

## Developing Skills for Business and Management Students

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### Abstract

Business education and learning has become formidable and challenging now a days. The key objective of business education is to provide overall business competencies to students. Business management or administration falls under professional education, experiential learning is suitable than bookish or theoretical knowledge. Then only students can understand and experience the real business problems and find their creative and feasible solutions. Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence, Golman's emotional intelligence, theory of constructivism, outcome based innovative learning strategies, co-operative learning and collaborative learning are to be applied in the teaching-learning process. Web 2.0 pedagogies can be applied for co-construction of knowledge among business and management students. The attainment of business and management skills will help to design SMART goals, development of teamwork and social skills and enhance creativity and innovation.

**Keywords:** Business Education, Bloom's Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Constructivism, Outcome based learning, Cooperative learning, Collaborative learning.

## **Introduction**

The designer of a business or management degree faces a tripartite tension when it comes to skills development: the work situation for which you are being prepared; the requisite for academic region for your university study and your personal growth needs as an individual student. The transferability of skills between these contexts - lies the challenge for course designers, managers and students. The sole objective of business education is to provide overall business competencies to students rather than being deliberately minting new cadres of professional accountants (MC Vay et al., 2008). Business curriculum content provides students with an elementary theoretical knowledge for understanding business management and at the same time provides students with knowledge and techniques necessary to starting up and managing small business effectively (Venter, 2001). Business skills are important at whatever level one work within on organization from working in a mailroom to running the company; good skills make one attractive to fellow workers and employers. Business skills give a person an edge in the way one work with clients, plan a marketing campaign, challenge the competition, bring in new business.

## **Weaknesses in the Present Management Education**

Management education has some weaknesses for its limited contribution to both students and business. Yet, the traditional education approach has not undergone fundamental changes in the modern times. A number of new educational models have been proposed, but challenges seem insurmountable when it comes for implementation. Therefore, business schools appear to have been on the wrong track and lost their way (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005).

AACSB International (2006) reported that misunderstandings exist between business schools and the business community. Teaching and research are thought to be too academic, isolated from real-world practice and day-to-day operations, and slow to respond to new business challenges.

- The present system does not build adequate entrepreneurial skills and abilities.
- It does not lay emphasis on ethical part of education
- It is not able to indicate or cultivate industry or sector specific skills.
- It is highly commercialized and commoditized it is filled with antiquated, out dated pedagogic and teaching skills.

- Many faculties have no enough expertise and experience in the latest academic and business trends. B-schools focus mainly on theoretical knowledge and rote learning with minimal emphasis on job skill development and practical training.
- Not suitable for future - ready - A report by Mckinsey Global Institute highlights atleast 30-60 percent of all occupations will become automated in the next two decades with the advancements in technology, change in the complexity and volatility, business schools must be ready to embrace these changes and prepare their students for future job roles and global competitiveness.

### **Skills for Business and Management students**

Business and management degrees are nothing if not a preparation for the workplace, a pragmatic approach to learning. Business schools must move beyond their current focus of equipping future executives with knowledge and instead furnish them with skills and attributes....ways to nurture integrity, judgment, intuition and other essential leadership attributes....the power to think, decide and act efficiently and innovatively in an unpredictable global business environment (O Andrea Tyson, 2005).

The list of skills from the **Chartered Management Institute (2002)** is below:

- Basic skills (Literacy/numeracy)
- Communication skills
- Team working/inter-personal skills
- Computer/IT skills
- Creating/innovation
- Presentation skills
- Reasoning/comprehension
- Problem solving/analytical thinking

