BEGE -145

SOFT SKILLS

![ignou THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY]

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National Open University
School of Humanities

**BEGE -145
Soft Skills**

Block

4

THINKING OF THE BOX

Block Introduction

**UNIT 1
Learning to be Creative**

**UNIT 2
Critical Thinking**

**UNIT 3
Decision Making and Problem Solving**

**UNIT 4
Hark into the Future**

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

As we understand, there are two types of skills that we identify both in our personal lives as well as professional lives: soft skills and hard skills. Hard skills are technical skills that have to be learned through external training and are usually job-specific. Soft skills cover personality-based traits that are key aspects of what makes someone a good fit for a given role and a productive coworker in a group work environment. We are generally aware of Hard skills as they are explicitly mentioned. We have seen people guessing about Soft skills on many occasions.

You will understand through the course that Soft skills generally fall into the category of interpersonal skills and inner values. Unlike hard skills, soft skills are generally not learned in professional training programs and are usually innate or gained through personal development. A person with strong soft skills usually has great communication skills or a strong work ethic. Through this course You will be able to generate a complete understanding on key soft skills such as Self-reflection, Adaptability, Learn ability and Emotional intelligence.

We will also learn about Appreciating different perspectives and also about ways Coordination with others. There will be a detailed discussion on Understanding disability and People management

When we are discussing Soft skills, it is important to understand the process of learning to be creative. Critical thinking is a crucial component and requires detailed discussion and understanding. It is also important to discuss various aspects of Decision making and problem solving. Soft Skills also relate to a futuristic understanding and that will be discussed in the concluding unit of the course Hark into the future.

We are sure that you will enjoy studying all the units and also achieve complete understanding of soft skills in your mind and conduct.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Block 4 is centered on the fundamental aspects of Thinking out of box. Learning to be creative is a central concern of most of our efforts. It is this unique quality that makes us appreciate the aesthetic quality of something – for instance, a piece of art, or music, or a game, or even a small showpiece hanging on your wall. It is this uniqueness that may be understood in terms of creativity. It indicates how well one is equipped to imagine. Imagination is very closely related to the idea of creativity. "Are you a creative person?" someone may just ask. And your answer will always be Yes! Creativity is not just about painting, or making music; creativity is everywhere, and you have to explore it. We will also discuss Critical thinking which is very important. We will discuss Decision making and problem solving in the unit 3 and understand problem solving is a continuous process--the more you reflect on the process, the more effectively you can respond to problems. Decision-making, too, is a process that constantly evolves through reflection. Both decision-making and problem-solving, as we have learned, need to be approached in a systematic manner, but the way to keep refining them is by constantly analysing how you approach them, reflecting on both your successes and failures.Unit 4 which is titled as Hark into the future will discuss Diversity, inclusivity, subjectivity, globalization, intersectionality, decenteredpoetics, accommodating alternative traditions and democratizing potential in great detail.

We are sure that you will enjoy studying all the units and also achieve complete understanding of soft skills in your mind and conduct.

UNIT 1: LEARNING TO BE CREATIVE

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to help you

- Understandthe meaning and importance of creativity in daily life. Creativity is an important soft skill in the contemporary competitive world.

- Explore the scope of creativity. You will also learn how you could be creative, along with understanding whether creativity can be measured or not.

- Apply creativity in your personal and professional world. By applying creativity, we can establish and retain our identity as an individual.

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered why you like a particular book, or a movie, or even food? There are certain things that appeal to us in an extraordinary manner, while some other things may seem just too ordinary. We tend to find things interesting because it is different from others. In other

words, it is 'unique'. It is this uniqueness that appeals to us, and human beings are inclined towards anything that is unusual and different. However, this unusual and different has to be aesthetically pleasing too.

When you are walking down the road that is full of dirt and dust, you would suddenly stop and glance at a beautiful flower on the roadside shrubs. You may be upset or feeling low, but a movie might just lift your mood. It is the beauty in things, the beauty of things, which makes you happy. Feeling happy is an extremely essential quality, whether you are at home or your workplace. You may have often tried to make the most boring things appear attractive in order to give yourself that happiness. In today's world that is largely pessimistic and has an underlying element of stress, emotional well-being is essential. When we are able to emotionally respond to the idea of beauty, uniqueness or difference, we tend to handle situations and circumstances in a much better manner.

It is this unique quality that makes us appreciate the aesthetic quality of something – for instance, a piece of art, or music, or a game, or even a small showpiece hanging on your wall. It is this uniqueness that may be understood in terms of creativity. It indicates how well one is equipped to imagine. Imagination is very closely related to the idea of creativity. "Are you a creative person?" someone may just ask. And your answer will always be yes! Creativity is not just about painting, or making music; creativity is everywhere, and you have to explore it.

Check your progress 1

1   List all the qualities you have that you think makes you creative.
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2   Look around yourself. You should be able to notice at least 10 things that are creative. Make a list of 10 instances where you find creativity in everyday life.

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1.2   DEFINING CREATIVITY

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines creativity as 'the use of skill and imagination to produce something new or to produce art' (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/creativity). If we look at this definition carefully, there are some key words that identify and explain creativity – **skill**, **imagination**, **produce**, **new** and **art**. Let us begin by understanding these terms.

Creativity involves a skill – it could be any skill that can be explored. In other words, it refers to an ability that any person may possess. All of us possess some skill, some expertise, some talent, and that needs to be applied and explored in an appropriate manner. Therefore, creativity involves in using one's skill in an innovative way. This would be possible when you apply imagination to use your skill effectively. Imagination is the most crucial component of creativity. Without imagination, no creative ideas can flourish. Let us understand this through an example. You must have watched a lot of advertisements that have changed our perception of ordinary things. Take the instance of Fevicol advertisements. The manner in which all the Fevicol ads have been conceptualized speaks volumes about the imagination that has gone behind the creation of these ads. This may be seen as an instance of creative imagination.

Image 1 – An advertisement of *Fevicol* adhesive

Source – https://brandequity.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/advertising/fevicol-turns-60-how-the-adhesive-brand-stole-the-heart-of-indian-consumer-with-its-quirky-ads/70755164

Additional information:

You may read an interesting news article in this context through the above link.

What we have seen above in Image 1 is a case of creative imagination whereby an advertisement is produced. Producing something may also be understood as creating something. We must, therefore, utilize our skills in an optimized manner in order to produce any creative piece – be it a painting, a book or an advertisement. At the same time, this newly produced thing ought to be new; otherwise there is no creativity in it. Creative essentially means something that is new, whereby innovative ideas are generated. Innovation and imagination go hand in hand in creativity. What is eventually produced at the end is a work of art. This work of art could be anything – a new dish that you prepared, a new song that you wrote, a new style of wearing your scarf, a new book that you are reading, or anything.

Thus, creativity is how best we can generate any work of art that is original, with whatever expertise we have, along with imagination. It is very difficult to define creativity in strict terms since each definition focuses on some particular aspects of creativity. There is a lot of subjectivity involved in defining creativity. Experts from different fields may define creativity according to their specific points of focus. We will now look at a few ways in which creativity may be defined. You need to remember that creativity is essential in every field. Therefore, the way in which we understand creativity also differs in each context.

Poetry involves creativity where imagination plays a very important role. You may read the poem below by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and see how the poet uses imagination to create a beautiful poem about a beautiful evening. Here, creativity has an aesthetic appeal.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,

The holy time is quiet as a Nun

Breathless with adoration; the broad sun

Is sinking down in its tranquility;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;

Listen! the mighty Being is awake,

And doth with his eternal motion make

A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,

If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,

Thy nature is not therefore less divine:

Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;

And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,

God being with thee when we know it not.

Source – https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45524/it-is-a-beauteous-evening-calm-and-free

Additional information:

William Wordsworth was an English Romantic poet who emphasized on the role of imagination in poetry. "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free" is a sonnet by William Wordsworth written in August 1802. This poem was first published in the collection *Poems*, in Two Volumes in 1807.

Try reading more poems by different poets to understand creativity in poetry.

Psychologists, on the other hand, view creativity in a slightly different manner. Their emphasis is more on thinking differently so that it helps in problem solving. Problem solving is another soft skill which you are aware of.

Creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others.

This definition of creativity is taken from *Human Motivation*, 3rd edition, by Robert E. Franken (p. 396). This definition of creativity is very different from the way in which Wordsworth used it to write his poem. However, on a deeper analysis, you may find that they have an underlying relationship of thinking or perceiving things differently.

Additional Information:

Human Motivation, 3rd edition, by Robert E. Franken discusses various aspects of human behavior, and analyses how creativity helps in motivating human beings. You may like to read it and explore.

When we are speaking of organizations, creativity appears to us in another connotative sense. For entrepreneurs, creativity is closer to innovation and production. It also refers to looking for a creative solution, as well as the possibilities of turning innovative ideas into a profitable solution. C. Bilton discusses creativity that empowers the entrepreneur to respond to increasing globalization and technology so that one may facilitate competitive advantage for the organization, and promote innovation and business growth.

Check your progress 2

1   Can you now 'create' your own definition of creativity? Try it out!

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2   What role does skill and imagination play in creativity?
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1.3   PARAMETERS TO UNDERSTAND CREATIVITY

Let us now try to understand the idea of creativity in some more detail. We will be looking at all parameters that may be taken together to understand creativity. When we were attempting a definition of creativity in the previous section, we referred to the use of skill.Appropriate skill would certainly refer to a balance where all efforts towards creating somethingare incorporated in the optimum amount. It could be the right amount of innovativeness, or even the right time. This carefulsense of balancemakes the final outcome to be appreciated.

A poet may write poetry for one's own satisfaction; but one may also write in order to earn a living. Advertisements are created so that a product's sale goes up, or an employee may put to use an innovative business idea so that the organization prospers. Therefore, the element of profit or growth cannot be seen as unrelated to the idea of creativity. This can only happen when the aesthetic outcome has a larger appeal, and is not limited to an individual's liking or preference. What we may do for our own selves is also creative in the same manner as the notion of using creativity to earn profit. We cannot overrule one in favour of the other.

Creativity involves thinking out-of-the-box, that is, how an ordinary thing can be looked at from a different and new lens. This involves a thought process that is not lateral thinking alone. In other words, in order to create something different, one has to also think differently. Here we may use another term to understand creativity. We may say that creativity involves divergent thinking. This refers to a thought process that involves perceiving things from different points of view, or looking for multiple solutions to a given problem. It is the opposite of convergent thinking that looks forward to only one solution, or thinking from only one perspective.

Image 2 – Divergent Thinking

Source: https://radcomservices.com/divergent-thinking-elearning/

This figure in Image 2 can be seen as a visual representation of divergent thinking. It indicates how divergent thinking allows the human mind to understand and explore multiple perspectives, and look for multiple solutions to a problem.

Now that we have understood creativity from various perspectives, let us identify the key indicators of creativity:

- New or novel idea
- Skill or talent
- Imagination
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Appropriate or balanced
- Thinking out-of-the-box

- Innovation
- Production
- Divergent thinking
- Originality
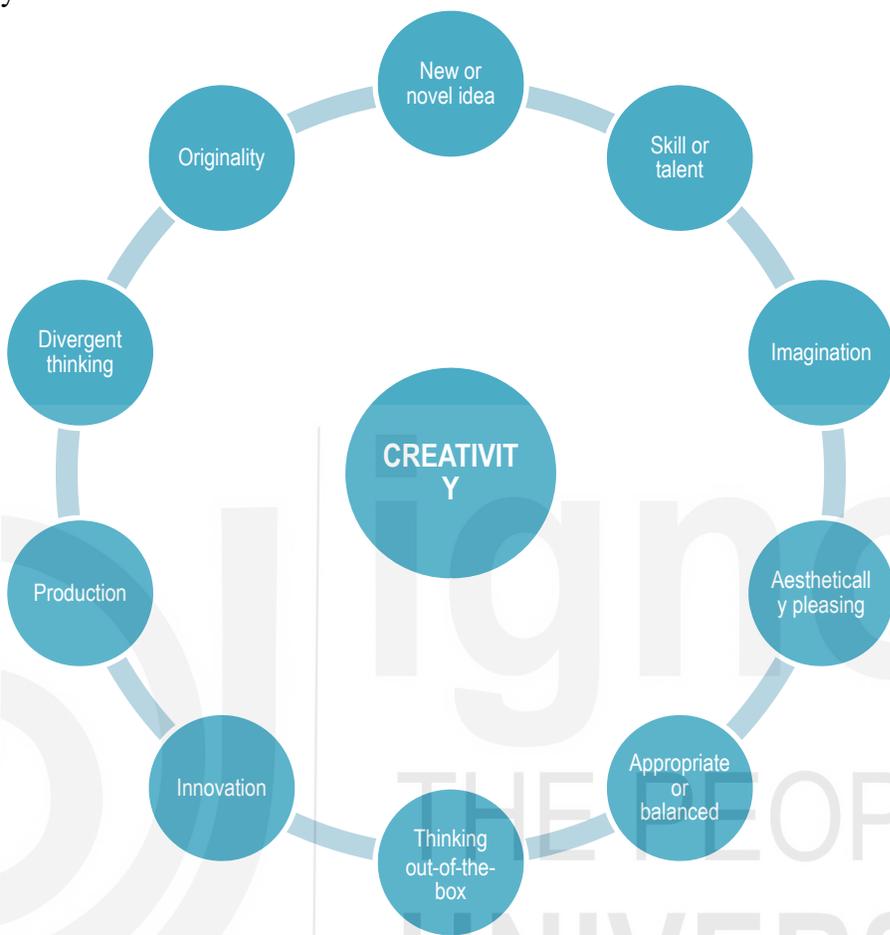
Image 3

Image 3 sums up the idea of creativity, emphasizing the fact that creativity cannot be defined in any one way, or in any rigid terms. Creativity in itself has multiple facets. It is evident that the idea of divergent thinking is embedded in creativity.

Check your progress 3

1   How is divergent thinking different from convergent thinking?

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2   What are the key indicators of creativity?

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1.4   CREATIVITY AS A SOFT SKILL

We have already discussed how creativity involves the use of skill; we shall now discuss how creativity becomes a soft skill. Since creativity as a skill involves thinking out-of-the-box, it deals with how an individual incorporates the thought processes in ways that are different from those of the others. Creativity has become an important concept in the last several decades. This is just not a concept that is used interchangeably with thinking out-of-the-box and innovation in the field of management or in organizations, but has a major role to play in the field of education as well. The emphasis on creativity as the highest order of cognition (or function of thought) has been introduced by Anderson and Krathwohl in their attempt to revise Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy in 2001. The original work byBenjamin Bloom and others in 1956 attempted to define the functions of thought, or cognition. This taxonomy, popularly known as Bloom's Taxonomy, that is almost 60 years old, was revised in 2000-2001. The shift from evaluative learning as the highest cognitive or knowledge category, was replaced by creativity. As such, acquiring knowledge was no longer considered to culminate with the evaluation of knowledge, but with creation of further knowledge.

