

SimVenture can help to develop Employability skills in Further Education and Higher Education



SimVenture is extensively used to support the learning & teaching of the subject matter of 'Business Education' but by deploying the software in a range of ways it can be equally effective in creating the context for skills based learning.

The extract below is taken from the CBI - Higher Education website (<http://highereducation.cbi.org.uk/>). It outlines the key Employability Skills that they have identified in collaboration with employers.

The italicised additions explain how SimVenture can support effective learning & teaching in this respect.

For reference, the specific page can be found at <http://highereducation.cbi.org.uk/policy/employability/what-are-employability-skills/>

What are employability skills?

Employability skills have been defined after extensive collaboration with business by the CBI. They are a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy.

Employability skills include:

Self-management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning.

The process of developing a virtual business within SimVenture, at an appropriate level of challenge, will require learners to deploy all of these skills and will be enhanced by working in groups. Improving own performance, particularly through reflective practice is central to the design of the SimVenture and the custom tools within the software allow teachers to provide guidance, explanation and challenge to facilitate this process.

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Teamworking – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.

Using SimVenture with teams, as a PC or paper based case study, provides a dynamic context within which learners can apply, explore and develop this set of skills.

Business and customer awareness – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty

Customer orientation is a central principle upon which success within the simulation is dependent. The software also allows learners to explore the relationship between the key elements of business success in a dynamic and interactive way.

Problem solving – analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.

SimVenture is essentially a dynamic problem creator. It can be used to explore specific issues or to simulate the range and complexity of problems which typically arise for businesses in the real world. The software also provides extensive information and data to facilitate analysis, evaluation, report writing and strategic planning.

Communication and literacy – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy - including listening and questioning.

By developing activities using simulated businesses as 'case studies' a wealth of opportunity can be provided for learners to produce plans, reports, analysis, presentations, and documentation relating to a range of contexts.

Application of numeracy – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae).

The wealth of data, with varying levels of complexity, generated within SimVenture can be presented to learners from within the simulation, printed out to provide paper based resources or exported to spreadsheet for analysis and manipulation.

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Application of information technology – basic IT skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines.

This set of skills can be applied appropriately to many of the contexts outlined above.

Underpinning all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a **positive attitude**: a 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen. Employers also value **entrepreneurial graduates** who demonstrate an innovative approach, creative thinking, bring fresh knowledge and challenge assumptions.

By presenting learners with a range of contexts, alternating between focused/applied activities and managing the level of challenge teachers can present learners with a whole range of activities to help them develop in these areas.

For more information visit The Learning Zone at www.simventure.cu.uk