

# **Soft Skills and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)**

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QUILL Learning Network

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## Introduction

Soft skills are getting a lot of attention these days, perhaps due to their importance in assisting individuals to get and keep a job. Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs have always integrated soft skills into learner plans. However, with the growing interest around soft skills, it might be time to make LBS' role in developing soft skills more explicit.

This resource is a step in that direction. We have put it together to:

- assist LBS programs in documenting what they already do to increase learners' soft skills
- identify community partnerships that show some good practices related to soft skill development
- provide some resources to LBS programs that may want to increase their soft skill programming

## What are soft skills?

It's the million dollar question. What are soft skills? How are they best described? There are many sources of information on this topic. We found an excellent website that identified about 30 resources on soft skills and various ways of identifying, describing, and grouping them. We were curious which "soft skills" were identified in literature most frequently.

This chart shows the results of our initial research:



About soft skills.xls

Of course, this chart is a little unwieldy and doesn't lend itself as well to talking about soft skills in general. We liked a definition of soft skills we found in [Soft Skills Development: Improving Organizational Effectiveness](#) – a resource developed by Workforce Planning Hamilton:

“Soft skills are personal attributes that enable individuals to interact effectively with one another. More specifically, soft skills are behaviours that allow individuals to work and socialize well with others. Ultimately, they are behaviours that foster relationships within an organization that may lead to improved productivity.”

## **A history of soft skills**

Now that soft skills are a frequent topic of conversation, it might be useful to take a look at how and when this emphasis on soft skills evolved. The blog Parentpreneur accelerator has a great [post](#) on the history of soft skills:

900 years ago, organized religions provided the primary source of people's values and soft skills training. People learned how to behave in society, how to cope with difficulty, and how to be successful, from their religious leaders and texts.

People didn't have much choice on what they were taught, and everyone was expected to attend. Adults were learning jobs through 'on-the-job training' by watching master craftsmen (often their parents). Over the next 800 years, public and private education became available to teach children and adults, resulting in greatly increased literacy and ability for people to learn. As non-religious organizations grew through the agricultural and industrial revolutions, so did people's needs for more specific soft-skills guidance (such as how to be a leader of many people, or make processes more efficient).

## **The last 50 years**

By the 1950s, great business writers like Peter Drucker were educating people on how to better manage & motivate employees. Organizations like Toyota were developing training programs that helped their employees to work more efficiently, identify and address issues, and continuously improve. In the 1980s, training videos became popular for catering for specific employee's needs for sales, customer service and communication skills. The rise of the Internet in the 1990s meant that people could do their own research more easily, and be served with even more specific content to meet their training needs. The next two decades brought huge innovation in multi-media training creation & delivery, customized & responsive e-learning, online assessment, and online community engagement.

## **Today**

It is now possible for someone in Lagos (Nigeria) to develop an online course about entrepreneurship in developing markets, make this available online (e.g. via Udemy.com) and allow people from around the world to find the course, enroll, and consume content in the forms of text, audio, video and 'mashups' (mix of slides & video). Yet, with all the amazing opportunities for learning that are available, many Learning and Development (L&D) managers are finding that employee training attendance in organizations has decreased. More so than ever before, people are more inundated with information, have access to a wider array of options, and have a greater understanding of the value of their time.

But this is no excuse for empty seats in your training programs. This reduction in attendance is primarily due to L&D falling behind in its capacity to create irresistible offerings, promote these effectively to ensure they are attended, and build content that helps employees share what they learn. If this problem is not addressed, we can expect the role of L&D to spiral downwards. Employees will be left to find their own training: performing their own research, pitching their needs and how they will fill these to their managers, and making the case for budget. This costs the business time and money, and employees deserve better than this.

## Why all the fuss about soft skills?

[Research](#) conducted by Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation and Stanford Research Center has concluded that 85% of job success comes from having well-developed soft and people skills, and only 15% of job success comes from technical skills and knowledge (hard skills). A [public interest study](#) conducted by McDonald's in the UK has predicted over half a million people will be held back from job sectors by 2020 due to lack of soft skills.

Here are some more [statistics](#) that speak to the value of soft skills in the workplace:

A US survey has found miscommunication costs businesses with up to 100 staff an average of US\$420,000 per year. Even more staggeringly, in another study, 400 businesses with at least 100,000 employees each claimed that inadequate communication cost an average of US\$62.4 million per company per year.

A study of science recruiters found 60% of respondents rated the ability to work collaboratively as most important, followed by adaptability (45%) and interpersonal relationship building (41%). Most respondents felt that applicants were lacking in these skills, particularly in critical thinking.

