Graduate Employability 2.0

Learning to connect

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What is Graduate Employability 2.0?

The **networked approach to graduate employability** is concerned with the social and relational dimensions of learning, work and career.

In **the 21st century**, many of these dimensions involve interactions and activities in digital spaces as well as face-to-face.

How is the networked approach and connectedness learning different?

So far, universities' engagement with graduate employability has been focussed on developing the individual skills and capabilities to find and acquire suitable work, perform well and in that work, and to build a lifelong career.

The networked approach instead foregrounds the central roles of **reciprocal partnerships**, **groups**, **communities**, and **networks** to employability, and developing the capabilities to make the most of these.

Together we can be much smarter and achieve much more than as individuals 'going it alone'

With a strong basis in theories of social constructivism and connectivism, the networked approach embraces the fact that together we acheieve much more through social activities such as:

mentoring | Collaborative problem solving | crowdsourcing | networked learning

Why connectedness learning?

The ability to make, grow and strengthen professional connections, and interact and work with them effectively and strategically has long been recognised as **essential to lifelong employability**.

Professional networks have a vital role to play in various aspects of career development, innovation and problem-solving processes, and socially-based learning. With the advent of digitally mediated communication and the widespread use of social media, network effects on employability are both intensified and amplified.

Increasingly, universities are also seeking to build their own connectedness, and to enrich learning and teaching by collaborating and **partnering with stakeholders from industry and community** and their own alumni and students. In so doing, they strengthen their programs' **authenticity** and **relevance**.

They can start to foster **dynamic lifelong learning communities** and broader networks, where the learning relationship can continue beyond the conclusion of a degree program.

How connected are our students?

Despite the centrality of professional relationships to employability, the **fellowship's 2016 survey of 192** 2nd and 3rd year students across multiple disciplines in two Australian universities shows that students are **not at all well connected into professional networks.**

Survey Results

- **8/10** — 8 in 10 **do not have** an up-to-date **Linkedin** profile
- **60%** — 60% **do not think** of any of their **teachers** as being industry active
- **80%** — 80% **do not have** an **online portfolio** of their work of any kind
- **30%** — On average they had met one employer in their field/s of interest (most often a WIL employer), and **30% have met 0 employers**
- **93%** — 93% **wanted more information** about how to improve their **networks** and **networking skills** for professional purposes
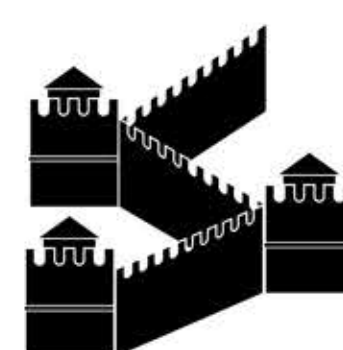- **12%** — 82% are on Facebook every day, but **only 12%** use social media regularly **for professional purposes**
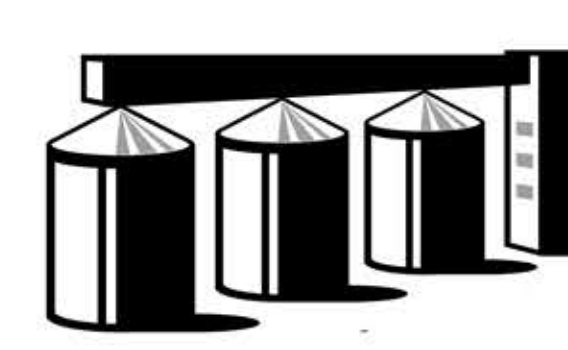
Random sample of 192 2nd and 3rd year undergranduate students across all faculties and disciplinary areas. n=192

How connected are our universities?

From 51 interviews across 34 institutions, **two core metaphors** emerged:

The university as a walled garden, keeping learning, learners and resources on the inside, and the rest of the world outside

The university as a group of silos, where learners, programs, staff and organisational areas are separate and do not communicate or collaborate

Universities are becoming more connected, but we continue to struggle with:

- Moving beyond the ad hoc to more strategic, joined up, larger scale
- Top down vs bottom up, centralised vs decentralised policies and practices
- Basic stakeholder engagement (internal and external)
- Resource allocation and management
- Responsive, personal engagement (bureaucracy, forms, generic email ad dresses)
- Implementing effective, agile risk management

## What has the fellowship achieved so far?

Through **analysis of more than 70 interviews** with university representatives, industry and alumni, the fellowship has developed a theoretical model of connectedness learning, comprising: individual capabilities; learning and teaching approaches; and institutional enabling strategies for connectedness.

