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KEY ACTION 2 – ADULT Cooperation Partnership in Adult Education

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Unit 5: Innovative Tools to Facilitate Public Speaking Skills Development

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TOPIC N°5: Innovative Tools to Facilitate Public Speaking Skills Development

Objective of the learning module:

- The aim of this unit is to empower educators with the latest knowledge and tools to re-elevate their approach to public speaking and communication skills coaching. Equipped with cutting-edge methodologies and technological advancements, educators will be better prepared to deliver engaging and effective communication training to their learners.

Skills to be acquired:

- Advanced public speaking techniques - The module will provide educators with updated knowledge on public speaking best practices to help them become more engaging, charismatic, and impactful speakers.
- Communication skills coaching methods - Educators will learn new coaching techniques and frameworks to improve their ability to teach communication skills like presentation delivery, persuasion, and audience engagement to their students.
- Leveraging technology for communication - The module will cover how to effectively use modern tools and software to enhance communication teaching and delivery. Educators will learn how to integrate technology like online platforms, AI, VR, etc. to create more immersive and effective communication experiences.



Source: themuse.com

Keywords:

- advanced public speaking techniques
- benchmark practices for educators
- technology to support public speaking development



STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENT AND CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

A good speech is accompanied by fluency and accuracy which students must learn and enhance competitively. And while teaching speaking has started to gain traction in schools, there is still a long way to go. Many adult learners, especially those from marginalised communities lack the skill set and confidence to speak confidently in job interviews, meetings, as entrepreneurs or even as consumers looking to have their voice heard. Moreover, even when speaking skills are integrated in the curriculum, most of the instruction and practical work is done through memorization and repetition of drills focusing on the fluency of the production of sounds (Kayi, 2012).

Firstly, public speaking is often neglected in traditional academic curricula, with educational institutions focused primarily on technical knowledge rather than essential soft skills. As a result, individuals may lack the confidence and ability to express ideas persuasively, hindering career advancement.

Secondly, underprivileged communities frequently have limited access to resources and training to improve public speaking skills. This disparity exacerbates socio-economic exclusion, as effective communication is critical for success in business and entrepreneurship. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds struggle to compete.

Finally, inherent biases and stereotypes create additional barriers for marginalised groups as public speakers. Discrimination leads to undervaluing perspectives, perpetuating inequality. Comprehensive solutions should improve communication curricula, increase access to training, and promote inclusive environments that empower diverse voices.

Role of educators in supporting co-creation dynamics in a group

In the context of increasing adult learners' communication skills to help them in business, as entrepreneurs, and in their careers, educators play a pivotal role in supporting co-creation dynamics within the learning process. By adopting learner-centred approaches, educators create a supportive and empowering environment where adult learners actively engage in shaping their communication training to suit their specific professional needs.



Image Source: <https://speakerhubhq.medium.com/8-ways-to-practice-public-speaking-to-hone-your-craft>

To begin, educators foster an inclusive atmosphere that encourages learners to express their unique perspectives and challenges related to communication in a professional context. By valuing diverse experiences and viewpoints, learners will feel more confident in contributing actively to the co-creation process. Through collaborative learning activities, such as group discussions and team projects, educators promote interactive exchanges among adult learners. This cultivates a culture of peer-to-peer learning, where individuals can share their insights, learn from one another's experiences, and collectively develop effective communication strategies applicable to entrepreneurship and the job market.

As facilitators and guides, educators provide targeted resources and guidance to support adult learners in honing their communication skills. They encourage learners to explore various communication techniques, from persuasive presentations for entrepreneurial pitches to effective networking and interpersonal communication for professional advancement.

Moreover, educators stimulate critical thinking and creativity by posing real-world communication challenges in the business context. By encouraging adult learners to analyse complex communication scenarios and brainstorm innovative solutions, educators instil a problem-solving mindset that will benefit them in their entrepreneurial ventures and job roles.

Constructive feedback is a cornerstone of the co-creation process, where educators acknowledge and celebrate learners' progress while offering personalised guidance for improvement. This iterative feedback loop allows adult learners to continuously refine their communication abilities, ensuring they are better prepared to navigate various business settings.

