



Enhancing the employability of graduates:
increasing the awareness of staff and students to
the needs of the employers

Charlotte Taylor
Mary Peat
Chris Stewart
Faculty of Science

What did we set out to do?

Develop a skills awareness program to:

- Raise awareness of the key role of generic skills in enhancing progression & success in a science career
- Provide a mechanism for students to self-assess their awareness of the various skills
- Provide students with a framework to understand the nature of the skills
- Show students how to use a portfolio to demonstrate their skills competence
- Help students learn the language of these skills and identify them within the curricula

Methodology

- Preliminary phase (literature review and investigation activities)
- Development phase (articulation, definition, identification)
- Implementation phase (pilots – 2003; 2004)
- Evaluation and reporting phase (currently at the latter stage)

How did we go about it?

Started with an academic thrust (typical of academics)

- Skills definitions up front - [L](#)
- Examples and portfolio development in the background

Student evaluations were started at the storyboard writing stage – May 2003

Further trials in August 2003 changed our direction slightly but not enough

First Trial – May 2003

On paper with a student focus group:

- Looked at the interpretation of one of the higher order skills - interpersonal skills
- Tried
 - the recording of (student) experiences
 - the development of logs of (student) activities

Feedback used to help develop the web interface

Second Trial – August 2003

- Tried the web interface using the Interpersonal Skills information
- Discussed the development of a portfolio with students

Developed the web site - [Lskills/index.html](#)

Trials in 2004 changed our views

- Students found there was far too much information
 - Information not in the format they felt they would work with
 - Far too academic!
- Changes were drastic*
- *Turned the site up side down and inside out!*
 - *Changed the name*

Life Long Earning

Matching your talents with employers' expectations

<http://www.lifelongearning.science.usyd.edu.au>

[L](#)

What have we produced?

A web site

- Student-friendly
- Explains core skills/attributes
- Provides a series of scenarios of experiences that help develop the skills
- Suggests ways of creating a portfolio; shares CVs
- Interviews with practising scientists and employers

What are we going to do with it?

- Available to all Science students in 2005
- Promoted through *WebCT*, the Faculty T&L web site
- Promoted to all staff through College Showcase and newsletters