

LEARNING SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Learning skills plays a vital role in future employability. The lower segment of the society need to acquire learning skills in order to survive in this competitive environment and secure employment. Learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge or skills through the process of study, experience or being taught. In order to acquire knowledge, knowing modes of learning is very important, which tell us the set of guidelines that describe the various methods of a human being uses to acquire, process, sustain and utilise Knowledge. People vary in selection of varied combinations of visual, auditory and reading learning modes. The modes of learning may be seminar by students, assignments writing, field visits, experiential learning related to the areas of study, peer group interaction, newspapers reading, short films on the subjects, Interaction amongst research scholars, books, journals and magazines, reading blogs etc. Self -learning is an instructional strategy where the learners, with guidance from the mentor, decide what and how they will learn. It can be done individually or with group learning. This is a theoretical secondary data research paper. The aim of this study is to emphasize the importance of self-learning and to explain the employability factors based on the self-learning skills that are acquired. It puts stress on developing a high quality of labour force. Hence, self-learning is a key for future employability.

Keywords: *Learning, Self-learning, Skill, Employability.*

Introduction

Learning is a process, not a product. Learning is a change in knowledge, beliefs, behaviours or attitudes. Learning is not something done to students, but something that students themselves do. Ambrose et.al.9(2010, p.3). Self-Learning is an instructional learning where the students acquire guidance from their faculty and decide what and how to learn. It can be done through group learning or individually done but on the whole the students take their ownership of learning. Learning skills play a vital role in future employability. It is a key performance indicator for reliability and acceptability keeping in mind the change towards quality enhancement. The lower segment of the society i.e., the category of people whose education limits only to plus 2 need to acquire the learning skills in order to survive in this competitive world and secure employment. They may make mistakes for the first time, but they learn on the basis of trial and error.

Self –Learning skills help one develop strong problem solving skills which gives a stress free learning process. The present generation, are well equipped with sophisticated technology which enables them to develop their cognitive ability and increase the individual ability to adapt to changing technologies. Self-learning also drives oneself to innovative ideas which may not be attained through classroom learning. It evokes the creativity in an individual and curiosity to acquire knowledge. The curiosity to learn, bringing along the innovative ideas and the capacity to manage a particular task without reluctance is created by self-learning, which is a very significant factor for future employability.

Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to emphasize the importance of self-study learning and to highlight the employability factors based on the self-learning skills.

Concept of learning

The concept of learning can be termed as memorising something in case of academics or changing the behaviour in terms of organisational psychology. To say that 'learning is change' is too simple. Not all change is learning. what we usually mean by 'learning' are those more or less permanent changes and reinforcements brought about voluntarily in one's patterns of acting, thinking and /or/feeling (Roger, 2003.p.86).

Robert M. Gagne (1972) identified the following five types of learning skills:

- Motor skills which require practice
- Verbal information: facts, principles and generalizations which when organized into larger entities become knowledge
- Intellectual skills: the discriminations, concepts and rules that help in using knowledge
- Cognitive strategies: the way the individual learns, remembers and thinks, the self-managed skills needed to define and solve problems
- Attitudes (Rogers, 2003, pp.86-87).

Learning can be interpreted as the change of behaviour through practice, training or experience which can be supplemented with five important components to make it clear.

Components of learning

1. Learning involves change: Learning may involve change for good or bad from an organization's point of view. The change through learning may not always be evident until a situation arises in which the new behaviour can occur.
2. Not all changes reflect learning: To constitute learning the change must be permanent. Temporary change may not represent any learning.
3. Learning is reflected in behaviour: A change in an individual's thought process or attitudes, without behaviour does not imply learning.
4. The change in behaviour should occur as a result of experience, practice or Training: This denotes that the change caused by maturity, disease or physical damages does not comprise learning.
5. The practice or experience must be reinforced in order for learning to occur: If practice or experience is not reinforced, the behaviour gradually disappears.
6. Through not implied in any standard definition of learning: In contrast to a popular belief, learning is not confined to one's schooling. Learning occurs throughout one's life.

Learning – Explicit and Tacit Knowledge

Explicit knowledge can be communicated from one person to another whereas tacit knowledge is acquired through observation and direct experience.

The information a student receives in a classroom is an explicit knowledge. On the other hand, a truck driver does not learn how to operate the vehicle through lectures. He masters the necessary skills by watching the subtle details as others perform the tasks, and by directly experiencing this complex task through interaction of behaviour with machine's response.

