



Soft Skills at Work

Taking the Extra Step

What are Soft Skills?

Research shows that soft skills are often better predictors of success in the workplace than technical skills. Soft skills are also called interpersonal or people skills. These skills help people to work effectively with others. Soft skills also ensure a collaborative, productive and healthy work environment. Employers look for these soft skills:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| teamwork | problem solving |
| motivation | communication |
| flexibility | punctuality |

The discussion and activities that follow help students understand a specific soft skill and its importance in the workplace. As well, students consider the soft skill in their daily lives and how to apply it.

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(A) Discussion

1. Dan takes the extra step.

What does he do?

How can taking the extra step help Dan?

Who might Dan help by taking the extra step? How?

2. Read about Sandy and Jim.

Discuss the questions.

Sandy works at a diner. She is a server.

Sometimes, the diner is quiet.

Sandy uses the quiet time to do her other tasks.

She has many tasks to do everyday.

The tasks keep her busy.

Jim works at a diner. He is a cook.

Sometimes, Jim uses his phone at work.

He uses his phone to look up menus.

He looks up recipes.

He tries to improve the diner's menu.

(a) Who takes the extra step? How? Explain.

(b) What are reasons that people might not take the extra step?

3. Describe a time you took the extra step.

What made you decide to take the extra step?

A person you cared about?

A goal you had?

Your mood that day?

Something else?

How did you feel after taking the extra step? Why?

How did the extra step affect others?

4. Describe a time someone took the extra step for you.

Why do you think they took the extra step?

5. What words describe a person who takes the extra step?

(B) Application

1. Make a Plan

(a) Where can you take the extra step?

At home? At work? With a friend? In your community?

I can take the extra step _____ .

(b) What extra step will you take?

I will _____

_____ .

(c) When will you take the extra step?

I will take the extra step _____ .

(d) What do you need to do before you take the extra step?

I need to _____

_____ .

(e) Who will help you take the extra step?

_____ will help me take the extra step.

2. Reflection

Why do you want to take this extra step?

How will things be better after you take the extra step?

Sometimes things do not go as we planned.

Think about all the ways your plan might affect you and others.

Do you need to make changes to your plan?

(C) Reading & Writing**1. Read the story below**

Find three words that do not make sense.

Cross each out. Write a word that makes sense.

The first one is an example.

works

Dan ~~sings~~ at a garden store.

Today, the store is quiet.

Dan looks outside.

Oh look! That window is broken.

Dan takes the pot away.

He puts the flowers in a new pot.

Then Dan takes his break.

The store is still quiet.

Dan looks around.

Oh look! That plant is missing.

Dan waters the plant.

Dan waters many plants.

Dan goes outside.

Oh look!

The path is full of dirt.

Dan eats the dirt.

Dan checks the time.

Time for lunch already.

All right. Time is flying by.

2. Complete the sentences.

- (a) Dan takes the extra step.

Dan feels *good*.

Dan feels _____ .

Dan feels _____ .

Dan feels _____ .

- (b) Taking the extra step can help others.

It can help *your boss*.

It can help _____ .

It can help _____ .

It can help _____ .

- (c) I know people who take the extra step.

They are *motivated*.

They are _____ .

They are _____ .

They are _____ .

Read your sentences again.

Which words do you want to remember?

Add these words to your word bank.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Step 1: Start a Discussion

Possible prompt: What did you learn about taking the extra step?

Step 2: Record the Students' Words

Print the students' responses on the board, using their exact words. Print clearly. Say each word as you print it.

Step 3: Read the Text

Read the student-generated text out loud to the students, pointing to each word as you read. Then read each sentence, inviting the class to read along with you. Finally, read each sentence out loud, inviting the student who contributed the sentence to read along with you. Always point to each word as you read.

The purpose of using the **Language Experience Approach** is to help students establish the link between spoken and written words and to develop reading skills through using their own words.

Note: Educators and ESL students may not be comfortable working with text that contains non-standard English forms. A flexible approach is recommended. The extent to which you choose to make corrections unobtrusively while recording should reflect the needs and concerns of the students.

Step 4: Use the Student-generated Text

(a) Sight Words

Have students choose three words they would like to remember. Have them add the words to their personal dictionary or word bank.

(b) Cloze

Cover highly predictable words (one per response) with paper and tape. Read the text back to the students. Stop when you reach a covered word and ask students to predict a word that makes sense and sounds right. Check their predictions by uncovering the word.

(c) Review Phonics and Word Families

Have students find, circle, and copy words that start with a specific letter or word family.

(d) Copying

Have students copy the language experience text. Copying the text provides practice in both printing and in learning the letter-sound relationships.

(e) Frame Sentences

Choose one sentence from the language experience text. Print the sentence on the board. Underline one word and ask the students to substitute the word with their own words. Print the sentence frame again to record each student's response.

Example:

Soft skills are important.

Soft skills are _____.

Soft skills are _____.

Soft skills are _____.