

# Enhancing Multiple Skills in Higher Education

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## INTRODUCTION

“KNOWLEDGE HAS NO VALUE UNLESS YOU PUT IT INTO PRACTICE”

Teaching and learning should always be relevant – whether it’s related to your degree or extra-curricular activities. Higher education is unlike any other force in its ability to catalyse social mobility, bridging social, economic, racial, and geographic divides. As job markets evolve, it is clear that the future requires a higher education system that is as dynamic and adaptable as the technologies that our society now revolves around.<sup>1</sup>

## Skills To Be Developed:

To be successful in a job, an individual must possess a number of influential skills. Many of the skills required for success in higher education are transferable, which means they can be applied to other careers. Among the transferable skills mentioned above are oral and written communication skills, professionalism, collaboration and teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving abilities, and networking abilities. A person requires these skills regardless of the profession he/she/they choose.<sup>2</sup>

Excellent oral and written communication skills are required. Individuals must clearly express their thoughts and opinions in a consistent and timely manner. Misrepresentations, misunderstandings, poor relationships, and poor performance will result if such skills are lacking. Collaboration and teamwork are also important skills. One person cannot achieve a team's goals or the institution's vision on their own. Every job entails consulting others, organising or participating in focus groups, soliciting and providing feedback, sharing and communicating.<sup>3</sup>

Another important factor is networking. It is getting to know others and developing professional relationships. It allows for greater collaboration and support. Agility and Adaptability are designed to assess our ability to be flexible in our work and our willingness to work in accordance with the current situation. Work is unpredictable, and one must train their minds to be at ease with their ideas while also being willing to adapt to their surroundings. Critical thinking and problem solving are also required skills. We should train our minds to think critically and solve problems, which will help us face challenges in the future. Time management is such an important skill that it is taught in schools. Employers will always value employees who finish their work before deadlines and juggle multiple commitments.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>How higher education can adapt to the future of work, World Economic Forum,

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/how-can-higher-education-adapt-to-a-constantly-evolving-future-of-work/>

<sup>2</sup>Transferable skills: 10 skills that work across industries, , <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/transferable-skills>

<sup>3</sup>How to demonstrate oral and written communication on your resume, Chegg Internships (2022), <https://www.internships.com/career-advice/search/communication-skills>

It is critical to accept constructive criticism. Employers want employees who can take constructive criticism and apply what they've learned to improve their own work. In today's world, digital literacy is essential for success. It refers to the ability to maximise the use of a computer. Touch typing, keyboard shortcuts, and email management are examples of digital literacy skills. Another important skill is leadership. It requires a variety of skills, including patience, motivation, decisiveness, and teamwork. Every job places a premium on professionalism and work ethics. Professional behaviour can increase respect among colleagues, improve relationships with business partners, and reduce workplace conflict. Employees with a strong work ethic may be professional, courteous to others, accountable, and determined.<sup>4</sup>

### **Importance:**

These skills are explicitly taught as part of the curriculum, allowing students to practise them in professional settings. "As employers seek to improve the cultural fit and success of their new hires, we are seeing a shift away from an emphasis on hard skills in favour of a closer focus on soft skills," Rudolph said. The modern workplace is interpersonal, and soft skills are required in all aspects. Soft skills are required at all times for clients, career advancement, and promotion. they complete their work Soft skills distinguish you and complement your hard skills. It enables all of the difficult skills learned in school to shine and matter. These abilities boost employability, predict success, and ensure survival in the modern workplace. During their studies, students prepare for future professional roles, such as experts in their chosen fields. With that in mind, the importance of soft skills for students is self-evident, because after a few years of studying, the next step is finding a job where they will be expected to behave appropriately toward others, accommodating and capable of teamwork, and to possess stable ethical principles<sup>5</sup>because the goal is to prepare students for their chosen professional career during their studies, soft skills are even more important for students to develop for their future professional roles. The quality of interaction of people who have developed soft skills has been shown to be significantly higher, which is critical for the employer and thus for the job you do together. Because studies prepare students for the labour market in a variety of ways, soft skills are equally important for students as they are for employed people.