Notably, this study showed that employers considered soft skills as important as academic ability. Yet both current and potential employees are often reported as being “deficient” in these same skills.

It may appear that these core communication skill requirements of employers have not changed much over time. But the emphasis on collaborative work has altered dramatically. A Harvard Business Review study found that the time managers and employees spend on collaborative activities has increased by more than 50% in the past 20 years.

Modern workplace environments reflect this shift. Open-plan workplaces designed to increase interaction and collaboration are the norm. So, in addition to the job's requirements, workplace design means these interpersonal and influencing skills are more important than ever.

In the past, you could escape difficult personalities and noisy co-workers by shutting the office door. The design of the modern workplace, coupled with the increased requirement to collaborate across teams and divisions, underscores the importance of increasing the soft-skill capacity of current and future employees.

## **Soft skills for workers**

So, what are the soft skills that employers are looking for? According to [Investopedia](#):

Employers look for a balance of hard and soft skills when they make hiring decisions. For example, employers value skilled workers with a track record of getting the job done on time. Employers also value workers with strong communication skills and a strong understanding of company products and services. When communicating with prospective clients, workers with employee skills can put together compelling presentations even if their specific job is not in sales or marketing. Other valued soft skills are the ability to coach fellow co-workers on new tasks and cultural fit.

An article from [MindTools](#) has this to add on why job seekers might want to focus on improving their soft skills:

While your technical skills may get your foot in the door, your people skills are what open most of the doors to come. Your work ethic, your attitude, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes are the soft skills that are crucial for career success.

Soft skills are increasingly becoming the hard skills of today's work force. It's just not enough to be highly trained in technical skills, without developing the softer, interpersonal and relationship-building skills that help people to communicate and collaborate effectively.

These people skills are more critical than ever as organizations struggle to find meaningful ways to remain competitive and be productive. Teamwork, leadership, and communication are underpinned by soft skills development. Since each is an essential element for organizational and personal success, developing these skills is very important and does matter... a lot!

## Teaching Soft Skills

So, what happens if someone is lacking in soft skills? Does teaching soft skills differ from teaching other types of literacy and numeracy skills? Some would argue “yes”. According to this [article](#) from the Conversation: “Developing these skills in young people will require not only a shift in subject matter, but also a change in how students are taught. Only one in ten Australian teachers have recently participated in professional development to help students develop generic, transferable skills for future work.

Soft skills have more to do with who people are, rather than what they know. As such, soft skills encompass the character traits that decide how well one interacts with others, and are usually a definite part of one's personality. Whereas hard skills can be learned and perfected over time, soft skills are more difficult to acquire and change. The soft skills required for a doctor, for example, would be empathy, understanding, active listening and a good bedside manner. Alternatively, the hard skills necessary for a doctor would include a vast comprehension of illnesses, the ability to interpret test results and symptoms, and a thorough understanding of anatomy and physiology.”

According to Business News Daily:

While it's true that certain attributes are difficult to force if employees don't naturally have them, they're not impossible to teach. One of the most important things you can do to improve employees' soft skills is to offer well-rounded training opportunities for your staff. The UdeMy report found that 72 percent of companies surveyed provide training that is only related to employees' roles. Paul Sebastien, vice president and general manager of UdeMy for Business, said managers are often busy with the task at hand so they may not consider the less-than-motivating message these narrow training programs send to employees.

"Rounding out hard and soft skills in areas outside of employees' job descriptions brings untold benefits to the company," Sebastien said. "The most successful teams consist of members who have skillsets that complement one another and play off of team members' strengths. When employers invest in training in hard and soft skills, it helps employees feel valued as they work toward career development goals."

You don't even need a formal training program to help employees build their soft skills – Sebastien advised having employees set skill-related goals for themselves during the performance-review process, and help them access resources to achieve those goals.

"Look for opportunities for employees to practice soft skills that may need work," he said. "One example is leading meetings to practice public speaking, in an environment where they can feel safe to fail. Encourage all employees to share personal successes as well as failures so others can learn from these victories and shortcomings."

The other key way to improve employee's soft skills is leading by example. The company culture and work environment you establish as a manager play a huge role in encouraging (or discouraging) the development of these skills. If you want employees to work hard and collaborate with each other, you need to show them how first.

"[Soft skills are] something you learn by doing, and you have to live it to learn it," Ciamillo added. "It's like parenting – your children don't do what you say, they do what you do. If you are a good example and live by the culture you want to establish ... [your] workers will follow."

