

BECOMING...

Views on the journey from higher education into employment and the world of work

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INTRODUCTION

Presented as work in progress, there follows a summary of ongoing research into *employability* conducted for the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts (DMTA) to inform the development of DMT612 Professional Preparation at Rose Bruford College.

BECOMING

When students graduate, they are *becoming* many things; employable, professional, established, *grown-up*, aware of self and aware of the world around them. It is the first time for many that the next September is an unknown, with no school, college or university to attend and a whole world to explore. But what does this actually mean?

The student perspective, the college perspective and the employer's perspective on the transition from the world of education into the world of work should surely align, but do they? Do we each perceive this transition or interface in different ways?

DEFINITIONS

In their 2013 paper for Rose Bruford, Jayne Richards and David Matthews assert:

The extant literature reveals that there is no agreed understanding of the term 'employability' as this relates to higher education (HE)¹.

Going on to suggest that:

The most concrete definition is that provided by Hillage and Pollard (1998), which measures employability in terms of 'success in gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, obtaining new employment if required'.²

Further reading from the same source might also suggest the following definition as being of use:

...a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.³

¹ Jayne Richards, David Matthews, RBC Employability Statement, <http://vle.bruford.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=29823> 27th April 2014

² Employability in Higher Education: what it is - what it is not, Mantze Yorke, HEA 2006

³ Op cit

However, going back to basics, a definition from the Institute of Employment Studies in 1999 might be equally appropriate:

*[Employability] is the capability of getting and keeping satisfactory work.*⁴

Being *employable* also suggests a certain confidence:

*To be employed is to be at risk, to be employable is to be secure.*⁵

It is also useful to consider motivational factors; quite simply that Drama School graduates want to develop successful careers in their chosen fields, they want to work in the performing arts. An article in The Guardian in 2013 identifies that one reason students attend Drama School *is to meet people who are going to give you jobs.*⁶

Are we in danger of over-complicating the issue?

This paper explores different views on *employability*, suggesting ways in which we develop engagement and delivery at Rose Bruford.

REFERENCES

Alongside published papers from the HEA and other organizations, supporting material is drawn from a series of seminars, panels and conversations:

- HEA Pedagogy for Employability
- HEA Employability in higher education: what it is - what it is not
- QAA Generic Employability Competencies
- Open University Employability Skills Descriptors
- Skills Plus Project

- Employability Seminar at the School of Arts, Birkbeck 2013
- Rose Bruford Symposia 2013 & 2014
- ITTP Conference at Pinewood Studios 2014

- Steve O'Brien, Production Manager, New Vic Theatre Stoke 2013
- Craig Bennet, Business Development Manager, White Light 2013
- Stage Management Association (SMA) 2013-14
- David Evans, Production Manager, National Theatre Wales 2013-14
- Mark Shayle, Freelance Production Manager 2013-14
- Ben Teale, Events Manager, Congo Blue Design 2014

⁴ Institute of employment studies, 1999

⁵ Peter Hawkins, UCE Careers Service – Delivering Employability for Musicians 2004, <http://78.158.56.101/archive/palatine/files/Contents.pdf> 27th April 2014

⁶ Paul Roseby, The Guardian 25th October 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/oct/25/drama-school-waste-money-time-paul-roseby> 27th April 2014

THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

As with any discipline, for students of production or of design, management and technical arts in theatre and its associated industries, the transition between student-hood and professional practice can often be challenging.

What is it about this rite of passage that seems so daunting?

ACKNOWLEDGED FEARS

Just reading the newspapers on a daily basis will give us the following digest of student issues regarding the world of work:

1. Money
 - a. Earning it
 - b. Paying it back
2. Leaving the secure “regimented” world of education
3. Uncertain job market
4. Having to grow up; be responsible
5. Not feeling ready for the world of work
6. Fear of the unknown
7. Finding the first job
8. Do I have the right training?
9. Awareness of the large number of new graduates applying for the same jobs

And talking with students about this transition, they identify exactly these same issues.

It is perhaps also useful to note that many students of production at drama school will have achieved a certain level within the hierarchy here, perhaps production or technical manager, but will have to start at the bottom of the ladder when they start work perhaps as an assistant or even an apprentice. *Are graduates prepared for this?*

A scare-mongering article in The Guardian’s *datablog* suggests that:

*Graduates in Europe now expect to submit as many as 60 applications before landing their first job, and the average wait between graduation and employment is approaching six months.*⁷

But interestingly identifies that attitude might have something to do with this depressing statistic:

*All across Europe, the survey has found a trend towards students becoming disenchanted with long working days and high levels of responsibility.*⁸

Preparation for the world of work therefore needs to address the *approach* required to fulfil employment criteria.

⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/datablog/2013/jul/02/survey-european-graduates-hopes-fears> 27th April 2014

⁸ Op cit

Equally, consideration should be given to the development in short, medium and long term prospects; there is a tendency to look at the *immediate*, inevitably give us a skewed view of the graduate's on-going journey.

