

Indirect Communication as a Teaching Method for Developing Student Capability in Higher Education

Melynie Tooley
National Chi Nan University
meltooley@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The capacity of a student to apply knowledge in new contexts involves the ability to transfer memorized knowledge to meaning, in real-world situations. However, there are conflicting views and an overall lack of research regarding how (the process) students in higher education, transfer that knowledge, especially in highly dynamic environments where knowledge is rapidly and continuously evolving – for example, in the current technology arena and business industry. While university scholars have discussed the need for a change in teaching styles, to accommodate the new technological generation of students, none have approached the topic from the aspect of indirect communication, as a teaching method for acquiring capability. The traditional lecture and rote memorization techniques are inadequate, yet are still used in today’s classrooms. Using Soren Kierkegaard’s theory of indirect communication, the present study explores how indirect communication can be used as an innovative educational tool for teachers in moving students from memorized textbook knowledge to developing capability that can be used in new contexts and in real-world situations.

Keywords: Indirect communication, capability, knowledge transfer, higher education

INTRODUCTION

One of the main purposes of higher education is to prepare students to apply learned knowledge in new contexts and in real-world situations. However, recent studies have shown that there is a disconnect between higher education and a students’ workforce readiness (ahealliance.org, 2020). Work-readiness has been defined as “possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding that will enable new graduates to make productive contributions to organizational objectives *soon after commencing employment*” (Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2006, p. 2). Companies in major industries report that they are unable to grow or compete because the students coming out of college are not able to apply the knowledge obtained in school with the capacity to perform specific tasks (penn-mar.org, 2022). A global talent research study surveyed more than 40,000 employers in 40 countries, revealed that four out of five employers report difficulty in finding qualified talent (Manpower Group, 2023; Myers, 2022). Within the global community, this problem has risen from 38 percent in 2015 to an all-time high of 77 percent in 2023 (Myers; OECD.org, 2021; Manpower Group, 2023; Verma, Nankervis, Priyono, & Noorziah, 2018), with skills shortage being the biggest threat to business disruption in the future (Conklin, 2022).

This problem is not just a global issue. Asia-Pacific employers, in areas such as Taiwan, Singapore, China, and Hong Kong, are also facing the highest talent shortages. With shrinking birth rates and the rise of early retirees, 90 percent of employers in Taiwan are reported to having difficulty with finding the qualified talent they need, representing the highest percentage within the global market (Manpower Group, 2023). Thus, one must consider the problem of work-

readiness and/or, what is meant by qualified talent, and examine the competencies that are required to mitigate this problem.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified work-readiness as the ability to perform both hard and soft skills (naceweb.org, 2022). Hard skills can be defined as objective, quantifiable skills gained through training, school, or work experiences (Tankovic, Kapes, & Kraljic, 2021) and can be measured by the employee’s ability to perform a specific task (penn-mar.org, 2022). For that reason, hard skills can, typically, be easily proven. For example, someone either knows how to open an Excel spreadsheet, or they do not know how to open an Excel spreadsheet (Girardin, 2022). In education, one would measure hard skills by a written exam, which could easily measure the ability to do mathematical functions or measure one’s grammar proficiency. However, soft skills are not easy to measure and can be more difficult to assess.

Soft skills are non-technical skills and describe how one works and interacts with others, or *how* an employee completes a task (Kaplan, 2022; penn-mar.org, 2022). Other researchers describe soft skills as personal attributes that “improve the interaction of individuals (Tankovic, Kapes, & Kraljic, 2021, p. 169), which permits them to deal effectively with the challenges of the work environment and everyday life (Tankovic, Kapes, & Kraljic, 2021), allowing them to better understand their own actions (Singh & Jaykumar, 2019). Ranade et al. (2010) identified soft skills as a behavior that directs employees towards goals that will make them more effective in *what they do* (Ranade, Tamara, Castiblanco, & Serna, 2010). Penn-mar.org (2022) suggests that soft skills include attributes such as thinking, behavior, and cognitive skills.

