Skill Building Blocks

Soft Skills are social, emotional, and cognitive skills that enable people to effectively interact. Soft skills are often NOT graded in school but are important for success in most aspects of work and life.

MHA Labs, a developer of 21st-century work skills, has developed a set of building blocks that help categorize the importance of work skills.

PERSONAL MINDSET

» Needs minimal supervision to complete tasks.

» Attempts to complete tasks independently before asking for help.

» Follows rules/directions as required by the task/situation.

» Maintains focus on tasks despite internal (e.g., emotional) and/or external distractions.

» Avoids actions that have produced undesirable consequences or results in the past.

» Strives to overcome barriers/set-backs, seeking assistance when needed.

» Adapts approach in response to new conditions or others' actions.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

» Sets and prioritizes goals that reflect a self-awareness of one's capabilities, interests, emotions, and/or needs.

» Breaks goals into actionable steps.

» Accurately estimates level of effort and establishes realistic timelines.

» Manages time to complete tasks on schedule.

» Applies existing/newly acquired knowledge, skills, and/or strategies that one determines to be useful for achieving goals.

» Monitors progress and own performance, adjusting approach as necessary.

» Demonstrates a belief that one's own actions are associated with goal attainment.

SOCIAL AWARENESS

» Recognizes the consequences of one's actions.

» Balances own needs with the needs of others.

» Takes into consideration others' situations/ feelings.

» Develops and implements strategies for navigating in different contexts (i.e., manages different patterns of behavior, rules, and norms).

COMMUNICATION

» Organizes information that serves the purpose of the message, context, and audience.

» Uses and adjusts communication strategies as needed based on the purpose of the message, context, and audience.

» Signals listening according to the rules/norms of the context and audience.

» Seeks input to gauge others' understanding of the message.

» Asks questions to deepen and/or clarify one's understanding when listening to others.

COLLABORATION

» Completes tasks as they have been assigned or agreed upon by the group.

» Helps team members complete tasks, as needed.

» Encourages the ideas, opinions, and contributions of others, leveraging individual strengths.

» Provides feedback in a manner that is sensitive to others' situation/feelings.

» Clarifies areas of disagreement/conflict that need to be addressed to achieve a common goal.

» Seeks to obtain resolution of disagreements/conflicts to achieve a common goal.

PROBLEM SOLVING

» Defines problems by considering all potential parts and related causes.

» Gathers and organizes relevant information about a problem from multiple sources.

» Generates potential solutions to a problem, seeking and leveraging diverse perspectives.

» Identifies alternative ideas/processes that are more effective than the ones previously used/suggested.

» Evaluates the advantages and disadvantages associated with each potential solution identified for a problem.

» Selects and implements best solution based on evaluation of advantages and disadvantages of each potential solution.

Think about these skills:

- Which of these skills do you have?

- Which of these skills could you work on?

- How are these skills useful in today's work world?

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