

Syllabus

Course Overview

What does it take to be competitive in the modern workforce? What skills are employers looking for? How can you use the skills you develop in the online courseroom to take control of your own success? This course introduces you to 10 essential skills that employers are seeking and that are critical to your success in today's high-tech, fast-paced economy. When combined together, these skills form a toolkit you can use to demonstrate a powerful professional presence to your current or potential employer. An employee, a leader, or an entrepreneur with professional presence has confidence, poise, and competence and knows how to communicate effectively, take initiative, and innovate to achieve results. The 10 skills you will learn in this course can not only enhance your professional presence and career opportunities, they can also be applied to your coursework and your personal life. Learning these skills will help you establish a powerful presence to enhance your professional and personal success.

Essential Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

All General Education courses reflect our Essential Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (EULOS). Review the [Essential Undergraduate Learning Outcomes](#) interactive media piece to learn more about these learning outcomes and how this course supports these outcomes.

General Education Information Research Skills Library Guide

A Capella University library guide has been created for your use in General Education courses. The [General Education Information Research Skills Library Guide](#) contains tips on how to use the Capella University Library to find resources for your General Education courses. You are encouraged to refer to the resources in this library guide to direct your research in this course.

Note: This program guide supports the Essential Undergraduate Learning Outcome of Information Literacy.

Assignments

Week 4: Complete a worksheet that will help you reflect on your skills, goals, and accomplishments.

Week 7: Write a plan where you will choose three of the 10 skills that you plan to develop.

Week 9: Design and record a presentation that explains who you are as a professional and your strengths and professional attributes.

Discussions

Week 1: Explain how a chosen innovation has evolved and how it has altered how you complete daily tasks.

Week 2: Discuss how to develop your self and social awareness skill.

Week 3: Discuss how you will develop specific goals to improve your technology skill in your academic, professional, or home life.

Week 5: Discuss a time when you took the initiative to solve a problem and seek results on your own.

Week 6: Explore how strong communication is difference maker in how we connect with each other solve problems.

Week 7: Discuss how you are applying characteristics that will help you practice your relationship building skill sin your life at home, work, or school.

Week 8: Share a problem you've recently encountered in your own life and outline the steps you took to solve it.

Week 10: Discuss how you would convince a friend or coworker to practice agility and embrace change.

Quizzes

Course Competencies

(Read Only)

To successfully complete this course, you will be expected to:

- 1 Describe the importance and impact of key skills and behaviors that are necessary for success in the future of work.
- 2 Analyze factors that contribute to professional presence.
- 3 Develop skills to support a successful learning experience and career.
- 4 Compose text that articulates meaning relevant to its purpose and audience.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Syllabus >> Course Materials

Required

The materials listed below are required to complete the learning activities in this course.

Library

The following required readings are provided in the Capella University Library or linked directly in this course. To find specific readings by journal or book title, use [Journal and Book Locator](#). Refer to the [Journal and Book Locator library guide](#) to learn how to use this tool.

- Dougherty, J. (2014, December 5). [5 steps to building great business relationships](#). *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2–4.
- Johnson, K. (2019). [New mindset, new results](#). New York, NY: G&D Media.

External Resource

Please note that URLs change frequently. While the URLs were current when this course was designed, some may no longer be valid. If you cannot access a specific link, contact your instructor for an alternative URL. Permissions for the following links have been either granted or deemed appropriate for educational use at the time of course publication.

- Anthony, S. (2012, April 17). [Four ways to think like an innovator](https://hbr.org/video/2226808801001/four-ways-to-think-like-an-innovator) [Video]. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/video/2226808801001/four-ways-to-think-like-an-innovator>
- CNBC International. (2019, January 22). [What is the fourth industrial revolution? | CNBC explains](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9rZOa3CUC8) [Video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9rZOa3CUC8>
- Delfino, D. (2018). [How to write a proper email](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/email-writing-tips/). Retrieved from <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/email-writing-tips/>
- DisCo. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.project-disco.org/>
- Franck, T. (2017). [McKinsey: One-third of US workers could be jobless by 2030 due to automation](https://www.cnbc.com/2017/11/29/one-third-of-us-workers-could-be-jobless-by-2030-due-to-automation.html). Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/11/29/one-third-of-us-workers-could-be-jobless-by-2030-due-to-automation.html>
- Hall, J. (2019). [6 techniques to better your problem-solving skills](https://www.inc.com/john-hall/6-techniques-to-better-your-problem-solving-skills.html). Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/john-hall/6-techniques-to-better-your-problem-solving-skills.html>
- Huggett, J. (2020). [How to avoid six common networking mistakes](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/01/10/how-to-avoid-six-common-networking-mistakes/#65d5a11e2e1d). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/01/10/how-to-avoid-six-common-networking-mistakes/#65d5a11e2e1d>
- Kashyap, V. (2019). [Effective communication in the workplace: How and why?](https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/employee-engagement/effective-communication-in-the-workplace-how-and-why/) Retrieved from <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/employee-engagement/effective-communication-in-the-workplace-how-and-why/>
- Klemp, N. (2019). [Harvard psychologists reveal the real reason we're all so distracted](https://www.inc.com/nate-klemp/harvard-psychologists-reveal-real-reason-were-all-so-distracted.html). Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/nate-klemp/harvard-psychologists-reveal-real-reason-were-all-so-distracted.html>
- Korkki, P. (n.d.). [How to make the most of your workday](https://www.nytimes.com/guides/business/how-to-improve-your-productivity-at-work). Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/business/how-to-improve-your-productivity-at-work>
- Manyika, J., Lund, S., Chui, M., Bughin, J., Woetzel, J., Batra, P., . . . Sanghvi, S. (2017). [Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages). Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages>
- NACE. (2019). [The four career competencies employers value most](https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-four-career-competencies-employers-value-most/). Retrieved from <https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-four-career-competencies-employers-value-most/>
- O'Donnell, D. (2019). [The 'new rules' of employability demand agility, determination](https://www.hrdiver.com/news/the-new-rules-of-employability-demand-agility-determination/562561/). Retrieved from <https://www.hrdiver.com/news/the-new-rules-of-employability-demand-agility-determination/562561/>
- Press, G. (2019). [2020 predictions about automation and the future of work from Forrester](https://www.forbes.com/sites/gilpress/2019/10/30/2020-predictions-about-automation-and-the-future-of-work-from-forrester/#1e45d2511318). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gilpress/2019/10/30/2020-predictions-about-automation-and-the-future-of-work-from-forrester/#1e45d2511318>
- PsychologyCompass. (n.d.). [A sustainable formula to improve concentration and focus](https://psychologycompass.com/blog/a-proven-formula-to-improve-concentration-and-focus/). Retrieved from <https://psychologycompass.com/blog/a-proven-formula-to-improve-concentration-and-focus/>
- Reynolds, B. W. (2019). [159% increase in remote work since 2005: FlexJobs and Global Workplace Analytics report](https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/flexjobs-gwa-report-remote-growth/). Retrieved from <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/flexjobs-gwa-report-remote-growth/>
- Safian, R. (2018). [Why Apple is the world's most innovative company](https://www.fastcompany.com/40525409/why-apple-is-the-worlds-most-innovative-company). Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/40525409/why-apple-is-the-worlds-most-innovative-company>
- SHRM. (n.d.). [Managing organizational communication](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingorganizationalcommunication.aspx). Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingorganizationalcommunication.aspx>
- SHRM. (n.d.). [Understanding and developing organizational culture](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/understandinganddevelopingorganizationalculture.aspx). Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/understandinganddevelopingorganizationalculture.aspx>
- Swerdlow, D. (2017). [The number one career and life skill you need to develop](https://www.idealst.org/en/careers/number-one-career-life-skill?_ga=2.21712450). Retrieved from https://www.idealst.org/en/careers/number-one-career-life-skill?_ga=2.21712450

Suggested

The following materials are recommended to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course, but they are aligned to course activities and assessments and are highly recommended for your use.

Optional

The following optional materials are offered to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course.

Unit 1 >> The Future of Work

Introduction



Ace the Interview

You are several minutes into your interview for your dream job. This career opportunity aligns with your goals and interests and represents the culmination of your hard work. During the interview, your potential boss asks you, "What skills have you developed at Capella University that would help you more effectively do this job and benefit my department?" How would you respond?

The future depends on what we do in the present.

– **Gandhi, Political Activist**

The jobs of today look very different from the jobs our parents had. Whether you work in a cubicle or on a construction site, technology has changed—and is continuing to change—the ways we connect, communicate, and create in our careers. In the past, a college degree was enough to set you up for professional success. Today, employers want job candidates who also have the right skills to succeed. That's why Capella partnered with top employers, business leaders, and recruiters to identify 10 skills that are critical to performing your best—not just in one field, but across all industries. These are skills that will prepare you for the needs of any future employer and set you up for success in a world that is constantly evolving.

Over the next 10 weeks, you'll learn how these 10 skills will help you reach your professional dreams, and you'll discover how you can use these same skills right now to achieve your personal and academic goals. Spend some time reviewing the 10 skills and thinking about examples that illustrate how you have demonstrated those skills—in your classes at Capella, on the job, or in your personal life. Reflect on the skills that you excel at and that you enjoy, as well as the skills that need more attention and refinement. By the end of this course, you will not only be able to answer this interview question with confidence and concrete examples, you will also develop a plan for your ongoing development and application of these essential skills.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Explain how a chosen innovation has evolved and how it has altered how you complete daily tasks.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn about current innovations and how they are impacting the future of work.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Watch an episode of Capella Stories about the 10 skills you will be learning in this course.

Learning Activities

u01s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, you will examine innovation and its impact on your everyday life.

u01s2 - What You Need to Know

The Future of Work

What does it mean when we discuss the future of work? It means that we are moving away from a classic employment model in which most careers tended to follow a particular path: after graduation, you got a job in an office where you worked 40 hours a week alongside everyone else at your company. You'd get promoted along a predictable path, before eventually retiring in your sixties.

The future of work is, in fact, not the future. It is happening now. You may remember learning about the industrial revolutions of the past and the way in which these revolutions transformed the economy and the nature of work. We are now in the fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0. This new world of work is characterized by:

- Expansive instant communication and connectedness.
- Virtual or remote workspaces.
- Age-diverse workforce.
- Move away from lifelong careers at a single company to more of an open talent or contract-based economy.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, or machines taking over some workforce tasks and jobs.

Resources

To learn more about the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the future of work, and the impact of automation, review the following resources.

- Press, G. (2019). [2020 predictions about automation and the future of work from Forrester](https://www.forbes.com/sites/gilpress/2019/10/30/2020-predictions-about-automation-and-the-future-of-work-from-forrester/#1e45d2511318). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gilpress/2019/10/30/2020-predictions-about-automation-and-the-future-of-work-from-forrester/#1e45d2511318>
- CNBC International. (2019, January 22). [What is the fourth industrial revolution? | CNBC explains \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9rZOa3CUC8). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9rZOa3CUC8>
 - Closed captioning is provided in the video.

Employability Skills

While AI, digital advances, and automation won't take away the majority of our work, they will change how we work. Even though repetitive and straightforward jobs are at greater risk of being automated, employers will continue to need people with uniquely human skills, such as agility, communication, and productivity.

As people become more and more connected, workplaces are expanding globally, with teams working in different parts of the world. Instead of staying at one company or even working in one field, people are more willing to change gears and enter entirely different professions. The promise of working in any industry from anywhere in the world can be incredibly exciting.

A traditional undergraduate program is no longer enough to prepare you for your future of work. That's why this course teaches the essential skills that will be useful right now and will prepare you for the changes that are sure to keep coming as the Fourth Industrial Revolution continues. The jobs of the future—like the jobs of today—will depend on skills that cannot be replaced by robots, artificial learning, or algorithms. These skills will help you perform your best in school, get hired and promoted, and future-proof your career so you can get where you want to go.

The 10 Skills

Whether you are here for a job, for a promotion, for personal enrichment, or to realize a different dream, these skills can work to help you meet your personal, academic and professional goals.

- **Self and Social Awareness** is the ability to understand your personal strengths and limitations, and how your behaviors impact others.
- **Technology** is the ability to confidently and effectively use technologies to be productive, complete goals and tasks, and maintain a competitive advantage.
- **Productivity** is the ability to strategize, organize, and plan to effectively and efficiently manage priorities and time.
- **Initiative** is the ability to see what needs to be done and to take action without being prompted to improve a circumstance or create a new one.
- **Results Driven** is the ability to act with a sense of urgency and focus to reach outcomes and goals, without compromising integrity and quality.
- **Communication** is the ability to actively seek and deliver information, articulate ideas, effectively listen, and connect to various audiences, settings, and situations.
- **Relationship Building** refers to the ability to effectively work with others and establish, cultivate, and leverage networks over time.
- **Problem Solving** is the ability to identify and frame problems, explore ideas, and create effective, ethical, and evidence-based solutions.
- **Innovation** is the ability to creatively think and generate original or unique ideas and solutions outside of routine perspectives.
- **Agility** refers to the ability to embrace change and effectively adapt in a continually changing environment to achieve desired results.

