



Uncovering the qualities of a successful internship:
A longitudinal evaluation of internship-based
experiential education in the graphic arts

OUR STUDY

Exploratory study looking at some of the feedback provided by employers about interns over the last 5 years

AGENDA

Understanding hard skills, soft skills and emotional intelligence

1. A look at trends in employer demands
2. Discussion of the curricular impact
3. Recommendations
4. Group exercise



RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

We both teach in management studies

- Diana Brown is the internship coordinator and a management studies instructor
- Natalia Lumby is a management studies professor teaching internship preparedness



FRAMEWORK KEY TERMS

We wanted to understand the characteristics/skills that are necessary to have a successful internship

- Anecdotally we are often told that employers hire for attitude and train for skills

Hard skills: "those skills acquired through training and education or learned on the job and are specific to each work setting" (Arnett et al, 2004)

Soft skills: "the cluster of personality traits, social graces, language skills, friendliness, and optimism that mark each one of us to varying degrees" (Arnett et al, 2004)

Emotional Intelligence: "your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behaviour and relationships" (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009)

A LOOK AT TRENDS IN EMPLOYER DEMANDS

Used a word cloud to identify trends by coding 414 employee comments

- No significant differences existed from year to year
- Strong trends in both positive and negative feedback
- Employers identified that students have stronger technical skills than business skills

A LOOK AT TRENDS IN EMPLOYER DEMANDS: YEAR-TO-YEAR

Year	Traits
2008 (n: 85)	Team Player Quick Learner Technical
2009 (n: 65)	Team Player Quick Learner Willing
2010 (n: 86)	Team Player Professional Hard Working
2011 (n: 80)	Team Player Independent Hard Working
2012 (n: 98)	Professional Positive Willing

A LOOK AT TRENDS IN EMPLOYER DEMANDS: FIVE YEAR LOOK



A LOOK AT TRENDS IN EMPLOYER DEMANDS: AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT



DISCUSSION OF THE CURRICULAR IMPACT

Soft skills are attributed generally with hiring/job success

- Soft skills are often praised and required by employers (however, this is only once hard skills are in place)



RECOMMENDATIONS: THE SURVEY

The employer survey should change in order to better generate information about the soft skills and hard skills present and those that need work

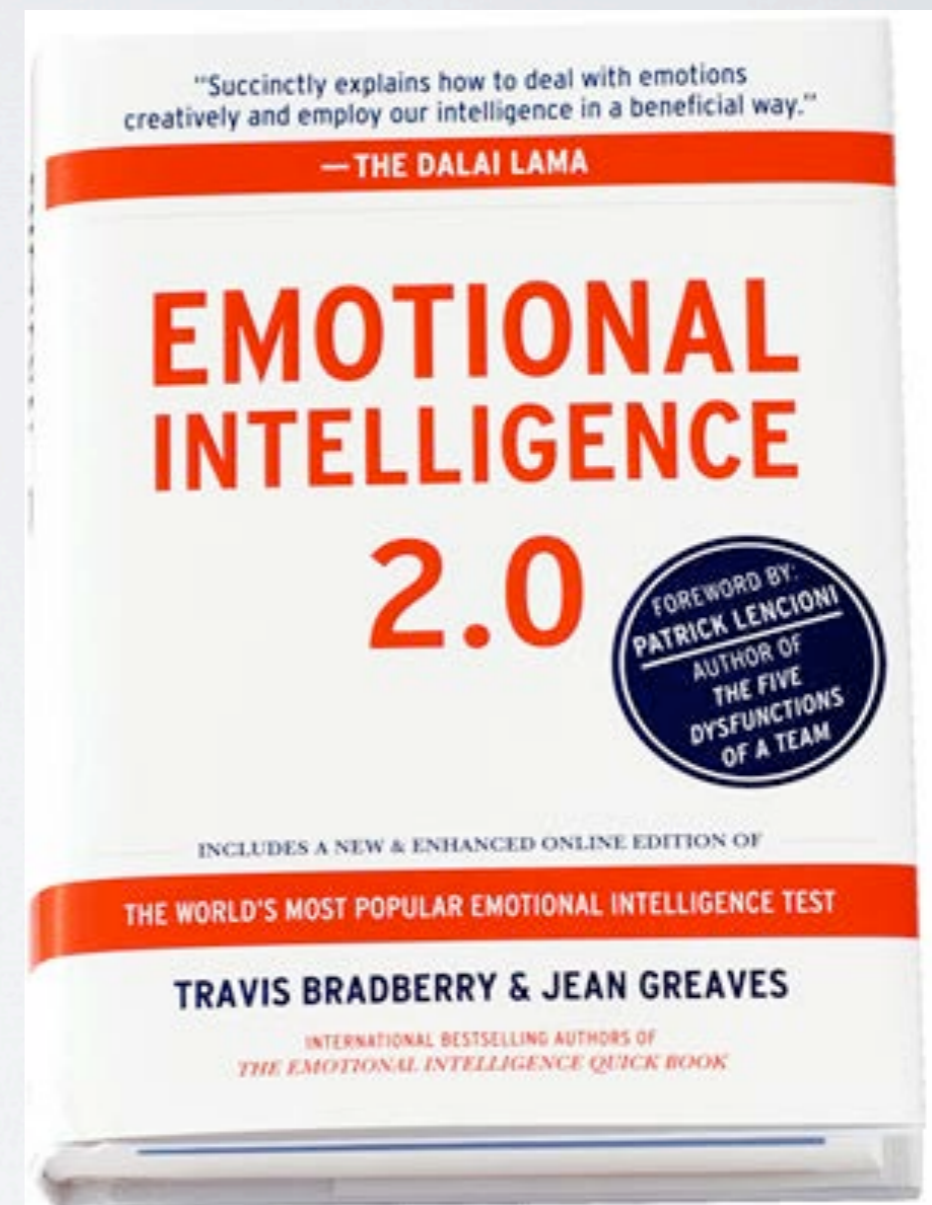
- Give employers a list of soft skills to rank on a Likert scale
- Prompt them to share what the intern could improve
- Better identify what is meant by technical and business skills using the soft/hard skills framework



RECOMMENDATIONS: THE CURRICULUM

Identifying key skills as learning outcomes to help ensure job readiness

- Example learning outcomes:
 - Works well independently and in interdisciplinary and diverse teams
 - Demonstrates a positive attitude, taking initiative and thinking proactively
- Use helpful resources to make these learning outcomes more measurable (Ex. *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Bradberry & Greaves, 2009)



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL EXERCISE

We're looking for hard-working, self-starting team players able to adapt quickly!

You are lost in the wild! Answer the following questions:

1. You have strayed from your party in trackless timber. You have no special signaling equipment. The best way to attempt to contact your friends is to:
 - a. call "help" loudly but in a low register
 - b. yell or scream as loud as you can
 - c. whistle loudly and shrilly
2. You are in snake country. Your best action to avoid snakes is to:
 - a. make a lot of noise with your feet
 - b. walk softly and quietly
 - c. travel at night
3. The day becomes dry and hot. You have a full canteen of water (about one litre) with you. You should:
 - a. ration it about a cupful a day
 - b. not drink until you stop for the night and then drink what you think you need
 - c. drink as much as you think you need, when you need it

WILDERNESS SURVIVAL EXERCISE DEBRIEFING



THANK YOU!

Are there any questions?

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Everyone Makes a Mark