Tom Hagues, a recent graduate from the University of Kent writes:

Students at universities in the United Kingdom will, at some point, read an article that screeches about how bad their chances at getting a job after graduation are. [...] I was briefly alarmed by some of these articles until I read a letter written by Professor Sir Christopher Snowden, the president of Universities UK. He, sensibly, argued that most of these terrifying figures are taken from a very tiny 'snapshot' of a six-month period after graduates have left University. In a much broader time frame, around two-three years, graduate unemployment stands at a very small 3.1%.⁹

And concludes his article by suggesting that:

As daunting as graduate unemployment figures sometimes are, the situation isn't as woefully desperate as you might believe.¹⁰

Perhaps we might consider that part of our job as educators and facilitators, as *people of experience*, is to calm student fears by simply encouraging a strategic approach to engaging with industry and finding work.

⁹ Tony Hagues, Articles Reporting on Graduate Employment Figures are Scaremongering, 4th October 2013 http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tom-hagues/graduate-unemployment_b_4029241.html 27th April 2014

¹⁰ Op cit

THE COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE

Alongside Jayne Richards and David Matthews’ assertion that there is no clear definition for *employability*, their findings include a useful summary of *employability skills* from a variety of sources:

QAA Generic Employability Competencies	Open University Employability Skills Descriptions	Skills Plus Project - skills and qualities
<p>Cognitive Skills – analysis, judgement, attention to detail</p> <p>Generic Competencies – planning and organising, written communication, working with others, teamwork, interpersonal sensitivity</p> <p>Personal Capabilities – achievement orientation, personal development, initiative, lifelong learning and development, listening, questioning, creativity, influencing, leadership, decisiveness,</p> <p>Technical Ability – technical application, technical knowledge</p> <p>Business and/or Organisation Awareness – process operation, financial awareness, commercial awareness, organisational sensitivity,</p> <p>Practical and Professional Elements – Professional expertise</p>	<p>Written communication</p> <p>Oral communication</p> <p>Team working</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Computer literacy</p> <p>Numeracy</p> <p>Planning and organising</p> <p>Initiative</p> <p>Problem solving</p> <p>Adaptability/flexibility</p>	<p>PERSONAL QUALITIES - Malleable self-theory, Self-awareness, Self-confidence, Independence, Emotional intelligence, Adaptability, Stress tolerance, Initiative, Willingness to learn, Reflectiveness.</p> <p>CORE SKILLS - Reading effectiveness, Numeracy, Information retrieval, Language skills, Self-management, Critical analysis, Creativity, Listening, Written communication, Oral presentations, Explaining, Global awareness:</p> <p>PROCESS SKILLS - Computer literacy, Commercial awareness, Political sensitivity, Ability to work cross-culturally, Ethical sensitivity. Prioritising, Planning, Applying subject understanding, Acting morally, Coping with complexity, Problem solving, Influencing, Arguing for and/or justifying a point of view or a course of action, Resolving conflict, Decision making, Negotiating, Team work</p>

Borrowing from the three projects detailed above, one of their outcomes was a list of key employability skills relevant to students at Rose Bruford.

Rose Bruford College Employability Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication and numeracy • Oral communication • Team working • Leadership • Interpersonal skills • Computer literacy • Planning and organising

- Initiative
- Problem solving
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Industry Awareness and Entrepreneurship

In discussion with colleagues at Goldsmiths College, University of London, we discover that their own research into employability has resulted in the following summarized output:

A Taxonomy of Graduate Attributes	Determinants of Employability
<p>Values (core beliefs or motives)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberalism • Altruism • Tolerance • Integrity • Learning <p>Style (dispositions, orientation, reputation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual, flexible • Creative, artistic • Outgoing, confident • Independent, radical • Passionate, engaged <p>Skills (competencies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem (thinking) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Critical and analytical skills ○ Adaptability ○ Flexibility ○ Numeracy ○ Literacy ○ Creativity • Business (entrepreneurial) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commercial awareness ○ Computer literacy ○ Networking ○ Initiative ○ Negotiation • People (interpersonal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team-work ○ Leadership ○ Diplomacy ○ Social skills ○ Empathy • Self (intrapersonal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning and organisation ○ Time management ○ Reflection 	<p>Pre-University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antecedents (previous education and work, values, traits, abilities, family background) <p>In/During University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills (content, specific, explicit, formal, assessed) • Engagement (involvement and enjoyment with degree) • Non-academic attributes (process, generic, implicit, informal, not assessed) • Work experience (part-time jobs, internships, volunteering etc.) <p>Post-University</p> <p>The education outlined above leads to an awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic credentials • Career motivation • Graduate/generic skills • Relevant training & experience <p>Which in turn leads to how students perceive their own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability (ability to obtain and maintain desired jobs)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-motivation ○ Insight • Communication (presentation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Articulacy ○ Communication ○ Networking ○ Self-marketing ○ Persuasiveness ○ Emotional ○ Intelligence 	
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In addition, they have put together a simple web page, condensing this information and suggesting a *3D model* for the well-rounded graduate:

<http://www.gold.ac.uk/3d/introduction/>

What we are seeing here is an encapsulation of the entire student journey, everything we expect them to take away from their experience with us as they go out into the world.