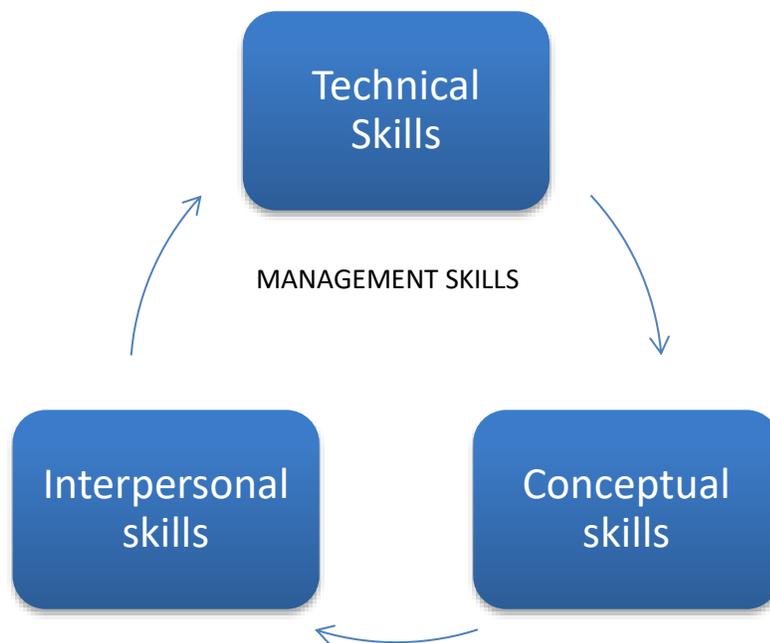
### **Types of management skills**

According to American social and organizational psychologist Robert Katz, the three basic management skills include:

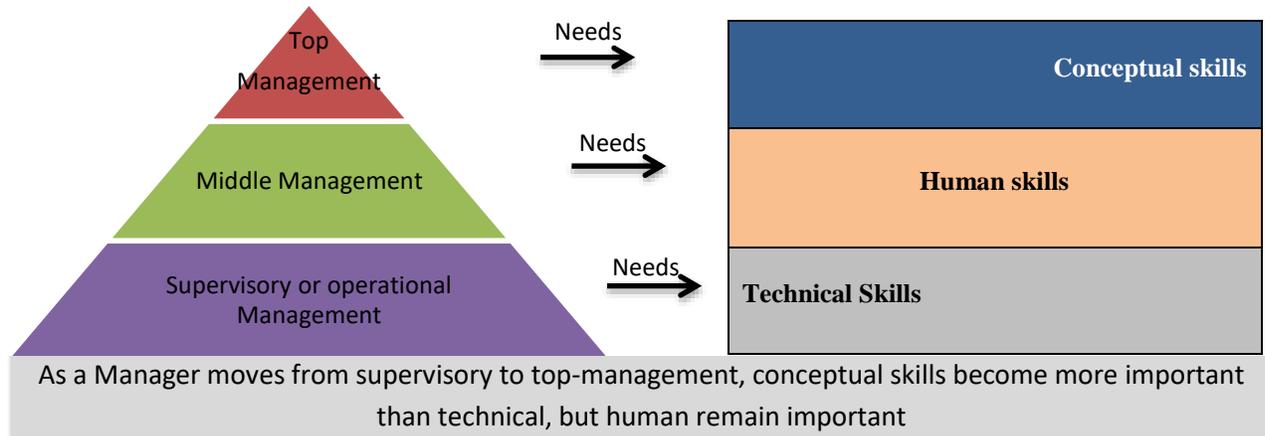
**1. Technical skills:** Technical skills involve skills that help the managers the ability and the knowledge to use a variety of techniques to achieve their goal. These skills not only involve operating, machines & software, production tools and pieces of equipment but also the skills needed to boost sales, design different types and products and services and market the products and services.

**2. Conceptual skills:** Conceptual skills involve the skills the managers present in terms of the knowledge and ability for abstract thinking and formulating ideas. The manager is able to see the entire concept, analyze and diagnose a problem and find creative solutions.

**3. Human or inter-personal skills:** The human/inter-personal skills are the skills that present the manager's ability to interact, work or relate effectively with people. These skills enable the managers to make use of human potential in the company and motivate the employees for better results.



**Figure 1: Types of management skills**



**Figure 2: Management skills continuum**

## Transferability of skills

Transferability of skills means that the ability or skill of management is transferable in other organization, industry, country or other source of job fields. It also implies that management can be moved from one organization to another. Graduates of business education will need to be flexible, adaptable, and in possession of a mix of broad education and specific skills. Communication, interpersonal skills, problem solving, decision-making, and teamwork are the competencies that will allow employees to grow and adapt as the world of work continues to change (Oblinger, 1998). In response to increased global competition and the expansion of the world economy, businesses are seeking workers more highly skilled in the soft skills.

Clearly, the study skills of reading, writing, research and presentation will help a student to get the most out of from the university or college. Other skills, such as team working may not appear to be so obviously transferable from the university / college to the work context especially if they require specific knowledge of company procedures etc. of course, it helps if students can see linkages between the academic and work contexts – this is why many programmes of study are now asking students to consider how skills may be used in the work place.

**Transferable skills tend to bring the following benefits** for candidates and employers:

- **Flexibility:** In an increasingly competitive job market, business houses want to recruit employees who can diversify and complete multiple tasks and roles.

