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Chapter 1: Introduction to Generic Skills

Introduction to Generic Skills

A generic skill is a skill which:

- can be applied across a **variety** of subject domains, and
- takes **longer** to acquire than domain-dependent (subject-area) skills.

It is what Gagné refers to as "cognitive strategies" and what many cognitive scientists refer to as "domain-independent knowledge." The major *kinds* of generic skills include thinking skills (such as problem solving techniques), learning strategies (such as creating mnemonics to help you remember things), and metacognitive skills (such as monitoring and revising your problem solving techniques or mnemonic-creating techniques).

There are at least three major *parts* of a generic skill. The most prevalent component is a **procedure**--a set of steps you use to perform the skill. But you also usually need to understand and be able to apply certain **principles** that provide guidance as to how to perform each step, or even guidance as to when to use which procedure (approach). Third, it is often necessary to **memorize** the order of the steps--a memorization component.

Importance of Generic Skills in Personnel Development

- **To remain competitive.**
- **To acquire new knowledge and information.**
- **To interact and socialize among one another in an inter-dependent world.**
- **The demands of the workplace.**

Life Long Learning

Most people associate learning with formal education at school, college, university etc. We are all told, from an early age, that we should ‘get a good education’.

Generally speaking it is true that a formal education and the resulting qualifications are important. Education may maximize our potential to find better, more satisfying jobs, earn more and, perhaps, become more successful in our chosen career.

However, ‘schooling’ is only one type of learning. There are many other opportunities to further your knowledge and develop the skills you need throughout life.

Knowledge can be acquired and skill-sets developed anywhere – learning is unavoidable and happens all the time. However, lifelong learning is about creating and maintaining a positive attitude to learning both for personal and professional development.

Lifelong learners are motivated to learn and develop because they want to: it is a deliberate and voluntary act.

Lifelong learning can enhance our understanding of the world around us, provide us with more and better opportunities and improve our quality of life.

There are two main reasons for learning throughout life: for [personal development](#) and for [professional development](#). These reasons may not necessarily be distinct as personal development can improve your employment opportunities and professional development can enable personal growth.

MASTER your Learning

In his book, Master it Faster, Colin Rose uses the mnemonic MASTER to describe the six stages he believes are key to becoming an effective learner. These stages can be applied to any type of learning, either formal or informal.

- *Motivation*
- *Acquire*
- *Search*
- *Trigger*
- *Examine*
- *Reflect*

Motivation

Lifelong learning requires self-motivation. You need to feel positive about learning and about your ability to learn. If you struggle to see the point of learning what you are learning, you are unlikely to do well.

Acquire

Effective learning requires that you acquire information through reading, listening, observing, practising, experimenting and experience. Information is all around you: the trick is to acquire relevant and meaningful information and develop this into knowledge and skills.

Search

Learning is successful when we can search for a personal meaning in the information we're acquiring. We find it hard to remember facts without understanding them or being able to put them into context.

Learning is about applying what you acquire and asking yourself questions such as: 'How does this idea help in my life?' or 'What has this experience taught me about myself?'

Trigger

Human beings are notoriously bad at retaining information. You cannot and will not remember all that you read, hear and experience. You can help to trigger recollection in a variety of ways. For example, you can take notes, practice, discuss and experiment with new ideas and skills to help you learn and develop.

Examine

You should regularly examine your knowledge to help reinforce in your mind what you have learned. You should always try to keep an open-mind, question your understanding and be open to new information.

Talking to others and seeing their point of view can be a powerful way of examining your own perception and understanding of a subject.

Reflect

Finally, you should reflect on your learning. Think about how and why you learned, including how you felt about a particular topic or situation, before and after you developed your knowledge.

Learn from your mistakes as well as from your successes and always try to remain positive.

Chapter 2 : Self-Management and Development

Concept of Personality Development

Definition

Personality development is the development of the organized pattern of behaviors and attitudes that makes a person distinctive. Personality development occurs by the ongoing interaction of temperament, character, and environment.

Description

Personality is what makes a person a unique person, and it is recognizable soon after birth. A child's personality has several components: temperament, environment, and character. Temperament is the set of genetically determined traits that determine the child's approach to the world and how the child learns about the world. There are no genes that specify personality traits, but some genes do control the development of the nervous system, which in turn controls behavior.

A second component of personality comes from adaptive patterns related to a child's specific environment. Most psychologists agree that these two factors—temperament and environment— influence the development of a person's personality the most. Temperament, with its dependence on genetic factors, is sometimes referred to as "nature," while the environmental factors are called "nurture."

