

WHAT the HACK?!

BLEND ED TRAINING PROGRAMME



FOR HACK-LAB COACHES

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication (communication) reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project granted under Agreement no. 2019-1-NL01-KA202-060502.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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1. INTRODUCTION

This training programme is for ICT professionals who want to become Hack-Lab coaches. A Hack-Lab coach teaches youth interested in IT at a Hack-Lab, which is an inclusive co-learning space for digitally aware youngsters, gamers, school leavers, the autism spectrum and young people who miss a challenge in their current education. This training programme will prepare professionals from the ICT industry with a pedagogical foundation and assist them to engage in non-formal education.

The training programme includes study materials on the following modules:

- Ethical Hacking
- Communication
- Learning Environment
- Learning Difficulties
- Motivation
- Teaching Methods
- Group Management
- Assessment and Feedback
- Lifelong Learning

This training programme can be freely separated into a schedule that is suitable for the learner. For example, it could be divided into 1 module per week or day, so that the learner can focus on practicing the learning material of one module in doing classes and coaching the youth in Hack-Lab.

The training programme takes an estimated 4 hours to work through with thought.

With the completion of the Blended training programme for Hack-Lab coaches, the participant (future Hack-Lab coach) will be better able to...

- understand the principles of ethical hacking and the laws associated with cybercrime;
- communicate, present and express oneself clearly;
- understand the different factors of a learning environment and learning difficulties;
- understand the challenges and functioning of a multicultural learning environment;
- have a tolerant and ethical attitude in creating equal opportunities and valuing different characteristic features of students in inclusive education and teamwork;
- create and maintain a learning environment that supports coaching and learning;
- handle difficult social situations ethically;
- understand the importance of motivation and motivate students, considering the different characteristic features of students;
- possess efficient teaching methods, considering the different levels of experience and characteristic features of students;
- apply methods of supportive feedbacking and assessment;
- develop positive attitude and independent learning skills in students;
- reflect and be ready for professional development and lifelong learning.

2. ETHICAL HACKING

Ethical hacking seems like a misnomer. Hacking into somebody’s account or service doesn’t seem very ethical, but you might be surprised by the positive impact. Nowadays, with a bit of know-how and a connection to the internet, anyone can be a hacker. Therefore it is very important to learn and practise security ethically. While most people will only ever deal with something like a password leak, being on the receiving end of a conventional hack is bad news. Ethical hackers, on the other hand, help to eliminate threats, as well as improve IT systems’ overall security.



WHAT IS ETHICAL HACKING?

Put simply, ethical hacking (or penetration testing) is the process of exploiting an IT system – with the owner’s permission – to determine any vulnerabilities or weaknesses. The results are then used to tighten online security or both the end user and the system owner.

Hackers normally operate within one of three categories which identify their intentions and methods: white hat, grey hat and black hat. These terms derive from American westerns from the 1920s on, where white or black cowboy hats denoted goodies and baddies respectively. Grey, naturally, is somewhere in between.

Black hat hackers tend to be the ones reported on by the mainstream media, as they seek to steal or modify data for illicit gains. They’re usually financially driven, although their primary motive can also be to cause havoc or personal fame.

White hat hackers are typically of the ethical variety. They look for exploits and typically ask for permission before getting to work. If sending unprompted bug reports, they’re unlikely to release or sell the data even without a reward for their efforts.

Lastly, **grey hat hackers** aren’t necessarily malicious, but will want some form of payment for finding an exploit. They probably won’t have permission from the website owner, but don’t really care. Their ambiguous nature means their behaviour will depend on individuals’ personal ethics.

WHY IS ETHICAL HACKING IMPORTANT?

Here are a few examples of how ethical hackers could do good:

1. In the existing industry, there are many jobs for ethical hacking. In an organization, to test the security systems, ethical hacking is really useful. These days, there are a lot of hacking attacks. That’s why the necessity for ethical hackers is huge.
2. We often hear that attackers hack the big companies and big systems. Some time ago, a hacker hacked the Uber website. Due to this, the important information of around 50 million users was exposed. Many big companies like Google, Yahoo, Instagram, Facebook and Uber hire hackers. The hackers try to hack their systems. After hacking the system, they indicate all the places where they found a weakness so that the company can fix it. Many companies also perform bug bounty programs. In this program, hackers around the world try to hack the website or web of that company. If a hacker finds a bug, the company will pay a reward per bug.

3. Ethical hacking is used to secure important data from enemies. It works as a safeguard of your computer from blackmail by the people who want to exploit your vulnerability. Using ethical hacking, a company or organization can find out security vulnerability and risks.
4. Governments use State-Sponsored Hacking to prevent intelligence information about influence politics, an enemy state, etc. Ethical hacking can ensure the safety of the nation by preventing cyber terrorism and terrorist attacks.
5. IT professionals can think from an attacker's perspective, find the potential entry point and fix it before any attacks.
6. Ethical hacking helps us to learn new skills used in many roles like software developer, risk management, quality assurance tester and network defender.
7. In a company, an ethical hacker can ensure the functions of software aptly. Ethical hackers can apply quick security tests under extreme and standard conditions.
8. Security professionals and hackers develop many tools and methods and quality assurance testers to eliminate all the system's vulnerabilities.



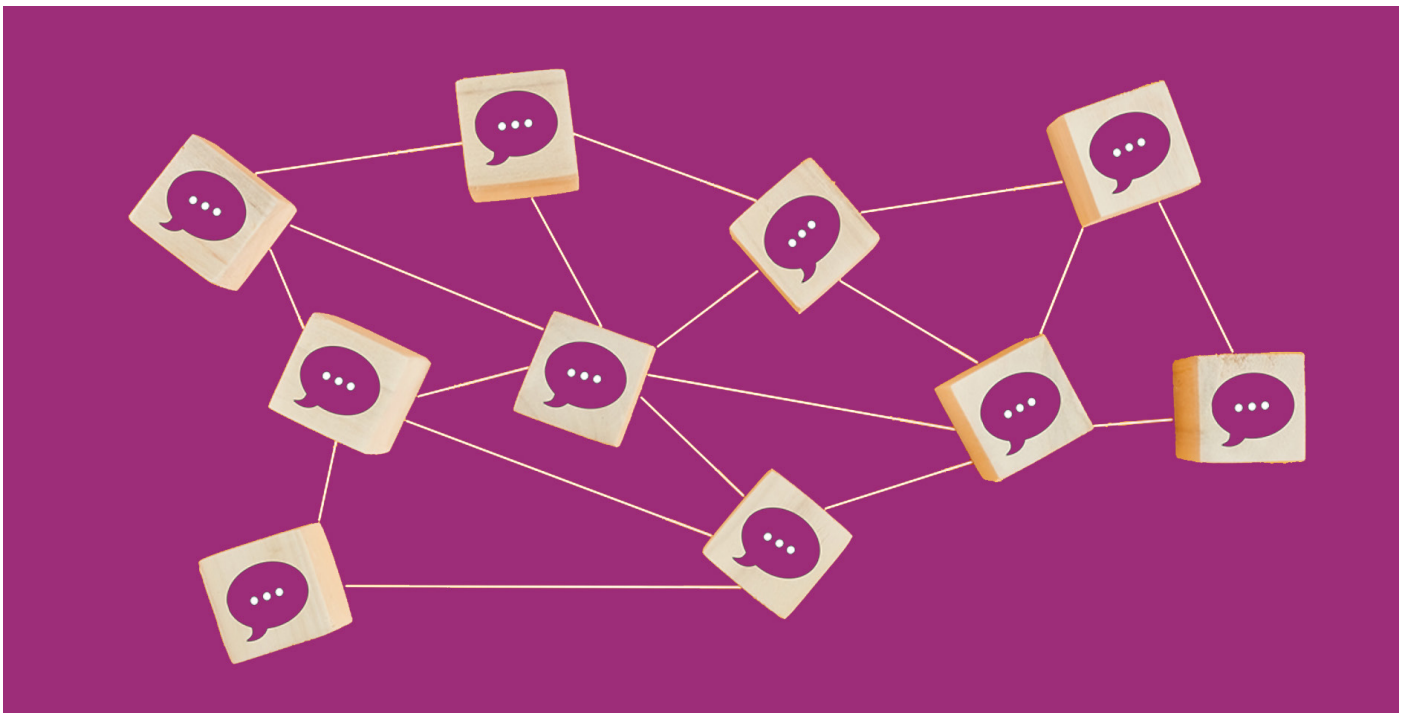
WHAT ARE THE KEY CONCEPTS OF ETHICAL HACKING?

Ethical hackers follow four key protocol concepts:

- Stay legal. Obtain proper approval before accessing and performing a security assessment.
- Define the scope. Determine the scope of the assessment so that the ethical hacker's work remains legal and within the organization's approved boundaries.
- Report vulnerabilities. Notify the organization of all vulnerabilities discovered during the assessment. Provide remediation advice for resolving these vulnerabilities.
- Respect data sensitivity. Depending on the data sensitivity, ethical hackers may have to agree to a non-disclosure agreement, in addition to other terms and conditions required by the assessed organization.

3. COMMUNICATION

Communication skills allow you to understand your students, and for them to understand you. It is an essential part of working with the youth and it embodies the example of cooperation skills for them. These skills can include but are not limited to effectively communicating ideas to others, actively listening in conversations, giving and receiving critical feedback and public speaking.



MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

People usually use verbal and non-verbal means of communication to send and receive their messages. In daily lives, it is often done subconsciously. Cultural, linguistic, social and individual characteristics play an important role here. Verbal means of communication can also be called audible means communication, which are divided into natural language and paralinguistic language.

In natural language, the speed of speech, rhythms and pauses and their duration and location within the speech are important. If we use the rhythms, pauses and speed of speech correctly, the content of our speech will be easily understood and interpreted. The speed of speech plays an important role. Very fast speech is annoying. Moderately fast speech is stimulating, therefore suitable for presenting examples and descriptions and for rephrasing ideas by using other words. The slow pace of speech is soothing, suitable for emphasizing and explaining complex topics. However, overly slow speech is lulling.

Paralinguistic language is embodied by all kinds of vocal sounds, sobs, screams, intonation, volume. Pitch plays an important role in transmitting a message. Our voice usually gets high when we are upset, happy or angry. Low voice signifies depression, tiredness or calmness. Loud voice gives an impression of confidence, while a squeaky voice makes the speaker seem indecisive and uncertain. When speaking, it is also correct to use the so-called punctuation, like we do in literary texts. For example, to denote a comma, we make a slight pause in communication. For full stop, the pause is slightly longer. Rich vocabulary, figures of speech, etc. increase the effectiveness of verbal self-expression.

The impact of the message is influenced in approximation:

- 10% by the verbal part (words);
- 40% by the vocal part (intonation etc.);
- 50% by body language (mostly facial expression).