And what is particularly interesting about all of this work is that while it appears to strive for a holistic approach to employability it does so by combining the identified determinants and qualities of employability resulting in a generic output that might be at odds with the rather more pragmatic and *real-world* requirements of prospective employers.

In considering these findings, we might also take on board the following thoughts from the University of Kent:

You can't rely on your degree alone to automatically open doors after you graduate. It will certainly unlock doors - in other words it will make you eligible to apply for jobs that specify "must be a graduate", and the subject or class of your degree may also be important to certain employers. But however good your degree class, however relevant your subject to the career that you'll be applying for, it is likely that you will be competing for this job with a number of other graduates who are equally well-qualified academically.

Once your degree has unlocked the door, you'll need the right mix of skills, abilities and personal qualities in order to turn the handle and give the door the push that will open it to you.¹¹

Supported by these from Mantze Yorke:

Academic qualifications are the first tick in the box and then we move on. Today we simply take them for granted. Brown (et al. 2002, p.19).¹²

And:

For other employers, a general 'graduateness' (HEQC, 1997) appears to be deemed to be sufficient, which should be understood to include the possession of general dispositions, qualities and skills. (Purcell and Pitcher, 1996, noted that for many years

¹¹ <https://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/skillsintro.htm> 27th April 2014

¹² Employability in Higher Education: what it is - what it is not, Mantze Yorke, HEA 2006

over 40% of advertisements for 'graduate jobs' had been more or less indifferent to applicants' subject of study.) In these circumstances, the message seems to have been 'give us a bright and engaged graduate, and we will build specific expertise for this organisation on top of that'.¹³

All of which might suggest that *employability* is value added at point of graduation, leading to further questions about how we support it.

¹³ Op cit

THE EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

In order to further understand the employer's expectations of recent graduates, we were lucky enough to secure the services of David Evans (DE) as a key practitioner for the Rose Bruford Symposium in 2013. A Production Manager of substantial experience¹⁴, he is in an ideal position to offer an overview of what employers want from HE

Three sessions:

1. Employer Panel, chaired by DE discussing what employers look for in graduates and what more they feel is needed from the education sector.
2. A talk/seminar from DE on *professionalism* and what it *actually* means.
3. An *in conversation* discussion between DE and myself asking what we look for in a candidate at interview or other networking environment. Equally what do we *not* want to see in these situations?

A Q&A and a drop-in surgery to discuss topical issues surrounding employability and the world of work immediately followed each of these sessions.

The sessions themselves allowed for a broad range of related topics to be discussed. Here, we shall limit ourselves with specific relevance to the topic at hand.

Summarising the findings from these sessions, it became clear that DE and the panellists were of one mind, that there were limited key attributes they each required of new graduates:

- Go into the industry with openness and adaptability; be aware of your transferable skills. You are entering the "fat end of the funnel", then you can streamline and specialise.¹⁵
- Be aware of your on-going development, always "keeping it fresh"¹⁶
- Understanding yourself as an employee, what is required of you? How do you fit into a particular environment, a particular company? How do you adapt?¹⁷
- Core skills and diversity, be prepared to continue learning and to develop new skills.¹⁸
- Good sense of humour, open-mindedness, keenness, willingness¹⁹

There was only one comment from the three days that suggested a particular element was actually missing from the HE offering in this sector. Steve O'Brien from the New Vic Theatre in Stoke suggested that *practical and making skills are often missing from recent graduates*. But immediately qualified it by saying that *this is perhaps where Rose Bruford's Scenic Arts and Costume Production courses are so valuable*.

There is a strong feeling here, that the skills we have will always require development and that the employee needs to be prepared for life-long learning. Equally an awareness that the employee needs to fit in with a team and to a working environment. Thus we identify a clear progression, from the world of education through a transition of proving oneself,

¹⁴ With Adventures in Motion Pictures and National Theatre Wales amongst other high profile companies

¹⁵ Craig Bennett, Business Development Manager for WhiteLight

¹⁶ Craig Bennett

¹⁷ Andy Rowley, Chair of the Stage Management Association

¹⁸ Steve O'Brien, Production Manager, New Vic Theatre, Stoke

¹⁹ Mark Shayle, Freelance Production and General manager

fitting it and becoming a professional practitioner into a career involving on-going development and learning.

We might also extrapolate from this argument the perception that if a student has actually graduated, then this must count for something; mirroring the earlier point from Purcell and Pitcher in 1996, *that for many years over 40% of advertisements for 'graduate jobs' had been more or less indifferent to applicants' subject of study.*

The full bulleted transcripts of these sessions may be found as an appendix to this document.