## Summary

Clearly, the conversation around soft skills is here to stay, and will likely only intensify. We encourage LBS programs to think about soft skills, how practitioners are trained in the delivery of soft skills instruction, and what role experiential learning might play in assisting LBS learners in acquiring soft skills.

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## Soft skills training partnerships

As was mentioned previously, soft skills are a strong focus in LBS. We have sought out some good practices and partnerships to share with you:

- a) ESU: Essential Skills Upgrading has a partnership with The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region (TLG) where they run some of their Soft Skills Module congruent with TLG's Customer Service Module. This just started and so far, so good. TLG has received referrals in from OW and from Canadian Council of Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW).

The Soft Skills Module was developed on-site. They have two instructors registered with Soft Skills Solutions, but it didn't really meet their needs in their continuous intake program. So, they developed their own based on different topics like teamwork, positivity, grit, dependability and work ethic. One instructor is now adding a couple of units about how to say no and when to say, "I don't know" and how to go from there. Their units are working really well with the Customer Service module designed by The Literacy Group.

### Contacts:

Linda Brooks, Program Co-ordinator/Literacy Instructor [linda\\_brooks@wrdsb.ca](mailto:linda_brooks@wrdsb.ca)

ESU: Essential Skills Upgrading, Waterloo Region District School Board

519-885-4356 x 223

Lisa McArthur, Program Co-ordinator, The Literacy Group Waterloo Region

519- 743 -6090

- b) Niagara Regional Native Centre often partners with the YMCA, Employment Solutions and NPAAMB to deliver soft skills. Topics include: resumes, cover letters, employment standards, True Colours, etc.

We deliver skills: time management, transferable skills, interview skills and job search skills & career development.

**Contact:**

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[literacypc@nrnc.ca](mailto:literacypc@nrnc.ca) 905-685-8547 Fax: 905-685-8990

- c) Customer Service: Targeted training being delivered in Peterborough by Trent Valley Literacy Association (TVLA) and in Hastings by Community Learning Alternatives (CLA). Both agencies receive referrals from ES and OW.

**Contact:**

- Peterborough - Lesley Hamilton ([programmanager@tvla.ca](mailto:programmanager@tvla.ca))
- Hastings - Shannon Lee ([shannon@cla-buildingskills.ca](mailto:shannon@cla-buildingskills.ca))

Job Fit: Targeted training being delivered in Peterborough by TVLA.

Learners are identified and enrolled in Job Fit by OW.

- Lesley Hamilton ([programmanager@tvla.ca](mailto:programmanager@tvla.ca))

- d) In Bracebridge, Agilec Employment Services and Trillium Lakelands District School Board LBS partner to deliver the Soft Skills Solutions (SSS) short-term course at the Agilec office. The LBS instructor is a certified SSS trainer. Participants include Agilec clients, assisted and unassisted, as well as any other job seekers.

**Contacts:**

Shirley Cunningham, Literacy Instructor, Bracebridge Alternate Education Centre, TLDSB 705-646-5651  
[shirley.cunningham@tldsb](mailto:shirley.cunningham@tldsb)

Julie Crate, Agilec, Bracebridge [jcrate@agilec.ca](mailto:jcrate@agilec.ca) 705-646-2092

- e) In Barrie, the Barrie Literacy Council delivers Soft Skills Solutions for OW and ES clients. They are also working with the Barrie Native Friendship Centre to augment the SSS course to make it more culturally appropriate. They have piloted one course delivery, which was successful.

**Contact:**

Judy desRoches, Executive Director, Barrie Literacy Council 705-728-7323 [blcexecutivedirector@on.aibn.com](mailto:blcexecutivedirector@on.aibn.com)

- f) Learning for Living South Muskoka has developed a program called Ready for Work. It is delivered in 2 parts that are 8 weeks each. They partner with 2 OW offices to deliver the program to OW clients.

**Contact:**

Dave Steeves, Program Co-ordinator/Instructor, Learning for Living South Muskoka 705-687-9323  
[davidsteeves@aol.com](mailto:davidsteeves@aol.com)

g) The Chatham Kent Workforce Planning Board has purchased “Bring Your A-Game to Work” from the US and they are using these resources for one-day workshops in Chatham-Kent. Tri-County Literacy Network recently invited them to present on these soft skills materials at their Local Planning and Co-ordination meetings. The LBS programs in the Tri-County region are currently reviewing these resources to see how they can implement them into their programs.

In Chatham-Kent, LBS programs will work with the Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board.

In Sarnia-Lambton, one LBS program is looking at offering the program and other LBS programs would refer. They are looking at partnering with the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board.