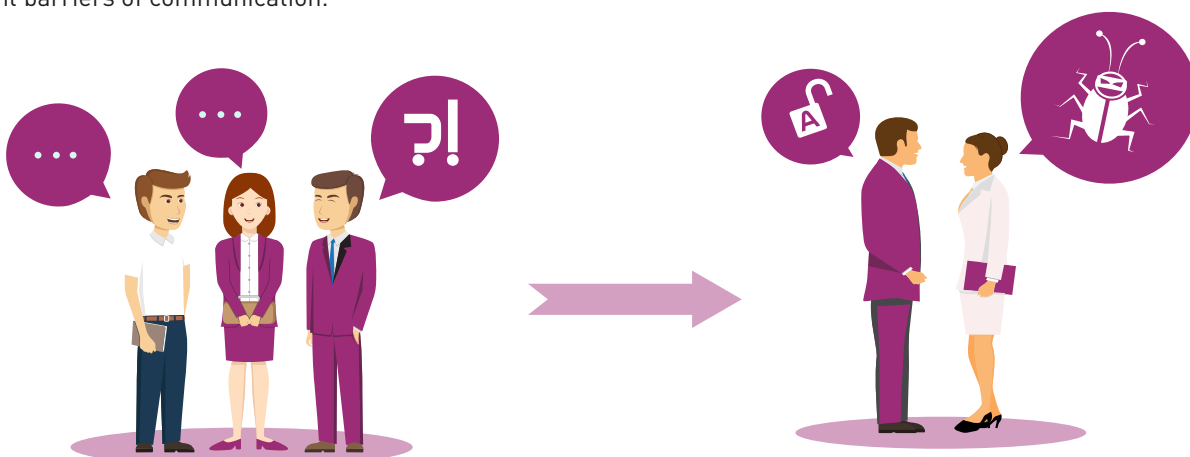
An oral message can be made demanding, threatening, begging, flattering, etc. by combining intonation and words. Just saying “One moment, please!” can be a simple request. However, the situation changes when you put an emphasis on one of these words - moment or please. As a result, this sentence expresses either irritation or impatience.

Non-verbal communication tools are designed to create and maintain contact between communication partners and can be divided into two parts: **kinesics** or body movements (facial expressions, gestures, posture) and **spatial relationships** (distance from the partner). Charles Darwin is considered to be the pioneer of body language, whose research has shown that people from different cultures express their emotions in much the same way. By using non-verbal messages, we express our feelings and opinions, convey our attitudes. Non-verbal communication tools add colour to communication, put emphasis on important elements within the context, strengthen and help to maintain contact, adjust the pace of communication, and convey most of the information we are interested in.

In daily life, non-verbal communication happens unintentionally. We “read” it just as instinctively. We have all been in a situation where we sensed that our communication partner was not honest with us. The words might have seemed plausible, but there was something in the body language that caused a dissonance, as the verbal content and the nonverbal message were contradictory.

For example, a frowning waiter, while gnashing his teeth, is smiling at us artificially and saying, “We’re so glad to see you here again.” In case of dissonance, we usually tend to believe body language, not the content of the words. In such cases it is useful to pay attention to our partner’s facial expressions, smiles and making of eye contact. Facial expression primarily reflects the partner’s state of emotions. Interpreting conflicting signals makes it possible to understand the actual emotional state of our communication partner, whether they agree with us, are they paying attention to us or not.

Behaviour is **congruent** when the whole message, both verbal and non-verbal, corresponds to the meaning conveyed. Communication is defined as **non-congruent** when the content and the non-verbal message are contradictory. Non-verbal means of communication should be consistent with each other and with the message’s verbal content. Dissonance errors are significant barriers of communication.



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence or emotional talent is the ability to understand, perceive, manage and express one’s feelings. According to Daniel Goleman, the creator of the concept of emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence or EQ is even more important than IQ. In his opinion, the level of emotional intelligence determines how well a person is able to realize his or her talents that correspond to their mental intelligence. His illustration of this concept is that if a person does not set goals or strive to reach them, they may not achieve anything special despite being intellectually talented. Highly educated and mentally intelligent people may possess a lot of knowledge, while being socially inept, for example. An emotionally intelligent person, however, is an excellent communicator.

According to Goleman, emotional intelligence consists of 5 parts:

- **Self-awareness** - understanding and recognising one's feelings.
- **Self-regulation** - controlling one's emotions and behaviour so that it is in accordance with the demands of the situation.
- **Self-motivation** - ability to drive oneself to take initiative and action to pursue goals and complete tasks. Impulsiveness and hesitation are not part of emotional intelligence.
- **Empathy** - appreciation and understanding of other people's feelings.
- **Relationship management** - coping with interpersonal relationships, the ability to resolve conflicts and have conversations on various topics.

Why do we need emotional intelligence?

Emotional health is the basis of learning ability. At school, children need to know how to study to perform well academically. This knowledge is based on self-confidence, curiosity, will, self-control, communication skills and an ability to create connections and to cooperate. A student who first learns how to study, is ultimately much more successful.

Having mastered emotional intelligence, you can be sure that you will be more successful in life and achieve more in every field. By familiarising children with emotional intelligence at an early age, many of the problems that can arise during their adolescence (depression, drug and alcohol use, low self-esteem, etc.) can be prevented.

How to develop emotional intelligence?

- Recognise your emotions.
- Distinguish thoughts from feelings.
- Take more responsibility for your emotions.
- Use your emotions to support decision-making.
- Be filled with positive energy and do not waste it to lash out in anger.
- Appreciate other people's feelings. Show compassion, joy, support.
- Practice utilising your emotions to get positive results.
- Do not try to control the feelings of others or be judgemental about them.

INITIATING AND MAINTAINING CONTACT

The ability to initiate contact can be considered the cornerstone of successful communication. In most cases people want to begin communication by immediately starting to transmit their information. However, the communication partner may be on a totally different wavelength and not ready to receive the information. Thus, contact is not made, or actual communication does not happen, as people just talk at each other, not with each other.

It is easy to make erroneous assumptions about another person's thoughts or feelings when:

- they look at you - so you think they probably notice you;
- they nod at you - so you think they agree with you, etc.



However, you need to ascertain at which level of attentiveness your communication partner happens to be at any particular moment.

The responsibility for making contact lies with the initiator of communication.

The absence of contact results in superficial solutions. A typical situation is when a woman comes home and tells a man sitting on the couch: "Put on your clothes, let's go visit my mother!" As the woman did not pay attention to the importance of making contact, it could easily lead the man to protest. The man may have had a very hard day at work, might have promised to meet a friend or just wanted to be left alone. Thus, the message might have missed its mark, so she cannot expect the man to jump up cheerfully from the couch and start dressing to go out with her.

Initiating contact can be learned and practiced. This presumes clarity of verbal expression and its comprehensibility for the partner, consistency of non-verbal behaviour with what we want to express in words and focusing on the situation we are currently in - the need and purpose of that particular situation. An open and non-judgemental focus on the communication partner helps to maintain good contact.

You can make better contact with your communication partner if you:

- give him/her a moment to switch their attention from their current activity to you;
- are not trying yourself to do anything else at the same time;
- are looking at him/her;
- use rituals of communication – greeting the partner and, if necessary, introducing yourself;
- are friendly;
- speak a little slower than usual, if you are a fast speaker;
- use body language that conveys openness and does not seem standoffish.

For many people, making eye contact is a very intimate activity that can even be compared to touching someone. Doing it with an unfamiliar audience may not be that easy. If you do not maintain contact with your listeners, your entire performance will suffer - the audience will feel like you are not talking to them, and you will be perceived as unreliable or insecure.

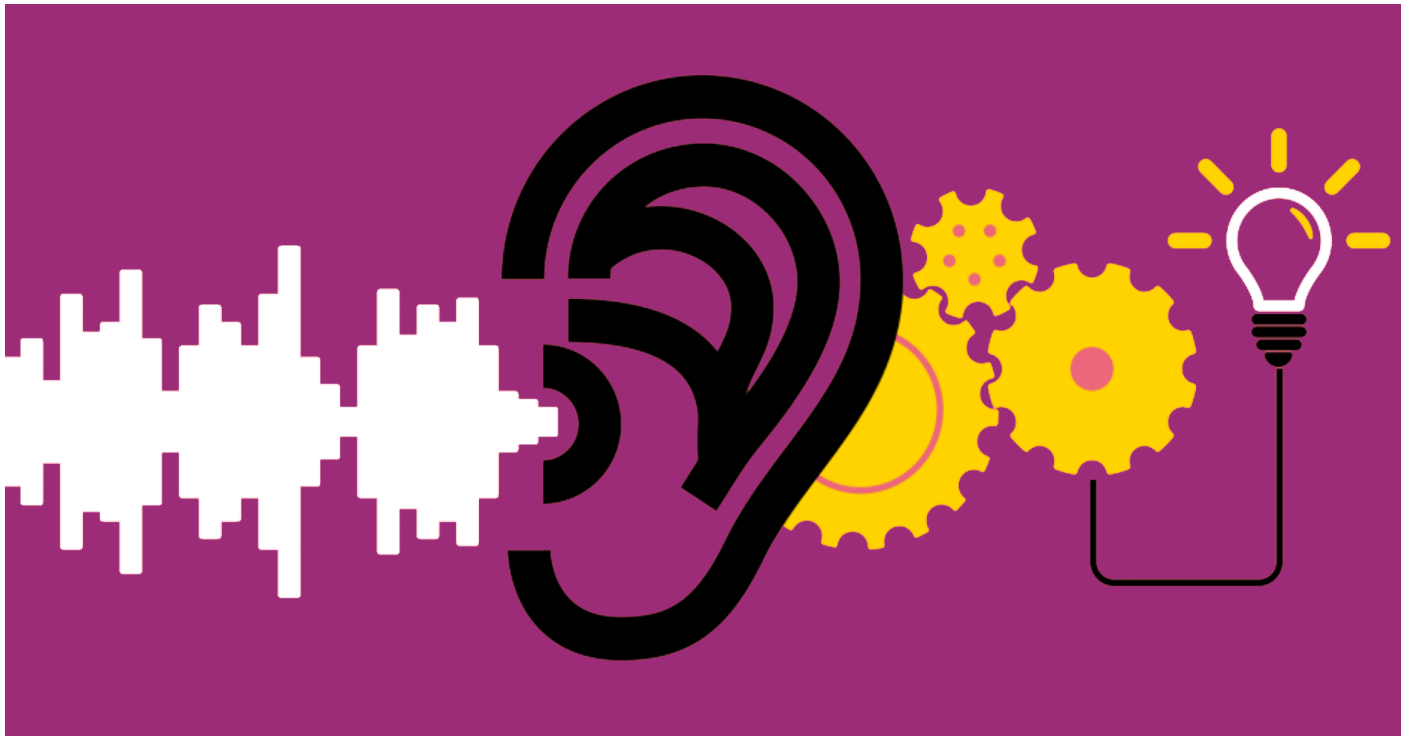


Use the following rules to initiate and maintain good contact:

- If you want to keep eye contact with your listeners, practice giving your speech - this allows you to speak without reading it from the paper.
- If you want to use notes, first present a fully formulated thought, and only then look at the paper. Resume eye contact when starting with a new point.
- Look at people – seek out friendly faces, but do not stare at them: they feel uncomfortable and think, "Why am I the focus of attention?"
- Make eye contact also with the listeners in the back rows, thus giving the overall impression that you are looking at everyone.
- Do not look out the window - if you do, the audience will do the same.
- Do not gaze at a specific point - too many performers tend to forget that there are also people the periphery of the audience.
- Do not look over the heads of the audience, at the lights or corners of the ceiling, at the floor, into the distance, etc. The audience might feel you have forgotten their presence.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening means both listening and speaking. The listener uses verbal expressions to show that he/she listens attentively, respects the speaker, understands him/her, expresses his/her sympathy and is being supportive.