### **How University Helps To Improve These Skills:**

While many people see university as a way to advance their careers, it is also a unique opportunity to examine yourself and consider how you can benefit and grow personally from the experience. Due to uncertainty and the increasing convergence of various disciplines, universities should intentionally reinvent their curricula to make interdisciplinarity a fundamental pillar of everything they teach, enabling students to solve real-world problems regardless of the career path they pursue.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted that while technical skills taught in schools are important, they frequently become obsolete. The modern world necessitates a continuous cycle of learning and relearning in which one must

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<sup>4</sup>Eric Roy, 7 benefits of embracing constructive criticism Code of Living (2020), <https://www.codeofliving.com/blog/7-benefits-of-embracing-constructive-criticism/>

<sup>5</sup> The Soft Skills College students need to succeed now and in the future, American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2017/09/soft-skills>

<sup>6</sup>Stephanie LUpdated September 26 & Written byStephanie LAs the Head of Sponsored Content for TopUniversities.com and TopMBA.com (until September 2021), 7 ways this university is helping students find their purpose Top Universities, <https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/choosing-university/7-ways-university-helping-students-find-their-purpose> (last visited Oct 30, 2022).

voluntarily participate. Students who get out of the classroom can gain genuine business and industry insights, develop their awareness of workplace culture, and improve critical workplace skills such as positive leadership and communication. It's also an excellent opportunity to help students understand their life's purpose. Motivate students to step outside of their comfort zones.<sup>7</sup>

### **Tips To Improve The Skills:**

Students are the future of the country. Every student possesses a unique skill; the only thing required was for those skills to emerge in the proper context and at the appropriate time to advance their careers.

Students will apply what they have learned in real-world, professional settings. Students will have access to internship and part-time employment opportunities with leading companies throughout their studies, with the goal of improving their long-term employability. As students, we should train our minds to think critically and solve problems, which will help us face challenges in the future.<sup>8</sup>

Agility and Adaptability are designed to assess our ability to be flexible in our work and their willingness to learn to work in accordance with the current situation. As a student, you should train your mind to be at ease with your ideas and willing to adapt to your surroundings. Students can improve their skills by studying in their various domains using a practical approach. Nowadays, there is an increase in the number of researchers and students who work in teams and interact with people outside their organisation, which helps students develop their entrepreneurial skills. Students can improve their communication skills by speaking in front of a large class group and participating in debates, which allows them to relax. They become fearless as a result of their preparation and practise, and their confidence levels rise, making them useful when approaching group discussions.<sup>9</sup>

### **Impact On Future:**

- Improve your CV
- During your interviews, identify and describe how you used your undergraduate education to acquire and strengthen these skills.
- Follow up on the message at the bottom of your résumé—References Available Upon Request—by requesting examples of how you demonstrated these skills in her or his class from at least one of your college instructors. This improves your first impression with the employer.
- "PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT," one can achieve their goal by regularly practicing their habits, which makes them skilled in their specific domain, which not only improves their career skill but also their life skill.<sup>10</sup>

### **Real Time Example:**

The Minerva Project, which began in 2011, has created a programme that reimagines higher education by focusing on student outcomes and developing an interdisciplinary, cross-contextual curriculum. This "Fully Active Learning" pedagogy requires professors to engage students in order to deepen their

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<sup>7</sup>Learning to be: the world of education today and tomorrow, Unesdoc.unesco.org, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000001801>

<sup>8</sup>OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development, OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/> (last visited Oct 30, 2022).

<sup>9</sup>OECD, *Supra*

<sup>10</sup>Resumes & cover letters | indeed.com - indeed career guide, <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters>

understanding of explicit concepts and enable them to apply this knowledge in real-world contexts. Minerva has since collaborated with Zayed University to launch the UAE's first fully interdisciplinary programme, Zayed University X Minerva. This initiative was launched with the goal of assisting students in entering the world with the aforementioned skills that are essential in the modern workplace.<sup>11</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Employers frequently complain about new graduates lacking basic skills that can contribute to the workplace. Indeed, many of us in the older generation would agree that the majority of what we learned at university, if we remember it at all, has served us little purpose in our professional lives. To close the skills gap and ensure that university graduates add economic and societal value, three questions must be addressed: what skills are students being taught? How (if at all) are students learning them? What about their effectiveness in the workplace?

Universities should intentionally reinvent their curricula to make interdisciplinarity a fundamental pillar of everything they teach, enabling students to solve real-world problems regardless of the career path they choose.

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<sup>11</sup>How higher education can do better at developing skills for the Workplace, THE Campus Learn, Share, Connect (2021), <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/how-higher-education-can-do-better-developing-skills-workplace>