View The 10 Skills Table media to get to know the 10 employability skills discussed in this course. You'll find a definition for each skill and why each skill matters for the future of work. This course will examine each of these skills and show you how to apply them in your professional and personal life. You will identify areas of strengths and areas that need improvement, and you will create a plan to continue developing these skills after this course ends. Understanding, developing, and applying these skills will give you the tools you will need to be competitive in the 21st-century workplace.

u01v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Capella Stories: Starting Your Journey, One Step at a Time

In this week's Capella Stories, you'll learn about the 10 skills you'll be building throughout this course, and you'll discover how one group of employees is using these same skills to successfully scale the world's tallest man-made climbing wall. Honing these skills throughout your educational journey will help you reach new heights.

Course Resources

[Capella Stories: Starting Your Journey, One Step at a Time | Transcript](#)

u01d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

The world around us is changing all the time, and those changes are also revolutionizing the way we work and the careers we pursue. This week, think about how one innovation has affected you at home, work, or school. Using the [Capella University Library](#), locate an article or a book that explores the history of that innovation and its impact on society. Based on your research, explain how that innovation has changed over time and how it has altered the way you complete daily tasks. Be sure to cite the library book or article you found.

Response Guidelines

Once you have completed your initial post, reply to one of your classmates and share your reflections on the innovation your classmates chose to discuss.

Course Resources

Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 2 >> Self and Social Awareness

Introduction

Practicing Self and Social Awareness

Imagine you work at a health care company. You and several of your coworkers are having a collaborative brainstorming session regarding how to improve patient satisfaction. One of your strengths is on-the-spot idea generation, and you don't shy away from vocalizing possible solutions. You notice, however, that your coworker Dina isn't chiming in. After observing her behavior and reflecting on your own, you consider the importance of not jumping to conclusions about Dina's behavior. You remember that Dina was engaged and interested in the session but didn't seem as comfortable speaking up. You realize that Dina might need time to process the brainstorming session to contemplate the issue and offer her ideas. So, you reach out to Dina via e-mail after the session is over to see if there are any points she'd like to add.

By using self-reflection and observation, you're practicing self and social awareness, which will improve your collaboration with Dina and help you work successfully.

What do a human, a chimpanzee, a dolphin, and an elephant have in common? Each of these creatures exhibits self-awareness. That means they are cognizant of this idea: "This is me . . . and I am separate and different from you."

We humans develop our self-awareness at about 15 months of age, and with each passing year, we gain a deeper understanding of who we are—our wants, our needs, our strengths, and our weaknesses. On the flip side, gaining self-awareness is also fundamental for developing our social awareness—our ability to empathize and modify our interactions with others based on their wants, needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Together, these two types of awareness form a powerful skill that can be utilized to understand and connect with your world.

This week, we'll explore the skill of self and social awareness and discover how understanding who you are and how you relate to others is essential for your personal and professional success.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Discuss how to develop your self and social awareness skill.
- **Quiz:** Take a quiz where you demonstrate your knowledge on concepts related to the future of work.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn about self-reflection and social awareness.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Discover exercises to strengthen your self and social awareness.

Learning Activities

u02s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, you will discuss how to develop your self and social awareness skill.

Quiz Overview

Take a quiz where you demonstrate your knowledge of the future of work and the employability skills that are needed in the 21st-century workforce.

u02s2 - What You Need to Know

Self and Social Awareness: A Strong Foundation

What does a brand new home need so that it won't come crumbling down around? A solid, unshakeable foundation.

The same is true when it comes to your life and career. To stand tall and sturdy in your personal and professional life, you need the right foundation for success. You need to understand your strengths and where you need extra support to climb high. And that starts with developing your **self and social awareness skill**.

So, what does a person with self and social awareness look like?

- They know their **personal strengths and limitations** and work toward correcting their weaknesses.
- They are **aware of the impact** of their own behavior on others.
- They value self-knowledge and **continually seek to improve** themselves.
- They **solicit feedback and use it** for self-improvement.

Creating this stable base—a heightened understanding of yourself and your world—is the foundation that will enhance all other areas of your life and career.

Build Your Self and Social Awareness

Have you ever thought back to an argument you've had with a friend and wondered if you should have approached it differently? Or considered how your good studying habits led to a higher grade? This process of looking back at your own behavior, actions, and motives is called self-reflection, and it is a critical part of growing your self and social awareness skill. To be aware of our strengths and weaknesses, we need to reflect on—or think about—what is or is not working in our lives. Then, we can make a plan to address weaker areas in the future.

To start using self-reflection in this course and beyond, you can ask yourself a few simple questions (and answer them honestly!).

1. Do you know what your greatest strengths are? What are the areas where you could improve yourself?
2. How do you react when confronted with constructive criticism from your boss, friends, or colleagues?

Honing your self and social awareness skill requires you to reflect on these sorts of tough questions, as well as show a willingness to learn from them. However, self-reflection is only part of developing your self and social awareness skill. You also need to spend time with others. By observing and engaging people with different perspectives, you'll have a better understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Because you will understand your colleagues' values and thought processes better, your collaboration with them will be more effective and productive.

For some practical tips for growing self and social awareness, review the following:

- **Journaling.** Writing down your thoughts can often provide insights that you might otherwise miss.
- **Practicing meditation and mindfulness.** Even a few minutes a day can help you become more aware of your emotions and thoughts.
- **Asking trusted friends or coworkers for insight.** By getting continuous feedback on your growth, you'll begin to determine how to be even more effective with others.
- **Tracking goals and priorities.** Imagine being able to look back at all you've accomplished and make adjustments as needed.
- **Watching others and mimicking their behavior.** By observing people who are not deterred by their own weaknesses, you'll feel more equipped to address your own.
- **Beginning to notice moments where you feel you are not your best self.** Try backtracking to what happened right before a situation arose and then try to avoid it in the future.

- **Identifying areas where you can improve and following through.** Attend training, get coaching, or ask a mentor for assistance. This kind of social support is critical to personal growth.

Self and Social Awareness in the Workplace

You may have heard news stories about how computers and AI will take over many of the tasks humans perform today. Imagine a machine trying to solve a customer dispute, for example. Or a computer trying to form an emotional connection to an audience of potential investors. Unlike machines, humans have the empathy and emotions necessary to develop self and social awareness. That's why this skill will always be an asset in the workforce.

When employees don't understand or utilize their self and social awareness skill, it can cause challenges in any career field. Employees who are not self and socially aware are not able to work well with others in the face of adversity. They often allow their emotions and shortcomings to cloud their judgement. Instead of working to improve their weaknesses, they remain stagnant and may be passed over for promotions and other opportunities. If you can hone and strengthen your self and social awareness, you will be more professionally attractive to future employers, and you will be a stronger coworker and team member. You'll also know when to advocate for your own strengths and when to seek out professional development or training to combat your weaknesses. And no matter what career you pursue, you will continue to stay competitive in our changing world.

To learn more about self and social awareness and how to use this skill set to your advantage in the workplace, review the following resources:

- Johnson, K. (2019). *New mindset, new results*. New York, NY: G&D Media.
 - Chapter 1, "Why Is Mindset So Important?" pages 1–20.
 - Chapter 2, "The Outward, Growth, and Fixed Mindsets," pages 21–42.
 - Chapter 3, "How to Build a Results-Focused Mindset," pages 43–60.
 - These chapters discuss how mindset shapes your thinking and behavior and the benefits of developing a results-focused mindset. This knowledge will not only help you build your self and social awareness skill, it also connects to many of the other skills in this course, including results-driven, technology, and problem-solving skill.
- Swerdlow, D. (2017). *The number one career and life skill you need to develop*. Retrieved from https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/number-one-career-life-skill?_ga=2.21712450
 - This article focuses on self-awareness and ways to become more self-aware.
- View [Stepping Toward Self and Social Awareness \[PDF\]](#), which will equip you with simple exercises to strengthen your self and social awareness skill in your education, career, and daily life. You can download and keep this resource.

u02d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

In this week's What You Need to Know activity, you learned about the self and social awareness skill and how it can be useful in your academic and professional career. For this week's discussion, address the following questions about self and social awareness in your initial post, using one of the assigned readings or the Interactive Learning Module to support your discussion.

- Discuss why self and social awareness is a valuable skill in today's workplace. Include an example from your professional or academic experience that illustrates the value of self and social awareness.
- Consider that part of developing your self and social awareness skill is knowing what your strengths and weaknesses are and working to capitalize on your strengths and improve areas of weakness. Do you know what your greatest strengths and weaknesses are? How might adopting a growth or results-oriented mindset help you improve upon weaknesses and further enhance your self and social awareness?

Response Guidelines

Once you have completed your initial post, reply to one of your classmates and share your reflections on the self and social awareness skill.

Course Resources

Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u02q1 - Future of Work Quiz

This quiz is worth 100 points, or 10 percent of your course grade. Once you begin the quiz, you cannot start over, and you cannot retake it to change your grade. You must take the quiz and submit it in this week.

- There is no time limit to complete the quiz, but keep in mind you can only access and take the quiz once. You will **not** be able to save your answers and then come back to the quiz at a later time.
- Because the quiz can be taken only once, do not access the quiz until you are ready to complete it.
- Essay responses should be in your own words. Any sources consulted to answer essay questions should be cited, whether you use course resources or other resources on the Internet. Any phrases or sentences taken *as is* from a source must be enclosed in quotes to show the words are not your own, with no more than one sentence of quoted content per essay.

Click the linked quiz title to access the quiz. If you have any issues with the quiz, contact your instructor.

Unit 3 >> Technology

Introduction

Mastering New Technologies

In the past, you have struggled with learning new technologies, but lately you are really feeling comfortable with your company's human resource management software. Your workplace offered a training workshop, and you signed up because you wanted to learn how to use all of the software's tools while also demonstrating your commitment to developing your technology skills. While you are working on a report for your boss, she stops by your desk and informs you that the company is upgrading to a new software program next month, and she wants you to take the lead in learning the new software and training other employees.

Now that you have changed your mindset about technology, you react to this news more positively than you would have last year. While you are still a bit nervous about taking on this responsibility, you know that you have the skills to tackle this new technology and share what you have learned with your coworkers.

Technology plays a role in virtually every job in every industry. The ability to confidently and effectively use technology makes you more productive, helps you complete your work, and gives you a competitive advantage. Of course, new technology can be intimidating, especially when it seems like other people know it inside and out. This course will help you start practicing your technology skill so you can identify, utilize, and master new tech throughout your life and career. This week, you'll discover how to practice your technology skill, why the right mindset matters, and how you can apply technology to help future-proof your career.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Discuss how you will develop specific goals to improve your technology skill in your academic, professional, or home life.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how develop your technology skill in relation to employability.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Join Brian Sweeney, who shares tips for mastering technology.
- **Prepare:** Look over next week's assignment instructions and scoring guide.

Learning Activities

u03s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, you will discuss how you will develop specific goals to improve your technology skill in your academic, professional, or home life.

u03s2 - What You Need to Know

The Value of the Technology Skill

The art of conversation lies in listening.

– **Malcolm Forbes, Publisher, Forbes Magazine**

Imagine showing up to your first day at a new job and finding that your desk doesn't have a computer. Suppose that when you're asked to create a document, you are handed a pen and paper. When you need to look up a fact, you are encouraged to visit a local library. And, instead of calling your coworkers on your cell, you have to mail them a letter. Sounds rather inefficient, doesn't it? Simply put, creating and sharing files, communicating with colleagues, and doing research is faster when you use technology.

The technologies around us are changing at what feels like speed of light. Apps and gadgets that are efficient today may be out of date in a few months or years. And these technological changes are also altering the ways we communicate, collaborate, and create in the workplace. Technology is even affecting the types of jobs available. In fact, nearly one-third of U.S. workers could lose their jobs by 2030 because of automation. So, how can you keep up with our changing world and ensure you have what it takes to succeed professionally? The answer lies in the second skill we will be covering in this course—technology.

