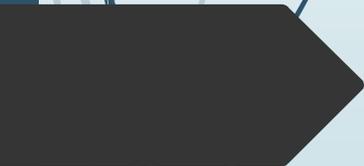


# Employability

Fiona Pavey



The  
Education  
& Training  
Foundation

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(emCETT)



# Rationale

## Media

“Firms need young people that are resilient, good communicators and understand how to work as part of a team.”

## Macrosystem - political climate

John Longworth  
Britain's Chambers  
of Commerce  
Director General  
(BBC News October 2014)



## Strategic Aims



Early Years Practitioner



A duality of professional understandings



FE and HE Lecturer

# Research Aims

- ▶ to gain greater understanding of skills for employability from the perspective of
  - ▶ The learner
  - ▶ The early years setting
  - ▶ Childcare lecturers/college practitioners
- ▶ to support the college strategic aim to
  - ▶ Inspire
  - ▶ Be ambitious
  - ▶ Respect
  - ▶ Support all learners
- ▶ To build and further strengthen relationships with the wider community
- ▶ Addition consideration given to how dispositions for how learning can be utilised to develop the learning environment including
  - ▶ Sustainability
  - ▶ Maths and English Skills
  - ▶ Reflective practice

# Findings and Research of Others

**Dispositions** can be considered to be learning to be a good thinker through 'learning to recognise and search for opportunities to apply one's capacities' (Carr 2001 p9).

Dispositions such as resilience, persistence and curiosity are seen to be supportive of lifelong learning as they are not constrained by curriculum, subject or age; as such they are seen to be a motivator in learning (NZME 2012).

'I realise that I am only interested in being a learner, preferably learning things that matter, that have some significant influence on my own behaviour'  
(Rogers 1967 p 267)

Pukelis et al (2007 cited Belt, Drake and Chapman 2010) add that there is no argument that educational institutions hold a large responsibility within the smooth integration of learners into professional life.

## Employability

Belt, Drake and Chapman (2010) define employability as the ability to be in employment, seeing the use and development of skills as a continual process. Yorke (2006 cited Saunders and Zuzel 2010) suggests that employability skills are 'a set of achievements-skills, understandings, and personal attributes'. Further STEMNET (2010) add employability skills can be considered to be transferable skills needed to become employable.

# Methodology

Action Research - Interpretivist

Value and respect the beliefs and feelings of all

Values, Beliefs and Principles

## Participants

- 42 learners initially
- 19 learners 2<sup>nd</sup> stage
- 24 settings
- 10 lecturers from Health, Care and Early Years

## Methods

- Learner and course documentation
- Questionnaires to
  - Settings
  - Lectures
- Dialogic interview
- Snapshot learner views

Multiple methods

Multiple perspectives

Triangulation

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

**drive** - The determination to get things done. Make things happen and constantly looking for better ways of doing things.

**communication** - The ability to get yourself, job opportunities and get noticed by potential employers. Ask to express your ideas clearly and confidently.

**time management** - To be able to manage your time effectively, be punctual to interviews to demonstrate that you can be on time for work.

# SKILLS Needed

**Confidence**  
Need to be able to be confident when working with others.

**Communication**  
Need to be able to talk to people to get things done.

**TEAMWORK**  
Need to work in a team to be able to achieve most things.

# COMMUNICATION

Use of technology!

HEY!

Fun & Enjoyment

Determination to overcome barriers.

Thought bubbles: Social life in Employment/FE in business, Party night!, Coffee on Friday breaks with friends!, Turned class into a party!

Text bubbles: I can do that without you!, I can't!

# ORGANISED

Skills to Progression!

# TEAM WORK

# PATIENT

# 3 SKILLS NEEDED TO SUPPORT PROGRESSION

**Organisation**

- To ensure you have the correct equipment at the right time.
- So that every thing is ready/prepared for when you next need it.