SUPPORTING COMMENT

These assertions are backed up by comments made at a panel held at Birkbeck in April 2013 – Employment and Employability in the Performing Arts, *What is HE's Role?* – Where it was clearly identified that employability in any area of the performing arts *is all about attitude and willingness to do the job.*²⁰

Equally, comments made at the ITTP conference at Pinewood in early 2014 looking at education for the Broadcast and Film industries identified exactly the same feeling: *we can teach them anything as long as they come to us with the right attitude and a willingness to learn.*²¹

In discussion with Ben Teale, Director of events company *Congo Blue Design*, he was even more forthright in his opinion, arguing that whatever educational background his prospective employees came from, he would still want to train them to his own standards, suggesting again that a bright and engaged attitude was what he was looking for²².

Lastly, I include a key comment from Mark Shayle, a freelance Production and General Manager, that in many ways sums up the employer's perspective:

*Solid training, well-honed core skills, a wide circle of trusted colleagues and a good sense of humour have always been and will continue to be the bedrock of gaining and maintaining employment in the entertainment industry.*²³

FOR THE FUTURE

There is further research to be engaged with here on themes of *the individual as a business, networking, branding and social media*. These points were all made during Symposium discussion and are referred to in the appendix, but time and space do not allow further examination at this time.

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION

It would appear that the three identified perspectives – student, college and employer – do not necessarily align as we might expect.

²⁰ Panel: Jane Deitch, Casting Director; Prof. Stephen Lacey, SCUDD; Prof. Simon Shepherd, Central; Wendy Spoon, Casting Director; Prof. Rob Swain, Birkbeck. Under the auspices of Drama UK

²¹ Panel:

²² In conversation with the author 10th April 2014

²³ Mark Shayle, Freelance Production and General manager, from personal correspondence 11/4/2013

Analysing the findings, we identify that the student perspective is based on fear, the college perspective is based on learning outcomes and results, then that the employer's perspective is based on what they need from the workforce. Further, the student response could be seen as essentially emotional, the college bureaucratic and the employer primarily commercial.

So how *do* we align such seemingly opposing viewpoints?

I might suggest that if we were to simply recognise that in vocational HE we already provide the core skills required of graduates entering their chosen profession, then it becomes a clear and logical progression that rather than on the particular skills learned along the way, leading up the point of graduation the student's focus moves to personality and attitude; to self-awareness, self-perception and self-assessment. It is this transition that we need to address

I am more than simply what I know

The student has the skills; upon graduating how does he or she use them?

In essence, if we are training and educating in order to populate an industry or industries, then one might argue that it is to this sector we should look to answer a simple question; *what do employers want from new graduates?*

And the answer might well be found in a comment repeatedly made during SM6 interviews for DMT612 in May 2012, 2013 and now 2014: *will they fit into my existing team?*²⁴

The DMTA Professional Preparation module DMT612 aims to encourage students to think in exactly this way. Exploring questions about what it means to be a *professional* and analyzing approaches to finding work, we are asking students to think beyond the confines of University; to think about the wider world and the wider working environment; to consider where they want to go, what they want to achieve and how they are going to achieve it.

EMBEDDING AN ETHOS OF EMPLOYABILITY

Extract from the introductory notes, illustrating a holistic approach to this transition:

Everything you do here is part of your preparation for the world of work, whether it is a placement or a conversation with a visiting professional; an interview or a conversation at the bar.

More specifically, we offer you the opportunity to put on shows in a professional manner using procedures and systems that are as close to industry standard as we can provide within an educational environment.

Classes will include explorations into ways of marketing yourselves to the industry and the way in which you present yourselves to prospective employers.

²⁴ Interview panelists including Sue Welsh, Jo Rawlinson, Simon Catchpole, Emily Gottlieb, Jo Holmes, Emma Cameron, Anthony Sammut, Mark Shayle, Jo Bradman and David Evans

To support the classes delivered to you within your respective programmes, we will be offering lectures and seminars from visiting professionals and either mock interviews or equivalent networking opportunities as appropriate to your discipline.

Putting all of this together, we are asking you to consider how you are developing, both as an individual and as a professional practitioner; how you will go about building a successful career.

As you go forward, consider everything you have learnt and are learning; everything you have experienced. How do these lessons and experiences affect you? How do they help you to define who you are and who you will become as you go out into your chosen field?

IN CONCLUSION

I am more than simply what I know, but what I know is my starting point. Where I go will be determined by who I am and who I become as I move forward.

Any module focusing on Professional Preparation would be lacking value without the disciplinary skillset it aims to support. However it is the fact that such a skillset *is* supported in this way that adds particular value to the degree programmes we offer at Rose Bruford College.