Developing Your Technology Skill

Because tech is continually evolving, practicing your technology skill starts with having the right mindset. When you adopt a tech mindset, it means you believe you can grow your technology skill throughout your life and career to achieve your personal and professional goals. Developing your technology skill does not mean you'll become a tech expert overnight. Instead, when you encounter new technological tools in the workplace, you can figure out how to use those tools by researching them and relying on what you already know. Be confident in yourself, and in the knowledge that you can use your technology skill to help get any job done, whether it's watching a YouTube video that shows you how to change a tire, accessing Capella on your phone, completing this course with a new laptop, or using a mindfulness app to meditate. If you need help, remember to check out [Capella Technical Support](#) resources for information on courseroom navigation and computer requirements, and [Computer & Software Tutorials](#) page to help you learn how to use ePortfolio, SafeAssign, Microsoft Office, and more.

Below are a few tips for maintaining the right mindset when you're learning new tech:

- Remember, confidence takes practice. You have an opportunity to build your tech mindset every time you face a challenge and a new technology.
- Take a slow, deep breath, if you feel stuck. It's hard to learn new tech if we don't feel calm.
- Reboot, when all else fails. Sometimes, a simple reset can solve all sorts of problems—and that goes for your mindset, too.
- Understand that technology is not static. Just as the courseroom will integrate new technologies, so you too will be exposed to new and evolving technologies in your workplace. Approach those changes with a positive mindset and a willingness to learn.

Using Technology to Stay Competitive

Developing your technology skill will keep you current in a world where things constantly evolve, and it gives you an edge over others who resist change. Think back to the first time you sent a text message. It probably felt strange typing on such a tiny keyboard. But before long, it became second nature. That will happen with any new technology as you spend more time using it. The key is that you are open to learning it.

In this course and throughout your Capella experience, you will continue to utilize technology as you complete assignments, research on the Internet, participate in global discussion boards, and more. In next week's assignment, you will use technology in the form of Microsoft Word to reflect on your goals, skills, and accomplishments. These activities will make you a more successful student and a more competent employee.

While there is a growing demand for developer, engineering, and data science jobs, those aren't the only kind of technology skills employers are seeking. A willingness to adapt to new technology has become essential in modern workplaces. And when it comes to starting your career, technology can also help you stand out. You can apply this skill to creating a targeted and stylish résumé, a well-crafted LinkedIn page, and an effective strategy for finding the right position using a variety of online resources. When you are able to confidently use what you already know to learn new technology, you become a more marketable job applicant.

Remember that different people will have different comfort levels with new digital tools, and that is okay. You may feel like a novice compared to one person, but you are probably an expert compared to someone else. Instead of wishing you were as savvy as someone with more experience, focus on what you are comfortable doing and use that to lean into new areas where you can further develop your skills. (**Hint:** This might require you to apply your **self and social awareness skill**.)

Using Your Technology Skill in the Workplace

Technology is not only reshaping the work many people do, but it's actually changing how we work. You may have heard that automation and AI is taking the place of certain roles. However, the 10 skills you're learning throughout this course are skills that AI cannot replace. That is especially true of your technology skill.

In the last few decades, the number of employees working remotely, whether part-time or full-time, has grown significantly. Thanks to new tech tools, it's easy for colleagues to share documents and talk to one another and collaborate, even if they are thousands of miles apart. To be an effective employee in the 21st century, you have to be comfortable using these technologies to complete your tasks.

As you become more familiar with new technological advances, you'll want to apply your technology skill to consider not only using whatever apps or software your company requires, but going one step further and seeking out new tools. By being the person in your workplace who is willing to adapt and learn new technology, you will give yourself a competitive advantage. You don't have to be a tech expert to succeed in your life and career. You just have to embrace your technology skill and ride the wave of change.

Resources

To learn more about technological change and the technology skill in the current and future workforce, review the following resources.

- Franck, T. (2017). [McKinsey: One-third of US workers could be jobless by 2030 due to automation](https://www.cnbc.com/2017/11/29/one-third-of-us-workers-could-be-jobless-by-2030-due-to-automation.html). Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/11/29/one-third-of-us-workers-could-be-jobless-by-2030-due-to-automation.html>
 - Read about automation and its current and future effects on workers in this article.
- Reynolds, B. W. (2019). [159% increase in remote work since 2005: FlexJobs and Global Workplace Analytics report](https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/flexjobs-gwa-report-remote-growth/). Retrieved from <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/flexjobs-gwa-report-remote-growth/>
 - Review data on the growth of working remotely in this article.

u03v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Real Talk: Mastering New Technology

New technology can be intimidating—even to a mountain climber! This week, Brian Sweeney, manager of BaseCamp gym, shares how mastering new kinds of technology got his business off the ground.

Course Resources

[Real Talk: Mastering New Technology](#) | Transcript

u03d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

How Tech Savvy are You?

This week, you're discovering how practicing your technology skill can keep you at the top of your game. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best), rate how proficient you feel with your technology skill right now. How do you envision developing your technology skill in your academic, professional, or home life? Please list at least three goals you have to improve your technology skill throughout this course and beyond. What steps can you take to achieve those goals?

Response Guidelines

Once you have completed your initial post, reply to one of your classmates and discuss any ideas you have for helping your classmate work on the technology skill.

Course Resources

Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u03s3 - Prepare: Week 4 Assignment

Next week, you will work on your Reflecting on Your Skills, Goals, and Accomplishments assignment. If you'd like to get started, review the Week 4 assignment instructions and scoring guide.

Unit 4 >> Productivity

Introduction

Be More Productive

It's Monday morning, and your manager has given you the task of preparing a presentation for a company meeting on Friday. Your presentation must be ready for your boss's review by Thursday. You already have a busy work schedule this week, not to mention your kids' activities will be keeping you occupied during the evenings. Add to that your fear of public speaking, and you are starting out the week feeling quite stressed out. Where do you start?

Consider how you would use the productivity skill to create a strong presentation that is submitted on time while completing all your other tasks. In addition to using the productivity skill, to effectively accomplish this task, you will need to apply several other skills you have learned about in this course, including your self and social awareness and technology skills.

If you have ever seen ants hard at work, you might have noticed how efficiently and effectively they get a job done. Whether it's building a new nest or carrying food to the colony, ants inherently understand how to manage their priorities, resources, and time. In the human world, this skill is called productivity, and when it comes to your life and career, productivity is absolutely essential for your success. If you are a productive employee, you can manage tasks to meet deadlines and share project plans, schedules, and task lists with others so that everyone knows how the work you do fits into your team's vision.

This week, you'll explore your productivity skill in detail and learn how it can help you find a balance between all of your responsibilities while boosting your performance in your personal and professional life.

To Do List:

- **Assignment:** Complete your Reflecting on Your Skills, Goals, and Accomplishments assignment.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn about productivity as an essential employability skill and how you can develop this skill.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Manage your to-do list and stay more productive in your professional and personal life.

Learning Activities

u04s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

In this week's assignment, you will complete the Reflecting on Your Skills, Goals, and Accomplishments template.

The Productivity Skill

Imagine your house is a mess after the holidays, and you decide to spend a Saturday cleaning it up. You start by putting a few dishes in the dishwasher. Then, out of the corner of your eye, you see that the living room floor is littered with toys. You go into the living room and begin to pick up the toys when you remember that there is a mountain of laundry by the washing machine. You hustle back to the laundry room, but on the way there, your phone buzzes; your friend Lee has texted you a picture of a dachshund dressed as a hot dog. You text back and then notice that the trash is overflowing. Three hours later, you realize you are exhausted but still have a messy house. You were busy the whole time, but don't have much to show for it. Why not? Well, because being busy is not the same thing as being productive.

Productivity is the skill of strategizing, organizing, and planning your time and priorities to accomplish the tasks you need to finish to achieve your goal. Productivity is about working smarter, not working harder. We all have lots of things to do, and practicing our productivity skill lets us use our limited time and energy to complete our tasks without wasting effort. At work, at school, and even in your personal life, being productive—learning to organize, plan, and manage your time to accomplish your tasks and goals—is your secret weapon.

This week, you will explore your **productivity skill** to learn the ways you can start performing your best right now in your personal and professional life. Keep in mind that you already have experience using productivity every day. Every time you set a goal, make a plan, organize something, or prioritize an assignment, that is your productivity skill in action. Practicing productivity may be as simple as getting the kids out the door to school each morning or managing a work project successfully.

It doesn't matter if you are a stay-at-home parent, a health care worker, or a business executive—everyone can achieve more and perform their best by using the productivity skill. The goal here is to recognize what you are already doing to be productive and practice to improve this essential skill.

Practice Productivity

You can use many powerful techniques to stay productive. You will be seeing many techniques for improving productivity in this course and in your other courses at Capella. Here are some simple ways you can improve your productivity right now:

1. Avoid distractions. For example, turn off your phone when you are working on an important project.
2. Understand the value of practice as you master new techniques.
3. Schedule breaks to keep your brain fresh.
4. Keep your space organized—both the physical area of your desktop and the virtual space of your laptop or phone.
5. Be flexible when necessary to reach your goals. For example, don't count on the Wi-Fi working on your flight to complete a time-sensitive task. If you know that you need documents, download or print them ahead of time for greater flexibility when reaching your goals.
6. Make checklists for repetitive tasks, such as writing weekly reports or submitting timesheets.
7. Do work that's important. Being productive without a connection to a goal can just feel like you're spinning your wheels and being busy for the sake of being busy. Ask yourself: *When is my deadline? Why does this matter to me? What values or goals does this task align to?*

Be sure to check out the Capella page on [Time Management](#) for additional resources and tips and tricks (like eliminating procrastination) that you can use to improve your productivity at home, work, and school.

Why Focus Matters

A big part of productivity is focus. You only have so much time every day, and you have to treat it like a limited resource. The world is full of things competing for your attention: work, your family and friends, school tasks, movies, games, music, or TV. Using your productivity skill means figuring out which things you need to focus on right now, and then directing your attention toward those things long enough to get them done.

Think back to the scenario of trying to clean a very dirty house and being continuously distracted by different tasks (and texts). When you aren't focused on your goal, it wastes time and effort, and that can leave you exhausted and even demoralized.

To stay focused on what you're trying to accomplish, try asking yourself the following question: *The thing you're doing right now—does it actually help you accomplish what you need to accomplish?*

If the answer is no, it might be time to put that thing aside until you've met your goal. Checking items off a to-do list is rewarding because it causes your brain to release dopamine, the *feel-good hormone*. By concentrating on a series of attainable goals, you can actually make yourself feel better, which encourages further productivity.

Productivity in the Workplace

Think of the amount of time you spend at work. Then, think about how important it is to use that time well. Success in the workplace requires laser focus on what matters and the ability to tune out distractions in order to deliver results. Employers value—and reward—employees who use their time wisely to get the results a company desires.

Here are some simple tips for practicing your productivity skill in the workplace:

1. Know when to say "no." Sometimes, being productive means eliminating tasks that won't help you reach your goal. (This applies to your personal life, too.)
2. Understand that it's not about the amount of work you do. It's about doing it efficiently and effectively.
3. Use an organized set of steps to achieve your goals. Breaking down a goal into achievable parts helps you reach it.
4. Determine your priorities and then work to complete them.
5. Understand how to delegate things to coworkers or ask for help when needed.
6. Reassess priorities throughout the day based on what the organization needs.
7. Decide which are key issues and which are distractions.

Once you get used to practicing your productivity skill, you will find it easier to make progress professionally and to go above and beyond your supervisors' expectations.

Using Your Productivity Skill Right Now

The same skills you learn in this course will help you in all parts of your life, including your journey to earning your degree. However, productivity is also closely tied to your personal preferences and habits of mind. What works for your friends and coworkers might not work for you. Scroll up to the tips for improving your productivity. Then, see which tips you could try to cultivate right away. Maybe, you can use one or more at work. Maybe, you can use one or more in this course.

For example, setting aside time to read through lessons in a quiet space is a good opportunity to practice avoiding distractions, and you will get the immediate payoff of understanding your reading material better. Or, try organizing your files on your computer and see how it improves your productivity when you're looking for an assignment.

There are many strategies for boosting productivity. Throughout your time at Capella, you will learn about—and try—a variety of strategies for organization, planning, and time management. These are strategies you'll be able to put into your productivity toolkit and take with you wherever you go.

Productivity Plus One

Productivity is wonderful to adopt on its own, but it doesn't actually stand alone. Improving your productivity skill will help you hone your other essential employability skills, too. Being productive and prioritizing your time helps you communicate the right information at the right moment. It helps you be more agile in the workplace by responding to change with a plan forward. It helps you be a more results-driven employee by giving you the order of tasks to focus on. (Be sure to look out for other connections between the skills as you continue through your Capella education and beyond.)