In Windsor-Essex, LBS programs are looking into incorporating the materials into existing programming and also looking at the option of a stand-alone program. They are looking at working with Employment Services since most of the LBS programs work within an agency that also offers ES. Workforce Windsor Essex is interested in being kept in the loop and may assist, if needed.

Please see the link below for more information on the Bring Your A Game to Work resources:

<https://workethic.org/bring-your-a-game-to-work/>

**Contact:**

Andrea Dickinson, Tri-County Literacy Network, Sarnia [a.dickinson@cogeco.net](mailto:a.dickinson@cogeco.net)  
519-355-1771

h) In the QUILL Learning Network region, VPI is working with literacy programs in Grey Bruce to deliver the Soft Skills Solutions program to YJC clients. The YJC students attend 40 hours of programs with VPI and then 20 hours with the adult learning centres. Partners are testing it this year and have delivered only 2 sessions so far. One session at Cape Croker was cancelled because of the lack of trained facilitators of Soft Skills Solutions.

## Resources to develop soft skills

This section contains some resources that we believe will be helpful to LBS programs looking to augment or increase their soft skills focus.

Name	Created By	Link	Description
Curriculum Docs/Learning Activities			
LNO Targeted Training List	Adult Basic Education Association, 2016	<a href="http://www.learningnetworks.ca/Files/LNOTargetedTrainingList.pdf">http://www.learningnetworks.ca/Files/LNOTargetedTrainingList.pdf</a>	This document is a list of targeted training that has been developed by agencies across the province. These developers are willing to discuss and share materials from their programs. If you have an interest in learning more about any of the programs listed here, connect directly with the developer. There is a specific soft-skills section.
Bridging the Employment Gap: Ready for Work	Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network, 2009	<a href="http://literacynetwork.ca/resources/bridging-the-employment-gap/">http://literacynetwork.ca/resources/bridging-the-employment-gap/</a>	In 2008-09, Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network (SMLN) was funded by the national Office of Literacy and Essential Skills to complete a series of occupational-related curricula called "Bridging the Employment Gap". The curricula were designed to help learners at Essential

Name	Created By	Link	Description
			<p>Skills Level 1 to upgrade their literacy, numeracy and other essential skills in an entry-level occupational context.</p> <p>Manuals include Clerical, Kitchen Help, Grounds Maintenance, Retail, Janitorial and Ready for Work (all of which have soft skills components, most notably Ready for Work).</p>
Connecting Literacy and Employment Through Essential Skills	Literacy Link South Central, 2011	<a href="http://www.llsc.on.ca/node/99">http://www.llsc.on.ca/node/99</a>	Through a 2-year project (June 2009 to May 2011) Literacy Link South Central has developed a set of seven workbooks. These resources embed Essential Skill activities within employment-readiness tasks. It's our hope that the workbooks will help people build employability skills and literacy/Essential Skills simultaneously.
Essential Skills for Personal Success	Literacy Network Northeast	<a href="https://www.northernliteracy.ca/article/-156.asp">https://www.northernliteracy.ca/article/-156.asp</a>	There are 4 modules to help to improve your Essential Skills. The four modules are  Manage my Basic Needs

Name	Created By	Link	Description
			<p>Manage my Health</p> <p>Manage Personal Issues and Contacts</p> <p>Participate as a Member in my Community</p>
Learning with Swagger - Soft Skills Resources	Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo- Wellington	<p><a href="http://www.projectread.ca/resources/publications">http://www.projectread.ca/resources/publications</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.projectread.ca/pdf/LWSpkg.rar">http://www.projectread.ca/pdf/LWSpkg.rar</a></p>	<p>LWS Assessment Tool - This enables the facilitator to score participant results and identify soft skills areas that need strengthening.</p> <p>LWS Strategy Guide - This guide was created to provide strategies to enhance learner soft skills and link to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).</p> <p>LWS Strategies Score Sheet - This provides choices of activities that can be used with adults to strengthen their soft skills.</p>
Working Together, Working Well	Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-	<a href="http://www.projectread.ca/pdf/WorkingTogetherWorkingWell.pdf">http://www.projectread.ca/pdf/WorkingTogetherWorkingWell.pdf</a>	<p>Chapters include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand and work within the dynamics of a group</li> </ol>

