for instance): visa conditions limit their capacity to work; if they lack the confidence to apply their skills; if there is a high level of competition for roles in their field; if they have a disability; if they are unable to access the 'hidden' job market through their social networks; if they went to a university with comparatively lower reputational capital, or if they live in a region with high structural employment (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2018).

Strategies for employability development

Most universities employ a range of employability strategies (Farenga & Quinlan, 2016), and this varies by institution and also within institution by discipline and degree program. Skills-based employability strategies have focussed on the development of disciplinary skills required for professional practice within the curriculum, along with generic / transferable skills such as teamwork and problem-solving, which are applicable and useful across multiple employment contexts (Clanchy & Ballard, 1995; Jackson, 2016). To develop competence, these need to be effectively mobilised in the workplace (van der Velden, 2013). They are underpinned by a range of desirable qualities, such as resilience, creativity and proactiveness (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Many universities around the world have published statements on graduate attributes, which list the capabilities that they aim to develop in their students (Barrie, 2007; Kalfa & Taska, 2017). In recent years, educators have recognised the importance of strong career management skills to graduate employability (Bridgstock, 2009, Williams et al., 2016), and in many universities there has been a movement of career development learning from the co-curricular space to inside degree programs (Bridgstock, Grant-Iramu & McAlpine, in-press). In an overcrowded and competitive graduate labour market, Employability Award schemes have been developed by some universities to recognise and promote the co- and extra-curricular experiences of their graduates, as a means of differentiation (Farenga & Quinlan, 2016).

The traditional role of higher education centres on knowledge and skills, but in recent years many universities have started to move to affect many of the other influences on graduate employability. One way is through creating labour market opportunities, either directly (such as through employing its own students and graduates), or through being an 'entrepreneurial university' – that is, by building the economic capacity, and thus the employment capacity, of a local region through research-based innovation, knowledge

exchange, and direct commercial action (Etzkowitz, 2016). Many universities have their own job centres and recruitment agencies, the remit for which is finding their students and graduates jobs; some of these focus their activities particularly on students from diversity groups who can be disadvantaged in the jobs market. Student entrepreneurship programs and incubators aim to support students to create their own employment. Careers fairs, industry networking events, industry mentoring schemes, and work integrated learning opportunities (such as placements and internships) are strategies that build students' social capital and professional networks, as well as their skills.

This article takes as its starting point that universities tend to engage with employability conceptually and in terms of desired outcomes in three main ways. The three employability aims that universities adopt are suggested to be: (i) short-term graduate employment outcomes; (ii) professional readiness; and (iii) living and working productively and meaningfully across the lifespan. The next section of this article considers each of the employability aims in turn, followed by some actionable principles for employability enhancement that balance performative, institutional, professional and individual student imperatives in productive ways.

Employability as short-term graduate employment outcomes

In many countries, governments have established university key performance indicators for graduate employability that focus on graduates' full-time employment a few months after course completion (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2018). For instance, in Australia, the percentage of recent graduates who have managed to secure a full-time role of any type, along with their salary levels, is presented in the Quality Indicators of Learning and Teaching website by university and disciplinary area. In addition, there now exist several 'league tables' that incorporate graduate employment outcomes (such as the Times Higher Education's Global University Employability Ranking) and benchmark institutional performance. These

published statistics are considered a proxy indicator for employability, and are used by prospective students and their parents, along with other ratings such as student satisfaction and course quality, to gauge institutional success and inform study choices. With moves towards basing government funding of higher education institutions on graduate employment outcomes in both Australia and the United Kingdom, the full-time employment indicator has become a powerful focus for many universities.

The fact that the proportion of graduates in short-term graduate employment is the key (and sometimes sole) measured indicator of graduate employability means that university leadership can set summative outcome targets for their employability interventions in terms of desired increases in percentage full-time graduate employment (Hazelkorn, 2015). In reality, as previously discussed in this article, there are a number of influences on graduate employment that have been demonstrated empirically to have greater impact on short-term graduate employment than educational interventions, such as the state of the local labour market, and the reputation of the university (Karmel & Carroll, 2016). Ultimately this means that the impact of educational interventions on percentage full-time employment is likely to be somewhat limited.

