Evaluating the Results of Job and Social Skills Training Along with Employment Outcome for Youth and Young Adults Enrolled In an Urban Youth Employment Program

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my Mom (Elaine), Dad (Dan), Step-Mom (Joanne), Siblings (Jaclynn, Gabriel, and Jordan), and especially my Grandmother (Marina), along with the rest of the Smith Family who believed in me and never gave up in telling me that I could succeed at anything if I put my mind to it. I love and thank you all!
ABSTRACT

The current study evaluates outcome measures to determine an increase in job and social skills for participants enrolled in a paid youth employment program. The study was conducted at a community employment services agency with seven participants, all under the age of 22 with a mean age of 19.6. Participants received job and social skills training pertaining to job search and maintaining employment, including a placement which subjects attended during the last six weeks of the 10 week program. Questionnaires measuring job search skills, job search attitude, and employability skills were administered pre- and post-training, along with self-reported goals that participants completed pre-training which were evaluated by the facilitator following completion of the training program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed non-significant results when questionnaire scores were compared before and after training; however, two subscales approached significance, and self-reported goals which were evaluated by the supervisor post-program revealed improvements. Findings from a feedback questionnaire also demonstrated client satisfaction with the overall training curriculum and the program. The implications of these findings, along with strengths and limitations, the multilevel challenges, contributions to the behavioural psychology field, and future recommendations for research were discussed.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Youth employment and overall job success are two important characteristics that pave the way to an adolescent’s transition into adulthood; the vital skills they learn while working in their younger years can improve their overall adjustment into a future career or to their overall emotional wellbeing in life (Ekstrom & And, 1987). However, not every youth or young adult has an opportunity to find successful employment, as they may lack important social and job skills that are required to be successful looking for work, finding work and finally maintaining employment. According to Ekstrom, Freeberg, and Roc (1987) some youths do not even know how to begin the process of seeking employment, let alone maintain employment once they obtain it, as many youth have never been taught the appropriate skills required. Skills such as job searching, writing a resume or cover letter, interview skills, and applying for a job with the appropriate social manner (good eye contact, smiling, asking for the manager’s name, or giving a handshake to the employer), and appropriate workplace etiquette (conflict resolution, asking for help when needed, and teamwork) are skills that are integral to job success.

Youth Employment Programs (YEPs) are programs in North America that can aid these adolescents and young adults through the facilitation of teaching crucial job and other social skills in an intensive classroom setting for several consecutive weeks, and then co-ordinating with employers in the community to place the individuals into jobs where they think the participants would be a good fit. The process of teaching and placement gives program participants an idea of what it would be like to work in a real job, and the opportunity to practice the new skills they have learned. The ultimate goal, however, would be to help the clients maintain employment within the placement that they were originally assigned (Rist, 1982).

According to Long (2006) and Riddell (2006) many of these programs are paid training programs, which provide an extra incentive for the participants to become involved in them. Most are funded through Federal (US and Canada) Government grants that help to get the YEPS started and continuing. The participants are usually paid minimal wage, but this does not seem to hinder the participants’ initiative to sign up for them. There are many different programs funded for youth or young adults work training that do not provide a wage incentive, but do include job and social skills training, with or without job placement.

In 2008, a Youth Employment Program called “The Shine Program” was proposed to the Ontario provincial government for funding by Kingston Employment and Youth Services (KEYS) ¹. KEYS, an employment resources agency, suggested that there were not enough services being offered for youth or young adults, particularly those youth or young adults who had barriers to finding employment. The program utilised curriculum pertaining to job and social skills mainly from a book by Denise Bissonette (2004) along with other resources from the internet and several icebreaker and teambuilding books (Epstein & Rogers, 2001; Hazouri & Smith McLaughlin, 1993; West 1999). The Shine Program was designed to help unemployed, out of school youth and young adults (ages 16-30) learn important work related, social, and life skills in a classroom setting for four weeks, and then place them in a six-week employment placement of the youth’s choosing.

¹Permission from agency obtained to utilise their name
Participants chosen tended to be youth or young adults who had never had employment, or those who had been employed, but had difficulties maintaining a job due to a lack of specific social and employment skills. The program pays the youths and funds employers to place these youths in the employer agencies for the entire ten weeks, with the intention that there will be continuous employment following the six week placement.

The criteria for admission to the program were that participants must be between the ages 16-30, out of school, not working, and not receiving Employment Insurance benefits. This criterion was mandated by the Federal government of Canada and the employment agency and must be adhered to in order to ensure future funding. To be considered a candidate for the Shine Program, participants must also attend an information session held at the agency, in addition to meeting all government criteria before they are considered for admission into the program. Potential candidates must fill out a document designed by the provincial government to gather information about candidates. The documents are then reviewed by the program’s co-ordinator and a decision is made as to whether or not the candidates are eligible for an assessment interview at a later date. After the interviews, the co-ordinator then decides which six participants will be selected for the program. Selection is based on factors such as the following: same age ranges, a mix of gender (how many males vs. females have met eligibility requirements and similar personality traits amongst participants to promote group cohesion (for participants to be able to get along due to similar personality types).