Regular reflection and adaptation by educators ensure that the co-creation process remains dynamic and responsive to adult learners' evolving needs. As communication trends and demands in the



business world change, educators should adjust the training to stay relevant, equipping learners with up-to-date skills for entrepreneurial success and career growth.

Speaking skills in an Entrepreneurial Setting

In our professional lives, exceptional public speaking and communication skills hold immense significance, particularly when it comes to personal branding and entrepreneurial aspirations. The ability to articulate ideas clearly, inspire audiences, and build meaningful connections is pivotal for establishing a strong personal brand and fostering credibility amongst peers, clients, and potential investors.



Image Source: forbes.com

In business, effective communication skills also play a crucial role in networking, negotiation, and team management, allowing professionals to forge fruitful partnerships and lead their ventures with confidence. A compelling speaker can effectively convey their vision, mission, and expertise, positioning themselves as influential thought leaders within their industry. In this context, those aspiring to become entrepreneurs must recognize that honing these skills through continuous practice and self-improvement is not merely a competitive advantage, but an indispensable tool for unlocking their full potential and achieving success in their professional journey.

Communication skills across industry



Effective communication has a positive impact on customers and is crucial for ensuring repeat business. Throughout various positions within a business, communication with customers occurs regularly. For instance, bank tellers in the banking field frequently interact with customers, while customer service representatives act as intermediaries between the company and its clients in different industries. Marketing professionals also engage with diverse audiences to understand the demographics and requirements of the companies they represent.

In addition, store associates play a vital role in effectively communicating and interacting with customers visiting their establishment. Possessing excellent communication skills is essential throughout the entire process, from warmly welcoming people into the store to assisting them in finding what they need and ultimately closing a successful sale. Prioritising effective communication enables businesses to strengthen customer relationships and cultivate a positive reputation, resulting in increased loyalty and sustained success.

Training ideas to enhance communication skills in an organisation:

Implement Role-Play Exercises: Customer service agents benefit from practical experience in addressing diverse customers, situations, and inquiries. Organise role-play scenarios within the team to simulate interactions with upset clients and potential customers with multiple questions.

Focus on Product Knowledge: Conduct demonstration sessions where team members present products to each other, encouraging constructive feedback. Additionally, create a knowledge base with helpful resources like user guides, frequently asked questions, and articles about your product or service.

Teach the LAST Method: Introduce the LAST method to customer service personnel to deal with angry or dissatisfied customers and difficult situations.



WHAT DOES LAST MEAN?



Listen: Actively listen to the customer's complaint without interrupting.

Apologise: Offer a sincere apology for the inconvenience caused.

Solve: Find a solution to the problem or escalate the issue to the appropriate person.

Thank: The customer for bringing the issue to your attention and for their patience.

Establish a Buddy Program: Encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing between new hires and experienced team members who can help each other practise on key communication strategies. This fosters a sense of comfort and helps build valuable relationships among colleagues and better support for clients.

Organise Team-Building Activities:

Team building activities can make all the difference when it comes to job satisfaction, employee engagement and organisational success. But even with the best intentions, it's not sufficient to simply bring a group of people together.



Image Source: Medium.com

Effective team building activities can help your group feel more connected and able to collaborate more effectively. As customer service can be demanding, arrange team-building events where colleagues can bond and relax, promoting a positive work environment.



Conduct Regular Training: To ensure consistent quality, conduct training sessions regularly, especially during times of crisis or when there are product and company updates. This helps keep the team well-equipped and informed to handle customer needs effectively.

Autonomous tools of education in Public Speaking

Autonomous tools of education in public speaking development have revolutionised the way individuals hone their communication skills providing learners with innovative and self-paced learning opportunities.. These innovative tools empower learners to take control of their learning journey and progress at their own pace. Online platforms, such as interactive speech analysis software and virtual speech coaches, offer personalised feedback and guidance, enabling learners to identify areas for improvement and track their progress over time. Additionally, virtual reality simulations provide a safe space for learners to practise public speaking in realistic scenarios, gaining valuable experience without the fear of judgement. These autonomous tools not only enhance accessibility to public speaking education but also foster self-directed learning, building confidence and proficiency in communication for individuals across diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

Autonomous tools of education in public speaking development have emerged as a game-changer, let's explore some specific tools that contribute to the development of public speaking skills:

Interactive Speech Analysis Software: This software leverages artificial intelligence to analyse and evaluate learners' speeches. It assesses factors like vocal tone, pace, clarity, and word usage, providing real-time feedback to help learners refine their delivery and presentation style.