Anderson and Krathwohl perceived a shift from concrete knowledge to abstract knowledge. This shift was made possible with the introduction of creativity. Concrete knowledge would deal with factual and conceptual knowledge; while abstract knowledge would emphasize on procedural and metacognitive knowledge. These levels of knowledge were indicated in Bloom's original work of 1956, but it only discussed the three kinds – factual, conceptual, and procedural. In the revised version, metacognitive knowledge was added to the knowledge types.
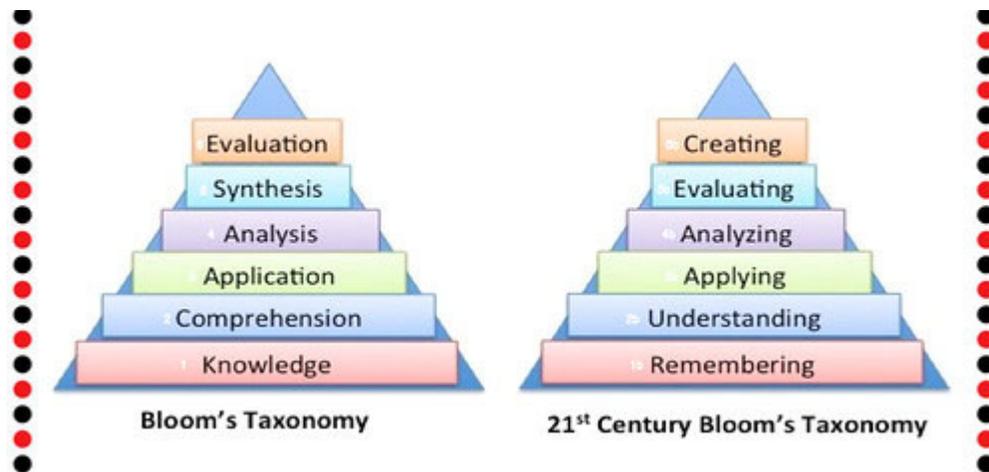
Image 4 – Bloom's Taxonomy and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

Source: https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/0778fcce-9559-40d0-9294-3df60a4eacd3

Image 4 discusses the taxonomies of the cognitive domain by bringing forth the differences between Bloom's Taxonomy of 1956 and the revised version of it by Anderson and Krathwohl in 2001.

1.4.1 Levels of Knowledge

Let us understand how the Knowledge Dimensions were defined in Bloom's Taxonomy and in the revised version in the 21st century, and highlight the distinctions between them. It may be noted that the first three levels were identified in the original work of 1956, but was not elaborated upon much while initially discussing the uses of the taxonomy. The fourth level was added in the revised version, while elaborate discussion was carried out on all four levels of knowledge as well.

The Knowledge Dimension:

Factual Knowledge – The basic elements students must know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems in it.

Conceptual Knowledge – The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.

Procedural Knowledge – How to do something, methods of inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.

Metacognitive Knowledge – Knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition. (Anderson and Krathwohl, 29)

Check your progress 4

1 What is the role of creativity in the revised Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives?

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2 Describe Knowledge Dimensions in about 80-100 words.

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1.4.2 Understanding Domains of Knowledge

When we attempt to understand this classification of the different levels of knowledge in some details, you will see how thinking creatively and constructively is extremely essential. Factual Knowledge refers to the knowledge that is basic to specific disciplines. This dimension refers to essential facts, terminology, details or elements students must know or be familiar with, in order to understand a discipline or solve a problem in it. This knowledge emphasizes on information, terminologies and specific details.This is the basic premise of any knowledge classification. The next step, Conceptual Knowledge, is the knowledge of classifications, categories, principles, generalizations, theories,models, and structures that are pertinent to a particular disciplinary area.In Procedural Knowledge, the focus is primarily on subject-specific skills and algorithms, techniques and methods, and the knowledge of criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures. It refers to methods of inquiry, and veryspecific or finite skills, in a discipline or an area of study. This is skill-based knowledge and the application of this skill-based knowledge.

It may be observed that the levels of knowledge that are applicable in the field of education, can, by way of extension, also be used to understand factual, conceptual and skill-based knowledge within an organization.These would refer to the hard skills that an individual requires to acquire in order to perform the given job or the professional role that one is expected to execute. These hard skills can be acquired by anyone who is diligent and hardworking. However, the output for this would be the same in every case. To this, we may now add what is known as Metacognitive Knowledge. This is a strategic or reflective knowledge about cognitive tasks that employ thinking in a constructive manner. It also includes appropriate conte1tual and conditional knowledge. The most significant aspect of Metacognitive Knowledge is self-knowledge. It entails the awareness of one's own cognition (understanding) and particular cognitive processes (application of the understanding). This is possible only when one applies divergent thinking

processes, or is capable of thinking-out-of-the-box. In other words, this is where creativity comes into play. With the introduction of divergent thinking, this becomes a soft skill. It means thinking about one's thought process in a meaningful manner so that one is aware of one's cognition and also knows how to regulate one'scognition. This cognitive domain works in close relationship to the actions one performs and the manner in which it is reflected upon the individual, or how the individual respond to it.

Check your progress 5

1   Discuss the significance of Metacognitive Knowledge and its relationship to creativity.

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1.4.3 Establishing Creativity as a Soft Skill

Let us now closely look at the traditional domains of learning – cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Each of these domains has a taxonomy associated with it. Categories of the cognitive process dimension in these taxonomies have become an integral part of knowledge and learning processes. Taxonomies of the cognitive have been explored by Bloom and others, where the revised taxonomy of the cognitive domain by Anderson and Krathwohlintroduced 'creating' as the highest form of knowledge. Therefore, we can say that creativity is an essential part of the domain of knowledge.Creativity requires a balance between all domains of learning.
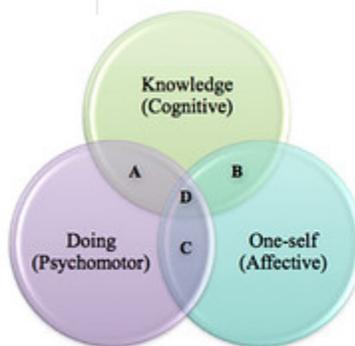
Image 5 – Traditional Domains of Learning

Source: https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/04798d8b-f4d4-41b0-b39d-2c4af5e39718

Look at Image 5 carefully. The three domains of learning have been shown. Please observe that the three domains overlap, and this merging of all three domains are essential for an individual's holistic development. Cognitive Domain refers to knowledge that is based on thinking. Affective Domain refers to the attitude of the individual that is based on feeling. The final domain is that of Psychomotor Domain. This domain refers to the skills that an individual possesses, and is reflected through the actions performed.

The affective domain of learning is value-based, and is dependent on humanistic knowledge. These values could be applicable to the work skills of an individual, as well as life skills (or, soft skills). It also takes into cognizance ethical and emotional awareness, which would again refer to an individual's soft skills. Another parameter of the affective domain is cultural competence, which is again associated with soft skills. Therefore, this domain of learning caters to developing one's soft skills.

The psychomotor domain of learning is related to the act of doing or executing the learning acquired. Traditionally, this domain referred to the physical encoding of information. In the 21st century learning process, this act of doing something may be viewed as meta-knowledge where communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, innovation and creativity become extremely important. No action is possible to represent itself in a better manner unless it has the elements of innovation and creativity.

Therefore, it may be rightly justified that creativity plays an exremely significant role in the growth and development of an individual, and hence becomes one of the most noteworthy components of soft skills that an individual may develop.

Check your progress 6

1   Explain the domains of learning with emphasis on the aspect of creativity.

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2   Do you think creativity is a soft skill? Give reasons for your answer.

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1.5   MEASURING CREATIVITY

Creative attitude and creative-thinking skills, both are very important. We have already discussed that. If creativity has so much significance, then a question naturally comes up – can creativity be measured? The term 'measuring creativity' sounds like an oxymoron. However, for psychologists, measuring creativity is a science, and there are ways in which it may be measured.

Three main ways of measuring creativity have been proposed by psychologists – the creativity quotient (CQ), psychometrics, and the social-personality approach. It was earlier believed that measuring creativity by a quotient would be similar to an IQ. For most of the 20th century, psychologists believed that IQ and creativity were linked: a high IQ meant high creativity, and conversely, a lower IQ meant lower creativity. However, researchers managed to test creativity by employing imagination and open-mindedness to various options.

In 1967, J.P. Guilford, the pioneer of creative psychology, developed a test to measure divergent thinking, calling it Guilford's Alternative Uses Task. This 'divergence test' considered the uniqueness of a response and analyzed how people understood different concepts. In his psychological model called the "Structure of Intellect," Guilford used a technique to separate creative thinking skills from other skills. Subsequently he identified two distinct forms of thinking: divergent thinking and convergent thinking.

Guilford devised four measures of a person's divergent production to measure creativity. These are:

Fluency

Flexibility

Originality

Elaboration

The Guilford approach may not be comprehensive in measuring creativity, but he made an attempt tomeasure the Creativity Quotient.

Another way to measure the outcomes of creative actions is through a psychometric evaluation of an individual. The psychometric method uses questionnaires to measure people's skills, character traits, attitudes and thought processes. One such example is the 2005-questionnaire used for trying to understand creativity, known as the Creative Achievement Questionnaire (CAQ). This questionnaire requires respondents to rate their achievements in the creative domains.This could be considered an appropriate way of measuring creative outcomes because people know how creative they are. However, it is difficult to assess creativity in a rational, honest and accurate manner.

The social-personality approach attempts to measure creativity by measuring other personality factors and claiming that these are parts of creativity.

However, in order to measure how creative a person is, the Guilford Model has been used quite effectively. Divergent thinking is associated with creative thoughts, while convergent thinking is commonly associated with IQ tests.Guilford's pioneering work led others to identify and measure creative thinking. Psychologist E. Paul Torrance built on Guilford's research, developing the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) that attempt to psychometrically measure divergent thinking, and other problem-solving skills. His scoring of answers included the four factors developed by Guilford – originality, fluency, flexibility, elaboration – plus two additional factors: abstractness of titles and resistance to premature closure.Other psychology researchers took an interest in designing and developing tests and scales to identify, rate, and predict creativity, especially by means of personality tests of creativity that involve self-assessments or self-reporting of creativity.Psychologists using the test to measure creativity focus on the 'openness to experience' trait.

Artistic assessments aim to assess artistic products, such as a short story, a painting, and apiece of music, building design, and the like. Experts rate and judge the products.This type of assessment is considered domain-specific,that is, creativity is not considered a general skill. Here creative thinking is seen across multiple subjects or areas, but specific to a particular discipline or domain.A test developed by Harvard psychology researcher Teresa Amabile called the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT) attempts to measure and assess domain-specific creativity.

Check your progress 7

1   Discuss briefly the ways in which creativity may be measured.

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1.6   LEARNING CREATIVITY

We have discussed certain theoretical models with you that will help you to understand the importance of creativity in your personal life as well as at your workplace. Now let us discuss whether creativity can actually be taught and learnt. This will certainly help you emerge as a thinking creative person and can bring about a change which will impact your professional life for the better.

An exhaustive study was done to assess that creativity training programmes help in the professional development of individuals in an article published in 2004, titled "The Effectiveness of Creativity Training: A Quantitative Review" by GinamarieScott, et al. They discussed some of the ways in which creativity may be taught, is by encouraging learners to use new vocabulary, engaging in divergent thinking activities, participating in problem solving, and working towards one's behavioral and attitudinal aspects of personality.

Teresa M. Amabile in her article "How to Kill Creativity" published in the Harvard Business Review in September-October 1998discusses the three components of creativity through the image given below. She posits thatcreativity is a combination of expertise in the area (knowledge), motivation that can inspire, and creative-thinking (imagination). The three components together would help an individual to learn creativity.

3 Components of Creativity

Expertise
Knowledge:
Technical,
procedural &
intellectual

Creative-thinking
Skills
Degree of flexibility,
imagination

Creativity

Motivation

Intrinsic;
influenced by work
environments

Extrinsic;
tangible rewards

Source: T.M. Amabile,
Harvard Business Review Oct. 98
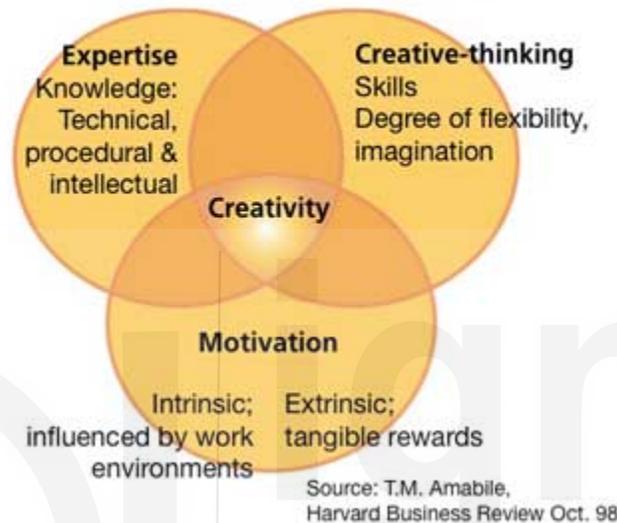
Image 6 – Components of Learning Creativity

Source: https://www.creativityatwork.com/2012/03/23/can-creativity-be-taught/

Creativity has become the buzzword in recent times. By now, you must have already realized that. In a 2010 IBM global survey of more than 1500 CEOs from 60 countries and 33 industries worldwide, creativity was selected as the most crucial factor for future success. In the last decade, the demand for creativity in every sphere has increased manifold.

According to an analysis by LinkedIn in 2020, 'creativity' is the most in-demand soft skill in the world for the second year in a row. LinkedIn analyzed thousands of job postings to determine the skills that companies need the most. Their analysis reveals that creative skills can help employees to retain their jobs, and not be displaced by automated technology.Deanna Pate observes that creativity is a skill that workers in every industry need, in the LinkedIn Learning blog. She further writes, "Organizations need people who can creatively approach problems and tasks across all business roles, from software engineering to HR. Focus on honing your ability to bring new ideas to the table in 2020."

Learning creativitydoes not mean that you start learning completely new things. There are a lot of hidden talents and potential in you that you may start honing. Creativity is about unraveling and enhancing the creative intelligence that you already have, but perhaps you haven't explored enough.

Rebecca Shambaugh in an article for the Harvard Business Review in 2019 observes that creativity is in such high demand because it helps both individuals and organizations achieve their goals. She further posits that leaders need talent who can identify better ways to solve problems, and concludes, "The goal of getting your team to think beyond the box is a no-brainer, but figuring out how to actually achieve greater group innovation isn't. As a leader, it's important to approach making this happen just as you would any other management challenge: creatively."

Therefore, in today's world, learning creativity and being creative is the most important soft skill for all. You must start thinking out-of-the-box!

Check your progress 8

1   Do you think creativity can be taught? Give three reasons in support of your answer.

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2   How can you cultivate creativity?

