



**Programme: BA (Hons) Leadership and Management
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Tasks 1 and 2

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Executive summary

A brief discussion of Critical thinking using the R.E.D Model to delineate how one can think critically.

My report is based on British Airways, the favourite transportation company in the United Kingdom. The company is 100 plus years in service with more than 30,000 dedicated workers, As well as handling air freight, the company flies passengers and cargo to a multitude of world destinations.

I chose to write my report on BA as my partner has been working there for more than 3 years and was thus able to give me valuable insights into the issues.

My discussion will focus on flight attendants and the impact of critical thinking on their beliefs, attitudes and values.

I will also discuss the application of certain principles of management theory to help me arrive at my conclusions.

My recommendations from my findings are intended to assist the flight attendants to tackle the challenges they face post-Covid and developing a positive a practical mindset for the future.

The Second part of my report will cover a Reflective Journal of all my learning sessions and Lectures from week 1 to week 9 using Gibbs Reflective Method.

PART 1. REPORT

Introduction: What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is a way of thinking which helps one to arrive at quality judgments with the ability to evaluate current situations and problems, taking in emotions, rationale and intelligence of those involved.

To succeed in an increasingly complex workplace, a person would benefit from a method of heightened reasoning.

How can one think critically?

One can think critically by following some of the suggested steps/stages from the RED Model - Recognize Assumption. One can sit through and listen to the end with no proof but by recognizing assumption one can differentiate fact from opinion.

The next stage is to Evaluate Argument - a way of speaking to convince a person to act in a certain way. One must be able to look at the facts regarding what the person is speaking about; to break it down and look carefully and separate emotion from fact as emotion can cloud good judgment.

Drawing Conclusion is the last of the model - following the facts available to one. If one gains possession of this ability, one will arrive at the correct conclusion and gain a reputation for having good judgement.

In the current time with high inflation and high cost of living, leaders with Critical Thinking attitudes question past assumptions; they think in the context of the present, with today's realities, and in doing so they make smarter decisions even in a challenging situation. (Davis, 2013)

It was very important to learn the principles in this module It has improved my Critical Thinking abilities considerably. I used to think that because everyone had the right to their own opinion, I believed what they were saying. I only questioned them if I thought they said something absurd.

Now I look at a situation differently. I do not just believe what I am being told. I now ask questions about the issue before concluding.

1. The organisation British Airways in the context of my report.

BA Gatwick is part of British Airways Plc, situated in the Gatwick South Terminal. It is a subsidiary of the International Airlines Group and is a worldwide airline company carrying passengers and cargo.

The company has a loyalty service program called the Avios Award points, which frequent flyers use to gain points and redeem travel, hotel stay and car rentals.

To save costs, BA Gatwick has an in-house Engineering Maintenance team that manages the repairs and maintenance of the aircraft. Some of their services include baggage handling, managing passengers and flight schedules.

British Airways recorded total revenue of passenger kilometres of 39,118 million and available seat miles of 63,725 million. Market Line: Business Description page 1 (BA 2022)

Unlike EasyJet airline whose revenue of passenger kilometres of 84,874 and the available Seat miles is 97,287. With the return of passengers' flights, EasyJet made an increment of 259% as of this year compared to 2021 during the pandemic 23,594. (EasyJet 2022)

Importance of critical thinking within the organization regarding the Covid-19 lockdown situation

During the nationwide Covid 19 lockdown, BA laid off some 10,000 employees in the spring and summer of 2020. Due to the hardship the company faced, the remaining staff had to accept lower wages and demotions. Some staff had to accept a 35 percent drop in pay to keep their job. The National (2021)

Most of the long-term staff were made redundant to save liquidity in the company. Sharon Graham, General Secretary of Unite the Union, argued that the rehiring plan showed “there was never any need to sack thousands of dedicated BA staff”. She accused BA of conducting an “abhorrent practice of fire and rehire”. She said it caused a “deplorable level of insecurity” for staff and that the company should find a way to increase reassurance in job protection.

2. Discuss and analyse the difference between beliefs, attitudes and values within the workplace context.

At British Airways Gatwick the core belief is that passengers arrive in a relaxed and happy frame of mind at their chosen destination. Customer Relations plays a vital role, particularly when there are unavoidable delays. The employees come from diverse backgrounds and places and are therefore well-equipped to deal with international passengers. BA provides training for managers, supervisors and new employees. They encourage innovation and team building with appropriate workshops.

