

Academic and Employability Skills

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Introduction

In this report I will be discussing 3 main topics. What is a *Skill*, the concept of *Academic skills* and I will end talking about the *Employability skills*.

These 3 concepts are very complex and wide so I will make them simple and easy to understand, as the fact of making them simple and easy to understand then give you the chance of expanding it later on as you need.

-Skill-

If we refer to a skill as Oxford defines it, a skill is "The ability to do something well". Going a bit deeper we can say that a skill is something that you learn through practice and as more you practice something more you master that skill. Then the skills can be generally divided in two types, specific skills and general skills.

Focusing on the field we are now, to achieve a good level of performance at the university there are some general skills such as time management, self-discipline, self-motivation, organization and so on but they can be useful also in many areas of my life, so that's way they are called general skills.

On the other side we have the specific skills that are just for some specific situations/fields, for example me as a barman I need to know how to shake a cocktail or how to use some specific tools that I won't need in any other thing of my life.

Within all these general and specific skills is also possible to divide them in two other categories, hard skills and soft skills.

Hard skills or other way to call them is technical skills. These are easy to be quantified and nobody is born with them, they must be learned. This type of skills is the one required for a specific task like computing or cooking. Many years ago, these skills were more present than the soft skills but nowadays the demand of the soft skills for the society has increased considerably.

Soft Skills are more related to the personality so don't necessarily have to be learned although they can be if you don't possess them. Due to the high demand of this skills in this society, the number of experts in this field has increased and there is more knowledge than before about it, but still is more difficult to quantify this type of skills. People skills is another way used to refer to the soft skills because they play a very important role in relation to how we deal with other people and even with ourselves. Some examples of this skills are *empathy, discipline, problem solving, self-motivation, communication* among many other.

-Academic Skills-

The set of abilities needed to succeed and achieve good grades in the learning fields are known as “*academic skills*”. Developing the right skills related to the academics, can make the difference because getting better result will provide a bigger range of opportunities for the world of work, and this by consequence will help to increase the chance of building a better lifestyle. Nowadays we can see how the effort to improve this set of skills has increased, there is more awareness of the real need of these abilities. As later will be shown, many of these skills are transferable to the workplace so they can also be named in the group of employability skills. To have a better idea I will name and explain some of these skills.

Here are some of the most common academic skills:

- **Academic Writing:** Is a writing style used for researchers to express their works. Its purpose is to be easy to understand for the readers. Some of the characteristics of academic writing are a formal tone, and a very precise choice of words, usually using a 3rd person perspective. It also needs to be based on evidences and properly cited and it must be done under a previous research to show the understanding of the topic discussed and to do this needs to be focused on answering the questions raised. Finally, the structure has to be coherent and in logical order to make sure is clear and easy to understand.
- **Reflective and thinking:** Is a very interesting tool that helps to understand better things like our thoughts, something happened, something that will happen..., is basically reflecting on something, and to make it even more helpful you can do a reflecting writing which consist in writing your reflective thinking to better visualize your thought and help you to understand better. Is definitely a really useful tool for personal awareness and it can be used to make wiser decision, solving a problem, or anything that you need to put some light on.
- **Research Skills:** it could be said that research skill is the ability to find a solution of a problem or the answer to a question gathering information and contrasting it and getting to the more accurate information possible and once we have this information, interpret it so that bring the best solution or answer possible.

There are many others such as memory, time management, organization skills, referencing skills, presentation skills, communication skills, etc. As more of these skills you can develop and master, more chances are to get better results.

-Employability skills-

These are skills that go beyond academic qualifications or experience. The vast majority are general to all the jobs, although there are some specific for the task to perform. Those general ones are the ones that make you employable. Many times, an employer is willing to hire someone who teach to the specific job skills but not without those skills that every employee should have to be employable.

There are many of these skills so I will divide them in three big areas:

- Working well with other people also described as “interpersonal skills” undertake a set of skills that help us to relate better with other and be a good member of the team as having a good relationship with customers and dealing good with the people in general. Some of these undertaken skills are:
 - Communication skills are very important to transmit the right message avoiding misunderstandings and it can be through speaking, writing or even listening.
 - Emotional intelligence is an ability that let you understand your own and others feelings and manage your own effectively to achieve the desired outcome
 - Team working skills make you a good candidate to be part of a team due to the ability to work with other comfortably. It is very required to work in groups because in group is better likely to perform better results.
 - Problem solving and decision making is a skills that allow the capacity of identify problems and solve them efficiently

- Being Reliable and Dependable are skills that means that you will do what you say you will, and also, you can find things that need to be done around you and do them. But these abilities are a way to describe many other that without them the reliability and dependability won't happen. All the abilities required to make the last mentioned are more "personal skills" rather than "interpersonal skills".
 - Being organized and having a good time management allow to know how long will the things to get done so then you can plan better and be realistic at the moment of setting a task and a deadline to have it done. Many times, it happens that you set a date for a task done to a customer and it takes longer than you planned and that gives an unprofessional image. Being organized and known the timings of the task to perform allow you to avoid such a thing.
 - Trustworthy and conscientious. Keeping your word and doing what is required are important parts to be reliable and dependable. In many situations to keep your word is going to be needed a lot of self-regulation, as much as self-discipline which are a bit similar, but basically define that you will do something even if you don't want to for the purpose of keeping your word as you said or you established you will do so. Also, this means taking responsibility for own actions showing this way what are your values and you stand for them over all.
 - One last thing to be reliable is to have initiative and for that is required a lot of self-motivation. Daniel Goleman described initiative as a "key part of self-motivation" which requires at the same time a big "emotional intelligence"
- One of the most important things needed to be a good employee is the willingness to learn which shows indeed the interest and even how passionate is an employee about the job. Showing the interest for learning a new skill or new knowledge related with your job, is a clear signal of being employable. Nowadays that the world is constantly changing is really important to don't become obsolete constantly acquire more skills and knowledge and show proactivity to adapt to the new changes.

Conclusion

After gathering all this information, I got to the conclusion that the skills are essential in our lives, that they are complex to explain due to that there is not just one skill alone, the skills are constantly composed and build up with and between others. With this report I intend to give a better understanding of the concept of skills and how they are part of the academic and employment worlds. After having discussed this topics I mean it help you giving some light on the matter to allow you to take advantage of this information and use it in your own benefit and also myself to become a better student and by consequence go through a better path in the working future.

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