

# Learning with Swagger

## Strategy Guide:

Strategies to improve  
soft skills in adults



Project READ Literacy Network



MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



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# Strategy Guide

**“No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.”**

Dr. James Comer, 2001.

## Overview

Adults with low literacy skills are vulnerable and marginalized within Canadian society and the numbers continue to grow. These adults face multiple barriers to participation in literacy education as a result of poverty, isolation, health, low self-esteem, and various other factors (Long and Middleton, 2001; Roussy and Paul, 2002; Horsman, 1999). Only a fraction of the adults who need literacy skills actually attend classes regularly. Among learners who participate regularly, persistence is an ongoing issue since adult literacy learners move in and out of programs based on life circumstances (Gadsby, Middleton, and Whitaker, 2007; Payne, DeVol, and Smith, 2006; Roussy and Hart, 2002; Long and Middleton, 2001). As well, the majority of learners need to feel safe, accepted, respected, encouraged, and given a sense of hope and possibilities in order to be able to persist in a program (Lefebvre et al, 2006; Grieve, 2003; Horsman, 1999).

There are many indicators of literacy, math, and computer skills however, much progress occurs in non-academic indicators which are as varied as the learners themselves (Lefebvre, 2006; Grieve, 2003). A lot of research has been done on the “soft skills” and their importance in adult learning. To our knowledge however, there are no formal assessment tools to assess these skills, used in Literacy and Basic Skills classes. We have found assessment tools that measure self-esteem but have not found a tool that measures multiple indicators of self esteem, confidence, self efficacy, grit and other measures known to be important to increase gains in learning. Almost all learners report a change in their lives as a result of involvement in a literacy program. To add to gains in math and literacy skills, learners identify confidence, friendships and connections with others, and an ability to speak out in groups more readily (Lefebvre et al, 2006; James and Nightingale, 2005; Westell, 2005; Grieve, 2003).

Often, learners describe their progress in terms of real life activities they can now accomplish in a wide variety of contexts including work, school, home and community. These indicators of progress appear to be both a consequence of learning and a necessity for learning to happen (Lefebvre, et al, 2006). Indicators such as

- Self-confidence
- Finding a voice
- Opening up to learning (positive attitude)
- Independence
- Building relationships
- Wellness (physical health)
- Taking risks, challenges
- Being Assertive
- Asking for help
- Listening to enhance learning
- Cultural awareness and tolerance
- Conflict resolution

Learners have different perspectives on non-academic progress and they may notice soft skill progress that may not be evident to another person (Lefebvre et al, 2006). For these reasons, the “Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool” contains both learner self-assessment

and assessor assessment. Additionally the monthly Tracking Tools allows for learner identification of skills and behaviours.

With implementation of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF), accountability measures have changed. It became obvious that when learner literacy, math, and computer skills increase, other less documentable skills also increase. When learners participate in a literacy program, there are many outcomes of learning that occur in addition to the gains in literacy and math skills. These outcomes are the essential foundational skills that make learning easier. For this reason, this project aimed to find measures that would capture learner skill increases in non-academic outcomes (soft skills). Thus the "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" and the "Strategy Guide" were developed.

## **How to Use the "Learning with Swagger Strategy Guide"**

This "Strategy Guide" was created to provide strategies to enhance learner soft skills and to link to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). Once scoring results are obtained from the "Assessment Tool," strategies for areas identified as needing strengthening can be implemented. The "Strategy Guide" provides choices of activities that can be used with adults to strengthen their soft skills. This strengthening of soft skills will enable learners to have greater increases in learning in a shorter time period. It is suggested that once instructors have determined the areas in which the learner needs support, refer to this "Strategy Guide" for background and strategies to enhance learner skills in particular areas. If instructors find the learner needs help in all areas, choose no more than 3 areas to enhance in a time period. Otherwise, the learner may feel overwhelmed and instead of gaining confidence, will have a decrease in confidence and self-esteem.

The two Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) competencies that this "Strategy Guide" links with include "Manage Learning" and "Engage with Others." "Manage Learning" describes the elements that contribute to successful learning both in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classroom and in other learning situations, both formal and informal. "Manage Learning" comprises goal setting, planning, learning strategies, self-reflection, and evaluation as each relates to the learning process. The competency "Manage Learning" has observable characteristics of learner performance and supports a variety of tasks. They include descriptors such as:

- Demonstrates positive attitude to learning
- Accepts positive feedback and constructive criticism
- Recognizes and expresses when one does not know something
- Accepts new learning challenges
- Is willing to work independently
- Takes responsibility for learning
- Takes initiative
- Takes risks in learning situations
- Manages time
- Attends class regularly and punctually
- Checks accuracy of work (Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework, 2011)

"Engage with Others" is about interactions and collaborations between individuals over various time periods. These interactions require communication and soft skills to establish and maintain associations or relationships with the goal of achieving a shared outcome. Many opportunities exist for learners to become aware of how to competently manage



situations involving others. Adult learners engage with others when doing tasks that require collaboration among individuals. Performance descriptors in this competency include:

- Understands one's role, seeks clarification as required
- Recognizes the roles of others
- Acknowledges/identifies responsibilities
- Accepts one's share of the responsibilities
- Acknowledges and accepts others' perspectives
- Adapts behaviour to the demands of the situation
- Shows an awareness of group dynamics
- Meets group expectations
- Demonstrates tolerance and flexibility
- Demonstrates a willingness to help others
- Makes contributions that take into account one's strengths and limitations

## **Design of the "Learning with Swagger Strategy Guide"**

The "Learning with Swagger Strategy Guide" has been designed to go hand-in-hand with the "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool." The "Strategy Guide" will offer choices of strategies to enhance various low scores on specific soft skills. The "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" was designed to measure the non-academic skills (i.e. soft skills, meta-cognitive skills) which increase with participation in an adult literacy class. For many years, educators have spoken about the need for measuring these skills since the soft skills must be present in order to have gains in the academic outcomes (i.e. literacy and math skills). Since many of the soft skills are not observable, it is more likely we can observe indicators or practices that suggest whether or not the soft skills are more established.

The "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" and "Strategy Guide" have 7 different parts including:

- Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences
- Introversion/Extraversion
- Life, Social and Employability Skills
- Self-Esteem
- Confidence
- Grit
- Time Management and Study Skills

Within each section of the "Assessment Tool," learners are asked to judge their abilities now, not their potential capabilities in the future. In conjunction with administering the "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" at initial and ongoing assessment, learners are asked to do a "Weekly Check-In" to aid in tracking progress of learners' soft skills. Each month, after learners complete the "Weekly Check-In," they will be asked to complete the "Examples of my Progress" tracking form. This will help both learners and instructors to document both soft and hard skill increases. Additionally, this "Strategy Guide" has two monthly tracking sheets, "Manage Learning Checklist" and "Engage with Others Checklist" that will document specific learning in these competencies.

Effective administration of the tool and strategies requires an understanding of the principles of adult learning and andragogy and the ways adults learn best.

## Tracking Progress

There are a number of tracking forms included in the package:

- Learner Weekly Check-In
- Examples of My Progress – Monthly
- Circle of Learning – Monthly
- Manage Learning Checklist
- Engage with Others Checklist

Since part of the OALCF is having learners reflect on their learning, a “Learner Weekly Check-In” form has been developed. This form will be another way of tracking both the non-observable attributes and the observable behaviours that the learner is exhibiting. The form is to be completed by the learner on a weekly basis and put into the learner plan or portfolio. On a monthly basis, the learner will record examples of his/her progress on the “Examples of my Progress” form. Finally, the third sheet, the “Circle of Learning” is for recording this data in a visual way. It is a form that both learners and instructors will complete. The aim of this tool is to stimulate wide ranging reflection and discussion by learners about the progress they have made and the variety of social practices and contexts in which they have made that progress (Lefebvre et al, 2006). These soft skills assessment tools will supplement the existing literacy and math assessment tools.

### How to Use “Learner Weekly Check-In” Form

1. Learner is to record name and the date; include the week.
2. Remind the learner that this “Learner Weekly Check-In” will help to track the learning progress made in the last week. When used on a weekly basis and kept in a portfolio with the learner plan, it will provide evidence of learning.
3. Learner is to check the appropriate column for the statements found under “Manage Learning” and “Engage with Others.”
4. Then s/he should record a goal for the next week. This should be a short-term goal.
5. The learner may have the same goal from one week to the next. That is acceptable.

## Learner Weekly Check-In (Manage Learning and Engage with Others)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates for the week completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please put a checkmark (√) in the column that shows what happened this past week.

<b>Manage Learning</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
I regularly attended every class and on time			
If "no" I told the instructor in advance if I had to miss or my absence was beyond my control			
I handed all or most of my work in when asked			
I listened and understood more than in previous weeks			
I spoke up in class when there were things I wanted to say or needed to know			
I had more control in my life this week			
I feel differently about my health			
I am more comfortable doing tasks in class			
I am using learning tools with ease (e.g. calculator, computer, pens, paper)			
I took on new challenges at home, school, work, or in the community			
My attitude toward learning was more open and positive			
<b>Engage with Others</b>			
I am more aware of others and their needs			
My family and friends said I have changed or am changing			
I feel like I've contributed to my community			
I have worked with other adults/I helped others			
I have someone who supports my learning in the classroom or at home			
I have accepted others knowledge and needs			
I have met group expectations and deadlines			
I have been flexible and tolerant where others are concerned			

(Adapted from Lefebvre et al, 2006)

My goal for next week is: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **How to Use “Examples of My Progress (Monthly)” and “Circle of Learning” Forms**

1. Have learner think about activities that s/he has been doing over the past month and record under “My Learning Activities” “Work Activities” or “Other.”
2. Refer to the “Learning Circle” to record the areas of progress.
3. Encourage learner to think about the areas of progress for him/her.
4. If these areas include “reading, writing, math, computers,” encourage learner to be more specific in describing how s/he applies those skills daily.
5. On the “Learning Circle” Form, either the learner or the instructor can circle the learning outcomes for which the learner feels progress has been made.
6. If there is an area not covered on the circle, add additional areas as needed.
7. Learners can also indicate which outcomes have positively influenced other outcomes by drawing a line from one outcome to another. For example, lines connecting “listening differently” to “having and building better relationships with others” would show a link to “engage with others.”
8. Any comments can be added to the top of the page.

# Questions and Prompts for Monthly Forms

(Adapted from Lefebvre et al, 2006)

These questions are to be used with the "Circle of Learning (Monthly)" form and "Examples of My Progress (Monthly)" form. They can guide your discussion with the learner. Another option is to have the learner record his/her answers to these questions in a journal and then complete the 2 forms based on the answers recorded.

1. Do you see a difference in your life as a result of your learning? Yes/No
2. If yes, in what ways (specify what the difference is)?
3. If yes, why do you think there has been a difference? If no, why do you think there has not been a difference?
4. How is the learning different from what you thought it might be?
5. What is bringing you back to the program? Why do you keep attending?
6. Have you learned what you wanted to learn? How can you tell?
7. Have friends or family commented on a change in you? What did they say?
8. How comfortable do you feel in class? In the community (e.g. grocery store, gas station, bus terminal)? At home?
9. Do you feel that you have more control, less control, or the same control over things in your life?
10. Are you more willing to do tasks that you may not have tried before you came here?