The fellowship has also developed:

- A series of **connectedness learning principles**
- An **educators' toolkit.** The toolkit can be used for program analysis and planning, either individually or through a whole-of-team workshop approach.
- Cases of exemplary educational practice.

The connectedness learning model

connectedness capabilities
connectedness pedagogies
enabling strategies
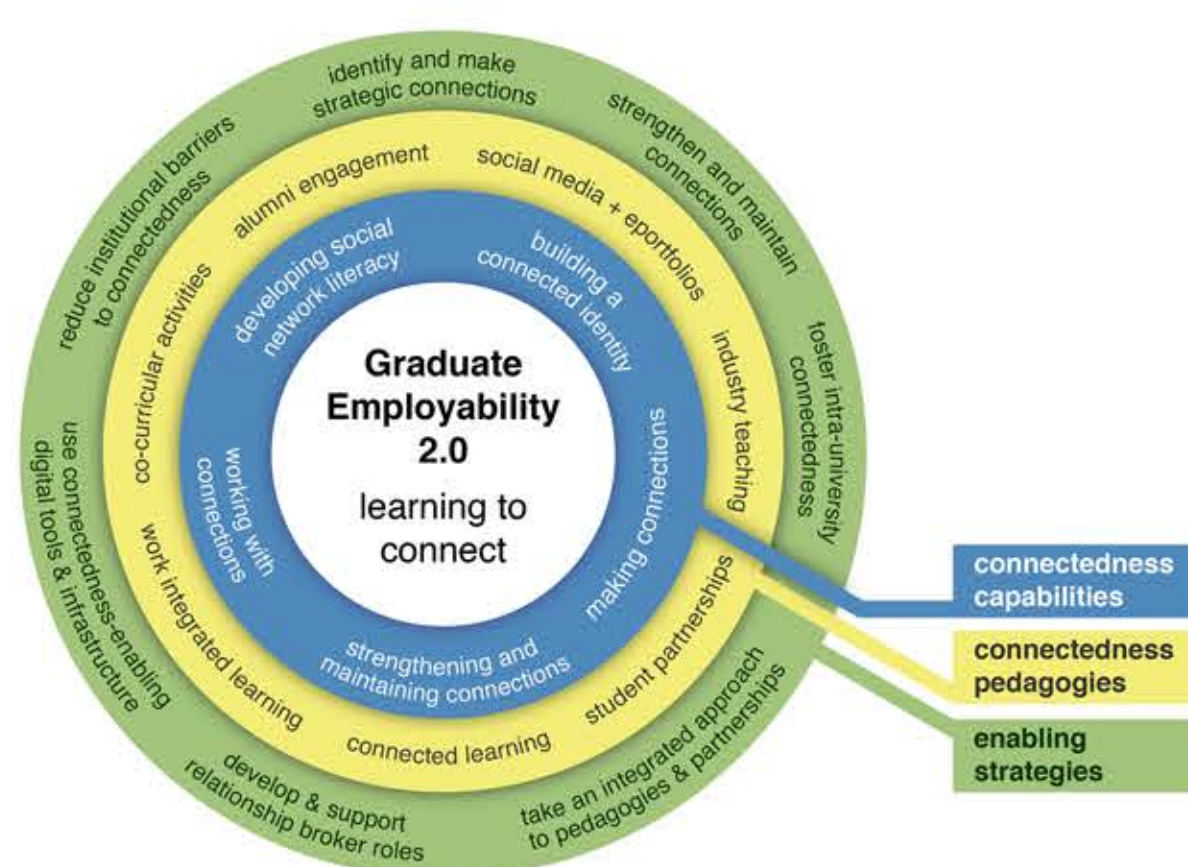
Phases

1 Higher education surveys (n=192 students) and interviews (n= 51, 34 Australian universities), case studies of practice – 9 graduates, 4 industry / recruiters, 10 higher education programs

2 Development of connectedness learning model and educators' toolkit. GE2.0 forum: 140 educators from 24 universities come together to test and refine the model and toolkit

3 Seminars & workshops at 20 universities around Australia

How can I get involved?

To get involved you can:

(1) Attend a workshop or presentation at your university

(2) Access the connectedness learning toolkit and resources, and join the community of practice

Details are available at **www.graduateemployability2-0.com**