**Time keeping**

- On time
- Punctual
- Don't miss out on any important information

**Communication**

- To share important information with need to know people.
- To share ideas.
- Multi-agency working

# Life Skills

Knowledge & understanding

Shows that you respect others and value others opinions and that you know what you are doing.

Shows that you know what you are doing and makes a secure status and planning.

**organised**

Being organised shows you are committed to work or education.

I don't plan, I succeed because I can't plan effectively.

Communicate because I can communicate effectively.

# Initial findings

Top four skills in each area, fifth one highlighted in lecturers of initiative

| Skill/attribute  | Learners           | Setting | Lecturers | Total |
|------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Communication    | 26                 | 18      | 12        | 56    |
| Teamwork         | 9                  | 10      | 7         | 26    |
| Reliability      | 3                  | 12      | 8         | 23    |
| Practical skills | 5 – possible links | 11      | 5         | 21    |
| Initiative       |                    | 11      | 6         | 17    |
| Organised        | 6                  | 1       | 2         | 9     |
| Time-keeping     | 7                  | 1       |           | 8     |

Skills for research

No learners highlighted initiative

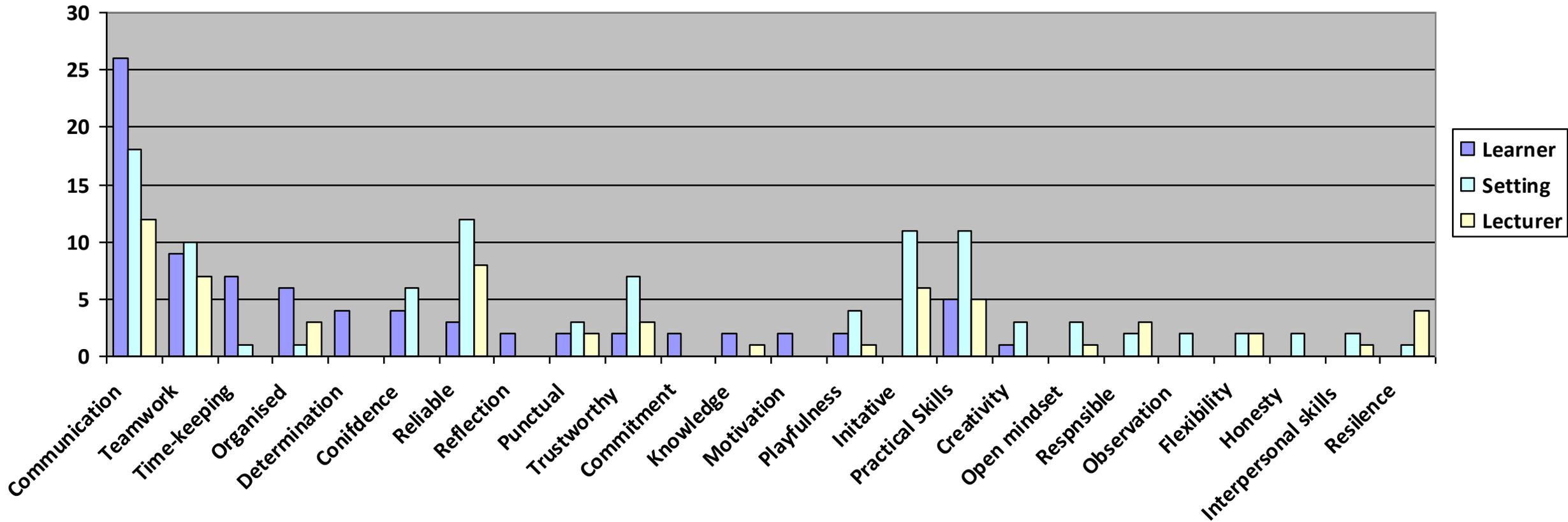
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# Intervention

- ▶ Stage One: Explicit learning objectives linking to employability
- ▶ Stage Two: Sessions on dispositions, mind-sets, resilience and initiative
- ▶ Stage Three: Initiative and reliability problem/prompt cards