Virtual Speech Coaches: Virtual coaches are AI-driven tools that act as personalised mentors for learners. They offer tailored advice and exercises to address individual weaknesses and build on strengths, helping learners progress in a way that suits their unique needs.

Virtual Reality (VR) Simulations: VR technology allows learners to immerse themselves in realistic public speaking scenarios. They can practise delivering speeches in front of virtual audiences, replicating the pressure and challenges of real-life speaking engagements. This tool helps build confidence and reduces performance anxiety.

Mobile Apps for Public Speaking: There are mobile applications available that provide bite-sized lessons, public speaking tips, and prompts for impromptu practice. These apps are convenient and allow learners to practise public speaking on the go.

Webinars and Virtual Workshops: Online webinars and workshops led by experienced public speakers provide learners with opportunities to observe expert techniques and receive guidance through live Q&A sessions.

Peer-to-Peer Practice Platforms: Some online platforms facilitate peer-to-peer practice, where learners can connect with others looking to improve their public speaking skills. They can engage in video conferencing or online speech-sharing to receive constructive feedback and learn from one another.

Speech Evaluation Platforms: These platforms enable learners to upload recorded speeches and receive detailed evaluations from qualified speech experts or experienced public speakers. The evaluations highlight strengths and areas for improvement, helping learners fine-tune their delivery.



These autonomous tools democratise public speaking education, allowing learners from all walks of life to access valuable resources and guidance in their journey to become confident and effective communicators. With the flexibility and interactivity they offer, these tools empower learners to take charge of their learning and progress towards becoming adept public speakers.

Digital Tools for communication and presentation skills

Learning how to present and speak in a work environment is not an option anymore, rather, it has become a fundamental skill for the modern age.

Effectively presenting oneself and expressing one's passions has a profound impact on how others perceive and connect with you. By mastering this skill, the student's self-confidence will flourish, and they will likely be astonished by the positive influence it can have on their overall success in life.

[Here are some digital tools to help students learn public speaking in an exciting way](#)

TED Talks

Watching TED Talk videos can be highly beneficial for supporting public speaking training. These talks feature captivating and skilled speakers from various fields, delivering powerful presentations. By observing these speakers, individuals can learn valuable techniques for engaging an audience, conveying complex ideas clearly, and incorporating storytelling to make their talks more compelling. TED Talks also showcase diverse speaking styles, allowing learners to identify the approaches that resonate with them personally. Additionally, exposure to a range of topics and presentation formats broadens learners' perspectives and inspires them to explore new ways of structuring and delivering their own speeches.

Podcasting & Flipgrid

Podcasting and Flipgrid offer innovative ways to leverage technology and enhance communication skills among adult learners.



Image Source: <https://www.searchenginejournal.com>



Podcasting allows learners to develop their speaking abilities by recording and sharing their thoughts, ideas, and stories in an audio format. This platform fosters self-expression, improves articulation, and boosts confidence in speaking publicly. Additionally, podcasting enables learners to receive feedback from peers or instructors, facilitating constructive self-assessment and growth.

On the other hand, **Flipgrid** provides a video-based platform where adult learners can engage in video discussions and presentations. It encourages visual communication, body language awareness, and active listening skills. By participating in Flipgrid discussions, adult learners can practise organising their thoughts concisely and effectively, making them better communicators both in online and face-to-face interactions.

The combination of podcasting and Flipgrid empowers adult learners to develop and refine their communication skills while embracing the benefits of modern technology.

The **Voice Analyst** app is another noteworthy app that serves as a powerful tool for anyone looking to develop their communication abilities and overcome voice-related challenges. It offers a user-friendly interface to get started by recording and analysing your voice. With the ability to set pitch and volume-based targets, users can optimise their public speaking skills and work towards improving their vocal delivery. Moreover, the app caters to a diverse range of users, including language therapists, performers, trainers, teachers, and individuals with neurological conditions.