The company attitude is that all customers should be treated fairly and with respect whether they are flying Economy class or First Class. All customers are valued customers. They are seen as part of the mechanism which makes up a complete workplace system. Without the customer, the company does not exist.

BA teamed up with selected partners and sponsors such as Paramount+ streaming service (iconic drama, action, reality shows, comedies and shows for kids).

The Airline is also proud to be an official airline partner to England Rugby (Men's team) and Women's Red Roses team.

BA teamed up with the makers of Dettol, to keep customers safe and protected while on the journey. It has been very useful to have this partnership with them since the Covid-19 situation.

They also teamed up with The White Company to bring luxury bedding and amenity kits to their Club World cabin.

By comparison, EasyJet's Beliefs, Attitudes and Values are quite different. As a short-haul airline, their concern is to just fly you to your destination with no frills but their passengers have to pay for all extras such as food and luggage space. Critical Thinking would lead one to conclude that the BA flight would end up costing the same with more comfort and less strain.

3. Critically assess my beliefs, attitudes and values systems and their impact on workplace behaviour during the pandemic.

The impact of the country-wide pandemic lockdown was hard on everyone. Most UK employees were on six months paid leave.

How will tailoring workplace changes for the post – Covid mindset tackle the challenges we face now and create a more resilient business in the future?

BA has a strong market position and brand image in the UK. Most people want to fly BA. They are the largest international airline in the UK. They have won many awards such as for the Best Airport Lounge, the Best Frequent Fly Programme, Best New Seat and Best Travel App.

The pandemic caused great uncertainty in the airline business. BA was under great pressure to restore its services and reputation. The company was forced [] to reduce flights across the world, [] to evaluate the staffs they had and their contribution [] to reduce work schedules where necessary.

BA had to constantly monitor the market in terms of where they could fly to and adapt to changing conditions in different countries.

As the lockdown eased, they slowly increased the number of flights and began recruiting more staff, also asking some of the staff that was let go to come back on certain conditions.

The workplace was not the same; staff had to wear facemasks and/or hygiene gloves, and they had to be two feet apart from each other. (O'Callaghan, 2021)

If staff had Covid like symptoms, they were asked to stay at home for two weeks which meant more workload for the few left at work. As more restrictions were lifted staff did not have to stay at home even if they had Covid like symptoms.

THREATS: Even though the worst is over peoples' mindsets and some of the challenges are still with us. At BA the number of people in a certain area was reduced, like the lounges, and the number of people on the flight was reduced so that passengers are not sitting close to each other. As a result, the flight fare increased significantly. Making it difficult for families and friends to travel for holidays. Even though most of the Covid restrictions have been relaxed and more people are now travelling, the increased airfares have not been reduced. The airline market is somewhat nervous and unpredictable. Customer service staff and customers are in a sensitive mood. BA faces stiff competition from other airlines as passengers continually shop around for the best deal.

Some challenges and solutions for a more resilient business future:

- Fewer seats on planes to increase space between passengers.
 - Retain more employees so that the airline can still function.
 - Have open-plan sustainable buildings with good ventilation.
 - Instal air purifiers to maintain clean airflow.
 - Add more workplace-friendly spaces where employees can step away from the office desk into a more relaxing space to continue working.
 - Employ more international staff to increase the number of customer services personnel and improve the quality of customer relations.
- (O'Callaghan, 2021)**

4. A Critical assessment of an appropriate management theory to evaluate how someone with different beliefs, attitudes and values might interpret the theory differently.

Management Theory:

I will be using the Scanlon Plan in discussing this section. Scanlon believed that an organisation would profit if it could manage and adopt suggestions from its employees on the basis that it is right that ideas come from the employees because they are mostly the ones on the ground doing the job, so they know where the company needs improvement. He further stated that the organisation would flourish and in turn be able to reward the employees accordingly.

The steps to this theory:

- Suggestions provided by employees to department heads.
- Suggestions made that can improve production.
- Department heads move to the next step with suggestions.
- A meeting will be held with the workforce and the management.
- Management will examine the suggestions and devise methods to adopt those that will lead to improved productivity.
- Management will periodically review and evaluate employee performance and devise and recommend appropriate rewards.

The goals of the Scanlon Plan

- Consistency of stability in the labour-management relations
- Concern with the interaction of the workers and management
- Employers allowing the employees to contribute to the improvement of the organisation as a result of their shared values, belief and attitudes and cultures, all working in synchronization to gain a common purpose.

