CAREER INSIGHTS & GUIDANCE



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THE MAIN CHALLENGE FACING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY TODAY

One of the key challenges faced by today's graduates is not a lack of academic qualification, but a gap in communication readiness for the workplace. While many graduates are technically competent, they often struggle with interpersonal communication skills such as active listening, clear expression of ideas, managing conflict, and adapting messages to different audiences. In diverse and fast-paced work environments, these shortcomings can lead to misunderstandings, weakened teamwork, and reduced professional confidence.

Equally important, yet often overlooked, is intrapersonal communication, hence the internal dialogue through which individuals interpret experiences, regulate emotions, and form self-perceptions. Graduates who engage in negative self-talk or lack self-awareness may experience anxiety, reduced resilience, and difficulty responding constructively to feedback. Without positive intrapersonal communication, even strong interpersonal skills can falter under pressure.

When graduates develop both interpersonal and positive intrapersonal communication skills, their working experience improves significantly. Effective interpersonal communication fosters collaboration, trust, and a sense of belonging in the workplace. At the same time, healthy intrapersonal communication supports emotional regulation, confidence, and adaptability. Together, these skills enable graduates to navigate challenges with clarity, respond professionally to feedback, and build meaningful workplace relationships. Ultimately, graduates who communicate well with others and with themselves are better equipped to grow, contribute, and thrive in their early careers.

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS IN PREPARING FOR THEIR FUTURE CAREERS

a. Practice Active Listening
Students should train themselves to listen with the intention to understand, not to reply. This involves maintaining eye contact, avoiding interruptions, and summarising what others have said before responding. Active listening reduces misunderstandings and strengthens relationships.

b. Develop Clear and Respectful Expression
Students can practise expressing ideas clearly and confidently through class discussions, presentations, and group work. Using respectful language, appropriate tone, and non-verbal cues (such as posture and facial expressions) helps messages to be received positively.

c. Engage in Collaborative Activities
Group projects, debates, and role-playing activities expose students to diverse viewpoints. These experiences help students learn how to negotiate meaning, manage disagreement, and adapt communication styles to different personalities.

d. Seek Constructive Feedback
Students should actively seek feedback from lecturers, peers, or mentors about their communication style. Reflecting on feedback helps identify areas for improvement and builds self-awareness.

e. Strengthen Digital Communication Skills
As workplaces rely heavily on emails, messaging platforms, and virtual meetings, students must learn professional digital communication etiquette, including clarity, politeness, and appropriate response timing.

ONE CAREER LESSON LEARNED THE HARD WAY

My journey began as a science-stream student in school, where I developed a strong foundation in analytical thinking, discipline, and problem-solving. This early interest led me to pursue a Diploma in Electronic Engineering, a phase that trained me to think systematically, logically, and with precision.

Over time, I realised that while I enjoyed understanding systems and technology, I was increasingly drawn to understanding people, communication, and meaning. This awareness prompted a pivotal shift into the social sciences, specifically the fields of communication and media. It was a challenging transition, but one that allowed me to integrate structured thinking with human-centred perspectives.

My professional experiences then took me across multiple sectors. Working in the private sector, particularly in the media industry, exposed me to fast-paced environments, real-world communication challenges, and performance-driven expectations. My experience in the government sector further shaped my understanding of public communication, policy implementation, and organisational dynamics. Today, as a university lecturer, I am able to draw upon these diverse experiences to bridge theory and practice in my teaching, research, and engagement with students.

Looking back, every phase of my journey—science, engineering, communication, industry, public service, and academia—has played a crucial role in shaping who I am today. These experiences have strengthened my adaptability, broadened my perspective, and reinforced my belief in interdisciplinary learning.

"WITHOUT POSITIVE INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION, EVEN STRONG INTERPERSONAL SKILLS CAN FALTER UNDER PRESSURE"



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