Even though most researchers agree that employers need both hard and soft skills, soft skills are regarded as of most importance to employers (ahealliance.org, 2020; Manpower Group, 2023; Verma, Nankervis, Priyono, & Noorziah, 2018; Tankovic, Kapes, & Kraljic, 2021; Singh & Jaykumar, 2019; Balcar, 2016; Succi & Canovi, 2020). According to Joanne Rosen, Chief Operations Officer at Write Choice Resumes, “Employers want to see how well [potential employees] work with people and can think beyond their learning” (Kaplan, 2022, p. 7).

Manpower (2023) lists five soft skill categories that employers are looking for in higher education graduates: Reliability and self-discipline, Resilience and adaptability, Reasoning and problem-solving, Creativity and originality, and Critical thinking and analysis. However, despite the undeniable importance of communication skills (Robles, 2012), existing studies show that the preparedness of future employees remains insufficient (Castillo, Angel-Urdinola, & Malo, 2021).

While research has shown the increasing need for soft skills, education systems pay limited attention to this topic and remain focused on the development of hard skills (Balcar, 2016; England, Nagel, & Salter, 2020; Daniels & Brooker, 2014). This is especially true with the introduction of AI tools, such as ChatGPT. This has created a scramble for universities to include AI-based training for its students. Thus, the emphasis on AI training continues to foster the need for hard skills education over soft skills education. However, the literature shows an entirely different scenario.

New studies suggest that AI tools will increase the demand for soft skills, not decrease them, as hard skills are more likely to be automated (Barnard-Bahn, 2024). In addition, the literature suggests that while AI might “edge out certain hard skills by automating routine tasks, it accentuates the value of soft skills, particularly those that revolve around human judgment, empathy, and creativity” (p. 13). Even in professions that traditionally rely on hard skills, such as software engineering and security, research indicates a shift towards the importance and need for soft skills. According to Lamri and Lubart (2023) soft skills may be a better predictor of the future

workplace because they become obsolete more slowly than hard skills. Doherty & Stevens (2023), suggests that the demand for soft skills, such as critical thinking, teamwork, change management, and communication, will increase over time. While hard skills, especially involving technical skills and routine tasks, will decrease as hard skills are more likely to become automated. Additional research suggests that AI will end up redirecting high-skilled workers towards tasks dependent on social skills and advanced cognitive abilities (Grennan & Michaely, 2020). While AI might “edge out certain hard skills by automating routine tasks” (Barnard-Bahn, 2024, p. 13), it accentuates the value of soft skills, especially those that revolve around problem-solving, teamwork and leadership (Ibitz, 2023). Senkosky (2023) goes so far as to suggest that the introduction of ChatGPT just increased the value of human capabilities in the workforce, not decreased. Thus, learning soft skills, in addition to hard skills becomes an important issue for a student’s future success.

Even though research supports the need for the ability of students to be able to transfer knowledge (hard skills) into meaning (soft skills), no study so far has examined the process by which a student accomplishes this task. This study attempts to fill this gap, by examining that process and the role of indirect communication to enhance the understanding of transference of knowledge to meaning from the perspective of the student. Thus, the research question that guided this study was: How can teachers use indirect communication as a method for Taiwanese college students to transfer memorized facts into meaning, and thus develop capability that can be used in new contexts and in real-world situations?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two methods by which exchange of information can be accomplished: Directly, which conveys knowledge by way of logic and reason, where the author’s intentions are obvious; or indirectly, which hides or camouflages the speaker’s true intentions and conveys knowledge “by way of story, narrative, and symbol” (Fraser, 2020, p. 4). For example, one can say, ‘please close the window,’ or one can say, ‘it sure is cold in here.’ The first example is the direct form of communication and the second represents an indirect form of communication. According to Mooney (1997), communicating one’s straightforward beliefs is not problematic. For example, if someone tells you it is sunny in Florida, or that one’s neighbor has been unbelievably rude, unless one doubts the speaker’s character, or detects any irony in the speaker’s voice, a person will believe what they are being told. Thus, “the transmission will be *direct* and uncomplicated by the need for *interpretation* or worries about unresolved ambiguities” (Mooney, 1997, p. 132). However, if someone states that they have just become a grandmother, this simple comment can evoke interpretations as to the meaning of what being a grandmother means to that person – whether it is good or bad, or whether that person is happy or sad about this experience – and may evoke questions from the recipient. Thus, the transmission is indirect and will require clarification.