(Team, 2015)

A belief is a feeling that something is true, even though that belief is not certain or logical. For example, I believe that seeing a black cat at night is a sign of a bad omen. (Anderson & De Silva, 2009) Values is what something means to a person. Attitude is how a person shows their belief and articulates their values. A persons' emotion is how the behave in a certain situation depending on the present situation, it is momentary.

Scientific management theory method. 1910-1935

They approached the different sections of organisations using the science of observation, for example, observing the employees and how they behaved in the workplace, how fast they worked at a given time, and what made them produce more at a given time. They also examined the job manager and how they treated the employees.

Unlike the Scanlon Plan, the Scientific method believes that a workplace works best by defining the administrative roles:

- **The jobs should be supervised**
- **That some people are best in some roles**
- **Continue to control the jobs and be pushed to get the job done**
- **Establish and maintain a top-down hierarchy employment structure.**
- **The workers are encouraged by “high wages” (Henry Gantt)**

Although the outcome was a surprising increment in production by the workers, they were not happy about it and this led to the start of unionism because the workers were made to work like machines rather than human beings. The employers just wanted the job done and did not care how it was done, while the workers wanted to maintain their individuality making them more cooperative and productive employees. (Team, 2015)

The Scientific method believed that money was the main motivation for work so there was no purpose for employers and managers to be attentive to the values, attitudes and emotions of employees. Indeed they believed that there was no place for this in the workplace. Work structures were made to fit this approach and some American companies still operate this way for example: If the workers do not like the job, they can leave without notice or employers can sack them without notice. All they want is for the employees to do their job and get paid at the end of the month.

5. Apply some critical thinking models.

In this section, I will discuss a few conceptual tools for managing Critical Thinking about the workplace and life, the advantages, and the disadvantages.

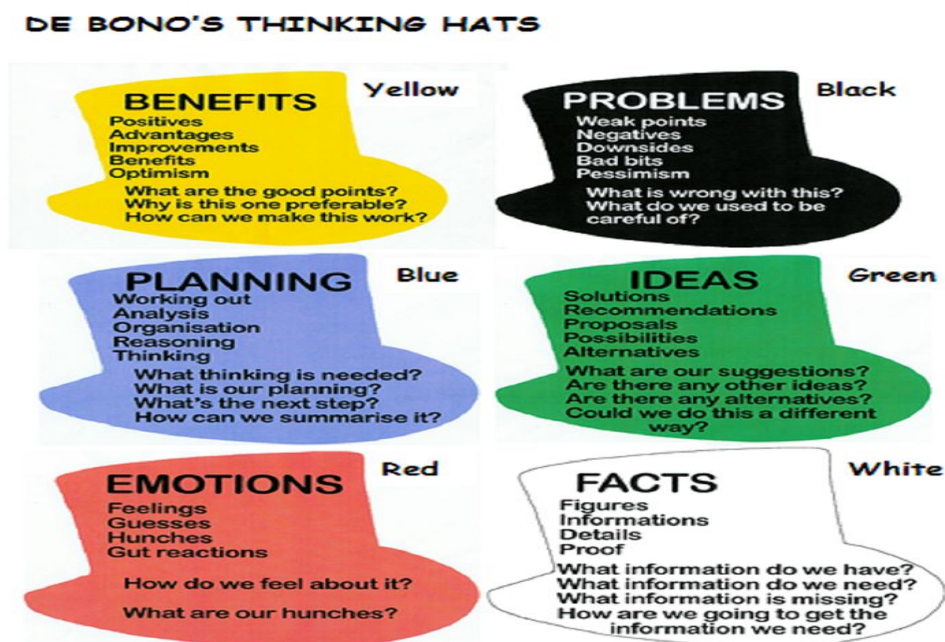


Diagram: 001

DE BONO'S 6 Thinking Hats Model. Mulder, P. (2016)

The method was invented by Dr Edward De Bono in the 1980s. It was used in organizations and big companies to **ENHANCE THINKING** and make good decisions and get constructive results when applied. The Thinking Method is divided into 6 coloured symbolic hats so each team can take each of the roles to manage a situation. Each team wearing the suggested hat can examine their thought to solve the situation. It can also be used by an individual who is trying to solve a problem in decision-making. The individual uses the different thinking hats, wearing one at a time, to look at the problem from the different points of the role of the thinking hat, brainstorm and resolve the problem.