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1.7   APPLYING CREATIVITY

We have discussed in detail all parameters that define creativity, and why this skill is so important for us in today's time. Let us see how we can apply creativity in our work, in our life, in our surroundings. You may apply some of the given ideas and suggestions so that you can become creative, and apply creativity in whatever you do.
Learning to be creative and applying creativity:

1.   Think freely: Never think that your ideas are not worth it.

2.   Explore: Look out for all possibilities.

3.   Imagine: Unless you can imagine, you cannot become creative.

4.   Stop self-editing: Let your ideas flow freely. That will ensure more avenues.

5.   Be confident: You must have confidence and conviction in your ideas.

6.   Do not imitate: We all have different ways in which we explore our creativity.

7. Be original: Creativity hinges on originality.

8. Look for alternatives: The more you look for different solutions; you will be able to think out-of-the-box.

9. Don't give up: If you are not able to think immediately, do not give up. Sometimes ideas take time to develop.

10. Relax: All creative thinkers have faced creative blocks. It is normal. Do not stress because you cannot think right now.

These may be seen as some simple tips and suggestions which may help you to apply creativity in your professional and personal life.

Check your progress 9

1. Discuss the 5 most important things that would make you creative. Why do you think these 5 points are more important than the other points?

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1.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have looked at importance of creativity and how we can aspire to be creative. Let us sum up the important points:

1. Imagination is very closely related to the idea of creativity.

2. Creativity involves in using one's skill in an innovative way.

3. Creative essentially means something that is new, whereby innovative ideas are generated. Innovation and imagination go hand in hand in creativity.

4. Creativity involves thinking out-of-the-box, that is, how an ordinary thing can be looked at from a different and new lens.

5. The key indicators of creativity are new or novel ideas, skill or talent, imagination, aesthetically pleasing, appropriate or balanced, thinking out-of-the-box, innovation, production, divergent thinking, and originality.

6. The emphasis on creativity as the highest order of cognition (or function of thought) has been introduced by Anderson and Krathwohl in their attempt to revise Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy in 2001.

7. The four Knowledge Dimensions are Factual Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge, Procedural Knowledge and Metacognitive Knowledge.

8. The most significant aspect of Metacognitive Knowledge is self-knowledge. It entails the awareness of one's own cognition (understanding) and particular cognitive processes (application of the understanding). This is possible only when one applies divergent thinking processes, or is capable of thinking-out-of-the-box. In other words, this is where creativity comes into play. With the introduction of divergent thinking, this becomes a soft skill.

9. Creativity requires a balance between all domains of learning.

10. The traditional domains of learning are Cognitive Domain, Affective Domain and Psychomotor Domain.

11. Three main ways of measuring creativity have been proposed by the psychologists – the creativity quotient (CQ), psychometrics, and the social-personality approach.

12. J. P. Guilford devised four measures of a person's divergent production to measure creativity. These are – Fluency, Flexibility, Originality and Elaboration. The Guilford approach may not be comprehensive in measuring creativity, but he made an attempt to measure the Creativity Quotient.

13. Expertise in the area (knowledge), motivation that can inspire, and creative-thinking (imagination), are the three components taken together that would help an individual to learn creativity.

14. According to an analysis by LinkedIn in 2020, 'creativity' is the most in-demand soft skill in the world for the second year in a row.

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1.10 ANSWERS AND HINTS

Check your progress 1

1.   (Hint) you can think about all those qualities that make you different and stand apart from others.

Check your progress 2

2.   Creativity involves a skill – it could be any skill that can be explored. All of us possess some skill, some expertise, some talent, and that needs to be applied and explored in an appropriate manner. Creativity involves using one's skill in an innovative way. Imagination is the most crucial component of creativity. Without imagination, no creative ideas can flourish. We must utilize our skills in an optimized manner in order to produce any creative piece. Creative essentially means something that is new, whereby innovative ideas are generated. Innovation and imagination go hand in hand in creativity.

Check your progress 3

1.   Divergent thinking refers to a thought process that involves perceiving things from different points of view, or looking for multiple solutions to a given problem. It is the opposite of convergent thinking that looks forward to only one solution, or thinking from only one perspective.

2.   The key indicators of creativity are new or novel ideas, skill or talent, imagination, aesthetically pleasing, appropriate or balanced, thinking out-of-the-box, innovation, production, divergent thinking, and originality.

Check your progress 4

1.   (Hint) The emphasis on creativity as the highest order of cognition (or function of thought) has been introduced by Anderson and Krathwohl in their attempt to revise Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy in 2001. You may elaborate on this.

Check your progress 5

1.   (Hint) The most significant aspect of Metacognitive Knowledge is self-knowledge. When one applies divergent thinking processes, or is capable of thinking-out-of-the-box, creativity comes into play. You may elaborate on this.

Check your progress 6

1.   Taxonomies of the cognitive have been explored by Bloom and others, where the revised taxonomy of the cognitive domain by Anderson and Krathwohl introduced 'creating' as the highest form of knowledge. Therefore, we can say that creativity is an essential part of the domain of knowledge. Creativity requires a balance between all domains of learning. You may elaborate on this.

Check your progress 7

1. Three main ways of measuring creativity have been proposed by the psychologists – the creativity quotient (CQ), psychometrics, and the social-personality approach. You may elaborate on this.

UNIT 2: CRITICAL THINKING

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- Learn the different components of critical thinking and how they can be applied in your personal and professional life
- Learn how to approach and work through problems in complex work scenarios
- Learn to develop an attentive and reflective mindset

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking has become a popular buzzword these days. We hear the term being used in different spheres of life, from the professional to the personal. Whether we are thinking of how to resolve conflicts in the workplace or communicate effectively with our friends and colleagues, critical thinking is useful in every little aspect of our life. But before we learn about some of the applications of critical thinking, it will be important to come up with a definition. What does 'critical thinking' really mean?

Critical thinking has been defined in various ways by philosophers and thinkers across time. But for our purpose, it will be useful to think of three essential features of critical thinking.

First, critical thinking involves thinking about the 'why' question, or the set of assumptions and biases that influence any thought or action. Why does a consumer want to buy a specific product from the market? Why do people misunderstand each other? Why are governments choosing certain policies over others?

Second, in the attempt to answer the 'why' question, critical thinking means one looks at the available evidence and evaluates it. It is not possible to find an answer to a question just on the basis of the opinions of one's friends and family--that may be quite misleading. Instead, it is important to consider all possible evidence: data gathered through primary research, information available in existing research, perspectives of different experts and stakeholders. For example, if the government has to consider how to prepare for an epidemic, they have to listen to different medical experts and scientists, look at evidence of epidemic transmission in other countries, and compare and evaluate the evidence before making a sound decision.

Third, critical thinking involves interpretation and analysis of different problems and issues one comes across in everyday life. These issues range from interpersonal conflicts (not being able to effectively communicate with another person) to policy problems (not being able to make a good decision regarding the implementation of an organisational policy). These problems have to be first observed, the details of the problem have to be written down, and then they can be analysed so that better alternatives can be found.

In this unit, we will look at how each of these features can guide us to understand the reality around us better and make more informed, critical choices.

Check your progress 1

Jot down the three features listed above. Now think of any problem you are facing in your daily life. Jot down brief responses to the following questions: a) Why do you think the problem exists? b) What is the evidence or data you will look at to understand the problem better? c) How will you break down the problem into smaller details and analyse the problem?

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2.2 UNDERSTANDING CAUSES, ASSUMPTIONS, BIASES

Imagine a scenario where you are working on a team project with a few other people. You are the youngest member in the group and have joined the project after it has already started. As you are working, you find that the other members are not really taking you seriously or they

excluding you from decision-making. When you try to convey your opinions, they interrupt you and make their points instead. How will you react in such a situation?

Now it is possible that many people, facing a similar situation, will feel demotivated from working. They might think that they are not good enough and begin to seriously doubt their own abilities. Or they might get angry with the other members and begin fighting with them. Both these reactions may not solve the problem. To strategically and sensitively respond to this situation, it will be important to understand the various factors creating the problem to begin with.

For example, it is important to understand that many work-places have hierarchies and unsaid power equations. So more 'senior' members of an organisation may feel superior to 'junior' members and not take them too seriously. Second, it's possible that the imbalance of power comes up more in group conversations--people who are more assertive tend to dominate group conversations. Third, it would be important to identify at what points you are being interrupted. Is it because of how you are communicating certain topics, your lack of knowledge or how you are using language? There may be many more reasons why the situation arose. But keeping in mind these potential causes, you can start strategizing and planning your response. You may want to talk to the members separately--some people are more receptive in one-on-one conversations--and slowly build their trust. You may try communicating your perspectives in a more detailed and concrete manner. You may need to be more assertive or confident.

In other words, the strategies can be effectively applied only if you observe and identify the causes for the situation first. But you may ask: how can one observe and identify better? Now there is no one formula for every situation, of course. However, to identify the causes for any situation or problem, you will need to do at least three things: closely observe the problem, coherently describe the problem, and frame the problem. We will go through each of these aspects one by one.

a) OBSERVING THE PROBLEM

Imagine you are working on an important policy report (say, on education) for a government agency. You are working in a team of 2 other people, with everyone carrying out a different task. One person has to conduct interviews with people on the ground, another person has to read existing research, and your job is to take the inputs from the other two and write the report. Whether you can successfully do the job or not depends on how effectively you work as a team. Each person has to do their job competently and communicate the right information to each other. But suppose things do not go according to plan.

The person who has to conduct interviews does not do all the interviews and shares partially written versions of them. The person who has to read the existing research does not share all the relevant inputs with you, for you to write a well-researched report. With partial information, you cannot really write a good report, so you feel confused and anxious as the deadline for submission nears. What will you do in such a situation?

Now the first thing to think about is that one should not let these problems grow to such an extent. You have to observe the behavioural and working patterns of your colleague's right from the beginning, and offer them reminders and encouragement to work. Second, you have to observe why they are not able to do their work properly. Is it because of family issues or issues with their work ethic or something else? Are they not able to do the work because of lack of training or confidence? Based on the observation of the problem, different kinds of support may have to be given to them. Alternately, the work may have to be structured more tightly, so that all three members talk regularly and are accountable to each other.

In other words, observation helps you finetune your understanding of the problem and learn what factors create and sustain the problem.

b) **DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM**

Observation is usually followed by description, where you begin to detail the different components of the problem. Through description, you can unpack the different layers of a problem, identify and articulate the finer details of what you observe and sense.

Imagine you are teaching a class of first year undergraduate students. Students seem very passive overall and do not respond to your questions, except for a couple of students. You observe that many students seem shy and timid, most of them do not make eye contact, and seem to be a bit lost. You also observe that the English-language proficiency of many students is a bit weak, so they are probably not able to understand the content of your lectures. You feel a little frustrated overall, but you also realise that you need to understand the problem in more detail to be able to address it.

To describe the problem, you'll first have to articulate what you observe. For example, what do students exactly do in the classroom? Are they taking notes, looking at their textbooks, making any eye contact with you? Are they sitting towards the back or the front of the classroom, do they regularly attend classes or are some of them irregular? This will help you concretely identify the behaviour and conduct of students in the classroom. This is important because you need to be sure that your observations are not illusory or incomplete.

Now to delve deeper and get a sense of the finer details of the problem, you will have to gather more data. You will have to talk to students and jot down the reasons why they may feel passive and unresponsive. For example, it may be because they fear being judged, or they feel intimidated by certain peers, or they are not able to pay attention to the lecture, or they do not feel adequately motivated, among other reasons. You can specifically describe the types of linguistic issues they may be facing by doing a short survey of their writing. Are students experiencing problems with vocabulary, conceptual understanding, or the structuring of arguments? You will also have to describe your own behaviour and conduct, by getting feedback from students, to understand whether your own actions are discouraging students from speaking and responding.

By putting together the description, you will have gathered and produced enough data to help you get a more concrete and detailed picture of the problem. However, you may be thinking: how does this help one solve the problem? Description, by itself, does not lead to solutions. To work towards solutions, we have to move into the next step: 'framing' the description.

c) FRAMING THE PROBLEM

After having observed and described the problem, we are left with many details. But sometimes there is too much detail to work with, especially if it is not organised and categorised. Now return to the previous example for a moment, where we discussed a scenario in which students are not interacting and responding in the classroom.

After getting a detailed sense of the various reasons for why students behave passively in the classroom, you have to think of how to organise them under particular categories. Let's assume that there are ten different reasons that have emerged:

I. Students feel disconnected from the lecture content

II. Students don't feel the syllabus is relevant to their everyday lives

III. Students find the language used in lectures too difficult

IV. Students are intimidated by the teacher

V. Students are intimidated by their peers

VI. Students find the content of the textbooks too difficult

VII. Students feel under-confident about speaking in English

VIII. Students are not used to speaking in public spaces

IX. Students feel bored by the content

X. Students don't understand why it is important to respond

Can you already identify some patterns? You might notice that reasons I, II, VI, and IX are all about how students are responding to the content being taught. Reasons III, VII, and VIII are language-related issues, with regard to speaking and listening. Reasons IV and V relate to student confidence. And reason X is perhaps a standalone reason.

Once you have framed and organised the reasons within particular categories, it will be easier to work on solutions. You have to rethink the content being taught or how it is presented; work on creating a safe, comfortable space for students to express themselves; address the language needs of students via speaking, writing, and listening exercises; and clarify why responding in the classroom is important to improve student motivation. In other words, framing the problem, based on your observation and description, helps you respond to the problem in more practical and meaningful ways.

In this section, we discussed how we can identify and understand the causes of a problem. However, even to identify causes, we have to look at 'data' produced through the observation and description of a problem to understand what causes are more important than others. As we further discussed, the availability of complex and numerous 'data' makes it necessary to frame and organise them. But there are a couple of questions that pop up. How do we select the data? And how do we understand which data is better? Well, to answer these questions, let's move on to the next section.

Check your progress 2

a) Imagine you are doing a survey to understand why students struggle to read English textbooks in school. These are the different reasons that have emerged from the survey:

I.   The textbooks are expensive and cannot be afforded
II.   The textbooks are available in very few shops
III.   The textbooks are written in difficult language
IV.   The textbooks don't contain many examples to demonstrate points
V.   Some of the explanations are written in an unclear language
VI.   The content feels too socially distant.
VII.   It is hard to understand the social relevance of some of the chapters.
VIII.   There aren't too many exercises given in the textbookto practise and apply the content being learned

a) How would you group together the reasons?

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b) Think of a situation from your education or work life where you are facing a problem. Now jot down your observations about the problem, write a detailed description of the problem, and finally frame the problem in a manner that you can address it better.

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2.3 WORKING THROUGH EVIDENCE

Evidence refers to the data, facts, and reasons by which you can support and validate an idea. For example, one could say that the earth is flat, but without providing strong evidence to support this idea, the idea cannot be validated. As we know, there is already strong and numerous evidence to support that the earth is roughly spherical, so if someone wants to make a contrasting claim, they have to come with even stronger evidence!

Critical thinking relies on evidence-based thinking and reasoning. It is not enough to just state an idea or opinion, even if it may appear new or interesting. The idea also has to be believable; it has to be persuasive. Frequently, in a debate on a news channel, you may have noticed that the speakers will resort to shouting and loudly asserting their positions, but not actually presenting evidence to support them. By loudly asserting an idea, one may be showing conviction, but it is dangerous to get persuaded just because someone presents an idea with force. Many people in power, for example, can mislead people by presenting their ideas with a show of authority or force, but not actually taking the labour/time to demonstrate the idea with evidence.

