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Empowered Growth: Integrating LifeComp Framework and LinkedIn Learning in Postgraduate Professional Development



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Abstract

This article explores the integration of the LifeComp Framework and LinkedIn Learning within the ENSI585 Professional Development module at Lancaster University Management School. By aligning these tools with the CareerEDGE model, the module fosters key employability skills, including self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and career development learning. We evaluate the effectiveness of this structured yet flexible approach and inquire into the uptake of LinkedIn learning, longer term engagement with the learning materials and students' overall module feedback.

Keywords

Professional development, employability, reflective practice

Introduction

In an evolving job market, postgraduate students must develop personal and professional competencies alongside technical expertise to enhance employability. Therefore, higher education institutions should prioritise career development and embed employability strategies in the taught experience (Abelha et al, 2020; Artress & Hooley, 2018; Cook et al, 2021) to deliver skilled graduates into the labour market (Healy et al, 2023).

The ENSI585 Professional Development module embeds Lancaster University's Graduate Attributes, which emphasise Professional Excellence, supporting students' career progression through structured learning and reflective practice. Initially, the module focused on career-related outputs such as CVs, personal statements, or mock assessment centre attendance. With the introduction of the LifeComp Framework, developed by the European Commission (2020), focusing on key competences for lifelong learning, we have been able to offer a holistic approach to employability development. In addition, students have been provided with an

integrated LinkedIn learning digital education platform designed to foster transformational growth by merging structured competency development with personalised learning opportunities.

This article evaluates changes implemented with one cohort of 124 postgraduate students in the Entrepreneurship and Strategy department. Our focus is on engagement with LinkedIn Learning and students' ability to connect digital material to their professional development needs.

Fostering a Lifelong Learning Mindset

ENSI585 builds on the Lancaster endorsed CareerEDGE model (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007) that provides a structured framework for employability, emphasising career development learning, practical experience, subject knowledge, transferable skills, and emotional intelligence. The model encourages students to understand themselves as part of their graduate readiness. The LifeComp Framework complements the focus on self that is fronted in the CareerEDGE model and encourages students to focus outwards towards navigating social relationships and preparing their future life-long learning strategies.

LifeComp includes competencies like self-regulation, adaptability, resilience, and communication, all critical in today's dynamic work environments (European Commission, 2020). It extends beyond traditional employability models, supporting identity formation and career direction (Artress & Hooley, 2018). By embedding LifeComp within ENSI585, students develop the reflective practices necessary for personal and professional growth.

Personalised Learning

A key component of the module is a self-assessment exercise and reflective log, guiding students in identifying their personal strengths and areas for improvement. This structured reflection supports those unfamiliar with reflective practices, providing actionable insights to enhance professional growth. It also encourages the tailoring and ownership of their learning, moving beyond a transactional knowledge exchange from one teacher to multiple students.

Given the challenges brought about heterogenous cohorts at the postgraduate taught level, and the variety of professional development needs this brings, an innovative and personalised approach needed to be taken ([Artress & Hooley, 2018](#)). To achieve this, we mapped LinkedIn Learning content to the LifeComp framework enabling a wide and varied selection of resources students can opt for.

LinkedIn Learning, a digital education platform with over 23,000 expert-led courses ([LinkedIn, 2025](#)), offers students access to high-quality professional development resources. Within ENSI585, students engage with up to five hours out of nineteen hours of curated content aligned with the three LifeComp areas:

- **Personal:** Strength identification, emotional intelligence, cover letter writing.
- **Social:** Communication, leadership, business etiquette.
- **Learning to Learn:** Growth mindset, flexible thinking, problem-solving.

Through the combination of structured reflection and a curated LinkedIn Learning Pathway, the module emphasises individual and personal development to empower students. As part of the module, students present their LinkedIn Learning through a poster session, providing an opportunity to share resources.

A key feature of ENSI585 is the live panel session with Leaders and Entrepreneurs in Residence, where professionals share their experiences and reflect on their life competences. This session

demonstrates the practical application of the framework, inspires students, and emphasises the importance of lifelong development.

Implementation Review Methodology

To review the implementation of the new module pedagogy, four datasets were collected. First, three in-class surveys were conducted during live teaching sessions, which captured the confidence levels of students across the LifeComp areas at various stages of the module. Second, sixty-six reflective essay submissions provided valuable data. These reflective student accounts mapped the LinkedIn Learning resources to LifeComp, exploring the value to their own learning and personal development. Third, we collated student usage data from LinkedIn Learning, including hours and timings of use. Last, we compared module evaluation scores from 22/23 and 23/24 academic years.

Student Development & Reflections

The in-class surveys - conducted at the start, mid-point, and end - provided students with a clear trajectory of their personal and professional growth. From these surveys, we can see the students demonstrated competency development across all nine LifeComp strands. In the final review survey, communication was the most improved skill (56%). This was supported by the essays, which showed a noticeable course taken by a high proportion of students was 'Communicating with Emotional Intelligence'. The essays reveal that students engaged with this course to "strike a balance between empathy and accountability", and "read and understand the perspectives of others". The two next most improved skills were growth mindset (50%) and self-regulation (46%). Interestingly, self-regulation was rated one of the most difficult to understand areas of LifeComp in the mid-point survey. This demonstrates how students have engaged with LinkedIn Learning to enhance their own understanding and prioritise development in this area.

The essays highlight students predominantly engaged with resources they mapped to the personal area. The two most prominent courses in this area, 'Discovering Your Strengths' and 'Leading Yourself', show a commitment to self-awareness and individual development. One student reflected that the 'Discovering Your Strengths' course helps them to "optimise their performance and achieve their goals". Another reflected it enabled them to "find out what I love to do and how to identify my core skills". This establishes the new pedagogy as more transformative, and LinkedIn Learning as an ideal accompaniment to enable tailored and personalised learning.

Overall, the students rated LinkedIn Learning 4.48 out of 5. Whilst only 38% said that they had browsed the platform and completed content that was not on the curated Pathway, 90% stated that they would continue to use the platform after the module ended. Analysis undertaken in February 2025 to track users' activity on the platform found that 90% had used the platform after module completion, and 81% had used it for 30 minutes or more. The highest total was thirty hours. The module evaluation score rose from 3.0 in 22/23 to 4.2 23/24, with comments praising the approach and saying how valuable it had been.

Conclusion

The integration of LifeComp and LinkedIn Learning in ENSI585 has demonstrated a successful model for postgraduate professional development. By fostering self-reflection, digital learning engagement, and structured competency development, the module equips students with the skills and mindset necessary for lifelong employability. It demonstrates the value of

transformational careers support, going beyond the transactional ‘how to get a job’ and ‘how to write a great CV’ to instead achieve empowered growth and foster lifelong learning.

To support future module convenors in replicating this approach, the module resources have been compiled into an online practice guide (Newton, Scrivener & Holgate, 2025). This guide offers a platform for comparing our methodology with that of other adopters, facilitating a broader understanding of its implementation and effectiveness.

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Author Profile

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