While there is still controversy as to which factor ranks higher in affecting personality development, all experts agree that high-quality parenting plays a critical role in the development of a child's personality. When parents understand how their child responds to certain situations, they can anticipate issues that might be problematic for their child. They can prepare the child for the situation or in some cases they may avoid a potentially difficult situation altogether. Parents who know how to adapt their parenting approach to the particular temperament of their child can best provide guidance and ensure the successful development of their child's personality.

Finally, the third component of personality is character—the set of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral patterns learned from experience that determines how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. A person's character continues to evolve throughout life, although much depends on inborn traits and early experiences. Character is also dependent on a person's moral development

In 1956, psychiatrist Erik Erikson provided an insightful description as to how personality develops based on his extensive experience in psychotherapy with children and adolescents from low, upper, and middle-class backgrounds. According to Erikson, the socialization process of an individual consists of eight phases, each one accompanied by a "psychosocial crisis" that must be solved if the person is to manage the next and subsequent phases satisfactorily. The stages

significantly influence personality development, with five of them occurring during infancy, childhood, and adolescence.

Infancy

During the first two years of life, an infant goes through the first stage: Learning Basic Trust or Mistrust (Hope). Well-nurtured and loved, the infant develops trust and security and a basic optimism. Badly handled, the infant becomes insecure and learns "basic mistrust."

Toddlerhood

The second stage occurs during early childhood, between about 18 months to two years and three to four years of age. It deals with Learning Autonomy or Shame (Will). Well-parented, the child emerges from this stage with self-confidence, elated with his or her newly found control. The early part of this stage can also include stormy tantrums, stubbornness, and negativism, depending on the child's temperament.

Preschool

The third stage occurs during the "play age," or the later preschool years from about three to entry into formal school. The developing child goes through Learning Initiative or Guilt (Purpose). The child learns to use imagination; to broaden skills through active play and fantasy; to cooperate with others; and to lead as well as to follow. If unsuccessful, the child becomes fearful, is unable to join groups, and harbors guilty feelings. The child depends excessively on adults and is restricted both in the development of play skills and in imagination.

School age

The fourth stage, Learning Industry or Inferiority (Competence), occurs during school age, up to and possibly including junior high school. The child learns to master more formal skills:

relating with peers according to rules

progressing from free play to play that is structured by rules and requires teamwork (team sports)

learning basic intellectual skills (reading, arithmetic)

At this stage, the need for self-discipline increases every year. The child who, because of his or her successful passage through earlier stages, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative, will quickly learn to be industrious. However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future and will feel inferior.

Adolescence

The fifth stage, Learning Identity or Identity Diffusion (Fidelity), occurs during adolescence from age 13 or 14. Maturity starts developing during this time; the young person acquires self-

certainty as opposed to self-doubt and experiments with different constructive roles rather than adopting a negative identity, such as delinquency. The well-adjusted adolescent actually looks forward to achievement, and, in later adolescence, clear sexual identity is established. The adolescent seeks leadership (someone to inspire him or her), and gradually develops a set of ideals to live by.

The Child Development Institute (CDI) rightfully points out that very little knowledge is available on the type of specific environment that will result, for example, in traits of trust being more developed in a person's personality. Helping the child through the various stages of emotional and personality development is a complex and difficult task. Searching for the best ways of accomplishing this task accounts for most of the research carried out in the field of child development today.

Renowned psychologist Carl Rogers emphasized how childhood experiences affect personality development. Many psychologists believe that there are certain critical periods in personality development—periods when the child will be more sensitive to certain environmental factors. Most experts believe that a child's experiences in the family are important for his or her personality development, although not exactly as described by Erikson's stages, but in good agreement with the importance of how a child's needs should to be met in the family environment. For example, children who are toilet trained too early or have their toilet training carried out too strictly may become rebellious. Another example is shown by children who learn appropriate behavior to their sex lives when there is a good relationship with their same-sex parent.

Another environmental factor of importance is culture. Researchers comparing cultural groups for specific personality types have found some important differences. For example, Northern European countries and the United States have individualistic cultures that put more emphasis on individual needs and accomplishments. In contrast, Asian, African, Central American, and South American countries are characterized more by community-centered cultures that focus on belonging to a larger group, such as a family, or nation. In these cultures, cooperation is considered a more important value than competitiveness, which will necessarily affect personality development.

Concept of Intelligence and Multiple Intelligence

Concept of Intelligence

According to Alfred Binet intelligence is the ability for judgement or common sense. Thorndike defines intelligence as “one's capacity to deal effectively with situations”.