To understand how we need to support our ideas with evidence, let us look at the following scenario. Imagine you are working in an environmental organisation, which works to promote more sustainable and ecology-friendly ways of living. You work in the communications team, that is, you have to help articulate and communicate the campaigns and agendas of your organisation to the general public. You are currently working on a project where you have to persuade different state governments to invest more in public transport, so that more people can be discouraged from relying on private cars and bikes. Governments are resistant to

implementing any radical change since the automobile industry creates jobs and contributes to the economy. How would you, then, go about producing your campaign?

In such a scenario, evidence-based reasoning will become essential. Different stakeholders will offer different types of reasons and evidence to make their points. For example, governments will argue that even if public transport is expanded, the more affluent communities will continue to invest in cars since public transport is not considered to be comfortable enough. Buying cars is also a way of showing one's status and socio-economic mobility, and the government might argue that forcing people to use public transport can be seen as an infringement on people's private liberty to acquire products for their comfort and status. Automobile manufacturers will argue that they are creating jobs and thus they cannot be discouraged from producing more cars.

Clearly, in this scenario, you will have to engage with all the evidence that is provided to you and form a critical judgment. The first step will be to list all the available evidence for and against the position or argument you want to convey; the second step will be to compare and evaluate the evidence. Let's go through one step at a time.

a) Listing the evidence

Now in the given scenario, you have to gather evidence both supporting as well as challenging your agenda. Now you have been given the job of making governments understand how public transportation needs to be encouraged. It is important for you, then, to gather evidence to make a case for how public transportation is good for the environment. But at the same time, there is evidence provided by other stakeholders about how expanding public transportation at the cost of discouraging private transportation may not be a good idea. So, you can list the evidence against your idea--let's call this counterevidence. Here's a list of the available evidence, along with the sources from where you may have gathered the evidence.

Evidence in favour of your argument:

E1) Expansion of safe and good quality public transportation has led to reduction of use of private cars in many countries. Source: research papers.

E2) The reduction of private transportation leads to less pollution. Source: research papers.

E3) People will actually be encouraged to shift to public transportation if it is improved. Source: primary field research.

Counter-evidence challenging your argument:

CE1) People will not be discouraged from using private transportation if public transportation is expanded. Source: politicians.

CE2) Reducing private transportation will adversely affect the economy by decreasing jobs. Source: automobile companies.

After you have listed all the evidence for and against your argument, now we can move to the next step: comparing and evaluating the evidence.

b) Comparing and evaluating the evidence:

Now you realise that the evidence being used to challenge your argument is not alive to the question of environmental impact. This is in stark contrast to the evidence you are using to support your argument--with the use of research papers, you are able to demonstrate that reduction of private cars does lead to less pollution. In other words, you have the stronger evidence to prove that reduction of private transportation will lead to less pollution.

Now according to the evidence provided by politicians (CE1), people will not be necessarily discouraged from using private transportation. However, through your own field survey, you have found that people, on the contrary, are willing to shift to public transport only if the quality of service is improved. The politicians' evidence, then, can be challenged by claiming that the problem is with how people perceive the quality of public transportation. So, a case must be made for not just expanding public transportation, but improving its quality. Finally, to reinforce this point, you can use research-based evidence from other countries to show how access to efficient and safe public transportation does lead to reduction of private transport.

However, there is one more counter-evidence you have to engage with. Automobile companies will claim that there will be job loss if private transportation is discouraged, and you cannot simply dismiss the evidence. You will, then, have to look for evidence from other countries/contexts to see how job loss can be countered in the shift to public transportation. Alternative options such as creating more jobs in the public transportation sector, or even incentivising automobile companies to produce more energy-efficient cars will need to be considered.

In other words, as you work through the available evidence supporting and challenging your argument and agenda, you realise that you cannot make a simple assertion anymore. Your eventual position will need to be supported by strong evidence, which you have to gather through first-hand field research as well as reading existing scholarship, but you will also need to engage with counter-evidence and modify your argument accordingly.

Check your progress 3

Imagine you are part of a media debate on how gender-based harassment can be prevented in colleges. In the panel, there is a politician, a lawyer, and a gender activist, along with you. You are representing your college and you want to make the point that more social sensitisation is

required for people, especially men, to understand what constitutes harassment. Here is the list of evidence being used in the debate:

i) Gender-based harassment has to be prevented by taking strict action against perpetrators and by making college security stricter so that students cannot easily move around and enter each other's hostels (Source: politician)

ii) Increasing security is not the solution since it leads to more policing of women and those with disadvantaged gender identities, and not necessarily prevent gender-based harassment (Source: gender activist)

iii) When gender-based harassment is not well-defined, it leads to confusion of response and delays institutional action (Source: lawyer)

iv) There are existing institutional guidelines to prevent gender-based and sexual harassment, but they are not implemented by college administrations (Source: gender activist)

v) The definition of gender-based harassment cannot be restricted to a narrow legal one since it is linked with complex social, linguistic, and behavioural factors (Source: research papers)

vi) According to multiple papers and reports, harassment cannot be prevented without social sensitisation, which has to be done through workshops, multiple conversations with the college community, and discussions in the classroom (Source: research papers)

How would you define your position based on the evidence? Is there evidence you would like to add?

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2.4 CRITICAL INTERPRETATION

In this section, we will discuss one more essential component of critical thinking: interpretation. Interpretation, in simple terms, refers to making sense of anything you observe and experience. As you read a book, you interpret its meaning or what it is trying to say. As you watch a film, you interpret various things such as the presentation of characters, the sequencing of the action, the use of music, among others. Interpretation is unavoidable. Whether you are talking to someone or doing a specialised task in a project, you will have to interpret what is going on in order to respond, interact, and act.

For our purposes, however, we will distinguish between functional and critical interpretation. Function interpretation refers to a surface-level understanding of what you observe; critical interpretation goes a step (or many steps) further, reflecting on the observation or experience in more detail.

For example, imagine you are listening to a song that you really enjoy.

A functional interpretation would be the following:

This song is fun because it has nice beats and an enjoyable melody.

On the other hand, a critical interpretation would sound something like:

This song is played at a high tempo, and the groove is produced by the use of the tabla along with the bongo. The beat creatively fuses Hindustani classical rhythms with Latin rhythms. The melody is soothing yet passionate; it first establishes a central melody and then improvises itself to provide a sense of expansion and movement.

As you can see, a more critical interpretation will observe finer details about the song, describe the components of the song more elaborately, and also reflect on how the song produces its intended effect. Now in previous sections of the chapter, we have already discussed how we can think about observation and description; here, we will focus on the aspects of reflection and synthesis.

Reflection refers to the act of introspecting about what you read and observe. It involves asking how and why things happen the way they do and cultivating a deeper engagement with what we read and observe. Synthesis refers to the act of connecting our responses and reflections into a coherent narrative or argument.

Task 1: A good place to begin is by asking yourself how you interpret everyday activities that you do. Think of an activity that you do every day--reading, walking, singing, cooking, taking care of family--and reflectively jot down your understanding of the same. You may think of the following questions:

What do I feel when I do this activity?

Why do I engage with this activity? What significance does it have for me?

How do I speak about this activity to other people?

How do others speak about this activity? Do I agree or disagree with them?

Would I like to do it differently?

You can practise this reflective exercise for any activity that you do, relationships that you have, and events that you see. This will help generate greater self-awareness about each aspect of your life and also help you interpret the various activities you do in your work spaces.

Task 2: Reflecting on what you read

Frequently, we are magnetised by what we read and are unable to question the authority of the text. To reflectively read means that we will pay attention to what we are reading, ask questions when we do not understand or are not convinced, and explore what we are specifically interested in. Now let us read the following passage:

> 'When reading a book, we should be receptive to any passage that triggers a deeper reflection on any topic, even if it's not the main subject of the book. Sensing a possible relationship between the read passage and our preoccupation, we as good readers should concentrate on analysing the text, looking for a connection between the main idea and our own interest'

(From Act of Study, Paulo Freire)

As soon as you finished reading, you were left with some thoughts, feelings, and perhaps even some words. Jot down your first impressions. Now go back and read again, but this time pause whenever a word or idea strikes you, look up what it means or what others have said about it, connect it with your own life and social contexts you see around you, discuss your thoughts with friends and family. The more you reflectively engage with the passage, the more deeply you will interpret it.

Finally, after jotting down your reflections, you will need to connect it together--and that is what we call synthesis. It is important to remember that learning to reflect on books and essays you read is a way to practise reading life at large. You will have to read situations you are placed in (like some of the scenarios we have discussed in this chapter), read conversations you have with people, and even read complex events that you will witness and experience. In other words, critical interpretation, which combines observation, description, reflection, and synthesis, will be essential to navigate each aspect of your life.

Check your progress 4

Write a brief reflective interpretation of what you learned from this chapter.

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we discussed three different components of critical thinking--understanding causes, working through evidence, and critical interpretation--and how they can help us navigate various personal and professional scenarios.

2.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

Hooks, bell. Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom. New York: Routledge, 2010.
Internet resources:
https://www.innovativeteachingideas.com/blog/critical-thinking-for-teachers-and-students
https://philosophy.hku.hk/think/critical/ct.php

2.7 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

Do it yourself

Check your progress 2

   a) Reasons I and II relate to issues of accessing the textbooks, reasons III and V have to do with the language of the textbook, reasons IV and VIII have to do with the design and organisation of the textbook, and reasons VI and VIII relate to how students socially relate to the textbook.

   b) Do it yourself

Check your progress 3

Do it yourself

Check your progress 4

Do it yourself

UNIT 3 DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.1 Reading a Situation

3.2 Evaluating the Available Information and Evidence

3.3 Comparing Different Decisions

3.4 Problem Solving

3.5 Let Us Sum Up

3.6 Suggested Readings

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- Learn how to approach decision-making in a step-by-step manner
- Learn how to take more informed decisions in both personal and professional spheres of life
- Apply techniques of decision-making to respond to and solve problems

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Much of our life is spent taking decisions, making choices, and solving problems which we encounter. But could we say that all our decisions are taken thoughtfully, or are they frequently abrupt, hasty, and dissatisfying? The answer is not simple for anybody. The situations we encounter in our daily lives are far more complex than they may appear, and taking good decisions is always a challenge. But it is a challenge we must learn to navigate better, and that is precisely what this unit will help you do.

A decision, in simple terms, refers to a choice or judgment one has to make in a situation. The quality of the decision, however, will depend on a set of factors. It will depend on a critical reading of the situation, evaluating the available information and perspectives to help you make a sound decision, and comparing the benefits and limitations of each potential decision. Further, the effectiveness of a decision will depend on whether enough analysis has gone into the

decision-making. When decisions are made on the basis of inadequate information or thought, they may be highly ineffective.

Decision-making is also an act of responsibility. We know that many bad or dangerous decisions are taken by people in power, which can impact how we live in society. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, some governments have been able to effectively contain the spread of the virus whereas others have not. If we analyse the reasons behind this difference, we will find that better decisions are taken when there is better critical thinking accompanying the decisions. If a government does not closely study the available scientific information and evidence available, if it does not listen to the perspectives of different experts and stakeholders, or if it does not compare the successful and unsuccessful policies of other countries, then the basis of decision-making will be weak.

The above example leads us to another insight. Decision-making is closely linked to problem-solving. While everyday decisions such as eating meals or meeting friends are not necessarily responding to a problem, many other decisions in your personal and professional life definitely are. For example, there are numerous conflicts and problems you will encounter in your workplace. These problems have to do with gaps in communication between people, or disagreements on approaches towards work, among other issues. The capacity to make an informed and critical decision will immensely help you navigate such scenarios and problems.

To reiterate, decision-making involves three primary steps:

i. The reading of the situation within which the decision will be made

ii. The evaluation of available information and perspectives to help you make a sound decision

iii. The comparison of different potential decisions, to be able to identify the best or the most effective decision.

In the next few sections, we will go over each step more elaborately.

Check your progress 1

Think of one important decision you have taken in the past one year. It could be related to your education, your professional work, or relationships with family and friends. Identify and jot down the factors that went into the decision-making. Think through the following questions:

a) where and when was the decision taken?

b) what was the context or situation within which the decision was taken?

c) what were the various facts, data, and information that you considered while taking the decision?

d) did you compare different decisions that could be taken in the situation and modify your decision accordingly?

e) would you consider the decision to be perfect, or do you think it has certain limitations?

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3.1 READING A SITUATION

Imagine you're teaching a course on soft skills, to a set of undergraduate students. While teaching, you notice that there is one student who does not pay any attention, keeps texting on his phone, or reads film magazines in class. You have asked him questions a couple of times to redirect his attention, but he's answered them half-heartedly and promptly gone back to doing what he wants to. A few students who sit around him have complained that they feel distracted because of him. When you have mentioned this situation to your colleagues, they have given you a range of suggestions. Some have asked you to be harsh and take away his phone; others have asked you to be gentle and talk to him separately to understand his behaviour better. What would you do in such a situation?

Now the first step is to read the situation very closely. When we use the word 'read', we mean a combination of things: observation, categorization of details, and interpretation. You have already observed the broad details of the situation. You could also observe where he sits (front or back), if he's distracted right from the beginning of the class or during certain moments, and how he responds when you directly ask him questions in class. You will realise that while you can observe superficial details, you have no sense of how the student actually feels. In such a case, you might need to also talk to the student, and ask how he feels in the classroom. It's important that you don't impose your judgment onto the student--that will actually compromise your observation and you will not get reliable, honest answers from the student. This is, of course, a tricky situation. But it's necessary that you create an atmosphere where the student can tell you why he is distracted without feeling intimidated. Your role is to learn from the student's answers, not immediately come to a conclusion.

After having jotted down your observations, you can begin organising and categorising them. You will notice that the situation can be broken down into different types of details: details about the social and physical environment; details about behaviour; and details about student motivation. For example, the details about the social and physical environment would include how many students are in class, where the student gets to sit, whether the student gets along with their peers or not, the social and linguistic background of the student, and so on. The details about behaviour would include what the student is actually doing--whether they are fidgeting, reading other books, tapping their phones. The details about student motivation would be gathered from a conversation with the student. This would include details such as what topics interest the student, whether the student feels engaged with the style of lecture, whether the student finds the lecture content relevant to their personal lives, and so on.

Once you have observed and categorised the various aspects of the situation, now comes the most important step: interpretation. Now to interpret the details, you might have to read up on the issue, talk to other people, and consider more perspectives. For example, to understand why the student is not motivated by the content you teach, you will have to reflect on your own teaching style. This will include an analysis of how you deliver content, the references and examples you use to illustrate the content, your body language, and so on.

In other words, reading the situation is quite a complex task. Once you have a more detailed understanding of the situation, you are more empowered to make a better decision to respond to the situation. However, it will be important to evaluate all available information that you have about the situation, which we will discuss in the next section.

Check your progress 2

Imagine a situation where you are working on a group assignment with three other people. After you have submitted the assignment, you realise that one person in the group had plagiarised the section they had to write. As a group, you can face strict penalties, so you will have to make a decision to help deal with the situation. Jot down how you would 'read' the situation.