- **Diversity:** The more transferable skills you have, the more diversity you can offer to a potential employer.
- **Portability:** The nature of transferable skills means they can be taken with you when you move jobs.
- **Employability:** Even if you have very little work experience, building a strong CV around your transferable skills will strengthen your chances of success.

**A complete list of transferable skills are:**

- 1) Business Strategy
- 2) Leadership and Team Management
- 3) Problem Solving
- 4) Teamwork Ability
- 5) Data Analysis
- 6) Communication Skills
- 7) Time Management
- 8) Work Ethics
- 9) Commercial Awareness
- 10) Listening and Providing Feedback

**The teaching - learning process: Changing Landscape**

UNESCO's **International Commission on Education** for twenty-first century in its report "Learning the Treasure Within"(1996) has advocated that '**Learning to know**', '**learning to do**', '**Learning to live together**' and '**Learning to be**' are the four pillars of education for the new millennium. It has emphasized learning throughout life as necessity. For this, here a teacher acts as a friend, philosopher, guide, facilitator, scaffolder, active listener, a person of empathy, respect and appreciation.

Learning is an active process in which pupil construct new knowledge through situated and authentic tasks, either individually or collaboratively and through active exploration, experimentation, discussion and reflection (Resnick, 2002). The learning process reflects the pathways through which the learners strive to acquire the habits, skills, knowledge, attitude, values and appreciation, which are necessary for a civilized society. Teaching is purposive activity, which leads to desirable learning by way of sequencing of activities or kinds of interactions that would lead to expected learning.

The 21st century teaching and learning process incorporating features of internet based teaching in to their conventional teaching models as well as in the *Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode (Blended learning)*. The 2012 Innovative Pedagogies Report 2013 described **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC's)** as open access online courses that provide no constraint on class size (Sharples et.al. 2013). The learning materials placed on the MOOC platform are in the form of recorded lectures, videos, text materials and are generally found to be consumed in diminishing proportions as the course progresses.

**Flipped classrooms:** Represents an interesting application brought about by merging the learning value in both online and face to face interactions. In this method, direct teaching taken outside the class room and put online on the learning platform using lecture videos and presentations.

**Web 2.0 supported pedagogies:**

Web 2.0 is an umbrella term for a host of recent Internet applications such as social networking, wikis, virtual societies, blogging, multi-player online gaming and Mash-ups. Much of the learning potential of Web 2.0 is seen to derive from the co-construction of knowledge.

**Gamification of learning:**

Gamification or the application of gaming techniques can be a powerful tool for delivering education and training in subjects that require strategic planning, scenario building, stimulating and evaluating alternatives as well as developing imaginative and creative solutions under defined constraints. As a pedagogy application, games allow the freedom to think outside of normal parameters, to add little bit of fantasy, and to force people to think in different ways (Kapp, 2012).

Forecast for online educations is India has presented a growth of eight times in the next five years and in money terms it is expected to grow from USD 247 million in 2016 to USD 1.96 Billion in 2021 with an increased number of paid online education offers from 1.57 million in 2016 to 9.5 million in 2021 (KPMG and Google 2017).

### **Skill Development and Bloom's Taxonomy**

Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives was originally developed to assist teachers and curriculum designers by providing a systematic assessment tool. Benjamin S Bloom of the University of Chicago classified learning objectives into three domains:

- Cognitive domain (about knowing)
- Affective domain (about attitudes and feelings)
- Psychomotor domain (about doing)

In each of these domains, there are a set of skills identified as fulfilling the learning objectives. Thus we have six levels (said to form a hierarchy) in the cognitive domain comprising of Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation. In the affective domain: Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organization and Characterization are included. In the psycho motor domain: Reflex, Movements, Perpetual abilities, physical abilities, skilled movements and non-discursive communication are included. By following this model, it is hoped that the learning outcomes become amenable for measurement and learning can be traced in the form of a hierarchy from the least complex to the most complex variable.

