



Soft Skills at Work

Thinking on Your Feet

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. Angel thinks on her feet.
How does that help her boss?
How does that help customers?

2. Read about Donna and Jake.
Discuss the questions.

Donna works security at football games.

Two fans have too much to drink.

They start to argue.

Donna quickly steps between them.

The two fans calm down.

Jake works security at football games.

Two fans start to fight.

One of them pulls a knife.

Jake quickly steps between them.

The fan stabs Jake.

- (a) Who is better at thinking on their feet? Explain why.
- (b) When should an employee ask for help?

(B) Application**1. Make a Plan**

- (a) Think of a problem that you would like to solve.

It can be a problem in your workplace or in your personal life.

Write the problem here in one sentence.

_____.

- (b) What is the main cause of the problem?

_____.

- (c) What is one way you can try to solve the problem?

I can _____.

- (d) What do you need to do before you try to solve the problem?

I need to _____.

_____.

- (e) Who can help you solve the problem? How?

_____ can help me by _____.

_____.

2. Reflection

Why do you want to solve this problem?

How will things be better if you solve this problem?

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?

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is one way to solve problems.

First, think of all the ways you might solve a problem.

Then write down each idea as you think of it.

Then think about the good and bad points of each idea.

Finally, choose the best idea.

(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.

customer

Angel's first ~~pet~~ walks in.

Angel shaves his head.

The customer pays.

Oh no! The machine is not working.

Angel writes down the card number.

The customer leaves.

Angel checks the machine.

The cord is loose.

Angel puts clean towels in the washer.

Angel hears the front door open.

A woman enters the salon.

She says, "Help! I used the wrong dye."

Angel says, "We are happy. But we can help you tomorrow."

The woman leaves.

Angel checks the towels.

Oh no! The washer is not working.

Angel phones for service.

Angel's boss smiles.

She thinks, "Angel can really dance on her feet."

2. Complete the sentences.

- (a) Angel helps a customer.

The customer feels *important*.

The customer feels _____ .

The customer feels _____ .

The customer feels _____ .

- (b) Some people are good at thinking on their feet.

I feel *confident* thinking on my feet.

I feel _____ thinking on my feet.

I feel _____ thinking on my feet.

I feel _____ thinking on my feet.

- (c) Sometimes, thinking on your feet is hard.

Sometimes, you don't have enough *experience*.

Sometimes, you don't have enough _____ .

Sometimes, you don't have enough _____ .

Sometimes, you don't have enough _____ .

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 thinking on your feet?

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 _____.