# Findings and Outcomes

## Employability Skills



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# Findings and Outcomes

## **Themes**

- ▶ Experiential learning
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Being explicit and contextualised
- ▶ Challenge



# Experiential Learning

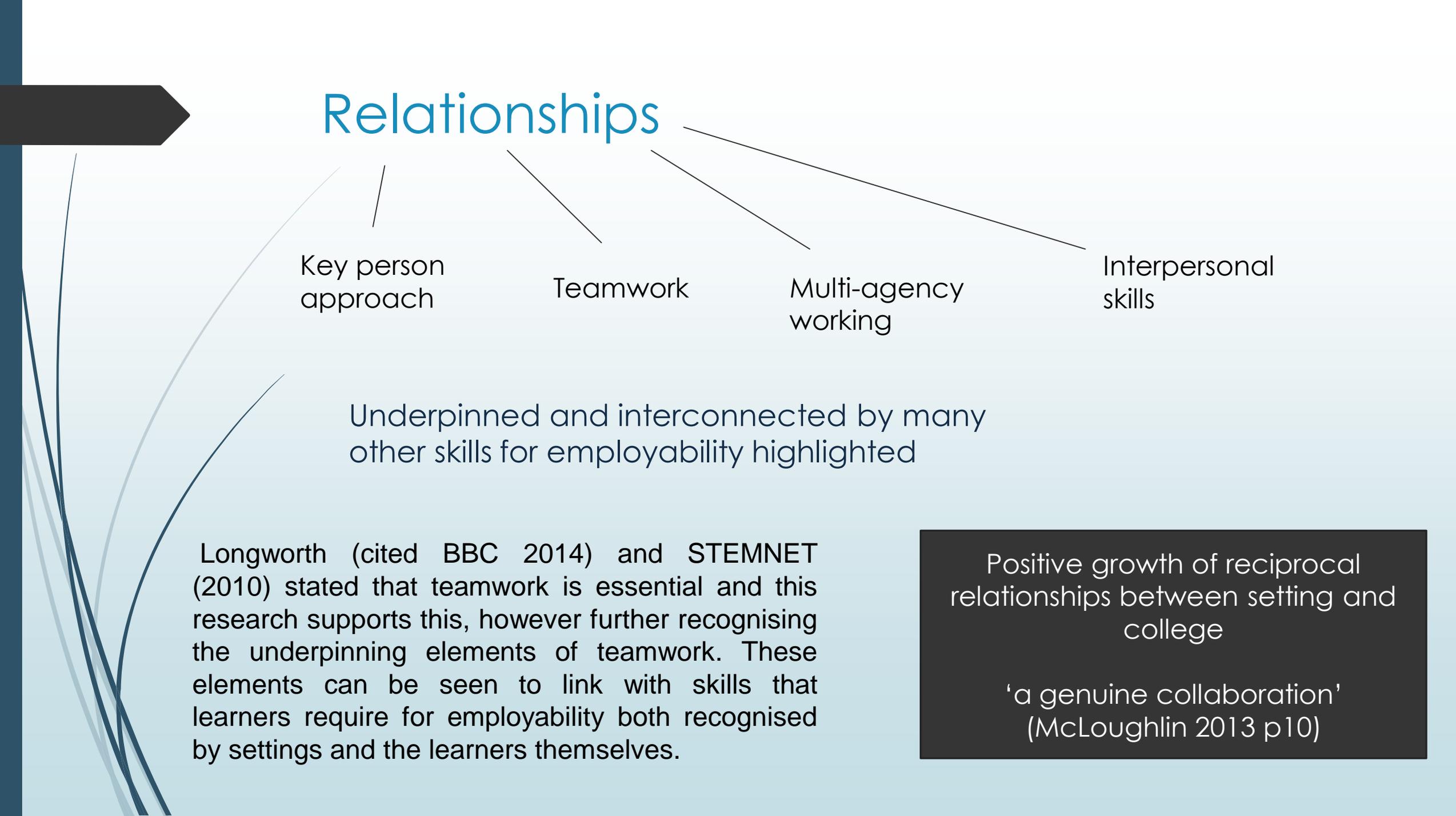
## Practical Skills

- Within the top four employability skills for lecturers and settings
- Learners consistently recognise the importance of practical learning

- Rationale for a practical, experiential methodology

This can be seen to be as Ravenscroft and Luhanga (2014 p143) suggest active contextualised learning that aims to support learners deeper thinking alongside employability.

