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NEXT STEP

A skill STEM students in Bangladesh must develop

Featuring advice from Oxford's Shamir Montazid, Lester Pearson Scholar Mubtaseem Zaman and FameLab Champion Adib Nur

Developing communication skills is one of the most important investments for STEM students in Bangladesh. This article will feature advice from promising STEM students who are using their communication skills to get closer to their dreams in various career paths for STEM graduates.

What is STEM?

In education, the acronym STEM stands for the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The myth about developing communication skills in Bangladesh

Having spoken to multiple teachers and students of STEM over the past few years, I realised that in Bangladesh, STEM students aren't encouraged to invest in developing communication skills by their academic curriculum. A typical STEM student in Bangladesh is imagined to be coding in a dark room wearing round glasses and a hoodie or holding a test tube close to her eyes with a purple liquid on it.

Developing communication skills is usually associated with business students (think charismatic individuals wearing bespoke suits giving PowerPoint presentations in front of a panel of Unilever executives). It is believed, academic success is the only important goal a STEM student should set to do well in the future.

Debunking the myth

During my 3 semesters at Harvard so far, I have had the privilege of meeting some of the most successful and promising STEM personalities in the world such as Nobel laureates, top tech entrepreneurs, famous professors, promising graduate students, etc. I have noticed one thing in common. They are all amazing communicators, be it written or oral and in many cases, both.

The fault in our STEM curriculum

The academic curriculum in Bangladesh

doesn't realise that as soon as a STEM student graduates with a bachelor's degree, her career success will depend on one or some of the following: research internship applications, higher educational degree applications, research grant applications/venture fundraising pitches, research finding presentations/ business product presentations and authored books.

Apart from her academic grades, previous work experience and idea quality, the thing that will separate her from other candidates and give her a strong fighting chance in getting any one of these opportunities will either be the email she writes or her presentations.

Yes, her communication skills will determine her success to a certain extent. And

be very expensive. Scientists often reach out to corporations, business tycoons, politicians and even mass crowd to raise fund for their research. To speak for myself, my PhD is funded by the Bangladesh Government. Apart from my high CGPA and research experiences, my role at 10 Minute School as a science educator also caught their eyes. I am sure that helped me win that fellowship to some extent.

In another perspective, the "most famous" scientists are also the ones with outreaching capabilities. Carl Sagan, Stephen Hawkins, Richard Dawkins—all made their public appearances and brought their science out of the laboratories and placed it into the hearts of people. Without these effective communications, the world of

time, making your audience understand the idea clearly and giving them a big picture is enough. It is unlikely that they will remember any of the technicalities you mention during your presentation. So, learning how to put yourself in the shoes of average Joe and convincing him with your idea is the key to get ahead. Put it this way - if you can not make a five-year old understand, then something is very wrong with the vision of your idea.

Interviewing Adib Nur

Adib Nur is the champion of FameLab and will be representing Bangladesh among 30 other countries at Cheltenham Science Festival 2019 in UK, an international competition for science communicators.

How do you start becoming a great communicator?

Great communication, in any field, needs two characteristics in my opinion - people keep listening, and the message sticks.

In order to keep people listening, I always structure my message around one of these ideas - start with a mystery and slowly solve the puzzle by introducing interesting new ideas to the listeners, or tell the audience a story that they will enjoy, and by the time I've finished, they've already learned what I wanted to communicate. An example would be a speech I did on fire, where I started by asking the audience if they know what fire was made of. Once the audience realised they didn't know much about it, I had their attention. And by the time I got to the answer at the end, the audience had already learned to appreciate the subtle science behind our everyday activities.

The skill needs time and practice. A great book I would like to suggest that helped me develop myself as a communicator is "Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die" by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.

Seeam Shahid Noor

Seeam Shahid Noor is a 2nd year student at Harvard University studying Applied Mathematics and is passionate about inspiring professional development in communities around him. Email him at seeamnoor@college.harvard.edu to express opinions, requests and compliments.



PHOTO: ADIB NUR AFTER WINNING FAMELAB 2019

that is why you should invest in developing it, especially if you are a STEM major.

Interviewing Shamir Montazid

Shamir Montazid is doing his PhD at Oxford University after graduating from Dhaka University. Apart from his academic achievements, he is famous for having served as the Chief Operating Officer of 10 Minute School, the largest online educational platform in Bangladesh. His book, "Heisenberg-er Golpo", was one of the recent Rokomari best sellers, the biggest online book shop of the country.