Modes of Learning

Modes of learning gives a set of guidelines that describe the various methods of learning a human being uses to procure knowledge, to process and to maintain knowledge. The learning mass vary in favouring different modes of learning. The modes of learning may be of various combinations- visual, auditory, reading and learning modes.

The modes of learning are:

- Classroom Lecture
- Seminar by students
- Assignment writing
- Field visits related to subjects
- Special lecture by experts
- Attending department or college seminars
- Newspaper reading
- Peer group interaction
- Short films on the subjects
- You Tube
- Website browsing
- TV Channel Debates
- Interaction-Research Scholars
- Reading Blogs
- Books, Journals and Magazines

Different people use different modes of learning to acquire knowledge. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may feel that they are dominant in some modes of learning while others may feel that they use different styles in different situations. There is no right mix of learning modes, nor are they fixed. Using multiple learning styles for acquiring knowledge is a new approach.

Self -Learning

Self-learning implies learning done by oneself without a teacher or instructor. Self-learning skills constitute the ability to manage learning without any direction from others. They are the skills necessary for effective learning in the long run which every student is expected to develop in them. The students gain content knowledge when they self-direct in learning.

A Self-learner is termed as Autodidact, Auto means “self” and “didact” comes from the Greek word for “teach”, so an autodidact is a person who is self-taught. Being an autodidact, instead of calling a plumber one brings some manuals and begins to learn the trade oneself. Self study can also be used to master a new skill or learn an entirely new concept like, a language or an instrument.

Self learning is helps in learning other important skills such as time management, self –assessment and setting your own goals. In reality, people who are good at self-learning have an increased tendency to develop other skills as they have to adapt a certain set of skills to learn.

Self-directed learning strategies:

Self-learning is the modern form of approach to learning, not that it has replaced conventional, instructional learning but as a credential to learning. Self-learning has proven to be a boon for the present generation, thanks to the modern technology which is equipped with internet, Google search, You Tube tutorial etc., which enables one to procure any information and by simply reading instructions and manuals. It is a sophisticated concept that strengthens one’s cognitive ability with skills that are indispensable to their daily activities. However, this can be a challenging form of learning even for the brightest students, as it involves lots of discipline and skills.

Benefits of self-learning

1. *One develops strong problem solving skills:* Self-learning helps one to develop the capacity to identify problems and design solutions on your own. Whatever may be challenges and obstacles in your way, it does not kill your drive to get the things done, instead they provide you with new opportunities to learn and acquire something innovative at your own pace. You develop the curiosity to look for solutions instead of somebody fetching the solution for a problem. Further you will adapt to changes in the environment due to the ability of fast learning.
2. *It is stress-free learning process:* The process of self-learning emphasises more on the process of learning than the outcome of learning. Moreover there is no pressure to learn the required content within a time period targeting the achievement of the highest. The discretion is your level as to what you want to learn, when you want to learn and how you want to learn. This leads to internalization of content. This is the reason why it is said that self-learners internalize what they learn than the ones who are directed in learning.
3. *You gain other skills in the process:* Self-learners or autodidacts get to learn other important skills such as self- assessment, time management and setting one’s own goals. In reality, people who are good at self-learning have and increased ability to develop other skills . Further, the self-learners

have a strong commitment to work efficiently, as they learn to follow the plans until they achieve their goals.

4. The Learning experience becomes more meaningful: self-directed learning comes from a personal interest and desire to acquire new knowledge. It is the thirst to find more information about a particular topic and use the information for a particular purpose. Hence, you have a clear picture of why you are learning and gaining information, making it more meaningful. In addition to learning and gaining information you are set to reach the topic in depth as you are not just learning for the sake of it. This kind of a desired learning leads you to good results.
5. Learning led by curiosity: A great part of learning is acquired by curiosity as learning occurs naturally when you are curious to know something. Curiosity motivates to learn and attain more knowledge than from outside sources as the drive comes from within. Self-learning becomes an adventure which enhances one's capabilities each time an individual learns something new successfully.
6. Self-learning helps to choose the right mode of learning: Self-learning can be acquired through various modes of learning which are at your disposal. You can choose the best out of the available resources. You need not follow only one mode of learning, as there are many modes of learning available such as, You Tube tutorials, newspapers, field visits, TV channels debate, reading blogs, journals and magazines, webinars and many more when you want to learn.

