

DO ECONOMICS ACADEMICS RECOGNISE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND INCORPORATE THEM INTO THEIR COURSES? *

Valeria Stella Cotronei-Baird
Williams Centre for Learning Advancement
Faculty of Business & Economics
University of Melbourne

ABSTRACT

Although previous studies have investigated economics curriculum reform to ensure economics graduates ‘think like economists’, it is unclear to what extent and how university economics teachers (academics) respond to the expectation that employability skills development is included in teaching and assessment practice. This paper reports the findings of an exploratory pilot study that investigated economics academics’ views and experience of employability skills integration. Drawing on interview data, content analysis of curriculum documents and observations of teaching and assessment practice, the findings indicate that while a common understanding and opinion of employability skills is held, tensions in practice exist: the teaching and assessment of employability skills is an individual decision, influenced by academic position and experience, and tempered by traditional expectations of a focus on discipline content.

Keywords: *Economics curriculum, employability skills, assessment practice.*

JEL classifications: A20, A22.

1. INTRODUCTION

The case for reforming economics education to better align undergraduate programmes with the requirements of the contemporary economist’s work is well-established (Precision Consultancy, 2007; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Chapman, 2012; Jackson & Hancock, 2010).

*Correspondence: Valeria Stella Cotronei-Baird, Williams Centre for Learning Advancement, Faculty of Business & Economics, The University of Melbourne, 111 Barry Street, Melbourne, Australia, 3010. E-mail: valeriec@unimelb.edu.au; Telephone: +61 3 8344 7099. I would like to thank two anonymous referees for their suggestions.

What is unclear, however, is how much support exists for such reform at the level of the individual academics responsible for delivering these programmes. Little is really known about the understanding academics possess of employability skills and the extent to which this understanding is translated into the development of these skills via teaching and assessment practices.

This paper makes a contribution to the filling of this gap. It uses qualitative interviews, content analysis of curriculum documents and direct observation of the teaching practices of economics academics (drawn from a larger study) to investigate the understanding that economics academics have of employability skills, and how this understanding is reflected in their educational practices. It finds that while academics do recognise the importance of these skills and make reference to them at various points in their teaching practices, the integration of carefully devised strategies to develop employability skills is inconsistent and unsystematic. These findings add to a growing body of literature on economics academics' perceptions and practice of preparing economics students for work-readiness in the contemporary workplace. The major limitation of the present study is its small sample size, but recommendations are made for a larger study using similar methodology in other business schools/faculties, both nationally and internationally, to test the robustness of its conclusions.

2. UNIVERSITY ECONOMICS CURRICULUM REFORM

There is a broad consensus in the economics higher education literature that teaching and assessment methods should be designed to educate economics students to 'think like an economist' (Allgood *et al.*, 2015; Becker & Watts, 2000; DeLoach *et al.*, 2012; McGoldrick, 2008; Santos & Lavin, 2004; Siegfried *et al.*, 1991). Economics graduates are therefore expected to apply and analyse economic theories and concepts to aid their understanding of economic problems in authentic economic, social and political settings (Siegfried *et al.*, 1991). While economics graduates currently gain in-depth knowledge of core economic principles, often learning how to express these principles mathematically, there is some concern that teaching practices enabling economics students to be work-ready for contemporary, real-life practice are lacking (Becker & Watts, 2001; Colander & McGoldrick, 2009; Guest & Duhs, 2002; O'Donnell, 2010, 2014; Thornton, 2014).

In response, reforms have been introduced into economics programmes focused on giving students the opportunity to practice and

demonstrate higher-order skills such as analysis and critical thinking (DeBoer *et al.*, 2016), the ability to write clearly (Docherty & Tse, 2010), the capacity to communicate more generally and to collaborate effectively (Alauddin & Foster, 2005), to be proficient in the application of economic knowledge to real world problems (Hansen, 2001), and the ability to undertake work-related research tasks (Conaway *et al.*, 2018; DeLoach *et al.*, 2012; Hoyt & McGoldrick, 2017; Klein, 2013; McGoldrick, 2008; Santos & Lavin, 2004). In addition, assessment methods such as written essays, reports and oral presentations have been advocated to measure students' acquisition of the required skills in preference to standardised tests such as multiple-choice questions and written exams (Becker, 1997; Becker & Watts, 2000; Hansen, 1986, 1993, 2001; Hansen *et al.*, 2002; Hutcheson, 2009; Walstad, 2001).

Despite these reforms to the economics curriculum, it is not clear how widespread the thinking which underpins them is among economics academics. *Talk* of employability skills may be widespread, but the term “employability skills” may mean different things to different people, so that academics delivering traditional programs (which may be thought of as *not* developing employability skills very effectively) may *think* they are enhancing these skills. The term “employability skills” has often been used synonymously with “competencies”, “generic skills”, “professional skills”, “graduate outcomes”, “graduate capabilities”, or “transferable skills” (Clanchy & Ballard, 1995; de la Harpe *et al.*, 2000; Jones, 2010; Radloff *et al.*, 2008). These terms have also appeared in government and business reports over the past two decades (Ithaca Group, 2012, 2013; Mayer, 1992).

We must, however, be very clear about how the term “employability skills” is defined in order to avoid the possibility that programs which do *not* cater for their development are justified in the name of furthering their cause. It will thus be argued that the term “employability skills” refers to the skills - beyond discipline knowledge and technical skills - considered necessary and relevant for the workplace. This includes skills that enhance communication (verbal and written), problem solving, critical thinking and the effective functioning of teams. This definition aligns with that espoused by employers who make hiring decisions, often on the basis of the extent to which they perceive graduates' to have these skills rather than on the basis of their discipline-specific knowledge or technical ability (Curtis & McKenzie,

2001; Finch *et al.*, 2013; McMurray *et al.*, 2016).

But the question is whether this definition is widely understood by academics and whether it has underpinned the design of economics programs on a widespread basis. Some have argued that Australian employers, while desiring curriculum change that enhances employability skills defined in this way, have not advocated strongly enough for the kind of plurality necessary in curriculum design that will give economics students the opportunities to develop these skills (see, for example, Thornton, 2014). It is thus not clear whether enough economics educators in Australia have got the message about how deep curriculum changes might need to be in order to deliver what employers really want from economics graduates. Thornton (2014) thus asks the question: if academic economists do understand the need for such change to the economics curriculum, why have they not acted upon this understanding?