Intelligence is defined as mental capability that involves the ability to reason, to plan, to solve problems, to think abstractly, to comprehend complex ideas, to learn quickly and to learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smartness. In

simple words, intelligence is nothing but thinking skills and the ability to adapt to and to learn from life's everyday experiences.

Intelligence is not acquired after sustained labour. It is a gift from nature. Intelligence is not memory. An intelligent person may have poor memory. Intelligence is not a skill which a worker acquires after planned practice. Intelligence is not a guarantee of a good behaviour of the individual.

To understand the nature of intelligence we need to know the classification intelligence as given by E.L. Thorndike and Garret:

1. Concrete Intelligence – It is the ability of an individual to comprehend actual situations and to react to them adequately. The concrete intelligence is evident from various activities of daily life. This type of intelligence is applicable when the individual is handling concrete objects or medicines. Engineers, mechanics and architects have this type of intelligence.

2. Abstract Intelligence – It is the ability to respond to words, numbers and symbols. Abstract intelligence is required in the ordinary academic subjects in the school. This is acquired after an intensive study of books and literature. Good teachers, lawyers, doctors, philosophers etc. have this type of intelligence.

3. Social Intelligence – It means the ability of an individual to react to social situations of daily life. Adequate adjustment in social situations is the index of social intelligence. Persons having this type of intelligence know the art of winning friends and influencing them. Leaders, ministers, members of diplomatic sources and social workers have it.

Characteristics of Intelligence:

The main features of Intelligence are the following:

1. Intelligence is an innate natural endowment of the child.
2. It helps the child in maximum learning in minimum period of time.
3. The child is able to foresee the future and plan accordingly.
4. The child is able to take advantage of his previous experiences.
5. The child faces the future with compliance.
6. He develops a sense of discrimination between right or wrong.
7. The developmental period of intelligence is from birth to adolescence.
8. There is a minor difference in the development of intelligence between boys and girls.
9. There are individual differences with regard to the intelligence between boys and girls.

10. Intelligence is mostly determined by heredity but a suitable environment necessary to improve it.

Types of Intelligence

1. Interpersonal Intelligence
2. Intrapersonal Intelligence
3. Linguistic Intelligence
4. Mathematical & Logical Reasoning
5. Emotional Intelligence
6. Social Intelligence

Concept of Physical Development

Physical development is the process that starts in human infancy and continues into late adolescent concentrating on gross and fine motor skills as well as puberty. **Physical development** involves **developing** control over the body, particularly muscles and **physical** coordination.

Body Language or Body Movements (Kinesics)

Body movements include gestures, posture, head and hand movements or whole body movements.

Body movements can be used to reinforce or emphasise what a person is saying and also offer information about the emotions and attitudes of a person. However, it is also possible for body movements to conflict with what is said.

A skilled observer may be able to detect such discrepancies in behaviour and use them as a clue to what someone is really feeling and thinking.

There are several different categories of body movement, these include:

Emblems

Gestures that serve the same function as a word are called emblems.

For example, the signals that mean 'OK', 'Come here!', or the hand movement used when hitch-hiking. However, be aware that whilst some emblems are internationally recognised, others may need to be interpreted in their cultural context.

For more about this, see our page on Non-Verbal Communication.

Illustrators

Gestures which accompany words to illustrate a verbal message are known as illustrators.

For example, the common circular hand movement which accompanies the phrase 'over and over again', or nodding the head in a particular direction when saying 'over there'.

Regulators

Gestures used to give feedback when conversing are called regulators.

Examples of 'regulators' include head nods, short sounds such as 'uh-huh', 'mm-mm', and expressions of interest or boredom. Regulators allow the other person to adapt his or her speech to reflect the level of interest or agreement. Without receiving feedback, many people find it difficult to maintain a conversation. Again, however, they may vary in different cultural contexts.

Adaptors

Adaptors are non-verbal behaviours which either satisfy some physical need.

Adaptors include such actions as scratching or adjusting uncomfortable glasses, or represent a psychological need such as biting fingernails when nervous.

Although normally subconscious, adaptors are more likely to be restrained in public places than in the private world of individuals where they are less likely to be noticed. Adaptive behaviours often accompany feelings of anxiety or hostility.

Posture

Posture can reflect emotions, attitudes and intentions.

Research has identified a wide range of postural signals and their meanings, such as:

Open and Closed Posture

Two forms of posture have been identified, 'open' and 'closed', which may reflect an individual's degree of confidence, status or receptivity to another person.