We live in a world that's fast-paced and getting faster. No matter where you want to go, productivity will help you do more of the things you do best.

Resources

The following resources will help you learn more about productivity and how to maximize your daily productivity:

- Korkki, P. (n.d.). [How to make the most of your workday](https://www.nytimes.com/guides/business/how-to-improve-your-productivity-at-work). Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/business/how-to-improve-your-productivity-at-work>
 - Read this article for daily productivity tips.
- Klemp, N. (2019). [Harvard psychologists reveal the real reason we're all so distracted](https://www.inc.com/nate-klomp/harvard-psychologists-reveal-real-reason-were-all-so-distracted.html). Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/nate-klomp/harvard-psychologists-reveal-real-reason-were-all-so-distracted.html>
 - In this article, read about research on productivity in the face of distraction.
- PsychologyCompass. (n.d.). [A sustainable formula to improve concentration and focus](https://psychologycompass.com/blog/a-proven-formula-to-improve-concentration-and-focus/). Retrieved from <https://psychologycompass.com/blog/a-proven-formula-to-improve-concentration-and-focus/>
 - Improve your focus by reviewing this article.
- View [Your Personal Productivity Matrix \[PDF\]](#), which you can download and keep, to help manage your to-do list and stay more productive—at home, work, and school.

u04a1 - Reflecting on Your Skills, Goals, and Accomplishments

Overview

In this assignment, you will reflect on the qualities, values, strengths, areas of improvement, and accomplishments that capture who you are, and how they connect to the 10 essential employability skills and your personal, academic, and professional goals. You'll then practice your communication skill by writing about what you've identified in ways appropriate for a CV or resume. You'll use this information later in the Week 7 assignment to create an action

plan for developing skills that will help you reach your future goals. After completing this assignment, you will have a document you can bring to the Capella Career Center where counselors can help you further develop your career strategy.

Preparation

Review the work you have done thus far in the course, including the course readings and your discussion contributions. Download the [Reflecting on Your Goals, Skills, and Accomplishments Template \[DOCX\]](#) and review the list of Accomplishment Categories at the end of the template for ideas.

Instructions

Use the [Reflecting on Your Goals, Skills, and Accomplishments Template \[DOCX\]](#) template to complete the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Describe personal and professional values and goals.
 - Respond to questions 1 and 2 in **Part 1: About Me**, reflecting on your values, aspirations, goals, strengths, and areas of growth.
- **Step 2:** Identify skills that are strengths and skills that need improvement.
 - Respond to questions 3 and 4 in **Part 1: About Me**, noting skills that are strengths and those that are weaknesses.
- **Step 3:** Analyze previous accomplishments that demonstrate professional skills.
 - Complete the three steps in **Part 2: Accomplishment Statements** by reflecting on your past accomplishments, using the template to identify the challenge, actions, results, and details, and then writing two concise stories using the accomplishments formula provided.
- **Step 4:** Explain the benefits of self-reflection.
 - Complete the four-question reflection in **Part 3: Reflect on Your Experiences**, considering Parts 1 and 2 of this assignment, and the connections you have made to the 10 employability skills.
- **Step 5:** Write coherently with correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Additional Requirements

Your submission should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication:** Write in complete sentences free from errors that detract from the overall message.
- **Font and font size:** Times New Roman, 12 point.

Review the Reflecting on Your Skills, Goals, and Accomplishments Scoring Guide for details on how your assignment will be graded.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies and assignment criteria:

- Competency 1: Describe the importance and impact of key skills and behaviors that are necessary for success in the future of work.
 - Describe personal and professional values and goals.
 - Identify skills that are strengths and skills that need improvement.
 - Explain benefits of self-reflection.
- Competency 2: Analyze factors that contribute to professional presence.
 - Describe previous accomplishments that demonstrate professional skills.
- Competency 4: Compose text that articulates meaning relevant to its purpose and audience.
 - Write coherently with correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Unit 5 >> Initiative and Results Driven

Introduction

Take Initiative to Drive Results

You and your coworker Cooper have been asked to take your department's lead on an exciting company-wide project designed to improving professional development and networking opportunities. You decide to start by examining what each department is currently doing when it comes to professional development and networking.

You also consult with leaders from other companies you collaborate with to learn about their employment enrichment policies and programs.

Meanwhile, Cooper reviews the business and economic journals to locate current research on what works and what doesn't when it comes to programs that enhance employee development. Together, you come up with an evidence-based plan with innovative steps the company can take to improve development and networking opportunities as well as an evaluation plan to track results and tweak the program as needed to ensure positive outcomes.

You and Cooper have not only displayed awesome teamwork, but you have also showed your company your initiative and your keen, results-driven focus.

As you start this week's lesson, take a moment to think about why you're taking this course at Capella. Odds are it is because you are looking to elevate your knowledge, make changes in your career, serve as a role model, or discover new life skills. Whatever your motivation, the fact is that taking the leap toward your educational journey shows initiative, and this ability to act and take control of your life is one of the essential skills that you need to be successful right now and in the future. While every journey starts with a single step, what happens after that? Staying results-driven and following through on your initiative is just as important; otherwise, you could simply sign up for this course or future courses and not complete any of the readings or assignments.

This week, you'll learn how to further develop your initiative skill and use it to find exciting new goals and opportunities, both personally and professionally. You will also begin sharpening your results-driven skill and discover how it can help you stay focused on those same goals and opportunities throughout your life and career.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Discuss a time when you took the initiative to solve a problem and seek results on your own.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how the skill of taking initiative will help you in your career and life.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Chef Kel discusses how taking initiative and being results driven has propelled his career.

Learning Activities

u05s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, you will discuss a time when you demonstrated initiative and focused on achieving results.

u05s2 - What You Need to Know

Do or do not. There is no try.

– Yoda, Jedi Master

Why Does Initiative Matter?

In work and in life, there is often a large gap between seeing what needs to be done and actually getting it done. For example, imagine that in your house, you keep your hammer in one room, your nails in another, and your screwdrivers, drills, and wrenches in various other spots. It would probably take you a long time to find the specific tool you needed for a project. It's one thing to simply acknowledge the issue. It's something else to take the initiative and say, "I am going to organize all my tools." Then, it requires being results-driven to actually finish the job.

Your **initiative skill** allows you to see what needs to be done and take action without being asked. This is a skill that will enable you to get ahead of the competition by finding opportunities that others miss. Whether you are organizing tools, starting a new project at work, or planning a birthday party at home, these two skills are essential for starting and finishing any task or goal. And throughout your life and career, you will find yourself practicing them simultaneously.

We've all heard the phrase "stay in your lane." In many cases, this phrase is said by someone who doesn't show initiative and is intimidated by people who do. The simple fact is that using your initiative skill improves your chances of professional success.

Practicing initiative means that you don't need to be told what to do or when to do it. When you see something that has to be done, you take responsibility and act. In other words, you don't pay attention to people who tell you to "stay in your lane." If you've got something to say in a meeting, say it. If you can lend a hand on a project, help out. That *get-up-and-go* spirit is valued by busy supervisors, who do not have time to micromanage everyone on their team. In fact, developing your initiative skill throughout this course and your life will make you a desired job candidate because it shows you can think for yourself and continue to develop and grow into your role.

How to Do It

Anyone can take initiative, but many people simply choose not to. Here are six steps you can follow right now to begin developing your initiative skill:

1. Write out a plan for your studies, career, or personal life. (Visualizing where you want to go helps give you the initiative to take the first step.)
2. Build your self-confidence.
3. Look for opportunities and potential improvements.
4. *Sense check* yourself; in other words, make sure your ideas make sense.
5. Show persistence, even when things don't go as you hope.
6. Find balance between your usual responsibilities and anything additional you take on.

A note on step 1 in the Skill Development Plan assignment in Week 7, you'll be asked to identify three skills that you would like to improve upon. That assignment will be valuable as you develop a tangible plan for your professional development, and it will help you practice your initiative skill so you can get a jump start on your career.

Practicing your initiative skill requires you to get comfortable with trying new things and not always succeeding. Failure is okay. In today's ever-changing workplaces, managers understand the value—and necessity—of shaking up the status quo. Sometimes, to succeed, you need to fail, learn from that failure, and use those lessons as you try again. In most cases, the reward outweighs the risk, because even if your efforts do not go as planned, you showed that you were willing to step outside your normal responsibilities to try and help others. (Remember to use your relationship building skill to know when to try something on your own, and when you need to loop in your supervisor or other members of your team.)

Why Is Initiative Essential in the Workplace?

In the past, demonstrating initiative wasn't always essential in the workplace. Many people would get one job when they were done with school and stay there for decades, *climbing the corporate ladder* one rung at a time. Today's workplaces are very different; now, your career path is less like a ladder and more like a rock-climbing wall, where you have to identify sidesteps along the way. If you don't see a path forward, take the initiative and find a new opportunity you can pivot toward.

For example, let's say that it is important for you to have a job where you manage others, but that is not possible in your current role. You could use your initiative skill to see if there is a position in a different department that matches with your current knowledge and allows you to manage team members. It may not be a direct promotion, but sometimes you have to move sideways before you can move up. Take the initiative to think about what your professional goals are and what is important to you in a career and then consider what jobs might allow you to fulfill both. As you move throughout your professional life, remember that it won't necessarily be in a straight line.

Showing initiative is more than just having an idea or volunteering for a new responsibility; you have to follow through, which leads to our next skill—results-driven.

Why Does Being Results-Driven Matter?

Let's go back to the tool-organizing example. Your tools are spread out all over the house, and you decide it's time to organize them in one area. It takes initiative to begin the project, but you also have to stay results-driven throughout and focus on the outcome you want—an organized tool chest. You've got a goal, and you are willing to do what it takes to complete the task in a way that you will truly be proud of. So just shoving a bunch of hammers into one drawer doesn't count.

Part of the results-driven skill is understanding your approach to reaching a goal. It's helpful to have a growth mindset, which means that you are confident you can develop specific abilities as you need them (like creating an organizational system for loose nails and screws). A positive outlook will help you commit to practicing something new and will help you get past the hurdles you'll face along the way. It will also help you pick yourself up and try again when things don't go your way. And practicing your **productivity skill** can help you stay results driven by allowing you to create a plan and prioritize the tasks you need to reach your goal.

How to Do It

To start honing your results-driven skill, try these simple tips while keeping your end goal in mind:

- Consider all the available options and make a thoughtful choice, before making a decision.
- Balance urgency and quality, understanding that each project needs to be completed quickly but also with integrity.
- Work efficiently and maximize your time.

- Stay focused and don't get sidetracked by other less important tasks.
- Be resilient in the face of challenges.
- Measure your work. Use data when possible to track and report results.
- Take pride in your accomplishments.

Why Is Being Results-Driven Essential in the Workplace?

The results-driven skill is essential in any career. Today's employees are required to complete their tasks while being flexible and responsive to changes that happen along the way. Being results-driven helps professional teams stay successful since they are always focused on achieving their goals. And it can also help you reach success here at Capella and as you strive for personal goals outside of school and work.

This skill also comes into play during a career search. Whether you are starting your career journey or looking to make a change, practicing your results-driven skill will help you stay focused on what you want without giving up. One great place to start is the [Capella Career Center](#) page (where you can take initiative and stay results driven at the same time). Connecting and networking with others can sometimes feel anxiety-inducing, but it's also a transformational step toward getting where you want to go.

Think about a time when you were driven to achieve something (maybe even one of the accomplishments you noted in last week's assignment.) What challenges did you face? How did you overcome them? Whatever the details were, you can use what you learned from that as a learner and in your career to take initiative and stay results driven now and in the future.

Resources

To learn more about the key concepts pertaining to organizational culture, as well as general strategies and HR practices that employers can use to create and sustain a strong organizational culture, review the following article:

- SHRM. (n.d.). [Understanding and developing organizational culture](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/understandinganddevelopingorganizationalculture.aspx). Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/understandinganddevelopingorganizationalculture.aspx>

u05v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Capella Stories: Chef Kel's Hustle

This week, meet chef Kelston Bascom. He runs a restaurant, owns his own catering business, and still finds time to give back to his community with free cooking classes. How does he do it? In this week's Capella Story, Chef Kel reveals how he's used the skills of initiative and results driven to build and live his dream.

Course Resources

[Capella Stories: Chef Kel's Hustle](#) | Transcript

u05d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

During job interviews, potential employers often ask candidates to describe a time where they have demonstrated their initiative and/or results-driven skills. This week, you'll have a chance to practice. Describe a time at work, home, or school where there was a problem, and you took the initiative to solve that problem and seek results on your own. How did it go? Consider using the accomplishments you listed in your assignment for last week to add to your story.

