

Problem Solving

Section 3: Evaluating your Project

[HIGHER]

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Introduction to the section

This section is the third in a series of self study packs that are intended to guide you through the skills required to complete Problem Solving at Higher.

The whole series is composed of the following sections:

- *Section One*: Analysing the problem
- *Section Two*: Planning your project
- *Section Three*: Evaluating your project.

The sections should be worked through in consecutive order.

You are encouraged to integrate your work in Problem Solving with other study areas where feasible. However, you must discuss this with your subject tutors before you begin any work.

Assessment explained

This third section covers the third outcome.

Problem Solving at Higher, Outcome 3:

You will need to

- identify relevant and sufficient criteria on which to carry out your review and evaluation
- evaluate the effectiveness of your strategy. This includes your original analysis of the situation, the planning and organisation that you undertook and evidence of how you carried out the task
- draw conclusions about how effective the outcome or solution to the problem was – this may mean suggesting changes or improvements
- justify your conclusions and make recommendations.

Aims and objectives of this section

This section will help you to:

- understand how to evaluate your own work.

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- select criteria for evaluating your own work
- evaluate your own work
- draw conclusions about how your work might be improved in the future
- make recommendations.

Symbols used in the pack



This denotes a Tutor Assessed Activity. These are different from Self Assessed Activities because there is no comment given after them (the tools for answering Assessment Tasks are included in the section however) and you should show this work to your tutor. Your tutor will mark this work and give you feedback.



This symbol denotes a Tutor Checkpoint and alerts you to the fact that it is now time to meet your tutor to discuss your progress. (There is further explanation of this on the page on Attendance/tutor contact requirements in the Student Introductory Guide.)

Tutor support

Although you may be studying Problem Solving at Higher as a flexible learning student, this does not mean that you have no support. Please do not hesitate to contact your tutor about any problems you are having, or to seek clarification on any points.

Look back at Assessment Task 6 at the end of Section 1. There you decided how you were going to judge the success of your solution. You listed **musts** that were the basic requirements for your solution and **wants** that were the desirable qualities for your solution.

You should write a final evaluation of your work now. The final evaluation should be approximately 200 words in length.

Guidelines for writing the evaluation

How effective was your solution? Look at your **musts** and **wants** and judge how successful you have been.

Refer to:

- your analysis of the problem, describing your original brief clearly
- the way you planned and organised the task and the outcome of the activity
- your conclusions, drawing on evidence that you have gathered to justify them
- any problems you faced, how you tackled them and changes you made to your strategy.

Write your evaluation overleaf.

T₁₂

Now complete the self assessment questionnaire for the second time.

Tick the box that describes most accurately your level of confidence when you have to:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cope well with everyday problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Be methodical about your approach to problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Talk to people you don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Work on your own | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Work in a group | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Find out information | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Manage your time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Set a deadline and work towards it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Look at your own work critically | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Learn from mistakes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | = | I can't do this |
| 2 | = | I find this difficult |
| 3 | = | I can just manage |
| 4 | = | I can do this |

Look back to Assessment Activity I and compare your responses.

During this problem solving unit I have improved the following skills:

There are some skills that I particularly need to work on in the future. They are:

Describe how you plan to improve these skills in the future:

Well done! You have completed this learning pack.

Hopefully you have improved your problem solving skills and will continue to build on what you have learned in the future – in the classroom and at work.

Problem solving, as you have learned, is all about how you approach the challenges that life throws at you. You can achieve just about anything if you approach problems calmly and methodically.

Remember, always be clear about what the problem is; try to break it down into manageable sized pieces; decide what a satisfactory solution would look like; work out a plan for achieving it and go for it!

If you want to do some further reading on approaches to problem solving you may want to try something by Edward de Bono such as *Six Thinking Hats* (2000), *Serious Creativity* (1994) or *De Bono's Thinking Course* (1994).

There will be books on problem solving in your school/college library and your local library – usually in the Business Management section.

There is a great deal of information about problem solving strategies on the internet and many of these resources have been evaluated for you at the core skills virtual learning centre: <http://www.sfeu.ac.uk>

If you want to do your own search, useful search words include:

- Brainstorming
- SWOT analysis
- Simplify the problem



Now you must discuss your progress with your tutor.