- **The White Hat:** Attentive to the information at hand, see if there is any data missing from the details they have, and compare what details they have currently to the past details they had.
- **The Red Hat:** Here the team would pay attention to a problem that could arise from instinct or feelings. They expect questions or comments from the team members.
- **The Black Hat** points out all the weak spots of the project. The role of this hat is to foresee any issues with the project before they occur; to prepare for any unwanted situation. They are like the backup system of the team making it stronger.
- **The Yellow Hat:** This team encourages the rest of the group to be hopeful towards the project, to see the value of what they are doing, and to empower them to be stronger.
- **The Green Hat:** they create and give answers, try to solve the problem are open-minded, they suggest different ways to solve the problem.

- **The Blue Hat:** The Blue Hat team try to keep the project operational so that every team is on the role applied to them and doing their part and working to achieve the end goal. The hat could be led by the heads of the departments they would liaise with the Green hat, the Black hat when need be or other hats to see how the project is going.

Advantages of the 6 Thinking Hats

- Increase teamwork and create workplace culture within the organisation
- Project plans work well and more effectively covering all the aspects so more resilient.
- Provides coordination and good structure

Disadvantages of the 6 Thinking Hats

- The model can be time-consuming
- The model not applied according to the steps will not get the expected result
- There can be a conflict with the group while applying the model.

(Mulder, 2022)

Recommendations

Management theory

Management principle was established to manage workers

Human Relation Approach

An Australian psychologist, Elton Mayo, initiated the human relation theory. He carried out a lot of tests in the 1920s at the Hawthorne Plants.

The upcoming approach to management was also known as Taylorism. The concept was that humans were machines. Mayo conducted several experiments and concluded that humans are individuals and are not machines. Everyone has their own needs. He also deduced that given the chance, employees like to change; that they needed to be understood by the managers and that it was important to maintain the social framework of the organisation and of the team.

Pros of the Human Relations Theory

Employees are more committed and work harder if they know they are valued. They feel secure and contribute more to the innovation of the organization.

Cons of Human Relations Theory

It is agreeable that the human relations priorities in happy employees about the other Management model disapprove of the model stating that it is another way to control the workers.

It was also believed that Hawthorne Experiment are not factually proven and not widely done. Sintelly (2021)

Hawthorne Studies 1924-1932

In the late 1920s, there were a lot of questions regarding the effectiveness of workers. To answer these questions Hawthorne experimented with a large manufacturing plant. He lit up the workspace so that it was very bright to observe how the workers performed and then severely dimmed the light and observe any difference in worker performance.

The discovery of the experiment :

The workers were more productive in the well-lit space than in the dimly lit space. However, after a while of working in the bright light, the workers drifted back to a slower speed of production. E. Mayo (1920)

The conclusion was that the workers' behaviour towards the job changed more because of the attention given to them by the management than because of the working conditions.

Conclusion

It is key to learning Critical Thinking because it is an integral part of our everyday lives, we apply critical thinking everywhere we are workplace, in colleges, in schools, and shops.

Organisations should use the management theories which best comply with their system structure and to increase workplace culture there, are decision-making models they, can use to resolve situations.

Part 2. Reflective Journal

Introduction to my Reflective Journal

I am using Gibbs reflective cycle to discuss my journal. The cycle was developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988 to give structure to learning from experience. It shows how to analyse experiences letting the user learn and plan from things that either went well or did not.

Gibbs Reflective Cycle.

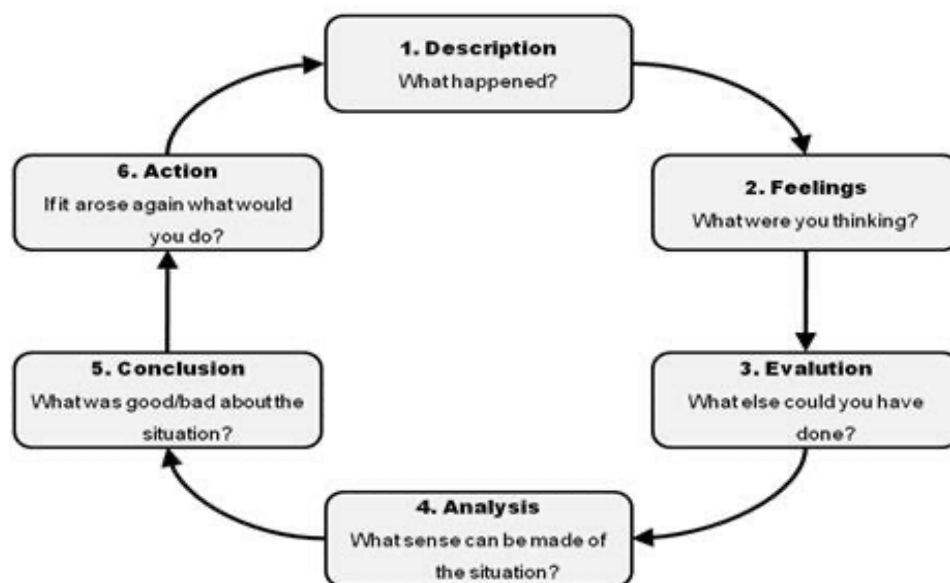


Diagram: 002. (Gibbs, 1988)

Week 1.