This paper seeks to ascertain the extent of this understanding in a small sample of tertiary economics educators, and the degree to which that understanding is reflected in their teaching practices. In order to investigate the teaching and assessment of employability skills, economics academics' understanding of those skills was investigated via the collection and analysis of interview data and data on their self-reported practices. This was followed by observations of actual teaching and assessment practices to examine whether a disjuncture does or does not exist between understanding, self-reported practice and actual practice.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To compare economics academics' understanding of employability skills and self-reported practice with their actual teaching and assessment practice, this research was guided by Argyris' & Schön's (1974) theoretical framework of comparing two types of action theory: *espoused theories of action* and *theories-in-use*. Individuals' espoused theories of action explain and justify proposed actions, while theories-in-use reflect actual practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974, pp.4-8). This theoretical framework enables exploration of whether individuals' theories-in-use are consistent with their espoused theories (Kerr, 2009, 2010; McAlpine *et al.*, 2009). The identification of incongruence between espoused theories and theories-in-use can provide information about practice, which in turn enables the evaluation of actual practice while suggesting ideas to improve practice (Cotronei-Baird, 2020; Kerr,

2009, 2010; McAlpine *et al.*, 2009). The use of these contrasting theories also offers a strategy for identifying the factors that support the integration, or lack of integration, of employability skills into current teaching and assessment practice.

4. METHOD

To draw out the understandings, beliefs and practices of economics academics, a qualitative methodological framework was adopted. The data was selected using a purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling “means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p.125). The data presented was thus derived from studying four economics academics involved in the teaching and assessment of two economics subjects in a *Bachelor of Commerce* degree program in a large, well-established, research-intensive, Australian university.

In selecting subjects, the author took into account compulsory and core economic subjects in the *Bachelor of Commerce* program, as well as subjects at the first and third year levels (the latter being taken in the final year of the degree). A first-year economics subject was selected because it was compulsory for all *Bachelor of Commerce* students and open to students from any discipline, requiring no background in economics and thus served to introduce students to economics. In addition, one third-year subject, required to be completed by all students choosing an economics major, was selected because this subject could be expected to be preparing students for imminent entry into the workforce.

Two subject coordinators/lecturers (responsible for curriculum design and delivery) and two tutors (teaching assistants/adjuncts responsible for delivery but not design) were selected from each subject. In total, the academics selected were responsible for teaching over 1,000 students per year.

The major limitation of this methodology is that it examined the understandings, beliefs and practices of a small number of economics academics at one university in Australia. Selecting academics from one institution obviously means that the academics in the sample have a common teaching experience and are thus less likely to reflect the variety of thinking and experience that may characterise the national

Table 1: Research Design

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Instrument</i>
<i>Phase 1: Semi-Structured Interviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics teachers (academics) involved in the design, delivery and assessment of curriculum. • Interviews took place prior to content analysis of curriculum documents and direct observation of teaching practice to ascertain academics' understanding and espoused views on the integration of employability skills in the curriculum.
<i>Phase 2: Content Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive text in subject handbook. • Descriptive text in subject curriculum documents, assessment tasks, assessment criteria and feedback. • Lecture material. • Tutorial activities/questions. • Online/eLearning resources. • Assessment tasks and feedback (written).
<i>Phase 3: Direct Observations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning activities (lectures, tutorials and workshops) of the selected subjects. • Assessment tasks and feedback (verbal).
<i>Phase 4: Follow-up semi- Structured Interviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics Teachers (academics) involved in the design, delivery and assessment curriculum. • Follow-up interviews took place to explore further the teaching and assessment practices observed and described or to clarify any anomalies.

population of university economics teachers. However, the small size of the sample was balanced against the in-depth nature of the study which to some extent required a more limited scope to make it manageable. The hope was that insights obtained from in-depth qualitative data on the understanding and experiences of economics academics could be used to obtain genuine insights into how they understand and develop employability skills, and that these insights might be able to inform larger scale quantitative analysis in extensions of the work at a later time.

The methods used to collect data from this sample of courses and academics can be characterised as falling within an adapted exploratory qualitative research framework over four phases. These phases are outlined in Table 1. A mix of strategies was employed including semi-structured interviews (pre- and post-observation), content analysis of curriculum documents, and observation of teaching and assessment practice.

Table 2: Semi-structured Interview Questions**Proposed Questions**

1. What is your understanding of employability skills?
2. What skills do you think your students should possess upon the completion of your subject?
3. What would you describe as your role in preparing future graduates with required employability skills?
4. What do you know about the university's direction with regard to the integration of employability skills within curriculum?
5. To what extent is the integration of employability skills integrated at the program level of your faculty?
6. What do you think is the best way to prepare students with a broad range of skills that will prepare them for employment in the workplace?
 - What is the purpose of lectures/tutorials/workshops/e-learning delivery?
 - What is the purpose of assessment?
 - Room that you teach from – is it conducive to the practice/learning of employability skills?
7. Have you made any recent changes to your curriculum that seek to include employability skills? If yes, in what ways? If not, why not?
8. Do you see the need to make changes to your curriculum in the future? Why/Why not?
9. Other questions/notes.

Data Collection

During Phase 1, semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify the understanding that economics academics have of employability skills prior to the Phase 2 gathering of data on how skills development is visible in subject curriculum documents, and the Phase 3 observations of practice. The schedule of questions reproduced in Table 2 was used to guide interview discussion. These questions were deliberately open-ended to allow participants' points of view to emerge (Patton, 2002).

The collection and analysis of subject curriculum materials available to students was also conducted during Phase 2. This enabled an examination of the extent to which employability skills were integrated into the design of subject curricula. Curriculum documents that were collected included subject handbooks, subject guidelines, assessment tasks and instructions, assessment criteria, assessment feedback, tutorial and lecture notes, tutorial and lecture instructions, and online/eLearning resources.

Table 3: Selected Subjects and Classroom Types - Each Macrogenre.

Subjects	Macrogenre Sequence of lessons over 12 weeks		
	Classroom Type Observed	1 class per week	Duration
First Year Economics	Lectures	12 weeks	2 hours (2 x 1 hours)
	Tutorials	12 weeks	1 hour
Third Year Economics	Lectures	12 weeks	2 hours (2 x 1 hour)
	Tutorials	12 weeks	1 hour

The direct observation of teaching and assessment practice in Phase 3 was undertaken throughout the entire semester (12 weeks). Christie's (2002) curriculum *macrogenre* model was adapted to guide the observation of teaching and learning activities during this phase. A *macrogenre* is a 'sequence of lessons' that can last several weeks and the macrogenre for the observed classes in this study is outlined in Table 3. The observations of practice took place in the actual teaching setting, so that precise locations depended upon which economics academic was being observed at the time. Observation, covering the entire semester of lectures and tutorials, occurred in the first year economics subject during Semester 1, 2014, and the third year economics subject during Semester 2, 2014. The observation of assessment practice was managed by collecting and analysing verbal feedback provided to students on formal assessment tasks during class time, and via written instructions and feedback on assessment tasks and assessment rubrics and/or criteria.

Phase 4 included semi-structured, follow-up interviews with the economics academics after teaching and assessment had concluded in the relevant semester. Academics were asked to recall examples of actual teaching and assessment practice in order to provide some indication, directly from the academics' perspectives, of the reasons for their decisions in relation to specific teaching and learning activities. Questions used in these interviews are outlined in Table 4 and as is apparent, were also open-ended in nature to allow academics to reflect on the particular teaching and assessment practices observed.