How important of a role did your communication skills play in your academic success so far?
The "best" scientists are mostly great communicators. Doing laboratory science can

science could barely finance their exciting and revolutionary endeavors.

Interviewing Mubtaseem Zaman

Mubtaseem Zaman is the first Bangladeshi Lester Pearson Scholar at the University of Toronto, studying Computer Engineering. Recently, he led his team to win first place at the Mac Design League Designathon 2019, hosted at McMaster University in January, against 243 other students with a design for shielding cameras on surveillance aircraft.

Is communication skill essential for leading any engineering team?

We, with our engineering/ STEM background, often suffer from the curse of knowledge, thinking everyone has the same technical knowledge as we do. Most of the

8th International HR Conference held at NSU

Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management (BSHRM) and North South University jointly organized the BSHRM-NSU 8th International HR Conference 2019 on 19th April 2019 at North South University Campus, Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka. This year the theme of the conference was "HR Leadership for Emerging Economy". Prof. Dr. Allan William Bird, the Darla and Frederick Brodsky Trustee Professor in Global Business at Northeastern University, USA was the key note speaker of the conference. Dr. Ajantha Sujeeva Dharmasiri, Professor in Management, University of Sri Jayawardanepura, Sri Lanka, and Prof. Dr. T. V. Rao, the Chairperson of TVRLS & former Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, India were also present. A number of renowned speakers and HR professionals held discussions at the



conference.

Barrister Nihad Kabir, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) was the chief guest of the event. Mr. MA Hashem, Chairperson of the board of trustees, NSU and Prof. Dr. Atique Islam, Vice Chancellor, NSU were present as Special Guests.

Mr. Mashqur Rahman Khan, President, BSHRM, Mr. Nazrul Islam, Conference Chairman, and Mr. Kamruzzaman, Conference Secretary also

delivered their valuable speeches.

It was insisted by Mashequr Rahman Khan to establish a separate HR Ministry and to formulate an employment act.

For notable contribution in the field of Human Resources Development, Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Mr. Monower Ahmed and Lifetime Achievement Award (Posthumous) was given to Late Mr. SA Huq. More than 700 people participated in the conference.

Delegates from 11 Schools of Bangladesh recently visited Tokyo International University facilitated by Maces.

Principals and counselors from eleven schools were invited by Tokyo International University to visit the campus and find out about higher education opportunities offered in Japan for Bangladeshi students. The delegation met with Chancellor Nobuyasu Kurata during the visit facilitated by MACES. Sabrina Shaheed, Principal, Sir John Wilson School; Roksana Zarin, Principal, International Hope School; Fr Hemanto Pius Rozario, Principal, Notre Dame College; Ali Karam Reza, Principal, Maple Leaf International School; Gyanesh Chandra Tripathi, Principal, Cider Interna-



tional School; Mohammad Imam Hasan Reza, Strategic Planner, Presidency International School Chittagong; Ruhbayna Mahmud Chowdhury, Counselor, Chittagong Grammar School; Suzanne Astle, Counselor, American International School; Lamia Rahman Ahad,

Counselor, DPS STS School; Mariam Haque Mousumi, Counselor, Scholastica Mirpur; Thoweed Husain, Counselor, Scholastica Uttara and Rouham Manzoor from MACES were seen here with Chancellor Nobuyasu Kurata and other officials from Tokyo International University.

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY

DUE TO COST SAVINGS, WE'RE TURNING OFF ALL LIGHTS. BUT YOU NEED TO CONTINUE WORKING.



WHAT! HOW DO I SEE WHERE I'M GOING? HOW DO THEY EXPECT US TO WORK IN THESE CONDITIONS?



IT'S ALRIGHT. JUST OPEN YOUR EYES, AND TALK IN LARGER SPEECH BUBBLES. THE WHITE BITS CREATE A GLOW LIKE THOSE OVERLY BRIGHT SMARTPHONES. YOU FORGET YOU'RE IN A COMIC PANEL.



Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

Why an internship experience is important

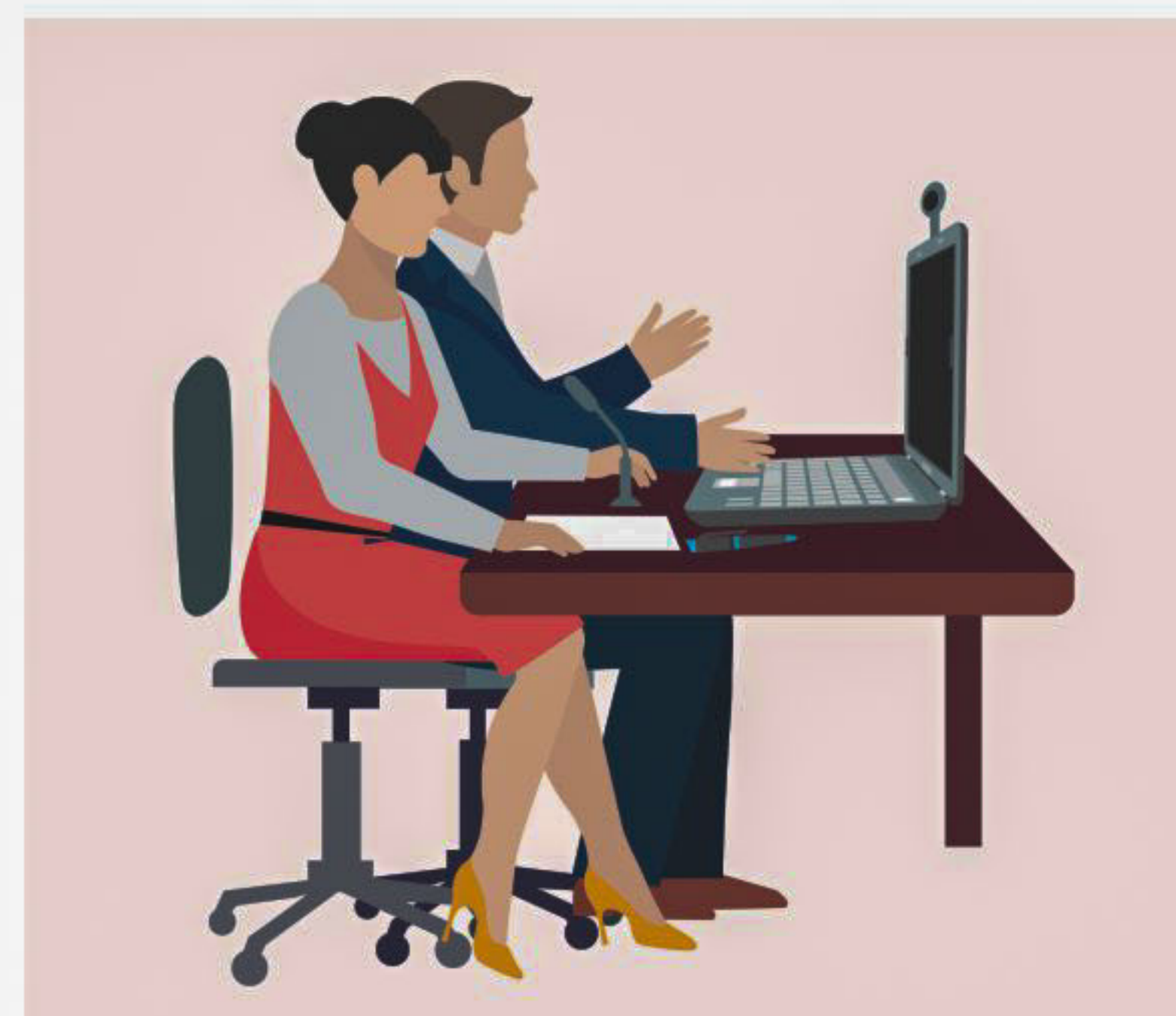
Participation in an internship program is relevant for someone completing their tertiary education. An internship is very important for the future and has three distinct parties who are interested in it.

The first party is the person or the organisation who employs you for the internship as a means to create a strategic talent pipeline and identify potential prospective candidates for entry-level positions. Once the employer has seen and understood your potential, they grow the confidence to engage the intern in a more permanent long-term position.

The second party is someone to whom you might apply to following your internship. The fact that you have completed your internship will give the employer the assurance that you have the ability and knowledge to have completed your internship in a talent driven, high quality organisation in the first place.

The third and the most important party is the intern himself/herself. An internship program is not just a way for the employers to evaluate their interns but also a crucial opportunity for the interns to evaluate the organisation, the people, the industry and the career path.

There is a more practical reason to pursue internship depending on the field. Most of the employ-



ers in the most competitive fields, such as finance, tech, law, etc. hire entry-level, full-time candidates exclusively through their internship programs. The odds of securing an attractive opportunity are very slim if someone shows up at the final year of college of university, without a meaningful and relevant internship experience or something comparable. The workplace is very competitive and it is very important

to weigh the pros and cons of every opportunity and grab the ones that appear lucrative for paving the way for a fruitful career.

Nabila Hossain

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