<b>Bloom's Original Taxonomy (1956)</b>	<b>Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (2001)</b>
Evaluation	Creating
Synthesis	Evaluating
Analysis	Analyzing
Application	Applying
Comprehension	Understanding
Knowledge	Remembering

Levels of Learning	Action Verbs
6. Creating	Create: generating, planning, producing, composing
5. Evaluating	Evaluate: checking, assessing, concluding
4. Analyzing	Analyze: differentiating, organizing, comparing, outlining
3. Applying	Apply: executing, implementing, classifying, calculating, constructing
2. Understanding	Understand: interpreting, classifying, summarizing, comparing, explaining, inferring
1. Remembering	Remember: recognizing, recalling, describing, listing

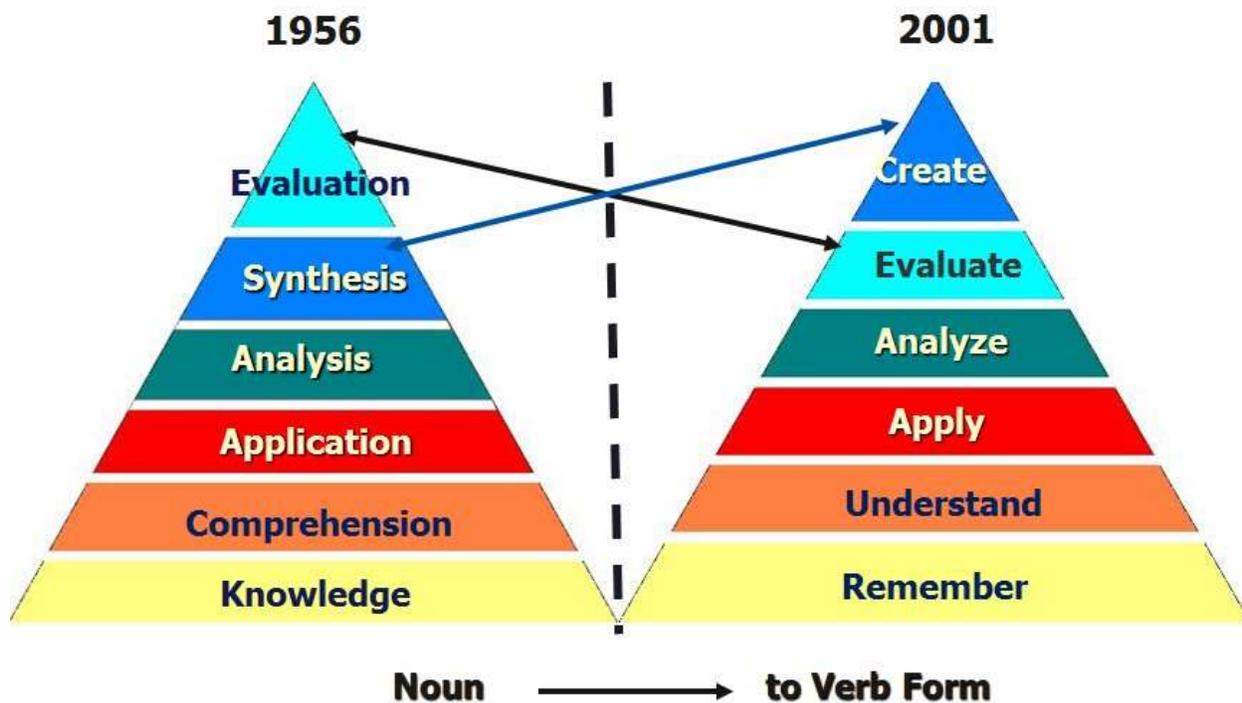


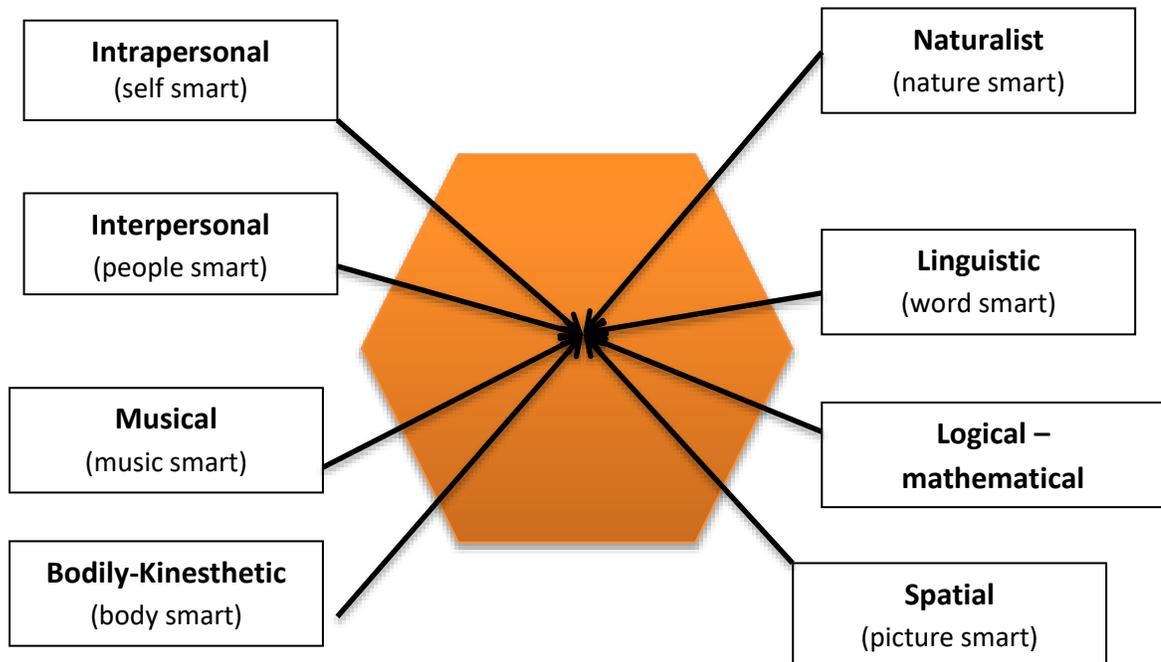
Figure 3 : Bloom’s Original Taxonomy (1956)

Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy (2001)

## Skill Development and Multiple Intelligence (MI)

Howard Gardner (1993), Intelligence is the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings. These intelligences are:

1. **Linguistic Intelligence:** relates to your ability to use language to speak, read and write.
2. **Logical – Mathematical Intelligence:** concerns your ability to reason and problem solving using rational thought.
3. **Spatial Intelligence:** relates to the ability to visualize objects in two or three physical dimensions.