Data Analysis

The author and two colleagues carried out a thematic analysis of all data

Table 4: Follow-up Semi-structured Interview Questions

Questions about Curriculum Documentation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell more about learning outcome (x, y, z). 2. Give me an example of how you set out to ensure learning outcome (x, y, z) was achieved by the students. 3. Tell me more about (x, y, z) learning and teaching activity. Why was this included? What are the benefits it has for student learning or the acquisition of employability skills?
Questions about Observed Activities (including Online Activities)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Tell me more about (example of observed teaching activity). 5. Why did you decide to do (example) during (specific tutorial/lecture/workshop)? 6. What is the purpose of (example of activity/questions/tasks)?
Questions about Assessment and Feedback
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Describe the skills students gained from completing assessment (a, b, c). 8. Describe in what ways did assessment (a, b, c) provide students with the... 9. Describe in what ways do you see feedback on assessment as a means to allow students to reflect on the skills gained/practised/enhanced. 10. In what way does feedback on assessment provide students the opportunity to learn what skills are important for employment? 11. Other questions/comments.

to ensure inter-coder reliability in working with qualitative textual data from the interviews (which were recorded and transcribed), curriculum documents and direct observations of teaching and assessment practice. A thematic analysis was appropriate to ascertain how the economics academics defined the nature of employability skills, what their espoused views were regarding the integration of employability skills into the curricula of the subjects they were teaching, and their actual practices. The process of ‘open coding’ (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) was employed over several stages to develop the final codes. The author and two colleagues were required to conduct ongoing analysis in order to develop multiple iterations of the codes, so that emergent themes and the relationships between those themes were identified and their validity ensured.

This thematic analysis of curriculum documents enabled the author to corroborate and augment evidence obtained from other sources (Yin,

2009), specifically from the semi-structured interviews and direct observations. Analysis of teaching practice observations was conducted using Christie's (2002) notion of macrogenres for understanding "classroom talk". Teaching and assessment practices were also analysed using the kind of thematic analysis applied to the interview data and curriculum documents.

5. FINDINGS

The findings are presented in accordance with the *Theories of Action* framework discussed above. The theories of "employability skills" espoused by economics academics (as expressed in interviews and self-reported practices) are presented first, followed by their *theories-in-use* as observed in their *actual* practices and the commentaries provided on these practices expressed during follow-up interviews.

Espoused Theories of Employability Skills

Drawing on the initial interview data and content analysis of curriculum documents, economics academics appear to understand the idea of employability skills in the same way as industry representatives. Consistent with industry conceptions, economics academics define employability skills as consisting of two main types of skills: discipline-specific skills and soft or generic skills:

There are two types. One is we're training people to be commerce graduates and so I guess one of the skills is knowledge of economics in a way that they'll actually be able to apply that in the workplace . . . the discipline specific skills. Then there are the generic skills, which are the things like being able to communicate, that involve being able to explain clearly, being able to know what audience it is you're writing for or talking to.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

The employability skills most often discussed in order of frequency included an ability to analyse, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication (written and verbal). The interview data indicate that, overall, there was a consensus among economics academics involved in the study that employability skills are important for ensuring that future economics graduates are properly prepared for the workplace:

Most fundamentally, skills that are going to be valuable for a person in the workforce and therefore they're going to enhance the person's

Table 5: Employability Skills Visible in Economics Subjects' Curricula

Economics Curriculum Documents

First Year Subject Guideline: Discussion of the role of the economist. It outlines that students will acquire the two main skills required of an economist: 1) a 'tool-kit' of approaches to modelling the economy; and 2) knowledge of how to apply those approaches to develop theories which fit the specific situations in which the economist is interested.

Third Year Economics Subject Guideline: Provides a direct link to employability by referring to the particular student skill enhancement that will enable employability in the economics profession. It states that students' 'critical thinking and analytical skills' improvement will allow students to be 'prepared' for a career as a professional economist in industry or government agencies.

First and Third Year Handbook and Third Year Subject Guideline:

Written communication.

Oral communication.

Collaborative learning.

Teamwork.

Oral communication.

Receptiveness to alternative ideas.

First and Third Year Handbook and Third Year Subject Guideline:

Problem-solving skills.

Application of theory to practice.

Interpretation and analysis.

Critical thinking.

Synthesis of data & other information.

Evaluation of data & other information.

Statistical reasoning.

Use of computer software.

Accessing Data and other information from a range of sources.

employability because they're seen as having these skills that are valuable in the workforce.

First Year Subject Coordinator

Content analysis of curriculum documents supports the understanding of employability skills apparent from the interview evidence. A summary of this analysis is provided in Table 5 and is characterised by a range of abilities and ways in which employability skills are described and referenced.

Despite this correspondence of how academics appear to understand employability skills with that derived from industry, and despite the range of skill types that make up this academic understanding of

employability skills, interview data suggests that most emphasis is placed by academics on *analytical* skills:

I think a lot of the employability skills are, like a lot of what an economist would do in a job would be to basically be constructing models or to be doing analysis on particular case studies. Some of the skills are going to be quite esoteric to their job. Some of them are going to be using the statistical package that the company uses which I guess having a much more academically focused kind of curriculum would help a lot. If you've got the fundamentals down, then you can pick up any sort of system or any sort of method of doing things and be able to quite comfortably adapt those skills to that particular business.

First Year Economics Tutor

Analytical skills . . . perhaps like by being able to recognise that the newspaper article can actually be understood by using these economic theories or concepts. It might be about being able to contribute at work to a discussion about something like price setting or it might be if you're in public policy, contribute to discussion about or analysis of something like policies for climate change.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

Overall, economics academics in the study revealed a common understanding of employability skills that aligned with industry and employer requirements. In addition, while these economics academics acknowledged that all of these skills are important for the work-readiness of their graduates, there appears to be a consensus that one employability skill – analytical ability - is the most important.

Self-reported teaching practice

To investigate whether the understanding economics academics have of employability skills influences their self-reported practice, they were asked in the interviews to talk about this connection. The transcript evidence suggests that academics in the study regarded preparation of students for the economics profession as a core part of what their teaching role involves:

To teach the subject well: is to get students interested and excited about economics. Encourage them to work hard and to want to become economists.

First Year Economics Tutor

One academic was explicit that to teach students to apply discipline knowledge relevant to the workplace is part and parcel of his teaching practice:

So, I think it's almost kind of tautological then that what you're doing is doing stuff that's useful for employability. Because okay, what are you going to do - what do you do when you're employed? Well you apply this knowledge to these problems that you come up against in business or public policy.