Guidelines to Self-learning

Self-Learning involves high range of challenges which can be countered with discipline. When self-learning takes place in a proper discipline it becomes one of the most interesting learning experiences. Here are some of the tips to go about with self-driven learning:

1. One has to get ready to learn: As self-learning involves lot of challenges and hurdles in the process, one has to get ready to learn the subject and develop the curiosity to acquire knowledge. For this one needs to set a right frame of mind to interpret what you want to learn and know the essence of the subject chosen. Willingness to learn keeps you on track even at low levels of motivation.
2. Learning goals should be clear: When you are clear about the learning goals, you will be able to examine the progress of your learning and check if you are within your framework or have deviated. In addition, this enables you to create a systematic learning process.
3. Decide the tools to be used for self-learning: Right source of learning should be chosen out of the many modes of learning. You need to choose the mode of learning which best suits your way of learning style. The availability of the different styles of learning enables you to learn the same subject from different views, which makes easy to know the subject matter.
4. Assess yourself through self-learning: Self-learning answers what you want, how you want and when you want learn. Self-driven learning is more effective than structured learning. Self-driven learning has no assessment tools, however there some online tutorials which assess your progress

in learning, which can be made use of. This helps you know where exactly you stand in your learning process.

Skills related to Self-Learning

Self-learning skills help us in the transformation of our future, as these skills are inbuilt which come from one's own cognitive abilities. They help us to learn, acquire the best and achieve the incredible. The following are some of the skills related to self-learning:

- Creativity: Creativity or creative thinking is one of the quality which comes from one's own ability. In the current scenario, the commercial world looks up to creative designs and grabs a lot of attention from the customers, in order to gain their loyalty. Creativity is the best communicative link to survive in the commercial world.
- Problem solving: The 21st century generation are equipped with highly sophisticated gadgets and digital resources. In order to access them we need to have learning skills. The problem solving skills acquired by the present generation aids in solving any problem which the older generation just even can't imagine.
- Critical thinking: Critical thinking is all about thinking independently, responsibly and productively, which is indispensable for the frequently changing environment.
- Leadership: Leadership qualities are very essential for self-learning. A good leader inspires, motivates and empowers others. Such leaders see the best in others and teach them to bring out the best potential in all they do. True leaders see more, do more and learn more.
- Communication: Communication through technology is a trend, set today. Having good communication skills means, having better management abilities, more productivity and maintaining better relationships.
- Collaboration: The present generation work in groups and teams. The educational institutions inculcate the practice of collaboration at all levels of performance of the students in order to develop life long learning skills.
- Adaptability: Today, all of us have to deal with the changing trends in technology no matter, we know or not. Self-learning plays a significant role in learning, adapting and updating to the latest technology, which help us keep in tact with the changing environment and helps us to survive and succeed.
- Curiosity: Curiosity in learning helps you to develop passion for what your learning. Curiosity is a learning skill which comes from an individual. It enhances your learning skills and helps you achieve the highest.

Employability factors based on skills

Employability refers to the qualities of an individual that enables him to acquire and maintain employment.

- Employability skills are general skills that are necessary for the success in the labour market at all employment levels and in all sectors.
- Self-learning skills enables an individual to acquire job quickly when compared to an individual on instructional learning.
- Self-directed learning changes learning skills from desired learning to acquired learning, which leads to employability in future.
- An individual with self-learning skills can be employed for a longer period of time when compared to an individual from structured learning.

Suggestions

- Schools, colleges and trainees in any organisation should be encouraged to go for self-learning skills through various activities than classroom instructions.
- Students must be given a chance to bring out their creative ideas through voluntary seminars, creative assignments, research articles etc.,
- Newspaper in education should be continued at all levels of education.

Conclusion

Self-Learning skills increases the chances of securing employment to autodidacts. Self-learners are a boon to any organisation as they can solve problems using their cognitive ability compared to the structured learners. They have no insecurity in their workplace unlike the classroom learners, as the self-learners follow certain standards and disciplines in acquiring knowledge whose shelf life lasts for long. Whereas structured learners are guided by their instructors, where the pupil is compelled to learn the content, whose shelf life is short term.

Self-directed learning is stress free without any compulsion. This mode of learning increases the skills of an individual creating a sense of responsibility in what they learn and achieve. Therefore, self-learning skills act as a good weapon to fight uncertainties related to unemployment. Learning without a mentor through observation and passion to acquire a skill creates confidence in an individual. This drives them to achieve the impossible. Thus, I conclude that self-learning is a key to future employability, inculcating the mindset change towards quality enhancement.

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