4. **Musical Intelligence:** covers the ability to recognize musical notes and form to create songs and music, to read and write in music notation, to sing and play musical instruments.
5. **Kinesthetic Intelligence:** concerned with the movement of your body.
6. **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** relates to our ability to recognize our strength and weaknesses, what motivates us, why we behave as we do and our ability to reflect upon our performance.
7. **Interpersonal Intelligence:** relates how you interact with other people- your ability to connect with them- to communicate and influence both individuals and groups.
8. **Naturalist Intelligence:** your ability to work in harmony with nature.



**Figure 4: 8 Multiple Intelligences**

## **Skill Development and Emotional Intelligence**

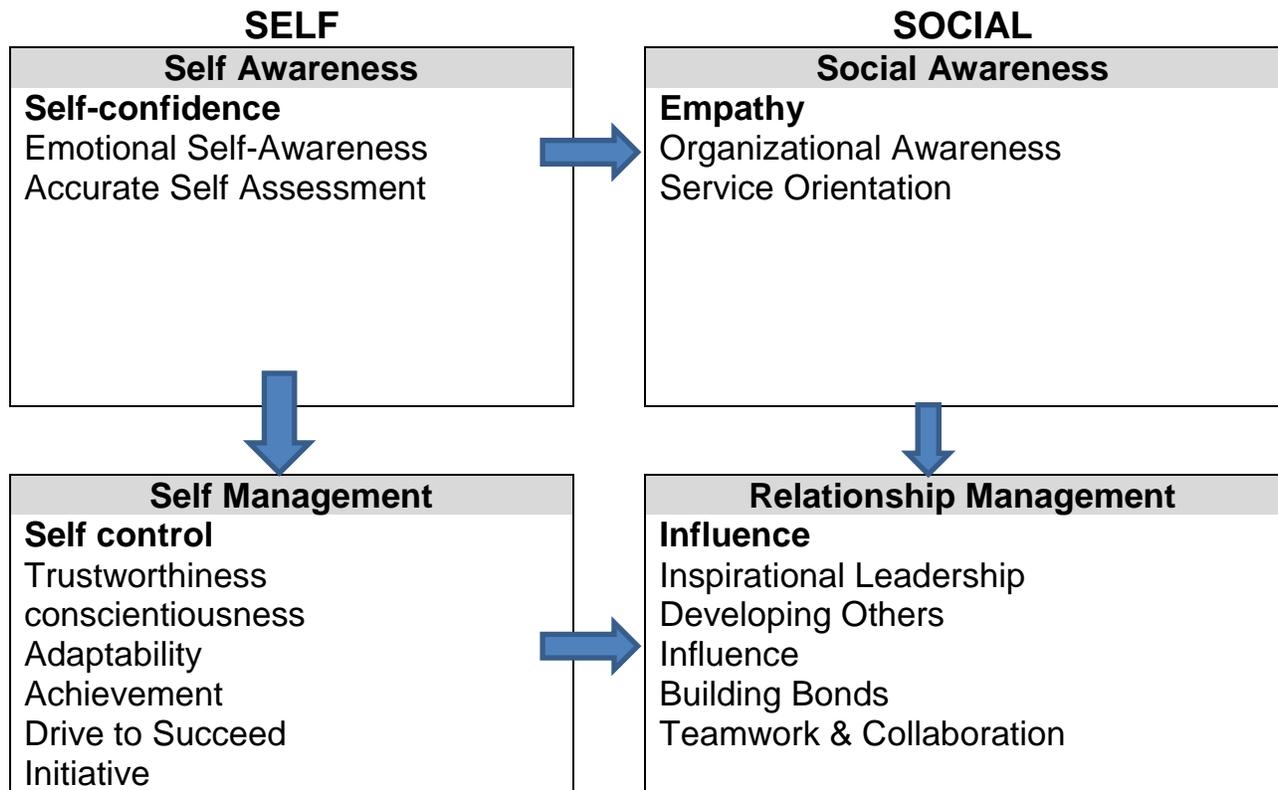
Since the concept of 'emotional intelligence' (EI) was first popularized by Daniel Goleman, it has been developed, adapted and embraced by the business world and very recently, by academics in business education. EI skills have been strongly associated with dynamic leadership, satisfying personal life experiences and success in the workplace. This has resulted in calls for the incorporation of EI competencies in university curricula to acquaint students with EI skills.

