

Academic and Employability Skills

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1. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Skill' is the capacity to perform any task with desired outcome in a given time and energy. Academic skills basically help you to develop effective study and research skills which in turn help you to obtain academic success. Employability skills are defined as the skills which increase your ability and chances to get employed. Here we are going to discuss the definition of skill, its types, importance of academic and employability skills, the impact they have in our professional and personal life both, the analysis through which we can identify the skill that we are lacking and the planning with which we can improve ourselves.

MAIN BODY

2. DEFINITION OF SKILL

Skill is defined as the ability obtained due to sustained and systematic effort in order to smoothly carry out complicated job activities/ functions.

MEANING OF SKILL:

1. The ability to perform some task in expertise manner
2. The potential of having particular ability like - dancing skills (Expertise in dancing)

Characteristics of skill:



Figure 1: Characteristics of Skill

(Source: Created by Learner)

1. Goal oriented skills are meant to obtain certain goals/achieve any end result.
2. Skills are responsible to increase the chances of getting success in the result.
3. Skills help to meet the organizational goal easily, in a short period of time with minimum energy outlay.
4. Skills should be learnt well and practised thoroughly in order to execute successfully.

3. TYPES OF SKILLS

Skill is generally classified into:

1. **LABOUR SKILLS:** Skills which concentrates on a certain segment of workforce. These are economically productive in nature. Some examples of labour skills are - Electricians, Carpenters, Painters etc.
2. **LIFE SKILLS:** Human skills which are obtained by learning, teaching or direct experience. Some examples of life skills are - time management, creative thinking, decision making ability, problem solving ability, flexibility, leadership, being patient etc.
3. **PEOPLE SKILLS:** Skills which are social and psychological in nature. Some examples of people skills are - understanding and moderating responses, building relationships with trust and respect.
4. **SOCIAL SKILLS:** Skills that facilitate interaction and communication with others.
5. **FUNCTIONAL SKILLS:** Skills that is responsible for the actions taken to perform a task, transferable to different work, functions and industries. Some examples of functional skills are - Organizing skills, promoting skills, analyzing skills etc (Assiter, 2017)
6. **PERSONAL TRAIT SKILLS:** Personality characteristics that contribute to the performing work. Some examples of personal trait skills are - Patient, Diplomatic, Independent, Result oriented.

4. FURTHER CLASSIFICATION OF SKILLS:

Skills are further classified into -

- **ACADEMIC SKILLS**

Academic Skills are defined as the skills which help you to develop more effective research and study skills that will be necessary for now and in future. Developing academic skills will help in achieving academic success that will reflect full potential.

Paraphrasing, Time management, Critical Thinking, Communicating and presenting information are the examples of academic skills.

I have developed Paraphrasing, Critical thinking and avoiding plagiarism by using Gibbs' reflection cycle.

Paraphrasing helped me to express anything in my own words which in turn helped me to understand well.

Critical Thinking helped me go in depth of any topic and link certain ideas together to make it work logically.

Avoiding plagiarism is one of the most important academic skills. Plagiarism is basically the act of copying and pasting someone else's work. It helped me to understand the context of any topic without just copy-pasting anything.

- **EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

Employability Skills are defined as skills necessary for any individual to make them employable. Apart from good technical and subject knowledge, employers often mention a set of skills that they want from an employee.

Problem solving, communication skill, teamwork, motivation are the examples of employability skills.

With the help of Gibbs' reflective Cycle, I have developed Communication skills (both oral & written), teamwork and motivation.

Oral communication skills help me to communicate with other people and understand them with confidence whereas written skills help me to express my ideas in simple language which can be easily understandable.

Teamwork helps me to maintain peace and harmony within a group/team with less or no conflict. It helped me to perform any task together successfully without any conflict.

Motivation would help me a lot to carry on with my work no matter how complicated it may get. We should keep ourselves motivated in spite of work pressure or peer pressure.

- **HARD SKILLS**

Hard skills are the skills that are specific teachable abilities and knowledge. These types of skills are obtained through training and education programs.

Computer technology, data analysis, marketing, project management, mobile and web development, accounting skills, legal skills, hard communication skills, data analysis, cloud, computing, certifications and licenses, Design, mobile and web development, network structure and security are the examples of hard skills.

Gibbs' reflective cycle helped me to develop marketing skills, computer technology and project management.

Marketing skills could help me to prepare a proper online marketing strategy using Search engine optimization (SEO), Social Media Optimization (SMO) in order to attract more traffic. Computer technology helps me to execute any tasks related to MS Excel, MS Word, Social Media.

Project management helped me to handle any project using certain models like - Agile model, Prince2 etc.

- **SOFT SKILLS**

Soft skills are defined as the group of personal traits that influences human relationship with each other. These types of skills are non-technical in nature and it teaches us the ability to communicate effectively with family, friends, employees, colleagues, clients etc.

Communication skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, Time management teamwork, adaptability skills, creativity skills, work ethic skills, attention to details are the examples of soft skills.