The key to active listening is **providing continuous feedback** so that the speaker knows how his or her message has been received. It is characterized by eye contact, interested facial expressions and supporting remarks (“Yes”, “Please continue”, “Elaborate”, “Give some examples”). With the help of active listening, people can be encouraged to look beyond the feelings and find the actual root of the problem that causes these feelings.

Active listener:

- supports the speaker in expressing their feelings: “I understand what you had to go through”, “I understand how you felt”, and so on;
- encourages the speaker to open up even more: “Tell me more about it...”;
- from time to time, the speaker rephrases the sentence in one’s own words to make sure that he/she has understood the message correctly: “You said that ...”, “Did I understand correctly that...”;
- uses short phrases to encourage the speaker, such as “Hmm”, “Yes?”, “Really?”, “Oh”, etc.;
- expresses his/her opinion but does not dispense advice to the speaker unless being asked.

Active listening is required:

- for problem solving;
- in all situations where the message from the communication partner is relevant for taking further action;
- if quiet listening does not work, for example when not enough information is given;
- in the case of a shy, quiet person who needs to feel encouraged and supported to open up or who is unable to express oneself;
- in the event of a conflict where the actual standpoints and needs of both parties need to be clarified;
- to calm emotions (the other person can “empty” themselves by talking);
- to manage the conversation (for example, the partner gets stuck and the conversation needs to be carried on).

Active listening can take place as quiet or reflective listening.

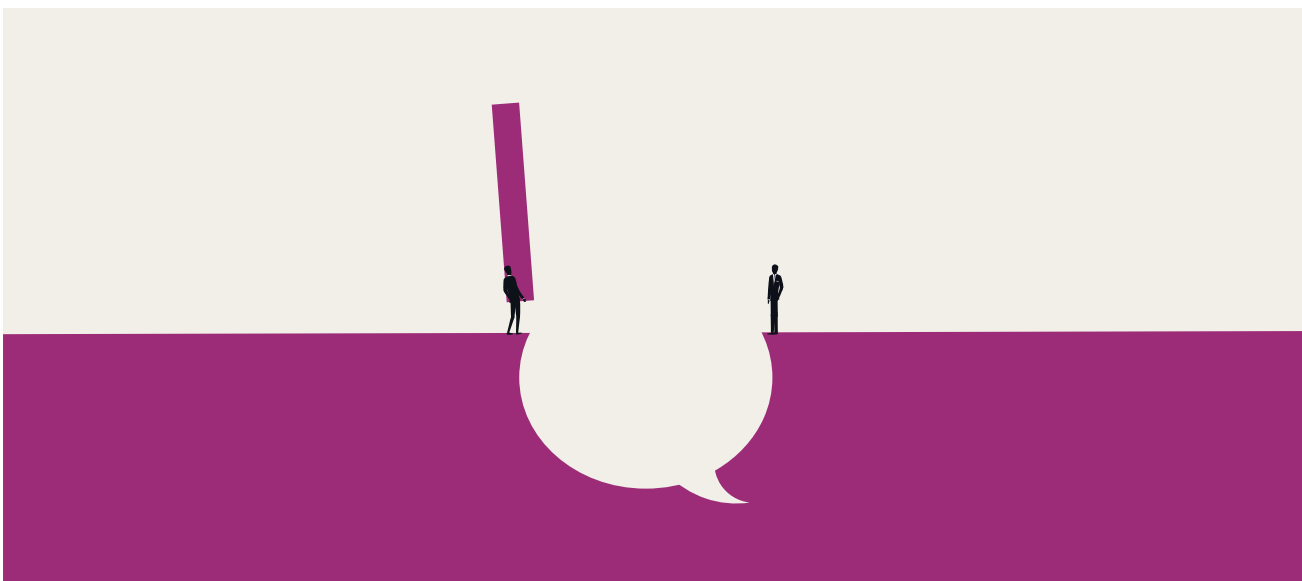
Quiet listening is the ability to listen carefully to a speaker without interrupting him/her. Such listening requires mental and physical focus and helps to express understanding, support, and interest. Quiet listening is accompanied by nodding, emitting short supportive remarks that encourage the speaker to continue. Non-verbal cues that express the listener’s attention also play an important role here. The speaker must notice and understand that he/she is being listened to and heard.

Reflective listening tells the speaker how he or she was understood, helping to express oneself better. Reflective listening means clarification - when the listener did not fully understand the point or when additional information is needed. Reflective listening also uses rephrasing by the listener - expressing the same idea in other words to check the accuracy of their understanding of the message.

EXERCISE

Share with your partner a childhood adventure/memory (take three minutes). The partner listens to you, using active listening techniques. When you have told your story, switch roles. When you have both told your stories, answer the following questions:

1. Did you feel that your partner was interested in your story or not? How did you feel yourself in this situation?
2. When you were the one listening, was it easy or difficult to be an active listener? Explain why this was the case.
3. Did you have an easy or difficult time telling your childhood story when your companion was an active listener? Explain why this was the case.



BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Barriers to communication are reactions that have a predominantly negative effect on communication, i.e. expressing oneself in a way that seeks to change rather than accept the other. They often diminish another person’s dignity, evoke defensive attitudes, resistance or resentment.

Common barriers to communication are: commanding, warning, moralising, giving advice, accusing, labelling, patronizing, pacifying and interrogating.

Relationship experts Carl Rogers, Reuel Howe, Haim Ginott, Jack Gibb, Thomas Gordon have studied this field for a very long time and developed a list of offensive actions:

1. Criticising - negative evaluation of another person, their actions or attitudes.
2. Labelling - humiliating or stereotyping another person.
3. Diagnosing – analysing the behaviour of another person.
4. Praising - evaluating another person, their actions or attitudes.
5. Commanding – forcing someone else to do what you want.

6. Threatening - attempting to control another person by warning them of the negative consequences you intend to enforce.
7. Moralising - teaching other people what to do or sermonising.
8. Interrogating – asking closed questions, i.e. questions that can be answered very briefly, often with just “yes” or “no”.
9. Giving advice - proffering a solution to another person’s problems.
10. Evasion – diverting attention away from another person’s problems by introducing other topics.
11. Logical argumentation - trying to convince another person based on facts and by ignoring feelings.
12. Pacifying/calming down - trying to prevent another person from feeling negative feelings.

Initially, it may seem that these are just the usual techniques in everyday communication, but compared to other forms of communication, they tend to have a more blocking effect on the flow of conversation. Praising, calming, logical argumentation, questioning and providing advice with good intentions are often seen as positive factors. Their negative consequences tend to be overlooked.

EXERCISE

Discuss with your partner which barriers to communication you tend to use. Do certain people or situations cause them to be used? Do you use more communication barriers when communicating:

- at home or at school,
- with younger or older people,
- with same-sex or opposite-sex,
- with fellow students / friends?



ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR

In the communication process, it is important to be able to express one’s views clearly and confidently, while remaining polite, understanding and co-operative towards your peers. People behave differently and the possible ways of behaviour can be classified as follows:

Aggressive behaviour

- Standing up for one’s own rights but with no consideration of other people.
- Patronizing arrogance is used to achieve one’s goals. Others are shouted at or insulted.
- Physical force may be used to achieve the goal.
- One’s moods and desires are put above those of others.
- Others are forced into submission.
- Gaining one’s will at the expense of others, harming them.

Submissive behaviour

- Nothing is done to stand up for one’s own rights.
- Opinions and wishes of others are always set above one’s own.
- Giving in easily to others.
- Everything is tolerated in silence.
- Apologising a lot.
- Being influenced by others.

Assertive behaviour

- Defending one’s rights without violating those of others.
- Ability to reject demands and offers that one is unwilling to accept.
- Respecting oneself and others.
- Expressing positive attitude.
- Being confident but not intrusive.
- Using the “I-statements”.

All types of behaviour can be justified depending on a specific situation. For example, aggressive action may be necessary to protect your health, property or the safety of loved ones. However, there are situations where it is not sensible to resist someone’s attack, for example when the attackers outnumber you. In this case, it is wiser to surrender, which can mean, for example, running away or giving up money when requested. Occasionally, everyone needs to act assertively to protect their rights, needs and views. **In communication it is not only WHAT we say that matters, but also HOW we say it!**

EXERCISE

When acting assertively, it is important to use the “I-statements”. Indicate which of the following sentences contain a message that is presented assertively.

Studying

- You are a meathead that never understands anything.
- It seems you cannot understand the lesson and it is not possible to be satisfied with the result. You need to study harder.
- When I am called a meathead in front of the class, I feel ashamed, because I fear that I will be laughed at.

Decision Making

- You must go to high school to get a good education.
- When all the grades on your report card are either good or excellent, I am glad, because with these results you will be accepted to higher school.
- You are not willing to study enough to keep your grades in order - you know how important it is to get a good education, and then everyone will be satisfied with you. If your report card will include even one grade of 1 or 2 on it, you will not get any pocket money.

Career Choices

- I do not know if becoming an IT professional is the right choice at all. There is very little physical activity and it can be mentally straining. Maybe there is something else to choose.
- You must be sure of your choice, because those in doubt will never succeed in their lives. Car mechanics is definitely the wrong choice. You should become a builder.
- When I’m forced to choose a profession that does not interest me, it irritates me because I am not able to make my own decisions.



4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts and cultures in which students learn. Since students may learn in a wide variety of settings, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments, the term is often used as a more accurate or preferred alternative to classroom, which has more limited and traditional connotations—a room with rows of desks and a chalkboard, for example.

The term also encompasses the culture of a school or class—its presiding ethos and characteristics, including how individuals interact with and treat one another—as well as the ways in which coaches may organize an educational setting to facilitate learning—e.g. by conducting classes in relevant natural ecosystems, grouping desks in specific ways, decorating the walls with learning materials or utilizing audio, visual and digital technologies. Because the qualities and characteristics of a learning environment are determined by a wide variety of factors, school policies, governance structures and other features may also be considered elements of a “learning environment”.