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3.2 EVALUATING THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE

In the previous section, we discussed how it is important to list down all the details that you will observe in a situation. These details, in fact, become part of the information you need to assess a situation and make a good decision. However, the details may not be enough and in some cases, may even be misleading. If you remember the previous example, where a teacher has to observe the details of how a student is distracted, the observation will only be accurate if the teacher is a critical observer. But this, unfortunately, cannot be guaranteed. All of us observe through our own biases, our own filters. You may read the student's behaviour as willing disobedience and disinterest, but the student may not have learned how to participate in classroom conversations. We can try to be as unbiased as possible, but there will always be a limit to our own perceptions. As a result, it will be important to gather information and evidence through multiple other sources.

Imagine you are leading your college committee which organises cultural events and discussions for the entire college. Your job, in consultation with the other members in the committee, is to identify speakers and performers who can come and present their work and ideas to the larger college audience. After you take charge, you realise that there are contrary perspectives about who should be invited. Some students feel that only mainstream celebrities (such as actors and singers) should be invited because they will encourage larger audiences to turn up for these events. If more students turn up, then it increases the popularity of your committee. Other students, however, believe that people who do socially conscious work should be invited-- grassroots activists, human rights lawyers, and NGO workers. This can help sensitise the larger student body, who may not be exposed to many socially relevant issues in the country. Yet another group believes that it is not enough to just invite people working in the social sector. They argue that people from marginalised communities should be prioritised, rather than those from urban, dominant caste backgrounds. This will help amplify not just social causes, but also give a platform to those who are socially excluded or discriminated against. Now after hearing all these perspectives, you have to decide who you will invite and why. What would you do?

In this situation, the first step will be to observe and understand all the perspectives. If required, you will have to set up conversations with different student groups to get a better sense of the reasons for why they wish to invite certain people. But you cannot merely rely on the perspectives of the groups. It is possible some groups will have a stronger, confident voice, or that some groups will be personally close to you. You cannot allow yourself to be biased or partial to certain groups, just based on the presentation of their perspectives. In other words, this means you will have to look for answers outside social conversations within your college community.

There are three steps that you will have to go through here. First, you have to identify the gaps in the information that you can find from a reading of the situation. Second, you will have to search for and list more evidence to substantiate each of the positions or perspectives. And finally, you will have to evaluate the evidence to see if they can significantly influence your decision-making. Now let's go over each step:

a) **Identifying gaps in situational details/information**: From a detailed reading of the situation, you can gather the different perspectives of different student groups. But you realise that they are speaking from their experience of college life, and partially through their own social and political interests. Are their perspectives based on actual facts? Now a good way to identify the gaps in information is by asking questions. Let's list a few important questions relevant to the present situation:

I. Is it true that the popularity of the committee increases if celebrities are invited?

II. Is there a necessary fan following for all celebrities?

III. What kinds of opinions and attitudes do celebrities hold?

IV. Do students get sensitised if they are exposed to people working in the social sector?

V. Does participation in events decrease if less famous people are invited?

VI. Are people from marginalised sections of society under-represented in discussions and events?

These are some questions that will help you seek more information from sources outside the immediate situation. For example, to address the final question, you will need to look at previous records of who has been invited to your college, and look at reports and studies which can provide a detailed understanding of how members of certain communities are less represented than others. You may want to speak to teachers or alumni, to get a sense of their experiences from a previous time. You may discover that even among marginalised communities, people from certain regions may have been invited over others. This will give you a more precise idea of which communities have been less represented or not represented at all in college talks, in terms of caste, gender, regional location, linguistic background, and so on.

b) **Listing the evidence**: The second step involves putting together all the evidence you have gathered, from a reading of the situation as well as a reading of external sources.

In the example we are discussing, the evidence gathered from reading the situation includes: the opinions of different student groups, the reasons provided by each group, and any personal experience you have had regarding events that have been organised in your presence. The

evidence gathered from external sources include: records of events in your college; opinions of faculty members and alumni; data and literature to help you cross-verify and assess the opinions and perspectives of other students. Finally, after you have listed all the evidence, you can move on to evaluating the evidence.

c) **Evaluating the evidence**: One of the most crucial aspects in decision-making is to evaluate the evidence. Each piece of information or evidence will provide their own arguments, and you will have to work through each of them. While there is no standard formula for how you can evaluate, there are some issues you need to keep in mind:

i) Reflect on your own biases: In the example given above, you may be inclined towards one perspective over another. You may feel that calling a celebrity will bring your committee more short-term benefits, and you may not seriously consider the question of how the events you organise also need to socially sensitise people. Or you may be inclined to listen more to a group you are friends with. But when you listen to different perspectives, you are being asked to question your own bias and broaden your own perspective. Assess the evidence by thoughtfully considering it, not by narrowly judging it through your own bias.

ii) Corroborate the evidence: It is important that you find multiple sources to reinforce an opinion or perspective. For example, the perspective that people from the social sector can sensitise students needs to be understood better. You can talk to more students, look up studies, and also talk to people from the social sector about their own experiences in sensitising others. If you make a decision in favour of one position, you need to have strong evidence to back it up.

iii) Look at counter-evidence: To develop greater clarity about whether the information or evidence is persuasive, you can actually search for information or perspectives that contradict the available evidence. We can call this counter-evidence. For example, some may argue that inviting figures from marginalised communities does not really make a big difference--it can feel tokenistic instead. The platform provided is too insignificant for it to really matter. If genuine representation has to take place, then people from marginalised communities have to be included within all decision-making bodies within the college. Even students from marginalised communities might prefer attending the talks of more 'famous' people instead. And more elite students might not attend these sessions at all. Now this is a view that challenges the position that calling people from marginalised communities helps provide a platform to these communities, to amplify their voices. You have to seriously consider the counter-evidence. If it is incorrect or misleading, then the existing evidence is proven right. But if it has some truth to it, then the evidence you have is more complex. Perhaps you will come to the conclusion that representing people from marginalised communities is important, but it may not always be effective and has to be supported by other strategies. This complex understanding will help make your decision-

making much more refined--your decision will be based on a real view of things, rather than exaggerated projections.

Once you have worked through the evidence, you will be far more empowered to take a meaningful decision. However, there is another hurdle to be crossed: what if two or more decisions feel equally valid? We will discuss this problem in the next section.

Check your progress 3

Imagine a scenario where you are contesting your local municipality or panchayat election without any affiliation to a big party. As you begin to campaign, you hear different perspectives about how you should campaign. Some tell you to be idealistic and campaign around issues that matter to people; others tell you to advertise yourself smartly and not fuss about being honest; and a few more are asking you to join a big party to avoid being muscled out of the election. What decision would you take in this situation, and what could be the possible information and evidence that will help you take this decision?

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3.3 COMPARING DIFFERENT DECISIONS

Is there a best decision for each situation? There may be different answers to this question based on the experiences and perspectives of each person. You may have noticed that people decide very differently in the same situation, and sometimes you are divided between decisions- you cannot be sure which is better than the other. To arrive at what you think is the most effective decision in a situation, you cannot just rely on intuition or hunch. Instead, you need to be able to compare the reasoning behind each potential decision in a situation, and justify why you are choosing one over the other.

Imagine you have to choose between two different disciplines for your higher studies, one which is more traditional and another which is more off-beat. Your parents want you to choose the more traditional course--say, engineering or economics--since it is associated with more stable and well-paid jobs. On the other hand, you want to study a course allied to your passions and interests--say, art history or music. Such niche courses may not provide you immediate jobs, and on top of that, these courses are available in more elite universities where the fees are considerably higher. What would you decide in this situation?

Now clearly there could be two different decisions here. It will be necessary to work through all the reasons that can both encourage and discourage each decision. A useful technique to compare the decisions would be to draw a table listing all the reasons for and against each decision. In this situation, there are two possible decisions--let's call them decision A and decision B. Decision A refers to opting for a more traditional course; and decision B refers to choosing the more off-beat course. Here, reasons refer to the judgments and arguments that you have arrived at, after reading your situation and assessing all the available evidence.

Reasons in favour of decision A	Reasons in favour of decision B	Reasons opposing decision A	Reasons opposing decision B
Will ensure more immediate and stable job prospects.	Can lead to prominent careers in the long run, although immediate job prospects might be limited.	Competition will be higher and it might not be as easy to get well-paid jobs unless one performs exceptionally or goes to more elite colleges.	Number of jobs available will be less, although competition will also be less.
Will be more satisfying for parents.	Will be more satisfying for you personally.	The personal dissatisfaction and disconnect will reduce the quality of learning.	Owing to less job opportunities, there might be a constant anxiety to train/skill oneself in other practical ways, thus reducing the engagement with the discipline.
Might be less expensive, unless you go to an elite college.	Despite the expenses, the course will train you in a field that you care about and find meaningful.	Without sufficient motivation for the field and allied jobs, there might be long-term regret and dissatisfaction about the life choices that you made.	Might be more expensive, since these courses are mostly available in elite private colleges.

After you have listed all the reasons for and against, you have to compare them and assess which ones would be more preferable in your situation. For example, if you have financial constraints

in your family, it may not be advisable to go for a field that is expensive and does not ensure stable jobs. You might want to save money first, and then go for your studies. Even though this decision may seem dissatisfying in the short run, it can enable you to make better and more meaningful choices in the long run. On the other hand, if you are sure how you want to use your degree towards certain personal and professional goals, then studying a niche field will not seem as anxiety-inducing. If you think that you are someone who cannot sustain interest without strong motivation, then studying a traditional course would be difficult and even lead to failure.

In other words, once you list all the reasons, you can make the decision more strategically, understand what would be most relevant for your context, and take responsibility for its consequences. For example, if your parents are strongly opposed to you studying a non-mainstream course, you will have to provide them with good reasons for your choice. This exercise will help you justify your decision much better, to yourself and to others.

Check your Progress 4

Think of a situation in your life, where you were divided between two possible decisions or choices. Draw a table to list all the reasons for and against each decision.

3.4 PROBLEM SOLVING

The process of decision-making is closely linked to how we go about solving or responding to problems. To solve a problem, you will need to identify the problem, closely observe and read the problem, look at all the available information to understand the details of the problem, break down the problem into different components, compare possible solutions, and finally decide how to approach solving the problem. While we have already discussed many of these steps in previous sections, here we will go through a few ideas that need separate focus. We will do this through a few tasks.

Task 1: Describing the problem

Does a problem already exist in the world, is it experienced by us in a ready-made version, or do we construct and define the problem? Many problems, whether they are long-term social problems such as poverty or ecological problems such as climate change, already exist and we are broadly aware of what they are. However, to meaningfully respond to a problem, it is important that we describe and clarify it for ourselves, so that we know what exactly we want to respond to.

Now think of a problem that you experience in your everyday life. This could have to do with how you get into exhausting fights with people who hold different political opinions from yours, or how you feel under-confident about doing certain tasks, or anything at all. How would you describe the problem?

To describe the problem, think of the following questions:

a) Where and when does the problem occur?
b) Does the problem occur in a similar way every time, or is it different? Is there a pattern to how the problem plays out?
c) What are the different components of the problem?
d) What are the immediate causes or triggers for the problem? What could be the deeper, underlying causes for the problem?
e) Is the problem linked to other problems or issues?

Jot down your responses to each question, and then put it together as a short narrative if you can. If you can describe the problem clearly and sharply, it will give you a sense of the specific nature of the problem. For example, if you are getting into fights with people who hold different political opinions, you may realise that this problem occurs specifically on social media platforms, that it is triggered by assumptions you hold about the other person based on their linguistic skills, and that it is broadly linked to your lack of exposure to people outside your social circle. If your interest is in influencing the other person's opinion, and perhaps even learning a thing or two from them, then it will be important to learn how to have more constructive conversations. Once you describe the problem, you are in a better place to work on smaller aspects of the problem.

Task 2: Clarify your motivation

Why do you want to respond to a problem? Why do you want to solve it? Problem solving cannot be a neutral activity. You are always doing it because you have some interest in it. Even if an organisation you work with has told you to do it, the organisation has an interest in solving the problem, for which you have been assigned the work. It is important to clarify and understand your motivation so that you do not feel confused and challenged during the problem-solving process. It also helps you understand what kinds of solutions you are actually looking for. For example, suppose you feel under-confident when you speak to colleagues in your work space and you want to feel more confident. It is important to identify why you want to feel more confident. Is it to help you improve your self-esteem, or because you want to present yourself as more assertive, or because you want to more effectively discuss work with your colleagues? It can be all of these reasons, of course. But once you identify which ones are more important, you can search for more precise solutions. To appear more assertive, you will also need to work on

your body language. And to effectively speak about work, you will need to learn the relevant vocabulary in your domain of work.

Now think of a problem in your life that you would like to address and solve. Jot down the reasons why you want to solve the problem. Identify which reasons are more important than others. Think of how the solutions can precisely respond to the reasons that are more important.

Task 3: Learn from implementation

Finally, it is important to remember that once you implement the solution, you have not actually solved the problem. Instead, you have attempted to solve it, and even if it is a successful attempt, you learn from it so that you can improve the solution over time.

Think of a problem that you have successfully addressed in your life. Now jot down some of your learnings from this attempt and think of how you can respond to the problem even more effectively and meaningfully. You can think through the following questions:

a) Were you able to easily find a solution, or did you have to rethink many times and cross many hurdles? Do those hurdles still exist? How would you navigate those hurdles now?
b) Were there any gaps or limitations in your solution? How would you address them now?
c) Are there alternative solutions you can think of now? How would you compare your original solution with alternatives?

In other words, problem solving is a continuous process--the more you reflect on the process, the more effectively you can respond to problems. Decision-making, too, is a process that constantly evolves through reflection. Both decision-making and problem-solving, as we have learned, need to be approached in a systematic manner, but the way to keep refining them is by constantly analysing how you approach them, reflecting on both your successes and failures.

Check your progress 5

Write a brief reflective interpretation of what you learned from this unit.

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we discussed three main steps involved in decision-making--reading the situation, evaluating evidence, and comparing potential decisions--and how they can help us work towards making better decisions. We also discussed how problem-solving is closely linked to decision-making.

3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

Internet Resources:

https://www.umassd.edu/fycm/decision-making/process/

https://www.cuesta.edu/student/resources/ssc/study_guides/critical_thinking/106_think_decisions.html

https://asq.org/quality-resources/problem-solving

UNIT 4: HARKING INTO THE FUTURE

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to help you

- To develop skills which will assure you a successful future.
- Elucidate the evolution, scope and relevance of people management and leadership.
- Understand Diversity perspective.
- Explain the purpose and usefulness of a holistic work force in the modern workplace.
- Define leadership roles for the present and future.
- Comprehend the complex nature of the modern workplace.
- Creating congenial work environment through effective interpersonal relations.
- Comprehending human factors in conflict resolution for harmony through practical techniques.
- Developing certain personal and social traits.
- Successful operation of committees, teams and group decision making through collaboration and cooperation.

4.1   MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Diversity, inclusivity, subjectivity, globalization, intersectionality, decentered poetics, accommodating alternative traditions anddemocratizing potential are the central tenets of the twenty-first century world view.The new workplace is more tolerant. The traditional hierarchical structures are getting dismantled. Today's workplace is characterized by a relaxed, fluid environment. According to a study by Center for Assessment, critical thinking, collaboration, complex communication and self-directed learning are the skills to master in the 21stcentury.

