

TALKING THE TALK AND WALKING THE WALK: COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AS A BARRIER TO TEAMWORK SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN ACCOUNTING STUDENTS

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There has been a call for change internationally in the objectives and pedagogic approach to higher education and specifically to accounting education. The suggested change is to integrate employability skills into the curriculum. This has led to the increasing use of team-work in undergraduate accounting education. This pedagogic approach can also be seen as a response to national policy on higher education. There has been recognition of the vocational and academic pressures which lead to the increasing use of team work within Accounting Education and also the importance played by economic pressures. There have also been criticisms of this pedagogic approach and recommendations counselling against its indiscriminate use. They note the complex relationship between individual, competitive and collaborative behaviours.

Despite numerous attempts to improve teamwork skills there is evidence from both graduate recruiters in general and accounting employers in particular that the improvement is not meeting employer expectations. Little focus has been placed on the possible barriers to the development of team-work skills. This paper examines the effect of communication skills in an attempt to understand the possible link between the communication skills and team-work skills.