Mark Simpson – Spring 2014

APPENDICES

1 NOTES FROM SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS 2013

"Solid training, well-honed core skills, a wide circle of trusted colleagues and a good sense of humour have always been and will continue to be the bedrock of gaining and maintaining employment in the entertainment industry."

Mark Shayle, freelance production and general manager, from personal correspondence
11/4/2013

When starting your career it is as important to consider business skills as creative ones. Think of yourself as a business; the work you intend to engage in is your product/ service. Whether you are freelance or permanently employed you must consider your position as a company.

Add an annual review to your diary and at this point consider the year ahead; what training do you want? Do you want to move up/ left/ right/ back? What new tools do you need? Is your career on track to hit a short/ mid/ long term goal? Are you earning enough? Are you happy? Once you have reviewed make a plan for the year ahead. Set money aside monthly for training and put it in another account - you must invest in your product and keep it fresh.

Consider your branding - EVERYTHING you do is a marketing activity from Facebook to a days work or your cv. Big brother is watching!

Craig Bennett, business development manager for WhiteLight, from personal correspondence 11/4/2013

SESSION 1

A WHOLE NEW WORLD
(SUBTEXT: *What do I do?*)

What does the industry require from new graduates and what more could the HE sector do to support these requirements?

OERIGINAL THOUGHTS FROM DE

You raised two subjects:

1. What we are looking for in candidates - perhaps 5 mins from each of us before opening up - there will be a lot of cross over but the students might be surprised at what we prioritise - one of the key points being that... ah there I go again.
2. What we want from the education sector - this could be fascinating, again we could have 5 mins from each on this, then open it to the floor - it would be interesting to see what they feel is missing, being very broad about this I would be quite surprised if we agree with the students.

THE SESSION

Craig Bennett

- Be prepared to research to improve skillset
- Beware of social media – but use it wisely
- How useful is a web presence?
- When networking, how do you come across?
- Go into the industry with openness and adaptability; be aware of your transferable skills. You are entering the “fat end of the funnel”, then you can streamline and specialise.
- If you always imagine yourself as a freelancer, how does this affect your attitude to residency or longer term contracts?
- Be aware of your ongoing development, always “keeping it fresh”

Andy Rowley

- Understanding yourself as an employee, what is required of you? How do you fit into a particular environment, a particular company? How do you adapt?
- Again, how do we use social media to its best advantage? Research and networking for the next venue on the tour...
- Find a way to make your valuable points so that it doesn't appear that you're treading on peoples' toes!

Steve O'Brien

- Core skills and diversity, be prepared to continue learning and to develop new skills.
- Consider a breadth of knowledge (*think wide range of genres*)

Mark Shayle

- Etiquette, knowledge of pedigree, history and tradition
- Good sense of humour, open-mindedness, keenness, willingness
- Managing expectation of both self and others; current situations and environments and the future
- Everybody knows everybody in these industries. Apply this knowledge to networking, media profile and both good and bad behaviour.

CV WORKSHOP

- Skills first
- Make it interesting
- Tailor CV to the job applied for

SUMMARY

- What might be missing from graduates is the appropriate interpersonal skills that allow them to interact with the people they aspire to work with.
- Self-awareness
- Human nature makes us discriminatory
- The industry wants people who take themselves seriously

Mark Shayle

- Uniqueness of each job and each situation
- Open mindedness is a key attitude
- There isn't just one industry, there are several inter-related industries that co-exist to form a huge variety of job and career opportunities.

Steve O'Brien

- Practical and making skills are often missing from recent graduates. This is perhaps where Rose Bruford's Scenic Arts and Costume Production courses are so valuable.
- We need to consider the importance of traditional methods of construction and making and not rely simply on the latest gadgets and toys to do the job.

Craig Bennett

Andy Rowley

- Keeping it fresh
- Always remember that training and re-training are tax-deductible expenses
- It's all about the show – and the show is always unpredictable
- Adaptability in terms of both skillset and hierarchy is invaluable, be prepared to do whatever it takes
- Three year cycle for skills refresh
- Consider the value of trade associations and unions

SESSION 2

I'M A PROFESSIONAL

(SUBTEXT: Who am I?)

What is a professional? What does it mean to become a professional?

ORIGINAL THOUGHTS FROM DE

Professionalism - a wide subject:

1. What is expected of a person on a stage - knowledge of the structure of a theatre's team, how to behave on a stage, when to keep your mouth shut, when to open it. What do you never do: stand around with your arms crossed, step over a flying bar, move anything that someone has put down, disturb a rehearsal etc
2. Professional approach to life - dress like you take yourself seriously, turn up on time, do your research
3. Interviews, this is the most important job in the world, do your research, sensible CVs, find something interesting about yourself that sets you apart from all of the rest of you -
4. This is a job this is how you pay the rent, will pay a mortgage and will pay for your children's food - get a pension, get a driving licence, pay TAX and NI etc....
5. When you are not working do your research, fairly soon you will no longer have free time so use it while you can, why do theatres use irons? What are the regulations around using firearms in a theatre? there is also a lot of free training out there, take it, not only will it improve your knowledge portfolio but it will give you good contacts.
6. Stay abreast of what is going on, who is out with what show, what show is coming into town, read The Stage, read Access all Areas, the more you know the greater are your chances of finding work

