



MODULE 9: **UNDERSTANDING** **THE WORLD OF WORK**

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK
LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME



nyda

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A dream doesn't become reality through magic.
It takes sweat, determination, and hard work.

Kevin-Prince Boateng

Module outcomes

By the end of this session, you will:

- Know what the new world of work looks like
- Be able to describe the skills needed in the 4IR
- Be able to use technology when searching for a job
- Understand what is meant by 21st Century Skills
- Know what employers are looking for
- Be able to explain a good fit between you and the world of work
- Know how to make yourself employable
- Know what is meant by 'work experience'
- Understand which soft skills are necessary for successful entrepreneurs





1. Introduction

The world of work in the 21st century is very different to the one our parents and grandparents experienced. How you work, where you work, or where you will be working one day, has been greatly affected by technology. Experts predict that in the next 25 years a large percentage of jobs will no longer exist due to increasing automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. We already have self-driving cars, companies such as Amazon and DHL use drones to deliver products to your doorstep, and 3D printers can print anything from toys to houses to organs.

These advances in technology indicate that there will be a great need for workers to be highly literate in technology, business, and creativity. In addition, education will likely change with a lesser need for formal university education and a greater need for skills. Today's workforce needs to be flexible and adaptable and be prepared for continuous learning and upskilling.

2. The past and future world of work

The world of work has changed dramatically over the centuries. The figure below demonstrates how things have changed. With each of the first three advancements—the steam engine, the age of science, and mass production, and the rise of digital technology—the world around us fundamentally changed.

Revolution	Year	Information
 1	1784	Steam, water, mechanical production
 2	1870	Electricity, mass production
 3	1969	Electronics, IT, automated production
 4	?	Cyber-physical systems, robotics

The 4IR also brings a lot of change. This revolution is powered by cloud, social, mobile, the internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI). If you want to learn more about these revolutions and specifically 4IR, search for the free resources of the World Economic Forum. Some people say that robots or machines will take over the world and all the jobs – but fortunately, that is not true. There is still good news for human beings!

A report from the McKinsey Global Institute has highlighted how they think a range of jobs based on human skills are likely to be affected by AI and automation. The report places work skills into five distinct categories: physical and manual; basic cognitive; higher cognitive;

social and emotional; and technological. Physical and manual skills involve tasks that could be performed by relatively unskilled labour (e.g. drivers and assembly line workers) and skilled workers (e.g. nurses and electricians). Cognitive abilities like basic literacy and numeracy are needed by workers such as cashiers, customer service staff, typists, and clerks. According to the report, it is mostly workers with these two skills sets who are likely to suffer most.

Higher cognitive skills include advanced literacy and writing, quantitative and statistical skills, critical thinking, and complex information processing. Doctors, accountants, research analysts, writers and editors typically use these. Social and emotional, or “soft skills”: include advanced communication and negotiation, empathy, the ability to learn continuously, to manage others and be adaptable. Business development, programming, emergency response, and counselling use these skills. Technological skills include basic to advanced IT skills, data analysis, engineering, and research. It seems that there will be an increased need for people who have higher cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, and especially technological skills. We as humans still beat robots when it comes to these three skills sets!

Social and emotional skills are clearly very important. Much has been written about the 21st century skills, which speak exactly about social and emotional skills.

3. 21st Century skills


The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that individuals need to develop to succeed in the information age. These skills can be divided into four main groups – all starting with the letter **C**: You need to be able to have **C**ritical thinking, and **C**reativity in solving problems. Then you need to be able to **C**ommunicate your ideas and **C**ollaborate with others. People often refer to these kinds of skills as “soft skills” or “personal and interpersonal skills”. We can also call it the 4C’s of 21st century skills.

<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective listening Delivering oral presentations Communicate using digital media Engaging in conversations and discussion Communicating in diverse environments 	<p>COLLABORATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership & initiative Cooperation Flexibility Responsibility & productivity Collaborate using digital media Responsiveness & constructive feedback
<p>CREATIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idea generation Idea design & refinement Openness & courage to explore Work creatively with others Creative production and innovation 	<p>CRITICAL THINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information & discovery Interpretation & analysis Reasoning & constructing arguments Problem-solving Systems thinking

If you put the 4C's under a microscope, you will find that the following skills are often highlighted:

1. **Reliability** - Will you go to work on time? Will you be at work every day? Will you call in to work if you are sick?
2. **Critical thinking & Problem-solving skills** - Problems arise every day at work. Can you cope with them? Can you make the right decision? Employers need the assurance that you can deal with job challenges.
3. **Organisational skills** - Life in the working world requires being able to sort through information and keep files and information neat and tidy.
4. **Leadership skills** - Leadership consists of a strong sense of self-confidence and the ability to take initiative. Can you take an active role in a team building project? Can you speak up about your ideas?
5. **Collaboration skills** - Are you a good team player? Do you get along with people? Do you offer ideas and input into projects?
6. **Communication skills** - Can you communicate effectively with co-workers, superiors, and staff members?
7. **Attention to detail** – Do you tend to get details right more often than not, or do you find details irritating?
8. **Initiative** - Do you like to take the initiative, or do you rather stand back and let others take the first step?
9. **Enthusiasm** - Do you show interest and passion for your work, or do you just do what is necessary?
10. **Creativity** - Can you come up with new ideas or solve problems in original ways?

ACTIVITY 1



Task

Choose three of the above skills and explain to the rest of the group how you display these abilities by using examples.

4. What employers are looking for

Let's imagine you are the owner of a restaurant. There are many things that will determine the success of your business. One of the most important things is your MENU. The content of your menu will either attract or turn potential customers away. You would like to make a success of your business and therefore you need to make sure that you serve them what they want (and of course it should be tasty so that they will come back for more!). For you to know what they will like; you first must do a bit of research!



This process is very similar when you are looking for a job. What you put on your MENU (CV) needs to be in line with what the hungry customer (potential employer) is craving for. The traditional approach to research jobs is to buy newspapers and look in their careers section. This remains a very effective manner of finding a job. Some newspapers even specialise in placing job advertisements. These days, however, electronic media makes it so much easier to look for a job in the sector we want.

5. Using social and electronic media to do research

There are many sites on the internet that you can use to find a possible job. Go and try the following ones:

Careers 24: <https://www.careers24.com/>

PNet: <https://www.pnet.co.za/>

Career Junction: <https://www.careerjunction.co.za>

These sites are online recruitment sites and advertise jobs by South Africa's leading companies as well as internationally. Recruiters can post job ads, as well as search the databases of CV's. Candidates can search job ads for available positions, upload their CV's and apply online for relevant employment opportunities.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/>

With LinkedIn, advertisements get sent to you! But you can also explore available jobs on this platform. Here you can find types of jobs in a sector or industry and the geographic area you are interested in. By using this method, you save yourself a lot of time.

Now that you know where to find information on what skills employers are looking for, and that these skills are regarded as relevant to the 21st century, let's put this into action with a number of different activities.

6. Analysing job advertisements

The best way to find out what employers are looking for in the current world of work is by analysing job advertisements. In this activity you will be required to read through a few given job advertisements (obtained from LinkedIn!). You will see that we continuously find two categories of requirements. The first one relates to specific qualifications required to do the job, for example, in a job that requires high-level accounting skills, they will ask for something such as a BCom (Accounting) degree. The first category also relates to specific technical skills, for example, having experience in using Pastel for accounting purposes. The second category refers to the soft skills/21st century skills that we have discussed above.

Each time you apply for a job, you need to tailor-make your CV according to the skills highlighted in the advertisement. The next activity will help you to quickly scan and evaluate job advertisements to see whether you are meeting the requirements. As you read through the advertisement, please mark the words that stand out as requirements for the position in the following ways. For **technical/qualification related requirements**, underline the words. For **soft skills/21st century skills** requirements, put a circle around the words. Then list all the words in two separate columns according to the two categories below. We will use the last column in the next activity when we find the fit between the workplace and yourself.

ACTIVITY 2

Position:		
Technical/Qualification	21 st Century/Soft skills	My Experience & Skills



1. Job descriptions – Sales consultant/Tour consultant

Company XYZ is looking for an experienced, driven *Sales Consultant / Tour Consultant*. This is what we are looking for:

- Previous Sales experience essential, with the ability to achieve high conversion rates
- Strong Southern African travel knowledge
- Minimum 3 years' experience in itinerary design
- Ability to accurately use systems and follow processes to provide a quality customer experience
- Driven and motivated by sales targets and to achieve sales incentives
- Strong verbal and written communication skills in English and preferably a local language
- An understanding of and a passion for various styles of travel
- Intermediate - Advanced Excel
- Diploma/Degree in Travel & Tourism (preferable)
- Excellent organisational skills, attention to detail, ability to prioritize and manage own workload
- Experience working on Travel Studio (preferable)

2. Job Description – Registered Nurse

Company ABC has a position available for a registered nurse. Our requirements are:

- Nursing diploma
- Registered with the SANC as a Reg Nurse
- 2-3 years nursing experience within a hospital and/or laboratory environment
- Knowledge of the Nursing Council Regulations and National Health Act
- Communication skills
- Numerical reasoning skills
- Knowledge of the Meditech system
- Basic knowledge of MS Word and Excel
- Customer focus
- Action orientation
- Problem-solving
- Quality orientation
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Flexibility
- Teamwork
- Attention to detail
- Task structuring
- Stress management
- Technical knowledge

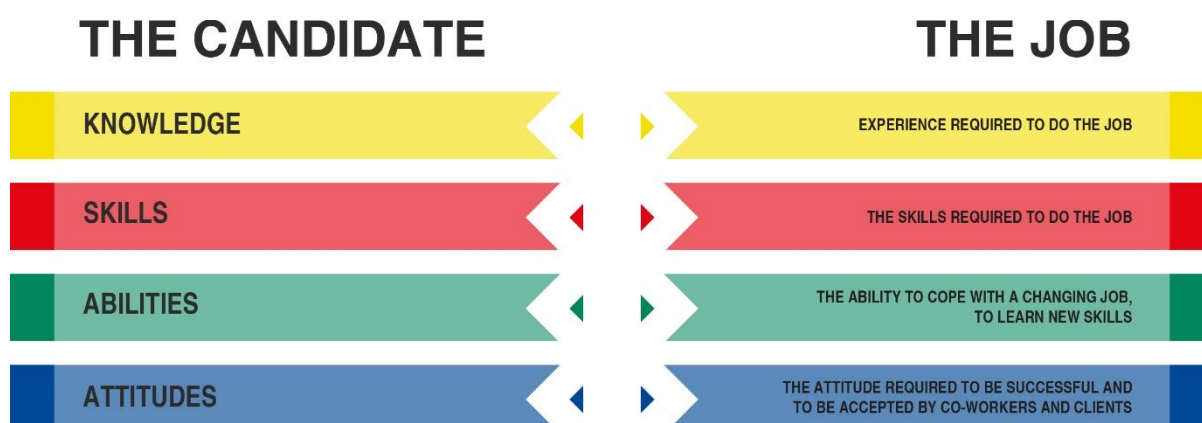
3. Job Description – Laboratory Technician

Company PYT is looking for a laboratory technician with the following skills:

- Organised and neat
- Ability to multitask in a fast pace, and team-orientated environment.
- Service-orientated
- Positive and passionate attitude
- Excellent communication skills
- Flexible
- A self-starter, takes initiative, pro-active
- Basic Math and Computer skills, SAP is a bonus.
- Ideally with previous lab experiences
- Adhere to instructions
- Previous flavour/food compounding experience
- High School Diploma or preferably a Degree/Diploma in Food Science, Chemistry, Biology.
- 1-3 years' experience in a food applications lab, production, or related area.

7. Finding a good fit between you and the world of work

Fit is all about matching a candidate to a job. The best candidate for the job will be the one who matches all the requirements of the job. The previous exercise is a basic way to determine your fit for the advertised positions. The figure below illustrates the concept of fit.



(Bright, 2011)

Employers think about “fit” in terms of four qualities:

- **Knowledge**, which refers to the experience and qualifications that you possess.
- **Skills**, which refers to the demonstrated skills you have.
- **Ability**, which shows your potential to carry out a range of different tasks beyond your immediate skills or knowledge, and the degree to which you can take on new tasks successfully or be trained in new methods.
- **Attitude**, which indicates your personality, and the degree to which you are enthusiastic, flexible, and positive in approach.

Based on the above, merely setting out your life history on a CV (your menu) is highly unlikely to offer the best fit. Therefore, it is important to tailor your CV to each position to increase the fit between you and the job. Be cautious not to tell lies when it comes to how you fit the job requirements. If you would like to increase your chances to meet more of the requirements of a potential job, it is extremely important that you gain work experience even long before you start earning a salary.

8. Make yourself employable

If you know what employers are looking for, you can do a lot to make yourself attractive or employable, especially when it comes to the required soft skills. You need to find or create opportunities to develop these and to demonstrate that you have these skills. Employers will most likely ask for situations where you used these skills. They will often require work experience.

8.1 What do they mean by ‘work experience’?

When employers say they are looking for experience, it does not always mean a full-time paid job. Any experience where you have developed and used the 21st century skills will count in your favour. These skills are transferrable from one situation to another. In other words: if you can use them in one context, it means you should be able to also use them in another context! Part-time work and volunteering are a great way of building skills. It also allows you to establish contacts, gain visibility and credibility, refine your skills, and develop new competencies at your own pace, with a low level of career risk, especially if you target industries and companies in your areas of interests. Let’s do a quick survey of all the opportunities where you have developed and used your 21st century skills.