The use of short-term employment outcomes as an indicator of employability has appeal partly because many students enter higher education seeking 'a good job' at the end of their degrees (Tomlinson, 2007), although this can vary by family history in tertiary education (Hunt et al., 2018). Amid increasing student fees for degree programs, many students are understandably seeking an immediate and tangible return on their investment. However, in the context of a massified higher education system and many more graduates than ever before, competition for a finite number of graduate level roles is also far greater than previously.

Measuring graduate employability using short-term graduate employment outcomes is also problematic on a number of other grounds. For instance, graduates with 'non-vocational' degrees, that is degrees that are not associated with one specific professional outcome, may take more time to transition to the workforce, and therefore may seem to be employable than their peers. Further, in some industry sectors such as the creative industries and information technology, the prevalence of project-based and entrepreneurial ways of working (Piperopolous, 2012) means that employability as full-time employment may not ever be a useful measure.

Graduate outcome measures also seem to operate somewhat at odds with future ways of working and building a productive career across all industry sectors. Graduates can increasingly expect to hold multiple job roles, including on a self-employment basis, and recurrently seek or create work (Committee for Economic Development of Australia [CEDA], 2015; Foundation for Young Australians, 2018). Self-employment and 'portfolio' ways of working involving multiple concurrent or overlapping work roles will become more common for knowledge workers due to structural labour market changes and the further rise of the 'gig' economy, along with digital influences on work such as automation and artificial intelligence (Bakhshi et. al., 2017).

We have elsewhere (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2018) presented arguments for the widening of short-term measures of graduate employability to include subjective measures incorporating graduates' own aims and goals, and recognising the different ways that they can add value through their work and other activities, and deepening of measures to include outcomes beyond initial labour market experiences. Some recent changes to measures of graduate outcomes in the United Kingdom and Australia have started to incorporate indicators of employer satisfaction with graduate employee work (Social Research Centre 2019a,) and measures of perceived underemployment and overqualification. Longitudinal

surveys have also recently become a feature of graduate employability measurement in the United Kingdom and Australia, including repeated survey measures of employment up to 3 years post-course completion (HESA, 2018; Social Research Centre, 2019b).

Nonetheless, graduate employability as measured by short-term employment outcomes continues to be the single preeminent indicator that is used to gauge performance. Institutional employability strategies that target short term outcomes include those that seek to influence the graduate labour market and job opportunities for graduates directly (such as recruitment and job placement activities, employing its own students, and careers fairs), along with interventions that seek to enhance the reputational capital of the institution, the school or degree program (such as targeted marketing campaigns, and building positive relationships with big employers in the local area). Enrolment profile enhancement strategies, such as enrolling more students in degrees for which there is known labour market demand for full-time roles, and conversely reducing enrolments in non-vocational degree programs or programs associated with poorer outcomes, is another possibility. Such enrolment profile enhancement strategies would need to be balanced carefully according to predicted labour market demand, levels of student demand for programs, and degree delivery costs. Employability Awards, the awarding of badges and micro-credentials, that emphasise participation in co-curricular activities can create positional advantage in the graduate jobs market and also enhance short-term outcomes.

In terms of degree offerings, one strategy involves narrowing of curriculum to educate graduates for specific jobs and emphasise the development of desired professional capabilities for those roles, strengthening the 'vocationalisation' of curriculum (Boden & Nedeva, 2010). Curriculum narrowing and a decline in liberal arts / humanities and general science degrees is also driven by student demand for degrees with clear career pathways and good graduate outcomes. Somewhat ironically, an emphasis on the development of specific

job skills over broader capabilities may in some instances militate against the university's role in preparing graduates for a dynamic labour market and contribution to the knowledge economy (Lyons & Hil, 2015). This tension is discussed further in later sections of this article.

Social capital-based strategies may also be effective in achieving positive short-term graduate outcomes (Jackson, 2014). Work integrated learning and industry mentoring schemes build students' employability skills and knowledge, and also develop professional relationships that can lead to the acquisition of work in the short term (Bridgstock, 2019). Other short-term strategies aim to enhance students' abilities to find and acquire work, through learning how to write job applications and resumes, and how to perform well in job interviews, a sub-category of carer development learning / career self-management learning (Bridgstock, 2009).