Since the program began, a total of ten sessions have run between March-2008 and March-2011, with more participants than not completing the program. However, it is important to note that some participants who do not complete the program may choose to leave for reasons of their own, or have been asked to leave by the co-ordinator due to attendance issues or lack of participation in the program activities, or have found higher paying employment during the course of the program.

The project discussed will focus on this paid YEP and its effectiveness in training and teaching the participants social and job skills required to obtain and maintain employment. It is proposed that the Shine Program as offered by an urban employment services agency will improve job searching knowledge, job searching attitude, employability skills, and certain social skills for youth participants who attend. The aim of this study will be to provide evidence from a combination of self-reported goal setting questionnaires and facilitator evaluation of these, along with three self-report pre- and post- group questionnaires measuring job search knowledge, job search attitude, and employability skills. Results from the program outcome report for Service Canada will also be reviewed as to employment outcomes after the ten weeks of training. The section to follow will be a literature review that will address the unemployment rate in Ontario and Canada as of 2010 and its affect on the Canadian Labour Market, along with the psychological effect on the unemployed youth. The demonstrated importance of having YEPs and success rates of such programs in North America, along with examples of some of the job skills included in the curriculum training will be evaluated. Similar YEPs will be discussed, compared, and contrasted to the current YEP being studied as well. Specific social skills taught in YEPs and how they pertain to employment and their importance in maintaining a job will also be addressed. The need for more studies surrounding the effectiveness of existing YEPs and how the literature relates to this current study will be further examined to support the study. Further sections in this study will include the methodology and results followed by the discussion and limitations.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Unemployment Statistics for North America and Effect on the Labour Market

In Canada’s ever changing Labour Market, the employment rate in the last two years has increased for most age groups. This is not the case for youth between the ages of fifteen to twenty four. According to Statistics Canada (2010), the unemployment rate for youth has been increasing. In October and November of 2010 alone, 16,000 young people were unemployed across the province of Ontario. The unemployment rate for this age cohort is 5.3%, and that is in Ontario alone. In Canada, overall the unemployment rate is currently 16.3% for youth. The government attributes this change in unemployment due to lack of job training or experience, hence making finding and maintaining jobs difficult, as employers often do not want to waste time and money in training an individual who has never had any job skills, let alone job experience (Labour Market and Statistics Canada Website, November 2010).

The Federal Government of Canada realized this reluctance on the part of employers, and therefore began to provide funding to employment agencies in different metropolitan communities in Ontario and other locations in Canada so that agencies could use the funding for youth employment strategy projects. Examples of such projects include skills link programs for youth, and youth employment programs (YEPS) that provide employment counselling, workshops, and specially designed youth employment training to teach the necessary job skills and job experience (through co-op or paid job placements) needed, and to motivate and help these individuals to having a better chance of acquiring successful employment. Another program the Federal Government have put into action is called The Youth Employment Strategy, which is the Government of Canada's commitment to helping young Canadians (aged 15 to 30) obtain career information, develop skills, find good jobs and stay employed. Through federal departments and agencies, the Youth Employment Strategy directive assists employers in hiring young Canadians. While spearheaded by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, eleven Government of Canada departments and agencies have partnered with other local governments, businesses and communities to deliver this initiative under three programs: Career Focus, Skills Link, and Summer Work Experience. All three of these programs are directed at getting young people trained so that they can have the necessary job skills and experience in order to maintain meaningful and lengthy employment. The exception to long term employment provided by these initiatives is the summer work experience program which lasts only three to four months per year with a wage incentive of two dollars per hour more that is provided to employers who hire on summer workers (HDRC Government of Canada Website, 2010). Although these strategies have been implemented, not all of the youth who could benefit from them are able to access them due to long wait times, and not enough youth and young adults can be enrolled at one time. This can result in many youth still being unemployed, which can affect their overall sense of psychological well being.