7. Go to the theatre - this is after all your stated main interest see shows, pester friends to get you in for free or for a discount - i always want to know what people have seen lately and how it excited them
8. Be realistic, you are not going to be the PM of the National by the time you are 25, if someone offers you a touring chippy job, say thank you, not "no thanks but I will Prod Chippy for you"

THE SESSION

Personal Introduction

- As a practitioner, has needed to develop a technical skill base to deal with the evolving complexity of theatre
- This development is illustrative of a portfolio career – Production Management, Technical Management, Design and Lighting Design – demonstrates a breadth of skills transferable between a variety of disciplines
- It is important to develop an awareness of the synergy between production and venue – not just the site specific elements
- And an awareness of the theatre environment – taking it out rather than staying in traditional venues

How relevant is stage management going to be in the future? We seem to be heading towards a much more generalist skill base; people who can put their hands to anything.

Definitions

- Don't work and drink
- Do what you say you're going to do
- If you behave like a twat; apologise!
- It's not a hobby, it's your living; take it seriously
- You get paid: it's contractual, you provide a service and this service requires adherence to a set of standards
- It's about attitude and approach
- It is never "that'll do"!
- Working to the highest standards within the parameters of time and budget
- Be aware of your abilities; know your limits: don't take jobs you can't do

Attitude to self

- You are a business
- If you take yourself seriously, so will employers
- Be ready, be prepared
- How appropriate is your CV to the job you're applying for?
- Research
- What are your skills? What do you bring to the party?
- Awareness of your immediate environment and the wider industry
- Readiness to work (PPE, boots, gloves, tools, food and sleep)
- The building of mutual trust and respect
- Colleagues are not friends – this is a *professional* relationship
- Don't be fooled by the informality of this industry

- Timekeeping
- Appropriate dress
- Notebook and pen – always to hand

“Your job may be fun, but fun is not a job.”

- Treat each other with respect; shouting at people never achieves anything!

Rules

- Often unspoken, learnt by osmosis
- Professionalism is the guide by which you navigate [the world of] work
- There is a moral code
- Unwritten standards
- Teamwork and professionalism
- ?Gallowglass rules
- Fundamental knowledge: stage geography, risk assessments, manual handling, plan reading, conventions
- Dancers warm up, why not the crew before heavy lifting?
- Understanding what other people and departments do – what pressures are they under?
- Expect to work long hours, but within the law!
- None of us is indispensable
- Industry jargon and terminology from other cultures and countries
- Awareness of your environment – fire escapes etc
- Who is in charge at any particular time – fluid hierarchy
- Know what you are there to do and get on with it
- Respect the sanctity of the rehearsal space. Don't disturb rehearsals, they are the reason we're all here.

General

When you first go out into the industry, you will be employed on your core skills, you will be asked to go back to basics. Do you need to refresh these core skills?

- What do others do? Crew? Press? Marketing? Let's remove the divides between departments.
- Consider these relationships, lines of communication, hierarchy and command
- Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask, but equally, don't keep asking the same question
- Don't allow yourself to be pressurised into doing something you feel underqualified or under-confident to do

“As a professional, I need to be able to justify my actions if asked to do so.”

- Stay contemporary
- Use non-work time effectively
- Be aware of the industry – go to the theatre!
- Be realistic

- Stay in with the people you get in with!

Key

- Integrity
- Loyalty
- Research and delivery

SESSION 3

GIZZA JOB

(SUBTEXT: Who do I know?)

What do we look for in a candidate at interview or other networking environment? Equally what do we not want to see in these situations?

- “ I have not killed anybody, oh in fact yes I have”
- Get your ducks in a row – be ready for work
- Sort out your identity – website, CV , references
- Identify your professional Persona
 - Skills
 - Experiences
 - Interesting Aspects
 - Job Roles
 - TEAM player
 - That you are a participant
 - Having a 2/5 year plan
 - An evolving knowledge of the industry inc elements that contextualise your work
- ALL this before you are interviewed
 - What name do you go by? Professional Name
 - Identify where you want to work – Research: – Company, Venue, Shows, who works where, what the venue/show may be proud of
 - Plan the Application; Be cautious of Copy and Paste, always reread
 - Customise every application
 - Prepare stories to illustrate your suitability/brilliance etc.
- YOU HAVE THE TOOLS, LEARN TO USE THEM
- LEARN WHO THE PROFESSIONAL YOU IS
- IT IS YOU THAT GETS THE JOB, NOT THE SKILLS

What a candidate should have

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Interest

I WANT:

- The job to be done
- Nobody that is too dependent
- Someone who will fit in
- Being hard to dislike is an advantage
- Too much character may be a disadvantage
- Someone who brings more to the party

Not too sure that I am bother if you are interested in

- New Writing
- Women's theatre etc....