We discussed how to identify and agree on a specific organizational context in which I can apply Critical Thinking and evaluation in the context of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values applying some Management Theories.

I learnt that some of these theories are still in use because of their effectiveness. e.g. The Contingency Management Theory.

Week 2.

I learnt how to think critically, how to ask a critical question, how not to assume that what someone says is necessarily factual, and to do my research.

I learnt the different areas one can apply critical thinking to, like at home, at college, in a relationship and on social media. A person can questions like, 'Why?' 'How is it possible?' 'How is it right?' 'How is it wrong?'

I now understand that thinking Critically energizes one's thinking. It is creatively positive and opens a subject to new opportunities. It can also be challenging when dealing with a difficult or puzzling situation.

After reading the RED Model I understand there is no right or wrong. It is about looking at all relevant data and arriving at a logical conclusion.

Week 3.

Here we learnt more about the importance of Critical Thinking and that critical thinker are curious, rational, brave, and self-sufficient. They test their own beliefs. They want to find out the truth.

We also learnt about the Scanlon Plan based on Human Relations Approach. My understanding of his approach is that employers should consult the employees about their jobs; what changes could be made to improve the work environment and lead to greater success and profits. (Cottrell, 2017)

Lastly, we looked at the Hawthorn studies of 1924-1932. I saw the transition from the classical approach to human relations and the Hawthorn Effect.

We covered team management programs like Scanlon and Just in Time Management theory. We did some class activity which was challenging, fun and rewarding.

Week 4.

From this lesson, I learnt how people can improve; how they can be properly prepared to solve problems and make decisions in the present business environment. I also learnt about the characteristics of a changing business environment and how it impacts the customer and how it affects the business supply chain and new products. A successful business sees change as an opportunity for innovation. It connects facts and ideas and experiences in creative thinking. It has the following attributes.

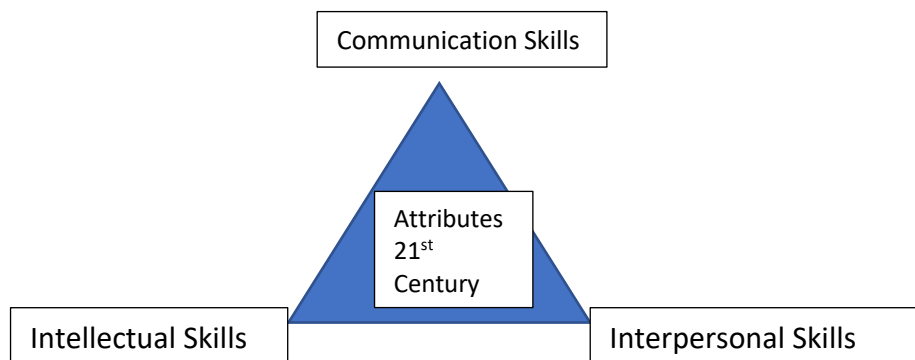


Diagram: 003

In the 1980s came the Scientific Management Theory. There were Management and the Foremen (also known as the middlemen) and Craft men workers. It was the beginning of trade unions. The workability and efficiency increased with the invention of more machinery.

(Hawthorne, 2015)

Some of the Management Theories include Frank and Lillian Gilbreth. They believed in following the rules and consistency in the workplace. The difference between Scientific Management and the Humanistic Approach.

Week 5.

Here we learnt various conceptual tools to enhance Critical Thinking such as the 6 Edward De Bono Thinking Hats, Function of Public Activities and Before Bureaucratic Management: Weber Max

I learnt how in 1980 Edward De Bono invented the Thinking Hats, each one focusing on ways to solve problems and improve the team in a workplace. We also learnt about the functions of Public Activities. If there is a problem in a workplace that an individual cannot solve, there is a government department which helps to resolve the issue. For example, we have the Taxation department, (HMRC), Police department, Army, Navy and Airforce. I learnt that their functions include rule of law and Judicial Control.