Response Guidelines

Once you've completed your initial post, respond to one of your classmates and comment on any similarities or differences you noticed in your stories about taking initiative and seeking results.

Course Resources

Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 6 >> Communication

Introduction

Communicate Effectively

While checking e-mails on Monday morning, you are dismayed by an e-mail from one of your employees to a manager in a fellow department but copied to you and the rest of your department. The e-mail is informal, contains no salutation or signature, and it is filled with grammatical errors and typos. What's worse, the e-mail has an accusatory tone that suggests the manager is to blame for discrepancies in the inventory management system. Based on your understanding of effective workplace communication and writing professional e-mails, how would you coach your employee to correct the mistakes and communicate more professionally in the future?

Communication is everyone's panacea for everything.

–Tom Peters, Business Speaker

Communication is one of the most powerful skills you will practice on your journey to success in your life and career. That's because strong communication is a panacea (a remedy or cure-all) for the personal and professional challenges we face throughout every day. Effective communication can prevent wars, launch spaceships, bridge international divides, and soothe hurt feelings. When communication is ineffective, it can cause strife, destroy relationships, and place additional obstacles in our path.

This week, you'll explore the power of your communication skill and discover how you can develop your ability to communicate your own ideas, as well as work more effectively with others.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Explore how strong communication is a difference maker in how we connect with each other and solve problems.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how communication can be an essential employability skill now and in your future of work.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Watch an episode of Capella Stories about the power of communication in the world of improv comedy.
- **Prepare:** Read next week's assignment instructions and start to think of the three skills you'd like to develop.

Reference

BrainyQuote. (n.d.). Tom Peters' quotes. Retrieved from https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/tom_peters_159517

Learning Activities

u06s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, you will use your own professional or personal experience in conjunction with this week's learning activities to analyze an example of effective or ineffective communication.

u06s2 - What You Need to Know

The Power of Communication

Think of a time in your life when you have felt understood by someone important to you, or helped someone else—a friend, classmate, coworker, or family member—feel heard and understood. Did you feel closer or more connected to that person? Or experience a rush of satisfaction? Or maybe a deep sense of fulfillment? If your answer is "yes," there is a good chance you are already familiar with some of the rewards that come along with successful communication. Our ability as human beings to connect to others and send and receive information is not only crucial to feeling understood, it is also critical to our success at home, work, and school.

Practicing excellent communication is essential for many reasons. Effective communicators:

- Listen actively to others and offer their full attention to ensure they understand what they hear. This prevents misinformation and misunderstanding.
- Are able to deliver information just as well as they receive it.
- Can give public speeches and presentations that inform or persuade their audiences.
- Write clearly and concisely, composing messages that convey both substance and intent, whether in e-mail, essay, text, or any form.
- Are able to use and interpret body language, including facial expressions, appropriately and accurately to ensure a message is understood.

Successful communication is particularly critical to employers who want to create a positive and productive work environment for their staff. By effectively articulating expectations, needs, and questions, employees have a clear understanding of each other's roles and tasks, which makes everyone work more efficiently. If you want to become a magnet for the best professional opportunities and fulfilling relationships throughout your future, you will need to start optimizing your communication skill right now.

This week, you will explore why communication is an essential employability skill now and in your future of work. Even if this is the first time you are thinking of communication as something relevant to your career, it's a skill you have been using your entire life. You use it to share your thoughts and ideas with your family, to connect to others on social media, and to join in discussions with your peers in this course. Throughout human history, practicing strong communication has allowed us to share ideas and reach goals that were once believed impossible—like landing on the moon.

The Apollo 11 spaceflight, for example, was humanity's first successful trip to the moon and back. It was also one of the most complex and innovative missions in human communication. By the time astronaut Neil Armstrong took the "giant leap for mankind," NASA had invested thousands of hours of collaboration and planning. Back at mission control, hundreds of crew members worked around the clock for over a week to stay in constant communication with the spacecraft and make sure everything went smoothly. On television, the world watched a live broadcast of Armstrong's historic first steps on the lunar surface. However, one of Apollo 11's most significant achievements was showing what a team of professionals can accomplish together by sharing information, listening to each other to overcome huge risks, and understanding how to make successful contributions while communicating constantly and constructively to get the job done.

How to Communicate

Learning strong communication occurs by doing. You can hone your communication skill by participating in projects in your school, community, or job that involve collaborating with others to develop ideas, produce results, and accomplish common goals.

Here are some ways you can practice building your communication skill in your life right now:

- Read writing that inspires you to think in new ways. Then, share what you learn with others online or in conversation.
- Practice explaining complicated ideas clearly and concisely. Twitter can help, as it forces you to keep your thoughts to 280 characters or less.
- Listen to podcasts or watch TED Talks to see how others communicate, or go to live talks in your community that will help you practice active listening.
- Recognize that there are opportunities every day to practice communicating, whether it's with your friends, relatives, or people in your community. All these life situations can easily translate into stronger workplace communication habits. Try reflecting by asking yourself: What am I really trying to say? What am I hoping to achieve by communicating with this person or group? Considering these questions can help you communicate more effectively and clearly and less reactively.
- Consider the best method to communicate your response, when faced with a question or problem. Would a face-to-face conversation be most effective? Does the situation call for a thumbs-up emoji or a formal memo? When it comes to getting your message right, how you communicate is also key.
- Use your **self and social awareness skill** to reflect on your past communication and ask yourself what went well and what you could do better: Was I clear when communicating? How did they react when I communicated my message? Did I choose the best form of communication? Was I actively listening to what someone was communicating to me?

Learning the skill of communication can help you listen and connect with others around you so you can improve your ability to build meaningful relationships, collaborate, and create powerful communities at home and school. Utilizing your communication skill is also essential to performing your best at work, whether you are in a meeting, giving a presentation to a large group, writing a proposal, or interviewing for a new job.

Part of finding and landing the right career will be communicating your skills, experience, education, and desires to potential employers. To start practicing right now, check out the resources available to you on the [Capella Career Center](#) page, where you can learn how to promote yourself (and your skills) during a job search. The resources in the Capella Career Center will help walk you through the process of communicating your value to others.

Communication in the Workplace

Excellent communication has always been a part of success in the workplace, and it is becoming more valuable as technology changes the way we conduct business. As companies go virtual and remote workers become more commonplace, it's crucial that teams stay connected across long distances. Today's communication technology means we can contact our coworkers anytime and anywhere, but it also means that there are a number of ways for information to be lost in translation.

Of course, with online life available 24/7, it is also crucial to keep a healthy balance between your work and personal spaces. Understand that your coworkers are trying to maintain that balance as well. That requires using your communication skill, too. Just because you can get a hold of your coworkers on the weekends via text or Messenger doesn't mean you should.

Potential employers value communication in their employees because good communication improves team dynamics. When employees are good communicators, it creates an environment where all employees feel valued and understood. In fact, workplace communication can impact everything from job satisfaction to self-esteem. Remember, communication in the workplace runs in both directions: from the top-down (from employer to employee) and also from the bottom-up (from employee to employer). Learning when to communicate formally versus informally, when to listen, and when to ask questions is important, whether you work in a traditional office environment or remotely.

Excellent communication can also help you give and receive feedback at work, as in the case of a performance review. If you are on the giving end, you want to communicate your feedback clearly and respectfully. If you're on the receiving end, make sure you are actively listening to others (not just waiting for your turn to talk). Stay open to asking or answering clarifying questions to ensure everyone feels wholly understood.

As technology changes the jobs of the future, they will become more focused on creativity, people management, emotional intelligence (EI), and negotiation. This means using communication to connect, build relationships, understand others, and innovate together will become central to many peoples' careers. No matter what career you pursue, your communication skill will help you soar to new heights in your personal and professional life.

Resources

To learn more about communicating effectively in today's workplace, review the following resources:

- SHRM. (n.d.). [Managing organizational communication](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingorganizationalcommunication.aspx). Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingorganizationalcommunication.aspx>
- Kashyap, V. (2019). [Effective communication in the workplace: How and why?](https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/employee-engagement/effective-communication-in-the-workplace-how-and-why/) Retrieved from <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/employee-engagement/effective-communication-in-the-workplace-how-and-why/>
 - Learn about steps you can take to improve your communication.
- Delfino, D. (2018). [How to write a proper email](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/email-writing-tips/). Retrieved from <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/email-writing-tips/>
 - Read about the art of effective e-mails.

u06v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Capella Stories: Communication: It's No Laughing Matter

In this week's Capella Story, we'll meet some of America's most talented improv comedians. Whether they're keeping audiences in stitches night after night, or climbing the corporate ladder at their day jobs, there's one skill that's crucial to their success—communication.

Course Resources

[Capella Stories: Communication: It's No Laughing Matter](#) | Transcript

u06d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Think of a time when effective or ineffective communication affected your success at home, school, or work. Describe what happened. Then explain how strong communication contributed to or could have improved the situation's outcome. Finally, reflect on how effective communication can improve productivity. In your discussion, apply one of this week's resources (the readings in the What You Need to Know activity or the Interactive Learning Module Capella Stories: Communication: It's No Laughing Matter) to support your points.

Response Guidelines

Respond to at least one of your peers, adding your thoughts on the value and impact of strong communication.

Course Resources

Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u06s3 - Prepare: Week 7 Assignment

Next week, you will complete your Skill Development Plan assignment. It's recommended that you get started this week by reviewing the Week 7 assignment instructions and scoring guide. Also, start to think about which of the 10 skills that you'd like to develop.

Unit 7 >> Relationship Building

Introduction

Encourage Positive Relationships

You work at a beverage company, and your boss has requested that you onboard Iman, a new employee. After a few weeks, you notice that this employee is eating lunch alone in the cafeteria, while the remaining employees in your small department are at a table together. You wonder whether you have done enough to encourage the team to welcome and include this new employee.

You sit down next to Iman and chat about how things are going, and she shares her concern that her fellow team members do not like her. She suggests it might have something to do with her being Muslim. How might skills in navigating and building relationships help you address this situation and create a more cohesive and inclusive team atmosphere?

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.

– Carl Jung, Psychoanalyst

After seeing this week's theme, you may be thinking, "I already know how to build relationships. I have close friends and people who love me. And I get along with my coworkers just fine. What else do I need to know?" The fact is that while some jobs are more collaborative than others, virtually every profession requires you to interact with many different types of people. Taking the time to build and nurture your working relationships, which are different from personal relationships, is critical as you further your career. This is particularly important given that the majority of jobs are filled through networking and building relationships with other people in your field.

This week, you will discover how to develop your relationship building skill, which will help you connect with peers, colleagues, and even loved ones in a more meaningful way. Practicing this skill will give you the support you need to stabilize your future of work.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Discuss how you are applying characteristics that will help you practice your relationship building skills in your life at home, work, or school.
- **Assignment:** Submit your Skill Development Plan assignment.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how relationship building skills will help you throughout your life and career.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Listen to a podcast about professional relationship building.

Learning Activities

u07s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, discuss how you are applying characteristics that will help you practice your relationship building skills in your life at home, work, or school.

Assignment Overview

In this week's assignment, you will complete and submit the Skill Development Plan template.

u07s2 - What You Need to Know

Relationships at Work

Imagine you have a coworker named George. He is smart and hardworking, and he always completes his tasks on time. But George isn't friendly. He never makes small talk in the office, never smiles nor says hello. George is quick to pick a fight over a small detail. He openly tells people that he doesn't like their work and that he could do a better job. He goes to the boss with the smallest complaint, takes credit for others' ideas, and does not take the time to listen to what others have to say. Even though George is good at his job, would you want to keep working with him? Do you think he is likely to be promoted or form strong connections with his coworkers or clients? Do you think his team members would volunteer to write him glowing recommendations for another job in the future? Probably not.

When it comes to your world of work, being good at what you do is only half the battle. You also must be able to connect to and work effectively with others. This is called relationship building, and it's an essential skill for professional success. The workplace is made up of many different people from all walks of life, and practicing your relationship building skill will help you create bonds that can not only bolster your job performance but also catapult you to new opportunities in the future.

This week, you will learn how the relationship building skill helps people with different backgrounds and levels of expertise come together. Practicing your relationship building skill throughout your life and career will allow you to exchange ideas and develop solutions in the modern workplace. By relying on and utilizing the expertise of others in your networks, you'll also be able to grow your abilities, look for new jobs, strive for personal and professional achievements, and reach your goals.

What Does it Mean to Build Relationships?