Name	Created By	Link	Description
	Wellington, 2005		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear</li> <li>3. Be open and flexible to the thoughts and opinions of others</li> <li>4. Recognize and respect diversity, individual differences and perspectives</li> <li>5. Provide feedback in a constructive manner</li> <li>6. Contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise</li> <li>7. Lead or support when appropriate, motivating a group for high performance</li> <li>8. Problem solving and managing and resolving conflict</li> </ol>
Career, Life, Work Series (workbooks)	NWT Literacy Council, 2012	<a href="http://www.nwtliteracy.ca/Youth%20and%20Adult%20Literacy%20%28Resources%29">http://www.nwtliteracy.ca/Youth%20and%20Adult%20Literacy%20%28Resources%29</a>	<p>Includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Management Skills Manual</li> <li>• Communication Skills Manual</li> <li>• Career Development Manual</li> <li>• Job Success Strategies Manual</li> <li>• Dealing with Conflict Workbook</li> <li>• Getting the Job Workbook</li> </ul>

Name	Created By	Link	Description
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft Skills for Work Workbook</li> <li>• Planning Your Career Workbook</li> <li>• Dealing with Stress Workbook</li> <li>• Goal Setting Workbook</li> </ul>
New Brunswick Aboriginal Workplace Essential Skills (NBAWES) Project	New Brunswick Aboriginal Workplace Essential Skills (NBAWES) Project, 2010	<a href="http://library.copian.ca/authors/new-brunswick-aboriginal-workplace-essential-skills-nbawes-project">http://library.copian.ca/authors/new-brunswick-aboriginal-workplace-essential-skills-nbawes-project</a>	The New Brunswick Aboriginal Workplace Essential Skills (NBAWES) project was designed to help Aboriginal adults improve their literacy skills and their employability. It builds on existing workplace Essential Skills material to develop a curriculum that meets the specific needs of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet adult learners. Includes 20 courses.
Paving the Way to Lasting Employment	Kingston Literacy & Skills, 2012	<a href="http://library.copian.ca/item/10486">http://library.copian.ca/item/10486</a>	This manual, which accompanies a series of 12 interactive videos, grew out of a project that focused on the “soft skills” that are a key to holding down a job. Those are the Essential Skills of oral communication, working with others, and thinking skills.

Name	Created By	Link	Description
			Each video is based on skill areas that would be required in a retail, customer service, or administrative setting. The user can select the relevant video either on the DVD or via the web address.
EmployAbility Success!	Timmins Learning Centre, 2009	<a href="http://library.copian.ca/item/8984">http://library.copian.ca/item/8984</a>	<p>This project was developed to help fill in the gaps for learners seeking employment or further training after upgrading through a literacy program.</p> <p>The curriculum focuses on helping learners develop their “soft” employability skills, like communication and adaptability. Other topics covered include thinking and solving problems; demonstrating positive attitudes; being responsible; and learning continuously.</p>
OLES Self Assessments and Tip Sheets	Office of Literacy and Essential	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essen">https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essen</a>	Tool User Guide – Job Seekers and Workers – Self Assessments

Name	Created By	Link	Description
	Skills	<a href="http://www.skills.gov.on.ca/OSP2Web/EDU/Welcome.xhtml">tial-skills/tools.html</a>	These informal assessments guide learners through a series of statements to help them identify their essential skills strengths and areas for improvement. Self-assessments are available for each of the nine essential skills, including Working with Others.
Ontario Skills Passport	Ontario Ministry of Education	<a href="http://www.skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSP2Web/EDU/Welcome.xhtml">http://www.skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSP2Web/EDU/Welcome.xhtml</a>	The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) provides clear descriptions of Essential Skills and work habits important for success in work, learning and life. Learners can use the OSP tools and resources to assess, build, document and track their skills in classroom, cooperative education and other experiential learning opportunities, volunteer and extracurricular activities. This information can help them develop their Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) as they answer the questions: Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals?
UP Skills for Work	ABC Life Literacy	<a href="https://upskillsforwork.ca/">https://upskillsforwork.ca/</a>	UP Skills for Work helps learners develop key

Name	Created By	Link	Description
	Canada		employability skills through free workshops and downloadable workbooks. The 9 topics covered are: Motivation, Attitude, Accountability, Presentation, Teamwork, Time Management, Adaptability, Stress Management, and Confidence.
The Learning Hub Online Courses	The Learning Hub	<a href="https://learninghub.ca/course-list-content/62">https://learninghub.ca/course-list-content/62</a>	Courses include Basic Skills for the Real World, Becoming a Lifelong Learner, Conflict Resolution Skills and Strategies, among others.
ACE Self Management & Self Direction	ACE Distance Delivery	<a href="http://www.acedistancedelivery.ca/courses-offered.php">http://www.acedistancedelivery.ca/courses-offered.php</a>	Online course - Self-Management & Self-Direction introduces students to concepts that will enable them to maximize their potential as learners. Students will participate in a variety of activities that will encourage them to reflect upon themselves, their goals, and what they need to do to reach those goals. In addition to examining how to take control of their own learning, students will also learn more about resources and support available to learners in Ontario.