In contrast, **VirtualSpeech** caters primarily to teams or groups rather than individual users. Its specialised courses focus on enhancing users' soft skills, offering pathways like "Winning New Clients," "Communicating as a Leader," "Public Speaking Mastery," "Facilitator Training," and "Remote Working Essentials." One drawback is that the app lacks private options for individuals to practise their speech independently. VR Courses also come with a cost and are not free to access.

Technology to help with Presentations



Image source: <https://www.tmcnet.com/>

The widespread growth of the artificial intelligence (AI) sector has impacted various aspects of our lives, ranging from video filters to content generation and even speech coaching. Among these advancements, AI speech coach apps have experienced significant popularity recently.



A speech coach app is a mobile application designed to assist users in improving their public speaking and communication skills. These apps leverage artificial intelligence (AI) and interactive features to provide personalised feedback, tips, and exercises for users to enhance their speaking abilities. Speech coach apps often include features like speech analysis, vocal tone assessment, and pronunciation practice, allowing users to track their progress and gain confidence in delivering effective speeches. These apps are valuable tools for individuals seeking to develop their presentation skills, whether for professional or personal growth.

Here's a few of the most used speech coach apps:

→ **Ummo**

This speech coaching app is extremely useful in tracking one of the biggest issues of public speaking: word fillers. It can be used to track your filler words like "Umms" and "Uhhs", "like", "you know" as well as pace, word power, clarity, and more. The app is easy to use and customizable.

→ **Yoodli**

The Yoodli communication coach offers users personalised and constructive feedback on their speech and speaking patterns. The process is simple: users can upload or record a video on the Yoodli platform, whether it's a Zoom call, a Google Meet interview, or a practice speech video. Yoodli then analyses the speaking patterns and speech content to provide insightful and detailed feedback on key areas for improvement.

→ **LikeSo**

This is another option for speech coaching. Like Yoodli and Ummo, the app's purpose is to help users improve their communication skills, whether that's for your next interview, date, presentation, meeting, debate, or audition.

→ **PromptSmart Pro – Teleprompter**

The PromptSmart speech coach application utilises voice recognition technology to analyse the user's speech patterns and delivery in real-time. It provides instant feedback on pacing, clarity, and vocal tone to help the user improve their presentation skills. Additionally, the app functions as a teleprompter, displaying the script or speech on the screen, scrolling automatically as the user speaks, ensuring a smooth and seamless delivery. This combination of voice recognition and teleprompter features allows users to practise and refine their public speaking abilities effectively.

Strategies for Feedback and Support

Feedback strategies hold significant importance as a fundamental pedagogical practice. Various studies have highlighted the crucial role of feedback in the teaching-learning process. Constructive and systematic feedback facilitates both the learning process and teaching performance. Evaluation, as an integral component of feedback, plays a decisive role in guiding teaching decisions. Through assessment and feedback, educators can gauge the current status of their students' language abilities, identifying areas of strengths and areas that require improvement. This knowledge empowers learners to actively participate in modifying or re-planning upcoming lessons, fostering a student-centred learning environment.

Feedback is what guides and develops a learner's thinking and it is therefore a very important part of the learning process. Provided that feedback is constructive, it will have a positive effect on a students' learning. Inappropriate feedback, however, will not benefit the learning process. An example of inappropriate feedback



is, for example, when feedback is given to encourage and make a student feel better even though the quality of their production is poor. In the study by [Colby-Kelly & Turner \(2007\)](#), it is shown that this type of inappropriate feedback can be perceived as unmerited and untrustworthy by adult students.

One prevalent feedback method widely used in Toastmasters and the corporate setting is the "*feedback sandwich*" or the "PIP" (*Positive-Improvement-Positive*) approach (Bergen et al., 2014). This method consists of three distinct segments. Firstly, it begins with focusing on the performance strengths, providing positive statements or compliments to acknowledge the learner's achievements. Secondly, constructive criticism or suggestions for improvement are offered to enhance the presentation. Lastly, the feedback is rounded off with another positive comment, reinforcing the learner's strengths and encouraging growth (Walter, 2001). This sandwich approach effectively balances praise and constructive feedback, creating a supportive and motivating atmosphere for adult learners.