Educators may also argue that learning environments have both a direct and indirect influence on student learning, including their engagement in what is being taught, their motivation to learn, and their sense of well-being, belonging and personal safety. For example, learning environments filled with sunlight and stimulating educational materials would likely be considered more conducive to learning than drab spaces without windows or decoration, as would schools with fewer incidences of misbehaviour, disorder, bullying and illegal activity. How adults interact with students and how students interact with one another may also be considered an aspect of a learning environment. Phrases such as “positive learning environment” or “negative learning environment” are commonly used in reference to the social and emotional dimensions of a school or class.



CHARACTERISTICS OF A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

1. The students ask the questions—good questions

This is not a feel-good implication, but crucial for the whole learning process to work.

The role of curiosity has been studied (and perhaps under-studied and under-appreciated) but suffice to say that if a learner enters any learning activity with little to no natural curiosity, prospects for meaningful interaction with texts, media and specific tasks are bleak.

Many coaches force students to ask questions at the outset of units or lessons, often to no avail. Cliché questions that reflect little understanding of the content can discourage coaches from ‘allowing’ them. However, the fact remains, if students can’t ask great questions — even as young as elementary school — something somewhere is unplugged.

2. Questions are valued over answers

Questions are more important than answers. Therefore, it makes sense that if good questions should lead the learning, there would be value placed on these questions. This means adding currency whenever possible—grades (questions as assessment!), credit (give them points—they love points), creative curation (handing a task that has multiple possible solutions), or simply praise and honest respect. See if you notice any change.

3. Ideas come from a divergent source

Ideas for lessons, reading, tests and projects—the fibre of formal learning—should come from a variety of sources. If they all come from narrow slivers of resources, you’re at risk of being pulled way off in one direction (that may or may not be good). An alternative? Consider sources like professional and cultural mentors, the community, content experts outside of education, and even the students themselves. Huge shift in credibility!

When these sources disagree with one another, use that as an endlessly ‘teachable moment,’ because that’s what the real world is like.

4. A variety of teaching methods are used

Online learning, experiential learning, differentiation, blended learning, game-based learning, student-centered learning, the flipped classroom, and on and on — the possibilities are endless. Chances are, none are incredible enough to suit every bit of content, curriculum and learner diversity in your classroom. A characteristic of a highly effective classroom, then, is diversity here, which also has the side-effect of improving your long-term capacity as an educator.

5. Classroom learning ‘empties’ into a connected community

In a highly effective learning environment, learning doesn’t need to be radically repackaged to make sense in the ‘real world,’ but starts and ends there.

As great as it sounds for learners to reflect on Shakespeare to better understand their Uncle Eddie — and they might — depending on that kind of radical transfer to happen entirely in the minds of the learners by design may not be the best idea. Plan on this kind of transfer from the beginning. It must leave the classroom because they do.



6. Learning is personalized by a variety of criteria

Personalized learning is likely the future, but for now, the onus for routing students is almost entirely on the shoulders of the classroom coach. This makes personalization — and even consistent differentiation — a challenge. One response is to personalize learning to whatever extent you plan for — by a variety of criteria — not just assessment results or reading level, but interest, readiness-for-content, and others as well.

Then, as you adjust the pace, entry points and rigor accordingly, you'll have a better chance of having uncovered what the learners truly 'need'.

7. Assessment is persistent, authentic, transparent and never punitive

Assessment is just an (often ham-fisted) attempt to get at what a learner understands. The more infrequent, clinical, murky or threatening it is, the more you're going to separate the 'good students' from the 'good thinkers'.

'The clinical' idea has less to do with the format of the test, and more to do with the tone and emotion of the classroom in general. Why are students being tested? What's in it for them and their future opportunities to improve?

Feedback is quick, even when the 'grading' may not be.



8. Criteria for success is balanced and transparent

Students should not have to guess what 'success' in a highly effective classroom looks like. It should also not be entirely weighted on 'participation,' assessment results, attitude or other individual factors, but rather meaningfully melted into a cohesive framework that makes sense—not to you, your colleagues or the expert book on your shelf, but to the students themselves.

9. Learning habits are constantly modelled

Cognitive, meta-cognitive and behavioural 'good stuff' is constantly modelled. Curiosity, persistence, flexibility, priority, creativity, collaboration, revision, and even the classic Habits of Mind, are all great places to start. So often what students learn from those around them is less directly didactic, and more indirect and observational.

"Monkey see, monkey do."

10. There are constant opportunities for practice

Old thinking is revisited. Old errors are reflected on. Complex ideas are re-approached from new angles. Divergent concepts are contrasted. Bloom's taxonomy is constantly travelled up and down, from the simple to the complex in an effort to maximize a student's opportunities to learn — and demonstrate understanding of — content.

5. LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

There are many different interpretations of the concept of special needs. It is often used in vernacular when a person has a disability. Learners with special educational needs (SEN) are those learners who need adjustments in the content, learning process, duration, workload and/or learning environment to achieve their required learning outcomes. Special educational needs become apparent in studying and coping with the learning environment and indicate that a person needs certain adjustments in order to participate on par with others and achieve the required results.

There may be different reasons for special educational needs, i.e. a person's disability or state of health, but a special need may as well be brought forth by family relationships or socio-economic circumstances. However, it is also possible that a person may have a disability or a difficult economic situation, but he or she can still perform well in the learning process and have no special educational needs whatsoever.



Not every learner with a disability may be a learner with special educational needs. A student without a disability or without being certified by a specialist can also be a student with special educational needs. It is the student's ability to cope and the need for individual adjustments in the teaching and learning process that must be considered.

The talents and learning problems of students are manifested in schoolwork as either learning success or learning difficulties. In order to support the development of a child or a young person and the professional mastery of teachers, it is important to discover the extent of those special needs and, in case of learning difficulties, also their possible causes.

Students may have learning difficulties in any subject. Experience shows that there exist more narrowly specific learning difficulties in acquiring key competences related to speech and language or with mathematics. For example, in studying Estonian these might include reading and spelling, text comprehension, written self-expression or, for example, in mathematics solving text problems, preparing financial calculations, calculating costs of goods sold, etc. These skills are basic learning skills that have an important impact on both the overall development of the learner's personality and the overall learning outcomes in acquiring professional competencies.

A common root cause of specific learning difficulties in vocational training is the **developmental delay in the age-appropriate verbal skills**, which leads to problems in understanding learning materials and study guides, following instructions and job-related documents (e.g. safety requirements of the workshop, technology descriptions, internship agreements, etc.). Difficulties also arise in acquiring the theoretical aspects of the chosen vocation, in presenting work-related documents and texts orally and in writing; passing both the general educational as well as vocational exams (in demonstrating one's professional competence, there is a disproportionate emphasis on language skills).

Problems in the development of oral and written skills are often combined, leading to lagging behind the other students, thus causing frustration for both the learner and the coach.

Poorly acquired learning skills at primary school level pose a serious threat to vocational training. The constant sense of failure that accompanies a student makes him/her a reluctant learner and leads to loss of interest in learning, dropping out of school and dropping out of education. A student with a learning disability may develop a permanent behavioural disorder, which may result in truancy and loitering.

Insufficient basic skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing, arithmetic) can lead to exclusion, lower quality of life - especially in today's society, where the speed of sharing information and the ability to understand it are increasingly important.

Reading difficulty includes both speaking and speech comprehension problems. Reading words takes more time and energy than usual. Inaccurate comprehension of reading material leads to misunderstandings. A prominent feature here is the poorer performance of reading-related activities compared to non-reading-related tasks and activities. Reading difficulty is accompanied by many other problems.

The most common of these are **speech and language impediments/disabilities, difficulty in writing, impaired coordination and motor skills, activity and attention deficit disorder. Learners who are struggling with reading are usually struggling with writing as well.** They have not developed reading and writing skills, which is a prerequisite for acquiring functional literacy.

In case of writing difficulties, there are errors in the application of vowels and their corresponding letters in Estonian, as well as in the correct choice of single or double letters and erroneously substituting the letters g - k, d - t, b - p., as well as errors in applying orthographical rules. All these difficulties are relatively permanent. However, as learners with reading and writing difficulties perform non-verbal tasks significantly better than verbal tasks, it would make sense to rely on this vocational training.

The specific learning difficulties apparent in **mathematics** encompass intertwined challenges regarding the different aspects of mathematics and the learner's abilities and skills. These include, for example, representation of sets, performing mathematical operations, text comprehension and analytical synthesis, solving text problems, solving mathematical problems (tasks related to integrated key competences): financial calculations, cost statements, cost calculations, net and gross salary calculations, calculation of percentages, dosing, etc. Although the student may memorize the rules and formulas, he or she does not always gain a substantive understanding of the underlying principles or the usually expected proficiency in using the formulas and rules.

Here are some general tips on supporting youth with learning difficulties:

1. Focus on praising effort, not results

Bearing in mind that students with learning difficulties cannot always reach high grades, parents and teachers must explain to them that effort must always be above the result itself. By placing focus on the result, the students can easily get demotivated and disappointed, especially if they keep comparing their results to other children's.



The key to success is in surpassing yourself and your abilities, and this is possible only through investing effort into mastering a certain skill or acquiring certain knowledge. When sufficient effort is invested, the desired result will surely be achieved; it is only a matter of time.



2. Concentrate on student's strengths, not weaknesses

As Albert Einstein once quipped, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." This neatly sums up the multidimensional nature of intelligence in humans. Bearing this quote in mind, we are obliged to perceive the strengths of a child with a learning difficulty and, through dedication to cultivating these strengths, create exceptional skills that will enable the child to stand out among their peers.

3. Provide them with role models

Every human being strives to realize their archetypes and they usually do it through finding role models, often celebrities. By pointing out the examples of celebrities with similar or even the same learning difficulties, you will probably encourage them to stay motivated and move forward with the realization of their goals.

For instance, Albert Einstein was autistic, Leonardo da Vinci exhibited signs of dyslexia and ADHD, Richard Branson has dyslexia and considers it his "greatest strength", while Michael Phelps was diagnosed with ADHD in fifth grade.

4. Nourish student's intellectual curiosity

If you pay attention, you will notice that every child starts their life with a hefty dose of curiosity. However, as children get older, if they keep facing stern and negative responses from parents and teachers, this curiosity often gets suppressed. For children with learning disabilities, curiosity is one of the crucial factors when it comes to maintaining continuity in their activities and finding creative alternative solutions for problems.

So, don't discourage children when they ask a lot of questions, but provide answers and refer them to materials where they can dive deeper into the subjects that they find interesting. Exploring the fields that the child is curious about is a good way to find the area in which they can achieve great results.

5. Divide the task into smaller parts with clear instructions

This is valid advice for any child, but especially for children with ADHD. Namely, due to the deficit of attention, it would be best to divide a task into steps, where the child can look back at the completed part after each step and gradually perceive the bigger picture of the task. There are other benefits of splitting tasks into parts, primarily the regular secretion of the happiness hormone serotonin and decreasing the odds of giving up due to the scope of the task and the delayed gratification.