Employability as readiness to enter a profession

The second way that universities engage with graduate employability is through preparing students to enter a profession, through professionally accredited degree pathways (Bravenboer & Lester, 2016). The formal accreditation indicates that the program's graduates are deemed to possess the capabilities required to progress toward registration in, or recognition by, that profession (Harvey, 2004; de Paor, 2016). During the process of professional accreditation, a degree program is assessed against predetermined criteria within various categories (such as its learning objectives, curriculum content, learning activities such as placements and internships, support and resourcing, and teaching staff profile). Professional accreditation can be categorised as 'regulated' or 'non-regulated'. Regulation is enforced by government on behalf of the public in professions where public safety needs to be ensured. In Australia, professions such as nursing, medicine, architecture and psychology

are regulated, whereas engineering, accountancy and journalism are unregulated, but are still accredited by their respective professional bodies.

Degree accreditation is most strongly associated with priorities around external quality assurance, and consistency of learning within programs. However, in Harvey's (2004) study of the perceptions of academics and university managers relating to accreditation, a strong employability theme also emerged. Participants discussed professional accreditation as either entirely necessary for professional employment in the field, or at least that it enhanced the prospects of their graduates for professional employment. Participants were also concerned that failure to achieve accreditation status would reduce both the employability outcomes and also the marketability and competitiveness of their degree programs.

In degree programs with external accreditation, tensions may exist between accreditation requirements and university curriculum requirements, such as the integration of university graduate attributes, and wider career development learning. The curriculum in many professionally accredited programs can be truly 'crowded' with occupational requirements for professional competence impeding the inclusion of wider capability development (Mills et. al., 2018; Reid, 2016), which may also militate against the inclusion of wider strategies for enhancement of employability, such as integration of career development learning.

That professional degree programs should have requirements that assure the quality and safe practice of commencing professionals, and in turn that students of professional degrees may expect to acquire the capabilities and recognition that will support them to embark on professional careers, seems appropriate. However, professional accreditation has been argued to run the risk of overemphasis on specific and short-term professional needs rather than longer term outcomes (Masse & Popovitch, 2007; Vibert, 2018). There is also

wide variation in the extent to which accrediting bodies encourage innovation in degree programs, versus policing compliance with current standards and requirements.

The largest cause for concern with professionally accredited programs and employability lies not with the preparation of students for their intended profession. Rather, it lies in the extent to which a proportion of these students will not ever practice in these professions, or will only remain in them for a short while. Wider career and employability learning may be strongly beneficial as they move into different life and career pathways. Examination of graduate destinations from professional programs suggests that graduates end up pursuing a wider variety of pathways than often considered by universities or the students themselves. For instance, up to 50 per cent of new Australian teachers leave the profession within five years (Gallant & Riley, 2014); a recent study of law graduates suggests that only two-thirds commence their careers in law, with the rest employed across other professional employment (Melbourne Law School, 2017). Even when graduates stay in their professional fields, a more flexible degree program may help them identify and pursue career opportunities that may not otherwise have been considered, such as pursuit of a specialisation or new/emerging sub-field.

Employability as living and working productively and meaningfully across the lifespan

The third sense of graduate employability is far less well-bounded than the other two. It relates to the role of higher education in developing a graduate's ongoing capacity to live, work and otherwise contribute to society and the economy productively and meaningfully throughout life, referred to hereafter as the lifelong/lifewide approach to employability (see also Bridgstock & Tippett, 2019; Fullan, 1993). Employability in this sense is the capacity to employ or use one's capabilities in ways that are personally meaningful and appropriate, and contribute to the contexts with which the graduate interacts. That is, graduate employability

could be thought of as the ability to harness one's capabilities in order to add value across a range of different contexts across the life course, including social and civic engagement, and economically and socially through one's work and career. This sense captures the graduate's own aims and goals, and their life and work circumstances.