Someone seated in a closed position might have his/her arms folded, legs crossed or be positioned at a slight angle from the person with whom they are interacting. In an open posture, you might expect to see someone directly facing you with hands apart on the arms of the chair. An open posture can be used to communicate openness or interest in someone and a readiness to listen, whereas the closed posture might imply discomfort or disinterest.

Mirroring

Notice the way a loving couple relate to each other. You might like to observe a close relationship in person or on television. You will see that the partners' postures will match, as if one partner is a mirror reflection of the other. For example, if one partner drapes an arm over the back of a chair this might be replicated in the other person's position. If one partner frowns, it could be reflected in the other partner's facial expression. This 'mirroring' indicates interest and approval between people.

Closeness and Personal Space (Proxemics)

Every culture has different levels of physical closeness appropriate to different types of relationship, and individuals learn these distances from the society in which they grew up.

The study of personal space is called proxemics.

In today's multicultural society, it is important to consider the range of non-verbal codes as expressed in different ethnic groups. When someone violates an 'appropriate' distance, people may feel uncomfortable or defensive. Their actions may well be open to misinterpretation.

In Western society, four distances have been defined according to the relationship between the people involved.

The Four Main Categories of Proxemics

Intimate Distance (touching to 45cm)

Personal Distance (45cm to 1.2m)

Social Distance (1.2m to 3.6m)

Public Distance (3.7m to 4.5m)

These four distances are associated with the four main types of relationship - intimate, personal, social and public.

Each of the distances is divided into two, giving a close phase and a far phase, making eight divisions in all. It is worth noting that these distances are considered the norm in Western society.

Intimate Distance:

Intimate distance ranges from close contact (touching) to the 'far' phase of 15-45cm.

In British society, it tends to be seen as an inappropriate distance for public behaviour and entering the intimate space of another person with whom you do not have a close relationship can be extremely disturbing.

Personal Distance:

The 'far' phase of personal distance is considered to be the most appropriate for people holding a conversation. At this distance it is easy to see the other person's expressions and eye movements, as well as their overall body language. Handshaking can occur within the bounds of personal distance.

Social Distance:

This is the normal distance for impersonal business, for example working together in the same room or during social gatherings.

Seating is also important; communication is far more likely to be considered as a formal relationship if the interaction is carried out across a desk. In addition, if the seating arrangements are such that one person appears to look down on another, an effect of domination may be created. At a social distance, speech needs to be louder and eye contact remains essential to communication, otherwise feedback will be reduced and the interaction may end.

Public Distance:

Teachers and public speakers address groups at a public distance. At such distances exaggerated non-verbal communication is necessary for communication to be effective. Subtle facial expressions are lost at this distance, so clear hand gestures are often used as a substitute. Larger head movements are also typical of an experienced public speaker who is aware of changes in the way body language is perceived at longer distances.

Concept of Time Management

“Time management” refers to the way that you organize and plan how long you spend on specific activities.

It may seem counter-intuitive to dedicate precious time to learning about time management, instead of using it to get on with your work, but the benefits are enormous:

- Greater productivity and efficiency.
- A better professional reputation.
- Less stress.
- Increased opportunities for advancement.
- Greater opportunities to achieve important life and career goals.

Failing to manage your time effectively can have some very undesirable consequences:

- Missed deadlines.
- Inefficient work flow.
- Poor work quality.
- A poor professional reputation and a stalled career.
- Higher stress levels.

Spending a little time learning about time-management techniques will have huge benefits now – and throughout your career.

Importance of Time Management

- **It helps you achieve what you want, and faster**

When you understand the importance of time management, you gain [the motivation](#) to stop sitting around and pursue your goals. As a result of this hard work and newfound motivation, you reach your goals faster.

- **It helps you get more done, but in less time**

When you properly manage time, you get more done, but also save more time for activities you truly enjoy. Allocating a specific time period, say 1 hour, to a task and sticking to your plan will have a better effect than working on a task with no predefined time slot.

- **It helps you waste less time, and avoid more friction and problems**

Properly managing time includes making a to-do list, allocating time to each item from your to-do list, and then scheduling those tasks on your calendar. By doing so, you'll no longer be indecisive about what you have to do next, and whether you'll have to finish everything you need to.

- **It helps you clear your schedule for more leisure time, and feel more energized**

Considering that proper time management helps you finish your work faster, you'll find that you now have more free time as a consequence. More free time will mean you have more time to spend with your loved ones, practice a hobby, or even go on a trip abroad – which will all result in you feeling more energized.

- **It helps you fulfill more tasks in less time, and in turn, feel more fulfilled**

When you properly [manage time](#), you'll enjoy the feeling of success a completed to-do list brings – you'll see how you can live up to your expectations and in turn feel a boost of self-confidence about your abilities.