8.2 My work experience and 21st century skills

Think back to all the activities, hobbies, volunteer work, and part-time or holiday jobs you have been involved in. You should discover that you already have many transferable work skills that you can highlight in your CV or during a job interview. List them in the table below. Once you have identified the activities and jobs, think about all the skills that you had to develop and use in these situations. Now list these skills.

ACTIVITY 3

Activity/hobby/volunteer/part-time	21st Century Skills/Soft Skills/Transferable Skills
e.g. Member of study group	Collaboration, communication, listening, patience, organising
e.g. Leader at church youth group	Organising, communication, presentation, reliability
e.g. Soccer team	Teamwork, enthusiasm, discipline, planning
e.g. School prefect	Leadership, organising, communication
e.g. Telesales for insurance group	Listening, communication, persuasion, resilience

9. Entrepreneurship

When you intend to start a business, both hard and soft skills are equally important. **Hard skills** are the technical skills you develop through learning. Each job comes with its own requirements for hard skills. If you want to be a graphic designer, for example, you need technical and artistic skills. If you want to be an electrician, you have to know about electrical installations. A bookkeeper needs to know about accounting. You will usually learn these skills through a qualification, course, or internship.

Soft skills are the ones you obtain not through general education, but through life skills programmes, such as this one, and personal growth. We also call them social and emotional skills, or sometimes Emotional Intelligence. We already said that soft skills for most jobs are those ones that you can transfer from one situation to another. They include listening, communication, stress management, teamwork, and presentation skills. All the 21st century skills that we mentioned previously, are soft skills. For successful entrepreneurship, there is a long list of useful soft skills. Make sure that you develop these, even if you are employed by another boss!

ACTIVITY 4

Task



Which of the following skills do you already have? Think about your “work experience” where you have developed these skills. Mark them with a tick.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong social skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to inspire other people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking or courage | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Time management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to see opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem-solving skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be proactive – don't wait for opportunities | |

Now, for each unticked soft skill, identify one place or situation where you can start developing these skills. Remember, it does not have to cost you any money! Think about any situation where you can make a difference.

10. My Action Plan

Personal Reflection



Please take a moment to reflect on the value of this life skills module that you have completed now. Also think how you are going to apply what you have learnt to develop yourself as best as you can.

1. What was interesting and new to you in this module?

2. What was the most valuable insight that you had today?

3. How can you use what you discovered today?

4. What will you do differently from now on as a result of what you learned today?

5. What is the first step you will take?

6. What are some of the obstacles you may encounter?

7. What will be the best way to deal with them?

8. How will you know that you have successfully applied your new knowledge and skills?

GOOD LUCK WITH THIS!

11. Recommended resources

Bolles, R. N., 2019: What colour is your parachute: A practical manual for job-hunters and career changers.

Businesstech. (2019). 16 South African jobs that are high in demand right now. Online resource, available at <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/305558/16-south-african-jobs-that-are-in-high-demand-right-now/>

Career exploration portal: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Joshi, M. (2017) Soft skills. Online resource, available at <https://bookboon.com/en/soft-skills-ebook>

Jana, L. (2018). Skills every child will need to succeed in 21st century (applicable to people of any age). TEDTalk available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_1Zv_ECv0g

McKinsey Global Institute. (2018). Skills shift. Automation and the future of the workforce. McKinsey & Company.

New world of work: Aligning education with employer needs. Online resource, available at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMBnumAMdQUPY1ptL7VgsDQ/featured>

Schwab, K. (2016). The fourth industrial revolution. New York: World Economic Forum.
World Economic Forum (2018). Eight futures of work. Scenarios and their implications. Online resource, available at www.weforum.org

“Entrepreneurs create value and stimulate economic progress by finding new and better ways of doing things. They shift economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield. They see and exploit opportunities.”

Baptiste & Schumpeter-



Did you know?

We have many more modules that were specifically designed to help you develop those skills that are essential to function effectively in life and in the workplace. Ask your facilitator about the following modules:

1. Who am I?
2. Building my brand
3. Managing time
4. Be more resilient
5. Creative problem solving and decision making
6. Building interpersonal relationships
7. Effective communication
8. Dealing with conflict
9. Understanding the world of work
10. Personal development plan

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You cannot teach a man anything.
You can only help him discover it
within himself.

Galileo