Psychological Effect on Unemployed Youth and Young Adults

Youth unemployment can have a negative impact on an individual’s sense of well being and can lead to poor self worth and negative self-esteem. Several studies have been conducted to address the effects of unemployment on a youth’s wellbeing. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Prause and Dooley (1997) (as cited by Matsuba et al. 2007) compared three groups of employed, unemployed, and under-employed youth (aged 21-years-old) on self-esteem. When finished controlling for characteristic population variables along with earlier self-esteem levels reported (7 years previous), higher levels of self-esteem were found for those who were
employed versus those who were unemployed. In addition, unemployment length was monitored and Goldsmith and Veum (1997) (as cited by Matsuba et al. 2007) reported that the longer the unemployment period, the more youth’s self-esteem declined, for the most part for females. According to Matsuba, Elder, Petrucci, & Marleau, (2007) “If the literature is correct in demonstrating the positive benefits of employment on psychological health, then a challenge facing those who work with at-risk youth is to help them find employment”. If this is the case, then finding employment is crucial in preventing negative affect from occurring. This is why job and social skill based training and work placement can be so beneficial to helping youth increase their self-efficacy and finding employment that is meaningful and positive through enrolment and participation in a youth employment program.

**Studies on YEPs and Their Effectiveness**

For many years, Youth Employment Programs have been implemented effectively and successfully with a variety of youth in different settings (Rist, 1982). Increased job skills and increased social skills in these youth programs have led to a favourable outcome in terms of the participants finding and maintaining lengthy periods of employment. An overall positive attitude towards job searching and job search competency also increased and improved their ability to search out and maintain employment. A study by Ekstrom, Freeberg and Roc (1987), showed demonstrated positive outcomes for participants in a Youth Employment Program in the United States, where increased job and social skills were reported, along with longer periods of stable employment once the program was completed. Performance feedback by participants in many Youth Employment Programs has indicated an increase in self-confidence and overall capacity to seek and maintain successful employment (Rist, 1982). According to Grubb (1995), “higher benefits exist for those with little labour market experience, compared to those with substantial experience”. This author goes on to suggest that job training programs for inexperienced youth are more beneficial than those youth with work experience, as the individuals with experience tend to not access these training programs and instead continue to cycle through job after job because they figure that job experience equates a higher potential to land a job. Research also shows that Youth Employment Programs provide the crucial job related skills such as job seeking, resume and cover letter writing, job interviews, social skills while employed (positive attitude, work ethic, and conflict resolution) that will help adolescents find and keep employment longer than those who do not participate in such a training program (Ekstrom, Educational Services Testing, & And 1984). Research by Weinbaum, and Wirmusky (1994) focused on best practices for Youth Employment Programs, and summarised that teaching the social and job related skills to unemployed youth results in the maintenance of meaningful employment that subsequently leads to better future careers and overall positive emotional wellbeing.

An employment training program based in an at-risk area in a rural town in northern British Columbia studied 59 at-risk youth (ages 15-24), and found that over a four year period of running groups of 10 participants per group, and results obtained showed periods of employment success and increased states of self-esteem and confidence (Matsuba, Elder, Petrucci & Marleau, 2007). An employment skills strategy program for youth based in San Diego also had success with the youth finding employment. Created and sponsored in 1999 by three foster services agencies, Walden Family Services, Casey Family Programs, and San Diego Youth and Community Services, the Employment Skills Development Program was designed to teach foster teens how to succeed in any job once they reach adulthood. The program annually costs about $100,000; most of the cost covered by in-kind donations and the agency volunteering
staff time. The students met at Walden, Casey or a library for general instruction about job skills and then moved on to different local companies. There were four components of the program, including an introduction to different work environments through work site tours and a seminar that provided education and training on employment areas. Another key component was the Pre-Employment Traineeship (PET), which provide 80-hours of employment training that focused on resume writing, interviewing skills, appropriate dress, behaviour on the work site and general work readiness information. Through PET, participants were placed at work sites in the community, and a program job coach visited the training site to discuss behaviours and reinforce concepts. Youths could earn a subsidized stipend of $5 per day. The final step was independent paid employment, where the youths found a job they wanted. The program assisted them with a refresher course on interviewing skills and career planning (San Diego Business Journal, 2002).

In Ontario alone, there are youth employment programs being implemented across the province, mainly by employment services agencies that are governmentally funded, or that are funded through private donation (i.e., individuals or local businesses in the community that want to donate to help). Some of the agencies providing employment programs for youth are in London (Youth Opportunities Unlimited runs the Youth Endeavouring for Success (YES) Program (15-30 years) (Youth Opportunities Unlimited Website, 2010). Another is in Mississauga (The Centre for Education & Training Website, 2011) where the agency runs youth employment programming, and finally in Kingston where KEYS Employment Services runs the Shine youth employment program (KEYS website, 2011). Other provinces across Canada provide the same type of services to youth to help them increase their job skills and experience. Please see Google Search Website, (2011) where a search for other programs in Canada similar to the ones offered in Ontario can be conducted.