For instance, while the majority of graduates aspire to a professional career after they graduate, some may wish to contribute to an area of knowledge or practice; some need to balance work and non-work activity; and some students enrol in university intrinsically motivated to learn without specific career outcomes in mind (Guiffrida et.al., 2013). These motivations may overlap, and they will certainly change over the lifespan as the graduate's circumstances change. Equally, for some graduates, full-time employment may never be a possibility due to cultural expectations, disability/health conditions or family responsibilities, or indeed labour market conditions in different regions or industries, but this view of graduate employability recognises a wide variety of life circumstances and ways that graduates can, and do, add value.

The graduate employability agenda has been variously criticised and resisted by some academics (e.g., Grant-Smith & Osborne, 2017) for 'neoliberalising' education, threatening academic freedom, and dumbing down / reducing the capacity of higher education to foster critical capabilities and thinking. A broader conceptualisation of graduate employability as explored here may be more congruent with long-held university values around wider contributions to economy and society, recently reinvigorated in Barnett's (2011, 2017) concept of the 'ecological university'. Barnett argues that the university is interconnected with seven ecosystems in which it is embedded: knowledge; social institutions (including politics); physical environment; economy; culture; learning; and human subjectivity. The university is influenced by, and in turn intentionally acts upon, the seven zones which are not separate from the ecological university, but that they all flow into one another. He further

suggests that even now when universities maintain some level of perceived independence from their ecosystems, that these still form a 'deep ecology' of the university that can be brought to the surface and strengthened through visioning and strategy.

The wider lifelong/lifewide notion of graduate employability therefore gives credence to the development of a wider and deeper set of graduate capabilities than either the professional readiness or short-term outcomes notions imply -- although it might be argued to encompass them. The lifespan approach to employability can be linked with Holmes' (2001; 2013) arguments that employability should move beyond the 'possessional' (meaning the possession of skills and knowledge that are useful for acquisition of, and performance at, work) to a 'processual' approach involving ongoing sensemaking, self-discovery and self-construction (Savickas, 2011). Advocates of processual perspectives on employability emphasise identity as a central construct, with individuals progressively constructing and refining their career and life identities through authentic experiences and social interactions (Bridgstock et. al., 2019; Jackson, 2016; Tomlinson, 2017). In turn, identity and 'who I am/ who I will be' frames decisions and action, becoming something of a 'cognitive compass' (Fugate et. al., 2004), supporting learning and career choices, and helping people to make sense of learning experiences.

The lifelong/lifewide notion of graduate employability can thus also be seen to support the optimisation of economic contributions of graduates, in part through graduate employment, but also through other considered economic activity. Through learning to make informed decisions through an ongoing process of identity development and career self-management (Bridgstock 2009; Bridgstock et al., in press) which optimises the match between individual motivations, needs and circumstances on the one hand, and opportunities to add value (such as through employment) on the other, graduates can arguably become

better equipped to contribute economically both now, and in an ongoing way throughout their lives.

Processually (rather than possessionally) orientated employability learning seems even more important now because of changes to the world of work and society that are already underway under the disruptive influence of digital technologies, and are predicted to gather momentum over the next few decades (CEDA, 2015). While commentators agree that human capabilities relating to creativity and connection with others will continue to be valued, and that new job roles and other ways to add value will emerge, other roles and opportunities are already disappearing. Predictions of the individual and social effects of these changes range from the optimistic to the calamitous, but what is widely agreed is that change will continue to occur, and that people will need to continually adapt and reskill. In turn, the ability and propensity to career self-manage in an ongoing way will underpin effective adaptation and learning.

The lifelong/lifewide perspective is not without challenges. We are in an era where universities are increasingly tasked with demonstrating institutional performance, and where a key element of this is demonstrating the value that graduates add through work. A conceptualisation of employability that recognises and promotes a multiplicity of student circumstances, aims and potential outcomes over an extended and unspecified period, does not lend itself to easy measurement. It is somewhat unclear what institutional success in a lifelong/lifewide sense might look like (although for a discussion of what wider subjective measures and measures of graduate value might entail, see Jackson & Bridgstock, 2018). Because direct impact of a lifelong/lifewide employability strategy can be hard to demonstrate, it can be difficult to argue for more explicit embedding of such approaches into institutional or government policy.