**According to Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia)(2010)**, Emotional Intelligence (EI), often measured as an Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ), describes a concept that involves the ability, capacity, skill or (in the case of the trait EI model) a self-perceived ability, to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups.

The ability to manage one's emotions and to manage one's interactions with others is important for effective managerial leadership. Students in business schools will need to be prepared to integrate their emotional intelligence with their everyday behavior if they are to achieve success in whatever field of endeavor they have chosen. EI adopting a problem-based learning approach which enabled teachers to provide students with 'rich opportunities to gain the interpersonal skills currently demanded by the management profession' (**Esmond-Kiger & Kirch 2003**).

**Goleman et al. (2002)** states that there are four major categories of EI for the business leader;

1. Self-awareness:
2. Self-management:
3. Social awareness
4. Relationship management



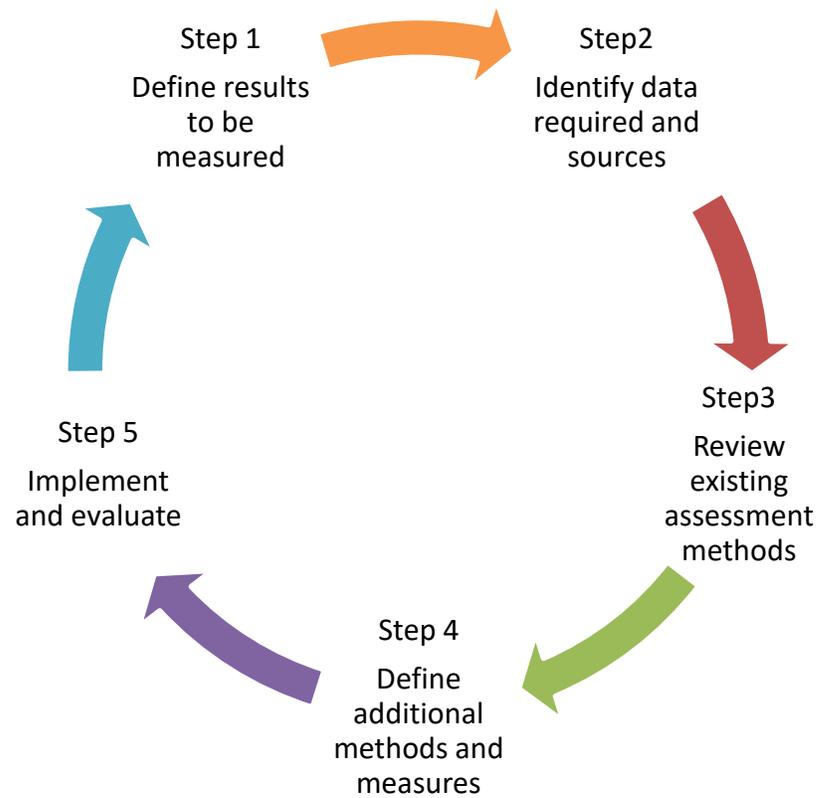
**Figure 5: Four major categories of EI**

### **Theory of Constructivism**

Constructivism is an idea that people are responsible in creating their own understanding of the world and using what they know based on previous experiences in the process of linking new information to these experiences. Construction of their own knowledge is the main aim. Examples for the methods are; case studies, research projects, problem based learning, brainstorming, Collaborative learning / group work, discovery learning and simulations.