First Year Subject Coordinator

Teaching students how to apply content knowledge was most often talked about as the foundation for building and enhancing the specific requirements of the workplace. To that end, the primary focus of the teaching and assessment role as perceived by economics academics was to ensure that students can apply economics content in a practical way, thereby emphasising analytical skills. The following quotes are indicative of this perception:

So, I guess I see I've got a particular responsibility to try and give people who are doing a commerce degree this practical knowledge of economics so they can apply it in a practical way.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

I think academics need to bring students to the major policy debate or the major events in the business world to . . . Yeah, let them think. Let them think and try to apply what are the principles of economics and try to use that to analyse. So first, they need to be aware of these facts, these kinds of policies, these debates, these questions or events and then apply [in practice].

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

In discussing their subject curricula specifically, each of the economics academics in the study said that their curriculum had been designed to give students the opportunity to be well-prepared for employment in the economics profession by ensuring that they were able to analyse:

. . . when you prepare your curriculum; you need to have some notion of what you want the student to achieve. In all my teaching years, I have always tried very hard to also prepare students for employment in the industry as a professional economist rather than as a researcher in a university, therefore they require the ability to analyse.

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

The importance of analytical skills was informed primarily by economics academics' knowledge of the employment pathways for economics students rather than by the expectations of industry, government or the higher education sector:

After a few years I guess I was thinking okay, some of this stuff really is so useful. You kind of find out what your students are doing afterwards; the type of jobs they're doing with their economics degree. Then I gradually had this realisation that what I really should be doing with my teaching is directing towards making sure people have the ability to apply economics.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

The emphasis placed on the integration of analytical skills by economics academics in this study was reflected in three main types of teaching practice: demonstrating the practical relevance of analytical skills in the workplace; facilitating the practice of analytical skills; and assessment of analytical skills.

In order to demonstrate the practical relevance of analytical skills in the workplace, the economics academics claimed that they provided students with examples to connect what the students were learning in the classroom with the reality of the workplace:

One of the ways of engaging them is by demonstrating – you've got to put yourself in their mind and think okay, why are they doing this? So, the best way you can actually get them to learn the material is by engaging them and making it relevant to them which, again, means that you've got to make them think that it's adding to their employability.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

Consistent with the practice of demonstrating analytical skills, the teachers claimed that they facilitated student activities for acquiring employability skills that mirrored activities in the workplace:

I guess it's like I say [to students] in that introductory lecture. What I'm hoping students will have is some capacity to apply the particular concepts and theories that we've studied in this subject, which are like a competitive market model, managerial economics and game theory. So that I guess, the ability to apply, perhaps like by being able to recognise a newspaper article can actually be understood using these economic theories or concepts. That yeah, I guess when you recognise that it's a professional discipline then the whole purpose of teaching is to get students to a point of being able to apply their knowledge in practice.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

All of the economics academics indicated that teaching practice that facilitates application of analytical skills takes place mostly in tutorials because these are considered to be the practical side of the subject and thus distinct from the lecture:

Well, tutorials, I guess that they're really important because it's the one opportunity in that subject, that students do have some structure and active learning with an expert tutor. Yeah, I guess I see tutorials as two things. First of all, an opportunity just to check that the students understand what the concept or theory or the method is and then secondly, it's this kind of first structured attempt to let them actually try and apply the concept or theory.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

The economics academics who delivered tutorials reported that their teaching practice reflected a tutorial design that expected them to facilitate student activities that applied analytical skills:

. . . the tutorials are all about . . . having a first go at practising being able to apply those concepts and methods.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

Tutorials are more hands on – to work through the formulas or some of the theory.

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

The tutorial is mostly practical application, doing the questions, working through the questions that will be assessed.

First Year Tutor Economics

In alignment with their self-reported practice, all of the academics reported that assessment design prioritised the evaluation of analytical ability, as indicated in the following statements:

. . . In my assignments, I have short essay questions, so basically, I expect them to analyse it, to give a short paragraph, to be able to just very concisely answer the question, but to be able to identify the most important . . . I also have an assignment that asks them to process data. I have some data facts and then do some intuitive explanations.

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

Congruence between the academics' understanding of the importance of analytical skills and self-reported practice was evident when they stated in the initial interviews that assessing analytical skills took priority over the assessment of other skills:

The assessments are all directed at getting them to be able to apply - do what I say in the first lecture, which is to be able to apply the material.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

For my assessment, I usually build in computer skills, so students have to do a little bit of data work, some simulations, they can use *Excel*. So, the assessment should be some work that I know they can do . . . some equations. But I would also give them some actual sensible parameter values and let them to do the simulation . . . a small project, a practical assignment. I also have an assignment that asks them to process data. I have some data facts and then require some analysis and intuitive explanations.

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

In summary, while economics academics identify a range of employability skills when they define the term, and while the range of skills was evident in their curriculum documents, the interview data indicates that they understand their teaching role as specifically related to equipping economics graduates with analytical skills. The following section presents the findings from data on actual teaching and assessment practice in order to examine the extent to which understandings and self-reported practice are reflected in this practice.


Theories in Use: Economics Academics' Practice

Drawing on coded observations, a typology of observed practice was developed which is shown in Table 6. This typology, read from bottom up, conceptualises four different levels of practice representing the extent to which employability skills are integrated into our economics academics' subject curricula. It illustrates that economics academics were observed using four different types of practice: 1) discussion of employability skills; 2) demonstration of employability skills; 3) facilitation of employability skills in practice; and 4) assessment of employability skills. Although the four types of practice observed integrated a range of skills, including analytical ability, evaluation, decision-making and written communication, there was a lack of systematic and consistent integration of these skills in practice. Each type of practice discussed below sheds light on this key finding.

(a) Discussion of Employability Skills

Discussion of employability skills was observed in 3 of 12 first year lectures, 2 of 11 first year tutorials, 2 of 12 third year lectures, and 1 of 12 third year tutorials (see Table 7). Contrary to the self-reported teach-

Table 6: Typology - Economics Academics’ Observed Teaching Practices

Practice	Examples	
Assesses employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentions two types of employability skills in some of the criteria (analysis and written skills). • Gives written feedback on two types of employability skills (analysis and written skills). 	<p style="text-align: center;">Direct</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Indirect</p>
Facilitates employability skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives students practice in application of two types of employability skills to case-studies and economic data (analysis, decision-making). 	
Demonstrates employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses cases studies and economic data to apply two types of employability skills (analysis and decision-making skills). 	
Discusses employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentions the importance of some employability skills (analysis, evaluation). • Mentions the importance of one employability skill for the workplace (analysis skill). 	

-ing practice of our economics teachers, the observation of class discussions indicated that teachers did not privilege analytical skills; other employability skills, such as decision-making, were also discussed as indicated below in the excerpt from an observed teaching practice in both the first and third year economics lectures:

[The Academic] refers to the methods/theories – explains that to understand human activity (social interaction), and decision-making ‘. . . you have to make as an individual or in work life – in business or government sector, you need a set of skills that can be applied to understand human behaviour and interaction and guide decisions you need to make’.