A lifelong/lifewide perspective might also result in diffusion of curriculum. Rather than a 'narrowing' of curriculum, per the discussion of professional readiness covered previously in this article, a lifelong/lifewide approach could encourage learners to want to pursue a very wide range of learning pathways and opportunities that a traditionally constituted degree curriculum may not be able to support. In some ways, a 'just for you learning' model, where students create their own degree programs through micro certifications – captured in EY's (2018) visualisation of the 'disruptor university' in future higher education – might better address these potentially very diverse learning requirements. The question then becomes how to support learners to construct these micro learning experiences into a coherent and progressive learning journey.

Three employability aims: Challenges and complementarities

This article suggests that the three employability aims are pursued concurrently by universities, with different emphases by institution and degree program. The emphases can change over time, and in response to policy, labour market, and stakeholder requirements. However, universities do not necessarily differentiate between the aims explicitly, or adopt a deliberate balance between them when deciding upon strategies or initiatives. While literature that documents institutional approaches to graduate employability does exist (e.g., Bennett et. al., 2017; Farenga & Quinlan, 2016), there appears to be remarkably little differentiation by desired outcomes, either in the literature or the documented institutional strategies.

It can be seen that the three views of graduate employability can be highly complementary to one another, but tensions do emerge. For instance, one might expect that a professional readiness approach would lead to better short-term graduate outcomes. However, in some cases professionally accredited or recognised undergraduate degrees do not lead directly to professional work, but rather depend on further postgraduate study, for which there are further academic and other entry hurdles. Australian degrees in psychology and

architecture are good examples of this (Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, 2019; Australian Psychology Registration Council, 2019). Graduates who complete the first degree but do not meet the requirements for the corresponding postgraduate program are then challenged to reframe their identities away from the narrow professional outcomes of their undergraduate program, and to acquire additional capabilities for the new trajectories that they must choose. To do this requires effective career self-management, drawn from the lifelong/lifewide sense of graduate employability.

Strategies can also compete for resourcing and space in the curriculum. The different views of graduate employability can lend themselves to the adoption of different specific learning outcomes, pedagogies, strategies and approaches, and this is where, in the context of limited curricular space, competition between the views becomes a potential challenge. Table 1 summarises some key dimensions of educational practice by which the three views of employability contrast, and that represent potential sources of tension and challenge.

[Table 1 near here]

Some strategies and approaches foster employability across multiple views. One key example of an approach that potentially cuts across the three views is work integrated learning (WIL), which can concurrently foster the development of career identity, while developing students' professional capabilities and enhancing their social and cultural capital for short term employment (Jackson, 2017). However, in practice, different models of WIL lend themselves to different employability aims. Traditional 'placement' models typically have high levels of disciplinary or professional specificity, where the student engages in supervised professional practice in an authentic setting. These can: develop students' professional and disciplinary capabilities; help them to translate their university-acquired

capabilities to professional contexts and make sense of university learning; build knowledge of professional workplaces and practices; and develop professional relationships that are useful for career development and future learning (e.g., Jackson 2017). By contrast, consultancy project or enterprise models of WIL may also draw upon students' disciplinary expertise, but often in a transdisciplinary collaborative problem-solving context, perhaps with a 'live brief' from an industry or community partner beyond their field of study. This latter model of WIL can foster employability in professional and short-term senses, but primarily lends itself to a lifelong/lifewide view of employability. The project/consultancy may emphasise the development and deployment of transferable skills, metacognitive skills, and '21st century' or 'future workforce' capabilities such as innovation and enterprise thinking, sense-making and advanced digital literacy (Davies, Fidler & Gorbis, 2011).

Navigating a strategic path: Actionable principles

Universities necessarily maintain concurrent commitments to all three views of graduate employability. Acknowledging that a 'magic bullet, one-size fits all solution' to navigating the challenges and tensions between them is not possible, this article seeks to promote a considered and pragmatic institutional approach that accommodates the different views and their associated strategies and initiatives, to maximise positive outcomes. This section of the article proposes a series of four actionable principles to support effective decision-making for the development of employability at both an institution-wide and degree program level.