### **Outcome Based Learning (OBL)**

OBL is an educational model in which curriculum and pedagogy and assessment are all focused on student learning. The main aim of education is to prepare learners for life and for performing tasks. It is the intension of the outcome based approach to focus as much on the process of learning and the final outcome or result is the attainment of knowledge and skills.

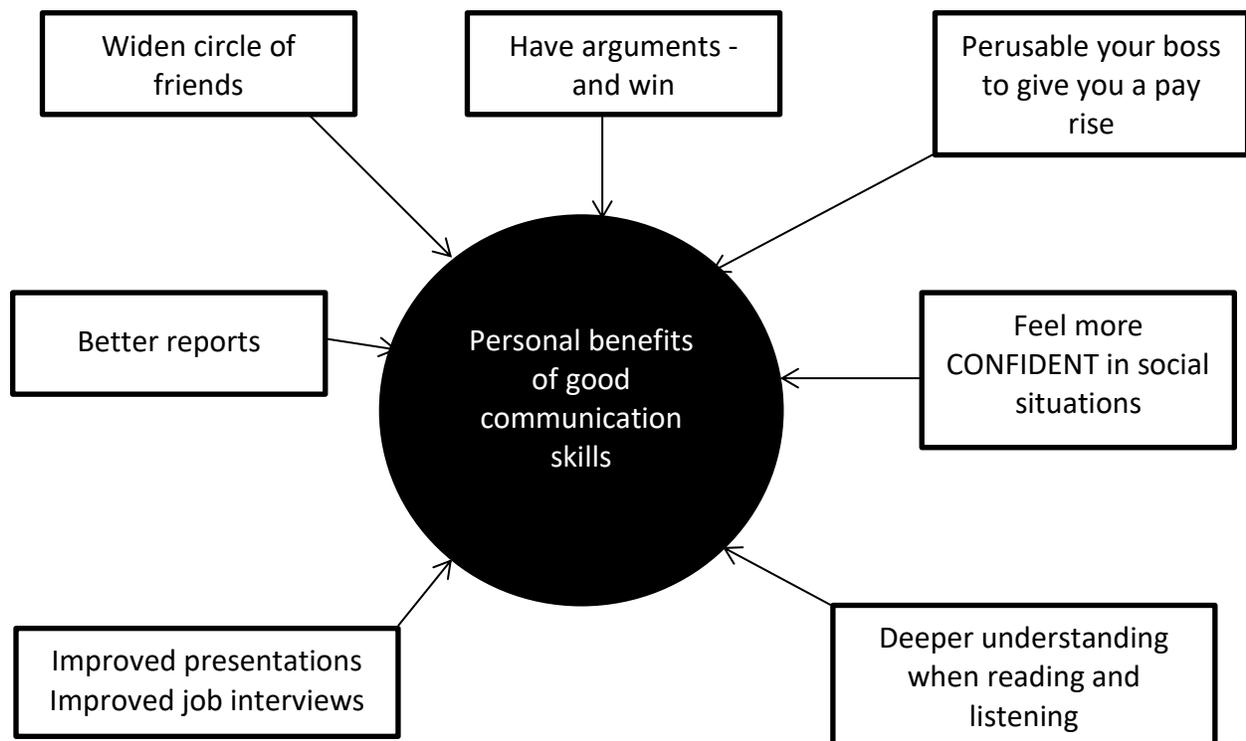


**Figure 6: OBL Process**

## Development of Communication Skills

Communication skill is the glue that brings all the educational qualities together. Communication skills helps to express ones' feeling, emotions, desires and wants to others.

Effective communication is vital for any business professional. Effective communication skills share ideas with others and to foster good relationships among employees. Whether it is verbal or nonverbal communication, both have equal importance.