6. MOTIVATION

Motivation is a person's emotional tendency to lead oneself towards achieving goals and to support achieving them more easily.

Emotion is what pushes us towards our goals. Emotions feed our motivation, and in turn, motives guide our thinking and shape our actions.

Motivation generally has two directions - internal and external, and motivation is either a pulling or a pushing force. Internal motivation corresponds to: I want to do it.



When motivation comes from within, being motivated is usually not under question. We just do something because we like it. We simply enjoy the activity and do not ask ourselves why we do it. Internal motivation helps to take responsibility for one's work and anticipate the expectations of the job or superiors, opens up creativity and pushes to look for new solutions. Internal motivation does not require remuneration, the work itself is the best reward. Each of us has activities that we do based on our personal inner will. Be it cooking, playing sports, reading, some work task (unfortunately it is not a frequent occurrence), or whatever other kind of activity - each of us has that special something. The goal should be to enrich our lives with those activities as much as possible.

External motivation corresponds to the statement: I have to do it. The reason why "I have to do it" is an external factor, most often a demand from a superior or a job order. It may also be a commitment that we have taken upon ourselves but have lost the joy in doing it.

Internal motivation triggers, external forces. The inner motivation is pulling, the outer is pushing, and when the outer motivator is depleted, we are stuck with the question “Why am I doing this?”. Of course, most cases are between these two extremes, but the main features can always be distinguished. If you sometimes question which motivation is driving you at that moment, just ask yourself: why am I doing this?

If the answer is: **I have to** (or: I am told to do so, it is required, the boss expects it, etc.) then it is external motivation, but if the answer is that **I want to** (or: I like it, I just do it, I enjoy it, etc.), then it is internal motivation.

What are the benefits of knowing whether I am driven by internal or external motivation?

Before accepting any task, it is worth asking yourself whether you really want to do it and why? It is worthwhile to look at your motivators honestly and make a decision based on that, in order to avoid non-fulfilment of accepted or designated tasks, thus also preventing stress and burnout.

Exercise

Think about the following questions and discuss them with your partner.

1. What makes you study or work?
2. What makes you try harder?
3. Why do you sometimes work in a way that it results in poor performance?
4. Why do you sometimes try hard and exceed expectations?
5. Why is your interest in working or studying (motivation) sometimes low?

A purpose or a goal is the main source of work motivation, which must be specific, concrete and clearly defined: what do I want to achieve, why do I want to achieve it, what does the purpose or goal include, where does it happen, who does it, and so on. The purpose or goal must not be too general or ambiguous.

Achieving the goal is also influenced by the level of commitment to the goal, self-esteem and national culture. Committing to a goal or purpose is more likely if the goals are made public, if the person has an internal control centre, and if the goals are set by oneself.

Self-esteem shows a person’s faith in their ability to perform a task. The higher the self-esteem, the more confident a person is in his or her ability to perform a task successfully. People with high self-esteem respond to negative feedback with increased effort and motivation, while people with low self-esteem are likely to make less effort when receiving negative feedback. Culture also plays a role in the goal-setting theory. Goal-setting is more effective when there is not too much power distance, when there is a low level of uncertainty avoidance, and when the goal is important for both managers and employees. Good goals are characterized by 5 important characteristics - SMART criteria:



1. Specific

A specific goal is unambiguously understood by everyone, and it states clearly what and why it is wanted. To be sure that the goal is unambiguous, it is worth asking yourself, “If someone who is not involved in the task reads that goal, does he or she understand it the same way I do?” If the answer is “Yes,” you can move on, if “No”, then rethink it.

2. Measurable

How do you know if the goal has been reached? When can you say that? When are you halfway there? How to measure your goal? A simple rule of thumb: if you cannot find a metric for your goal, rethink your goal. Without a metric, it is not likely to be a goal, but simply an activity.

3. Agreed – consensual

A goal that is agreed upon between parties, works. If something is imposed on someone, there is no common understanding or agreement, and it is very likely that the expected result will not be achieved. People have to believe in the same thing in order to succeed in achieving the goal.

4. Realistic - real, achievable

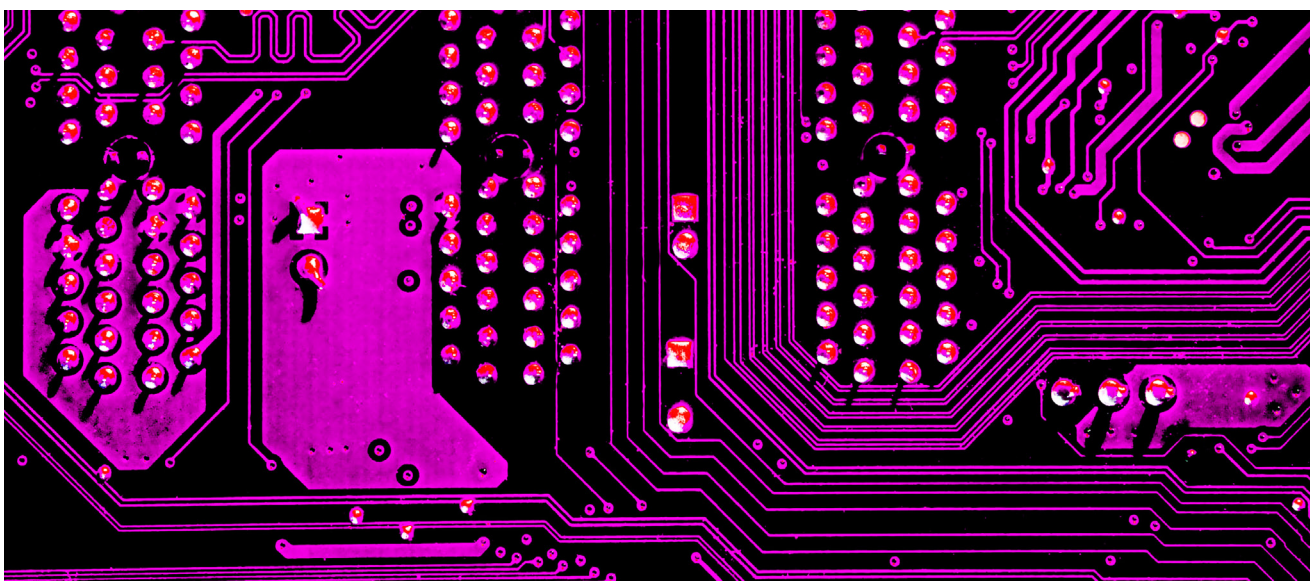
A realistic goal is one that can be achieved through specific action and effort. It must neither be too easy to achieve nor unattainable. In either of these cases, it does not motivate us to make an effort. If there is no motivation, there will be result.

5. Timed

To assess how we are meeting our goals, we need to know when we expect to see the results. Goals can be like long-term dreams that give broad guidance, or short-term checking points, after reaching which we are clearly closer to our end goal.

To maintain motivation and the will to learn, the learning process should fulfil the following:

- The learning environment is safe and supportive. Respect for each student, an atmosphere of togetherness and cooperation, a well-run organisation, a pleasant physical environment and mentoring between students and coaches contribute to this.
- Interest of students is captured through optimally complex and relevant topics and tasks. The assumption is that the topic is approached from the vantage point of a problem or a question, the material is presented logically, critical reflection is encouraged and there is open acceptance of unexpected ideas and approaches.
- Learning is based on learners' experiences. To do this, students need to be treated as knowledgeable, their experiences are taken seriously and integrated with theory, joint efforts are made to find relevant answers to the valid issues in their lives and to meet their needs.
- Learners' self-management is supported. This means that students are encouraged to start learning, they have the opportunity to control their own learning process and to make choices within set parameters.
- Learning concerns both the mind and the heart. It is not enough to convey factual information and theoretical analysis, but they must be supported by narratives, symbols, questions that require imagination and flights of fancy, and specific plans of action.



7. TEACHING METHODS

Teachers are an essential part of our society, but teaching can be a difficult and stressful job at times. Particularly when working with children and teenagers, it can be hard to retain focus, manage behaviour and encourage active participation. In addition, teaching adults can have its own challenges – it can be difficult for adult learners to absorb new things and change old thinking patterns.

One thing that may help you deal with some of these challenges is learning about the different teaching methods available. You don't need to pick one method and stick to it, but you may find that certain methods and styles are suitable for different learning environments.



1. Online learning

Teaching online may not have been the norm for most teachers before the COVID-19 pandemic, but there have always been some teachers who prefer to work online. Online tutors often enjoy the freedom of working from home, choosing their working hours and being their own boss. But what exactly does teaching online consist of? Essentially, it's the process of educating others using the internet, whether that's through individual or group video calls, webinars or messaging platforms. Normally it'll be a combination of things to keep students engaged.

If you're thinking about teaching online, or your current job requires you to teach online, you'll need to be comfortable with technology and the internet. This is because all your communication will be online, and you'll need to create digital resources for your students. These resources might be presentations, lesson plans, worksheets, videos or audio lectures. The great thing about online learning is that it's accessible to many people. Not everyone is able to go to school, but more people have access to the internet. Of course, technology can be a barrier to education too, but as the years go by, this barrier is – fortunately – breaking down.

2. Experiential learning

If you haven't heard of experiential learning before, it's the idea that learning is a product of experience. We can only gain experience from interacting and engaging with the world and people around us. This learning theory comes from David Kolb's experiential learning cycle and considers the role of all our experiences in learning, from emotions and cognition, to our environment.

Kolb's 1984 theory suggests that there are four main stages in the learning cycle:

1. Concrete experience. This is when the learner has a new experience, such as riding a bike for the first time.
2. Reflective observation. After the concrete experience, the learner must reflect on their actions and watch others perform that action.
3. Abstract conceptualisation. The next step involves the learner making sense of their reflections and making a plan or going forward. They might come up with next steps and seek insight from experts.
4. Active experimentation. During the final stage, the learner will consider their reflections and previous lessons and then retry the original experience to see if any progress has been made. This will lead to a new concrete experience, and so the cycle restarts.

Experiential learning is a great teaching method because it encourages creativity, helps students learn from mistakes, fosters reflective thinking, and prepares students for future experiences.

Some simple ways to encourage experiential learning in your classroom include encouraging students to assess themselves regularly and reflect on what they've learnt. As a coach, you might want to record yourself teaching or keep feedback journals so that you can reflect on previous lessons.

3. Differentiation

Differentiated learning is a teaching method that tailors instructions to students depending on their individual needs. This method could be a great option if you're teaching mixed-ability classes and want everyone to get the most out of each lesson.

This is a fairly traditional approach to teaching mixed-ability classes, but it can be successful if managed sensitively. For example, some teachers may choose to teach entirely different content depending on student ability. However, this can cause students to feel embarrassed and teachers to feel burned out from trying to do too much at once.

