

Moodle title: Academic and Employability Skills

Student name: Yumei Huang

Student number: 1906520

Lecturer name: Anita Nan

Moodle code: BMSW4001

Contents

Introduction	3
Time management	3
Team-working	4
Problem solving	5
Paraphrasing.....	6
Communication	6
Conclusion	8

Introduction

The purpose of this report is analysing several academic and employability skills. The skills which will be analysed are: time management, team-working and problem-solving, paraphrasing and communication. It will show the important elements of each of these areas and explain why they are important. The report will also detail my stage of development in relation to these concepts. The conclusion will show how all these areas link together to improve employability and academic skills for people in the organisation as well as what I am going to do to improve my skills in the areas of the essay.

Time management

Time management means the ability to control our use of time. Good time management allows us to accomplish more with less effort. It is a most fundamental skill both in academic and employability skills.

Some of the benefits of effective time management are:

- Become more organized, punctual and disciplined.
- Finish daily tasks and get more done within job role.
- Enhance peoples standing and personal reputation in the workplace.
- Achieve great heights both personally and professionally.
- Give more confidence and potentially less stressed.

There are some techniques to help how to set priorities time in time management, for example The Pareto Principle, that suggests that 20 percent activity will account for 80 percent of the results. Pareto observed that about 20% the *'peapods in the garden contained 80% of the peas'*. In time management, this helps put the focus on the right thing whether it is work, productivity, goal-setting or studies with the greatest Impact, so a fifth of effort creates four fifth of output.

Another is Stephen Covey (Covey, 2004) time management matrix where quadrants are used and labelled to differentiate and importance as the diagram below – this then helps in the selection of next steps in the problem faced and eliminates the things to dismiss.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Quadrant I: Urgent & Important	Quadrant II: Not Urgent & Important
NOT IMPORTANT	Quadrant III: Urgent & Not Important	Quadrant IV: Not Urgent & Not Important

Source: Stephen Covey, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

I have this skill, because I learn to control my time by organising and prioritising my daily tasks. It helps me to increase my ability to focus, make better decisions and gain control of my key priorities. Good time management is essential to be able to work effectively with the team when other is depending on my work as the next section shows.

Team-working

Team-working is group of people with a different knowledge who join each other to achieve a common goal. A team can be created to achieve long term and or short-term objectives.

The skill involves many areas like personal behaviours, leadership and communication. People will have different approaches to working in a team and some theories relate specifically to the makeup of teams and the member's personalities for example Belbin (Belbin, 2010): Belbin's research revealed that the difference between success and failure for a team was not dependent on factors such as intellect, but more on behaviour. Stevens & Campion, (1999) developed a model to asses' team knowledge strengths and abilities used in the building of a team.

Good teams are thought to be put together with differing people depending on the aims of organisation (The Myers & Briggs Foundation, 2019) employers can also use this to select potential employees for particular roles or projects for example.

Good team working has benefits for the individual such as developing on-going learning, teaching conflict resolution skills and fostering creativity. The benefits to the company are both a wider sense of ownership and the encouragement of healthy risk-taking.

Employees will look for good team working skills because it improves their business outcomes and decisions are thought to be of higher quality when made collectively leading to the benefit of possible consensus. (Rousseau, et al., 2006).

The essential keys to an effective and high-performance team are working with a positive attitude and with a firm commitment to achieve the objectives. Working in harmony with effective communication and cooperation within the team is critical to achieve the success.

I need to improve this skill especially in conflict resolution. I realise that not every individual can be perfect. Therefore, in the team the strengths of one member may compensate the weaknesses in other parts of the team.

Good team working skills are important for many roles and is often viewed as an essential requirement for employability. As we have seen the correct makeup of the team has benefits for the organisation and individual especially in the area of problem-solving as we shall see in the next section.

Problem solving

It is about how to deal with a problem and create a solution. Problem solving requires two distinct types of mental skill, analytical and creative.

"You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created." Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

There are many approaches for problem solving but there are four steps help to refine this skill to obtaining a smart and workable solution. The first step is identifying the problem, for example in the workplace, analyse employee behaviour, company policies and working procedures. The second is problem definition. Thirdly, possible alternatives are needed to be compared by using critical thinking skills and select the best strategy for problem solving. The last step is draw up an action plan, implement it with appropriate approach, in this step both communication and negotiation are important.

The ability to solve problems is essential to everyone's daily life, at home and at work. Good problem-solving skills not only strengthen personal life but are critical in professional life. Poor problem solving will lead to failure of business and interpersonal relationships.

In my workplace, I always stumble over one or more of the critical steps when I resolve the issues. Sometimes it is about identifying the problem or finding the right approach to the issue, I find brainstorming with my colleagues to be particularly useful (Osborn, 1963).

I need to improve this skill especially the critical thinking and the attention to detail when I assess the results. I also learn to use available resources to resolve issues in a constructive manner and see a problem from a professional, not personal, perspective.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means rephrasing text or speech in your own words, to explain other people's information without changing the original meaning.

The method for paraphrasing is, first take notes, underline any important subject or specific words and try to find synonyms for them. Then rewrite each sentence, try to simplify the structure of the sentence and vocabulary. At the end check what it has revised and compare it to the original, the piece needs to be the same length as the original, then you must cite the original works (Gahan, 2018).

Paraphrasing is an important skill in academic writing. Failing in paraphrasing causes miscommunication of the original author's idea and even plagiarism. Often poor English skills lead to errors in paraphrasing, however done properly it can be a powerful skill that validates others, builds trust, and invites deeper levels of disclosure. (Griffiths & Dunham, 2015)

Paraphrasing can also be used in a meeting or conversation. It requires one to listen carefully to what is being said and repeating it back to the speaker to check it has been understood correctly.

