

There Is No Silver Bullet: The Bronze, Silver and Gold Approach to Employability-Based Learning

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Abstract : Given many factors that influence graduate employment are beyond the control of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the graduate (e.g., labour market fluctuations), it is concerning that measures of success of employability-based learning (EBL) initiatives are often based on employment outcomes. Instead, the impact of EBL should be gauged by measures that include understanding how students respond to professional learning opportunities, how they critically evaluate their learning to identify relevance to their own circumstances, and how they draw from their learning to implement personalized career actions and develop their professional identity. It has been observed that identity development is synchronous with purposeful reflective practice whereby students 're-story' their experiences to evidence learning and capability. Given that HEIs are tasked to deliver highly personalized EBL at scale and within limited budgets, this is challenging to implement, and scholars, therefore, agree that there is no "silver bullet" approach to this complex issue. The Griffith Sciences Professional Learning for University Students (PLUS) initiative emphasizes purposeful reflective practice designed to empower students to 'make sense' of EBL activity to create connections between their experiences and their anticipated future careers. A qualitative study (portraiture methodology) was implemented to determine if the PLUS program is both bespoke and scalable. An analysis and overview of student experiences in the tiered PLUS program (Bronze, Silver and Gold achievement levels, including the creation of a Portfolio) will be provided to demonstrate the impact of reflective practice in a co-curricular employability program, including the effect on student motivation to implement career actions. The PLUS workbook will be showcased to evidence how leveraging the technological functionality available in a Personal Learning Platform (Pebble Pad) can enable both an individual and a scalable solution to EBL.

Keywords : employability-based learning, graduate outcomes, career readiness, reflective practice for identity development

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