1. *Adopt a systematic, explicit and evidence-based approach to determining the desired balance of employability views and outcomes for each program.*

The determination of balance should bear in mind the overall constraint of limited curricular and co-curricular space and resourcing, along with central issues of programmatic identity

and branding, and stakeholder expectations and requirements. If it is an established program, evidence of its actual performance in alignment with three views of employability (short-term graduate outcomes, professional outcomes, and wider lifelong-lifewide outcomes) can help inform decisions. Lifelong-lifewide outcomes may be more difficult to gauge than short-term or professional outcomes, and may include alumni-based research, such as interrogation of LinkedIn data, alumni interviews and survey tracking over time to explore their career aims, trajectories and contributions. Direct alumni input into programmatic design may also be beneficial. If the program is in development, research into the outcomes of comparable programs should be a standard part of determining degree viability and composition.

In addition to focussing on current and immediate outcomes, a systematic and evidence-based approach will also involve keeping an eye towards the future of work and projected professional, discipline-specific and wider capability requirements, which can inform the ongoing updating of curricula. Published studies that use scenario methods to explore the future of professions and industries may be useful (Hajkowicz et. al., 2016; World Economic Forum, 2018), along with direct insights from researchers and practitioners who are engaged in leading-edge practice.

It is suggested that all initial undergraduate degrees contain some lifelong/lifewide elements, even if they are accredited programs that emphasise professional readiness. The inclusion of some broader experiences, identity and career development will advantage learners within their chosen professions and will assist them to obtain initial employment, as well as enabling them to realise wider and deeper outcomes. Subsequent (e.g., advanced undergraduate, postgraduate or continuing professional education) educational experiences and credentials may deemphasise lifelong/lifewide aims, as they build upon existing capabilities and identities, and target the development of professional capabilities or specific desired employment outcomes.

2. *Develop a programmatic approach to employability that reflects the desired balance of aims.*

It is increasingly recognised that curriculum integration of graduate employability, with progression and development clearly mapped through the whole of a program, is more effective than purely co- or extra- curricular; individual subject-based; or other 'bolt on' employability learning (Bridgstock, Grant-Iramu & McAlpine, in-press; Campbell et. al., this volume; Minocha et al., 2017). Programmatic curriculum integration is likely to have impact on the whole student cohort, and is associated with fewer equity concerns than co- or extra-curricular approaches. Whole-of-program design means that the core student learning can be progressive and scaffolded, and a coherent curriculum design that interweaves different forms of capability development can enhance relevance for learners, and optimise efficiency of learning.

In selecting curricular elements and strategies for employability, it is worthwhile to consider first those that have a demonstrable impact on multiple types of outcome. As noted in the previous section of this article, career development learning, WIL, industry mentoring, and industry networking are all strategies that cross-cut employability aims, although they can also be tailored to address different desired outcomes. The development of metacognitive 'learning how to learn' and career self-management capabilities is a lifelong/lifewide strategy that can also mean that short-term and professional employability skill development needs are met.

Choice of pedagogic practices can also maximise the breadth of employability outcomes. For instance, complex collaborative problem-solving, inquiry-based or research-based learning in authentic contexts can be used to develop professional or disciplinary

capabilities and lifelong/lifewide capabilities concurrently, offering a potential employability advantage over more traditional, lecture-based approaches.

3. *Offer optional pathways that permit learners to pursue individual learning and employability pathways beyond the core programmatic approach.*

Recognising that space in the programmatic curriculum will always be at a premium, and therefore core learning must be prioritised to benefit the entire cohort, opportunities can then be offered to students to 'dive deeper', to specialise or to further explore various employability learning pathways beyond the programmatic approach. Co-curricular, elective (space permitting), or even post program-completion opportunities can be useful, to further boost outcomes in alignment with any of the three employability views. For instance, learners who discover an interest in enterprise and entrepreneurship (lifelong/lifewide view) may participate in further or additional learning focussed on applied innovation and enterprise thinking, or developing their start-up and venture management skills. Those who need to work more intensively on their job search and acquisition capabilities (short-term view) may engage in co-curricular or post-graduation learning focussed on these capabilities.