On this note, it's important for teachers to ensure that they create an inclusive classroom where students of all abilities are welcome, regardless of gender, race, sexuality or disability. Differentiated learning should never be used to make some students feel inferior to others.

A better way to approach differentiation is to teach in a variety of ways, including books, films, images and verbal presentations. This gives different students the opportunity to get involved and understand the lesson content. You can even go further than that and offer differentiated class activities and assessment styles.

For example, if the class topic is a Shakespeare play, you could allow students to demonstrate their understanding in several ways. They could write an essay, give an oral presentation, create an illustration or comic, play to any other strengths they have.

4. Blended learning

The next teaching method we'll be exploring is blended learning. Essentially, blended learning is a combination of traditional face-to-face learning and technology-based learning. Although blended learning did exist before the COVID-19 pandemic, it's become more popular with schools and universities in the past two years.

Using a blended learning model can be great for both students and teachers because it forms a middle ground between traditional and technology-based methods. It uses enough technology to keep students focused and interested, but it also provides opportunities for students to talk in person to teachers and fellow classmates, which can be invaluable.

Some great examples of blended learning include:

- Station rotation. Students rotate around different 'stations' during lessons, with these being a mixture of online and hands-on activities.
- Flex learning. Students are in class with teachers, but they primarily use online learning methods. Teachers are there for support and instruction whenever needed.
- Virtual Reality. Students are in a physical classroom but are able to use Virtual Reality (VR) to immerse themselves in an environment. This could be a historical landmark, art gallery or natural wonder, with the aim of capturing their attention and furthering their learning.
- Enriched virtual learning. Activities and coursework are completed online using digital technologies, but students can arrange face-to-face sessions when required.



It's likely that blended learning models will become more predominant as time goes on and our physical and digital lives become increasingly interlinked.

5. Game-based learning

If you want to focus on making your lessons more fun, engaging and interactive, then look no further. Game-based learning, also known as gamification, is a great way to engage students, particularly those in primary and secondary education.

The definition of gamification is a strategy that implements game-like elements into non-gaming activities to enhance motivation. Since youth is very interested in games, from video games and mobile applications to simple board games, this can be a great place to start.

However, it is worth mentioning that gamification shouldn't necessarily be used in every context. Sometimes, lessons require more serious discussions. In addition, too much game-based learning is likely to remove some of the fun and increased motivation that youth feel.

Here are some of the ways you can incorporate game-based learning into your lessons:

- Points systems
- Levels and progress bars
- Challenges or CTF competitions
- Unique rewards
- Learning badges



6. Student-centred learning

You can probably guess what this approach focuses on – your students. While the success and happiness of students is always a high priority for teachers, student-centred learning is different to more traditional teaching methods.

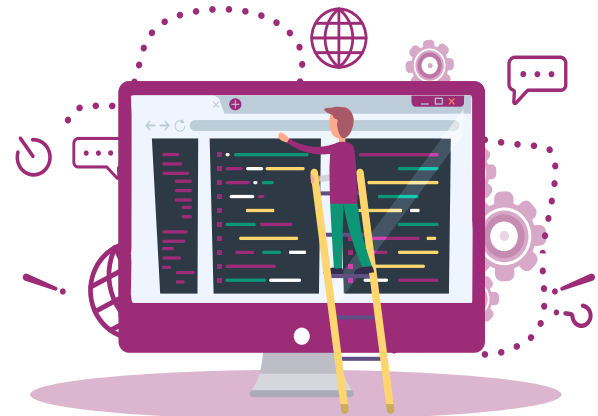
Teacher-centred learning, which is more common, requires the teacher to give classroom instructions and lead the class most of the time. With student-centred learning, students are given more opportunities to choose what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. This is also known as personalised learning.

In student-centred learning approaches, students are encouraged to take an active role in the classroom, rather than taking part in more passive activities like listening to a lecture or writing an essay. They will have lots of discussions with their peers and teachers, and they'll also be encouraged to ask questions, which is linked to inquiry-based learning.

Some great examples of this kind of approach include students taking part in debates, small group projects and fun roleplay scenarios together. As a teacher, it's your job to be an excellent facilitator. You should encourage open communication, curiosity, creativity and exploration. At the end of a classroom activity, the teacher should urge students to reflect on what they've learnt.

This method is good in small groups where skills levels vary more.

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8. GROUP MANAGEMENT

Group management is the process by which teachers create and maintain appropriate behaviour of students in classroom settings. The purpose of group management is to enhance prosocial behaviour and increase students' academic engagement.

Conflicts

Very generally, a conflict could be defined as a disagreement or misunderstanding that results in tension, which motivates parties to take action against each other. The conflict must include at least two parties and areas where their interests collide.

Conflict is usually perceived as negative, so it is no wonder when people in conflict feel uncomfortable and anxious. They do not want to be associated with something negative or appear in a negative light. It is traditionally believed that any conflict is bad, and its existence shows that something is wrong. Consequently, conflicts should be avoided. This understanding usually leads to the suppression of conflicts, but it does not eliminate their causes and thus neither the conflict itself. In fact, successful conflict resolution can make good relations even better or help to find new and better ways to move forward.

It cannot be concluded from the above that all conflicts are good. Depending on how it is perceived and resolved, the conflict can be **constructive** (resolving conflicts creatively, trying to find the best possible alternatives and not trying to offend each other) or **destructive** (addressing emotions - the surface layers of conflict - not the root causes). If the parties to the conflict are only lashing out in anger at each other, it is clearly far from being constructive. It is helpful to look into the future (how to do things differently) instead of looking at the past to place the blame.

Conflicts can occur in every relationship. No matter how close or understanding you are, there are still times when your ideas, needs or goals do not match those of the people around you. E.g.:

- you like to relax listening to rock music, but your friend would rather listen to classical music;
- you feel that you do your job properly, but your superior seems to be never satisfied with it;
- you want to buy a washing machine, but your spouse is convinced that the savings must be spent on a car, and so on.

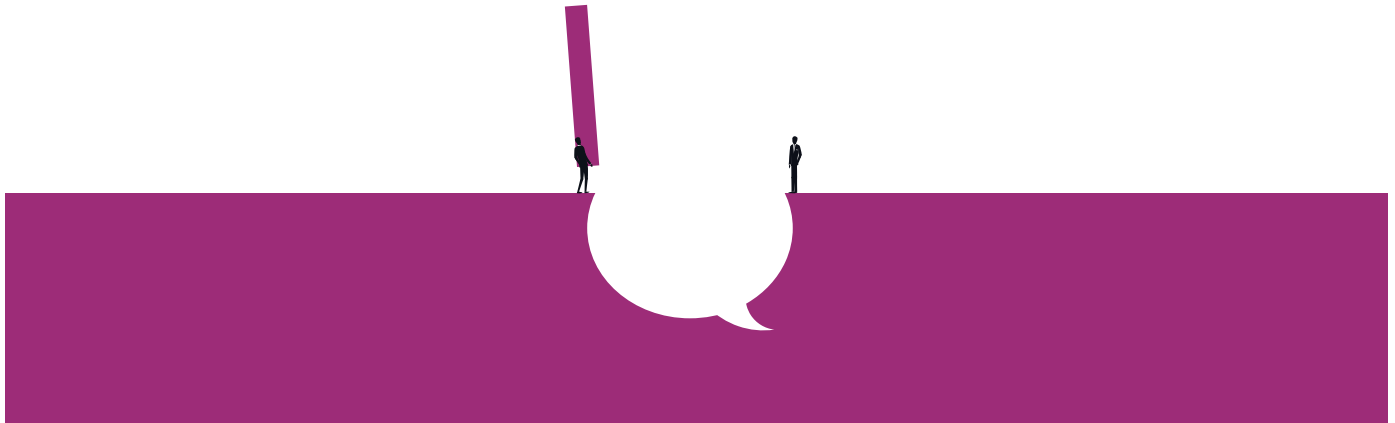


There is no end to the topics on which misunderstandings can arise. Just as conflict is a fact of life, so are **the feelings that come with it - anger, frustration, etc.** People tend to avoid such negative feelings or to pretend that they do not exist. It is not uncommon for us to be offended by a friend's behaviour for a while and to hide our hurt as if hoping that everything will resolve itself. **However, if not resolved, conflicts tend to escalate, and this applies to feelings as well.**

Although conflict is part of relationships, we can change our attitude towards it and the way we deal with it. A conflict could be seen as resolvable already from the outset, and an attempt should be made to maintain open communication with the other party. There is a higher probability of resolving misunderstandings if these are clearly communicated to the partner and subsequently dealt with.

HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS?

As conflicts are inevitable, we should learn how to deal with them as well as we can.



1. Domineering/fighting

The user of this strategy is maximally focused on one's own interests and minimally on the interests of the other party. The dominant participant in the conflict considers one's own interests to be paramount and uses power (physical, economic, intellectual) to influence the other party. A fighting party can be successful if it indeed has enough power in practice. It is not uncommon for both sides to use a fighting strategy. This often has negative consequences, as time, energy or money is wasted without either party being satisfied with the results. The losing party may feel ill-treated and, in extreme cases, even seek revenge. This strategy can be useful if the conflict needs to be resolved quickly or if unpopular decisions need to be made (e.g. disciplinary issues).

2. Adjusting/adapting

This is the opposite strategy. In order to maintain harmony, the demands of the other party are taken into account as much as possible and one's own needs are suppressed. While this may seem like a surrender, in some situations it is most appropriate, e.g. if the conflict has arisen for insignificant reasons or if it is indeed important to maintain good relations.

3. Avoidance

Parties try to **remain neutral and essentially do not take into account their own needs or the needs of the other party.** Sometimes it is useful to use avoidance as a temporary alternative. If the conflict is very hot, temporary avoidance can give the parties time to cool down. It may also allow time for the parties to gather additional information for an effective resolution of the conflict. Unfortunately, people tend to opt for avoidance too often and too easily, although such situations, where avoidance makes sense, occur far less frequently than we would like.

4. Problem-solving

Theoretically, this could be **the best strategy for dealing with conflict**, but it is the most difficult to put into practice. In such cases, **while resolving a conflict, the best interests of all parties are taken into consideration as much as possible.** At problem-solving, the causes of disagreement are addressed, and an attempt is made to find a solution that satisfies all parties. Successful problem-solving requires all parties to be ready for maximum cooperation. The biggest obstacle here is the winner-loser mentality (only one can win and therefore the others must lose), which very often characterizes the participants in the conflict.

5. Compromise

This is an intermediate strategy to all previous options, as well as a **traditional method of dealing with conflict.** There is no loser or winner, and neither side gets the maximum outcome. Problems are not avoided, but they are not dealt with in depth. A compromise is a good solution if resources can be shared equally (e.g. money). This can be a temporary solution in case of particularly complex and difficult problems.