- **It helps you feel calmer and less stressed overtime**

When you properly manage time, you don't have to worry about missing deadlines or forgetting errands – because you already planned your time in such a way that prevents such mishaps from happening.

As a result, you'll feel less stressed about your workload and more calm about the end results.

- **It helps you make a change in your lifestyle for the better**

Proper time management makes sure you spend less time busy as a bee but as productive as a sloth on a duvet day. You'll be able to single out your priorities and schedule your time in such a way that you manage to both attend your daughter's recital and go over some crucial project issues with a client.

Intellectual Development

Types of Reading

The four main types of reading techniques are the following:

- Skimming
- Scanning
- Intensive
- Extensive

Skimming

Skimming is sometimes referred to as gist reading. Skimming may help in order to know what the text is about at its most basic level. You might typically do this with a magazine or newspaper and would help you mentally and quickly shortlist those articles which you might consider for a deeper read. You might typically skim to search for a name in a telephone directory.

You can reach a speed count of even 700 words per minute if you train yourself well in this particular method. Comprehension is of course very low and understanding of overall content very superficial.

Scanning

Picture yourself visiting a historical city, guide book in hand. You would most probably just scan the guide book to see which site you might want to visit. Scanning involves getting your eyes to quickly scuttle across sentence and is used to get just a simple piece of information. Interestingly, research has concluded that reading off a computer screen actually inhibits the

pathways to effective scanning and thus, reading of paper is far more conducive to speedy comprehension of texts.

Something students sometimes do not give enough importance to is illustrations. These should be included in your scanning. Special attention to the introduction and the conclusion should also be paid.

Intensive Reading

You need to have your aims clear in mind when undertaking intensive reading. Remember this is going to be far more time consuming than scanning or skimming. If you need to list the chronology of events in a long passage, you will need to read it intensively. This type of reading has indeed been beneficial to language learners as it helps them understand vocabulary by deducing the meaning of words in context. It moreover, helps with retention of information for long periods of time and knowledge resulting from intensive reading persists in your long term memory.

This is one reason why reading huge amounts of information just before an exam does not work very well. When students do this, they undertake neither type of reading process effectively, especially neglecting intensive reading. They may remember the answers in an exam but will likely forget everything soon afterwards.

SQ5R Method

The SQ5R study method is one system for active reading. Actively processing information improves comprehension and retention of the material.

SURVEY Before reading a chapter or passage, read the introduction and summary. Skim topic headings, bold-faced words, pictures, charts, and graphs to get an idea of the general structure and content before beginning to read.

QUESTION Formulate a purpose for the reading by developing questions from the topic and headings skimmed in the survey step. Ask who, what, where, when, why, and how questions: the best questions are general, covering main topics and important points.

READ Break the material into sections which take about 20 minutes to read and go section by section. Look for answers to your questions, key concepts, and supporting details. Study charts, graphs, tables, and pictures which serve to present new information and tie together concepts from the reading.

RESPOND After each section, think about the material you have just read and answer the questions you have asked. This can be done during the reading step, since response is often automatic. The purpose of this step is to think about the material and take notice of what is important.

RECORD Go back and underline key concepts and take notes. This can be done on a separate sheet of paper, on note cards, in the margins of the textbook, or any way that works well for you. (Do this after each section.)

RECITE Next, look away from the material and try to recite the key information and ideas in your own words. Reread the material until you are able to recall the most important points. This may be frustrating at first, but will lead to better understanding and save review time in the long run.

REVIEW After reading the entire chapter, scan and review the information aloud or in your head. Discuss the material with a classmate if possible. Identify overall themes and relationships between concepts. Revise notes or markings so they can be easily understood later.

Advantages of written communication:

- **Easy to preserve:** The documents of written communication are easy to preserve. Oral and non-verbal communication cannot be preserved. If it is needed, important information can be collected from the preserved documents.
- **Easy presentation of complex matter:** Written communication is the best way to represent any complex matter easily and attractively.
- **Permanent record:** The documents of written communication act as a permanent record. When it is needed, important information can be easily collected from the preserved documents.
- **Prevention of wastage of time and money:** Written communication prevents the waste of money and time. Without meeting with each other the communicator and communicate can exchange their views.
- **Accurate presentation:** Through the documents of the written communication top executive can present the information more accurately and clearly. As it is a legal document everybody takes much care does draft it.
- **Use as a reference:** If it is needed, written communication can be used as future reference.
- **Delegation of authority:** Written communication can help the authority to delegate the power and authority to the subordinate. It is quite impossible to delegate power without a written document.
- **Longevity:** Written document can be preserved for a long time easily. That is why; all the important issues of an organization should be back and white.