## Examples of My Progress (Monthly)

**Instructions for Learner:** Please record all the activities that you have been doing over the past month

My Learning Activities	
Work Activities (paid or volunteer)	Other

Note to Instructor:  
Think about OALCF  
competencies when  
discussing the learner

**Do you see a difference in your daily life as a result of your learning?**

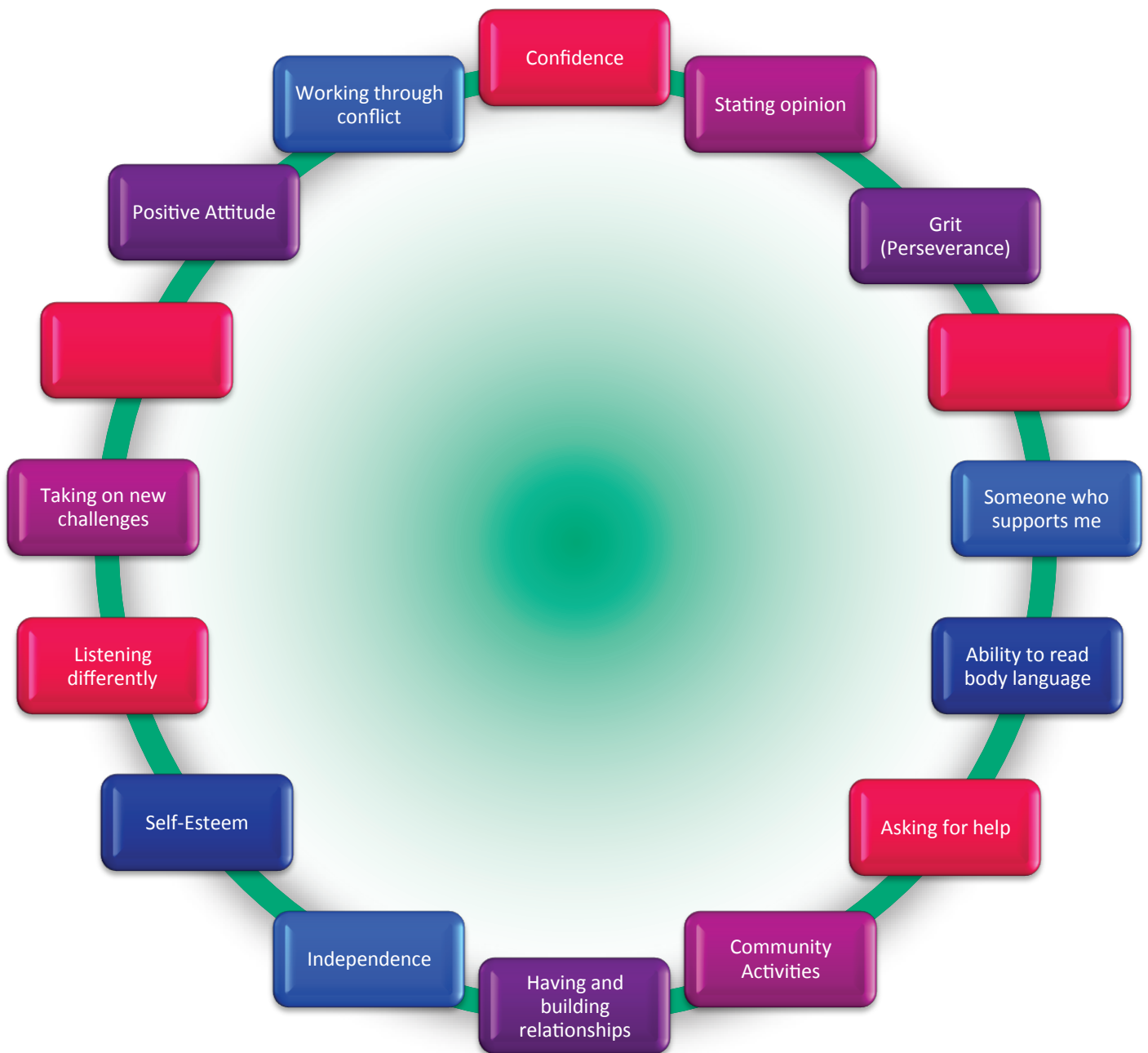
**Circle of Learning (Monthly)** Adapted from Lefebvre et al, 2006.

**Instructions:** This tool is to be used for reflection on “Manage Learning” and “Engage with Others.” Have the learner think about progress in reading, math, or other subjects. Encourage the learner to be specific by describing how s/he applies reading, writing, math, etc. in everyday practices. If the learner feels s/he has made progress in an area not on the diagram, create a new spot and include the area. The learner circles the learning outcome for which s/he has made progress. Then s/he reflects on which outcomes have positively influenced that outcome. These interactions can be shown by drawing a line from one outcome to another. Example: a line connecting “Ability to read body language,” “Having and building relationships” and “Working through conflict” would show these three impacted each other. This reflection on how one outcome might impact another outcome may also bring progress to light that may otherwise go unnoticed.

**Learner:**

**Review Date:**

**Comments**



## **Use of “Manage Learning” and “Engage with Others” Checklists**

These checklists have the performance descriptors located in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework for the competencies “Manage Learning” and “Engage with Others.” As you incorporate the use of various strategies in this guide, you will notice increases in the learner’s soft skills. On a monthly basis, if the learner is working towards increasing skills in both “Manage Learning” and “Engage with Others,” complete both forms. If only working on one, complete the appropriate form.

## **How to Complete Forms**

If you or the learner noticed evidence of the specific performance descriptor, check the “yes” column. If no evidence, check the “no” column. It is understandable that the learner may have a difficult time monitoring his/her learning but by practising using the various tools located in the Learning with Swagger package, these skills will increase.



## Manage Learning Checklist

### Instructions

Using the checklist below, complete with the learner on initial and exit assessment. This may also be used on a monthly basis. These are the performance descriptors located in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework. If you or the learner noticed evidence of the performance descriptor, check the "yes" column. If no evidence, check the "no" column. It is understandable that learners may have a difficult time monitoring their learning but by practising using the various tools located in the Learning with Swagger package, these skills will increase.

Learner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

"Manage Learning" is about the elements that contribute to successful learning both in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classroom and in other learning situations, both formal and informal.

Performance Descriptor	Yes	No	Comment
<b>Level 1</b>			
Sets short term goals			
Identifies steps required to achieve goals			
Begins to monitor progress towards achieving goals			
Begins to identify barriers to achieving goals			
Begins to use a limited number of learning strategies			
Begins to identify ways to remember information and reinforce learning			
Creates "to do" lists to keep organized			
Begins to monitor own learning			
Identifies preferred learning style			
Identifies one source of information			
Uses feedback to improve performance			

## Manage Learning Checklist Continued

Performance Descriptor	Yes	No	Comment
<b>Level 2</b>			
Sets realistic short and long-term goals			
Identifies steps required to achieve goals			
Monitors progress towards achieving goals			
Identifies barriers to achieving goals			
Begins to adjust goals, activities, and timelines to address obstacles to achieving goals			
Uses a limited number of learning strategies			
Identifies ways to remember information and reinforce learning			
Sequences activities in multi-step tasks			
Monitors own learning			
Begins to adapt to instructional approaches and learning materials that do not reflect preferred learning style			
Begins to identify how skills and strategies can transfer to different contexts			
Identifies multiple sources of information to complete tasks			
Evaluates own performance using established criteria and tools			
Begins to identify ways to improve performance			

## Manage Learning Checklist Continued

Performance Descriptor	Yes	No	Comment
<b>Level 3</b>			
Sets realistic short and long-term goals			
Prioritizes goals and establishes realistic timelines for achieving goals			
Monitors progress towards achieving goals			
Identifies barriers to achieving goals			
Adjusts goals, activities, and timelines to address obstacles to achieving goals			
Uses a variety of learning strategies			
Identifies ways to clarify, check understanding, and reinforce learning			
Develops plans to complete longer-term tasks			
Monitors and evaluates own learning			
Adapts to instructional approaches and learning materials that do not reflect preferred learning style			
Identifies how skills and strategies can transfer to different contexts			
Evaluates the quality and comprehensiveness of multiple resources to complete tasks			
Identifies ways to improve performance			

## Engage with Others Checklist

### Instructions

Using the checklist below, complete with the learner on a monthly basis. These are the performance descriptors located in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework. If you or the learner noticed evidence of the performance descriptor, check the "yes" column. If no evidence, check the "no" column. It is understandable that learners may have a difficult time monitoring their learning, but by practising using the various tools located in the Learning with Swagger package, these skills will increase.

Learner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

"Engage with Others" is about interactions and collaborations between individuals over various time periods. These interactions require communication skills and soft skills to establish and maintain associations or relationships with the goal of achieving a shared outcome. Many opportunities exist for learners to become aware of how to competently manage situations involving others. Adult learners engage with others when doing tasks that require collaboration among individuals.

<b>Performance Descriptor</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Understands one's role, seeks clarification as required			
Recognizes the roles of others			
Acknowledges/identifies responsibilities			
Accepts one's share of the responsibilities			
Acknowledges and accepts others' perspectives			
Adapts behaviour to the demands of the situation			
Shows an awareness of group dynamics			
Meets group expectations			
Demonstrates tolerance and flexibility			
Demonstrates a willingness to help others			
Makes contributions that take into account one's strengths and limitations			

## **Piloting of the Assessment Tool and Strategy Guide**

This "Assessment Tool" and "Strategy Guide" were piloted with 50 learners in all 3 sectors of the Anglophone stream including community based, school board and college programs. Additionally, it was piloted in one program from the Deaf Stream. The pilot included 38 learners who were in the test group which meant they had the "Assessment Tool" administered and also had the benefit of having specific strategies implemented to enhance the soft skills that were identified as lacking. There were 12 learners in the control group who had the "Assessment Tool" administered but did not receive the strategies. All learners had their literacy skills assessed at the same time as they had their soft skills assessed. The results showed a definite increase in both soft skills and literacy skills in most all of the test group participants from initial to final assessment. The "Assessment Tool" and "Strategy Guide" was found to be useful in all 3 sectors and with learners working on both lower-level and higher-level tasks.

*"I noticed that 2 of my students used to come in to class and chat and always wait for direction from me. After 'Learning with Swagger' implementation started, they now take on little projects. They also now call when sick to let me know they won't be attending. They have taken on other responsibilities. Self-esteem has increased in both learners. It was kind of neat! Taking initiative also increased in a huge manner. It is nice to see them gaining independence."* LBS instructor involved in Learning with Swagger pilot

*"Learners working on tasks at lower levels seemed to also move up within the level that they started working in. There were a few learners who made substantial gains in both soft skills and in literacy skills. Learners working on tasks at higher levels seemed to move quickly through the level they started on."* LBS instructor involved in Learning with Swagger pilot.

From the pilots, many recommendations have been incorporated into the final product. Additionally, adaptations that surfaced are listed below.

## **Suggested Adaptations of the Assessment Tool from the Pilot Testing**

The "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" was designed to be administered one-on-one with adult learners. The "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" was piloted with a College program in order to see if it would fit College and Career Preparation programs. The assessment was administered in a group setting. Learners were monitored by instructors with support given when needed. In the college setting, it was suggested that certain components of the assessment be administered and then the strategies utilized for the specific sections. Additionally, it was suggested that Parts 4 and 5 – Self-Esteem and Confidence be administered at the start of the academic year and again at the end to show changes in self-esteem. In the community-based programs, it was found that each part of the assessment tool opened up conversations which broke down barriers. Some learners who attend these programs think they are "stupid" because they have literacy challenges. Using some of the components of the "Assessment Tool," such as the "Multiple Intelligences" component, allowed assessors to explain to the learners that everyone has different strengths. *"I gave them an example of how I am not good at gardening; indeed I try very hard but I just can't seem to get it right. The learners begin to see that they have skills they have developed in other areas of their lives and they are smart. Many had never even thought about the*

*concept of being smart before. Some showed a sense of pride in what they can do.”* LBS Assessor involved in Learning with Swagger Pilot

In the case of the Deaf program, the limited time to pilot the “Assessment Tool” and “Strategy Guide” which was only 3 months, was too short to show major improvements. Since many of the Deaf learners required more time with all aspects of administration and implementation, instructors were unable to use many of the strategies. Because assessors were “signing” the assessment, sometimes the learners forgot what was being asked so the assessor had to repeat the questions. It was extremely time-consuming. It was suggested that the “Assessment Tool” be further adapted for use with Deaf learners. The biggest concern with the “Assessment Tool” at present was the language used since some terms contained within the tool are terms that Deaf learners would not understand. As well, Deaf learners recommended that the “Assessment Tool” be shorter so that it could be administered more quickly with learners. Despite the excessive time needed to administer the tool and implement the strategies as well as some of the terms used, Deaf learners liked using the tool and the strategy guide. For specific adaptations for Deaf learners see “Adaptations for Deaf Learners” section.

## **Things to Consider when Working with Adults**

### **Principles of Adult Learning and Andragogy**

In a learner-centred environment, there is no universal best teaching practice but there can be a core set of learning principles. It is the role of the instructor to select the methods of instruction that best suit the adult learner. This may vary by subject matter and desired outcome of the learner. In this way, instruction can be purposeful and in context. The ability to acquire skills is enhanced when skills are connected to meaningful, problem-solving activities within context. When learners are helped to understand why, when, and how the facts and skills are relevant, new learning is easier (Pellegrino, 1999; Sticht, 1999).

Andragogy consists of learning strategies that focus on how adults learn best. Knowles, the pioneer of andragogy spoke about the importance of using specific principles to motivate adults to learn. These principles include:

1. Adults need to know the reason for learning something
2. Adults need to be responsible for their own decisions; they are self-directed learners
3. Adults learn better as a result of their experiences
4. Adults are interested in material that has a direct meaning for them; they learn the information they want when they want; often in response to a problem and in a context of their home or work life
5. Adults are motivated to learn to the extent they think it will help them do tasks in their lives; (Knowles, 1980)

Adult instructors need to find the connection to the skills the learner wants to learn and to facilitate, motivate, encourage adults to participate, summarize their achievements and help evaluate their progress (Paul and Kennedy, 2010).

### **Giving Feedback**

The fundamental principle about feedback is to provide information on what you see, hear, and feel versus what you think. Next, provide specific rather than general feedback. Third, focus on the behaviours you wish to improve. Finally, give feedback in a way that maintains the relationship (Jensen, 2008). For example, start by telling the student what s/he has

correct and then suggest what to work on next. "That was great! You did....." Be specific in what you observed they did correctly. Then give instruction/minor adjustment on how to approach it differently. Finally, if you follow the first three principles of feedback, you will be able to maintain the trusting relationship that you have with the adult learner. If you say "You did this wrong because..." the learner will only hear the negative feedback, especially a learner with low confidence. ( Gutteridge, Kloster and Watson, 1997).