Name	Created By	Link	Description
Good Learning Anywhere	Sioux Hudson Literacy Council	<a href="https://goodlearninganywhere.com/courses/types-of-courses/live-classes/">https://goodlearninganywhere.com/courses/types-of-courses/live-classes/</a>	Online learning for Indigenous learners including courses such as Spirit Self Discovery.
Workplace Skills Tutorials	MaxKnowledge	<a href="http://www.maxknowledge.com/tutorials.php">http://www.maxknowledge.com/tutorials.php</a>	We offer a large selection of free online tutorials covering basic workplace skills areas. These tutorials provide informal learning opportunities with no certificates or CEUs awarded. You should be able to complete a tutorial in less than an hour.
How to Achieve Personal and Professional Success by Simply Learning these 10 Soft Skills	E-Soft Skills	<a href="https://www.esoftskills.com/free-soft-skills-training/">https://www.esoftskills.com/free-soft-skills-training/</a>	12 part video course

Practitioner PD			
Blended Learning for Soft	Canadian Council	<a href="http://library.copian.ca/item/">http://library.copian.ca/item/</a>	“Blended learning” refers to combining different kinds of instructional approaches, like

Skills Development	on Learning, 2010	<a href="#">10159</a>	<p>face-to-face learning and coaching, with a variety of technologies, including discussion boards, e-content, and conference calls.</p> <p>This research study compares the learning outcomes of four different blended learning strategies for developing the “soft skills” that enhance job performance and personal interactions. The four strategies range from a very loose coupling of personal learning with job performance to a very tight coupling.</p>
Creating the learners society needs: An examination of knowledge building	Canadian Council on Learning, 2007	<a href="http://library.copian.ca/item/11145">http://library.copian.ca/item/11145</a>	<p>Although Canadian workers have more education than ever before, numerous surveys of business leaders suggest that employers are dissatisfied with their employees’ so-called “soft” skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication skills, and self-motivation. Research suggests that a learning strategy called knowledge building can help students acquire and develop these skills.</p>

Coursera	Coursera	<a href="https://www.coursera.org/">https://www.coursera.org/</a>	Online learning - Search the catalog for soft skills and you will find courses such as Learning Mindsets and Skills and Building Your Leadership Skills.
Lynda	Lynda	<a href="http://www.Lynda.com">www.Lynda.com</a>	Online learning (free trial available) - Search the catalog for soft skills and you find courses such as Assessing Soft Skills and Reveal Transferable and Soft Skills.
Literacy Basics - Learner Retention	Community Literacy of Ontario	<a href="http://literacybasics.ca/learner-retention/">http://literacybasics.ca/learner-retention/</a>	The reasons why adult students enroll in a literacy program and then choose to either continue or drop out are complex and varied. Adult students come to literacy programs with individual motivations, barriers and personal needs. In this training module, Community Literacy of Ontario explores issues around student retention including motivation and goal setting.

## Soft skills and the LBS Task-Based Activities Portal

For the past several years, the LBS Task-Based Activities Portal has been a go-to resource for literacy practitioners. Many of the tasks on the LBS Portal contain soft skills. Here are some examples:

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Addressing Envelopes EI A2.1_B3.1a_B3.1b_E.1	The learner will copy the names and addresses of at least five friends or relatives into a personal address book (if one is not already available). The learner is expected to be able to read the names of these people. The learner will then address three envelopes to three different people using the correct format, including a return address.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/address-envelopes-addresses-personal-address-book">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/address-envelopes-addresses-personal-address-book</a>
Analogue Clock EI A2.1_B3.1_C2.1_E.1	The learner will read an analogue clock with many different times registered on it, set the time on an analogue clock as requested, and then solve everyday situations at work or at home which involve measuring the elapse of time.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/tell-and-set-time-using-analogue-clock">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/tell-and-set-time-using-analogue-clock</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Answer Questions Based on Short Story SS A1.3_B2.2	In this task the learner is required to read a short story and find the necessary information to complete the questions related to the story.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/answer-questions-based-short-story">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/answer-questions-based-short-story</a>
Applying for a Job Online E A1.1_A1.2_A2.2_B3.2a_D.2	Understand how to find job opportunities online, type of information required, and format of information.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/applying-job-online-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/applying-job-online-transition-employment-task</a>
Appointment Calendar EI A2.1_B3.1a_C2.1_E.1	Write upcoming events and appointments on a current calendar, and then at a later time read the entries and answer questions orally about these entries.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/write-and-read-appointments-calendar-organize-personal-schedule">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/write-and-read-appointments-calendar-organize-personal-schedule</a>
Apprenticeship Myths Video ASSPS A3_B2.1_D.2	The learner will watch a short video, debunking myths about apprenticeship and write a short paragraph describing two of those myths.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/watch-short-video-learn-truth-about-myths-apprenticeship">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/watch-short-video-learn-truth-about-myths-apprenticeship</a>
Assemble Supplies for Board Meeting E	Compare a list of required supplies to the supplies on hand and make a shopping list.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/assemble-supplies-board-meeting">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/assemble-supplies-board-meeting</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
A2.1_B3.1b_C4.1		
Assessing Computer Skills E A1.1_A2.3_D.3_E.1	Many jobs require knowledge of computers and the internet. In this task the learner will assess their computer skills through an online test and determine whether they would benefit from computer skills upgrading.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/assessing-computer-skills">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/assessing-computer-skills</a> URL
Applying for a Job Online E A1.1_A1.2_A2.2_B3.2a_D.2	Understand how to find job opportunities online, type of information required, and format of information.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/applying-job-online-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/applying-job-online-transition-employment-task</a>
Apprenticeship Myths Video ASSPS A3_B2.1_D.2	The learner will watch a short video, debunking myths about apprenticeship and write a short paragraph describing two of those myths.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/watch-short-video-learn-truth-about-myths-apprenticeship">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/watch-short-video-learn-truth-about-myths-apprenticeship</a>
Behavioural Job Interviews E A1.1_A1.2_A2.1_B1.1_B	Understand how to answer behaviour based questions using a particular method.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/behavioural-job-interviews-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/behavioural-job-interviews-transition-employment-task</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
2.2_B3.2a		
Body Language during an Interview E A3.2	The learner will watch a video about job interview body language to extract information about job interview skills.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/body-language-during-job-interview">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/body-language-during-job-interview</a>
Brainstorm EASSPS B1.2	Brainstorm to generate solutions to a problem	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/brainstorm">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/brainstorm</a>
Business Message 1 EI A1.2_A2.1_C2.1_E.1	Read aloud a message from a business and then answer written questions about the message.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/read-business-message">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/read-business-message</a>
Cancelling and Rescheduling a Workshop E A1.1_A2.2_B1.2_B2.2_B3.2a_C2.1	Use proper phone etiquette to cancel and reschedule a workshop. Use a calendar to reschedule and understand appointment times	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/cancelling-and-rescheduling-workshop-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/cancelling-and-rescheduling-workshop-transition-employment-task</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Career Planning E A3.2	The learner will watch a video to extract information about career planning.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/career-planning">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/career-planning</a>
Classroom Rights and Responsibilities SI A1.1_B2.1	In this activity learners determine what their rights and responsibilities are in the classroom. They will also have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Classroom Rights and Responsibilities contract.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/classroom-rights-and-responsibilities">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/classroom-rights-and-responsibilities</a>
Cold Call an Employer E A1.2_A2.1_B1.1_B2.2_B2.3_D.2	Understand what a cold call to an employer is and how to prepare for the cold call.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/cold-call-employer-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/cold-call-employer-transition-employment-task</a>
Complete a self-assessment to help determine a career exploration choice	The learner will complete a short self-assessment about a particular trade group to determine if a career in that trade group might be suitable. They will add up the results and use the total to help them decide.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/complete-self-assessment-help-determine-career-exploration-choice">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/complete-self-assessment-help-determine-career-exploration-choice</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Dealing With Racism in the Workplace EI B1.2_B2.2	People from different cultures may experience racism in the workplace. It is important for all workers to prepare for those situations and handle them appropriately. In this task the learner will answer questions that will help them reflect on racist behaviour.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/dealing-racism-workplace">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/dealing-racism-workplace</a>