4. *Keep learners informed, and support them to make good, active choices about their employability learning.*

Under this principle, learners are empowered to make their own decisions about their employability outcomes, and the strategies they wish to pursue as individuals. This includes providing a clear articulation of the balance of employability views chosen in the degree program, along with an explanation of the adoption of specific curricular decisions and employability development strategies in alignment with each view. Providing evidence of actual and anticipated possible graduate outcomes and trajectories (per principle 1 above)

according to the three views, along with suggested learning pathways (per principle 3) beyond the core programmatic curriculum, will help to inform learner choices.

However, empowering learners to make their own decisions about employability learning is more than informational. For many undergraduate learners (particularly school-leavers), it may commence with learning why employability is important, discovering what they want out of their degrees, and how the program and other types of learning opportunities can help them achieve the desired outcomes. It may also include progressive sense-making through experience and periodic reflection over time, along with supported check-ins and learning choice points either within or outside the program (e.g., Gilworth & Cobb, 2017).

Conclusion

This article has unpacked and explored three views of graduate employability adopted by universities, along with some of the strategies that are associated with each. While the different types of outcome are often pursued concurrently, the commitment to each is often tacit and ill-defined, and the specific choice of strategies in programs is not optimal. Further, strategies can compete for curricular space and resourcing, resulting in an overcrowded and confused curriculum. There is no simple, universal solution, but it is possible to navigate a more productive path through these challenges. To this end, this article has proposed a series of four actionable principles that can support effective institutional and programmatic decision-making for employability: (i) adopt a systematic, explicit and evidence-based approach to determining the desired balance of employability views and outcomes for each program; (ii) develop a programmatic approach to employability that reflects the desired balance of aims; (iii) offer optional pathways that permit learners to pursue individual learning and employability pathways beyond the core programmatic approach; and (iv) keep learners informed, and support them to make good, active choices about their employability learning.

There will always be more important employability learning than can fit into a degree program. A pragmatic and evidence-informed approach to employability that prioritises the needs of learners, and empowers them to make decisions about their own learning, is useful. However, there is a limit to what can be achieved within one program or set of learning experiences. With longer lifespans, multiple jobs and careers, and technologically-based disruptions to work, learners now have the ongoing need to refocus, retrain, and reskill. For maximum benefit, institutional approaches to graduate employability could next look at how to support learners with employability learning throughout the lifespan. A far longer and deeper perspective on employability, involving the development of lifelong partnerships between universities and learners, and multiple 'episodes' of higher education experiences is required.

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Table 1. Contrasting views of graduate employability by key dimensions of practice

	Short term employment	Professional readiness	Lifelong/lifewide
Capability development	Capabilities for securing employment & performance at initial employment	Capabilities for professional competence	Capabilities for a wide range of motivations and contributions to economy and society
	Capabilities for now	Capabilities for now (extent of future-focus depends on professional accrediting body, if applicable)	Capabilities for now and the future
	Disciplinary and transferable skills	Professional skills	Metacognitive capabilities, '21st century' capabilities, transdisciplinary capabilities
Curriculum composition	Narrow curriculum focussed on short-term labour market opportunities	Professionally-specific curriculum	Breadth curriculum, multiple disciplines and perspectives
Career development learning focus	Job search and acquisition capability development and support	Professional standing / registration	Long term career management and identity development through experiences, social interactions, reflective processes
Career development learning initiatives	Industry mentoring for industry awareness and career building, social capital	Professional mentoring	Industry mentoring for career identity development
	Field-specific networking, jobs fairs	Profession-specific networking	Wider interests-based networking
			Reflective e-portfolios
	CVs, cover letters, elevator pitches, Linkedin profiles, interviewing skills		
	Create/advertise/broker student and graduate employment opportunities directly		
Work integrated learning	Field-specific experiences e.g., placements, builds short-term capabilities, adds to cultural and social capital	Profession-specific experiences e.g., placements, builds capabilities for professional competence	Wider experiences within and outside degree field e.g., placements, projects builds metacognitive capabilities, career identify development
			Innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship learning, including social entrepreneurship
Key stakeholder partnerships	Field-specific industry, alumni	Professional bodies, alumni	Broader industry (field-specific and beyond), broader community, alumni, future of work researchers and commentators