Someone who has honed their relationship building skill genuinely enjoys being around—and collaborating with—other people. They understand the value of different points of view, they ask others for their thoughts and ideas, and they always give coworkers credit where it's due. People who build strong relationships are supportive of colleagues. They make time to connect with them, even when they don't necessarily need to for a specific project. These are the people that everyone wants to work with, and being in-demand is extremely helpful as you advance your career.

You may already be adept at building personal relationships but are unsure or uncomfortable about doing the same at work. Fortunately, a lot of what you do in your relationships with friends or significant others can also be applied to your career. As you work on this skill, consider these five characteristics that make up healthy relationships:

- **Trust.** It is the foundation of every good relationship. When you trust your team and colleagues, you form a powerful bond that helps you work more effectively. For specific ideas on how to build trust with your coworkers, check out the *Harvard Business Review* and Gallup's CliftonStrengths.
- **Mutual respect.** Value what others have to say, and they will value what you have to say. As you work together, you will develop solutions based on your combined insight and creativity.
- **Mindfulness.** Take responsibility for your words and actions. People who are mindful think about what they say before they say it, and they don't let their negative emotions affect others.
- **Diversity and inclusion.** The next time you're scheduling a meeting, go out of your way to invite someone who you think will have a radically different approach to your problem. Listen to what they have to say and use their insights as you work toward a solution.
- **Open communication.** The more effectively you communicate with those around you, the richer your relationships will be. For a refresher on honing your communication skill, refer back to last week's reading.

Relationship Building in the Workplace

No matter how smart or skilled you are, we all benefit from hearing other points of view. That is why people with a well-honed relationship building skill get better results at work. As you nurture various relationships, you will sometimes disagree with the people you work with. That's fine—in fact, it's actually a good thing. A differing opinion challenges you to look at a problem from another angle, and can often turn a bad idea into a good one, or a good idea into a great one. The best way to make that happen is to remove judgment and criticism from the conversation. Instead, see where the other person is coming from and find common ground. Yes, you may disagree on certain points. But where do your opinions overlap? Start with those similarities and work from there.

Here are several steps you can take to develop your relationship building skill throughout your career:

- **Identify your needs.**
 - What do you need from others? What do others need from you? Answering these questions will help you build better relationships.
- **Make time.**
 - Even if it's just 20 minutes, devote some of your day to connecting with others. You can do small things, like having a cup of coffee with a coworker, stopping by a colleague's office to say hi, or commenting on someone's LinkedIn post. Every interaction, no matter how small, helps build relationships. (And while it's not always possible, in-person interactions are ideal.)
- **Focus on your EI.**
 - That means you recognize your own emotions, which in turn helps you understand others' emotional needs. Focusing on your EI will also help you hone your self and social awareness skill!
- **Show appreciation.**
 - Everyone, from the office admin to the CEO, wants to feel that their work is recognized. So when someone does a great job, pay them a genuine compliment.
- **Stay positive.**
 - Both positivity and negativity are contagious. Which one will others respect you for spreading?
- **Manage boundaries.**
 - If a relationship with a colleague begins to take up too much of your time, set ground rules about when to be social and when to work.
- **Avoid gossip.**
 - If you have an issue with someone you work with, be direct and talk to them about it. Gossiping to others will only make the situation worse.
- **Listen actively.**
 - There's a difference between hearing someone and really listening to what they have to say. Listen when others speak, don't interrupt, and only jump in when you can add to the conversation. In other words, practicing your communication skill will help you hone your relationship building skill.
- **Reach out.**
 - Have a question for a former professor? Curious about a job that a former colleague may know about? Don't hesitate to reach out to people in your network—that's why you built your network in the first place.

The better a team is at practicing their relationship building skill, the more likely they are to enjoy working together and to have stronger collaboration. Research has shown that relationships with coworkers were identified as the top driver of employee engagement and that the quality of workplace relationships has a significant impact on many other workplace factors like job satisfaction, productivity, company loyalty, and more.

Employers who want a high-performance workforce will continue to seek out employees who are able to form strong bonds to their coworkers, clients, and staff. And as technological advances continue to transform the modern workplace and make remote collaboration more commonplace, it is just as crucial that you are able to build healthy, positive relationships over e-mail, messaging, and video chat.

Building Strong Relationships Now

Forming strong relationships in school can create a useful network you can rely on when you are looking for a job or career. It can help you develop a support system of peers or professors who believe in your success. It can also give you an avenue to ask for help when you need it. Outside of school, your relationship building skill will assist you as you form committees, social groups, and grassroots organizations to support causes you believe in. Planning to join the PTA, canvass for a local candidate, or launch a side gig? You will need your relationship building skill to be successful.

Developing your relationship building skill throughout your life will do so much more than help you build a bridge to others—it will help others build a bridge to you as well. It will give you the contacts and support you need to get where you want to go. Start with the Capella Connect page on the [Capella Career Center](#), where you will find people that will bolster your confidence and help you build a strategy for success.

Resources

To learn more about communicating effectively in today's workplace, review the following resources:

- Huggett, J. (2020). [How to avoid six common networking mistakes](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/01/10/how-to-avoid-six-common-networking-mistakes/#65d5a11e2e1d). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/01/10/how-to-avoid-six-common-networking-mistakes/#65d5a11e2e1d>

- Dougherty, J. (2014, December 5). [5 steps to building great business relationships](#). *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2–4.
 - Learn about steps you can take to build better relationships.

u07v1 - Interactive Learning Module: The Skills for Success With Andrea Backman: Relationship Building

This week's interactive learning module is a podcast in which you'll discover how building solid relationships at work can pay dividends on your success. Tune in as Dr. Marie McIntyre, an expert on working relationships and office politics, gives you tips for connecting with the people you spend more time with than your family—your coworkers!

Course Resources

[The Skills for Success With Andrea Backman: Relationship Building](#) | Transcript

u07d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

This week, you're learning some of the characteristics that will help you practice your relationship building skill (trust, mutual respect, mindfulness, welcoming diversity, and open communication). Use the Capella library to locate an article or a book about one or more of the characteristics of relationship building listed in this week's What You Need to Know activity. Using the article or book you located to support your points, include the following in your initial post:

- Discuss how you are applying at least one of these characteristics in your life right now at home, work, or school.
- Describe steps you can take to improve your ability to master one of the characteristics in your professional life or in your classes.

Response Guidelines

Once you have submitted your initial post, respond to one of your classmates, sharing your own examples of how to apply the characteristic your classmate has examined.

Course Resources

[Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide](#)

u07a1 - Skill Development Plan

Overview

In this course, you have been learning how the 10 skills are an essential part of being successful in the future world of work. Your understanding of the skills has been refined, and now it's time to reflect on your strengths and areas for growth again to develop a plan moving forward. For this assignment, you'll identify three skills that you'd like to focus on and develop a plan for. As you think of which skills you'd like to improve upon, consider choosing skills at varying levels. You might, for example, choose a skill that you are already strong in, but would be excited to continue exploring and building upon, as well as a skill that you might have more room for growth in. At the end of the assessment, you'll leave with the beginning of a tangible plan for personal and professional development that you can review with the Career Center team.

Preparation

Review the template you completed for the Reflecting on Your Skills, Goals, and Accomplishments assignment and the feedback you received from your instructor. Download the [Skill Development Plan \[DOCX\]](#) for this assessment. Identify the three skills you plan to focus on and develop.

Instructions

Use the [Skill Development Plan \[DOCX\]](#) template to complete the following steps. You will repeat Steps 1 through 5 for each of the three skills:

- **Step 1:** Identify strengths and areas of improvement for targeted professional skills.
 - Identify the first targeted skill. Summarize your strengths and areas of improvement in this skill area. Then, identify your desired outcomes around this skill area and write a positive goal statement. Complete the **Target Skill, Strengths, Areas of Improvement, Desired Outcome, and Goal Statement** sections of the template.
- **Step 2:** Describe previous accomplishments that demonstrate professional skills.
- **Step 3:** Discuss specific strategies and practices that will be used to further develop professional skills.
 - To complete steps 2 and 3, specify the actions you can take to work toward your goals, with specific strategies and practices that you can apply. Identify any potential obstacles and challenges to achieving your goal. Complete the **Practices for Growth, Action Steps, and Potential Obstacles/Challenges** sections of the template.
- **Step 4:** Identify supporters and resources that will contribute to the development of professional presence.
 - Keeping your action plan in mind, identify trusted supporters and university resources that can help you in your skill development plan. Complete the **Key Supporters and Supporting University Resources** sections of the template.
- **Step 5:** Explain connections between skill development and personal, academic, and career goals.
 - Reflect on the connections between skill development and your overall personal, academic, and professional goals. Complete the **Benefits From Change/Connections to Personal, Academic, and Career Goals** section of the template.
- **Step 6:** Write coherently with correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Additional Requirements

Your submission should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication:** Written communication is clear and complete and free from errors that detract from the overall message.
- **Font and font size:** Times New Roman, 12 point.

Review the Skill Development Plan Scoring Guide for details on how your assignment will be graded.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies and assessment criteria:

- Competency 1: Describe the importance and impact of key skills and behaviors that are necessary for success in the future of work.
 - Identify strengths and areas of improvement for targeted professional skills.
- Competency 2: Analyze factors that contribute to professional presence.
 - Identify supporters and resources that will contribute to the development of professional presence.
 - Describe previous accomplishments that demonstrate professional skills.
- Competency 3: Develop skills to support a successful learning experience and career.
 - Discuss strategies and practices that will be used to further develop professional skills.
 - Explain connections between skill development and personal, academic, and career goals.
- Competency 4: Compose text that articulates meaning relevant to its purpose and audience.
 - Write coherently with correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Unit 8 >> Problem Solving

Introduction

Identify and Solve Problems

Your classmate Callista keeps turning in her course assignments late, and her grade is suffering. Callista always plans to start her assignments on time, but then her family responsibilities get in the way and she ends up missing the deadline.

Callista decides to practice her problem-solving skill to get to the root of her problem. She looks at her calendar and realizes that she's been trying to finish her schoolwork in the evenings when she has a lot of important family deadlines, such as making dinner and getting her kids ready for bed. She decides to ask you about how you make time to complete your assignments.

You tell Callista that you usually block off time on the weekends or during your lunch hour for schoolwork. Callista then looks at the dates her course assignments are due and plans time in her personal calendar to work on those assignments. Callista sets a reminder on her phone and asks a friend to watch her kids for a few hours on the weekends so she can concentrate.

By using her problem-solving skill, Callista is able to identify her problem, explore options, and come up with a solution. As her life responsibilities change, Callista knows she can always reapply her problem-solving skill to find a different solution in the future.

We all solve problems every day, even when we don't realize we are. "How can I avoid traffic?" "What should I have for lunch that isn't too expensive?" "How can I work well with a difficult coworker?" "How do I tell my partner I don't want to hang out with their best friend?" The problems in our personal and professional lives come in all shapes and sizes, but learning to understand and solve the big and small problems we encounter can help us reach success at home, work, and school.

This week, you will learn to develop your problem-solving skill, which will help you identify and properly frame problems, explore ideas, and create effective solutions. Learning to problem solve in any situation will help you achieve your goals at work and in life—even if you still don't want to hang out with your partner's best friend.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Share a problem you've recently encountered in your own life and outline the steps you took to solve it.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how problem-solving skills will help you in work, school, or your personal life.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Meet Dr. Tamirra Lucas and discover how problem solving has contributed to her success.
- **Prepare:** Read through next week's assignment instructions and start to design your presentation.

Learning Activities

u08s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In this week's discussion, you will share a problem you have recently encountered in your own life and outline the steps you took to solve it.

u08s2 - What You Need to Know

Problem Solving

Imagine you are at a job interview. Your potential employer asks you to describe a time you have overcome a difficult problem in your personal life. Why? How does this question help them assess a candidate's strengths? Asking job candidates to explain how they've overcome obstacles in the past is a frequent interview topic because it helps hiring managers understand how their future employees would practice problem solving in the workplace.

Problem solving is an essential skill for any career because no matter what type of job you do, you're sure to encounter obstacles every day—whether that's negotiating contracts, dealing with demanding customers, or meeting tight deadlines. When you have a well-developed problem-solving skill, it shows that you're logical, creative, resilient, imaginative, and determined and that you work hard to get the job done. Understanding how to practice (and talk about) your problem-solving skill will set you up to meet everyday challenges in the workforce and beyond.

This week, you will discover how your problem-solving skill allows you to tackle and solve any issue you face at work, at school, or in your life. Practicing and developing this skill will help employers see you as a valuable resource, which will be essential as you advance your career.

Why Does Problem Solving Matter?

