The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	ENGL1004
Subject Title	Communication Skills at Work
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite/ Co-requisite/ Exclusion	None
Objectives	The subject seeks to inform students about the role of communication in effective management across all areas of business and to teach them practical communication skills.
	It brings together communication skills and reflective practice on being an effective manager. It explores the multifaceted tasks and responsibilities that managers must undertake. It emphasizes the need for managers to be able to work with their staff to solve a range of diverse concerns including human resourcing, workflow structures and personal work relationships. Managers need to draw on their communication skills to avert possible conflicts and to engage their staff to work harmoniously together.
	Communication skills are often learned on the job when a person is promoted to a management position. The result is that many people who have the potential to be effective managers, fail because they have not learned the basic communication skills that all effective managers need to employ. The subject has relevance for all students entering the professional workforce and, irrespective of their chosen professions (engineering, accountancy or nursing) provides them with skills to negotiate and manage workplace responsibilities.
	Students will be introduced to a basic management communication issues around managing change in the workplace, the communication of leadership and workplace conflict. They will be introduced to issues around managing the virtual team and the many types of workplace diversity that now confront today's managers.
	Learning these skills while at university will equip them with knowledge that will enable them to aspire to management positions. In addition, developing these communication skills may assist them with managing their group work at university.

Intended Learning Outcomes *(Note 1)*	Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to: a) Know what being an effective manager means from a communication perspective. Critically recognise good management techniques (communication and time management skills) that are vital for teams and organisations to function effectively. b) Articulate what managers need to know about a range of business situations such as organisational change, workplace diversity and human resource concerns. c) Related to b) manage diverse group and team situations to achieve required key performance indicators. d) Demonstrate the importance of reflective practice as it relates to managing conflict across several workplace contexts. e) Recognise and articulate the role of a manager as both problem solver and leader.
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus *(Note 2)*	1. **Framing the role of the manager as a communicator** What does being a manager mean? What does communication as a manager mean? Can everybody be a manager? What are the responsibilities of a manager? 2. **Different workplace contexts may mean different management styles** What are the styles of management communication? What are the core essentials of management communication? Being a flexible and adaptable manager 3. **Communicating as a manager across diverse contexts** Managing diversity in the workplace Managing e-workplace situations Intercultural communication as a manager 4. **How do managers deal with change in the workplace?** How to evaluate the change Understanding the basic elements of organizational change How to manage organizational change effectively How to manage organizational change when it is not effective 5. **Managers have to work with people** Working with subordinates – good communication skills Working with peers – good communication skills Working with those a manager reports to – good communication skills 6. **Conflict resolution and communication as a manager** Dealing with rather than avoiding conflict in the workplace The role of agentic communication in workplace conflict 7. **How to be an effective manager and a leader** Some basic theory on leadership and communication When to be a leader and when to allow others to lead
Teaching/Learning Methodology *(Note 3)*	1. Lectures (with required set reading for each week) 2. Analysis of video material 3. Group discussions 4. In-class presentations This subject will include a number of different learning stimuli. Lectures will provide the base material with video being used to provide relevant day to day examples of the lecture content. Students will break into groups to discuss the material from the lecture and videos and discuss their views with the class as a whole. Specific aspects of manager communication and associated problems will be presented in class.

Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes *(Note 4)*							

Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)				
		a	b	c	d	e
1. In-class active participation	15%	✓	✓			✓
2. Group presentation	30%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Individual written assignment	55%	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Total	100 %					

Active participation through in-class discussions and activities forms 15% of the total assessment and provides students with opportunities to articulate their ideas and understanding of the course material throughout the semester.

The group presentation allows students to learn how to work together and how to reflect on challenges encountered within a group. This activity involves choosing a real-world example of miscommunication in the workplace that the group finds particularly interesting or important. Each group will review and cite relevant literature from the course readings and additional academic sources to explain why the miscommunication occurred and what steps could have been taken to prevent it. Two-thirds of the presentation will consist of a discussion on the chosen example of workplace miscommunication, and the remaining one-third of the presentation will be spent discussing communication successes and difficulties the group encountered while putting together the first portion of this presentation.

The written assignment is an individual assignment consisting of a 2,250-to-2,750-word paper. This assignment involves conducting an extensive literature search, synthesising, and evaluating information and ideas from a wide range of reputable academic sources, and demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the issues. Students are expected to choose a real-world business example of (mis)communication and to discuss the reasons for the success or failure of the organization during this instance and the consequences for the organization. The chosen example should be different than the example chosen for the group presentation above. Students should also briefly compare the chosen example to the student's own struggles (or lack of struggle) cooperating with others this semester. Only one-fifth of the paper should be spent describing the instance of (mis)communication – the rest should be spent using literature to explain the reasons for the success or failure.

Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ Lectures (13x 3 hours)	39 Hrs.
	▪ Individual and Group Study	26 Hrs.
	▪ Written Assignment	26 Hrs.
	▪ Private Study	26 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	117 Hrs.

Reading List and References	**Required Readings** Holmes, J., & Stubbe, M. (2015). *Power and politeness in the workplace: A sociolinguistic analysis of talk at work*. Routledge. Harms, L. (2016). *Working with people: Communication skills for reflective practice* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. **Additional Readings** Chasen, E. & Putnam, R. (2012). *The manager's communication toolbox*. ASTD Press. Tourish, D. (2012). Developing leaders in turbulent times: Five steps towards integrating soft practices with hard measures of organizational performance. *Organizational Dynamics, 41*(1), 23-31. Other relevant journal articles. Video material sourced by lecturer.

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