## **Strategies for Marking to Improve Learner Confidence**

(Adapted from Kate Nonesuch)

Whenever possible, move around the room, talking as the learners work. **The job of an adult instructor is to point out explicitly what the learner has done correctly, and what evidence you see of good thinking and of learning. The job is also to give the learner a chance to tell you what s/he is doing, which will help him/her remember and take control of the process.** When looking at a page with the learner, take a quick, silent glance at the paper to see if there are a few mistakes, or many. Look at the errors to see if you can get a sense of what the problem is; often students make the same kind of mistakes in the same places. Don't point out the errors but instead comment that the student got some or many correct. Mark for confidence.

### **When there are only a few mistakes...**

1. Start with the first question that is correct. Mark it right with a big check mark. Then ask the learner to explain how s/he found the answer. This allows the learner a chance to "rehearse" the procedure and articulate it clearly. Ask questions to get a fuller answer.
2. Repeat with the next correct one, marking it right and asking for an explanation of what s/he did and why s/he did it.
3. Move to the next questions, until s/he can easily articulate the procedure.
4. Then move to the first mistake, and again ask the student to explain what s/he did. Because the learner has the correct reasoning fresh in his/her mind, s/he will usually find his/her mistake and correct it.
5. Mark it right, and acknowledge that s/he was able to find his/her own error without you pointing it out.
6. Continue with the next error, and ask him/her to look at it again. When s/he has corrected it, mark it right.
7. At some point, you can mark all the remaining correct ones with a checkmark, and ask the learner to independently correct all the ones that don't have a checkmark beside them.

### **When there are many mistakes...**

1. Again, find the first question that is right, mark it right, and ask the learner if s/he can guess what s/he did. For example, how did s/he find the answer.
2. Go over the question, teaching and dialoguing with the learner about the question. Notice the thought process to find any clues about why s/he made the errors s/he made.
3. Then present a new question and ask the learner to answer while you watch and coach.
4. Then have learner do another question.
5. When the learner has the correct process in mind, give a clean copy of the worksheet to do, or a new worksheet with similar problems.

## **Share the responsibility for learner mistakes**

1. When a learner makes many errors, take some responsibility for asking the learner to do something s/he was not prepared to do. This helps the learner know the mistakes were part of a complex process that involves explanation, learner ability to focus, time pressures, learner previous knowledge, instructor knowledge of learner skills, and emotional factors.
2. You might say "I made a mistake here—I'm sorry I asked you to do this right away. I didn't know you weren't clear on how to do it." Or "I forgot you missed yesterday's class."
3. Maybe s/he'll say, "That's all right. Everybody makes mistakes sometimes." This is role reversal which is a great position for a learner to be in. Maybe s/he'll say, "I guess I should have asked more questions when you were explaining it before." Again, that is a step forward in the learner taking control of his/her work, as s/he recognizes his/her responsibility to get clear explanations, and articulates one strategy for doing so.

Marking for confidence is more than just being encouraging. It is providing the learner with details that make it great work. The instructor must be specific about exactly what the learner has done successfully and why, so as to encourage the student to do it again. It is also important to help the learner articulate the strategy or skill being used. The instructor needs to get into the habit of cutting the work into small pieces, so that the parts learners do correctly can be acknowledged.

## **Instructor's Role in Learner Success**

The role of the instructor in learner success includes helping them to take control of their learning (Manage Learning). As they begin to do this, they take on a "can do" attitude. As they work with other learners and watch them go through the same process, they may become more comfortable working as teams to guide each other (Engage with Others). The teaching techniques include:

- breaking tasks into manageable pieces for learners
- showing learners how to build their internal learning support system
- being a role model for learners

All learning is problem-solving. It is a constant cycle of mentally preparing to try a out a new skill, checking to see if you've got it right; and if you don't have it right, figuring out how to do so. An example that a LBS instructor might use would be to double a recipe. First, you might begin by having learners review their knowledge of multiplication and then having them practise with some simple calculations so that they know how to double quantities. Then you might demonstrate how to double a recipe by showing and explaining how you are doing it. Then you will ask them to try it. You will check their work and notice what they did right. Ask them to explain what they did, both on paper as well as their thought processes. Then as they get better at these calculations, you may have them move on to more difficult calculations. See "Strategies for Marking to Improve Learner Confidence" for more information on giving feedback (Kloster and Watson, 1997).

## **Impact of Violence**

Many learners have described violence including physical and verbal abuse, and other negative messages and labels they endured as a child and into adulthood. Many come to literacy programs with negative ideas about what to expect. All kinds of violence build upon each other in one person's perspective. Each additional violence has increased impact and



deepens the first violation. People internalize embarrassment, shame and fear, which then impacts how they view themselves (Horsman, 1999). One of the indicators of progress for learners who have experienced violence, is the ability to speak in a group without being afraid. This is a soft skill that learners self-assess on a weekly basis on one of the "Learning with Swagger Tracking Forms."

### **Strategies for Working with Learners Who Have Experienced Violence**

Research suggests that creative approaches are needed to help learners become more present and reflective, building a sense of identity, self-esteem, and belief in the possibility of change (Grieve, 2003; Horsman, 1999)

1. Help the learner to focus - continual crises may make it hard to cope calmly
2. Build trust - if people who should have been trustworthy aren't, then a lot of a learner's energy may go into figuring out who to trust; this takes a lot of time
3. Build connections - can't assume learners can connect; this takes a lot of time
4. Build meaning - help learners to find meaning in life, words, print
5. Use journal writing as a safe place for learners to control their words, connect with others, and place new meaning on experiences. This can also lead to the possibility of imagining a future and move towards goal setting (Horsman, 1999)

Accessed from [www.learningandviolence.net/impact/handouts/briefnotes.pdf](http://www.learningandviolence.net/impact/handouts/briefnotes.pdf) on August 25, 2012.

Visit [www.learningandviolence.net/index.htm](http://www.learningandviolence.net/index.htm) for more information on how to support learners who have experienced violence in their lives. This website has a plethora of information, including videos showing how to better support learners.

### **Knowing the Essential Skills**

Essential Skills are the skills necessary for work, learning and life. They are the foundational skills that help people to evolve and adapt to changes in the workplace, school, and community. Skills are attributes that learners need in order to perform tasks. Adult learners come from different backgrounds but each person brings with him/her knowledge, skills, and experiences. The 9 Essential Skills, as defined by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) include:

- Reading Text
- Writing
- Document Use
- Computer Use
- Oral Communication
- Numeracy (Money Math, Scheduling or Budgeting and Accounting, Data Analysis, Measurement and Calculation, Numerical Estimation)
- Thinking Skills (Job Task Planning and Organizing, Decision-Making, Problem-Solving, Finding Information, Critical Thinking, Significant Use of Memory)
- Continuous Learning
- Working with Others

Work habits include:

- Working Safely
- Teamwork
- Reliability
- Organization
- Working Independently

- Initiative
- Self-advocacy
- Customer Service
- Entrepreneurship (OSP, HRSDC websites, Recognizing Life's Work)

### **Knowing about the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)**

The Curriculum Framework used broad competencies to organize learning content and describe learner proficiency using three levels of performance. The six competencies cover the full range of ways learners will need to use their abilities once they reach their goals. Within a competency-based approach, the interaction of skills, knowledge and behaviours as well as learners' understanding of how to use these skills contributes to learners being able to perform tasks. The components of the "Learning with Swagger Assessment Tool" and "Strategy Guide" focus on two competencies: "Manage Learning" and "Engage with Others." Manage Learning is about helping learners develop the abilities necessary to manage in all learning situations. It comprises goal setting, planning, learning strategies, self-reflection and evaluation as it relates to the learning process. The performance descriptors support a variety of tasks. The learner:

- Demonstrates a positive attitude to learning
- Accepts positive feedback and constructive criticism
- Recognizes and expresses when one does not understand a concept
- Accepts new learning challenges
- Willing to work independently
- Takes responsibility for learning
- Takes initiative
- Takes risks in learning situations
- Manages time
- Attends class regularly and punctually
- Checks accuracy of work

"Engage with Others" is a series of interactions and collaborations between individuals extended over an indeterminate period of time. These interactions use communication skills and soft skills to establish and maintain associations or relationships with achieving a shared outcome. The performance descriptors are indicators of learners' readiness to make successful transitions. They include:

#### Collaboration

- Understanding one's role, seeking clarification as required
- Recognizing the role of others
- Acknowledging/identifying responsibilities
- Accepting one's share of responsibilities
- Adapting behaviour to the demands of the situation
- Showing an awareness of group dynamics
- Meeting group expectations
- Demonstrating tolerance and flexibility
- Demonstrating a willingness to help others
- Making contributions that take into account one's strengths and limitations

#### Conflict Resolution

- Recognizing areas of agreement and disagreement
- Identifying options for resolving agreements
- Contributing to finding a mutually agreeable resolution
- Taking action to resolve the conflict

## Comparison Chart of Essential Skills and OALCF Competencies

Essential Skills	OALCF Competencies
Reading Text	Find and Use Information
Document Use	Communicate Ideas and Information
Writing	Communicate Ideas and Information
Computer Use	Use Digital Literacy
Oral Communication	Communicate Ideas and Information
Numeracy	Understand and Use Numbers
Thinking Skills	
Continuous Learning	Manage Learning
Working with Others	Engage with Others

### Knowing about Other Supports – Free Online Courses

There are some fantastic, free online resources available for learners and instructors. For example, “The Learning Hub,” hosted by the Avon Maitland District School Board can be accessed at [www.learninghub.ca/course\\_listing/courses.aspx](http://www.learninghub.ca/course_listing/courses.aspx)

Some suggested courses include:

- Managing You and Managing Work (time management with a goal focus)
- Managing School: College Readiness
- Memory and Study Tips
- Understanding your Learning Style
- Goal Setting: Discovering your Goals
- Improving your Job Skills
- Maintaining Healthy Self-Esteem On and Off the Job
- GED Prep

Another website that has some fantastic, free online courses available hosted by the Sioux Hudson Literacy Council can be found at <http://goodlearninganywhere.com/register/>

Some suggested courses include:

- GLA (Good Learning Anywhere)
- Creative Writing
- Take a test
- Write an essay
- Self Management/Self-Direction
- Workplace Writing
- Reading for College Reading, Writing, Math
- Reading, Writing, Math, Computer Essential Skills
- Pre-GED Social Studies

Many of these courses deal specifically with enhancing a learner’s soft skills. Other courses are designed to improve employability and social skills. Please access these and many other courses to support the classroom instruction.

## Learning Theories and Paradigms

Many theories exist that explain the “why” behind human behaviour and practices. Many that underlie these tools are found on the following pages.

### Social-Cognitive Theory

Social-cognitive theory is a theory for understanding, predicting, and changing human behaviour. Human behaviour is an interaction of personal factors (cognitive, affective, biological events), behaviour, and the environment (Bandura, 1986). This Strategy Guide uses this theory as a background.

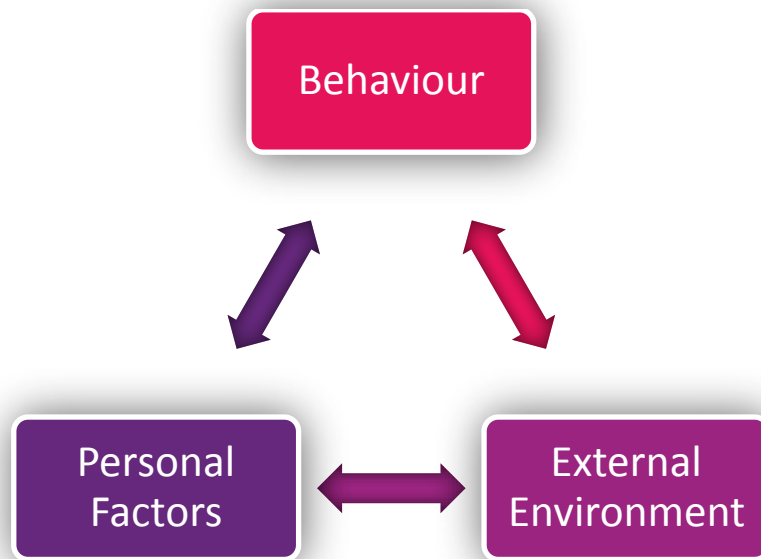


Fig.1 Framework depicting relationship of key variables on predicting both individual and group behaviour (Social Cognitive Theory)

### Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning is a process for helping adults develop fundamental skills for life including self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management and relationship managements (Zins et al, 2004). This type of learning has many components that educators encourage in their students.

### Meta-Cognition, Constructive Theory, and Self-Direction

Meta-cognition is how a learner thinks about thinking. It is a way to help learners set goals, plan, problem-solve, monitor their own progress, and evaluate if they are effective thinkers. In short, it is what is done in Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classes. Using Constructive Theory helps learners to figure out what they know, what they need to learn, and what they should do in a situation (Beamon, 2001). Other related terms are self management and self direction, used quite frequently in previous research on skills lacking in adults enrolled in LBS classes. Improving these skills will improve and hasten their literacy learning and may include soft skills, employability skills and skills and behaviours that are needed for success in the academic realm. “It’s not so much about skills. It’s about a process of opening up to learning” (Grieve, 2003). If you refer to the chart below, you will see the various stages of self-direction. These are the stages that instructors of LBS programs should be guiding their learners through, until stages 3 and 4 are reached.