The "**feedback sandwich**" method is particularly relevant when assessing adult learners' public speaking presentations. By using this approach, educators can offer targeted feedback to improve students' communication skills while also recognizing their strengths in each performance. This enables learners to understand their areas of improvement, build on their strengths, and refine their public speaking abilities more effectively.

There are many different ways in which corrective feedback can be given. Lightbown & Spada (2006) present six types of feedback that have been identified in different studies:

According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), there are various methods of providing feedback to students in language learning settings. **Explicit feedback** involves the teacher clearly pointing out errors and providing the correct form. On the other hand, **Recast** refers to correcting an erroneous utterance by repeating it in the correct form without explicitly mentioning the error. Clarification requests are used when the teacher wants the student to realise that their statement was not understood or contained an error. **Metalinguistic feedback** involves asking questions like "Is this supposed to be plural?" to help students self-correct their errors. **Elicitation** is a method where students are encouraged to come up with the correct forms themselves, either by completing the teacher's utterance or answering questions like "How can we say this with fewer words?" **Repetition** involves the teacher repeating the student's error, often using intonation to highlight the mistake, followed by other types of feedback to aid in correction. These diverse feedback methods contribute to a comprehensive approach to language learning and improvement. (INSERT GRAPHIC)

Language and Tone for Giving Feedback

Effective feedback is a crucial aspect of the learning process, and the language and tone used when providing feedback can significantly impact the recipients' receptiveness and motivation to improve. Carol Dweck, a renowned psychologist and researcher, conducted studies that shed light on the importance of the language and tone in shaping individuals' mindsets and attitudes towards learning and growth.



How to give useful speech evaluations



Here are some key considerations for using language and tone when giving feedback, drawing insights from Dweck's research:

→ **Emphasise Effort and Process**

Instead of solely focusing on the end result, highlight the effort, strategies, and steps taken by the individual to reach that point. Acknowledge their hard work, perseverance, and dedication throughout the learning process. Dweck's research has shown that praising effort and the process of learning fosters a growth mindset, where individuals believe in their capacity to improve and embrace challenges as opportunities for growth.

→ **Avoid Fixed Mindset Triggers**

Be cautious not to use language that inadvertently reinforces a fixed mindset, where learners believe their abilities are fixed and cannot be changed. Avoid phrases that imply inherent talent or intelligence, such as "you're a natural" or "you're so smart." Dweck's studies indicate that these types of compliments can lead to a fear of failure and a reluctance to take on challenges.

→ **Be Specific and Constructive**

Offer specific feedback that focuses on the areas that need improvement while maintaining a constructive and supportive tone. Dweck's research highlights the importance of actionable feedback that helps individuals understand what they can do differently to enhance their performance.

→ **Encourage Reflection and Growth**



Promote a growth-oriented mindset by encouraging learners to reflect on their progress, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for future development. Dweck's studies have shown that individuals who embrace a growth mindset are more likely to seek out opportunities for learning and continuously strive for improvement.

→ **Foster a Safe and Supportive Environment**

Create a safe and supportive learning environment where learners feel comfortable receiving feedback without fear of judgement or embarrassment. Dweck's research underscores the significance of nurturing a growth mindset through positive and encouraging interactions that emphasise learning and progress rather than innate abilities.