Yeo (1981) provides another way of thinking about direct and indirect communication by using the analogy of pain. Pain can be understood through a second-hand experience, when the information one has available is based on someone else’s description of the pain. Or, pain can be understood through first-hand experience. Once someone has experienced pain for themselves, one no longer needs to rely on someone else’s description. Yeo (1981) states that how someone arrives at this understanding is “like the difference between imagining and experiencing something” (p. 101). Kierkegaard (2009) warns us of “the infinite difference which exists between understanding something in possibility and understanding something in actuality” (Kierkegaard, p. 202). Kierkegaard goes on to state, “The fact is that when I understand something in possibility,

I do not become essentially changed. I remain in the old ways and make use of my imagination; when it becomes actuality, then it is *I* who am changed” (Kierkegaard, 2009, p. 202). Turnbull (2009) explains that this type of communication is a form of ambiguity which Kierkegaard would have considered as indirect communication.

Theory of Indirect Communication

Soren Kierkegaard was the first to explore and coin the concept of ‘indirect communication’ providing an alternative interpretation of indirect communication, (and its application) as it applies to the field of communication. Kierkegaard’s perspective on communication was that the communication of knowledge comes by way of direct communication (Fraser, 2020), where the speaker is responsible for clear communication. However, in indirect communication theory, the burden of understanding the message falls to the recipient to interpret. Indirect communication, conveys meaning not just by the words, but by nonverbal behaviors, tone of voice, pauses, and silence (Ting-Toomey, 1999), as well as implication, understatement, innuendo, and figures of speech; requiring a widely shared understanding of the context of the communication (Joyce, 2012). Therefore, context plays a much more nuanced and internal role in indirect communication as opposed to direct communication. However, the burden still rests on the recipient to interpret, deduce, or perceive the meaning (Turnbull, 2009; Mooney, 2007). Herrman (2008) expounds on this idea by explaining that when the focus of communication is on knowledge, then neither the communicator nor the receiver is important. Kierkegaard (2000) felt this kind of direct communication was impersonal, especially in a classroom. It is *how* the communication is transmitted that is important to Kierkegaard, and is the defining characteristic of indirect communication.

Kierkegaard’s strategy of indirect communication arises out of the concept of what is communicated, and how it is communicated. His focus is on the meaning of communication itself (Kierkegaard, Journals and papers, 1967-1978). For Kierkegaard, coming to a meaningful understanding of both *what* was being communicated, and *how* it was being communicated was important (Fraser, 2020). Thus, “when one is concerned not simply with communicating something, but about communicating it in such a way as to facilitate a certain kind of understanding, the form of the communication becomes very important” (Yeo, 1981, p. 5). Kierkegaard’s strategy of indirect communication arises out of such concern.

The process by which capability is obtained seems to be through reflection, dialogue, and experience. Or, as Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory suggests, acquiring knowledge, reflecting on that knowledge, experimenting with that knowledge, reflecting on the knowledge gained through experimentation, and incorporating the meaningful knowledge into one’s life (Kolb; Morris, 2020). Kierkegaard believed that capability was developed only by indirect communication (Fraser, 2020; Herrmann, 2008).

Capability

Capability as Kierkegaard saw it involved ethics, truth, capacity, and actuality. Actuality, or actualizing, is the process of bringing the ethical into the light (Herrmann, 2008). He was suggesting that capability was about producing a passion to live by the self-knowledge, or truth, that was realized (Herrmann). In essence, capability is internalized knowledge. Thus, using the example above of the experience of pain, developing capability involves the shifting of knowledge, which is external, obvious, and less personal, to self-knowledge, which is internal, not obvious,

and deeply personal (Fraser, 2020; Herrmann, 2008; McPherson, 2001). Thus, “more than transference of knowledge, the indirect approach conveys the capability to embody the belief we encounter” (Fraser, p. 273). Fraser states it this way, [capability] “is not merely the change of mind but a change of will” (p. 205).