Part of what makes problem solving so valuable is that practicing this skill lets you find the root cause of an issue so you can approach it effectively. For example, if profits are down at your job, is the problem that sales are suffering, or is the problem that shipping expenses have gone up? Practicing your problem-solving skill means gathering the information you need to identify the true nature of the issue and then approaching that problem in the best way. After you have done your research, you can identify several possible answers, use sound judgment to select the best solution, and then implement it to solve the problem. If profits are down because of sales, you may decide to develop a new marketing strategy. If they are down because higher shipping costs are taking away from your profit margins, you may need to renegotiate your shipping contract so the cost of shipping won't eat into your profits.

Whenever you practice your problem-solving skill at home, work, and school, there are several strategies you should keep in mind:

- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to every problem.
- Just as every problem is unique, so is every solution.
- Problems can have more than one solution. Don't be afraid to think about familiar problems in new ways or to consider a variety of solutions to one specific problem.
- Don't wait to be told which problems to solve! (Use your **initiative skill** to identify problems that need solving.)
- Work with others who can offer insights and perspectives that you don't have. (Using your **relationship building skill** will help you develop your **problem-solving skill**.)
- Test commonly held assumptions. Often, the things everyone *just knows* to be true end up being false. Remember who you're solving the problem for. If it is a problem that customers are having and the solution only improves matters for your boss, you may want to rethink your approach.

Developing Your Problem-Solving Skill

To develop your own problem-solving skill, observe how others (such as your friends, family, or coworkers) tackle issues. Pay attention to their strategies, and see what you can learn from them. You may have to try several techniques before finding a method that works best for you.

You also need to grow comfortable with being decisive. When you make a decision, you accept responsibility for its outcome, which can be intimidating if you worry that people will blame you if it doesn't work. Instead of worrying about a negative outcome, try to think positively. Think about how happy everyone will be with your decision when it does work, or what lessons you can learn if it doesn't.

As you shift your mindset from negative to positive, don't be afraid to change your perspective as well. The more experiences you have, the better you will be at problem solving in new situations. So make a point to learn new subjects, skills, and strategies that will help you solve a wide variety of problems. That might mean getting familiar with how other departments function at work, seeking out a mentor, taking an online course, or attending a lecture from someone you admire. Outside of work, try your hand at other activities that involve problem solving, such as playing chess, solving puzzles, or tackling brain teasers. These games will help you exercise your mind and discover new tactics for solving all kinds of problems.

Problem Solving in the Workplace

Not surprisingly, being an effective problem solver will help you grow your career, as most modern jobs require you to find solutions to a never-ending series of complications. Most employers identify critical thinking or problem solving as an essential competency for new hires. People who get easily flustered or repeatedly try the same tired techniques to solve new problems will have a tougher time advancing, as they won't be seen as creative thinkers. On the other hand, employees with a well-developed problem-solving skill will simplify complex issues, find ways to be more efficient, and help save their company money. It is much more likely that those people will be hired and promoted.

No matter what career you pursue in your future of work, practicing the problem solving will help you make the impossible possible. A great place to start is the [Capella Career Center](#), where you can leverage all you have learned and act on your career goals.

Resources

To learn more about using your problem-solving skill in the workplace, review the following resources:

- NACE. (2019). [The four career competencies employers value most](https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-four-career-competencies-employers-value-most/). Retrieved from <https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-four-career-competencies-employers-value-most/>
- Hall, J. (2019). [6 techniques to better your problem-solving skills](https://www.inc.com/john-hall/6-techniques-to-better-your-problem-solving-skills.html). Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/john-hall/6-techniques-to-better-your-problem-solving-skills.html>
 - Learn about techniques you can use to improve your problem-solving abilities.

Problem solving is a skill that's essential in boardrooms and businesses around the world. But it's also a skill you can use every day to reach personal and professional success. In fact, you're already using it! In this week's Capella Story, we'll meet Dr. Tamirra Lucas and discover how she's used problem solving in every step of her journey to success—from earning her degree online to building a family to starting a successful business that helps others do the same.

Course Resources

[Capella Stories: Problem Solving Like a Superstar](#) | Transcript

u08d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

You use your problem-solving skill every day, even when you don't realize it. For example, maybe you need to be at work for an important meeting, but your child is sick. How do you make arrangements so you can get to your meeting? Or you're trying to make pancakes on Sunday morning, and you have one egg when the recipe calls for two. How do you finish your mix? Or maybe your rent is due tomorrow, but you are 150 dollars short. What do you do?

Share a problem you've recently encountered in your own life and outline the steps you took to solve it. What were the possible solutions? For example, if you knew you were going to be short on rent, would you borrow the money or ask your landlord for an extension, and why? Explain how you determined the best course of action for your situation. In the end, how did you ultimately solve the problem?

Response Guidelines

Once you have completed your initial post, reply to one of your classmates and share any additional problem-solving strategies you would recommend.

Course Resources

[Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide](#)

u08s3 - Prepare: Week 9 Assignment

Next week, you'll complete your Professional Presence Presentation assignment. It's recommended this week that you read the Week 9 assignment instructions and scoring guide and start to design your presentation.

Note that this assignment requires to you to record a voiceover narration of your presentation using Kaltura. Refer to [Using Kaltura](#) if you need help with using this tool. Also, review the Audio and Video in this Course on the Tools and Resources menu.

Unit 9 >> Innovation

Introduction

Innovate to Improve

Based on what you have learned about the 10 employability skills in this course, you decide you would like to create new study habits in this and future courses. You start by working through the five brain-training strategies for developing your innovation skills: research, experiment, observe, adjust, and fine-tune. As part of the research strategy, you talk to your professors and fellow learners about what

study habits they use and recommend, and you review Effective Learning Strategies Campus page for tips on academic success. What other steps would you take to apply each of the strategies and create an innovative plan for developing more effective study habits?

“No one will ever walk on the moon.”

“There is no way to prevent polio.”

“Computers can’t be smaller than a single room.”

These statements were once made with total confidence. But, thanks to humankind’s ability to innovate—to approach problems in new and unique ways and think creatively about their solutions—we have accomplished all of these achievements and more.

This week, you will learn how to develop your innovation skill, which will help you think creatively about how you approach the challenges and tasks in your own life and career so you can develop the future you want.

To Do List:

- **Assignment:** Submit your Professional Presence Presentation assignment.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how you can use your innovation skills to approach challenges and obstacles in your life and career.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Practice your innovation skill.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Learn tips for leveraging all of your employability skills.

Learning Activities

u09s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

In this week’s assignment, you will complete and submit the Professional Presence Presentation.

u09s2 - What You Need to Know

The Skill to Innovate

In the 1980s and 1990s, after decades of vinyl records, the invention of portable cassettes and CD players allowed regular people the ability to carry their music with them wherever they went. But Steve Jobs, CEO and cofounder of Apple, saw a unique opportunity to innovate the music experience even more. In 2001, Apple released the iPod—an innovation that fundamentally changed the way people all over the world listen to music and helped Apple become the powerhouse company it is today. In fact, most major inventions in the history of the world were created because someone saw an opportunity to do something different or unique.

No matter where you want to go in the future, if you are going to lead your life successfully, you will need to understand how to use your innovation skill to achieve your goals. In other words, you will need to think outside the box, create unique solutions to old problems, develop bold solutions to new problems, and think creatively in all aspects of your life. That might mean inventing a recipe to use up leftovers in the fridge, developing a new slogan for your company’s product, or changing the way employees are onboarded in your department. Wherever life takes you, relying on your innovation skill will not only help you think differently about the world around you, it will help you instigate change, explore opportunities, and even create the future you want.

This week, you will discover ways to use your innovation skill to train your brain to think creatively and take action so you can approach challenges and obstacles in your life with a fresh perspective. For example, if you were planning a birthday party for a friend and wanted to really wow your guests, you might consider unusual party ideas like hosting the event at the local animal shelter to promote animal adoptions or renting out an ice cream truck and passing out free cones in your town. Innovation often begins with this type of divergent thinking, where you try to come up with a variety of different ways of looking at a situation. And it is important because if you only consider one idea (like a typical party scenario), it will most likely be similar to something you’ve done before. The most common way to use divergent thinking to come up with a variety of options is by brainstorming.

Brainstorming Your Way to Innovation

Brainstorming is a group activity that encourages people to share ideas in a spontaneous way to reach a solution. Whether you are brainstorming as part of a group at work or a team at your church or school, the most effective brainstorming includes people from a wide variety of backgrounds. That's because working with people with different perspectives can help you come up with ideas you wouldn't ordinarily have thought of, which in turn can make you more successful at practicing your innovation skill. So, the next time you brainstorm, consider inviting new people to the team. (For example, you might try reaching out to your network using your relationship building skill to ensure you have a variety of members represented.)

Here are some important considerations to take into account whenever you're brainstorming as part of your innovation skill:

- **Begin your brainstorm with a warm-up activity or icebreaker.** These help participants break down mental barriers, loosen their minds, and lower their judgments. There are countless games and icebreakers you can find online—just search for “brainstorming activities.”
- **Practice free association by considering unconnected thoughts and ideas as they pop into your head, during the brainstorm.** Remember, there are no *good* or *bad* ideas at this point. By leveraging your experience and knowledge, sharing all of your ideas with your team, and encouraging others to do the same, you'll help everyone consider situations in new and novel ways.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions—even ones that seem silly or obvious—because they can challenge your assumptions.** Stay curious and search for insights by taking the time to ask how things work and why they work that way.
- **Try convergent thinking after the brainstorm, which means taking a more linear, logical approach to evaluating the ideas you came up with.** Not every option will be the innovation you're looking for, and that's perfectly normal. In fact, the winner might not even be one single idea. It might be a combination of many of the ideas you've explored.
- **Try using your initiative skill to take action, once you have a winner, and try out the concept that you think is best.** If things do not go according to plan, don't get discouraged. Instead, learn from your mistakes and try again.

You can also try brainstorming on your own if you don't have the time or opportunity to include others. Consider the same tips whether you are brainstorming with a group or by yourself.

Developing Your Innovation Skill

Brainstorming is only part of practicing your innovation skill. To utilize innovation in any situation, you'll need to actually train your brain to think in new ways. Like anything else, this takes practice.

Here are some simple strategies you can use to help:

- Research.
- Experiment.
- Observe.
- Adjust.
- Fine-tune.

Let's revisit the scenario described in this week's introduction and apply each of these strategies to your goal of creating effective study habits:

- **Research.** You talk to professors and other learners at Capella to discover the study habits they recommend and use. You ask your fellow learners questions like: Where do you study? How long do you study? How do you schedule your studying throughout the week?
- **Experiment.** Based on what you discover, you decide to test out some of the study habits of your peers. You try studying at night after you get home from work and also on your lunch break. You also try studying at the local library and in your bedroom at home. By testing out a variety of options, you get to experience how well different habits work for you.
- **Observe.** You take notes on his study habits and track your results. That way, you can see what worked well and what didn't. For example, when you try studying after your job, you find yourself losing focus because you are so tired.
- **Adjust.** You use what you learn to come up with new studying ideas. For example, you study best on a full stomach outside of your house, but not in a place that you are easily distracted and not too late at night. You decide to try studying at a café very early in the morning before it gets too crowded and when you are well-rested. You often order coffee or breakfast to enjoy while you work.
- **Fine-tune.** Just because a strategy has been successful doesn't mean there isn't a way to make it more successful. For example, you try bringing headphones with you to the café to see if music improves your studying.

By using these simple strategies to practice your innovation skill, you are able to find unique study habits that help you reach your academic goals.

Another way to practice your innovation skill is by identifying pain points—things that have given you trouble at work or in your personal life—and then searching for ways you can improve them. As you practice identifying pain points in your own life, think of any hurdles you face as opportunities to work on your innovation skill. And be sure to keep in mind that the goal is progress—not perfection.

In your search for progress, you may also want to review the resources available in the [Capella Career Center](#). These include career interest groups, resume building tactics, a job search toolkit, and videos and articles geared toward helping you capitalize on your strengths and improve any weaknesses as you progress in your current career or transition to a new field of work.

Also, note that your Professional Presence Presentation is due this week. In this assignment, you will explore how you can use your understanding of the skills you have studied in this course to demonstrate your professional presence. Consider how the innovation skill in particular might be helpful for boosting your professional presence.

As you move forward in your studies, your life, and your career, you will face new challenges that will require bold solutions. By using your innovation skill, you will be able to confront these issues head-on. You should also consider how you could combine past ideas in new ways to develop solutions for new problems. (This ties into your problem-solving skill.) And you'll show others—and yourself—how creative you really are.

Resources

Review [Effective Learning Strategies](#) for tips on academic success.