First Year Economics, Week 1, Lecture 1

[The academic] refers to students possibly working at the Reserve Bank Australia (RBA) after university i.e. ‘you may be involved in the decision processes at RBA, banks’ staff are expected to prepare a detailed report . . .’

Third Year Economics, Week 9 Lecture

Despite the discussion of some employability skills, observation of practice indicated that economics academics rarely discussed employability skills, including analysis, as part of their teaching practice. While first year economics teachers were observed discussing

Table 7: Observed Practice Overview

Observed Practice	Teaching Week											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>First Year Economics Lectures</i>												
Discusses employability skills (3)	✓					✓		✓				
Discuss employability skills of the economist (1)						✓						
Demonstrates application of employability skills (10)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>First Year Economics Tutorials</i>												
Discusses employability skills (2)										✓	✓	
Demonstrates application of employability skills (2)				✓	✓							
Facilitates student activities to practise employability skills (2)						✓	✓					
<i>Third Year Economics Lecture</i>												
Discusses employability skills (2)	✓								✓			
Demonstrates application of employability skills (1)		✓										
<i>Third Year Economics Tutorials</i>												
Discusses employability skills (1)				✓								

employability skills more often than third year economics teachers, the number of times they did so throughout the semester was very low. In contrast to economics academics' espoused theories, it seems that in practice, economics students are not made aware that academics view the acquisition of employability skills as an important outcome of their subject, and thus as central to economics graduates' work-readiness.

(b) Demonstrates Application of Employability Skills

Demonstration of the application of employability skills refers to explicit teacher showcasing of how employability skills are applied in

the workplace. Although this practice was observed, for the most part it was not a significant form of teaching practice consistently apparent across all economics subjects and teaching spaces. Table 7 indicates that the demonstration of employability skills was mostly observed in first year lectures (10 out of 12 lectures), infrequently in first year economics tutorials (2 of 11 tutorials), rarely in third year lectures (1 of 12 lectures), and not at all in third year tutorials. In demonstrating analytical skills, economics academics were observed showing how to analyse implications through visual calculations, as indicated in the following example:

Direct Control: [The academic] provides a definition of this term. Draws up a graph. Gives an example of this i.e. minimum wage. Considers the effect on market outcome – direct effect is on the price/as he talks about this, he writes the formula on the right-hand overhead slide. Considers a maximum price? On the right-hand slide – demonstrates this in a graph as he talks about it. ‘An example would be like the case study for this subject CEO salary or rent ceilings like they have in NY (max price you can charge people for rent).’ Moves the previous example to the left-hand slide. Says this is what the case study 2.9 is about – CEO pay should be regulated in the US after the GFC. He spends some time explaining what is said in the case/potential problems etc . . . the implications of imposing a maximum price. How it affects the choices people make to choose to work in the banking sector/implications for attracting good quality people . . . Talks about the case study - what policy makers and other commentators have said . . . to make a contribution rather than regulating CEO’s salaries. Maximum quantity trading [Slide] – back to the graph on the right-hand slide. Quota – gives the example of taxing licences in Melbourne – where government regulates how many or land available for home building; the government regulates this. The direct effect on the quantity – equilibrium shifts (shows this on the graph – where the new equilibrium is). Demonstrates what is going to happen when the quantity is restricted – get an increase price . . . talks about this as he demonstrates on the slide.

Economics, First Year, Week 3, Lecture 6

The demonstration of applied analytical skills was not a common form of teaching practice in third year economics subjects. The third year economics teacher demonstrated the application of analytical skills only once. For the most part, they were observed demonstrating discipline-specific calculations and application of economic theories/concepts to examples of data and particular cases. The

following excerpt, drawn from the observation notes, is an example of the nature of the demonstrations:

The Steady State [slides] with some information that [the Academic] speaks directly to. Reads directly from the slides/expands upon them. Additional equation on the slides – works through the already typed-up formulas. Refers to it as a numerical example – Figure 5.6 on the slide ‘The Steady State’ an already prepared graph and she [the academic] discusses what it represents/refers to – using the cursor to point to the different parts/line curves on the graph.

Back to the slides with notes – consists of notes and equations. Moves to another Figure 5.7 Convergence to the Steady State – discusses/points to the different parts/curves on the graph. Effects of Growth on Welfare across Generations [slides] substantial notes/reads these/expands in some places. Goes back to the previous table 5.1 – back to the notes – moving through these quite quickly. Notes: Persistent Growth – notes on the overhead slide. My filed notes: [A very content transfer lecture – however, lots of reading notes on board/graphs and formulas already pre-written – students have the notes beforehand – most students have copies of the slides either in hard copy or on their tablet/lap top. Not many students taking notes – very quiet lecture theatre. It is hard to know how much content students are taking in – students gradually leave the lecture theatre early.]

Third Year Economics, Week 3, Lecture 6

The third year economics teacher, an early career academic, indicated during follow-up interviews that the large class posed challenges for doing more than simply delivering content:

I think it’s hard to demonstrate the calculations during the lecture. Firstly, there is no whiteboard there. If I demonstrate using document camera, I need to switch. A switch over takes time. I don’t have time . . . I don’t expect them to get to grasp the formulas right away, because they have tutorials to do that, the tutorials are very structured. Since the lectures are large, it is only possible just to go through the major points quickly.

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

On the other hand, the first year economics teacher, an experienced lecturer, reported finding ways to manage teaching in large classes – this was reflected in the number of times he was observed integrating employability skills during the lecture (see Table 7). The first year economics teacher was observed during the large lecture using an interactive game called ‘the tennis ball game’ to demonstrate analysis of an economic concept. This academic explained during the follow-up

interview that the purpose of using games during a lecture was to *demonstrate* the underlying economic concept:

I mean the technical purpose of it is I guess that it's supposed to illustrate this idea of diminishing marginal product, which it does. Sometimes it's absolutely perfect. Sometimes it doesn't work out so well. So, you've always got to be able to think on your feet of how it is you're going to describe what bits of the example do fit.

First Year Economics Subject Coordinator

(c) Facilitates the Application of Employability Skills

Facilitating the acquisition of employability skills in practice was observed when academics directly and explicitly assigned set activities for practising analytical skills to pairs and groups of students. While all the economics academics said they facilitated the application of analytical skills, such facilitation was rarely observed in practice; as indicated in Table 7 it was observed in two first year tutorials only and was absent from lectures. With the exception of two first year tutorials, teachers were observed working out the tutorial problems on the whiteboard, with little observed facilitation of student activities involving practising analytical skills. This type of practice was consistent across all tutorials where the tutors were observed completing the problem tasks on the whiteboard step-by-step during the tutorial and writing responses on the board, while students copied the information. The first year teacher explained when asked that his teaching practice in tutorials which sought to ensure student understanding of content and application of economic concepts:

[Demonstrating] – It's something that I like doing in all of my classes - I even like doing that in second year classes and in fourth year classes if possible. But particularly in first year is that it's very easy to identify when students are having an issue and if they are then the solution is usually not that difficult.