According to Fraser (2020), “The salient factor in indirect communication involves the communication of capability, rather than the communication of additional information” (p. 162). The purpose of indirect communication is to “provoke thought, stir emotions, and engage the imagination, rather than impart objective information” (p. 32). As Jean Piaget puts it, “The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done – men who are creative, inventive, and discoverers” (Silverman, 1980, p. 110). Kierkegaard would have proposed that the education of capability requires indirect communication. Direct and indirect communication are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, acquiring knowledge and using that knowledge to create meaning, and thus capability, functions as part of a continuum.

In summary, Kierkegaard saw education as communication that was designed to give students the knowledge, but then to give them the freedom to transfer that knowledge to capability. The process Kierkegaard proposed was one of dialogue, or discourse resulting from reflection, and being part of the reflection process. Kierkegaard did not isolate the educators from this process, but rather suggested that they be immersed along with their students, being equally open to change as a result of their own reflection coupled with the discourse among their students and themselves.

Role of the Teacher

Kierkegaard felt that it was the teacher’s job to seek reflection from the learner. Thus, it is necessary for the teacher to reflect upon the method (the how) of instruction that will best shape the learner’s presuppositions and guide them to their own conclusions. In this way, indirect communication is not only concerned with the transference of knowledge, but with the “conveyance of capability (the ability to do, and to live the truth, rather than just knowing the truth” (Fraser, p. xi). This form of communication between teachers and students, is more about what is *shown*, rather than what is *said* in the texts (Soderquist, 2016). Thus, the mission and purpose of indirect communication is to capture the attention of the listener and “utilize the written word, creative verbal device, or demonstration, to guide the recipient to come to their own conclusion” (Rose & Halliday, 2019, p. 7).

In *Philosophical Fragments* (Kierkegaard, 1985), Kierkegaard suggests that the role of the teacher is a maieutic process, in which the teacher acts as a midwife, who helps the student give birth to his/her own ideas (Fraser, 2020; Johansson, 2019). Kierkegaard wanted each person to recognize they were unique (Herrmann, 2008), and that uniqueness would result in each individual discovering meaningful knowledge distinct to themselves (Fraser, 2020; Aumann, 2019). It was by using the maieutic method of injecting questions from different perspectives, that Kierkegaard believed one would become that coach, or as Socrates suggested, the midwife (Johansson, 2019), helping people to birth truth leading to action, and the understanding to do, or as Kierkegaard liked to call it, capability (Herrmann, 2008).

This requires a true Socratic teacher to practice and perform a type of vanishing act. According to Dalton (Dalton, 2019), it is “the art of catalyzing the student’s own creative process and then erasing yourself – vanishing before anyone notices.” (Dalton, p. 248). It also requires the teacher to not think of herself as an authority. “A Socratic teacher stands on the same plane and

shares the same world as the student; there is no hierarchy of authority that makes the teacher transcendent” (p. 248). It is the student who must create their own truths. “The teacher is only an occasion, whoever he may be...because I can discover my own untruth only by myself, because only when *I* discover it is it discovered, not before, even though the whole world knew it” (Kierkegaard, 1985, p. 14). Kierkegaard compares this type of learning to a coachman who is not “capable of pulling the horse’s load, even though he may help the horse do it by means of the whip” ((1985, p. 13). Thus, there must be a way to teach that allows the student to teach himself. This is where indirect communication comes in. The purpose of indirect communication is to help the student give birth to their own creative solutions to problems, become critical thinkers, and capable citizens.

METHODS

A total of 38 undergraduate students from National Chi Nan University, in Taiwan, participated in the research. Data was collected from two university English classes, over a period of one semester (16 weeks). Both classes were elective classes and were chosen by the students on a voluntary basis. Both classes were senior-level classes, thus, the participants English language proficiency was expected to be at the intermediate to high intermediate level. All of the students were asked to write a personal reflexivity journal for each class activity, each week. There were 10 students in the public speaking class and 28 students in the school-wide elective (Business English II) course. The students in the public speaking course, were all English majors.