- **Effective communication:** Written communication helps to make communication effective. It is more dependable and effective than those of other forms of communication.
- **Maintaining image:** Written communication helps to maintain the images of both the person and the organization. It also protects the images of the company or organization.
- **Proper information:** It is a proper and complete communication system. There is no opportunity to include any unnecessary information in a written document.
- **Less distortion possibility:** In this communication system information is recorded permanently. So, there is less possibility of distortion and alteration of the information.
- **No opportunity to misinterpret:** there is any opportunity to misinterpret the information or messages of written communication.
- **Controlling tool:** Written communication can help to control the organizational activity. The written document may be used as a tool for controlling.
- **Easy to verify:** The information and messages that are preserved can be verified easily. If there arises any misunderstanding any party can easily verify the information.
- **Others:** Clear understanding, Legal document, Acceptability, Reduction of risk, Creating confidence, Easy circulation, Wide access or coverage etc.

Disadvantages of written communication

The limitations and disadvantages of written communication are given below:

- **Expensive:** Written communication is comparatively expensive. For this communication paper, pen, ink, typewriter, computer and a large number of employees are needed.
- **Time consuming:** Written communication takes time to communicate with others. It is a time consuming media. It costs the valuable time of both the writer and the reader.
- **Red-Tapism:** Red-Tapism is one of the most disadvantages of written communication. It means to take time for approval of a project.
- **Useless for illiterate person:** If message receiver is illiterate, written communication is quite impossible. This is major disadvantage written communication.
- **Difficult to maintain secrecy:** It is an unexpected medium to keep business secrecy. Secrecy is not always possible to maintain through written communication. Because here needs to discuss everything in black and white.
- **Lack of flexibility:** Since writing documents cannot be changed easily at any time. Lack of flexibility is one of the most important limitations of written communication.

- **Delay in response:** It takes much time to get a response from the message receiver; prompt response is not possible in case of written communication that is possible in oral communication.
- **Delay in decision making:** Written communication takes much time to communicate with all the parties concerned. So the decision maker cannot take decisions quickly.
- **Cost in record keeping:** It is very difficult and expensive to keep all the records in written communication.
- **Complex words:** Sometimes the writer uses complex words in writing a message. It becomes difficult to meaning out to the reader. So the objectives of the communication may lose.
- **Lack of direct relation:** If there is no direct relation between the writer and the reader, writer communication cannot help to establish a direct relation between them.
- **Other:** Prompt feedback is impossible, Slowness, Bureaucratic attitude, Understanding problem between boss and subordinates, lack in quick clarification and correction, formality problem, lack of personal intimacy, etc.

Techniques to manage stress and anxiety

It's normal to experience stress and anxiety from time to time, and there are strategies you can use to make them more manageable. Pay attention to how your body and mind respond to stressful and anxiety-producing situations. Next time a stressful experience occurs, you'll be able to anticipate your reaction and it may be less disruptive.

Managing everyday stress and anxiety

Certain lifestyle changes can help alleviate symptoms of stress and anxiety. These techniques can be used along with medical treatments for anxiety. Techniques to reduce stress and anxiety include:

eating a balanced, healthy diet

limiting caffeine and alcohol consumption

getting enough sleep

getting regular exercise

meditating

scheduling time for hobbies

keeping a diary of your feelings

practicing deep breathing**recognizing the factors that trigger your stress****talking to a friend**

Be mindful if you tend to use substances like alcohol or drugs as ways to cope with stress and anxiety. This can lead to serious substance abuse issues that can make stress and anxiety worse.

Concept of Presentation Skills

A presentation is a means of communication that can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting or briefing a team.

A presentation can also be used as a broad term that encompasses other 'speaking engagements' such as making a speech at a wedding, or getting a point across in a video conference.

To be effective, step-by-step preparation and the method and means of presenting the information should be carefully considered.

A presentation requires you to get a message across to the listeners and will often contain a '*persuasive*' element. It may, for example, be a talk about the positive work of your organisation, what you could offer an employer, or why you should receive additional funding for a project.

Chapter 3: Team Management

What Are Group Dynamics?

Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist and change management expert, is credited with coining the term "group dynamics" in the early 1940s. He noted that people often take on distinct roles and behaviors when they work in a group. "Group dynamics" describes the effects of these roles and behaviors on other group members, and on the group as a whole.

More recent researchers have built on Lewin's ideas, and this work has become central to good management practice.