<https://www.workhuman.com/blog/growth-mindset-feedback/>

Exercises for assertiveness and negotiation skills

To promote participants' ability to converse in an assertive manner and to negotiate confidently in a business environment, you can incorporate the following exercises and workshop activities:

- **Role-Playing Scenarios:** Create realistic business scenarios where participants can practise conversing and negotiating with each other. Assign different roles, such as a client and a salesperson, and encourage participants to engage in simulated conversations. Provide feedback and guidance to improve their communication skills.
- **Mock Negotiations:** Organise mock negotiation sessions where participants represent different stakeholders in a business deal. This activity helps them practise persuasive communication, active listening, and compromise to reach mutually beneficial agreements.
- **Debates:** Conduct debates on relevant business topics, dividing participants into teams with different viewpoints. This exercise enhances critical thinking, persuasive communication, and the ability to respond to counter arguments confidently.
- **Impromptu Speaking:** Have participants deliver impromptu speeches on business-related topics. This activity helps them think on their feet, articulate ideas clearly, and build confidence in spontaneous communication.
- **Group Discussions:** Host facilitated group discussions on current business issues or trends. Encourage active participation, constructive feedback, and open dialogue to foster effective communication and collaboration.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Provide participants with business case studies that require analysis and problem-solving. In small groups, they can discuss solutions and present their findings, honing their ability to communicate ideas convincingly.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Organise networking events or sessions where participants can practise engaging with others in a professional setting. Encourage them to initiate conversations, exchange business cards, and establish meaningful connections.



- **Communication Workshops:** Conduct workshops focusing on verbal and nonverbal communication skills, including body language, eye contact, and tone of voice. These workshops help participants become aware of their communication style and make improvements where needed.
- **Video Feedback:** Record participants' conversations and negotiations during the exercises. Provide them with video feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, to enhance self-awareness and encourage self-assessment.
- **Guest Speakers:** Invite experienced negotiators or successful business professionals as guest speakers to share their insights and tips. Participants can learn from real-world experiences and gain inspiration to improve their own skills.

Developing self-awareness exercises for personal and professional development.

One of the best things we can do to support a learner of any age is to help them to know themselves. For young adults entering the world of business or aspiring to become entrepreneurs it is imperative to have a deep understanding of one's abilities, aspirations and motivations, because in order to lead others one must first know themselves.



Psychologists refer to two main types of self awareness: public and private. **Public self-awareness** often compels people to adhere to social norms. With the awareness of being watched and judged by others, people often try to behave in ways that are socially acceptable and desirable. **Private self-awareness** is the ability to accurately perceive your emotions and be aware of them as they happen. You can increase your self-awareness by understanding your strengths and limitations.

Role of Self Awareness in Goal Setting



Setting goals demonstrates proactive behaviour, showcasing a strong sense of initiative in taking charge of one's future and life path. Psychologists refer to this proactive approach as having an internal locus of control, wherein individuals believe that they hold the power and responsibility for the events in their lives. This internal perspective attributes control to personal efforts and decisions, rather than external factors like luck, chance, or fate, which are beyond one's influence ([Rotter, 1966](#)). By embracing goal setting and demonstrating an internal locus of control, individuals assert their ability to shape their destinies and pursue success through their actions and determination.

Here are some ways in which self-awareness influences the goal-setting process:

- ❖ **Clarity of Purpose:** When individuals are self-aware, they have a deeper understanding of their values, passions, and long-term aspirations. This clarity of purpose helps them set goals that are aligned with their core beliefs and desires, leading to greater motivation and commitment to achieve those goals.
- ❖ **Realistic Goal Setting:** Self-awareness allows individuals to recognize their strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. It helps them set realistic and achievable goals that take into account their current skills, resources, and circumstances. By acknowledging their abilities and constraints, they can avoid setting unattainable goals that may lead to frustration or disappointment.
- ❖ **Identification of Priorities:** Being self-aware enables individuals to prioritise their goals based on what truly matters to them. They can distinguish between short-term and long-term objectives and allocate their time and energy accordingly. This prevents them from getting overwhelmed by setting too many conflicting goals.
- ❖ **Adaptation and Flexibility:** Self-aware individuals are more receptive to feedback and open to self-improvement. They can assess their progress objectively and adjust their goals when necessary. If they encounter obstacles or find better opportunities, they can adapt their goals while staying true to their overall vision.
- ❖ **Intrinsic Motivation:** Self-awareness helps individuals connect with their intrinsic motivations, such as personal growth, fulfilment, and a sense of purpose. When goals are driven by internal motivations rather than external pressures, individuals are more likely to stay committed and persistent in pursuing them.
- ❖ **Effective Planning:** Self-awareness provides a clearer understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses. This insight allows individuals to create more effective and tailored action plans, utilising their strengths to overcome challenges and addressing areas that need improvement.
- ❖ **Emotional Regulation:** Being self-aware enables individuals to recognize their emotions and manage them constructively. This emotional intelligence plays a vital role in dealing with setbacks and maintaining resilience during the goal pursuit.
- ❖ **Accountability and Responsibility:** Self-awareness fosters a sense of accountability and responsibility for one's actions. Individuals are more likely to take ownership of their goals and progress, leading to a higher commitment to achieving them.