## Stages of Self Direct

	<b>Learner</b>	<b>Instructor/Facilitator</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Stage 1	Dependent	Authority, coach	Instruction with immediate feedback
Stage 2	Interested	Motivator, guide	Inspiring lecture plus goal-setting and learning strategies
Stage 3	Involved	Instructor	Discussion in which learner and instructor are equally involved
Stage 4	Self-directed	Consultant	Independent work

Table 1. Stages of Self-Direction

## Mental Models (Paradigms)

All people are products of learning and experience and no two people have the same experiences, knowledge and values. A mental model is the way we view the world. These mental models or paradigms can help or hinder learning (Payne, DeVol and Smith, 2006; Covey, 1996). Knowing from what background a learner comes, can help the instructor to understand how to work with the learner. In order for dialogue to occur, we must suspend our mental models. When we approach any learner, we always approach from our perspective or mental model. If we know the learner is on Ontario Works (OW), we make some judgements before we even meet them. These judgements may be accurate or not. When we are dealing with people living in poverty, we have to relate to them and their needs and wants and have them relate to us. Refer to the chart below to see what challenges some individuals are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. There are some similar ones that instructors may be able to relate to such as debt, housing, and health, but there are other categories that are not accessible to someone living in poverty.

## Mental Models for Two Class Systems In North America

<b>Categories in Common</b>	<b>Poverty</b>	<b>Middle Class</b>
Anchor	Relationships	Achievement
Time	The Present (day-to-day) is important	Future is important
Entertainment	Big Flat Screen TV	Theatre
Cars	Used, many don't have a car	Newer Vehicle, no rust
Housing	Rent	Own
Food	Inexpensive, little fresh fruit and meat	Fresh fruit, balanced diet, Variety of everything
Health	Poor	Good
Jobs and Money	Minimum wage, unemployed,	Employed, ability to earn a wage
Family and Friends	Dependent upon them	Can choose friends and neighbourhood

Businesses	Pawn Shop Laundromat Corner Store Rent to Own Fast Food Cheque Cashing Store Used Car Lot	Shopping Mall Bookstores Banks Fitness Centres Office Complexes Restaurants/Bars Golf Courses
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Table 2. Mental Models for people in poverty and middle class

When working with learners living in poverty, understand that to them, relationships = power and respect. Relationships are motivating factors for them. These individuals often live in unpredictable environments and do not have the ability to plan for the future because they are so busy dealing with the day-to-day. Having strong relationships provide them with resources they would not normally be able to access. A huge strength for learners living in poverty is problem-solving. To survive in their environment, they must have excellent reactive, sensory, and non-verbal skills. In their environment, they need the ability to read the situation, establish relationships and solve immediate and concrete problems (DeVol, Payne, Dreussi Smith, 2006).

### **Strategies for Working with Individuals living in Poverty**

Instructors need to move from a “fix it” approach to a motivational approach. In some cases, the learner is not ready for change. The learner needs to be ready to have different ways to think about his/her life. They need to be able to imagine a future story because when living in poverty, there is no future story. There may be no tomorrow if the person can’t feed his/her family or pay the rent. When you are working with these learners, you need to think about the resources that you can nurture. Are they emotionally, mentally, and physically motivated or a combination of all three? Community sustainability is the outcome you are hoping to achieve. Nurture the person’s resources. This is achieved by being able to:

1. Build relationships
2. Stabilize the environment
3. Provide support during the transition
4. Build future stories, practise choice and develop power and influence
5. Think of people living in poverty as the solution to problems

*“If you want small changes, work on your behaviour; if you want quantum-leap changes, work on your paradigms.” (Covey, 1996)*

### **Motivational Change Strategy A – Future Story**

Begin this strategy by having the learner see a concrete picture in their mind. Ask them what their next step goal is. Ask the learner to think of a picture of what they want for their learning or life. For example, picture 1 shows s/he working as an office assistant. Ask him/her:

1. What does it look like? What are you wearing? What does the office look like? Are you sitting at a desk or a table? Is there a couch in the room you are in? Is there a computer in the room?
2. What does it feel like? Do you have a comfortable chair?
3. What does it sound like? Are there other people working in the office? Is it loud? Quiet?

If the learner cannot picture himself or herself in the office, then ask him/her if s/he have seen other people in an office? If so, what do they look like? (etc.) Have the learner draw

this picture. The important thing is that if the learner can see a mental picture of it, they can attain it. If they can't describe any of this to you, then maybe this is not a good goal for him/her.

If they want to be an office assistant, they need to take the course that will give them that credential. In order to do that, they need to attend upgrading class regularly, learn the concepts, gain the skills, and continue to move forward with their learning.

If they choose to stay where they are:

1. What does it look like?
2. What does it feel like?
3. What does it sound like?

What picture does the learner like better? If the learner chooses to fulfil the obligations of attending LBS, doing the work and gaining the skills, they have chosen to become an office assistant. If on the other hand they choose not to do anything, the pictures they have in their mind (Future story) are exactly as they are right now.

## **Relationships**

Relationships are a way that people can access resources, no matter what class they belong to. Ruby Payne (2006) states that there are two kinds of capital: bonding capital and bridging capital. Bonding capital includes the people that help you with the here and now whereas bridging capital includes the people that help you with the next step. Institutions and the people working within those institutions are able to provide learners with both bonding and bridging capital. It is important for LBS instructors to know what kind of resources learners need.

According to Covey, every relationship has an "emotional bank account" that symbolizes the amount of trust within that relationship. Every interaction with another human being can be classified as either a deposit or a withdrawal. Deposits help to repair and build relationships whereas withdrawals break the trust within the relationship (Covey, 1996). If you want to strengthen an existing relationship or build a new one, you need to be kind, make apologies and keep your promises. If you are wondering why a relationship does not feel as close as it did before, consider whether you were unkind or disrespectful of the person, you broke a promise or you did something that wasn't acceptable to this person.

## **Strategies to Build Relationship**

1. Seek first to understand (listen first); then to be understood
2. Make deposits, not withdrawals
3. Appreciate humour and entertainment
4. Respect relationships
5. Wait for the invitation
6. Be aware of one's own mental models
7. Identify strengths and use them

## **Building Relationships Strategy A - Filling the Emotional Bank Account**

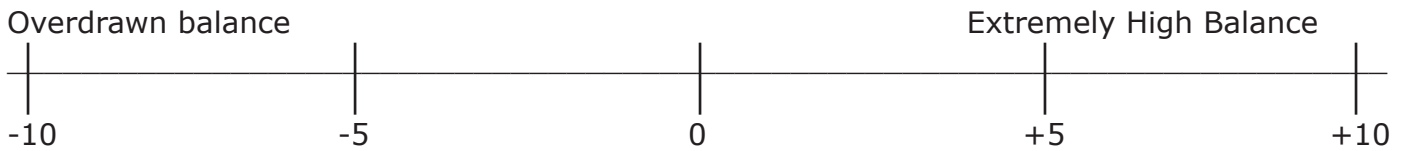
(Adapted from Covey, 1996)

According to Steven Covey, the emotional bank account is the amount of trust in a relationship. He suggests that every interaction with another person can be either a deposit or a withdrawal. Deposits build and repair trust in relationships whereas withdrawals take away from the trust in a relationship. In every relationship, you can only control the deposits and withdrawals that you make. To build trust, look at every problem and every interaction with another person as an opportunity to build trust, or make a deposit in that person's

Emotional Bank Account. By making deposits in relationships, you build your own and other's security.

Think about an important relationship that you want to continue. On a scale of -10 to +10, mark where you think you fall in terms of the "Emotional Bank Account Balance" with this person right now.

Relationship with \_\_\_\_\_  
(person's name).



Think about and write down 3 things you think the person you named would consider deposits (things that would make the person happy, enjoy the relationship with you). Some examples of deposits include:

- giving a birthday card or some other type of card
- noticing when the person is having a bad day and caring to ask why
- showing kindness and courtesy
- keeping promises

**Possible Deposits (To make in the future)**

1.
2.
3.

Now think about and write down 3 things you think the person would consider withdrawals (things that would make the person unhappy with you, not enjoy the friendship/relationship with you). Some examples of withdrawals include:

- breaking promises
- not apologizing for something you did
- forgetting about a special day in that person's life

**Possible Withdrawals (To avoid in the future)**

1.
2.
3.

You now have some ideas on how to build and/or maintain the relationship with that person. You can repeat this process for building relationships with other people.



# Ways of Learning

## Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences – Part 1

Research shows that students found learning style is explicitly associated with academic performance (Gardner, 1999). This means is that if a learner is taught or allowed to learn information in the way s/he learns best, it is easier for the learner to obtain the information.

A highly-used way of categorizing learning is called the VAK (Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic) Theory. According to this theory, the three main learning styles are:

- Visual These people learn best by seeing things. Using pictures, maps, photos, colours, shapes, and body language are all ways to improve learning.
- Auditory These people learn best by hearing things. Talking out loud, singing, clapping, playing music in the background are all ways to improve learning.
- Kinesthetic These people learn best by doing things. Use movement, activity, exploration, and hands on methods in order to improve learning.

## Strategies for Enhancing Learning Style

Learning Style and Difficulty	Strategy
Visual Have difficulty with spoken instructions Over-react to sounds Have trouble in lectures	Show learner rather than telling Write down instructions Use coloured pens/highlighters and show learner how to use them Write key information in different colours Begin with a tidy desk that has good lighting
Auditory Have difficulty with written instructions Have difficulty with reading Have difficulty with reading body language	Ask the learner to talk through the steps in an activity Encourage learners to think out loud when studying Discuss new information so learners understand the information Work in a quiet place Use a CD or computer to read or listen to materials
Kinesthetic Have difficulty learning abstract information Have difficulty sitting still	Use objects, models and games that can be touched and moved Have learner use computer Allow learner frequent breaks Encourage learner to stand up and move around Encourage learner to trace new words with highlighter

Another way of looking at how people learn best is Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1999). According to Gardner, we are all smart but we differ in the strength of our intelligences. The educational system uses universal measures of testing that are biased towards language and math, sometimes ignoring the other intelligences. Refer to the chart below for a detailed explanation of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences and some strategies to enhance each intelligence.

## Strategies for Enhancing Multiple Intelligences

Intelligence (Smart)	Strategy
Linguistic (Word Smart) Highly developed auditory skills that think in words; enjoy reading, playing word games, making up stories.	Encourage the learner to say and see words, read books with another person, use computers, play games, and use oral communication skills (speaking and listening).
Visual-Spatial (Picture Smart) Very aware of their environment and think in terms of physical space; enjoy drawing, jigsaw puzzles, reading maps, etc	Can be taught through drawings, videoconferencing, television, multimedia, and texts with pictures, charts and graphs.
Logical-Mathematical (Math Smart) Think conceptually and abstractly; ability to see patterns and explore relationships. They enjoy experiments, solving puzzles, asking questions.	Can be taught through logic games; like to learn concepts before they learn the details.
Interpersonal (People Smart) Learn through interaction; have many friends, empathy and street smarts.	Can be taught through group activities, computer conferencing, email and dialogue.
Intrapersonal (Self Smart) Understand their own feelings; have intuition, wisdom, and motivation.	Can be taught through independent study using books, privacy and providing time.
Logical-Mathematical (Math Smart) Think conceptually and abstractly; ability to see patterns and explore relationships. They enjoy experiments, solving puzzles, asking questions.	Can be taught through logic and mystery games; like to learn concepts before they learn the details.
Naturalistic (Nature Smart) In tune with nature; interested in exploring the environment and learning about other species. Have the ability to categorize information easily.	Can be taught by linking information to nature.
Bodily-Kinesthetic (Body Smart) Keen sense of body awareness; enjoy movement, touching, and making things.	Can be taught through physical activity, hands-on learning, and role playing.
Musical (Music Smart) Love music; are sensitive to sounds in the environment; enjoy background music.	Can be taught by putting the lesson to music, speaking in rhythm, tapping and using music, radio, and multimedia.

### Links to the OALCF for Ways of Learning

“Manage learning,” in the OALCF comprises learning strategies as they relate to the learning process. Knowing the person’s strengths regarding preferred ways of learning will help instructors plan more effective and affective lessons. “Engage with Others,” in the OALCF comprises the communications with others. Both of these competencies require instructors and learners to know the learners’ “best” ways of learning.

## **Introversion/Extraversion – Part 2**

Helping learners to understand their energy levels and how to regenerate their energy levels can make their learning more effective. This information will also provide the instructor with information about how to work with the learner to enhance his/her learning. If the learner is mostly an introvert, working with others in a classroom or work situation may prove to be more difficult and energy-draining. Therefore, the instructor may need to provide more breaks and/or other strategies to aid the learner.