A group with a positive dynamic is easy to spot. Team members trust one another, they work towards a collective decision, and they hold one another accountable for making things happen. As well as this, [researchers](#) have found that when a team has a positive dynamic, its members are nearly twice as creative as an average group.

In a group with poor group dynamics, people's behavior disrupts work. As a result, the group may not come to any decision, or it may make the wrong choice, because group members could not explore options effectively.

What Causes Poor Group Dynamics?

Group leaders and team members can contribute to a negative group dynamic. Let's look at some of the most common problems that can occur:

- Weak leadership: when a team lacks a strong leader, a more dominant member of the group can often take charge. This can lead to a lack of direction, infighting, or a focus on the wrong priorities.
- Excessive deference to authority: this can happen when people want to be seen to agree with a leader, and therefore hold back from expressing their own opinions.
- Blocking: this happens when team members behave in a way that disrupts the flow of information in the group. People can adopt blocking roles such as:
 - The aggressor: this person often disagrees with others, or is inappropriately outspoken.
 - The negator: this group member is often critical of others' ideas.
 - The withdrawer: this person doesn't participate in the discussion.
 - The recognition seeker: this group member is boastful, or dominates the session.
 - The joker: this person introduces humor at inappropriate times.

- **Groupthink** : this happens when people place a desire for consensus above their desire to reach the right decision. This prevents people from fully exploring alternative solutions.
- **Free riding**: here, some group members take it easy, and leave their colleagues to do all the work. Free riders may work hard on their own, but limit their contributions in group situations; this is known as "social loafing."
- **Evaluation apprehension**: team members' perceptions can also create a negative group dynamic. Evaluation apprehension happens when people feel that they are being judged excessively harshly by other group members, and they hold back their opinions as a result.

Stages of Team Development (Bruce Tuckman's Five Stage Model)

This process of learning to work together effectively is known as team development. Research has shown that teams go through definitive stages during development. Bruce Tuckman, an educational psychologist, identified a five-stage development process that most teams follow to become high performing. He called the stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Team progress through the stages is shown in the following diagram.



The five stages of team development in a graph: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.

Most high-performing teams go through five stages of team development.

Forming stage

The forming stage involves a period of orientation and getting acquainted. Uncertainty is high during this stage, and people are looking for leadership and authority. A member who asserts authority or is knowledgeable may be looked to take control. Team members are asking such questions as “What does the team offer me?” “What is expected of me?” “Will I fit in?” Most interactions are social as members get to know each other.

Storming stage

The storming stage is the most difficult and critical stage to pass through. It is a period marked by conflict and competition as individual personalities emerge. Team performance may actually decrease in this stage because energy is put into unproductive activities. Members may disagree on team goals, and subgroups and cliques may form around strong personalities or areas of agreement. To get through this stage, members must work to overcome obstacles, to accept individual differences, and to work through conflicting ideas on team tasks and goals. Teams can get bogged down in this stage. Failure to address conflicts may result in long-term problems.

Norming stage

If teams get through the storming stage, conflict is resolved and some degree of unity emerges. In the norming stage, consensus develops around who the leader or leaders are, and individual member’s roles. Interpersonal differences begin to be resolved, and a sense of cohesion and unity emerges. Team performance increases during this stage as members learn to cooperate and begin to focus on team goals. However, the harmony is precarious, and if disagreements re-emerge the team can slide back into storming.

Performing stage

In the performing stage, consensus and cooperation have been well-established and the team is mature, organized, and well-functioning. There is a clear and stable structure, and members are committed to the team’s mission. Problems and conflicts still emerge, but they are dealt with constructively. (We will discuss the role of conflict and conflict resolution in the next section). The team is focused on problem solving and meeting team goals.

Adjourning stage

In the adjourning stage, most of the team’s goals have been accomplished. The emphasis is on wrapping up final tasks and documenting the effort and results. As the work load is diminished, individual members may be reassigned to other teams, and the team disbands. There may be regret as the team ends, so a ceremonial acknowledgement of the work and success of the team can be helpful. If the team is a standing committee with ongoing responsibility, members may be replaced by new people and the team can go back to a forming or storming stage and repeat the development process.

Chapter 4 : Task Management

Stages of Task Management

1. Project/Task Initiation

Initiation is the first phase of the project lifecycle. This is where the project's value and feasibility are measured. Project managers typically use two evaluation tools to decide whether or not to pursue a project:

- **Business Case Document** – This document justifies the need for the project, and it includes an estimate of potential financial benefits.
- **Feasibility Study** – This is an evaluation of the project's goals, timeline and costs to determine if the project should be executed. It balances the requirements of the project with available resources to see if pursuing the project makes sense.