# Relationships



Key person  
approach

Teamwork

Multi-agency  
working

Interpersonal  
skills

Underpinned and interconnected by many  
other skills for employability highlighted

Longworth (cited BBC 2014) and STEMNET (2010) stated that teamwork is essential and this research supports this, however further recognising the underpinning elements of teamwork. These elements can be seen to link with skills that learners require for employability both recognised by settings and the learners themselves.

Positive growth of reciprocal  
relationships between setting and  
college

'a genuine collaboration'  
(McLoughlin 2013 p10)



# Being Explicit and Contextualised

- ▶ As Cranmer (2006 cited Saunders and Zuzel 2010) suggested being explicit about employability has on reflection supported learners understanding of the value of different learning activities.
- ▶ Explicit objectives set at start of lesson and reviewed throughout linking with employability and employability skills
- ▶ Maths and practice challenges

**Increased learner motivation visibly**

# Challenge

► Learner sessions on:

- Mindsets
- Dispositions
- Resilience

Enabled learners to make links between themselves as learners and Early Years Provision

Determination

Change management

Open mindedness

Reflective practice

**Autonomous learning**

When learners are encouraged to take the challenge, within an emotionally contained learning space this disposition is encouraged.

Belt, Drake and Chapman (2010) suggest it is beneficial for learners setting boundaries and provision for their own meaning making

# Conceptual Framework

- Catalyst for change in practice
- Five Domains – Communication, Relationships, Well-being, Work readiness and habits, Thinking and learning
- Open to interpretation in and through the multi layered nature of reality
  - Not to be limited to the current skills but developed to be constantly current in reality
- A framework for reflection and feedback

| Communication                             | Relationships                 | Well-Being  | Work readiness and habits             | Thinking and learning |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Communication                             | Teamwork                      | Confidence  | Confidentiality                       | Determination         |
| Observation                               | Ability to make relationships | Compassion  | Reliability                           | Play                  |
| Writing skills                            | Equality                      | Fun         | Good judgement                        | Enabling environment  |
| Approachable to parents and practitioners | Trustworthy                   | Patience    | initiative                            | Open mindfulness      |
| Being able to smile                       | Interpersonal skills          | Flexibility | Practical skills relating to the role | Creativity            |
| Interact with children and adults         | Sociable                      | Honesty     | Punctuality                           | Problem solving       |
|   | Empathy                       | Resilience  | Time Keeping                          |                       |
|   |                               | Happy       | Responsible                           |                       |
|   |                               |             | Organisation                          |                       |

# Initiative

Most proactive student we've ever had

...used his initiative to engage the children.

- An unexpected skill for embedment
- Essential but can be considered to be instinctive
- Mapped under work readiness