**Figure 7: Personal Benefits of Good Communication Skills**

**Table 3: Examples of Verbal written, verbal spoken and non-verbal**

Verbal Written	Verbal Spoken	Non-verbal
Newspapers	News Broadcast, Chatting with family & friends	Facial expressions- sombre, happy, surprised, angry, disgust, staring, crying  Body language- proud, confident, aggressive, humble, submissive, welcoming, hostile etc.  Action which convey a message- e.g. volunteering, doing nothing, style of dress
Posters/Advertisements	Spoken adverts/voiceovers	
Signs	Speeches, discussions, spoken commands, requests, questions	
Books	Books, poems, plays that are read aloud, songs	
Journals	Lectures, presentations, feedback	
Diaries	Audio diary	
Essays	Stories	
Reports	Verbal reports	
Shopping lists	Spoken order	
Instruction Manuals	Verbal instructions	
Stories (Written)	Narrated stories	
Poetry (Written)	Narrated poems	

## Reading skills

In the preface to Book **Smart Jane Mallison (2007)** talks about the 'joys of being well read' and lists:

- stimulation of our own thinking
- gaining of experience
- we read to know that we are not alone

An effective method for reading is called SQ3R (**Robinson 1970**): Surveying, Questioning, Reading, Recalling and Reviewing.

**Table 4: Personal, Academic and Career Aims and Outcomes**

<b>Personal aims / Objectives</b>	<b>Academic aims / outcomes</b>	<b>Career aims / outcomes</b>
Allowing for greater self-expression	Getting better marks in essays and reports	Looking more professional
Greater self-awareness	Passing degree	Writing better CVs
Improving general knowledge	More more effective gathering of information	Writing effective business reports, letters, and other documentation
Intrinsic enjoyment/satisfaction	Providing an improved basis for comparison and contrasting of various points of view	Ability to sift out pertinent information from masses of data
Adding to personal vocabulary	Improving understanding of subject area	Improved general awareness
Opening up areas of future interest	Improving ability to construct arguments by reading those of others	Better social skills

## **Presentation Skills**

Presentation skills can be defined as “the skills you need in delivering effective and engaging presentations to a variety of audiences. These skills cover a variety of areas such as the structure of your presentation, the design of your slides, the tone of your voice and the body language you convey”. While everyone communicates online and offline in written, verbal and visual formats such as blog posts, social media posts, youtube videos, slideshows, and seminars and in official meetings, etc. to convince the small and larger audience. But not all use presentation skills and

that's why most of the people are not that much effective in communicating in a meeting, classroom, and interviews, etc.

Presentation skills in business mean the way you present/introduce/explain your product and services in front of customers online and offline by using the website, videos, social media and on the shop counter, etc.

When someone lists the product in their online store website, create, title, write description it means they are presenting the product to customers or people those are visiting the website.

### **Team work skills**

The cooperative learning methodology provides an opportunity for business students to develop interpersonal, social, and teamwork competences which can be decisive in their professional and social success. The better you work with others, the more successful your team will be in achieving their goals. Employees often need to collaborate or work with others to complete tasks and projects – having teamwork skills and experience will make it a much better experience.

A team is 'a group of people who work together to achieve a particular tasks. The five key areas required for team skills at work are:

- Collaborative problem solving
- Communication – Listening effectively
- Conflict resolution
- Goal setting and performance management
- Planning and task co-ordination

### **Ways to develop teamwork skills**

Teamwork is the product of bringing all of that together; it requires:

- Working confidently with all group members
- Contributing your ideas effectively
- Behaving with integrity
- Taking a share of the responsibility
- Allowing others to express their opinion freely
- Accepting and learning from others

- Respecting their boundaries and individuality
- Providing positive and constructive feedback to others
- **Create a project:** Find opportunities to work in a group. Then make sure you contribute to the group and help others to get involved.
- **Join a local group:** Lots of groups run in local areas for all kinds of interests including conservation, politics, special interests and team sports. Getting involved in a group is a great way to build your teamwork skills.
- **Understand how to work in a team:** Communication, planning, problem solving and negotiating are some of the skills you will need to develop. Work on these skills and your teamwork skills will improve.

## Conclusion

Business education adds value to people and to organizations as it helps them achieve competitive advantage through exposing managers to new ideas, training and development opportunities, practices that may be applied in the corporate context. This study makes an awareness about the existing skills, in addition to cover those basic skills and to transfer these skills to improve employability. It mirror the experiences of business and management students, the issues faced by them by the lack of fresh skills. By developing those skills in a better way we can reduce the gap existing between theory and practice.

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