Dress Code Policy E A1.2_A1.3_B2.2	Understanding a Dress Code Policy, to interpret the meaning of various parts of the document and the reasons for appropriate dress.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/understanding-dress-code-policy-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/understanding-dress-code-policy-transition-employment-task</a>
Explains a safety procedures and answer questions E B1.2	Explain safety procedures to a co-worker and answer questions.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/explain-safety-procedures-co-worker-and-answer-questions">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/explain-safety-procedures-co-worker-and-answer-questions</a>
Filing a Complaint Against an Employer E A3.2	The learner will watch a video to extract information about filing a complaint against an employer.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/filing-complaint-against-employer">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/filing-complaint-against-employer</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Interview Questions EA A1.2_A2.2_B2.1_B2.2_B 3.1a_D.2	Understand and research types of questions asked in interviews.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/interview-questions-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/interview-questions-transition-employment-task</a>
Job Search Terminology E A1.1_A1.2_A2.2_B2.1_B 2.2	Understand the meaning of terminology used in employment searches.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/job-search-terminology-transition-employment-task">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/job-search-terminology-transition-employment-task</a>
Learning & Time Mgmt Task 1 P B2.1_B3.2a_C2.1_C4.3_E .2	In this activity, the learner will track their learning and time management for a week, reflect on their findings, and then create an optimized learning and time management plan.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/learning-and-time-management-tracker%C2%AC-part">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/learning-and-time-management-tracker%C2%AC-part</a>
Learning & Time Mgmt Task 2 P B2.1_B3.2a_C2.1_C4.2_E 2	In this activity, the learner will track their learning and time management for a week, reflect on their findings, and then create an optimized learning and time management plan.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/learning-and-time-management-tracker%C2%AC-part-b">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/learning-and-time-management-tracker%C2%AC-part-b</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Manage Learning SSPS E3	To create a manageable, personal tool that will help the learner identify their goals, learning goals, barriers and possible ways to overcome them while also achieving an end, a big picture goal.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/manage-your-learning">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/manage-your-learning</a>
Managing Time Schedule E A2.2_B3.2a_C2.2_C4.1	People who work in salons need to have a clear understanding of time for booking appointments and managing schedules. These tasks will require the learner to arrange bookings and manage appointment times to suit clients and staff.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/managing-time-schedule">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/managing-time-schedule</a>
Negotiating A Raise E A1.2_B1.1_C1.2_D.1	Employees need to know how to promote their strengths and negotiate a raise during performance evaluations. In this task the learner will role play asking for a raise based on a scenario.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/negotiating-raise">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/negotiating-raise</a>
Our Changing Workplace EA F	Learners on the employment path will discuss their ideas on workplace protocols and how they can affect them.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/our-changing-workplace">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/our-changing-workplace</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Preparing for a Job Interview E A3.2	The learner will watch a video and extract information about preparing for a job interview.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/preparing-job-interview">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/preparing-job-interview</a>
Reporting an Emergency I A1.1_B1.1	In this task, the learner is required to make decisions about the correct telephone number to use in an emergency and to support his/her reasoning.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/reporting-emergency">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/reporting-emergency</a>
Resolving Conflicts EASSPSI F	Resolving conflicts through discussions	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/resolving-conflicts">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/resolving-conflicts</a>
Self-assessment to manage learning EAPSSSI E1	Complete a self-assessment and identify areas of needed improvement.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/self-assessment-managing-learning">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/self-assessment-managing-learning</a>
Speaking Up At Work E A1.2_B2.2	Workers sometimes find themselves in work situations where they have to speak up for themselves. In this task the learner will read and reflect upon a fictional work scenario.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/speaking-work">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/speaking-work</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
Support a Work Colleague E F	Learners will choose a scenario where a co-worker is struggling at the workplace and will think of various ways to support/help their colleague.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/supporting-work-colleague">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/supporting-work-colleague</a>
Using Social Media to Find a Job E A3.2	The learner will watch a video to extract information about using social media to find employment.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/using-social-media-find-job">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/using-social-media-find-job</a>
What it Means to be a volunteer E A3.1_A3.2	The learner will watch a video to identify its purpose and intended audience.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/what-it-means-be-volunteer">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/what-it-means-be-volunteer</a>
What Makes Us Feel Good about our Work E A3.2_A3.3	The video will watch a Ted Talk presentation to extract information about what makes us feel good about our work.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/what-makes-us-feel-good-about-our-work">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/what-makes-us-feel-good-about-our-work</a>
Workplace Health and Safety Tools_ EA A1.1_A2.1_B1.2_B2.1_D.	Learners are encouraged to access online tools available from the Ontario Ministry of Labour that were created to identify possible workplace hazards and what precautions to take to avoid	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/workplace-health-and-safety-tools">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/workplace-health-and-safety-tools</a>

Activity	Description of activity	URL
2	injury at work.	
Workplace Violence Ministry of Labour E A3.2	The learner will watch a video to extract information about Workplace Violence regulations.	<a href="http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/workplace-violence-ministry-labour">http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/workplace-violence-ministry-labour</a>