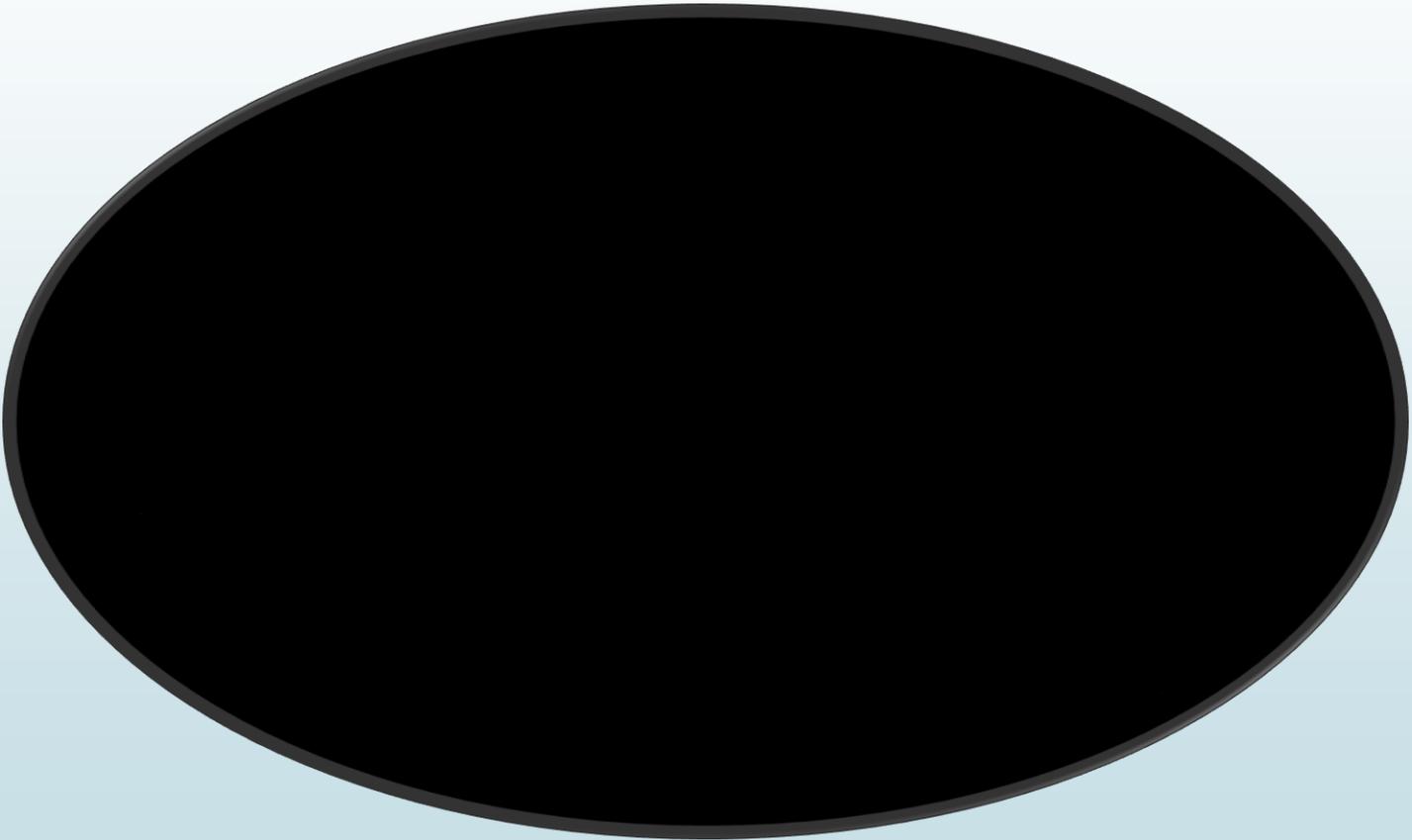
Underpinned by other skills such as self-confidence, resilience and problem solving

Can be considered to be dispositional or habit of mind

Shows the complexity of employability



Learners say...



Employers say...





# Conclusion and recommendations

- ▶ Skills for employability are essential for practice (these may have been referred to as different methodologies in the past)
- ▶ It is important to embed these through experiential, active contextualised learning
- ▶ Play is an important skill within Early Years education, learners should have the opportunity to break down the barriers and grow dispositions for learning
  
- ▶ Provide opportunities for experiential learning and possibility thinking
- ▶ Continue to develop the conceptual framework for reflection and feedback
- ▶ Develop a resource bank of initiative and reliability scenario cards
  - ▶ Have a progression of complexity in scenarios from paint pots to safeguarding

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