Competency assessment



A competency test measures an individual's ability to complete a task or a series of tasks and is often used to determine if an individual is qualified for a particular position or assignment. The results of a competency test can help employers or educators make informed decisions about an individual's skills and abilities.

In terms of understanding one's competency and job readiness, such assessments can also be taken by an individual to have a deeper knowledge of their own abilities in relation to what employers are looking for in the job market. Moreover, competency tests can also be used to identify areas of improvement for an individual. By pinpointing areas of weakness, these tests can help individuals focus their efforts on improving their skills.

There are many different types of competency assessments, including tests, interviews, portfolios, and performance assessments. These tests are designed to evaluate an individual's skills, knowledge, and abilities within a specific professional context, aiding in self-assessment and informed career decisions. Among the most popular competency tests are:

DISC Assessment: This widely used tool assesses an individual's behavioural traits based on four dimensions: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. It offers insights into communication styles, work preferences, and interaction tendencies, helping individuals understand their interpersonal strengths and potential areas for development.

StrengthsFinder: Developed by Gallup, StrengthsFinder identifies an individual's top strengths out of a list of 34 unique themes. By focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses, individuals can leverage their natural talents to excel in their roles, enhancing job satisfaction and performance.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI): MBTI categorises individuals into 16 personality types based on four dichotomies: Extraversion/Introversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling, and Judging/Perceiving. This assessment aids in understanding work preferences, decision-making styles, and team interactions.

CliftonStrengths: Also from Gallup, CliftonStrengths identifies an individual's top five strengths from a list of 34 themes. It emphasises leveraging these strengths to achieve peak performance and contribute meaningfully to teams and projects.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI): This tool assesses an individual's preferred conflict-handling styles—Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating. Understanding these styles helps navigate conflicts effectively and collaborate productively.

Cognitive Ability Tests: These assessments measure an individual's cognitive skills, including reasoning, problem-solving, and critical thinking. They provide insights into intellectual strengths and areas that may benefit from further development.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) Assessments: EI tests evaluate an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions—both their own and those of others. Enhancing EI can lead to improved interpersonal relationships and leadership skills.

Technical Skills Assessments: For roles requiring specific technical expertise, skill-based tests are vital. These assessments gauge an individual's proficiency in areas such as coding, software proficiency, data analysis, and more.

Embracing professional competency and capability tests empowers individuals to embark on a journey of self-awareness, guiding their career choices and personal development efforts.



CONCLUSION

This Module lends critical importance to the need for effective communication skills in the modern world, where every single person needs to upskill themselves in working in a cohesive and collaborative environment. Recognizing the challenges faced by individuals, especially those from marginalised communities, in developing these essential skills, the module emphasises the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to communication education.

The analysis underscores the insufficient attention given to public speaking in traditional academic curricula, leading to a gap in the soft skills needed for successful professional interactions. Furthermore, the socio-economic exclusion exacerbated by limited access to resources and training opportunities is highlighted, emphasising the importance of addressing disparities in educational and mentorship programs.

The conclusion calls for a multi-faceted solution, advocating for educational institutions to prioritise communication skills in their curricula and urging initiatives to provide affordable or free public speaking courses in underserved communities. This approach aims to bridge the gap and empower individuals who face challenges in competing in the job market or entrepreneurial ventures due to a lack of effective communication skills.

The unit's overarching aim is to empower educators with the latest knowledge and tools to enhance their approach to public speaking and communication skills coaching. By equipping educators with cutting-edge methodologies and technological advancements, the unit seeks to ensure that learners are better prepared to navigate the demands of the modern professional world.

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