First Year Economics Tutor

In contrast, the third year teacher explained his view that demonstrating calculations during tutorials enabled students to acquire the ability to complete problems independently.

These results indicate that economics academics do not consider it their responsibility to facilitate realistic practice analysis, and instead mostly focus on providing students with content knowledge via solutions to algebraic problems:

[I'm trying to get students to understand and know how to complete the calculation or the algebra] the method of doing it and then I expect them to do it again by themselves. I hope that because they are third years, they should be responsible for their own learning.

Third Year Economics Tutor

There is some indication that economics academics do not practise what they espouse because they do not have the time:

Most of it's implied [expectation to teach students to develop employability skills] and a lot of it's because it's really quite tough to find time to do anything that's outside of the materials being covered. Like when I'm able to I'll mention about how this relates to actual economic policy and what not, but that's time permitting.

First Year Economics Tutor

As one academic explained, dedicating time to employability skills during tutorials would take the focus away from what is important about first year economics content:

I don't want students to get bogged down in the wrong stuff. I guess that suggests that the focus here is to understand the economics and not to get too bogged down in the written work.

First Year Economics Tutor

Overall, inconsistent with academics' self-reported practice, economics students were rarely given the opportunity to practise analysis of economic concepts during class time, even though it was claimed by teachers that such applied activities mostly took place during tutorials. For the most part, students watched and listened to their teacher complete the tutorial problems on the whiteboard, with some student interaction in the tutorial in the form of questions and answers in the first year tutorial, but rarely in the third year tutorial. This largely 'one-way demonstration' teaching method reflects the current literature on economics education which reports that such teaching methods in the economics discipline, despite the call to move away from traditional passive learning environments, are common in economics classrooms today (see, for instance, Becker, 2004; Becker & Watts, 2001; and O'Donnell, 2010, 2014).

(d) Assessment of Employability Skills

While assessment of employability skills is categorised as the highest level and most direct form of integration in practice (see Table 6), the

Table 8: Employability Skills Identified in the Subject Assessment

First Year Assessment	Analysis	Critical Thinking	Problem Solving	Written	Verbal
Tutorial participation & attendance					
Multiple Choice Test Online					
Assignment 1	✓			✓	
Assignment 2	✓		✓	✓	
Final Exam					
Third Year Assessment					
Tutorial participation & attendance					
Group Assignment 1	✓				
Group Assignment 2	✓				
Mid Semester Exam					
Final Exam					

assessment of employability skills was not observed to be a significant part of economics academics' teaching practice. While the typology in Table 6 indicates that economics academics were observed assessing two employability skills - analysis and written communication, findings from the content analysis of all assessment criteria, and verbal and written feedback, found that these two employability skills were not assessed consistently. This is shown in Table 8. Although all the economics academics believed that analytical skills are most valued in the workplace, the observation and content analysis of assessment results and written feedback indicate that, in practice, analytical skills remain largely un-assessed. Assessment and feedback focused on the understanding of content covered in the subject. This focus was reinforced by comments made during follow-up interviews:

I guess with someone with poor writing skills is that they're going to have - obviously the English is going to be a bit sloppy and the construction of the question may be a bit sloppy. But that could also be due to low effort. So, it tends to be the students who nail all the economic concepts are the ones who put in effort, or they either put in effort or they understand the material well enough. So, the easiest way tends to be just to look directly for their understanding of the economic concepts.

First Year Economics Tutor

Since I don't know if they are going to be a professional economist, I think it's important that they know the basic economics, the knowledge; that is, the economic theory, the literature and also the development of the economic - some experience, development of experience of some major countries. Also, some data facts, like some policies, some data facts.

Third Year Economics Subject Coordinator

Two first year subject assignments were the only assessment tasks in which feedback on analytical skills was given to students in written form. For all other assessments, students were given a summative score without written feedback. In addition, the first year teacher was the only one observed, during a tutorial, giving students overall verbal feedback on analytical skills, as indicated below:

Hand back assignments. Average mark 11.5. Most people had problems with questions 1 and 5. Feedback about case study – most people didn't have enough research to support claims. Be able to provide evidence for what you say would be nice.

First Year Tutorial 12

Although not mentioned as part of self-reported practice, the assessment of written communication skills was included among criteria for assessment of two of the five first year assignments in the subject guideline. Despite this, the assessment material returned to students did not include feedback about their written work. In explaining the absence of feedback about written communication skills, one economics academic indicated that the assessment of such skills would take focus away from ensuring that students are able to complete the required calculations/formulas accurately:

One of things that we don't put that much emphasis on is the presentation of the assessment. We are very much focused on understanding the intuition and getting the economics right. The presentation is not hugely important and that's pretty consistent through a lot of economics, is that there's very, very little formal essay writing. There's very, very little I guess formal written communication at all.

First Year Economics Tutor

Overall, observations of assessment practice indicate that the message students receive is that assessment of their acquisition of discipline knowledge is far more important than their acquisition of employability skills, and that ultimately employability skills are neither a dominant nor consistent component of their assessment.

6. DISCUSSION

The economics academics interviewed for this study reported an understanding of employability skills that was consistent with industry and employer definitions. This suggests that they consider such skills to be additional to those associated with discipline-specific knowledge and related skills. Academics appear to agree that the acquisition of employability skills is an important learning outcome for university graduates. They also appear to understand their teaching role as preparing economics students for employment, with analytical skills considered to be the most salient skill that should be developed in these students. But it also appears to be the case that skills such as the ability to work in teams or to communicate effectively are not well catered for in the teaching and assessment practices of academics in the economics discipline.

Despite the emphasis economics academics appear to place on analytical skills, the findings from observations of teaching practice seem to indicate that the integration of employability skills into curriculum materials and classroom experience is inconsistent and unsystematic. This suggests that changes to the higher education landscape, in particular, an expressed desire for curriculum reforms driven by a recognition of the importance of employability skills, have had a limited impact on the practices of economics academics. Employability skills, therefore, remain largely absent (or unaccounted for) in the curriculum design, teaching methods and assessment practices of economics academics.

Insights into economics academics' actual practices make important contributions to understanding the response of economics academics to the increased emphasis placed on employability skills in the recent higher education agenda of contemporary Australian universities. These insights indicate that the desire for economics education reforms are not consistently embraced by economics academics. The findings from this exploratory study have implications for how universities shape their policies and practice to enhance graduates' employability skills directly and consistently through teaching and assessment practice. In order to foster stronger, direct and consistent integration of employability skills development within economics curricula, universities must recognise how university economics teachers understand employability skills. The top-down policy approach to integrating employability skills which dominates the university

response across most contemporary universities fails to grasp the realities of the day-to-day practices of economics academics directly responsible for educating the future graduate workforce of professional economists.