Depending on a situation, all these strategies can be used. In some cases, one strategy may work better, and in others, another one.

CONFLICTS IN A TEAM

At some point, even the best teams may face complex challenges and obstacles, which may include communication errors, deteriorated team relationships, lack of trust, declining performance and an inability to overcome setbacks. Some of these problems stem from the team itself, some from organizational mistakes that have occurred between the team and other work groups, customers or vendors. The first step in helping a team is to separate from the bunch of problems those problems that indicate the team's inherent weaknesses, which can seriously hamper the effectiveness of teamwork if left unaddressed.

For example: An IT support team whose relationships with in-house customers have deteriorated. The team may have dropped the level of service to such an extent that it can still respond to requests for help quickly, but perform ineffectively. On the other hand, the problem may be the team's inability to keep up with the rapidly growing number of employees or communication problems between the team and its clients.

One way is to fix the problems that are visible in teamwork and another to identify the causes of these problems. The most effective way to meet these challenges is to provide yourself with clear information about the team. Start gathering information by asking yourself and other team members the following three questions:

1. What are the symptoms of team's problems and their causes?
2. How have these problems developed? What is the possible trend?
3. How serious are these problems? What would be their impact on the team and the organization if they were resolved/eliminated?

Building an effective team requires commitment and dedication. Sabotage of teamwork can happen in form of seemingly insignificant behaviour (being late, forgetting deadlines, but also arguing, self-justification, looking for culprits, demanding many detailed clarifications and answers, etc.).

For a team leader, noticing passivity or undermining and defining it as a problem is valuable in itself. It is often considered natural and inevitable that not everyone contributes equally. The word sabotage might sound too ominous here, but in essence it puts brakes on successful cooperation.

Possible reasons for passivity and undermining:

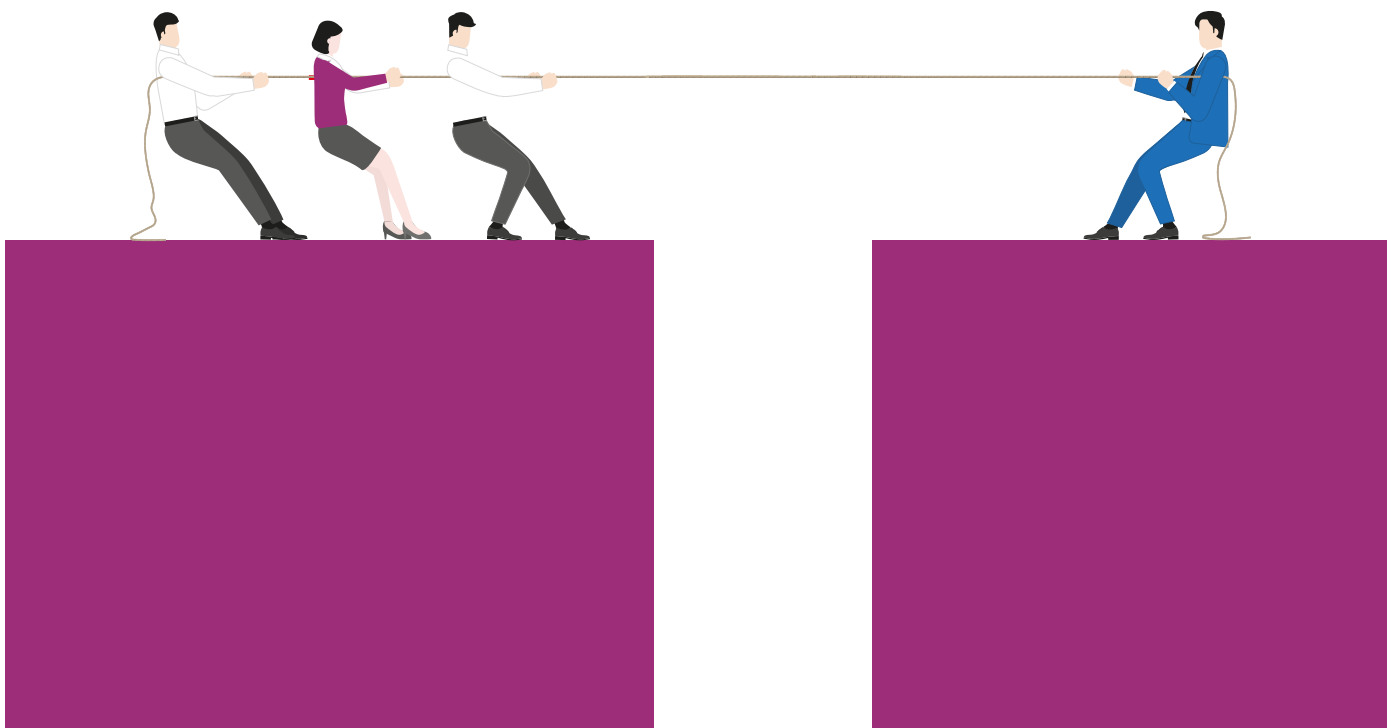
- The goals of the team are not clear enough for all team members or not everyone is aware of their role in fulfilling them.
- Team members do not trust each other personally or professionally.
- Team members do not identify enough with the team.
- Team members feel hopeless about working together.
- Changes have led to opposition.
- The group has reached a stage of development (the so-called conflict phase), where the differences and power struggles that have been kept in the shadows so far are now intensifying (and it is possible to start moving towards a more effective solution).
- Some group members have remained in a so-called role lock (for example, in the position of a hermit, martyr or warrior) and are not able to change their behaviour in this group dynamic without outside help.



The disrupter of teamwork must know that he/she is doing this. The false consensus effect, well known to psychologists, is often evident in teams - when someone (such as a leader) is significantly disturbed by a team member, it seems to him or her (for example, the leader) that everybody is disturbed by the same person. However, this is not always the case, and quite often the person concerned is unaware that his or her behaviour (distancing oneself, raising and amplifying all problems, withholding information, etc.) disturbs others.

A “difficult” team member needs to be listened to. There are several possible reasons for passivity and undermining. If a problematic team member has received feedback about his or her behaviour, they will most likely want to justify themselves and explain the situation. It is very reasonable to listen to these explanations and justifications, even if initially they might not make any sense.

This reduces tension and opposition. When a person is listened to, they are also more willing to listen themselves and take into consideration what they have heard.



A teacher with authority:

- is consistent and sets clear boundaries, but does not go overboard with those;
- expects age-appropriate behaviour from students;
- appreciates sense of duty /conscientiousness in students;
- requires obedience;
- regards students with respect, warmth and love;
- listens to the views and opinions of students and encourages them to be “true to oneself”.

Students like when they are accepted as they are

- This develops trust in a person, a positive and healthy attitude towards various activities.
- When students are socially rejected because they are different in some respect, they may become discouraged to try more difficult tasks in the future.
- Thus, by being tolerant and accepting of one’s students, the teacher signals to them that he/she can be trusted.

Students like the teacher to be “present”

- This means that, if necessary, he/she is there to explain, lead, discuss, advise.
- Being present does not mean aggressive self-presentation but rather observing what is going on in the classroom.

Students do not like teachers who

- are unaware of or do not accept the values of young people;
- tend to frequently exert their power unnecessarily;
- bring their own personal worries and problems and complexes to class;
- gossip about other teachers;
- cannot communicate clearly, use filler words;
- tend to be judgemental, use labels and “put a person in the box”, grade subjectively;
- behave in a rude way;
- are afraid to openly admit their own errors, mistakes and lack of knowledge;
- treat students as objects, not as personalities;
- snitch on students and seek outside reinforcement;
- are soft and inconsistent and easily distracted from the subject matter;
- do not teach in order to help achieve realistic goals that correspond to the students’ abilities, but force them to super achievements by setting unrealistic goals;
- are unfair and make unfounded claims against students;
- have little or no tolerance;
- are less creative in class and unvaryingly use the same study guides for many years (even the test questions do not change from year to year);
- are stuck on textbooks and syllabus;
- ignore or do not notice any problems related to students’ health or other issues that are important for them;
- carry a grudge for past mistakes or wrongdoings, are unforgiving and prone to nagging;
- do not listen or do not want to listen, or are unable to listen to the students;
- dress impersonally.



9. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Feedback is a natural part of communication and indispensable in cooperation. Through feedback, we learn about our strengths and become aware of possible areas for development. Constructive feedback, whether negative or positive, helps to develop, learn from experience, perpetuate positive behaviour, achieve success and build interpersonal relationships.

There are three types of **constructive feedback**:

1. **Appreciation** - describing the other party's successful actions and including thanks for what they have done (to reinforce what works).
2. **Coaching** - asking relevant questions to direct the other party to analyse their own actions, become aware of their experiences and change their behaviour.
3. **Evaluation** - constructively presenting the activities that could be corrected by another person, the significance and impact of those activities, and the expected change (to change what does not work).



Feedback is inherently positive because it is aimed at development - bringing about positive change or maintaining what works.

Giving feedback has two evaluation focuses – on process and on outcome. The result can be evaluated in relation to the goal; in evaluating the process, level of activity/passivity, personal initiatives, quality of relationships and communication, perseverance, cooperation, etc. deserve attention.

If the provider of feedback wants the message to be understood better, he/she should refer to:

- observations or facts which triggered the feedback;
- how he/she interpreted those observations or facts (what they signalled or meant to them);
- what kind of consequences, impact or effect he/she noticed.

The **principle of interaction** applies when providing feedback. How feedback is received depends largely on the person giving the feedback. One must learn to give feedback in a way that ensures pleasant and expected reactions. If our provision of feedback evokes reactions that are unpleasant, we need to find out what we do to cause it or to inflame it.

Several studies show that the **source of feedback** is often the most important factor in determining whether or not a recipient accepts or rejects the feedback given. The most important feature of a dependable source of feedback is **reliability**, which is based on two main characteristics - **expertise** and **credibility**.

Trust in the motives of the feedback provider helps to accept the feedback – the feedback should be constructive, not like a hanging sword above your head.