Week 6.

In this lesson, we learnt ways to use Critical Thinking Poles. We talked about how to develop Critical Thinking Skills and the Contingency Management Theory.

We discussed how an employee would take part in making decisions for their area of the workplace. A person using Critical Thinking to make decisions must observe both the positive and negative alternatives of the issue before choosing the right option for the company. I understand that it is best to follow the Decision-Making process to get the most positive result.

I also learnt about the Contingency Theory. It was a study done in the 1960s on the importance of the external and internal environment of an organization. Much of the study was about structure and how the command channels are laid

out. We used the PESTLE analysis Model to delineate how these factors affect the organization.

Week 7.

We did a class exercise on ‘Which came first, the Chicken or the Egg?’ which was not easy to answer but it was a fun mental challenge. In the end, I decided that the egg must come first, because of the evolution of one species of bird to another which it does by laying eggs.

I also learned about the System Theory which was invented in the 1940s by an Austrian Biologist Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy and furthered by Ross Ashby in 1964. The System Theory is a set of objects or elements that interact together to achieve a given goal. We all work in a type of system – structural, like road work, building houses, a functional system – a college department, a social system -a place of work and an information system - a school class system. We have a CLOSED system where there is no interaction between the components (for example a printer), and an OPEN System, there is an interaction between the components.

I understand from this lesson that if a system is too complex it is best to divide it into smaller parts for easy comprehension. We learnt about EQUIFINALITY; a principle and system where a person would get the same result by viewing or tackling the problem in different ways. I found this topic challenging and interesting and I would like to investigate it further. (Bertalanffy & Ashby, 1964)

Week 8.

We learnt about managing new ideas and creativity improvement in the workplace and environment; how two businesses can merge to create a great workplace and be more efficient in their products. We discussed where else one can sell their products and how a business can adapt and improve its product to reach new markets.

We talked about the attributes of a successful business - educating the employees, and financing new and challenging products. For a company to be innovative they need high-quality management, good Human Resources, and a workable strategic plan. I learnt that innovation is important in our current business world and that successful do not see change as a threat but welcome it as a new way to improve and meet the current market. Jiri Vacek (2008)

Week 9.

Sustainability development is both Management and Evolution - keeping the environment safe to the point of providing social, economic, and cultural well-being.

Sustainability has to do with the preservation of natural and physical resources using methods such as forestation. Also safeguarding life and health by supporting the capability of air and water ecosystem. Avoiding or remedying the outcome of adverse effects on the environment. We also learnt that it was more survival to re-cycle material (if possible), to improve it, and to use less pollutive products.

We looked at how the Ford car company is keeping to these sustainability regulations. We learnt about future-proofing; a way to make the product or system future damage-proof. (Rich, 2014)

Futureproofing includes preventing decay, extending service life, increasing component redundancy, reducing obsolescence, planning, diversifying, and staying local and healthy. I learnt that many companies invest in this.

“You cannot predict the future, but you can prepare for it” (Brian Rich) (2014)

This topic was very interesting so I did more research to gain more ideas. I would like to do more in this area.



Diagram:004

Example of future-proofing buildings and sustainability, by Vincent Callebaut Architecture

Transformed a former industrial area into Futuristic Eco Village in Belgium

(CALLEBAUT, 2022)

Conclusion

- **First, we discussed Beliefs, Attitudes and Values and how they relate to human Emotions and Critical thinking and how they affect the workplace environment.**
- **What tools would help increase my critical thinking?**
- **Management Theories are tools to help one manage a business effectively to achieve a given goal. Example: Scanlon Plan, Humanist Approach, The Hawthorn Study.**
- **The impact of having a conceptual tool to enhance the workplace.**
- **Skills that employers are looking for in an employee: interpersonal skills, intellectual skills, and communications skills.**
- **How a company can use the De Bono 6 Thinking Hats model to resolve a decision-making process**
- **I also discuss the Ludwig von Bertalanffy System theory which helps resolve a complex problem by breaking it down into smaller parts and tackling those until the whole is resolved.**
- **I discussed the importance of managing new ideas, improving, and educating employees to create an effective workplace environment.**
- **I realize the impact of future sustainability, the need to save energy, invest in futureproofing, reduce waste and keep fit and healthy.**
- **I am glad I took part in this course. I have gained a lot of useful information concerning the workplace environment. (Gibbs, 1988)**

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