The important of this skill is to prove understanding and give freedom on how deliver the same concept in a suitable way. I have difficulty on using this skill, I need to improve my English writing skills, grammar and vocabulary.

My strategy to improve this skill is SMART:

S-specific task: be confident in using my own words to paraphrase academic texts with minimal errors by taking an English academic reading and writing course online.

M-measures: finish my course by a particular time

A-agreed: I need to improve my grammar and vocabularies.

R-realistic: I think it is possible to complete my course.

T-timings: I will spend two months during the break of the school to do it.

Communication

Communication is about the sender and receiver, it means sending or receiving information by speaking, writing or using other medium, including verbal and non-verbal communication. Models of communication include Shannon & Weaver (1949) which follows the concept of communication in a linear fashion from sender to receiver with the following steps and Schramm (1949) who studied the impact of the message on the receiver both the 'desired and undesired'. This was developed by David Berlo (Berlo, 1960) who in 1960 expanded Shannon and Weaver's

1949 linear model of communication and created the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) Model of Communication.[11] The SMCR Model of Communication process starts at the source.

Interpersonal communication is further complicated because it is usually not possible to interpret a gesture or expression accurately on its own.

Communication skills are foundational for individual, team and organizational success. For example, in a job interview the most important criteria in evaluating a candidate are verbal communication and interpersonal skills.

Face to face communication is one of the most common way to communicate each other, because it is hard to know the exact intent of one another's comments. With this, it easy to see people's body language and facial expressions, as well as understand the tone of voice. This form of communication included not just words, but [word fillers and facial expressions. It is important to interpret these properly to communicate fully (Quintanilla & Wahl, 2017).

Good communication brings the advantage of saving time and money and providing speed of feedback and also maintaining clarity of message. On the other hand, the disadvantages of it are changes and distortion of meaning, not convenient for long message, irrelevant information and creating a misunderstanding.

Non-verbal communication consists of various expressions; hand and eye movements, postures, and gestures which should be interpreted along with speech (verbal communication).

There are many different types of non-verbal communication including body movements, posture, eye contact and the tone and pitch of a person's speech. Non-verbal communication can be very important in communication as people take a lot of meaning from body language.

Non-verbal communication can be as important, or in some cases even more important than verbal communication and can have a great impact on the listener and the outcome of the communication.

Non-verbal communication strategies, over and above what is actually said, can help to improve interaction with others. Knowledge of these signs can be used to encourage people to talk about their concerns and can lead to a greater shared understanding.

There are 7 C's of effective communication strategy which are applicable to both written as well as oral communication. 7 C stands for completeness, conciseness, consideration, clarity, concreteness, courtesy and correctness (Centrer & Cutlip, 1952).

I have this skill, as a receptionist I use communication techniques on working with my customers and colleagues, such as active listening, body language and feedback. It helps me to reduce the misunderstanding and mistakes and increase the satisfaction of the customers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to show factors that make up time management, team-working, problem-solving, paraphrasing and communication and how they link with each other to make good employees to increase employment prospects. Each can be successful in isolation but combined together give better outcomes for the organisation and also the employer.

My report concludes that if the skills are studied in an academic environment then they can be applied in the workplace so improving outcomes. Each of the areas of time management, team-working and problem-solving, paraphrasing and communication can be developed individually but are best combined for the best outcome for the employer. Successful academic study can enhance the employability of a person.

I need to improve my skills in all of the areas above and intend to use my studies to support my learning and experience in the workplace. I will do this by further researching the theories as above and applying them in my workplace and my every day practice. I am also very conscious that I need to work on my written communication skills and ensure they are in line with what I am trying to communicate. My studies will support this when I apply them in work.

References

- Belbin, R. M., 2010. *Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.
- Berlo, D., 1960. *The Process of Communication*. 1st ed. New York: Rinehart & Winston.
- Centrer, A. H. & Cutlip, S. M., 1952. *Effective Public Relations: pathways to public favor*. 1st ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall; Bailey & Swinfen.
- Covey, S. R., 2004. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. 18th ed. New York: Free Press.
- Gahan, C., 2018. *Scribbr*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com>
[Accessed 23 December 2019].
- Griffiths, B. & Dunham, E., 2015. *In Working in Teams*. 1st ed. California: SAGE.
- Maund, A., Schriek, M. & Tinkler, P. K., 2017. *Certificate in Higher Education: Skills for the Workplace Student Yearbook*. 1st ed. London: SAGE.
- MSG, 2019. *www.managementstudyguide.com*. [Online]
Available at: www.managementstudyguide.com
[Accessed 5 December 2019].
- Osborn, A. F., 1963. *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem solving*. 3rd (Revised) ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Quintanilla, K. & Wahl, S., 2017. *In Business and Professional Communication*. 3rd ed. California: SAGE.
- Rousseau, V., Aube, C. & Savoie, A., 2006. Teamwork Behaviours: A Review and an Intergration of Frameworks. *Small Group Research*, 5(37), pp. 540-570.
- Schramm, W., 1949. *Mass Communications*. 1st ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Shannon, C. E. & Weaver, W., 1949. *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. 1st ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Stevens, M. J. & Campion, M. A., 1999. Staffing Work Teams: Development and validation of a selection test for teamwork settings. *Journal of Management*, 2(25), pp. 207-208.
- The Myers & Briggs Foundation, 2019. *The 16 MBTI® Types*. [Online]
Available at: www.myersbriggs.org
[Accessed 23 Decemeber 2019].