Three methods of data collection were used in this study: semi-structured audio and video-taped interviews, the students’ personal reflexivity journals, and the personal reflexivity journal and field notes from the researcher. Thirty-eight students turned in a weekly reflexive journal, detailing their thoughts over a 16-week semester. In order to seek an in-depth understanding of students’ learning experiences, students were asked to volunteer to record a semi-structured interview, at the end of the semester. Eighteen students volunteered for the interview: 5 from the public speaking class and 13 from the Business English II class. There were 6 boys and 12 girls. The interviews were conducted by a proxy who spoke both English and Chinese.

The data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) theory of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (TA) is “a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (‘themes’) within qualitative data” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). The advantage of this form of TA is its flexibility, allowing the research data to seek to understand what participants’ think, feel, and do (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

FINDINGS

The classroom was set up to be student-led, in a project-based environment, where the researcher acted only as the guide in self-discovery, not in the instruction of new knowledge. Because there were no right answers in this type of environment, the students were able to explore their own creativity, and share ideas with others without fear of criticism. The syllabus was built around in-class discussions of real-world topics, moral dilemmas, and presentations. The goal was to enhance their teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and to develop confidence – all while enhancing their English conversation ability.

Each week, the students were given a different challenge that required critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which they were required to complete in English. A specific theme was chosen for the weekly discussion with real-world examples. The students were asked to choose

their own topic, within that theme, and prepare a weekly presentation of their ideas to the class. The following pedagogical themes were used to frame the findings: Student presentations; Teamwork and sharing ideas; Discussion/debates on real-world topics; and Feedback.

Student Presentations

In-class presentations were recognized by the students as an activity that helped them develop conceptualization, critical thinking, confidence, and command of the English language. For example, one student stated, *“The in-class practice of preparing the presentations and speaking in class, helps me think about how to solve some questions that happen in the real world. It makes me have more confidence to speak English and not be afraid.”*

This type of learning environment created capability by allowing the student to birth their own ideas and to share those ideas in class. Because the students were able to choose their own topics, they had to do a considerable amount of research for each presentation. One student commented in his interview, *“For this assignment, I spent many hours just researching my topic for the presentation. I learned more from doing the research, than in doing the presentation itself. Although, having to present my research to the class gave me confidence to express my ideas.”*

The majority of students had never been asked, or been given the opportunity, to give a presentation in any of their other classes. Thus, this activity was a novelty for them. Giving weekly presentations was one of the most important activities in contributing to a students' move from knowledge to capability.

Teamwork and Sharing Ideas

The thematic analysis revealed that teamwork and sharing ideas was the second most valuable activity in making the students more capable. This is reflected in student comments such as: *“Working in a team helped me approach problem solving in a creative and innovative way. By discussing ideas with my teammates, we were able to think outside the box and come up with unique solutions that others may not have considered.”* Many students experienced a revelation, of sorts, because they had never been asked their opinion in a classroom setting. One student commented, *“I realized for the first time that I have an opinion and that others thought it was valuable. I do have something to contribute and my ideas are important.”*

Discussion and Debate using Real-World Scenarios

The discussion and debate of real-world scenarios was the third most important aspect students said helped them move from knowing about the material to living the material. These types of real-life decisions created student comments such as: *“Instead of simply reading or hearing about it. This hands-on experience allows for a deeper understanding and connection to the subject, making it more meaningful.”*

Discussion and debate required students to weigh the pros and cons, to give reasons for their choices, and think about the criteria they used to make their decisions. The use of real-world scenarios made the students utilize their critical thinking and conceptualization skills. The ability to develop confidence resides in their ability to give valid reasons for their decisions and to learn to approach solutions from both sides of a situation. One student summed it up this way, *“We must find solutions that align with both sides of a situation.”*

Feedback

Other indications of enhanced student capability involved the encouragement they received from both their classmates and the teacher, and the importance of feedback. *“Feedback from the teacher and my classmates encouraged me and gave me good ideas for improvement.”*