Carl Jung first coined the terms “introversion and extraversion.” What he meant by these terms was an individual’s preference towards people; either getting energy from being with people, or renewing energy by being on one’s own. Introverts tend to be drained by social encounters and are energized by solitary pursuits. In general they are empathic and interpersonally connected to others and their energy is directed towards concepts and ideas. Introverts need very little external stimulation and can suffer from sensory overload if they spend too much time focusing on others. They want to understand the world rather than change it; they think deeply about things and often prefer working alone with depth rather than breadth.

Extraverts, on the other hand, get energy from people, places and activities and their interest is directed to things outside self and to other persons rather than to themselves. Extraverts need a lot of stimulation and often express emotions. They like variety, action, achievement and “act first, think later.” They like working with people and prefer work with a breadth rather than depth.

Whether one has introverted tendencies or extraverted tendencies it is neither good nor bad. Some researchers suggest that introversion and extraversion are cyclical. People need to get adequate returns on their energy investment in order to work effectively. Extraverts like to invest a lot of energy and get a lot back from engaging with others. Introverts, at the other end of the spectrum do not want to invest a lot of energy, and don’t expect a lot back. To summarize, if a learner gets energy from people, s/he has a tendency towards extraversion. If a learner needs time to recharge energy away from others, s/he tends to have more introverted tendencies (Grimes, 2012; Geary and Bulstode, 2010).

### **Strategies for Helping Introverts and Extraverts Learn**

Strategies for working with introverts include:

- Allowing introduction time to get to know you and trust you
- Encouraging responses with questions such as, “What do you think?”
- Polling the learners for input and decision making
- Allowing time for thinking before responding and decision-making
- Making use of written responses where practical
- Concentrating on one-on-one activities
- Ensuring that you do not assume the learner has a lack of interest

A learner who has placed him/herself towards the extraversion side of the spectrum prefers to learn in groups and may find learning easier when done as a group task.

Strategies for working with extraverts include:

- Showing energy and enthusiasm
- Responding quickly without long pauses to think

- Allowing talking out loud without definite conclusions
- Communicating openly and without judgement
- Focusing on the external world including the people and the things
- Allowing time for networking or brainstorming ideas
- Taking words at face value

If the learner has placed him/herself somewhere in the middle, then incorporating a variety of instructional methods, both in groups and solitary, will regenerate this learner’s energy.

## Life, Social, and Employability Skills – Part 3

Under this realm of skills, we have included stress level, mood and attitude, oral communication, ability to express opinion in a group (assertiveness), ability to acknowledge mistakes, ability to read body language, ability to adapt to change, ability to have control, time management and organization skills, and attitude towards life. These skills can be found under the “Manage Learning” and “Engage with Others” section of the OALCF.

### Stress

Some people deal with stress a lot better than others. Also, great variation occurs between the amount and type of stress different individuals can handle. Some learners thrive on a hectic life; others want life to be peaceful. Unfortunately we don’t always have total control over the amount of stress in our life but we can change the way we think about stress (George, 2002). If you have a high level of stress, you may need to use more than one strategy listed below. Remember that trying to incorporate all of the strategies, will likely result in more stress. Discuss each strategy with the learner and decide together with which strategy you would like to begin. Then, as you practice that strategy, you can replace it or add other strategies to the learner’s plan.

### Strategies for Coping with Stress (Distress)

Strategy	How to Do It
1. Breathe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice 4 square breathing (Inhale for 4 breaths, Hold for 4 breaths, Breathe out for 4 breaths, Rest for 4 breaths) Repeat 5 times for relaxation</li> </ul>
2. Make affirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirmations are short statements that you want about your life that you want to change. Examples include: “I am in control of my learning and life” “I am a great person” “I can learn this material” “My spouse and I are handling our problems” “I am a success”</li> </ul>
3. Have a positive attitude and optimistic view of life (Mood and Attitude)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help learners to be more positive by finding positive quotes and having them read or say them each day</li> <li>• Works well with affirmations</li> </ul>
4. Change the self-talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instead of blaming oneself for everything, help the learner find things s/he did well</li> <li>• Change words from “dreadful” and “horrible” to “fantastic” and “great”</li> </ul>

5. Be thankful for the good things already found in life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a list of good things such as "I'm in a safe place" "I have bus tickets" "I have been given these books"</li> </ul>
6. Change your behaviour patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get organized</li> <li>• Decrease clutter</li> <li>• Develop supportive relationships</li> </ul>
7. Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make time for walking , running, doing something active – it brings out endorphins which are natural "uppers" – they make you feel good</li> </ul>
8. Quiet your mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meditate; clear thoughts out of your mind</li> </ul>
9. Ask for what you want (Assertiveness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assertiveness is an attitude about what you want that is helpful and honest</li> <li>• State what you want openly and directly</li> <li>• Respect others opinions</li> <li>• Say it confidently without anxiety</li> </ul>

## Attitude

Your attitude drives behaviour. By choosing your attitude, you get in a specific mood and send out messages both verbal and non-verbal that everyone understands. Almost always, attitude is a choice. Create positive thinking patterns by working with positive thinking exercises so that your subconscious mind brings you the people, situations, and circumstances that help you succeed.

*"It is not what happens to you that counts. It is how you react to what happens to you, especially when you have unexpected problems of any kind." Unknown*

Scientific research has demonstrated that having a positive attitude is key to having a successful outcome. Unfortunately, in the average person, over 60% of what we think is negative. Some techniques to enhance positive thoughts include:

1. Become more self-aware by thinking about what you are thinking, saying, and doing
2. If you are having negative thoughts or saying negative words, replace the thought or phrase with something positive
3. Give thanks for the good you already have. "What you focus on grows." In a journal, write out 5 good things that occur every day
4. Spend time each week thinking about your feelings and how you reacted. This may provide information about what you really want
5. Use positive affirmations to keep you positive

## Positive Attitude Assessment

(Adapted from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Employability Skills)

Read the definition of "Attitude" to learner. Then read the script below and record learner response to statements on "Attitude."

Attitude	A manner, feeling, position with regard to a person or thing; it is how you express your likes and dislikes. Attitudes can be positive, negative, or neutral
----------	--

## Script

"Below you will find a list of statements that deal with your 'attitude.' Again, as in the previous section, there is no right or wrong answer. Read each statement carefully and decide at what level the statement is about you. I will record the number you tell me beside each statement.

- If you feel that the statement is "all the time" like you choose "5."
- If the statement is "most of the time" like you choose "4."
- If the statement is "sometimes" like you choose "3."
- If the statement is "rarely" like you choose "2."
- If the statement is "never" like you, choose "1."

These statements can help you figure out how positive or negative you tend to be and may offer you some insights as to how you can improve your attitude."

	<b>X X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√ √</b>	<b>√√√</b>
<b>Statements</b>	<b>1 Never</b>	<b>2 Rarely</b>	<b>3 Sometimes</b>	<b>4 Most of the time</b>	<b>5 All the time</b>
1. I am friendly					
2. I can stop myself from constantly complaining					
3. I can be optimistic and happy when others are not					
4. I have a sense of responsibility					
5. I can control my temper					
6. I follow directions willingly most of the time					
7. I keep promises					
8. It is easy for me to like most people					
9. I do not feel sorry for myself					
10. I am a good listener					
11. I can accept other people's beliefs					
12. I can disagree without being disagreeable					
13. I am on time and punctual					
14. I am excited about the interests of others					
15. I can adapt to new and unexpected situations					
16. I can be pleasant to others even when I am unhappy about something					
<b>Totals</b>					

## Attitude Tally Sheet

Tally up the checkmarks under each column.

- Every checkmark in column 1 is worth "1" point.
- Every checkmark in column 2 is worth "2" points.
- Every checkmark in column 3 is worth "3" points.
- Every checkmark in column 4 is worth "4" points.
- Every checkmark in column 5 is worth "5" points.

Total each column and record the total score \_\_\_\_\_

The higher the learner's score, the more positive the learner's attitude. If the learner's score was less than 70, use one of the strategies for improving attitude.

## Creating a Positive Attitude Strategy A – Positive Affirmations

Developing a positive attitude is one of the most powerful life strategies. We are continually affirming subconsciously, with our thoughts and words, how we are feeling. Every thought and word is an affirmation. Below are small affirmations listed. These small inspirational messages are vital to slowly changing the way we see the world. Repeat positive statements over and over to help create a positive mood. Help the learner to find one that really works for him/her. Have the learner state each of these affirmations. You can also find other positive affirmations by Googling "affirmations." Learners will likely find one or two that really make him/her feel good. Those are the best ones to use on a daily basis. If the learner prefers, affirmations can be sung or chanted.

"When I believe in myself, so do others."

"I am my own unique self- special, creative, and wonderful."

"Change your focus and think about all the things that are wonderful about you."

"It's up to you what happens next."

"Feel the end result as if it already happened."

"Expect the best, plan for the worst and prepare to be surprised."

"Every failure brings with it the seed of an equivalent success."

## Creating a Positive Attitude Strategy B – Wouldn't It Be Nice If...

Use this strategy when the learner has a negative attitude and you want to turn it into a positive attitude. You can also use this strategy when the learner already feels positive and wants to focus on a specific area of life and make it feel better. Have your learner say the statement, "Wouldn't it be nice if..." and then fill in the blanks.

Examples

Wouldn't it be nice if...I was able to write 3 paragraphs in my journal today.

Wouldn't it be nice if...I could be confident when dealing with my children tonight.

Wouldn't it be nice if...I felt comfortable asking my tutor 1 question today.

Wouldn't it be nice if...I was on time tomorrow.

## Creating a Positive Attitude Strategy C – Choice

When learners realize that being positive or negative is a choice, they may feel they can have control over something in their lives. What happens to them is not always a choice, but how they react to what happens, is a choice. Have learners explore what happened today and approach it using the 5 Steps for Choice listed below:

1. Believe happiness is a choice – it is up to you to find the good
2. Get rid of negativity – get rid of negative thoughts, people, behaviours
3. Focus on the positive – find the good in everything and everyone; when something challenging happens, ask yourself "what is good about this?"

4. Reinforce the positive in yourself – tell yourself you are awesome
5. Share your happiness with others – be agreeable

## **Oral Communication - Listening Skills**

*"The one who listens does the most work, not the one who speaks."* (Covey, 1996)

Most of us spend our days speaking and listening and it has been estimated that 80% or more of what we know is acquired through listening. Research shows that adults spend 40-50% listening, 25-30% speaking, 11-16% reading, and 9% writing (Vandergrift, 2012). Because of this, explicit instruction on how to listen is important. There are 5 levels of listening, but only one that is truly effective and that is to give the person who is talking your full attention. It is important to try to discover what the other person means and feels through what he or she communicates. The skill of active listening can be learned. Basically you are helping the one who is speaking to feel understood and his/her message heard. The five levels of listening include:

- Ignoring which is where you make no effort to listen
- Pretending which is giving the appearance you are listening
- Being Selective which is hearing only parts of the conversation in which you are interested
- Being Attentive which is paying attention by focusing on what the speaker says, and then comparing it to your experience
- Active Listening which is listening and responding with the heart and mind to understand the speaker's words, intent, body language and feelings and repeating the message back in your own words (Covey, 1996)

Listening is more than hearing. Listening requires thinking and processing of the message being heard. In order to become a better listener, you have to practice understanding the message being delivered. Active listening creates respect and understanding. Some keys for active listening include:

- Paying attention by looking directly at the speaker, not thinking about anything else, and being focused on the speaker (keeping distractions minimal)
- Showing attention by using body language to show you are listening, such as nodding, using appropriate facial expressions and leaning forward
- Responding appropriately by sharing your opinion but also accepting the speaker's opinion
- Providing feedback by repeating back what you have heard - this is the most important part of active listening
- Deferring judgement by not interrupting and by not speaking until it is your turn

## **Building Listening Skills Strategy A – Active Listening**

With a partner, listen to him/her for 3 minutes. Be an active listener. Help the person to feel understood by either (a) repeating back exactly what s/he said; (b) rephrasing what s/he said in your own words; (c) trying to rephrase his/her feelings in your own words, thinking about the body language and tone of voice used. Words that you can use to show you understand what the person said include phrases such as:

*"I think what you are saying is..."*

*"So, in other words, ...."*

*"You must have felt..."*

*"I'm not sure I totally understand you but what I heard was..."*



Topics for the learner to talk about include:

- A happy event such as a party recently attended
- A situation (either home or school) that learner feels strongly about
- A story about mother or father or child
- A story about a pet
- A story about childhood
- A recent news event

### **Building Listening Skills Strategy B – Listening for Understanding Checklist**

Accessed [www.helpingmorepeople.com/communication/listen.htm](http://www.helpingmorepeople.com/communication/listen.htm) on August 29, 2012

Effective team players and leaders listen to understand, not speak to be understood. Listen more and talk less. Your coworkers will listen to you when they perceive you are open to their contributions to you or your organization. Read each statement and check if this statement describes you. If it doesn't describe you, do not check the statement. Move to the next statement. After you have determined which statements are most like you, read through the section on "Active Listening" for more information. Take the checklist again after having worked on some of the skills for which you were not able to check the statement.