It is important to note that, as a result of demographic and legislative changes,workplaces are increasingly becoming more diverse. People no longer function in a monochromatic setting. The inclusion of women and members from various racial, religious, social, linguistic, gender, ability and skill backgrounds has additionally altered the workplace dynamics. Diversity, according to Stephen Butler, co-chair of the Business Higher Education Forum, is a valuable competitive asset. (Robinson 2002)Inclusion of diversity not only benefits the managers but also imparts a wider perspective and a greater vision to the workforce. Organizations are constantly evolving and are being restructured to accommodate the interests of the larger working population.Since diversity has the ability to improve work efficiency and has acompetitive advantage, companies are increasingly transforming into inclusive spaces. Discrimination and derogatory perceptions (prejudices, stereotyping, and biases) in the workplace are now unlawful due to improvements in federal and state equal opportunity laws.As a result, managers and administrators must implement new and creative approaches to manage people. Progressive organizations promote safe environments within the offices that eventually lead to further opportunities for dialogue, dissent and discussion. Effective managers create a fair and safe environment for everyone and keep up to date on diversity concerns, its laws and regulations. They also never ignore constructive, critical criticism about company's programs and policies.Thus, recognizing, embracing, and respecting differences among people with empathy, compassion, and an awareness of rights and duties is a vital management skill that discerning administrators must cultivate.

Check your progress 1

1   Why is the 21ˢᵗ century different from the other centuries?

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2   Why is it essential for administrators to recognize diversity?

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3   How will you make your work environment conducive for a new hire from a different cultural background? [Practical Question]

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4   How will you make your workplace communication gender and race agnostic? [Practical Question]

4.2   MANAGINGWORKFORCE THROUGH PROPER COMMUNICATION

In all aspects of life, effective communication is critical to success. Particularly beneficial for those in positions of leadership and management, almost all aspects of work and functionality are affected by communication. Training specialists Brad Humphrey and Jeff Stokes identify communication skills as being amongst the most important skills for modern supervisors. Andrew Posner, a career counsellor, advises that employees looking for career advancement require such "transferable skills" as the ability to "analyze, write, persuade, and manage".

Communicationfor Effective Leading andBetter Teamwork

Effective leaders are able to use a wide variety of media and strategies to communicate. They are not only skilled at using verbal communication skills, but they are also adept at reading nonverbal cues. Great leaders collaborate to foster harmony and amicability at work and help teams achieve organizational objectives, in addition to writing regular and constructive messages, gathering and conveying information, and making informed decisions for better productivity. Additionally, they collect useful information through informal networks such as the company grapevine; they can communicate effectively and persuasively in core groups and formal presentations; and they write with conviction.Relying on the latest systems and technology to improve their day-to-day operations, modern day managers employ modern collaborative software like Skype and Google docs, TeamViewerto communicate more efficiently in real time with their colleagues all over the world. In today's world, apart from using e-mail as a competent communication tool, Managers arealsousing social media networks to launch, promote, and collaborate with potential clients and customers. Online collaborative post-It notes are a great way to share ideas within a team. In contrast to the traditional methods like newsletters, flyers, and brochures, modern day managers are enhancing their professional reach exponentially by writing professional e-mails, relevant WhatsApp messages, effective business blogs, informative podcasts, and so on to connect with a wide variety of stakeholders. However, depending on the purpose and scope of your writing, having your authentic voice and personal style to communicate with different individuals and groups is even more essential.Clear and honest communication can strengthen the relationships at the workplace. Leaders need to keep themselves abreast with latest

motivational theories and leadership models to help create a stable system and philosophy for their own business enterprise viable in their indigenous surroundings. It's imperative on the part of managers to acknowledge the contribution of employees every now and then by generously offering words of appreciation such as "thank you", "great job", "commendable effort", "laudable effort" etc. These kind expressions recognize individual effort, increase loyalty and inspire people to work even harder. In a survey by Mc Kinsey Quarterly in 2009 it has been stated that praises from immediate superiors can empower and motivate employees.

Delayed feedback, stilted and rude content, delayed action, fewer personal pronouns can mark a manager's expression discourteous, impolite and offensive. However, putting a focus on interpersonal relations, conversational tone, immediate feedback, prompt action and usage of more personal pronoun, simpler yet colloquial expressions can bring the manager closer to his subordinates and other members of the organization. "You" is more preferable than "I" or "We" in most instances. Use of more positive words can draw more encouraging response from the listeners. The seven C's or golden rules of communication can again be recalled for ensuring effectiveness in business dealings within and outside the organization.

The Seven C's of Effective Communication

Completeness –Providing all necessary, desirable information, answering all questions asked.

Conciseness- eliminates wordy, redundant expressions, include only relevant material.

Consideration-Focus on "You" instead of "I" or "We", show interest in the speaker, emphasize positive pleasant facts

Concreteness-Use specific facts and figures, put action in your verbs, choose vivid, image-building words

Clarity-Choose precise, concrete and familiar words, construct effective sentences and paragraphs

Courtesy-Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative, use expressions that show respect, choose nondiscriminatory expressions

Correctness-Use the right level of language, tone, check accuracy of figures, Facts and words, maintain acceptable writing mechanics

It has been noted that managers who practice honest, candid and timely communication in public interest are valued highly for their congeniality and trustworthiness. An efficient manager disseminates accurate information and rectifies wrong communication. Being sensitive to cultural values and beliefs of theirteamwhile engaging in fair communication, the Managers shoulder a larger responsibility towards the organization by refraining from taking part in gossip

and unethical communication. They are non-judgmental, empathic in nature, positive in attitude, assertive and sensitive to business etiquettes. Fairly accountablefor their speech and actions, these managers use compatible language and images, provide practical information, clarify and condense information, persuade others by example and offer recommendations, testimonials etc. for creating an exemplary work culture.

Check your progress 2

1. What are the current day employees deficient in? Why is it important to learn the use of new age technology for communication?

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2. What are the seven Cs or golden rules of effective communication?

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3. [Practical]Describe a workplace example of lack of clarity in communication leading to a conflict amongst peers?

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4. [ORAL] Give an example of an effective communication between Manager and an Employee for promoting gender neutrality at workplace.

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4.3 HOLISTIC IMPROVEMENT OF WORKFORCE THROUGH EFECTIVE MOTIVATION

Catherine Cupas and Michelle Siarez define motivation as the internal condition that activates behavior and gives it a definite direction. Motivation is also the factor that energizes and directs

goal-oriented behavior. It is the vigor that causes an individual to behave in a specific manner. According to various theories, motivation may be rooted in the basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure. Motivation can be broadly classified into two types: Intrinsic and Extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation stems from practicing self-control and the attraction for the rewards inherent to a task or an activity i.e., the pleasure or joy of doing something up to one's capability and perfection can motivate people to perform well and precisely without expecting anything in return - the activity in itself becomes the reward. It leads to feeling of competency and personal development.

Extrinsic Motivation comes from external factors such as valuable insights, suggestions or upshots provided by supervisor or a higher-level manager or even factors like money, bonus, cash rewards, promotions, time waver, special tasks, verbal adulation etc. Here self-control is increasingly understood as a subset of emotional intelligence.A person may be highly intelligent to a more conservative definition, yet unmotivated to dedicate this intelligence to a certain task.

Here is a comprehensive view ofdifferent motivational theories and approaches integral to modern day management.

THE INCENTIVE THEORY

A tangible or an intangible award is offered at the end of an act or certain behavior with the intention to cause the behavior to occur again. Here, the sources of motivation lie within oneself (intrinsic motivation) or in other people (extrinsic motivation).

NEED THEORIES (ABRAHAM MASLOW)

According to Need Hierarchy Theory of Abraham Maslow, motivation is based on a hierarchy of needs, which a person cannot ignore by moving to the next level of needs without satisfying the previous level. Maslow's hierarchy begins with the lowest level of needs, basic physiological needs such as air, water, and food. Employers paying at least a minimal living wage meet these basic employee needs. The next level is that of safety and security which include needs for a living abode or shelter. Employers can meet these by ensuring that employees are safe from physical, verbal or emotional hazards and have a sense of job security. The third level is for social affiliation and belonging. This is the need to be social, to have friends, and to feel like one belongs and is loved. Implementing employee participation programs can help fulfill the need to belong. Rewards such as acknowledging an employee's contributions can also satisfy these social and love needs. At the workplace, interaction with friendly workers, customers, pleasant supervisors can fulfill this need. The fourth level on the hierarchy is esteem needs. This level is described as feeling good about one's self and knowing that their life is meaningful, valuable, and has a purpose. Employers should use the job design technique to create jobs that are important to and cherished by the employee. The last level Maslow described is called self-

actualization. This level refers to people reaching their potential states of well-being. An employer who ensures that an employee is in the right job and has all other needs met will help the employee realize this highest need.

VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY

The expectancy theory of motivation was established by Victor Vroom with the belief that motivation is based on the expectation of desired outcomes. The theory is based on three concepts: valence, expectancy, and force. Valence is the attractiveness of potential rewards, outcomes, or incentives. Expectancy is a person's belief that they will or will not be able to reach the desired outcome. Force is a person's motivation to perform. "In general, people will work hard when they think that it is likely to lead to desired organizational rewards".

MC CLELLAND'S THEORY OF NEEDS

Mc Clelland claims that we are all influenced by the impact of one of the three motivating drivers, namely achievement, affiliation, and power.

LOCKE'S GOAL THEORY

Edwin A. Locke's goal theory describes setting more specific goals to stimulate higher performance and setting more difficult goals to increase effort. He also believed that, through employee participation in goal setting, they would be more likely to accept the goals and have a greater job satisfaction.

REINFORCEMENT THEORY

Reinforcement Theory is based on E.L. Thorndike's Law and looks at the relationship between behavior and its consequences. This theory focuses on modifying an employee's on-the-job behavior through the appropriate use of one of the following four techniques: Positive reinforcement rewards desirable behavior. Avoidance is an attempt to show an employee what the consequences of improper behavior will be. Extinction is basically ignoring the behavior of a subordinate and not providing either positive or negative reinforcement. Punishment (threats, suspension) is an attempt to decrease the likelihood of a behavior recurring by applying negative consequences.

In today's competitive scenario, effective leaders clearly know about their goals and are driven by their intrinsic or extrinsic rewards.As explicated by Marlowe's need for self-actualization, or by Locke's normalization of goal settings in challenging situations, an underlying incentivization is pertinent for organizational success, individually as well as a group.

Check your progress 3

1 Enumerate some Motivational Theories?

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2 Discuss with regard to your personal experience, how an intrinsic motivation can lead to fulfillment and professional growth.

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3 [Enhanced Read] Read about and describe Machiavellianism with respect to Management practices.

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4.4 LEADERSHIP STYLES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE

Northouse (2001) defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group to achieve a common goal. According to Koontz (2006) "Leadership is seen as aninfluence, that is, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals." To be an effective leader, the manager must exert a positive influence on his or her associates so as to smoothen the path to reach the goals of the organization. Adopting an appropriate leadership style helps managers to establish rapport, trust and respect, engage their team members and build good working relationships.Although management and leadership are conceptually different, as Henry Mintzberg suggests in hisbook,*Managing,*it is difficult to separate the two in day-to-day practice.The leadership style adopted by the managers should not be at loggerheads with the general ethos of the organization.Adopting an inappropriate leadership style would mean fall out amongst the employees anddiscontent. Let's take a look at various models of management and leadership styles.Leadershipis an important quality for managers which helps them initiate actions, sets plans into motion, provides guidance, instill confidence, builds morale and helps employees in coordinating between their personal goals and organizational goals.

TRAIT APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

Before 1950s leadership was synonymous with certain traits and held the belief that great men alias leaders are born and not made, as per the "great man" theory with its roots from the ancient Greece and Rome making researchers to identify the physical, mental, and personality traits of various leaders.Many studies of traits have been made toclassify leaders. More recently, the following key leadership traits have been identified: drive (including achievement, motivation, energy, ambition, initiative, and tenacity) leadership motivation (aspiration to lead but not to seek power as such), honesty and integrity, self-confidence (including emotional stability), cognitive ability, and an understanding of the business. The impact of creativity, flexibility, and charisma is also being studied on leadership effectiveness (Koontz, 2006)

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the study of leadership moved from personality analysis to behavioral analysis: not 'who' the leader is, but 'what' the leader does. This fostered an appreciation for the possibility of developing leadership in others. Today's most influential leadership theories draw on this understanding and begin to incorporate followers' perspectives and the contexts in which leaders and followers communicate.

There are five basic theories of leadership:

- Transformational leadership
- Leader-Member exchange Theory
- Adaptive Leadership
- Strengths Based leadership
- Servant leadership

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In the late 1970s, political sociologist James MacGregor Burns popularized the idea of transformational leadership. Burns distinguished two distinct styles of leadership.

Transactional: when a leader affects others throughwhat they offer in exchange, the transaction.

Transformational: occurs when a leader interacts with his or her supporters in such a way that the degree of inspiration and morality is enhanced.Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms individuals (Northouse 2001).It is the ability to get people to want to change, to improve and to be led. It involves assessing associates' motives, satisfying their needsand valuing them. There are four factors to transformational leadership:

- **Idealized Influence:** describes managers who are exemplary role models for associates. Managers with idealized influence can be trusted and respected by associates to make good decisions for the organization.
- **Inspirational Motivation:** describes managers who motivate associates to commit to the vision of the organization.

- **Intellectual Stimulation:**describes managers who encourage innovation and creativity through challenging the normal beliefs or views of a group. Managers with intellectual stimulation promote critical thinking and problem solving in an effort to make the organization better.

- **Individual Consideration**: describes managers who act as coaches and advisors to the associates. Managers with individual consideration encourage associates to reach goals that help both the associates and the organization.

Effective transformational leadership results in performances that exceed organizational expectations. When managers are strong role models, encouragers, innovators, and coaches they are utilizing the four factors to help transform their associates into better, more productive and successful individuals. Northouse states that in 39 studies of transformational literature, individuals who exhibited transformational leadership were more effective leaders with better outcomes.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

According to leader-member exchangetheory, every group or entity has in-group and out-group members. Members of the in-group work together with the leader, share the leader's personality, and are often willing to take on additional duties or responsibilities. Out-group members are incompatible with the leader; they may have divergent views, clashing attitudes, or a reduced willingness to take on additional tasks. Unsurprisingly, members of an in-group are more likely to win promotions; members of an out-group are more likely to leave.

Activating LMX theory:

Activating LMX theory is simple for followers: agree with the leader, take on additional responsibilities, and expect positive results. For leaders, LMX presents a greater challenge, as maximizing team productivity requires converting out-group members to in-group members. Individualized concern, the final component of transformational leadership, can provide an avenue for transforming out-group members. Additionally, LMX theory has major consequences for diversity and inclusion enhancement. If, women, or people with disabilities often self-identify as out-group members, the leader should ask, "What does it take to be an in-group member here, and are we implicitly creating obstacles for others?"