Not really interested in your career trajectory, but it is important that you have a 2/5 year plan as this illustrates your professionalism

I REALLY don't want to be lied to

Think about the Interviewer

I have been intimidated by interviewees - too keen, obsessive, agenda driven

PROFESSIONALISM IS:

- A state of mind and an aspiration
- Steering between self interest and the interest of the employers
- Partly instinctive

Student to employee: The bad habits you'll have to change

One day, after an uncertain few months of applications and interviews, your search for a graduate job will finally be over. However, be warned: the transition from student to employee is rarely smooth and you won't be able to get away with acting the same way you used to. To prepare yourself, now is as good a time as any to start thinking about cutting out some of those bad student habits.

Quit the Facebook addiction

Funnily enough, your new boss won't be paying you to spend the whole day on Facebook. Unless, of course, you're working for Facebook in which case, congratulations will be in order. While at university you can always flick between work and your friends' holiday snaps without fear of punishment, you'll need to cut out the procrastination once you're working.

Leave your sport 'career' behind

Being leading try scorer for the 1st XV may allow you to strut around campus like you own the place but the workplace is a different environment. Being the star of track and field doesn't put you at the top of the food chain any more, so don't expect to stun your co-workers into submission with your sporting prowess - and learn a bit of modesty instead.

Stop living in the library

Throughout your university education, the library (or Wikipedia) always had the answer whenever you were stuck. In the real world though that's just not true. In the same way you can't read a book to learn how to ride a bike, there's no Work For Dummies guide to teach you how to do your job. Instead you'll be learning as you go. If it seems unnerving, don't worry: chances are the people you work with will still be learning things too.

Avoid cheesy nightclubs

Yes, 'Gangnam Style' gave us a brilliant dance move, and, okay, 'Call Me Maybe' is a near-perfect pop song but once you're surrounded by adults you might want to start going to bars and clubs where dancing topless to the Baywatch theme isn't de rigeur. There's nothing wrong with enjoying the cheesier aspects of pop culture but choose your moments and indulge sparingly. You're a bit too old now to still be screaming along to 'Teenage Dirtbag'.

Refrain from uni slang

This might come as a shock given your self-appointed status as the Archbishop of Banterbury, but it's unlikely your new co-workers will find your endless collection of ridiculous slang words to be as 'lادتastic' as you think they are. Nonsense words like 'chunder' and 'shlid' must be confined to university campuses to prevent them infecting the rest of the country.

Cut out the reckless spending

No matter how hard you try, money seems to slip through your hands like water. No sooner does a student loan payment arrive than it's rashly spent on a round of 50 Jaegerbombs. Thankfully, you should be going out less once you have a job so it shouldn't be too hard to start saving some of your monthly pay-slip. After all, adulthood promises a series of scary-sounding investments (House! Family! Pension!) which are [more important in the long-run than an iPhone upgrade](#).

²⁵ <http://jjobs.independent.co.uk/article/student-to-employee-the-bad-habits-you-ll-have-to-change/>

Save the partying for the weekend

There's nothing wrong with working hard and playing harder but the demands of a five-day working week mean it's better to confine your late-night antics to the weekend. It may mean leaving your favourite mid-week club nights behind you but you'll have 48 hours at the weekend to make up for lost time. Just make sure you're fit for work on Monday!

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3 ARTICLE FROM THE GUARDIAN – 4th FEBRUARY 2014²⁶

The ten skills students really need when they graduate

Graduate vacancies are predicted to rise by 10% this year – here are some skills you'll need to make sure you're one of the lucky ones

Helping to organise your university ball could show business sense, one of the skills graduate recruiters look for. Photograph: Andrew Parsons/PA

The number of jobs available for graduates is [predicted to rise by 10.2%](#), according to a survey by the [Association of Graduate Recruiters](#). Good news for [students](#) – but when you come to apply for your first job after university, are you sure you'll have the relevant skills for the post?

Leaving it until you're sitting in front of a blank computer screen trying to write your CV for a [graduate](#) job may well be too late to assess the qualities you've got to offer.

"From day one students should see the start of university as the start of their working life," says Dan Hawes, co-founder of the [Graduate Recruitment Bureau](#). "Think of the skills you need to have when you finish university in three or four years time and then work backwards, so you're hoarding skills each year."

Gemma Pirnie, founder of [Your New Crew](#), says: "When I left university I was completely unprepared for what the grad market would throw at me. I thought having a 2:1 from a good university and having a bit of (irrelevant) work experience would see me land a job no problem – not the case."

Obviously the skills you need will depend on the job you apply for, but there are some things that graduate recruiters are looking for that you can start thinking about now.

Business sense

"Candidates who start their own societies, organise their university ball or start their own T-shirt-making business while at uni tend to have a good grasp of how a business makes money," says Cary Curtis, managing director of [Give-a-grad-a-go](#).

²⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/04/skills-graduates-need-students-employability>

An understanding of business is one of the main skills that students underestimate, according to a 2013 Guardian survey. Less than 10% of students thought it was a vital skill, compared to nearly 50% of employers.

"You don't need to be the next Mark Zuckerberg," says Curtis, "but having a good idea of how a business runs and the challenges involved are really useful skills to take into a company."

Get global

"More and more employers are wanting graduates to have a 'global mindset', which means understanding different cultures and how industries work across borders," says Stephen Isherwood, chief executive of the [Association of Graduate Recruiters](#).

Isherwood recommends that students make the most of time at uni to meet people from around the world, consider study abroad schemes like Erasmus, and says that speaking another language shows that a grad has a "better cultural understanding".

A language

"If you speak another language then make sure it's clearly displayed on your CV," says Curtis. "We really like bilingual candidates as they usually interview really well. But quite often their CV doesn't do them justice. 'Business fluent French' looks much better than just 'French A-level at grade A' as it offers a company more."

Be careful though. "If you haven't had much practice with your languages make sure you scrub up before sending out a CV that implies you can hold your own."

A squeaky clean digital footprint

"Start building a digital footprint of relevance to what you want to do," says Smith. "Employers, just like everyone else, will look on the internet as a first port of call."

That might mean [setting up a LinkedIn profile](#), starting your own blog or website, joining Twitter, and generally making sure you're careful about what goes online connected to you.

Chris Smith, chief executive of [Opinio Group](#) recruiters, says: "If the only thing employers can find is you with traffic cones on your head on Facebook then you're in trouble."

Office etiquette

Knowing how to fit into an office will come in handy for many graduate jobs, so it's a good idea to look for opportunities to spend time in one while you're still a student.

Hawes says: "What some graduates might not have is the office know-how, maybe they've never worked in an office before so everything's new, whether it's answering the phone or the way you dress or address people, the things like that – office etiquette."

How to make a good cuppa

It might sound like a cliché, but being able to make a good cup of tea can go a long way.

Sam Espensen, managing director of [Conversation Creation](#), says: "One of the skills that has stood me in great stead is making great tea and coffee. I once had a grad refuse to make my team drinks because it 'suggested he was below the rest of us' – needless to say he didn't last long.

"We all make tea in my team and the person who brings me a cup of tea unprompted is likely to be my hero for the day."

Sussing out the culture of a workplace (whether they all make tea for each other, for example) is really important when you come to look for work.

Good with computers

"Hard skills in programming and software development for us are really valuable," says Hawes. Curtis adds that being highly numerate and having good analytical skills is increasingly important.

But even if you're not applying for a job in a tech company, being digitally savvy is still really important.

"All employers expect graduates to be computer literate," says Isherwood. "Generally just being aware of the digital age is important. That doesn't mean having programming skills, but understanding that instant messaging and conference calls are common in the business world and having basic IT skills like working with spreadsheets and documents."

Teamwork

If you've been thinking of joining a uni sports team but haven't quite found the motivation, here's another reason to join: it could help you get a job. Smith says: "What shows better that someone can be part of a team than the fact they've spent the past two years playing for a team."

Being able to work with other people is a key skill employers are looking for and you'll need to prove it's something you have had experience of beyond your course.

"When talking about teamwork don't use university examples," says Isherwood. "At uni the teams are chosen for you, so it's much more impressive to speak about sport or involvement with a society."

Talking to people

Getting confident talking to people is useful for building up your contacts. Pirnie says: "Attend industry meet ups. This will help you both with articulating your interests and with interview techniques as you'll quickly become comfortable talking to new people."

Smith recommends going to exhibitions and conventions in your chosen field. He says: "There are small business conventions going on all over the country. Go to them, meet people, ask some questions. And if you're not sure yet quite what you want to do, all the more reason to get out there and investigate."

Positive attitude

If you're still at uni, it's worth thinking about how you can build up all these skills. But if you're in your final year and haven't ticked them all, don't worry. "Employers often say that they hire for attitude and train for skill," says Hawes. So whatever experience you've got to your name, a positive attitude is still the most important thing you can bring to your first job.

A few more things to consider

- **A driving licence:** "A driving licence certainly isn't the prerequisite that it used to be," says Curtis, but if you haven't yet learnt to drive it's still worth trying before you leave uni. Smith says: "It can be important. Also, it speaks volumes if you can't drive. The first thing I think is – why not? It hints at laziness."

- **You can pick up skills in unlikely places:** Espensen's father ran a cottage industry making model planes, and when she was a student she "reluctantly" helped out, packing the kits and posting them out. At the time she had no idea that the knowledge she built up would come in handy – but she ended up working doing the PR for the Bomber Command Memorial and realised how useful it was.

Things you get involved with at university and in your own time might not seem directly linked to what you want to do in the future, but you never know when those skills might come in handy.