- Listen without judgement or drawing conclusions before you have all the information
- Recognize what situations call for selective listening and what situations would benefit from compassionate listening
- Evaluate the verbal messages as well as body language; note conflicting messages
- Stay tuned with active listening by using full eye contact
- Don't be afraid to show some emotion in response to what is being said
- Ask for feedback from the speaker about whether or not you understood what they have communicated
- Note what information is left out

### **Building Listening Skills Strategy C – The Listening Levels**

With another person, discuss and record below how you can tell if someone is listening to you at each of the 5 listening levels. Record the verbal and non-verbal behaviours that you can observe (loudness of voice, body language, eyes, words chosen, hands moving, posture, etc.)

<b>Level of Listening</b>	<b>Verbal Behaviour</b>	<b>Non-Verbal Behaviour</b>
Ignoring		
Pretending		
Being Selective		
Being Attentive		

(Adapted from Covey, 1996)

### **Oral Communication – Building Speaking Skills**

Speaking skills do not necessarily come easily to individuals and are an important part of social and employability skills. It is important for a learner to be able to express him/her self well in both a one-to-one situation as well as a group situation. The ability to speak effectively means having the knowledge and confidence in using the language.

One way to encourage learners to begin to speak with confidence and clarity is to give them responses that they can use in various settings. Having scripts for greetings, apologies, compliments, and purchases can help learners predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response. Another strategy is to encourage adults to clarify when they do not understand another speaker. Giving them some questions to ask in a polite and respectful manner will go a long way in social, educational, and workplace situations.

Speaking in a group also requires some specific skills such as knowing the topic well; helping the audience to focus on your message by organizing your ideas logically; telling a story; starting and closing strong; and incorporating humour. Additional strategies for speaking in a group include using gestures for emphasis; making eye contact; using visual aids; staying within time limits; and interacting with the audience by asking questions and listening to the answers.

## **Assertiveness**

Being assertive means clearly communicating what you want. This does not mean being aggressive or rude. When a person is assertive they are maintaining their self-respect without being selfish or rude. Things to keep in mind when being assertive:

1. Have a confident body stance by keeping your chin up, shoulders squared, avoiding fidgeting, avoiding covering your mouth, and looking others in the eyes when you speak
2. Speak slowly and clearly because when you rush your speech, it indicates you don't expect people will take the time to listen to you
3. Wear clean clothes and dress in non-wrinkled clothing so that others will take you seriously
4. Know when to speak up about something and when to keep it to yourself. You should speak up if you are in danger (i.e. food that you are allergic to has been put in front of you) but not when it is for the sake of hearing your own voice (i.e. telling a waitress that she has bad manners and how they should be corrected)
5. Plan ahead so you accomplish what you hope to when you speak up
6. If something is sprung on you, ask for time to think it over
7. Make sure you speak to the correct person; don't blame the messenger
8. Say what is on your mind; share your opinion because there is nothing wrong with having an opinion
9. Use "I" statements when talking about how you feel and think (e.g. "I feel like this because....")
10. Learn to say "no" if you do not feel right doing something. If you don't respect your own desires, how can you expect others to respect yours?
11. Recognize that you are not responsible for the actions of others
12. Respect others and their right to state their opinions too (Scott, 2011)

## **Being Assertive Strategy A – Broken Record**

This technique can work well in many different situations. Use this approach when:

- Your rights are being ignored
- You are coping with people who have good language skills
- You might lose your self-confidence if you give in

Rehearse ahead of time what it is you want to say by repeating it over and over again. During the conversation, keep repeating what it is you need or want. Do not be put off by the other person's arguments. Once you have prepared what you want to say, you can relax and remember the message you want to repeat.

## Being Assertive Strategy B – Say “No”

If you have trouble saying “no” to others, there are things you can do to help yourself. First, tell the person you are finding it difficult to say “no.” You do not have to give a reason why. Do not apologize and give elaborate reasons for saying “no.” Know that it is your right to say “no” if you do not want to do things. It is better to be honest than have resentment within yourself for doing something that you did not want to do.

## Being Assertive Strategy C – Scripting

Scripting involves planning out exactly what you are going to say. Often writing it down will help you to figure out how to say it. This four-stage approach must include:

- The event, situation, relationship, or problem
- Your feelings about it
- Your needs, i.e. what you want to happen in the future
- The consequences of how making these positive changes will improve the situation for you and others

## Reading Body Language (Visual Clues)

Many learners struggle with the undertones of communication. They find it difficult to determine what message another person is trying to convey. This makes it extremely difficult when going on job interviews, meeting a teacher, and other social interactions in the community. Noticing the non-verbal signals that people send is a useful social skill. Fortunately with a little extra attentiveness and practise, reading body language will be easier. Researchers state that only 7% of our communication is through words, 38% through sounds and how we make those sounds, and 55% is through non-verbal and body language (Covey, 1996).

“Body language communicates your emotions and motivations, likes and dislikes, interest and disengagement” (K-W Review, 2012). You will be the most convincing when what you feel internally is aligned with what you are communicating with your words. When you are trying to communicate with someone, you need to think about what the message is that you want to communicate. How do you really feel about it? How important is it to you? Why do you think others should care? Anyone can be taught how to include more positive signals in their interactions with others.

## Strategies for Reading Body Language

Things to Watch For	Body Part
1. Pay attention to the distance the other person is away from you. The physically farther away they are from you, the less they care about the situation.	Distance
2. Pay attention to head position. Overly tilted heads are a sign of sympathy. Lowered heads indicate a reason to hide something. If someone lowers their head, could be shyness, feeling ashamed, or feeling complimented. (Some cultures do this as a sign of respect).	Head Position

3. Look into their eyes. If looking to sides, sign of nervousness, lying or distraction. Looking away from the speaker can be a sign of comfort or submissiveness. Shyness or being upset can be indicated by looking at the floor. Dilated pupils mean interest. If glazed over look, disinterest or deep in thought.	Eyes
4. Mirroring shows definite interest.	Movements
5. Crossed arms indicate being reserved, uncomfortable with appearance, toughness. If someone rests their arms over their head or behind their neck, it means they are open to what is being said. Hands on hips indicate impatience or fatigue. If hands are closed or clenched it may indicate irritation, anger, or nervousness.	Arm Position
6. Fast tapping, shifting of weight or movement of foot will mean impatience, excitement, nervousness, fear, or intimidation.	Feet Position
7. Preening hair could mean the person likes you or their thoughts go against yours. If they raise their eyebrows, it is an indication that they disagree with you. If the person wears glasses and is constantly pushing them up, also means they disagree with you.	Gestures
8. Lowered eyebrows and squinted eyes indicate an attempt to understand. If staring into space, they are thinking deeply about the past or of you.	Eyebrows

([www.wikihow.com/Read-Body-Language](http://www.wikihow.com/Read-Body-Language))

### **Reading Body Language Strategy A – Put on a Happy Face**

Since you know that the way you feel affects your body language, did you know that your body language can also affect the way you feel? Putting on a smile can induce changes in your body temperature and heart rate. Smiling can make you feel happier.

### **Pictures A – Happy**

Smile while thinking about something or someone. Look at the pictures on the following pages. Record your answers to the way your body language looked on the page following the pictures.

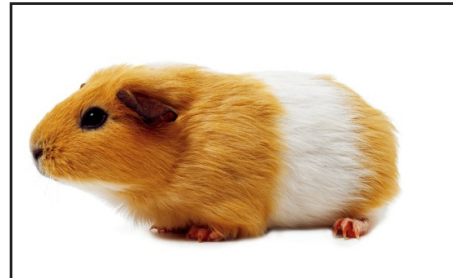
### **Questions**

How do they make you feel?

What do you notice about your body? What is it doing?

Tell a happy story about any one of the pictures. Make sure you are smiling when you tell the story.

Pictures A



## **Pictures B – Peaceful**

Take a deep breath and relax your shoulders. Think about a time when you were relaxed. Look at the pictures on the next page.

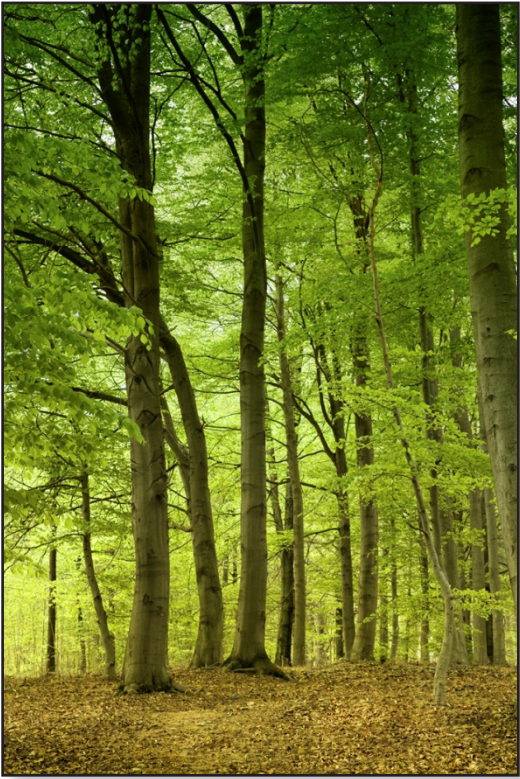
### **Questions**

How do they make you feel?

What do you notice about your body? What is it doing?

Tell a happy story about any one of the pictures. Make sure you are smiling when you tell the story.

**Pictures B**



## **Pictures C – Anger**

Clench your fists and your face. Hunch your shoulders. Look at the pictures on the next page.

### **Questions**

How do they make you feel?

What do you notice about your body? What is it doing?

Tell a happy story about any one of the pictures. Make sure you are smiling when you tell the story.



Pictures C



In all three situations, what did you notice about your face, shoulders, body posture, and the physical space you had between the people to whom you were telling the story? Without using any words, could you have shown the emotion that you felt about what was happening in the picture? Think about what body language someone needs to have to show confidence. List the characteristics you noticed below.

**Characteristics**

<b>Pictures A</b>
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<b>Pictures B</b>
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<b>Pictures C</b>
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<b>Additional Comments</b>
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## **Problem-Solving**

Problem-solving includes using mental processes to find solutions to problems.

Problem-solving is one of the Essential Skills and is embedded in the OALCF competencies.

Problem-solving has also been considered an employability skill.

### **Building Problem-Solving Skills**

1. Observe and gather information – give the learners activities in watching how others solve problems more closely; activities to find information; have them develop exercises on ways to remember information (mnemonics)
2. Focus on what is important
3. See the various possibilities/solutions – being able to see more than one possibility or way for something to work will help learners to do things on their own with confidence and gives them choices
4. Value everyone’s contribution – being able to see that someone else may have a good idea is important – give the learners exercises in which they have to re-word someone else’s idea and confirm with the other person if they have the correct information

### **Problem-Solving Strategy A – Determine Root Cause**

This strategy often helps learners find out why the problem occurred in the first place. If you don’t find out why the problem occurred, it is more likely to recur. There are three basic causes to most problems: physical, human, and organizational. Physical causes are material items that failed in some way (e.g. the oven overheated which burned my cake). Human causes occur when people either did something wrong or improperly (e.g. the oven temperature was at 400 instead of 350 degrees). Organizational causes deal with system, process or policies that people use to make decisions (e.g. a person almost died from not making it to the hospital – this occurred because there weren’t enough ambulances in the area and so there was a delay in response time).

1. Determine what the problem is – what do you see happening? What are the symptoms?
2. Collect information – how long has the problem existed? What is the impact? What proof do you have that the problem exists?
3. Figure out the cause – what events led to the problem? What conditions allow it to occur? What other problems occurred?

### **Problem-Solving Strategy B – Re-focus on a Problem** (Connelly et al, 2000)

This strategy often helps practise mindfulness to reduce stress.

1. Ask learners to write a problem on a large sheet of white paper.
2. Tape the paper to the wall and ask learners to sit in front of the paper.
3. Instruct them to focus only on the problem written on the paper.
4. Explain that the purpose is not to come up with a solution. The learners are to sit and stare at the paper for about 15 minutes.
5. At the end of 15 minutes, have them return to their seats.
6. Ask if anyone found a solution to the problem or if they gained knowledge by doing this exercise. What are the solutions they found?
7. Have learner reflect on this activity. Do they think that sitting still and focusing on only one problem at a time is helpful? Why or why not?
8. Often learners will get a solution later on when they revisit the problem. This may help to show progress and build confidence.