The findings from this study provide some insight into the pressures, constraints and challenges faced by economics academics. Practical difficulties such as time constraints, overcrowded curricula, and large classes are some of the challenges to consistent and direct integration of employability skills. Economics academics seek to balance tensions that arise from traditional expectations of a focus on discipline knowledge and technical skills. This was shown in observations where teachers facing time constraints tended to demonstrate calculations rather than to analyse the results of such calculations, or where they provided assessment feedback that focused on students' understanding of key economic concepts rather than on their writing skills. If indeed contemporary universities espouse the belief that employability skills development is an important learning outcome, then identifying the factors that impede the teaching and assessment of such skills should be an important area of research.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The typology of practice outlined in Table 6 categorised the various ways in which employability skills were observed to be treated in the courses considered as part of the study reported in this paper. Practices documented towards the top of Table 6 are what we might call “best practice” where the development of employability skills are integrated and fostered throughout the course, while practices towards the bottom of the table are those that deal with these skills in a more superficial or tokenistic way. A more idealised typology, based on the key findings of this study, is provided in Table 9. This table is structured in the same way as Table 6 but provides a richer set of possibilities at the upper levels of good practice in treating employability skills. The hope is that Table 9 may facilitate the identification of disjunctures between espoused theories (beliefs and self-reported practices) and actual practice about fostering employability skills, and best practice possibilities. This typology could, therefore, be used by economics academics and/or program/curriculum developers to fill potential gaps in the actual development of employability skills.

Table 9: Typology for Identifying Gaps in Employability Skills Integration

Practice	Examples	
Employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate employability skills development into assessment tasks and instructions; • Include employability skills in assessment criteria and rubrics; • Focus on employability skills in written and verbal feedback. 	High/Direct
Facilitates employability skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students opportunity to practice and demonstrate the application of employability skills through classroom activities and pre-class task/activities; • Facilitate activities that can be used to enable students to demonstrate employability skills; • Give students opportunity to apply employability skills to real life cases, data and examples. 	
Demonstrates employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use case studies to demonstrate employability skills; • Use data or examples relevant to the discipline, subject and students to demonstrate employability skills in practice and in workplace/profession; • Show how to apply employability skills to real life examples, case studies, data, workplace/profession. 	
Discusses employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention the importance and relevance of identified employability skills in the workplace. • Explain the employability skills that are linked to the particular roles/positions relevant to your students and discipline/subject. 	Low/Indirect

If the imperative is accepted that higher education needs to address the issue of graduate employment outcomes, it is recommended that university curricula need to include a *range* of practices, starting with the scaffolding of basic approaches but moving toward teaching practices that more consistently incorporate the development of employability skills. That is, the full range of possibilities outlined in Table 9 could be used to introduce academics to the incorporation of employability skills into their courses but then to encourage them to improve the way this is done over time. For example, an economics teacher could begin a lecture or tutorial/workshop by discussing employability skills and their relevance to the workplace. They could

then build on this discussion by demonstrating employability in practice, and then move toward explicit practices that enable students to acquire, practice and demonstrate employability skills.

The typology outlined in Table 9 could thus make an important contribution to practice by supporting a mechanism to bridge employability skills and discipline content, and for both to be treated as core parts of discipline curricula. Employability skills must be conceptualised as a core part of the delivery and assessment of discipline content, not as separate add on. This perspective is reinforced by recent research that indicates how students who experience academics that discuss, contextualise and assess learning outcomes specifically aligned with employability, demonstrate greater confidence and achievement of learning outcomes and are better prepared for employment (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018). The argument that academic skills and employability skills are a false dichotomy is well argued (Rust & Froud, 2011; 2016). The typology also provides support for an explicit strategy that enables a shift toward a plural curriculum that is best placed for giving economic students the opportunity to develop and practice employability skills (O'Donnell, 2010, 2014; Thornton, 2014). This is an important change to curriculum given that the provision of opportunities in the curriculum can influence the extent to which students believe they have the skills required for the contemporary workforce (Chaffer & Webb, 2017).

The typology of employability skills integration conceptualised in this study, therefore, provides a useful tool to address the graduate skills gap identified by industry and to ameliorate the incongruence between what teaching academics want to do and what they actually do in practice.

References

- Alauddin, M. and Foster, J. (2005) "Teaching Economics at the University Level: Dynamics of Parameters and Implications", *Department of Economics Discussion Paper*, No. 33, University of Queensland, available at: https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_9467/econ_dp_339_05.pdf.
- Allgood, S., Walstad, W. B. and Siegfried, J. J. (2015) "Research on Teaching Economics to Undergraduates", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 53 (2), pp.285-325.
- Argyris, S. E. and Schön, D. A. (1974) *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*, San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

- Becker, W. E. (1997) "Teaching Economics to Undergraduates", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 35 (September), pp.1347-1373.
- Becker, W. E. (2004) "Economics for a Higher Education", *International Review of Economics Education*, 3 (1), pp.52-62.
- Becker, W. E. and Watts, M. (2000) "Teaching Economics at the Start of the 21st Century: Still Chalk-and-Talk", *American Economic Review*, 91 (2), pp.446-451.
- Becker, W. E. and Watts, M. (2001) "Teaching Methods in U.S. Undergraduate Economics Courses", *Journal of Economic Education*, 32 (3), pp.269-279.
- Chaffer, C. and Webb, J. (2017) "An Evaluation of Competency Development in Accounting Trainees", *Accounting Education*, 26 (5-6), pp.431-458.
- Christie, F. (2002) *Classroom Discourse Analysis: A Functional Perspective*, London: Continuum.
- Clanchy, J. and Ballard, B. (1995) "Generic Skills in the Context of Higher Education", *Higher Education Research and Development*, 14 (2), pp.156-166.
- Colander, D. and McGoldrick, K. (2009) "The Teagle Foundation Report: The Economics Major as Part of Liberal Education", in Colander, D. and McGoldrick, K. (eds.) *Educating Economists: The Teagle Discussion on Re-evaluating the Undergraduate Major*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp.3-42.
- Conaway, B., Clark, C., Arias, J. J. and Folk, J. (2018) "Integrating Econometrics: A Modern Undergraduate Economics Capstone Experience", *Journal of Economic Education*, 49 (3), pp.260-270.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2014) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 4th Edition, Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Cotronei-Baird, V. S. (2020) "Academic Hindrances in the Integration of Employability Skills Development in Teaching and Assessment Practice", *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education Research*, 79 (2), pp.203-223.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Curtis, D. and McKenzie, P. (2001) *Employability Skills For Australian Industry: Literature Review and Framework Development, Report to the Business Council of Australia, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Australian Council for Educational Research*, Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education Science & Training.
- de la Harpe, B., Radloff, A. and Wyber, J. (2000) "Quality and Generic (Professional) Skills", *Quality in Higher Education*, 6 (3), pp.231-243.