Teams abandon proposed projects that are labeled unprofitable and/or unfeasible. However, projects that pass these two tests can be assigned to a project team or designated project office.

2. Project/Task Planning

Once the project receives the green light, it needs a solid plan to guide the team, as well as keep them on time and on budget. A well-written project plan gives guidance for obtaining resources, acquiring financing and procuring required materials. The project plan gives the team direction for producing quality outputs, handling risk, creating acceptance, communicating benefits to stakeholders and managing suppliers.

The project plan also prepares teams for the obstacles they might encounter over the course of the project, and helps them understand the cost, scope and timeframe of the project.

3. Project/Task Execution

This is the phase that is most commonly associated with project management. Execution is all about building deliverables that satisfy the customer. Team leaders make this happen by allocating resources and keeping team members focused on their assigned tasks.

Execution relies heavily on the planning phase. The work and efforts of the team during the execution phase are derived from the project plan.

4. Project/Task Monitoring and Control

Monitoring and control are sometimes combined with execution because they often occur at the same time. As teams execute their project plan, they must constantly monitor their own progress.

To guarantee delivery of what was promised, teams must monitor tasks to prevent scope creep, calculate key performance indicators and track variations from allotted cost and time. This constant vigilance helps keep the project moving ahead smoothly.

5. Project/Task Closure

Teams close a project when they deliver the finished project to the customer, communicating completion to stakeholders and releasing resources to other projects. This vital step in the project lifecycle allows the team to evaluate and document the project and move on the next one, using previous project mistakes and successes to build stronger processes and more successful teams.

Although project management may seem overwhelming at times, breaking it down into these five distinct cycles can help your team manage even the most complex projects and use time and resources more wisely.

Chapter 5: Problem Solving

Problems are at the center of what many people do at work every day. Whether you're solving a problem for a client (internal or external), supporting those who are solving problems, or discovering new problems to solve, the problems you face can be large or small, simple or complex, and easy or difficult.

A fundamental part of every manager's role is finding ways to solve them. So, being a confident problem solver is really important to your success. Much of that confidence comes from having a good process to use when approaching a problem. With one, you can solve problems quickly and effectively. Without one, your solutions may be ineffective, or you'll get stuck and do nothing, with sometimes painful consequences.

There are four basic steps in solving a problem:

- 1. Defining the problem.**
- 2. Generating alternatives.**
- 3. Evaluating and selecting alternatives.**
- 4. Implementing solutions.**

1. Define the problem

Diagnose the situation so that your focus is on the problem, not just its symptoms. Helpful problem-solving techniques include using [flowcharts](#) to identify the expected steps of a process and [cause-and-effect diagrams](#) to define and analyze [root causes](#).

The sections below help explain key problem-solving steps. These steps support the involvement of interested parties, the use of factual information, comparison of expectations to reality, and a focus on root causes of a problem. You should begin by:

- Reviewing and documenting how processes currently work (i.e., who does what, with what information, using what tools, communicating with what organizations and individuals, in what time frame, using what format).
- Evaluating the possible impact of new tools and revised policies in the development of your “what should be” model.

2. Generate alternative solutions

Postpone the selection of one solution until several problem-solving alternatives have been proposed. Considering multiple alternatives can significantly enhance the value of your ideal solution. Once you have decided on the "what should be" model, this target standard becomes

the basis for developing a road map for investigating alternatives. [Brainstorming](#) and team problem-solving techniques are both useful tools in this stage of problem solving.

Many alternative solutions to the problem should be generated before final evaluation. A common mistake in problem solving is that alternatives are evaluated as they are proposed, so the first acceptable solution is chosen, even if it's not the best fit. If we focus on trying to get the results we want, we miss the potential for learning something new that will allow for real improvement in the problem-solving process.

3. Evaluate and select an alternative

Skilled problem solvers use a series of considerations when selecting the best alternative. They consider the extent to which:

- A particular alternative will solve the problem without causing other unanticipated problems.
- All the individuals involved will accept the alternative.
- Implementation of the alternative is likely.
- The alternative fits within the organizational constraints.

4. Implement and follow up on the solution

Leaders may be called upon to direct others to implement the solution, "sell" the solution, or facilitate the implementation with the help of others. Involving others in the implementation is an effective way to gain buy-in and support and minimize resistance to subsequent changes.

Regardless of how the solution is rolled out, feedback channels should be built into the implementation. This allows for continuous monitoring and testing of actual events against expectations. Problem solving, and the techniques used to gain clarity, are most effective if the solution remains in place and is updated to respond to future changes.

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