## **Problem-Solving Strategy C – Re-focus on the Solution and Create New Strategies** (Johnson, 2012)

1. Identify the problem
2. Turn the problem into a goal/expectation
3. Be specific
4. Revisit an old strategy and think about why it isn't working
5. Create a new strategy – how else can you do it? Brainstorm – be open to possibilities.  
Can you use your strengths more? Can you break it into smaller steps?
6. Try the new strategy
7. Rate it

Worse than old strategy	1
No difference	2
A little bit better	3
A lot better	4

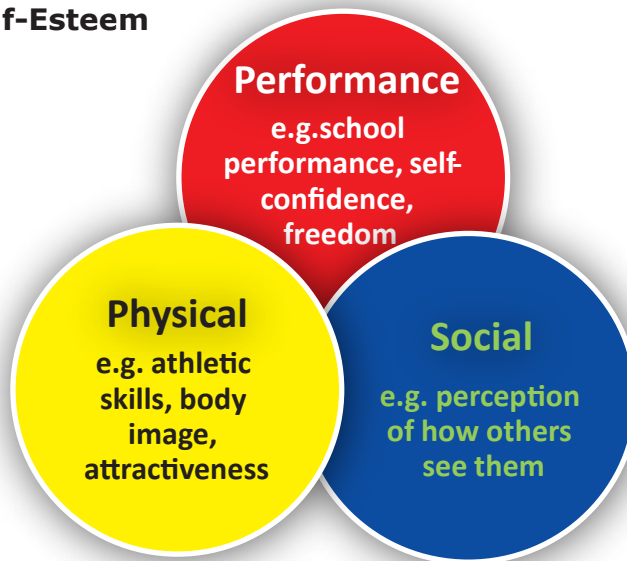
8. Decide what to do now

Keep using it – it works great!	√√√
Need more practice	√√
Modify it/make it better	√
Need new or different strategy	X

## Self-Esteem – Part 4

**Self-Esteem** (Adapted from Heatherton & Polivy “State Self-Esteem Scale” (1991)  
Self-esteem is another important aspect of learning. “A person’s level of self-esteem is important and related to both their sense of worth, that is how they feel about themselves, and what they feel they are capable of doing or achieving” (Mruk, 1999). Self-Esteem can be thought of as confidence in personality and abilities (Lawrence, 2000). Self-esteem has many dimensions. Some theorists take a global approach and consider it an overall attitude of self (Robins, Hendin, and Trzesniewski, 2001). It has also been conceptualized as multi-faceted and includes performance, social and physical components (Heatherton and Polivy, 1991). Note that there are gender differences in self-esteem. Overall it appears that males increase self-esteem by getting ahead whereas women increase self-esteem by getting along with others. Global self-esteem is an overall self-attitude that permeates all aspects of people’s lives (Heatherington and Polivy, 1991). Different constructs of self-esteem exist including performance, social and physical. Performance self-esteem refers to one’s sense of general competence and includes intellectual, school performance and self-regulatory capacity. People high in performance self-esteem believe they are smart and capable. Social self-esteem refers to how people believe others perceive them. Note it is perception rather than reality. Physical self-esteem is how people view their physical bodies and includes athletic skills, attractiveness, race and ethnicity. Self-esteem is stable because it builds slowly over time however, self-esteem can sometimes be momentarily manipulated.

### The Components of Self-Esteem



“Soft outcomes are visible, tangible effects of changing soft indicators.” If a person makes progress toward their goal, they are more likely to have positive feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence. “These attitudinal changes often translate to willingness to take on challenges like seeking new or better employment, or pursuing additional education. Ultimately, soft outcome changes lead to hard outcomes which are easy to measure....” ([www.ehow.com/info\\_7830784\\_tools](http://www.ehow.com/info_7830784_tools))

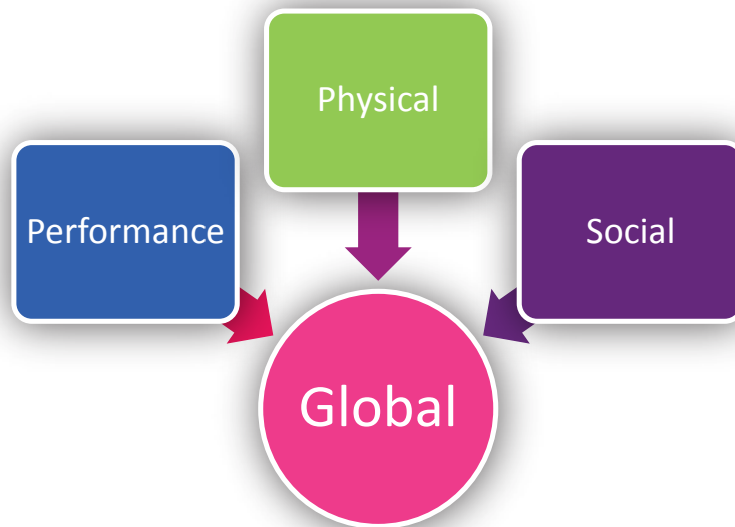
Self-Esteem is learned and can be improved upon. It is measured at a more general level of specificity and includes the evaluation of competence and feelings of self-worth. Self efficacy is the belief in personal ability (Panjares, 2004). In order to build learners self-esteem, instructors must give them a realistic image of themselves. This requires active listening

and good communication skills. Peers also play a crucial role in developing self-esteem (and confidence) by encouraging each other to recognize achievement and by providing praise (Ward and Edwards, 2002).

Elements of Self-Esteem include:

- A sense of purpose
- A sense of identity
- A sense of belonging to a group
- A sense of personal competence
- A sense of security (James and Nightingale, 2005)

“In general, those with a fragile sense of self-esteem respond extremely favourably to positive feedback and extremely defensively to negative feedback” (Heatherton and Wyland, 2003). If standards are set so high that a learner can seldom achieve the standard, then self esteem is low (Pajares, 2004). “Low self-esteem rooted in poor competence requires the cultivation of skills that will bring self-satisfaction. It is rooted in unrealistically high standards and requires that the learner is helped to adopt more realistic standards of achievement. Low self-esteem rooted in social inequities requires humane treatment by others that affirm one’s self-worth. Low self-esteem rooted in multiple causes requires multiple corrective measures” (Bandura, 1997).



### **Building Self-Esteem Strategy A**

Have the learner write or discuss answers to the following questions. Discuss the answers with the learner. If the learner is having problems with some answers to the questions below, provide some ideas or examples.

Write or discuss one thing of which you are proud.
Write or discuss one thing that you have accomplished that was difficult to do.
Write or discuss one thing that you do well.
Write or discuss one thing you would like to do.
Write or discuss something you are happy about.

## **Building Self-Esteem Strategy B – Self-Esteem Computer Games**

There is a body of research that is currently being studied that helps learners practise habits of thought. Researchers at McGill University have developed computer games to help people feel more secure. People with less insecurity have an automatic thought process that makes them confident and buffers them from worrying about the possibility of social rejection. With enough practice, people with low self-esteem can develop these beneficial thought processes that might allow them to gradually become more secure and confident.

Encourage your learner to play these self-esteem computer games for 5 minutes each day.  
[www.selfesteemgames.mcgill.ca/games/index.htm](http://www.selfesteemgames.mcgill.ca/games/index.htm)

## **Building Self-Esteem Strategy C – The Bucket and the Dipper**

Read the story of the bucket or dipper found at the website below. Discuss with the learner which one they think they are and why. Talk about ways to increase self-esteem.

### **A Bucket-Filler or a Dipper – Which are you?**

[www.inspirationalstories.com/4/458.html](http://www.inspirationalstories.com/4/458.html) (Adapted from this website)

This is a story of an invisible bucket that everyone has. This bucket determines how we feel about ourselves, about others, and how we get along with people. Have you ever experienced a series of favorable things which made you want to be good to people for a week? At that time, your bucket was full.

A bucket can be filled by a lot of things that happen. When a person speaks to you, recognizing you, your bucket is filled a little. Even more if s/he calls you by name, especially if it is the name you like to be called. If s/he compliments you on your clothing or on a job well done, the level in your bucket goes up still higher. There must be a million ways to raise the level in another's bucket. Writing a friendly letter, remembering something that is special to him/her, knowing the names of his/her children, expressing sympathy for loss, taking time for conversation, or listening to him/her.

When one's bucket is full of emotional support, one can express warmth and friendliness to people. But, remember, this is a theory about a bucket and a dipper. Other people have dippers and they can get their dippers in your bucket. This, too, can be done in many ways. Think of the times a person makes a mistake, feels terrible about it, only to have someone tell him/her about the known mistake. This does not fill anyone's bucket.

Buckets are filled and buckets are emptied many times because people don't really think about what they are doing. When a person's bucket is emptied, s/he is very different than when it is full. You say to a person whose bucket is empty, "That is a nice tie you are wearing," and he may reply in a very irritated, defensive manner.

Although there is a limit to such an analogy, there are people who seem to have holes in their buckets. When a person has a hole in his/her bucket, s/he irritates lots of people by trying to get his/her dipper in their buckets. This is when s/he really needs somebody to fill his/her bucket.

The story of our lives is the interplay of the bucket and the dipper. Everyone has both. The unyielding secret of the bucket and the dipper is that when you fill another's bucket; it does

not take anything out of your own bucket. The level in our own bucket gets higher when we fill another's, and, on the other hand, when we dip into another's bucket we do not fill our own but instead we lose a little.

For a variety of reasons, people hesitate filling the bucket of another and consequently do not experience the fun, joy, happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction connected with making another person happy. People think the other person will be suspicious of the motive. However, often the person will be happy with the compliment or the positive efforts.

Therefore, put aside your dipper and resolve to touch someone's life by filling their bucket, even a little.

## **Confidence – Part 5**

An increase in confidence after regular participation in a literacy program or project has been noted by various researchers (NIACE, 2004; Grieve, 2003; Ward and Edwards, 2002). "Confidence was identified as the most commonly emphasized benefit of learning" (NIACE, 2004). Gains in confidence and self esteem are positive in learning gains and were often seen as indications the learners were making progress. Learners saw the transferability of these skills and felt that they could accomplish more outside the learning environment as well (Wards and Edwards, 2002; NWT, 2011). Often, this outcome is not based on a systematic gathering of the indicators of confidence nor has it been gathered based on anything other than anecdotal information (NIACE, 2004).

Learning gains and increases in confidence are vital parts of the learning process. Development of confidence seems to be a key to the successful development of literacy, language and numeracy skills. Learning to deal with change and growth requires confidence. Confidence can increase and decrease and differs in speed depending on the learner (NIACE, 2004).

Research from NIACE (2004) showed that learners noted that their confidence levels varied in different situations. This confidence often reflected past experiences and current life situations. "Success and achievement in learning, reinforced by tutor and peer recognition and praise boosted confidence as it made individuals believe in their abilities and potential." (NIACE, 2004). Conversely, stumbles in the learning process knocked some learners' confidence because the experiences of failure made them doubt their capability. As learners became more confident and enjoyed learning in the group, they became happier, and not as down or depressed. This was related to feeling better about themselves, to the social contact this brought about and to the positive effects of learning experiences which were both successful and enjoyable(NIACE, 2004).

Confidence is not constant. Learning has been found to develop situational and overall confidence. Gains in confidence through learning helps learners to cope with other areas of their lives and sometimes influences their overall confidence levels (Schuller et al, 2002).

### **Strategies for Building Confidence**

The significance of talking, expressing opinions, and speaking up is an important way to build confidence (NIACE, 2004). Some examples include volunteering, doing presentations, and reading a book at a level one can master. Doing things in a group can also develop confidence. (NIACE, 2004; Roussy and Paul, 2002)



You build confidence by making sure your learners will be able to do what you ask them to do. This can be done by controlling the task and breaking it into smaller sub-tasks. First, start small and then work towards having the learners accomplish more difficult tasks. Tell them what they have done right at each step so that their confidence grows. Then you give them opportunities to practice. (Kloster and Watson, 1997)

**Confidence – Building Strategy A – SWOT Analysis**

A learner needs to figure out where they are and where they want to go. Setting and achieving goals is a key part to developing confidence. Set goals that work from strengths and minimize weaknesses. Having confidence is about balance. If a learner is under-confident, they’ll avoid taking risks. If s/he is over-confident, they may take on too much risk. Instead, everyone needs a balance. Have the learner list attributes within each section. If the learner cannot think of an attribute, have him/her state what a friend would tell him/her what their strength is or the instructor can provide information for this chart as well.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>

After looking at the comments in this chart, the learner can think about what is important to him/her and what s/he wants to achieve. In other words, the learner can set goals.

**Confidence – Building Strategy B – Dressing for Success**

People feel better when they are wearing clothes that fit comfortably and well and clothes that they feel make them look good. Dressing for success also includes wearing clothes that suit the position. Appearances do matter and people will treat you differently based on the judgements they make about your clothing. Research states that 55% of another’s perception of you is based on how you look (Doyle, 2012). Instructors realize that often learners have many stressors in their lives and dressing is low on their list of priorities. Often with a bit of guidance about where to find low cost clothing or no cost clothing can aid learners to feel better about how they look which may increase his/her self-esteem which in turn increases confidence. Google “Dressing for Success” to find more information on this topic. The key is to make sure that learners have comfortable clothing to wear that is appropriate for learning. Then, as they progress in their learning program and may want to venture into employment, researching appropriate clothing for interviews is the next step.

