

1ST task

THE 'NATURE' OF SKILLS

Skills represent your talents, abilities, and aptitudes – in short, what you are good at doing. Skills are built gradually by repeated training or other experiences. They may be, manual, intellectual or mental, perceptual or social.

(Source: I)

Skills are built gradually by repeated training or other experience. May also be defined as any competence possessed by someone; in an employment using their hands well among manual workers.

The acquisition of skill is a tortuous process that takes us through the following sequence:

1. Unconscious incompetence

This is the stage when ignorance is bliss, when it looks easy and you don't realise how much there is to it. In an example of a skilful presenter to the observer, he may be performing the task effortlessly.

2 Conscious incompetence

This is the realisation that, when you first try to emulate the skilful performer, you can't do it. This is an unpleasant discovery which may shock you into giving up and returning to the relative comfort of stage 1.

3 Conscious competence

This stage is hard work! It is when you are able to do a competent presentation, but only by investing an enormous

amount of conscious effort into every aspect of it. You have to force yourself to make adequate eye contact with the audience and to stand still. You have to force yourself not to talk to the visual aids and to synchronise your gestures with your main messages. This is such hard work that you may decide that it isn't worth the effort and abandon your attempt to acquire the skills in question.

4 Unconscious competence

This is the skilful stage when you too can do professional presentations effortlessly! Even this, however, isn't the end of the story, because of the real danger of complacency creeping in. The more skilful you are, the more you tend to cut corners which, if unchecked for long periods, degenerate into bad habits. The answer is to drop back to conscious competence every now and again to check things out and eradicate the bad habits.

(Source: iii)

The four basic learning strategies are as follows;

1. Trial and Error
2. Being Told or Instructed
3. Copying or imitation
4. Thinking for yourself (class notes 4rm 26-11-02)

A perfect example illustrating the application of the methods outlined above would be acquisition of *Social competence* (Source; II)

3rd TASK

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF VARIOUS DIFFERENT TYPES OF SKILLS

Various different types of skills to be outlined in TASK 2 can be developed and improved through a number of processes the main ones being:

1. Learning
2. Education
3. Training; this is a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve performance in an activity or range of activities.
4. Personal development; an inevitable process which is unique to each individual, and which enables that individual to develop, increasing knowledge, skill, moral values and understanding.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS TASK

I believe that by carrying out this 'skills audit' on myself to fulfil the requirement of the set task 3, I will gain further insight into the current level skills and with that in mind I should hopefully be able to identify the skills that require more attention in future.

Communication

I speak to others with ease and clarity, giving information and explanations which are clear and easily understood. I have identified that I need to improve on this by listening actively to others.

Motivation

Showing a lot of energy and enthusiasm is always good for motivation; I need to do this a lot more in order to improve the current skill level.

Delegation

This is a task that I readily seem to take for granted, in order to build a reflective team I will need to focus more on this aspect of leadership and attempt to increase my capabilities in it.

Decision – making

I have to always evaluate the alternative lines of action in order to make appropriate decisions. Lots of information is also required to help this process.

Strength

My strength is self-confidence and understanding what my weaknesses are. I try to be as realistic and am willing to learn from past failures and successes. I'm reliable and I can cope with pressure and control my emotions.

Weaknesses

My main weaknesses may lie in time management, a skill which performed in a grouped situation I able to cope with, but individually on a task, I will need to work upon suggestion include planning more effectively.

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