The teacher also played a large role in moving the students to becoming more capable. For example, student comments such as, *“The teacher was easy to talk to,”* or *“She teaches more than just conversation,”* and *“The teacher thinks every idea is important.”*

DISCUSSION

Indirect communication involves the maieutic method of instruction, where the teacher's job is to help the student give birth to their own ideas. This involves letting the student be in charge of their own education. A pedagogical model must incorporate the attitude of the teacher and the classroom environment. The classroom curriculum should be focused on ‘doing’ and applying every concept to a real-life scenario. The students were able to experience real-world situations in the classroom as they read, presented, analyzed, and reflected on issues such as moral dilemmas and real-life situations. Every aspect of the class curriculum involved the students engaged in doing an activity that involved discussing, presenting, analyzing, reflecting, collaborating, conversing, and evaluating. This resulted in a 2-prong approach to capability based on Kolb's learning cycle and Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication.

The use of real-world scenarios, moral dilemmas, and problem-solving activities were based on Kolb's learning cycle. However, the method of delivery by the teacher, such as avoiding direct communication and lecture, and utilizing Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication and ambiguity, resulted in classroom conditions where students were encouraged to dialogue. It provided a comfortable environment where the students would not lose face, while it also provided the foundation for a kind of intrigue that motivated students to engage with the process.

The same idea can be seen in reverse. The students think they are coming to class to learn English, but they are indirectly changing their world-views, learning to solve problems, making decisions, and overcoming their fear. Using indirect communication as a teaching method creates a double aspect of capability – the formation of soft skills, an increased capacity to use English in a variety of contexts and real-world applications, the development of higher-order thinking skills, and learning how to work in a team. This all happened without the students' awareness that they had developed these skills, or the realization that they had fundamentally changed, either their behavior, or their way of thinking.

In essence, the students became interested to the point that they were not even thinking about learning English – they just *did* learn English. In addition, the students also learned soft skills, such as critical thinking, conceptualization, and transferability; thus, they gained capability. And, as Kierkegaard suggested the teacher simply disappeared in the process.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

This study reveals that indirect communication methods are a sustainable method of teaching capability and enhancing those soft skills that employers need and expect from university graduates. Teachers who ask questions, probe the students for their ideas, allow dialogue and provide an interactive classroom, capture the attention of the students and create a joint learning environment for both teacher and student.

This study demonstrated how indirect communication can help students move from knowledge about something to being capable of using that knowledge in new contexts and in real-world situations. According to Kierkegaard, “there is no lack of information; something else is lacking, and this is something which the one cannot directly communicate to the other” (Kierkegaard, 2009). It is up to the educator to create an environment which allows the student to give birth to their own ideas. This creates students who are capable of doing new things not simply repeating the thoughts of others. That is the purpose and goal of education.

The significance of indirect learning as a communication model is of value as educators move towards solving the problem of rote-memorization and knowledge-only based learning. Thus, this paper could be helpful to any teacher attempting to teach students who have been schooled in a teacher-central culture. This study could be expanded to include other Asian countries or areas where students are learning English as a second language.

This study has the following limitations: First, it is limited in scope, as it was researched within the context of a single university in Taiwan, with students having a limited command of the English language. Second, the transferability of the findings to other Asian countries needs to be considered. Even though there are similarities in cultures across Asia, differences to exist that could impact the outcome.

REFERENCES

- Ahealliance.org. (2020, July 24). *The distinct connection between higher education and workforce readiness*. Retrieved from ahealliance.org: <https://www.ahealliance.org/uncategorized/the-distinct-connection-between-higher-education-and-workforce-readiness/>
- Aumann, A. (2019). Kierkegaard on the value of art: an indirect method of communication. In A. Buben, E. Helms, & P. Stokes, *The Kierkegaardian Mind* (pp. 166-176). New York: Rutledge.
- Balcar, J. (2016). Is it better to invest in hard or soft skills? *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27(4), 453-470. doi:10.1177/1035304616674613
- Barnard-Bahn, L. (2024). Decoding job market trends: ChatGPT's influence on soft and hard skill demands. *Scripps Senior Thesis*. 2414. Retrieved from https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3514&context=scripps_theses.
- Bok, D. (2006). *Our underachieving colleges: A candid look at how much students learn and why they should be learning more*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.
- Castillo, C., Angel-Urdinola, D., & Malo, S. (2021, July 26). *How do we know if college students have the skills of the future? - The "DESCAES" skills assessment offers the answer*. Retrieved from worldbank.org: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/how-do-we-know-if-college-students-have-skills-future-descaes-skills-assessment-offers>.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 297-298. doi:10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613.