To learn more about using your problem-solving skill in the workplace, review the following resources:

- [DisCo](#). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.project-disco.org/>
 - This site features a variety of articles about the intersection between work life, technology, and innovation.
- Safian, R. (2018). [Why Apple is the world's most innovative company](#). Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/40525409/why-apple-is-the-worlds-most-innovative-company>
 - Learn about Apple's use of innovation.
- Anthony, S. (2012, April 17). [Four ways to think like an innovator \[Video\]](#). Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/video/2226808801001/four-ways-to-think-like-an-innovator>
 - Closed captioning is provided with the video.
- Check out [Using Your Skills to Stand Out \[PDF\]](#), which contains interview questions that you can use to practice how you would include your skills when you would interview for a job.

u09v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Mind of an Innovator

Warm up your brain and get your creative juices flowing! In this week's interactive learning module, practice your innovation skill in an exercise designed to help you make out-of-the-box connections that you can apply in your own life!

Course Resources

[Mind of an Innovator](#) | Transcript

u09a1 - Professional Presence Presentation

Overview

In this assignment, you will build on the work you have done in this course to create and record a professional presentation. Your presentation will explain who you are as a professional, your strengths and professional attributes, how you will maintain lifelong professionalism, and your educational plan for continuing to develop and market your skills.

Preparation

Review the resources provided in each week's What You Need to Know as needed as well as your previous assignments. Use the Capella library to locate at least two additional articles or books that discuss professional presence.

In your presentation, you will need to record a voiceover narration. It is recommended that you use Kaltura, a program that records audio and video. Refer to [Using Kaltura](#) if you need help using this courseroom tool. Also, review the Audio and Video in this course on the Tools and Resources page.

Instructions

Create a 7–8-slide PowerPoint presentation that includes the following:

- **Step 1:** Describe your professional attributes and skills.
 - Include a **Title** slide with a title for your presentation and your name.
 - Include an **Introduction** slide that introduces who you are and your chosen professional field, with an appropriate photo.

- Include at least one **Professional Attributes and Skills** slide that provides a description of your professional attributes and skills (such as professional attire, strong communication skills, self and social awareness, et cetera). You may need a second slide to cover this component. Reference the course resources or other sources to support your description.
- **Step 2:** Explain what it means to demonstrate professional presence, citing support from credible sources.
 - Include a **Professional Presence** slide that explains what it means to have professional presence, citing evidence from your library sources to support your explanation.
- **Step 3:** Describe personal examples of professional presence.
 - Include at least one **Examples of Professional Presence slide** where you describe clear, concrete examples of how you have demonstrated professionalism in your career and/or academic program. You may need two slides.
- **Step 4:** Discuss strategies that will be part of a continued plan for maintaining professionalism.
 - Include a **Lifelong Professionalism** slide explaining how you will continue to develop your professionalism. Consider how you will continue to hone the skills you learned about in this course as you continue in your career or enter a new field.
- **Step 5:** Demonstrate effective oral and visual presentation skills.
 - Prepare notes for your oral presentation and add them to the presenter notes in PowerPoint. You can type your notes in the Notes area below each slide.
 - Record a voiceover presentation to accompany your slides (4–6 minutes). Focus on how you have demonstrated professional presence and your plan for lifelong professionalism. It is recommended you use Kaltura to record your presentation. Refer to [Using Kaltura](#) if you need help using this courseroom tool.
- **Step 6:** Write coherently with correct grammar, usage, mechanics, and citation of sources.
 - Include a **References** slide that cites at least four credible references and two from the Capella library.

Additional Requirements

Your presentation should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication:** Written communication should be free of errors that detract from the overall message.
- **APA format:** Citations should be formatted according to current APA Style and Format guidelines.
- **References:** Your presentation should include at least four credible references (two from the Capella Library).
- **Visual appeal:** Slides are clear and visually appealing.
- **Speaker notes:** Notes accompany the content slides to provide more detail and expand on points made in your slides.
- **Length of PowerPoint presentation:** 7–10 slides.
- **Length of voiceover presentation:** 4–6 minutes.

Review the Professional Presence Presentation Scoring Guide for details on how your presentation will be graded.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assessment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies and assessment criteria:

- Competency 1: Describe the importance and impact of key skills and behaviors that are necessary for success in the future of work.
 - Describe professional attributes and skills.
- Competency 2: Analyze factors that contribute to professional presence.
 - Explain what it means to demonstrate professional presence.
 - Describe personal examples of professional presence.
- Competency 3: Develop skills to support a successful learning experience and career.
 - Discuss strategies that will be part of a continued plan for maintaining professionalism.
 - Demonstrate effective oral and visual presentation skills.
- Competency 4: Compose text that articulates meaning relevant to its purpose and audience.
 - Write coherently with correct grammar, usage, mechanics, and citation of sources.

Unit 10 >> Agility

Introduction

Be Agile in the Face of Change

Your friend Karlie works at the reception desk of a busy medical office. The office is changing its procedure to eliminate phone call reminders for patient appointments and replace them with text message reminders. Karlie is optimistic this change will help the majority of her patients. She volunteers to oversee learning the new texting program so she can teach it to her coworkers. She also takes the initiative to research as much about the program as possible so she can help decrease the number of patients who don't show up for their appointments. She even proactively asks patients upon check-in if they prefer the text reminders or another mode of communication.

By staying inquisitive about customer feedback, she will have a better understanding of problems her team needs to address in the future, and she'll be more resilient if changes are made because she'll know she can adapt.

Karlie's agility pays off. Her office managers notice how well she and her team adapt to these changes. The text message reminder program is a success, and within a year, Karlie receives a promotion to assistant manager.

The only constant in the modern world is change. The question isn't if you will have to deal with change, but rather how well can you handle change when it happens?

Change has also become the new normal in today's workplace, which is why employers look for and retain people with a highly developed agility skill. These people are flexible when things do not go as planned. They keep their cool, learn how to handle new situations, and maintain a *glass-is-half-full* attitude as they adapt. They often anticipate shifts before they happen and are comfortable initiating change in the first place to improve their job performance.

This week, we will conclude with a discussion of the last of the 10 skills you have studied in this course. You will learn how to hone your agility skill, which will give you the confidence you need to tackle change head-on and help you better manage disruptions in your personal and professional routine.

To Do List:

- **Discussion:** Discuss how you would convince a friend or coworker to practice agility and embrace change.
- **What You Need to Know:** Learn how your agility skill will help you anticipate and navigate changes in your studies, your career, and your life.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Watch an episode of Capella Stories about the agility skill in action.
- **Interactive Learning Module:** Watch an episode of Capella Stories about how you can put the 10 skills to work.

Learning Activities

u10s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

In the final discussion of the course, you will explain how you would convince a friend or coworker to practice agility and embrace change.

u10s2 - What You Need to Know

What is Agility?

Think for a moment about some of your happiest memories. Maybe, it was when you met your partner or the day you got married. Maybe, it was when you had a child or adopted a pet. Maybe, it was when you graduated or got a new job or moved to a new town. All of those events have one thing in common: they all mark a significant life change. Yet, change can still seem scary. It is normal to want to embrace what's comfortable or to think that if something has worked in the past, there is no reason to do things differently now. Yet without change, we cannot get where we want to go.

Your agility skill can help you break out of the change-is-scary mindset. Practicing this skill will allow you to easily adapt and embrace change without fear—or to feel fear and move forward anyway. So, instead of getting left behind, you will be leading the charge toward your personal and professional success. This week, you will discover how your agility will help you anticipate and navigate changes in your studies, your career, and your life.

The word agility is often used when people talk about sports—referring to an athlete's ability to move quickly and easily. Take, for example, a football player who runs down the field to score a touchdown, dodging the members of the other team who are trying to tackle him. Just like that football player, someone with a well-developed agility skill demonstrates quick reflexes, can easily pivot to change directions, and has the ability to sense and react to what is going to happen next.

Because technology is rapidly changing the workplaces of today, employees need to be willing to learn and adapt to new situations and software. (Your technology skill is also important for this reason.) But it's not just technology that causes changes—outsourcing, downsizing, mergers, and a general feeling of ambiguity means that modern workers need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

To get outside of your comfort zone and embrace change, you need to start with the right mindset. A mindset is a set of beliefs or a way of thinking. People with a fixed mindset believe their abilities and qualities are fixed and cannot change, while people with a growth mindset believe their talents and qualities can grow over time with hard work. Agility starts with a growth mindset because to respond to change in challenging or uncertain situations, you have to believe you can persevere. By developing your agile mindset, by believing you can respond to change and succeed, you will be better equipped to actually do so in the future.

What Does Agility in the Workplace Look Like?

A large part of your agility skill is remaining calm in the face of change. Because modern workplaces tend to be in a constant state of flux, it's important not to panic every time a new change rears its head. Instead, you need to find a way to roll with the changes and still perform successfully.

Someone with a well-honed agility skill displays:

- **Optimism:** You believe that change is an opportunity for growth.
- **Adaptability:** You recognize that change is necessary to move forward, so you embrace it, modifying your behavior as you go to achieve your goals.
- **Supportiveness:** You don't complain about new initiatives, especially in front of peers. If you do have serious concerns, they should be made in private to your manager.
- **Proactivity:** You use your initiative skill to seek out areas to grow and improve.
- **Resilience:** You don't become overwhelmed and can cope when plans shift.
- **Inquisitiveness:** You look for new information so you can anticipate future changes.
- **Flexibility:** You take suggestions and adjust appropriately.

When faced with change, your agility skill helps you discover what's happening, decide how to respond, change your behaviors, and measure your performance. Not every change will be for the better, but by quantifying your results, you can learn what is and isn't working and can continue to make and suggest refinements as necessary.

Practicing agility can also mean the difference between success and failure. Take a company like Blockbuster that did not respond to the growing demand for digital entertainment. When Netflix approached Blockbuster with an offer to sell, Blockbuster failed to see the value in the deal. They weren't able to pivot and adapt in the face of a growing trend. By 2010, Blockbuster had filed for bankruptcy. Whether you work for a large company or yourself, agility is the key to riding the waves of change successfully.

Resources

To learn more about the power of the agility skill in the workplace, review the following resources:

- O'Donnell, D. (2019). [The 'new rules' of employability demand agility, determination](https://www.hrdiver.com/news/the-new-rules-of-employability-demand-agility-determination/562561/). Retrieved from <https://www.hrdiver.com/news/the-new-rules-of-employability-demand-agility-determination/562561/>
- Manyika, J., Lund, S., Chui, M., Bughin, J., Woetzel, J., Batra, P., . . . Sanghvi, S. (2017). [Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages). Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages>
 - Learn about the future of work and how to capitalize on the skills you have learned in this course.

Developing Your Agility Skill

These three simple steps will help you hone your agility skill now and in the future:

1. **Don't run from change—lean into it.** For example, if you're assigned a new manager, make time to get to know your new boss and define their expectations of you. Even if you feel intimidated, see the opportunity to grow by asking yourself questions like, what can I learn from this person?
2. **Be open to small changes, even in the midst of a larger change.** For instance, if you are moving to a new town, don't limit yourself to finding a place in only one specific neighborhood.
3. **Use resources to drive progress.** For example, if you are tasked with a new responsibility that isn't in your area of expertise, do research and learn as much as you can about your new assignment. This will help you adapt successfully.

No matter where you want to go or what you want to do, change is a normal and healthy part of life. Not all changes are welcome ones, but by using your agility skill, you can adapt to changes as they come and face your future with confidence.

u10v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Capella Stories: Agility in Life and Business

This week, we return to the world's tallest climbing wall in Reno, Nevada, to discover how Jill Vacchina Dobbs used her agility skill to make a major career move and life change.

Course Resources

[Capella Stories: Agility in Life and Business](#) | Transcript

u10d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Your agility skill is an essential part of being successful in our changing world. Employers are looking for job candidates who are able to adapt to changing technologies and practices and are willing to learn and embrace those changes.

Imagine you have just learned a new and more effective way to complete a task at home or work. Now, you must teach this new technique to a friend or coworker. But that friend or coworker is very resistant to learning a new way of doing things. Explain how you would convince them to practice agility and embrace this new, more effective method.

Response Guidelines

Once you have completed your initial post, reply to one of your classmates and share any additional tips you have for helping others embrace agility.

Course Resources

[Undergraduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide](#)

u10v2 - Interactive Learning Module: Capella Stories: Step Up to the Future of Work

Congratulations, you've made it through your first course! In this week's Capella Story, we'll look ahead to how you can use the 10 skills to keep climbing high in your own life and career.

Course Resources

[Capella Stories: Step Up to the Future of Work](#) | Transcript