Adaptive Leadership

According to adaptive leadership, a leader is someone who mobilizes people to address difficult issues, such as inclusiveness. Adaptive problems are those for which no obvious solution exists. Adaptive leadership distinguishes leadership from authority. In comparison to authority, which is positional and requires control, leadership requires influence and the ability to mobilize.

Individuals can demonstrate adaptive leadership by engaging in six practices described by Ronald Heifetz:

- Get on the balcony: take a step back from the fray to obtain a fresh perspective.

- Identify adaptive challenges: adaptive challenges elicit strong emotions; understanding their origin and complexity helps to explain the path forward.

- Regulate distress: create a secure emotional space in which to resolve the tension associated with adaptive challenges.

- Maintain disciplined attention: foster concentration.

- Give the work back to the people: follow collective approaches.

- **Project leadership voices from below:** Listen to the voices of the project's leadership from below: pay particular attention to out-group participants, the disadvantaged, and the external community.

Strengths-Based Leadership: is the concept of discovering and using one's own and others' strengths to accomplish goals. The definition is derived from positive psychology and the Gallup Organization's common StrengthsFinder 2.0 assessment.Most of the analysis and debate around strengths-based leadership focuses on self-reports of individual characteristics. Gallup recommends four talent theme categories for strengths: execution, power, relationship building, and strategic thinking. Understanding your own strengths, as well as those of your colleagues, will help you boost team cohesion and efficiency, as we always feel more motivated and energized when we work in our areas of power.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership emerged in Robert Greenleaf's writings. Servant leadership entails leaders prioritizing the needs of others over their own. Greenleaf argued that leaders had a social duty to provide for the disenfranchised and to put others first; he proposed devolving control to those being guided.Northouse describes ten qualities of a servant leader, citing Spears (2002). Each implies behavior that a servant leader must exhibit in order to exhibit this leadership style:

- Listening: first and foremost, servant leaders must listen.

- Empathy: servant leaders must "put themselves in the shoes" of other persons.

- Healing: servant leaders are concerned about their followers' well-being.

- Awareness: servant leaders are perceptive to others' contexts.

- Persuasion: servant leaders communicate effectively and persistently in order to effect progress.

- Conceptualization: servant leaders are visionaries who develop specific goals and priorities.

- Servant leaders show foresight by predicting the future.

- Stewardship: servant leaders accept accountability for their leadership position.

- Commitment to the development of others: servant leaders are committed to assisting others in their development.

- Community building: servant leaders seek harmony and connectedness with others.

In addition to the above-mentioned theories, Kitty O locker addresses three distinct types of leadership that correspond to the three group dimensions:

- Informational Leaders: generate and analyze ideas and text
- Interpersonal Leaders: They keep an eye on the group's progress, track people's emotions, and mediate disputes.
- Procedural Leaders: establish the agenda, ensure that everyone understands what is expected at the next meeting, interact with absent group members, and ensure that all duties are shared equally.

While it is possible for one person to fill all of the positions, the three styles of leadership are filled by three distinct individuals based on their aptitude. Effective groups harmonize informational leadership,interpersonal leadership andprocedural leadership.Effective leadership, in the end, is all about coordination and cohesion.

There are multiple leadership styles, and yet there is no one-size-fits-all solution to handle a diverse workforce in a variety of situations. Accordingly, an effective leader must possess a variety of traits, abilities, and attitudes. However, no one leadership style is superior, and managers are most effective when they apply their skills and adapt seamlessly to unforeseen situations. According to the leader-member exchange theory, the leader should assume additional roles and expect positive outcomes. Servant leadership allows leaders to place others' interests ahead of their own. Another perspective on leadership is based on the premise that leaders are products of their circumstances; thus, a leader is someone who mobilizes people to solve challenging problems, such as inclusivity. Transactional leaders identify roles and obligations, create a framework, and assist followers in accomplishing goals. Transformational Leadership transforms organizations by articulating a vision and inspiring others. The ideas of transformational and charismatic leadership are interlinked.

Leadership abilities are not inherently innate in anyone. Work ethic, self-awareness, and a commitment to personal development are critical components of eventually mastering leadership skills. These days one can explore a variety of resources to hone one's leadership abilities. Nowadays, one can hone one's leadership skills through a variety of tools and resources. There are facilitating workshops, teambuilding games (both real as well as virtual), leadership activities, virtual conflict resolution games that improve teamwork, facilitate better communication and strengthen one's leadership and team-building skills. As the adage goes, "Experience is the best teacher, and the worst experiences teach the best lessons," a manager or leader embraces all kinds of experiences, positive or negative, and with caution, persistence, and foresight, transforms obstacles into opportunities. Mentoring, peer support, and leadership development training can all assist an individual in developing into a more effective leader.

Check your progress 4

1. What is "Trait" theory? Contrast it with "Transformational" leadership theory.

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2. What, in your view, constitutes the essence of leadership?

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3. If you were chosen to be the group leader for your class project (for example, to make a case study of best places to work in India), which leadership style would you prefer?

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4. [ORAL] Describe your favorite real-world Leader and justify your choice.

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4.5   TEAM BUILDING FOR A BETTER WORK ENVIRONMENT

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." – *African Proverb*

Having a strong core team guarantees success in all endeavors.The manager's ability to galvanize the entire force is vital to the company's growth.To be successful at team building in the workplace, a leader must first understand the fundamentals of group behavior.Training a set of people to work cohesively for a desired outcome is imperative to a group's success and is catapulted by the groups' ability to communicate effectively while staying focused to the common objectives.Mutual recognition of peers and accommodating to their communication styles ensures a better team performance and faster realization of goals. Infusing a sense of solidarity is another ingredient for effective team building.

Teams outweigh individual accomplishments and pave the way for long-term objectives. According to researchers, teams have significant advantages over directionless individuals in a variety of work situations and have several advantages such as more evenly distributed work and less stress on individual shoulders, shared responsibility for problem solving, brainstorming of ideas, quick decision making, and improved motivation and support through rapport building.

Richard Hackman, a pioneer in the field of organizational behaviour, has discussed many "enabling conditions" for team collaboration. These 'enabling conditions' help today's complex teams often referred to as diverse, distributed, digital, and dynamic teams (Martine Hass and Mark Mortensen), or 4-D teams to operate at a high level.These "enabling conditions" include: A compelling direction, a strong structure and a supportive context. According to Hackman (2002), real teams have four primary components: defined boundaries, established interdependence, moderately stable members, and authority. Wage man et al. (2005) argued that real teams have three characteristics: well-defined boundaries, mutual accountability for common objectives, and moderate membership cohesion. A more recent update asserted that real teams are defined by six dimensions: close interdependence, agreed-upon goals, systematic performance reflection or analysis, defined boundaries, high autonomy, and stated roles (Richardson, 2010; West and Lyubovnikova, 2012). Pseudo teams, on the other hand, are identified as a group of individuals

who identify as a team and work independently or collaboratively toward a potentially dissimilar understanding of their target while maintaining permeable boundaries (Adapted from Benishek & Lazzara).Sir Richard Charles Nicholas Branson, an English business magnate, elucidates the benefits of teamwork in the following manner: "Two heads are definitely better than one and by sourcing ideas from each other, you have a better chance of coming up with a strategy that will allow your business to overcome a setback or challenge."

There is no "I" in a team; petty ambitions, self-centered thoughts, and self-serving motivations have no place in a team. Enhanced employee motivation can arise from the creation of trust amongst coworkers. The most significant advantage of team building is increased efficiency, which results in increased profits.Vince Lombardi puts it succinctly that team players need to commit to group goals rather than individual satisfaction: "Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

Characteristics of a Good Team

- They interact effectively with one another.
- Concentrate on priorities and targets
- Each person contributes their fair share.
- They provide assistance to one another.
- Team members come from a variety of backgrounds.
- Efficient Leadership
- They are well-organized.
- Clear contact and open doors
- Clearly established functions
- Disagreement and debate are welcome.
- Trust in the team
- Mutual responsibility
- esprit de collaboration
- They slog together, they enjoy together.
- They look forward to working with each other.

Team building includes following phases:

- Setting realistic goals before the team and explaining the desired outcome
- Clarifying specifications for Planning, preparation and execution
- Recognizing the road blocks and their potential solutions
- Overcoming impediments and inspiring the employees to deliver their best

Whereas an egoistic personality, unnatural rivalry, disdain towards some peers, and a lack of trust in team members are the primary deterrents, amicable relationships, empathy, reverence for others' cultures and values, and group dynamics assist teams in achieving their goals quickly.

The following points must be ingrained in order to ensure a successful team.

- Take into account the perspectives of others and weigh and consider
- Make no distinctions or be partial to any one member's viewpoint.
- Observe and collect data through other channels available
- When in doubt, seek clarifications from authentic sources.
- Avoid preconceived notions and stereotypes.
- Be adaptable and consider everyone's viewpoint within the bounds of prudential judgement, profit, and professional performance.
- Be considerate and positive in your contributions and interventions.

How to be a "Team player" rather than a "Freelancer"
- Seek information and opinions
- Joke and suggest breaks and recreational activities
- Solve interpersonal problems
- Be collaborative rather than individualistic
- Don't try to run the group by dominating, yelling and imposing your individual opinion on others
- Contribute to discussions; don't be silent, casual or absent minded.
- Drop your arrogance
- Empathize with others
- Don't have false/unrealistic expectations
- Be realistic
- Be practical
- Enjoy the work you do
- Don't build walls around you
- Don't be a verbose
- Don't beat yourself up over small failures
- Admit your fault
- Learn to appreciate
- Sorry, Thank-You and please are golden tickets to collaboration
- Believe in others' instincts and abilities

Check your progress 5

1. What is a team?Is it better to work in a team or independently?

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2. What are the traits of a team worker?

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3. [ORAL] Discuss among your classmates, strategies for team building and solidarity via enhanced interpersonal communication.

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4.6 EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

A positive work atmosphere uplifts all involved, while a toxic work environment can break people's spirits by undermining their sense of self.Managers and associates must aim to create healthy relationships at work in order to strengthen collaboration and promote creativity. It's a common saying-people don't quit a job; they quita boss. Balance, timing, and clarity are three ways to cultivate a genuine manager-associate relationship (White2002).Successful interpersonal relationships include effective interpersonal communication, which is contingent upon active listening, conflict resolution, able leadership, an equitable exchange of facts and opinions, a constructive approach to criticism, and a You-attitude.

ACTIVE LISTENING
Listening is the act of receiving, interpreting and reactingto the speaker's message. Effective listening often entails an awareness of the primary and secondary points. Sensing, message decoding, or interpretation, evaluation, and response are the four stages of listening.There is a distinction to be made between hearing and listening. Listening, is an active process while , hearing is a passive one. Listening requires considerable effort, undivided attention, and focus.Active listening facilitates productive partnerships within the organization and strengthens the organization's functions.A person with a strong listening ability can expand their knowledge, broaden their experience, form new and meaningful alliances, and attain more job opportunities and promotions.Listening enables you to comprehend your coworkers' perspectives.Listening helps you to recognize the experiences of your peers.It enables you to establish rapport with colleagues quickly. As an effective manager one should try to elicit the perspectives, thoughts, and feelings of others about a specific concept or problem.Kitty O locker writes that good

listeners pay attention, focus on the other speaker in a generous way rather than on themselves, avoid making assumptions and listen for feelings as well as for facts. Active listening and occasional questions assist managers in developing their ability to reason about issues. According to Locker and Kaczmarek (2007:302), in active listening, receivers consciously show that they have heard and understood a speaker by feeding back either the literal sense, the emotional material, or both.

To accomplish better communication, listeners are encouraged to take the following steps:

- Paraphrase the content
- Reflect the speaker's emotions in the message
- Express their own sentiments
- Solicit additional details or explanation
- Offer to assist in resolving the problem.

Occasional Talks with Employees/Associates

Small talk or casual conversations with workers or colleagues about daily issues, their well-being, families, and health often result in the creation of a positive work environment.It can serve as an icebreaker and can also help to calm anxious nerves. Small talk can be used by the managers to accomplish the following tasks:

- To inform(at workplace)
- To question
- To guide
- To discuss
- To encourage
- To direct

LEADING WITHOUT ANTAGONISM

According to Locker and Kaczmarek (2007:310), leaders should avoid becoming dictatorial and should refrain from antagonizing team members and associates by their arrogant behavior and high-handed approach. They suggest that good leaders should be team players, who do not shirk criticism or negative feedback and who are prepared to combat peer pressure and groupthink.

The following measures assist in developing harmonious relationships with coworkers or subordinates: -

i. **Smile**- A smile is a kind of invitation. Smiling sets the atmosphere. It builds rapport and fosters confidence.

ii. **Share**- Share your hopes, ambitions, and priorities, your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your tactics and experiences. Inviting team members to reciprocate is a good idea.

iii. **Suggest**- Making suggestions to resolve a dispute or a problem situation, making substantive additions to one's job profile, truthful suggestions, ratings, and analysis, and so on.

iv. **Think**-Think it aloud. Let the team be aware of your immediate goals and deadlines your method of work, and make contributions accordingly.

v. **Volunteer**- to take notes, collect data, and make suggestions to enhance the presentation, product, project, or report, for example.

vi. **Ask-**Enquire about others' core competencies, expertise, interests, and skills alongside their worst apprehensions, weaknesses and honest feedback about company's work culture.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING

A successful leader instils confidence in his team and supports them through thick and thin.Confidence is derived from a sense of well-being, appreciation of one's body and mind (self-esteem), and faith in one's own abilities, knowledge, and experience. Therefore, a leader must 'walk the talk' andinstill confidence in team members, preparing them to be innovative and cooperative whilst remaining committed to the organization's goals.

Leaders who wish to facilitate progress and enhance organizational productivity build spaces for discussion, collaboration, and idea exchange leading to enhanced individual confidence. Leaders use their foresight to develop strategies that assist workers in achieving organizational objectives. Additionally, leaders serve as strong mentors and sponsors for their employees by motivating, supporting, and providing necessary feedback. Leadership involves exceptionally effective governance and analytical abilities, as well as an openness to new ideas devoid of dogmatism. Confidence building initiatives such as promoting resources in achieving small and approachable goals initially and leading them to aspire for subsequent bigger ones is a very integral part of confidence building strategy for successful managers.The company should award certificates of achievement to achievers, and timely recognize employees for crisis management, superior customer service, or meeting sales goals for boosting employee morale.

Check your progress 6

1. Why is listening so difficult? What are the benefits of good listening?

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2. [Oral] Suggest a confidence building method for an employee feeling demotivated after an initial failure in a project.

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4.7   CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Cambridge Dictionary defines conflict as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles. Individuals who work in an organization can have different viewpoints, principles, beliefs, attitudes, goals, ambitions, and traits. In other words, what I desire may be different from what the other person desires. When conflict arises in the workplace, it can go to the extent of affecting people's morale, decrease efficiency, increase absenteeism, and spark large-scale confrontations that may escalate into severe and violent crimes.