## Self-Efficacy

Perceived self-efficacy concerns a person's belief in their ability to do something. It is a judgement of capability to execute certain types of performances. These expectations take three different forms:

- Physical
- Social
- Self

Within each of these forms, the positive expectations are incentives to perform; the negative expectations are disincentives to performance. These beliefs also influence how people think and whether they are an optimist or a pessimist. Not only do they influence the challenges and goals they set for themselves and their commitment level to these goals, they influence their effort, the outcomes they expect, their perseverance threshold, their resilience to adversity, the quality of their emotional life, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with demands, and their ultimate life choices and accomplishments they realize (Bandura, 2006). **How people behave can be better predicted by their beliefs about their abilities than by what they are actually able to do.** This does not mean that people can accomplish tasks beyond their abilities by simply believing that they can however, it does mean that self-perceptions of ability help to determine what learners do with the knowledge and skills they possess. It is critical to understand that self-efficacy beliefs are critical to how well a learner acquires skill in the first place (Pajares, 2004).

Self-efficacy influences the choices people make in specific situations, such as whether to start or do a task or not. It also influences the effort put into tasks and their persistence, especially when a huge effort is required. Self-efficacy is situational. Unfortunately, no meaningful global measure of self-efficacy exists (Sanders and Sanders, 2003). Self-efficacy has both physiological and psychological effects; such as the effect of anxiety on performance. Research supports that self-efficacy affects academic performance (Bandura, 2006; Sanders and Sanders, 2003). According to Bandura, people with high self-efficacy are more likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than avoided.

## Building Self-Efficacy Skills

Researchers have suggested that learner self-beliefs may be enhanced and in so doing, might lead to increased use of cognitive strategies. This may then lead to improved performance (Pajares, 2004). Knowing how to build a sense of efficacy and how efficacy works within learners will provide instructors with further guidelines to structure experiences that help learners to realize their desired potential and social changes (Bandura, 2006). Self-efficacy beliefs affect behaviour in the belief that success breeds success and increases self-efficacy beliefs, and failure lowers self-efficacy behaviour. Learners are more apt to engage in tasks in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which their competence is not as high. Efficacy beliefs also influence the amount of stress and anxiety learners have as they do a task as well as the level of accomplishment they realize. Raised competence and confidence occurs through genuine success experiences (Pajares, 2004). Learners are likely to believe that they can do something when a highly regarded mentor or instructor models excellence in that endeavour (Shunk, 2005).

## Self-Efficacy Strategy A - Cooperative Learning

When students have successful experiences, they gain self-efficacy. When they experience constant failure, they may have their self-efficacy eroded. Research shows that a cooperative

learning environment and instructional method can improve self-efficacy in the class (Bandura, 2006). When learners are engaged in a comfortable and collaborative manner, they are better able to learn. Cooperative learning strategies often improve self-efficacy and academic skill. An example of cooperative learning is to have learners in groups of 2 or more. Provide them with a task that they need to explore together. As they tackle the problem, have them talk out loud to each other about what they are thinking. Give each one of them a task. For example, if they have to read and understand an article, have them each read part of the article and then explain to the other person what they read. Go over the comprehension questions ahead of time to make sure that all people in the groups understand what they have to learn from the article.

This type of cooperative learning strategy is called "jigsaw." For more information on jigsaw, check out [www.jigsaw.org/steps.htm](http://www.jigsaw.org/steps.htm)

## Grit – Part 6

Grit is a personality trait that includes perseverance and motivation to order to achieve a goal or outcome. Grit is a strong predictor of success. There are times in life when it feels as if everything is not going as it should and it feels out of control. What separates successful people from those who fail is grit.

### Grit-Building Strategy A – Creating A SMART Goal

Create SMART Goals. Write down a statement for each of the 5 steps for creating a smart goal.

1. Be **Specific** and identify your goal
2. Make it **Measurable** by making sure that you can quantify it. i.e. I will finish my study notes 1 day early before every test
3. Take **Action** by starting to work towards it now
4. Be **Realistic** by breaking down the goal into actions you can take
5. Give it a **Timeline** by giving it a date and writing the goal down

If you are having trouble reaching your goal, reassess the goal. Is it realistic? What about the timeline? Did you make the same mistake again? What can you do differently this time? Understand why you failed and get over it. You are not a failure unless you give up and stop trying.

## Study Skills and Time Management – Part 7

### Building Study Skills

Study skills involve many things. First of all they involve taking good notes, reading effectively, learning the information through regular practice and setting aside time for studying and learning. When learners independently write to understand as opposed to copying to aid memory, they are involved in high-level thinking that enhances learning. When learners take good notes, they can quickly identify the main idea and important information. When making notes, it is important to find the key ideas and words and put them in his/her own words; linking these ideas and words to his/her own knowledge. When the learner reviews his/her notes, s/he can use colour to highlight the key parts of his/her notes. If s/he knows abbreviations, they can be used to save time and space when taking notes. When good notes are taken, it is much easier to create study notes from these notes. To do this

most effectively, the learner needs to plan time to make the study notes, and then to study. Study the material by reading it over, more than once. If the learner has a math equation to do, study by practising questions so that s/he can solve them correctly.

### **Study Strategy A – The Necessary Steps**

1. Allow time for reading or re-reading all materials in preparation for a test. If you have already summarized notes by highlighting important terms or by putting notes in the margin, this process will be quicker.
2. When reading materials from class, analyze what you are reading. Think about how this material fits with other things you know about this topic. This thinking and analysis will begin to help you categorize and learn the material.
3. Create study notes. These study notes are to shorten the amount of material that you will re-read and in some cases, memorize. If you are studying for a math test, it is necessary to allow time to practise doing the various types of questions that you will be given on the test. Just reading the questions is not the way to study for math.
4. As you begin to study, remember to ask yourself, “Why is this information important?” This may also help you to think about how this material fits with what you already know.

### **Study Strategy B – Regular Goal Setting**

Goal setting is knowing what you want to achieve and then following through with what you need to achieve. Start with small goals so that you can feel success. Make sure that you can measure your goal. For example, “By a certain date, I will have attended a minimum of 10 out of 12 classes.” State your goal in a positive manner and write it down. Writing your goal in a positive manner will help you to view it as a good thing to do. By writing a goal down, the goal will subconsciously be remembered in your brain and you will be more likely to commit to it.

Goals should be:

#### **SMART**

**Specific** – state the goal so that you understand what it is you want “One month from now I want to have passed 2 tests”

**Measurable** – the goal is something that can be observed

**Action-Oriented** – take action rather than procrastinating

**Realistic** – something you can achieve in a reasonable amount of time

**Timelined** – state a time so that you will know if you have achieved the goal

### **Building Time Management Skills**

Since we all have exactly the same amount of time in any given day, how you choose to use time is important for success. When time is managed wisely, feelings of satisfaction can be enhanced because you control your life. Aim to complete assignments before the deadline by always deciding on a personal deadline in advance of the official one.

The Keys

- Organize, plan and prioritize (get a calendar, set goals, prioritize into “must do, should do, can do”)
- Choose your goals in terms of your work (or school), learning, and life commitments
- Use resources (including technology) to help you
- Respond to new challenges daily
- Take responsibility for results

Knowing what you want and how to reach your goal is an important skill. If you approach goal attainment seriously by making lists and prioritizing them, you have a better chance to be successful in life. For more tips on managing time, Google "Time Management," check out either The Learning Hub [www.learninghub.ca/course\\_listing/courses.aspx](http://www.learninghub.ca/course_listing/courses.aspx) or Sioux Hudson Literacy <http://goodlearninganywhere.com/register/> or refer to this website [www.literacy.kent.edu/salt\\_fork\\_time\\_prioritytimemanagement/manage.html](http://www.literacy.kent.edu/salt_fork_time_prioritytimemanagement/manage.html)

According to Steven Covey, there are 7 steps to effectively managing time that include:

1. Being proactive – make choices based on your values
2. Begin with the end in mind – mental creation precedes physical creation
3. Put first things first – be organized and follow through "*Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.*" Goethe
4. Think win-win – take time to find solutions that will make you and others happy at the same time
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood – communicate effectively by first actively listening
6. Synergize – look at the problem, understand needs and work to make the result greater than the sum of its parts
7. Sharpen the saw – renew the four dimensions (physical, mental, spiritual, social/emotional)

### Time Management Strategy A – Figure out your Time

Looking at how you spend your time is the first step in planning your time more effectively. Use the calendar below to complete all activities for a one-week time period. Put each activity done in blocks of time that you determine. Then use 3 colours to figure out how much time is spent on homework/school work, other activities/commitments, and free time.

Time	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
7 – 9 am							
9 – 11 am							
11 – 1 pm							
1 – 3 pm							
3 – 5 pm							
5 – 7 pm							
7 – 9 pm							
9 – 11 pm							

Complete the table below to show how much time is spent on the activities. Evaluate your time management

	<b>Hours/minutes a week</b>
Study/homework	
Activities and commitments	
Free time	

What things didn't you have time for?

How much time did you waste or not use as effectively as you could have and on what activities was it used?

Knowing what you previously spent time on, how can you plan to make better use of your time?

# Learning with Swagger

Adaptations  
for the Deaf Stream



Project READ Literacy Network

## **Explanation about the Adaptations**

Although we attempted to make this tool as user-friendly as possible within the time constraints of this project, it was discovered that the tool in its present state cannot be fully used by assessors working with Deaf Adults in LBS classes. Additionally, when terms more useful for members from the Deaf population were included in the Assessment Tool, it confused learners from the Anglophone stream. Because of these reasons, some adaptations are found in this section. It is hoped that a future project will allow for the Assessment Tool to be fully adapted for use with the Deaf Population. The Strategy Guide was found to be useful for these learners.

### **4a1. Oral Communication - Reading Sign Language**

The part below is about reading sign language and is assessor administered. The learner will need to sign the main idea of the dilemma. The second part of this section is about being able to respond to questions and think about what a picture is showing. The answer sheet follows the dilemmas and the pictures.

#### **Instructions**

Sign one of the articles based on the goal path of the learner. Use "Joyce's Dilemma" if on Independence Goal Path. Use "Fred's Dilemma" if on Employment or Apprenticeship Goal Path. Use "Abdulla's Dilemma" if on Credit or Post-Secondary Path. Ask the learner to state the main idea of the article. The learner does not need to solve the dilemma but can give some possible solutions. Track whether or not the learner understood the main idea of the article which would indicate his/her reflective listening skills or in the case of using sign language, would indicate comprehension skills of sign language.

#### **Joyce's Dilemma (use if on Independence Goal Path)**

Joyce needed 1 cup of milk to finish preparing the scalloped potatoes that her family loved. She put on her coat and walked a block to the corner store to purchase the milk. When she got there, all she could find was skim milk and 1% milk. She was used to buying 2% and didn't know how or if the different milk would affect the taste of her potatoes. Should she buy the milk at the corner store or walk 2 more blocks to the large grocery store that will definitely have the milk she always uses?

#### **Fred's Dilemma (use if on Employment or Apprenticeship Goal Path)**

Fred wasn't sure if his boss Jake had told him to take an early break or not. He had just been reprimanded for not asking the lead hand (Sylvia) about the order tasks should be done on the line. Now, Jake had just said "go on break and think about it." Fred knew that the lead hand, Sylvia always told the people on the line when they could take a break and it wasn't always in the same order. Fred was worried that if he took his break now, without asking Sylvia, she would be angry and he would have a lot of problems in the future. However, if he went and asked the lead hand now, Jake would be upset. What should Fred do?

#### **Abdulla's Dilemma (use if on Credit or Post-Secondary Goal Path)**

Abdulla had been trying to find time to study for her grade 10 math exam for 3 weeks but every time she sat down, one of her children needed help with homework and her husband was always at work so she had to help the children. Finally, it is 3 days before the exam and she knows she needs to spend the next 2 nights creating study notes and doing math problems. The night before the exam she is planning to memorize math formulas and practice more math problems. Tonight, Abdulla's husband is home but frustrated with the children and has taken the dog for a walk. Her children need help but she needs to finish her studying. What should she do?



## 4a2. Oral Communication - Signing

### Instructions

Can the learner carry on a conversation and answer your questions for 1-3 minutes (depending on skills of learner) about a picture that you provide? See previous page for picture. Ask the learner to describe what is happening in the picture. Can the learner answer the questions on the page?

Complete this chart based on learner's response to the questions.

<b>4a1. Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Was the learner able to repeat what you signed (s/he did not miss important information)?		
2. Was the learner able to understand the dilemma?		
<b>4a2. Questions – Speaking about the picture</b>		
3. Was the learner able to describe by signing what was happening in the picture? (anything related to dogs and children, girl, happy)		
4. Was the learner able to describe his/her feelings about the picture? (any answer works provided the learner gave a reason why s/he felt that way about the picture)		
5. Was the learner able to use sign language to communicate for a specified time period with answers other than "yes/no" answers?		
6. Does this learner sign too slowly or too quickly (the ideal is to sign at a comfortable pace)?		
Total		
Comments		

## Signs

### Attitude



### Self-Esteem



### Confidence



### Grit



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### **Self Esteem Games**

[www.selfesteemgames.mcgill.ca/games/index.htm](http://www.selfesteemgames.mcgill.ca/games/index.htm)

### **Bucket and Dipper Story**

[www.inspirationalstories.com/4/458.html](http://www.inspirationalstories.com/4/458.html)