- DeBoer, L., Josephson, A., Nelson, D. and Zissimopoulos, A. (2016) “Reshaped for Higher Order Learning: Student Outcomes in the Redesign of an Undergraduate Macroeconomics Course”, *Annual Meeting, Agricultural and Applied Economics Association*, No. 235765, Boston, Massachusetts.
- DeLoach, S. B., Perry-Sizemore, E. and Borg, M. O. (2012) “Creating Quality Undergraduate Research Programs in Economics: How, When, Where (and Why)”, *American Economist*, 57 (1), pp.96-110.
- Docherty, P. and Tse, H. (2010) “Reducing the Expectations Gap: Using an Academic Literacies Approach to Improve Student Writing in Economics”, *Australasian Journal of Economics Education*, 7 (1), pp.31-58.
- Finch, D. J., Leah, K. H., Baldwin, R. and Zehner, M. (2013) “An Exploratory Study of Factors Affecting Undergraduate Employability”, *Education and Training*, 55 (7), pp.681-704.
- Guest, R. and Duhs, A. (2002) “Economics Teaching in Australian Universities: Rewards and Outcomes”, *Economic Record*, 78 (241), pp.147-160.
- Hansen, W. L. (1986) “What Knowledge is Most Worth Knowing - For Economics Majors?”, *American Economic Review*, 76 (2), pp.149-152.
- Hansen, W. L. (1993) “Bringing Total Quality Improvement into the College Classroom”, *Higher Education*, 25 (3), pp.259-279.
- Hansen, W. L. (2001) “Expected Proficiencies for Undergraduate Economics Majors”, *Journal of Economic Education*, 32 (3), pp.231-242.
- Hansen, W. L., Salemi, M. K. and Siegfried, J. (2002) “Use It or Lose It: Teaching Literacy in the Economics Principles Course”, *American Economic Review*, 92 (2), pp.463-472.
- Hoyt, G. M. and McGoldrick, K. (2017) “Promoting Undergraduate Research in Economics”, *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 107 (5), pp.655-659.
- Hutcheson, T. (2009) “A Suggestion for Using Oral Presentations to Reduce the Incidence of Plagiarism in Business Course”, *Australasian Journal of Economics Education*, 6 (2), pp.44-63.
- Ithaca Group (2012) *Employability Skills Framework Stage 1: Final Report*, Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
- Ithaca Group (2013) *Core Skills for Work Development Framework*, Canberra: Australian Government.
- Jackson, D. (2013) “Business Graduate Employability - Where are We Going Wrong?”, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 32 (5), pp.776-790.

- Jackson, D. and Chapman, E. (2012) “Empirically Derived Competency Profiles for Australian Business Graduates and their Implications for Industry and Business Schools”, *International Journal of Management Education*, 10 (2), pp.112-128.
- Jackson, D. and Hancock, P. (2010) “Non-technical Skills in Undergraduate Degrees in Business: Development and Transfer”, *Education Research and Perspectives*, 37 (1), pp.52-125.
- Jones, A. (2010) “Generic Attributes in Accounting: The Significance of the Disciplinary Context”, *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 19 (1-2), pp.5-21.
- Jorre de St Jorre, T. and Oliver, B. (2018), “Want Students to Engage? Contextualise Graduate Learning Outcomes and Assess for Employability”, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 37 (1), pp.44-57.
- Kerr, P. (2009) “Espoused Theories and Theories-in-Use of Information Literacy: A Model for Reflection and Evaluation”, *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 46 (1), pp.1-7.
- Kerr, P. A. (2010) *Conceptions and Practice of Information Literacy in Academic Libraries: Espoused Theories and Theories-in-Use*, New Brunswick, New York: Rutgers University Graduate School.
- Klein, C. (2013) “Econometrics as a Capstone Course in Economics”, *Journal of Economic Education*, 44 (3), pp.268-276.
- Mayer, E. (1992) *Key Competencies: Report of the Committee to Advise the Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment on Employment-related Key Competencies for Post Compulsory Education and Training*, Canberra: Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training.
- McAlpine, L., Amundsen, C., Clement, M. and Light, G. (2009) “Rethinking Our Underlying Assumptions About What We Do and Why we Do It: Academic Development as a Case”, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 31 (3), pp.261-280.
- McGoldrick, K. (2008) “Doing Economics: Enhancing Skills through a Process-oriented Senior Research Course”, *Journal of Economic Education*, 39 (4), pp.342-356.
- McMurray, S., Dutton, M., McQuaid, R. and Richard, A. (2016) “Employer Demands from Business Graduates”, *Education & Training*, 58 (1), pp.112-132.
- O'Donnell, R. (2010) “Economic Pluralism and Skill Formation”, in Garnett, R., Olsen, E. K. and Starr, M. (eds.), *Economic Pluralism*, London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, pp.262-277.

- O'Donnell, R. (2014) "What Do Graduate Attributes Have to Do with Political Economy?", in Schroeder, S.K. and Chester, L. (eds.), *Challenging the Orthodoxy*, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, pp.57-76.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Precision Consultancy (2007) *Graduate Employability Skills*, Canberra: Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council.
- Radloff, A., de la Harpe, B., Dalton, H., Thomas, J. and Lawson, A. (2008) "Assessing Graduate Attributes: Engaging Academic Staff and Their Students", *ATN Assessment*, 1, pp.1-7.
- Rust, C. and Froud, L. (2011) "'Personal Literacy': The Vital, Yet Often Overlooked, Graduate Attribute", *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 2 (1), pp.28-40.
- Rust, C. and Froud, L. (2016) "Shifting the Focus from Skills to 'Graduateness'", *Phoenix*, 148, pp.8-10.
- Santos, J. and Lavin, A. M. (2004) "Do as I Do, Not as I Say: Assessing Outcomes When Students Think Like Economists", *Journal of Economic Education*, 35 (2), pp.148-161.
- Siegfried, J.J., Bartlett, R. L., Hansen, W. L., Kelley, A. C., McCloskey, D N. and Tietenberg, T. H. (1991) "The Status and Prospects of the Economics Major", *Journal of Economic Education*, 22 (3), pp.197-224.
- Thornton, T. (2014) "Are Employers Interested in Reforming the Economics Curriculum?", *Australasian Journal of Economics Education*, 11 (1), pp. 42-62.
- Walstad, W. B. (2001) "Improving Assessment in University Economics", *Journal of Economic Education*, 32 (3), pp.281-294.
- Yin, R. K. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.



Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:

Cotronei-Baird, VS

Title:

Do economics academics recognise employability skills and incorporate them into their courses?

Date:

2020-11-01

Citation:

Cotronei-Baird, V. S. (2020). Do economics academics recognise employability skills and incorporate them into their courses?. *Australasian Journal of Economics Education*, 17 (1), pp.24-55

Persistent Link:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/267638>

File Description:

Published version