- Conklin, H. (2022, April 8). *The skills shortage is 2022's biggest threat*. Retrieved from fortune.com: <https://fortune.com/2022/04/08/online-learning-workforce-training-digital-skills-gap/>
- Dalton, S. (2019). How to be a terrible teacher: Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments on what education is no. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 45(3), 241-264. doi:10.1177/0191453718794746.
- Daniels, J., & Brooker, J. (2014). Student identity development in higher education: Implications for graduate attributes and work-readiness. *Educational Research*, 56(1), 65-76. doi:10.1080/00131881.2013.874157.
- Doherty, O., & Stephens, S. (2023). Hard and soft skill needs: Higher education and the Fintech sector. *Journal of Education and Work*, 36(3), 1-16.
- England, T. K., Nagel, G. L., & Salter, S. P. (2020). Using collaborative learning to develop students' soft skills. *Journal of Education for Business*, 95(2), 106-114. doi:10.1080/08832323.2019.1599797
- Fraser, B. P. (2020). *Hide and Seek: The sacred art of indirect communication*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.
- Girardin, M. (2022, July 14). *What are hard skills? Definitions and examples*. Retrieved from theforage.com: <https://www.theforage.com/blog/basics/hard-skills#:~:text=Hard%20skills%20are%20objective%2C%20quantifiable,%2C%20or%20you%20don't.>
- Grennan, J., & Michaely, R. (2020). Artificial intelligence and high-skilled work: Evidence from analysts. *Swiss Finance Institute Research Paper*, SSRN. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3681574.
- Hallinger, P., & Jiafang, L. (2013). Learner centered higher education in East Asia: Assessing the effects on student engagement. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 27(6), 594-612. doi:10.1108/IJEM-06-2012-0072.
- Herrmann, A. F. (2008). Kierkegaard and dialogue: The communication of capability. *Communication of Capability*, 18, 71-92.
- Ibitz, S. (2023, October 27). *Soft skills and hard skills vs AI*. Retrieved from linkedin.com: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/soft-skills-hard-vs-ai-susan-ibitz-wlpi-ba-scan-cfr-iii-mbti-w3wcf/>.
- Johansson, V. (2019). Pedagogy and polyphonic narrativity in Soren Kierkegaard. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 53(4), 111-122.
- Joyce, C. (2012). The impact of direct and indirect communication. *The Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*.
- Kaplan, J. (2022, July 13). *What are soft skills? Definitions and examples*. Retrieved from theforage.com: <https://www.theforage.com/blog/basics/what-are-soft-skills-definition-and-examples.>
- Kierkegaard, S. (1967-1978). *Journals and papers* (Vols. 1-7). (H. Hong, & E. Hong, Eds.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1985). *Philosophical fragments*. (H. Hong, & E. Hong, Eds.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (2009). *Concluding unscientific postscripts*. (A. Hannay, Trans.) Cambridge University Press.

- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Retrieved from www.learningfromexperience.com/images/uploads/process-of-experiential-learning.pdf
- Lamri, J., & Lubart, T. (2023). Reconciling hard skills and soft skills in a common framework: The generic skills component approach. *Journal of Intelligence*, 11(6), 107-108. doi:10.3390/jintelligence11060107
- Liu, S. (2006). Developing China's future managers: Learning from the West. *Education and Training*, 43(1), 6-14.
- Manpower Group. (2023, October 1). *The global talent shortage*. Retrieved from go.manpowergroup.com: <https://go.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage>
- Mason, G., Williams, G., & Cranmer, S. (2006). Employability skills initiatives in higher education: What effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes? *Education Economics*, 17(1), 1-30.
- McPherson, I. (2001). Kierkegaard as an educational thinker: Communication through and across ways of being. *Journal of the Philosophy of Education*, 35(2), 157-174.
- Mooney, E. F. (1997). Exemplars, inwardness, and belief: Kierkegaard on indirect communication. In R. L. Perkins (Ed.), *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (pp. 129-148). Macon: Mercer University Press.
- Mooney, E. F. (2007). *On Soren Kierkegaard: Dialogue, polemics, lost intimacy, and time*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Morris, T. H. (2020). Experiential learning - a systematic review and revision of Kolb's model: Interactive learning environment. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 28(8), 1064-1077. doi:10.1080/10494820.2019.1570279
- Myers, J. (2022, May 24). *These are the world's most in demand professions*. Retrieved from [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org): <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/most-in-demand-professions-list-2022/>
- nacweb.org. (2022). *What is career readiness?* Retrieved October 16, 2022, from [nacweb.org](https://www.nacweb.org/): <https://www.nacweb.org/>
- Nusrat, M., & Sultana, N. (2019). Soft skills for sustainable employment of business graduates of Bangladesh. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 9(3), 264-278. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-01-2018-0002
- OECD.org. (2021). *Adapting to changing skill needs in Southeast Asia*. OECD Southeast Asia Regional Forum. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/southeast-asia/events/regional-forum/OECD_SEA_RegionalForum_2021_Discussion_Note.pdf
- penn-mar.org. (2022, March 15). *What is the difference between hard skills and soft skills?* Retrieved from https://www.penn-mar.org/what-is-the-difference-between-hard-skills-and-soft-skills/?gelid=Cj0KCQjwy5maBhDdARIsAMxrkw01iSQBkalChAYIK8MxjbuUl66pBjAYduLGNkzMMs1JC73yvJ9gmoUaAql7EALw_wcB
- Ranade, S., Tamara, C., Castiblanco, E., & Serna, A. (2010). Mapping competencies. *Mechanical Engineering*, 132(2), 30-34. doi:10.1115/1.2010-Feb-3
- Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75(4), 453-465. doi:10.1177/1080569912460400

- Rose, E. G., & Halliday, S. (2019). Soren Kierkegaard and indirect communication: Language of the horse.
- Senkosky, E. (2023, May 19). *Why ChatGPT just increased the value of human capabilities in the workforce*. Retrieved from Recruitingdaily.com: <https://recruitingdaily.com/why-chatgpt-just-increased-the-value-of-human-capabilities-in-the-workforce/>
- Silverman, H. J. (1980). *Piaget, philosophy, and the human sciences*. Evanston: Northwest University Press.
- Singh, A., & Jaykumar, P. (2019). On the road to consensus: Key soft skills required for youth employment in the service sector. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 11(1), 10-24. doi:10.1108/WHATT-10-2018-0066
- Soderquist, A. S. (2016). *Kierkegaard on dialogical education: Vulnerable Freedom*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Strong, M. (2022, October 12). *National Taiwan University drops 74 spots on The Times higher education list*. Retrieved from taiwannews.com: <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4684420>
- Succi, C., & Canovi, M. (2020). Soft skills to enhance graduate employability: Comparing students and employers' perceptions. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(9), 1834-1847. doi:10.1080/03075079.2019.1585420
- Tankovic, A. C., Kapes, J., & Kraljic, V. (2021). Importance of soft skills and communication skills in tourism: Viewpoint from tourists and future tourism employees. *Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe*, 6, 167-185. doi:10.20867/tosee.06.12
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Turnbull, J. (2009). Kierkegaard, indirect communication, and ambiguity. *The Heythrop Journal*, 13-22.
- Verma, P., Nankervis, A., Priyono, S., & Noorziah, M. S. (2018). Graduate work-readiness challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and the role of HRM. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 37(4). doi:10.1108/EDI-02-2017-0015
- Yeo, T. M. (1981). Kierkegaard on understanding and indirect communication. *Doctoral Dissertation*.