Managers devote a substantial amount of time to managing organizational disputes. They spend a significant amount of their work time resolving internal conflicts. This obviously has an impact on the morale of both managers and associates and can have a far-reaching effect on the organization's performance. Locker and Kaczermarek (2007:311) believe disagreements occur when sincere people are invested in the task at hand. Nonetheless, it is important to fix the real problem and restore hurt feelings. Additionally, they propose the following measures for reducing group conflict:

- At the outset, define specific responsibilities and ground rules.
- Instead of allowing problems to fester till people explode, discuss them as they surface.
- Recognize that community members are not responsible for the happiness of one another.
- Discuss problems as they arise, rather than letting them fester till people explode.
- Realize that group members are not responsible for each other's happiness.

Causes of Conflict

Farnsworth et.al recognize eight causes of conflict:

i.   Conflicting needs,
ii.   Conflicting Styles,
iii. Conflicting Perceptions,
iv.   Conflicting Goals,
v.   Conflicting Pressures,
vi.   Conflicting Roles,
vii. Conflicting Personal Values,
viii. Conflicting Unpredictable policies

Steps to Resolve Conflict

Conflict resolution requires one to let go of one's ego and see the situation in a realistic manner. It also requires attention to the issue and to people's feelings. Locker and Kaczermarek (2007:311) suggest five-step procedure to resolve conflicts amicably:

- Make sure that The People Involved Really Disagree
- Check to see that everyone's information is correct
- Discover the needs and motifs each person is trying to meet.
- Search for alternatives
- Repair bad feelings
-

According to Robin (2002), there are five conflict resolution styles: confront, compromise, collaborate, accommodate, and avoid. Identify your resolution style. The five conflict resolution styles can be used strategically in three specific ways when dealing with conflict. These three strategies are engage, do not engage, and negotiate.

Engage Strategy

If the scenario allows for confronting, negotiating, or collaborating, an engage approach will be used (Robin 2002). The engage approach in confrontations can be violent but not hostile, so the result should be a win-win situation for both parties. If aggressive feelings continue, suggest a new approach. Since compromise entails bargaining for a mutually beneficial result, the engage approach entails putting disagreements aside and working together to find a solution that everyone can agree on. Working as a team is important when using the engage strategy for collaboration. Everyone is accountable for their efforts and has a say in the decision-making process.

Do-Not-Engage- Strategy

Where circumstances allow for accommodating and avoiding, a do-not-engage approach is suitable. Not engaging does not imply resisting or being defensive; rather, it is a conscious and deliberate decision not to be adversarial (Robin 2002).Since the problem is less relevant than the relationship, the do-not-engage approach is successful in accommodating.

Negotiate Strategy
It is important to understand when and how to negotiate. There are several negotiating styles. Consider negotiating as a means of confronting, compromising, or cooperating.

The optimal time to negotiation is if you can make an offer to your adversary that is more appealing than the next-best option. The following table summarizes when it is possible to negotiate (Robin, 2002):

- When you are forced to make a choice and there are no better choices

- When a mission or problem is critical (if it is not, either let it go or lead strongly)

- When you are in a position to consider alternative courses of action

- When not negotiating will be detrimental to your interests or you have anything to gain

- When there has been a miscommunication, or when there has been no understanding or agreement

- When you would like to discuss disagreements freely.

- To serve as a role model by exemplifying what successful negotiation entails.

There are several kinds of negotiators. Recognizing an associate's negotiation style will assist in the resolution of conflict. Wertheim (2002) suggests the following categories of negotiators:

The Aggressive: makes disparaging remarks about the opponent's previous results or irrational behaviour, or makes comments implying that the opponent is inferior and insignificant.

The long pauser: employs extended silences to elicit information from the opponent.

The mocking negotiator: antagonizes the adversary in order to provoke regrettable answers.

The interrogator: confronts all respondents and proceeds to press for additional information.

The cloak of reasonableness: seems rational when making impossible demands in order to gain an opponent's trust while simultaneously undermining him.

Divide and conquer: a strategy used when negotiating with a coalition to sow discord among rivals that they become distracted by internal conflicts rather than the issue at hand.

The act dumb negotiator: pretended not to understand the issue in order to exasperate the opponent, or opponents, to the point that he, or another member of the party, accidentally revealed details.

Check your progress7

3   What isa conflict?

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4   What qualities come in handywhen attempting to resolve conflicts??

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3.   What are the best strategies involved in conflict resolution?

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4.[Oral] what practices should be avoided during a conflict resolution?

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4.8 COLLABORATIVE APPROACH FOR EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

A successful man is he who receives a great deal from his fellowmen, usually incomparably more than corresponds to his service to them. The value of a man, however, should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive.

Albert Einstein

Togetherness is key to success in an organization. There is no "I" in organizational matters. It is imperative that managers rise above their egoistic motivations and come together for co-action and collaboration to reach organizational goals. Great managers recognize their employees' strengths but also help them to work on any shortcomings. By incorporating empathy, a you-centric approach, and strategies for team building, managers can develop into good leaders and role models in their organizations.

Empathic Response

At its most foundational sense, empathy is an understanding of another person's thoughts and emotions. It is a critical component of Emotional Intelligence, the bridge between self and others, since it enables us to consider what others are experiencing as if we were experiencing it ourselves.It is like putting yourself in other's shoes and trying to understand what they are going through without passing judgment or refuting them.However, psychologists have identified three distinct forms of empathy: cognitive, emotional, and compassionate.Empathy, a soft leadership skill, is required to lead and drive employee engagement in a complex, diffused, and constantly evolving world.Today's workplaces, thus need more empathetic leaders and managers who can establish relationships with employees and engage with them first and foremost as individuals.Keith Ferrazzi, a celebrated author and entrepreneur, maintains that we truly do need one anotherfor our own pursuit of happiness, personal development, and the growth of our businesses.He assertsthat'great businesses require radical interdependency' and it is therefore, enabling for managers to form strong bonds with the people who work with them.

The You Attitude

You attitude means looking at things from other person's (client, audience, associates, employees) point of view. While this ensures reciprocity, it also entails respect for others' preferences, requirements, and expectations. The success or efficacy of business communication or professional communicationdepends upon the amount of consideration you show for others. It will also require protecting your interests without offending or hurting the egos of your team members or associates.

You Attitude in oral communication

While communicating orally through speeches, presentations, meetings, group discussions, it is important to maintain a calm persona and a you centred approach in communicating. Conducting audience analysis is the second step. It assists you in sensing the nerve of the audience. Your speech should be tailored to your audience's requirements. Not only should the speech be important to you, but also to the audience. If time and resources permit, it is best to perform an audience analysis to determine the audience's demographics and level of awareness about the subject.

You Attitude in Written Messages

Your viewpoint creates goodwill and has a positive impact on others. Lesikar and Flatley observe that your "you" perspective should prioritize the needs and concerns of your readers and the people you have your business with. It should place a premium on 'you' and 'your' and downplay 'we' and 'our'. The you-viewpoint entails the appropriate choice of words,

communication style, language preference, type of examples and illustrations, and an overall courteous and caring attitude when conducting day-to-day business.

They know that it's not their job to arm each employee with a dispassionately accurate understanding of the limits of the strengths and the liabilities of their weaknesses but to reinforce their self-assurance. According to a Cornell University report, employers can see an increase in productivityif they allow workers to eat meals together, as many sectors like armed forces do. Group Activities promote wellbeing, enhance overall productivity, and offer opportunities to de-stress and connect with one's strengths and spirit.

It is proposed that organizing company outings, employee newsletters, team building seminars, regular formal and informal interactions with the employees, surprise treats, employee themed party, talent shows, outdoor events, sports events, adventure activities, will increase mutual trust and faith leading to enhanced productivity and creation of enjoyable workplace culture. **"Coming together is beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." Henry Ford**

Check your progress 8
1. Enumerate benefits of Collaboration?
   ………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………..
2. [Practical]Explain how a difficult task became achievable by cooperation?
   ………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………
3. What is it that triggers distrust among team members? In the light of this unit, how will you overcome your situation?
   …………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………..

4.9   LET US SUM UP

In the twenty-first century, professional development cannot be accomplishedby merely achieving theoretical knowledge. In order to create a sustainable work environment, in this ever-changingworld order, managers need to value the "Team". Cultivating "people skills" to collaborate effectively, resolve any conflict and establish rapport with other team members is ineluctable. Moreover, it has been well established that the most effective individuals are those who have worked on themselves to develop into supportive individuals and who are receptive to the needs of their team members and peers and who have honed their emotional and social intelligence skills.

Management in a nutshell is the understanding of the "human "in human resource and effectively communicating with it to achieve a common goal.

4.10   SUGGESTED READINGS

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4.11   ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

1. Marked by its advancement to include diversity,heterogeneity, globalization, intersectionality, decentered poetics, accommodating alternative traditions and respecting individual choices at workplace makes 21st century different from the preceding eras.

2. Inclusion of diversity not only benefits the managers but also imparts a wider perspective and a greater vision to the workforce. Organizations are constantly evolving and are being restructured to accommodate the interests of the larger working population. Since diversity has the ability to improve work efficiency and competitive advantages, companies are increasingly transforming into inclusive spaces

3. Imbibing communication practices which make accommodations for different cultural practices, beliefs and habits and refraining from xenophobic hints during communication as well as actions.

4. Using gender neutral communication techniques, avoiding racial remarks and honoring individual merit impartial to any background or gender preference.

   - Being sensitive to verbal and non-verbal behaviour of people.
   - Using bias-free language (Discrimination and derogatory remarks based on sexual orientation, physical capacity, age, ethnicity, appearance, faith, culture, or nationality are considered illegal.)

- Avoiding negative terms
- Using terms of positive emphasis
- Choosing bias free photos and illustrations.

Check your progress 2

1. With advancement and overdependence on Virtual channels of communications a perfect blend of traditional communication tenets with modern methodologies of expression is vital for any workplace. Modern workforce lacks and need to be upskilled with effective communication skill for virtual reach out.

2. The Seven C's of effective communication are golden rules that imply completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness in favor of fair and enhanced professional communication.

3. While doling out perks to different strata of workforce in an organization care must be taken that effective communication of distribution of perks is maintained, so that any particular group or strata of employees don't feel alienated or left out leading to generation of resentment for the higher management.

4. Manager: Manoj, can you please make sure all your mail communications do not refer to employees only in "male" pronouns as we have to make our workplace equally inviting to all genders.
   Manoj: Yes, Boss.

Check your progress 3

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Hertzberg's two factor theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Mc Clelland's theory of needs, Vroom's theory of expectancy,Locke's Goal theory, Reinforcement theory, Mc Gregor's theory of X and theory Y are some of the popular motivation theories .

1. For a wider acceptance towards my team and to make myself feel valued in the new workplace I devoted extra hours to keep myself abreast with latest technological communication techniques practiced by the rest of my team in my new office.

2. https://www.ckju.net/en/dossier/machiavellianism-what-it-how-recognize-and-cope-machiavellians

Check your progress 4

1. Trait theory is one of the approaches to leadership that held that "great men" alias leaders are born rather than made, prompting researchers to classify the physical, emotional, and personality traits of various leaders. Numerous studies of personality traits have been conducted in order to classify leaders. Recently, the following key leadership characteristics have been identified:drive (including achievement, motivation, energy, ambition, initiative, and tenacity) leadership motivation (aspiration to lead but not to seek power as such), honesty and integrity, self-confidence (including emotional stability), cognitive ability, and an understanding of the business.

   Transformational leadership is about inspiring and motivating teams without micromanagement. Here, the leader delegates decision-making authority to competent employees in their assigned roles. It is a management style that empowers workers by encouraging them to be more creative, to plan ahead, and to come up with novel solutions to vexing problems.This leadership style is possible when a leader communicates with his or her followers in such a way that inspires and moralizes them. Individuals undergo change and transformation through transformational leadership. It is the capacity to awaken people's desire for change, improvement, and leadership. It entails determining the motivations of colleagues, meeting their needs, and valuing them. By valuing his or her employees, a transformational leader helps the business succeed.

2. Transformational because changing times demand adaptability, as well as non-compromising adherence to the larger picture of overall team building and growth.

3. Mohandas K. Gandhi, the pre-eminent scholar, thinker, philosopher, and social activist was the greatest leader of the 20th century. He was charismatic, pragmatic and a great enabler. He had a rock-solid belief system that influenced all of his decisions and he sought major changes at every step of his life, while maintaining a symbiotic relationship with his followers. As a man of actions, he lived his life by the four E's: Envision, Enable, Empower, and Energize. As a great leader he always led by example and never dictated anything that he could not do himself. He was charismatic, but he was also a good strategist and examined things closely. He epitomized people management skills to the core. He was a transformational and transactional leader too.(Information fromhttps://www.mkgandhi.org)

Check your progress5

1. A 'team'may be described as a group of people who work towards shared objectives in order to achieve a common goal or specific goal.Working in a team is recommended because team attributes such as collaboration, effective peer support, mutual encouragement and desire to grow together and strive for bigger goals than self, lead to a faster and consistent development of all individuals in the team.

2. A team player is adaptable, patient, willing to learn and collaborate, seeks advice and inputs from others, and never attempts to steal the show by domineering or hijacking the show. This kind of group member is helpful, contributes ideas, is committed to problem solving, and is more concerned with the group goal than with individual performance.

3. Games, practices for mutual trust, equitable work distribution, and skill-based training can be cited as a few of the strategies employed for team building and solidarity through enhanced interpersonal communication.

Check your progress 6

1. Listening is difficult because it involves considerable effort, undivided attention, and focus on the part of the listener. Active listening has numerous benefits: A person with a strong listening ability can expand their knowledge, broaden their experience, form new and meaningful alliances, and attain more job opportunities and promotions. Listening enables one to comprehend the co-workers' perspectives.Listening helps one to recognize the experiences of peers.It enables one to establish rapport with colleagues quickly and effortlessly.

2. Verbal counselling, mentoring by helping an employee break down task at hand into small achievable subtasks can help the employee overcome the initial setback of a failure.

Check your progress 7

1. A conflict may be described as a disagreement, opposition of some sort, argument, antagonism, or animosity between two or more individuals or groups leading to disharmony or hostility among the affected individuals or groups.

The following measures suggested by Locker and Kaczermarek (2007:311) come in handy to resolve conflicts amicably:

1) Make sure that The People Involved Really Disagree
2) Check to see that everyone's information is correct
3) Discover the needs and motifs each person is trying to meet.
4) Search for alternatives
5) Repair bad feelings

2. Engage strategy, Do-Not engage strategy and Negotiate strategy are some of the well recommended strategies to deal with any kind of professional conflicts.

3.
- Not letting conflicting parties accuse each other.
- Avoid taking sides during conflict resolution.
- Don't overgeneralize.
- Don't interrupt/ interject while someone is speaking

Check your progress 8

1. Idea generation, accelerated decision making, diversity perspective, increased employee engagement and retention, innovation and development, competitive edge, increased profits, enhanced self-worth among individuals, positive work culture, openness, and decreased stress and burnout as a result of decentralized authority, tasks, and responsibilities.

2. An inaugural function required to communicate a large set of people. Impossible task for a single person, it was judiciously divided into sub tasks among a team of students to take care of reaching to the different subgroups.

3. Lack of trust in leadership and team members, insufficient opportunities for team building, unclear group goals, hostile work environment, lack of praise from employers or preferential treatment for some employees, unprofessional or immoral behaviour on the part of certain managers or team members.

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