Using Gibbs' reflective cycle, I have learnt about communication skills, interpersonal skills and time management and undoubtedly, this reflection model has played a crucial role in acquiring these effective skills.

Communication skills and interpersonal skills would help me a lot to maintain a good relationship with others in both academic and professional fields. It helped me to motivate myself, to have a transparent communication with people.

Time management helped me to organise, plan and execute tasks within a given time. It made me more punctual.

5. SWOT ANALYSIS:

Strength: 1. I am capable of having a good communication skill. My strong writing communication helps me to express my ideas in the correct manner. 2. I can motivate myself and people around me to get a task done. I can create a positive environment which results in less stress and tension. 3. I have a strong knowledge of digital marketing. I can propose various unique marketing ideas that will be fruitful like search engine optimization (SEO), social media optimization (SMO), website development etc. 4. I have a strong knowledge of various tools and models which will help me to handle any kind of project now and in the future. Models like Prince2, waterfall are used in project management. 5. I have the ability to keep a group or team together so that the task is done in a proper environment. 6. My critical thinking helps me to go in depth of anything and find out certain correlation between ideas logically and form a new idea. It helps me to do tasks not in a specific pattern, but in a	Weakness : 1. There are times when it is not possible to keep myself motivated. This may happen, due to excess work pressure, peer pressure. 2. I have a little problem related to time management. 3. I face problems whenever I have to communicate with a large number of people at the same time i.e. I have problem in oral communication
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unique way. 7. Due to my good writing skill, I don't need to copy-paste anything. Rather I learn the basic concept of any topic and express it in my own words which are simpler to understand. Hence avoiding plagiarism and resulting in good paraphrasing.	
Opportunity : 1. There is a high chance of career development in various sectors. 2. I can easily get any internship/work while in the University. 3. More the skills acquired, it will be easy to get recognition within a very small period of time in any working sector.	Threat: 1. I have to face a lot of competition as there are many people who are actually going to acquire extra skills to get employed easily.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

(Source: Created by Learner)

Personal/Professional Development Plan (PPDP):

A PDP is a procedure with which we can identify our weak points and work on it by setting certain targets (Cottrell, 2015).

Ranking	SKILL	CURRENT ABILITY	TARGET ABILITY	DEVELOPMENT related OPPORTUNITY	TIME FRAME
1st Priority	Oral communication	Weak	To have strong oral communication skill	Helps in communicating with other people, prevents any sort of miscommunication, builds team bond	6 Months

2nd priority	Time Management	Weak	To be efficient in time management	Delivering work on time, providing better quality of task, less stress, more career options and career growth	1 month
3rd priority	Motivation	Weak	Highly Motivated	High efficiency in performing tasks, achieving organizational goals, reduces labour turnover	1 Month

Table 2: PDP Analysis

(Source: Created by Learner)

With the help of this method, we have created a plan -

Firstly, we have chosen three priority skills to be improved. For my case, the three priority skills are oral management skills, time management skills and motivation skills.

Secondly, we have to analyze the initial condition and set the target. In my case, all the initial conditions are weak. The target is to improve these skills.

Third, a time period is to be set in order within which I can improve my skills. Here I have given six months time for improving my oral communication skills, one month for improving my time management skills and one month for improving my motivation skills.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle helps people to think in a systematic manner about the experiences they had in any past situation, activity or event. With the help of this cycle, I pointed out the problems and tried to solve it.

1. Description :

In this stage we are supposed to recall experience and find out the skill we are lacking. With the help of this stage, I was able to find out my weak point. This stage helped me to find out that I do get demotivated at times. Hence I was lacking Motivation skills. It also helped me understand that I have weak oral communication skills.

2. Feelings :

This stage is all about visualising experiences to learn quality lessons. Being weak in oral communication skill, I was not able to get confidence in anything I used to do, or

communicate verbally with anybody. But with the help of this stage, I was able to improve my oral communication.

3. Evaluation :

With the help of this stage, I evaluated thoroughly that I had difficulty in completing tasks within a given time. I was not able to cope up with time no matter how much I try.

4. Conclusion :

In conclusion, individuals are supposed to rethink their experiences and associated faults along with limitations. This stage helped me to gather my weak points together and work on it.

5. Action Plan :

This is the last stage of Gibbs reflection model, where individuals have the opportunity to learn from their personal experiences to improve existing skills and acquire new ones. This stage helped me to make a plan in order to improve my skills and be ready to get employed in near future.

6. CONCLUSION

Less than 1% of the workers in the UK are skilled workers. So training of more and more people is very much required. The more number of skilled workers, the more the development in the country. Without skills, there will be no chance to sustain in the workplace and face the competition. It is necessary to empower the youth with various skill development programs. Here, it can be concluded that it is very essential to acquire skills and knowledge. It explained how skills are important and what the types of skills that influence us are. It is also explained that both academic and employability skills are important in order to have a wide range of opportunities and get employed in no time, the procedure of identifying your weak points, and how to work on it for improvement.

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