If it is necessary to give a person feedback about his/her performance or actions, it is worthwhile to bear in mind the following tips in order to turn (often negative) feedback into constructive feedback:

1. Be specific and detailed. General feedback is very ineffective. Give examples of specific situations.
2. Focus on behaviour. Do not humiliate or shame a person by labelling and judging his or her personality, but stick to describing the situation. Instead of looking for the causes of the behaviour and finding the culprits, focus on finding solutions and what the feedback recipient can actually influence. If possible, also find something positive to appreciate in their behaviour or something that the person has done well.
3. Tell the reason why you are giving feedback. Find a way to show that the feedback you are providing is personally useful to the recipient. This increases the likelihood of the expected change. Show that you care (being sincere, of course) and show your support in resolving the situation.
4. Use effective ways of verbalising the feedback. Use I-statements instead of the You-statements. Avoid statements like “you have to”. Express your expectations and belief in a person’s abilities.
5. Listen. People often need to “ventilate” themselves before they are ready to receive feedback, and situations always have different perspectives. Before presenting your vision, give the person a chance to talk about how he/she perceives the situation. It is also useful during the conversation to consciously take the position of an active listener and give the other party an opportunity to express his or her views.
6. Contribute to self-analysis and finding solutions. The key to change often lies in the extent to which you can use various questions to guide the recipient’s process of self-analysis. One way is to focus on what the person can learn from the situation. It does no harm to ask explicitly: “What did you learn from this situation?”, “What would you like to do differently in the future?”, “What should we have done differently?” If this person is not ready or able to do so, it is worth offering specific solutions or giving clear instructions as to what kind of behaviour or action you expect from them.
7. Choose a suitable time and place. If possible, give negative feedback privately. The general rule of effectiveness for providing feedback is to share negative feedback in the presence of as few people as possible and positive feedback in the presence of as many people as possible. The best way to give feedback is still face-to-face, doing it by email or via other people should be avoided.
8. Check each other’s understanding of the situation and make agreements. By asking the recipient of the feedback to reflect on what they have heard and to summarize the conversation, you can assess whether the message you wanted to convey has actually been received. It is certainly worth concluding specific agreements that are acceptable to both parties, i.e. as a result of which something will actually change (even if it is just an agreement for a new meeting to discuss the matter further).
9. Give feedback right away. Do not let it pile over an extended period of time. This is especially true for negative feedback. Changes can take place when feedback is given in small doses at once, rather than be buried deep under a whole bunch of comments.



10. LIFELONG LEARNING

The claim that machines or robots will steal our jobs has echoed through the decades from the earliest science fiction stories to more realistic developments today in smart electronics, artificial intelligence and automation. The claims that they will take over millions of jobs may only be partially true, while the exact numbers are something we cannot definitively declare. In fact, the technological changes underway will create more jobs in different sectors if history is any indication.

The question then becomes not whether a robot or AI system will render you obsolete, but whether you will rise to the challenge of learning what it takes to stay relevant and employed. When you become a lifelong learner and focus on continuous learning of new, in-demand skills, you claim the power to face the future of work successfully.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LIFELONG LEARNER?

Abandon the commonly held notion that learning is for children and young adults. You graduate high school, get a university degree and consider yourself done with education. In the past, this may have been sufficient to land and keep a great job until you retire. The concept of being a learner has however shifted. No more is the concept learn, do, retire. To be agile and adaptable, you need to learn, do, unlearn — learn, do, rest — learn, do, unlearn — repeat. This is the cycle of a lifelong learner.

Lifelong Learner Lifecycle



"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn!"

– ALVIN TOFFLER

Modern careers are like nonstop conveyor belts — you need to keep moving and learning no matter what the stage of your career. Being content is a mindset that puts us at risk. Consider how quickly industry, business and technology evolve — this is how our employees get left behind. Instilling lifelong learning ensures talent remains agile, adaptable and ready to fill the next organizational gap.

In today's work climate, lifelong learning paves the way for current and future success.

In the most basic terms, a lifelong learner is someone who keeps acquiring new skills and capabilities well past their formal education years. It involves not only studying new topics but also developing an open-minded, positive attitude about the dynamic nature of the world. Personal development continues alongside professional development.

A lifelong learner looks for opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding. While qualifications help with a career, curiosity and a growth mindset invite future possibilities.

WHY IS LIFELONG LEARNING IMPORTANT?

The labour market has changed considerably in the past decade. Increased digitalization and globalization lead to extreme flexibility when it comes to hiring new talent. Companies choose part-time, project-based independent contractors or gig economy freelancers more than ever before. They shop for workers based on skills rather than official qualifications or job titles.

Add in the fact that needed skills regularly morph as tech advances, and employers' focus on attracting talent rather than someone to fill a job makes sense. They need people who support their policies, processes and projects. If the same person continues to be agile and adaptable for the long-term due to their focus on lifelong learning, they become a much more valuable asset. Lifelong learning matters more now than ever because generic experience and flexibility cannot compete with serial mastery. Even mastering one skill will not ensure employment for the long-term. The shelf life of skills is reducing year after year. If you abandoned learning after achieving mastery in one thing, you will likewise become useless in the labour force.

These truths hold for both personal and **professional development**. While career-based learning assists with finding the next contract work or position, adopting the same mindset off-hours provides benefits, too.

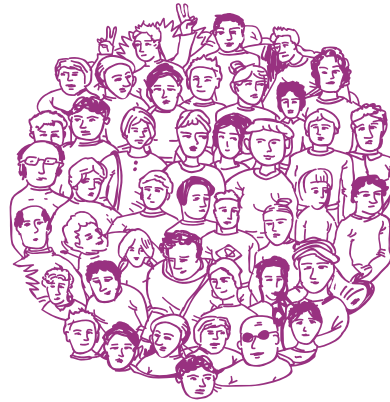
For context, think of **personal development** as the process of learning anything that strengthens your mind, improves memory and instils higher levels of self-confidence. This translates not only into greater happiness and contentment but also promotes the soft skills that are appreciated in the workplace. Professional development, on the other hand, is learning marketable, transferable skills that boost your value in the workplace. Tech and processes change rapidly these days, and disinterest in learning how to advance their usefulness in your industry translates into disinterest in helping your employer. The outcome? You are first in line for layoffs or downsizing. If you develop yourself personally and professionally well enough, and continue to do so for the rest of your life, you (or your brand) becomes the asset instead of the one skill you have to offer.

How to become a Lifelong Learner

Understanding the benefits of both professional and personal development throughout your life does little if you cannot apply effective methods to become the best type of lifelong learner. The process involves attitude adjustments and the kind of effort you may not be accustomed to.



In the face of sweeping and swift changes throughout global industries, however, it gives you the best chance of remaining relevant.



1. Develop a growth mindset

Research into IQ and neuroscience shows that lifelong growth and improvement are scientifically viable. Individual internal monologues may default to fixed mindsets, however. Definitive “I can’t” or “I will never” statements are often self-fulfilling prophecies.

A growth mindset, on the other hand, embraces challenges, change and critique on the way to learning goals. Accept that skill acquisition requires effort, that improvement is possible, and that obstacles and others’ success are not reasons to stop your progress.

2. Take responsibility for your future

Too many adults blame the educational system, their industry, the government or chance for stagnation and career struggles. When you own your decisions, actions and future results instead, you give yourself the power to make changes independent of whatever happened to you in years past or yesterday.

Lifelong learners seek out opportunities for their benefit and growth because they understand they have the power and responsibility to mould their progress.

3. Discover and follow your passion

If you do not have a passion for your current career position, figure out what your passion is, and then do what it takes to incorporate it into your life. The luxury to launch your own business or quit your job and become a travel photographer, for example, exists outside the realm of reality for many people. Instead, find passion where you are now. What makes your career meaningful? What rewards do you or others receive that you can feel good about? Take time to look within and find the value that you provide or can provide in your work.

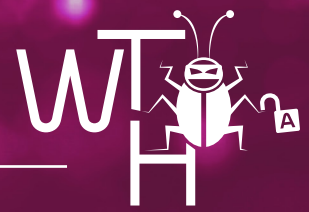
As a lifelong learner, personal development helps you discover not only your passion but how to incorporate it into even the most mundane jobs. You also cultivate new opportunities by learning additional skills and techniques, paving the way for possibilities in the future. Passion fuels learning more than anything.

4. Be the linchpin

Become a company or industry linchpin that holds everything together and keeps things moving in the right direction. Instead of aiming for indispensability, make yourself invaluable. Through lifelong learning and growth, you can create a personal brand that stands for dynamic need fulfilment. Proactive skill acquisition is an essential part of the learning, doing, unlearning and learning more lifecycle.

5. Stretch beyond your own (and your employer’s) expectations

The feeling of career contentment the first time you land a good job is rather old-fashioned these days. Still, too many professionals focus on an end goal where they can finally say, “I’ve arrived,” prop their feet up on the desk and float toward retirement. This comfort zone gives a false sense of security, which you must push beyond to become a lifelong learner. Contentment is the enemy of success when things change so rapidly across most industries.



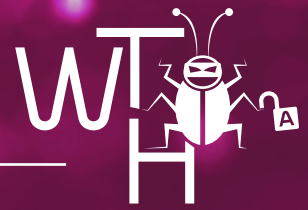
Courting positive stress in a controlled, beneficial way by taking a class, following tutorials and practicing new skills, combats the harmful stress of trying to hang on to your job or find a new one when your abilities do not match expectations.

Steps outside your comfort zone can include deepening existing skills to help with future tasks, enhancing existing skills to make current tasks easier or more efficient, and genuine skill growth that can open doors to new roles and responsibilities.

As computers, AI systems, robotics and other machines get smarter and more capable, human workers should do the same to stay relevant and employed. As a lifelong learner, you can excel at both professional and personal development and growth to make yourself invaluable in your chosen field. The combination of educational opportunities today and the right mindset of non-complacency and responsibility gives you the power to build a future that more closely aligns with your passions.



Lifelong learners prosper in this new, increasingly flexible and dynamic global economy. Lifelong learners invent and reinvent themselves whenever they find or create the opportunity. This is not about job-hopping. It is about ensuring you can continue to provide benefits for your current job and position yourself as a valuable asset if you do have to find a new one.



11. APPENDIX

Here are some final words for your journey on coaching the youth...

- You can prepare everything as well as you can, prepare it down to the last detail, but in practice things sometimes turn out differently than you had planned... So be flexible. If you can do that, you will be able to meet the needs of your pupils.
- The largest part of your work consists of educating. Take that into account and spend most of your time on it, especially during the first weeks of class. Your subject will play a bigger role later in the year.
- Talk a lot with colleagues. As a starter, you can learn from their experience, and they can learn from you. After all, you have just come from training, so you have up-to-date knowledge and no tunnel vision.
- Find your own role in the classroom. Who do you want to be as a coach? How do you reconcile that with your personality?
- Use your lesson preparation form. In other words, prepare your lessons.
- Stay yourself and have/use humour.
- Keep it cool. Don't let yourself get crazy.
- Do what you like and what you are good at. Find your strength and use it.
- Stand in front of the class as yourself and do not try to play the role of the teacher too much.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the person you are sitting in front of. Find a connection.
- Visualise the lesson you have thought up. If you have already gone through the lesson in your head, you will be completely confident in real life!
- Don't take on too many extra tasks (officially, this is not necessary!).
- Speak softly, so that they have to do their best to understand you.
- Don't let your schooling interfere with their education.
- Invest very much in the relationship with your pupils. Show genuine interest.
- Think about your own boundaries and guard them.
- Don't worry too much about wanting to be liked by everyone, that won't work anyway...
- Think about what you feel comfortable with and how you can achieve that in the way you stand in front of the class, in the way you organise your lessons and your tasks as a teacher outside the classroom.