Comparing, Contrasting, and Suggestions for Programs Similar to Paid YEPs

Two job search assistance programs for disadvantaged youth, funded under the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act, were evaluated for both operation and impact. The two programs were the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Job Factory, which paid 203 youths for doing the “job” of finding a job, while also providing group activities, resume writing, job search skills and placement assistance; and the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Workshop, which assigned 356 participants to one of three treatment groups to receive either individual career counselling and job placement services, career counselling, job placement services, and group job search skills workshops, or career counselling and job search skills workshops. No participant was provided pay in the Pennsylvania project. The control group consisted of 165 youth. The impact of the evaluation found that the Job Factory had a substantial effect in getting youth to work quickly, and maintaining employment for longer periods of time than the other two groups, while in the Workshop, there were no significant differences in the rate of job finding for the three groups. Job Factory participants found moderately better jobs than the controls, however, in Cambridge, attitudes/knowledge areas alone did not contribute to job finding, while in Wilkes Barre, job search skills were a significant component of job finding. The results of this study are seen as supporting the notion that paying an individual to find a job combined with teaching job searching skills to youth and young adults could lead to finding and maintaining employment versus simply finding employment (Hahn, Friedman, & Brandeis, 1981).

Cave, Doolittle, & Manpower Demonstration Research Corp (1991) conducted a meta-analysis study assessing an employment training program JOBSTART, a demonstration program which was federally funded and offered basic education, occupational skills training, support
services, and job placement assistance to young school dropouts. Eligible youth (ages 17-21 who read below an eighth grade level) for the JOBSTART program consisted of 2,312 participants who were randomly assigned to two groups: 1,163 to the experimental group and 1,149 to the control group. The control group was not offered the same services as the experimental group; in fact they were simply to use other services offered in the community. Random assignments over varying periods of time from August 1985 to November 1987 were conducted at thirteen sites (13 organizations that would run and operate the program). Success was measured by the participants’ ability to increase their educational attainment, employment, and earnings. Data gathered on outcomes such as participation in education and training programs, educational attainment, employment, earnings, and use of public benefit programs was obtained using Follow-up surveys at 12 and 24 months after assignment. An examination of JOBSTART services and participation at the 13 sites found great diversity within the program; as longer and more substantial participation than that in other programs for young school dropouts resulted; and similar participation hours among different groups and types of sites. The impacts on employment and earnings were encouraging for mothers; but more positive for women without children; and generally negative for men. There are several possible explanations for the above results. One possibility is paid training, combined with a focus more on the youth obtaining job and social skills training, with a focus on employment rather than them having to meet criteria involving more scholarly education. Another explanation being that employment outcomes might have led to an increased positive outcome of youth who had employment and earnings versus schooling (which they dropped out of originally and had less motivation for). The last reason includes being a potential for youth to gain future employment. The effectiveness of YEPs with disadvantaged or delinquent youth has supported this latter notion mentioned because in many cases, they have produce positive results with youth finding employment (Leiber, & Mawhorr, 1995). Another youth training program entitled the Summer Work Experience Program offered by the Crispus Attucks Center for Employment & Training provides over 200 youth paid (minimum wage of $7.25) job training skills and work placement. The completion rate is high, however, the downfall is that it is only for the summer and the participants are high school students who must return to school and are not necessarily guaranteed a job when they are finished school. A paid YEP program like The Shine Program, which offers job and social skills training would at least provide the necessary skills and work experience, with the potential for further employment and earnings, as the youth would be paid for the same length with a greater chance for success.

**Importance of Social Skills Training in YEPs.** Although employability skills are crucial, employment skills alone do not necessarily equate maintaining employment, as social skills provide aid to youth or young adult’s chances of keeping the job. If they are practicing appropriate workplace etiquette and implementing both the job and social skills they have been taught in a YEP program, they stand a better chance at staying with on with the employer. Carter & Lunsford (2005) state that “appropriate social skills directly impact employment success, co-worker acceptance, and job satisfaction”, which are three important areas within the workplace setting for the youth or young adult to consider. They also mention that if a poor fit between job skills, social skills and employer expectations exists, it could inevitably lead to problems in the workplace, including work frustration, no promotion, or being fired. Ogilvy (1994) states that” social skills can be defined in terms of their functional relationship with socially valued outcomes”, meaning that they are defined depending on the
environment or setting that they need to be learned in, and goes on to mention that teaching social skills alone, such as a social skills training program (SST), is not considered best practice when used alone. He suggests that a multidimensional intervention leads to a higher acquisition of social skills, such as using role playing, coaching and skill based activities for the individual to learn from so they may apply the skills in a real life setting.

In many youth employment training programs, especially The Shine Program, a multidimensional approach is used to teach social skills through role playing, videos, team working games and group activities that focus on the individuals learning about the skills, and how to use them as required in the workplace, Coaching, as well as the participants answering journaling questions, or talking about their social barriers that hinder them when employed are also methods used in Shine and other YEPs to teach social skills to the participants. This encourages them to brainstorm what they could do differently to improve their employment social skills when working with staff, customers, and their managers. The coaching helps to encourage the participants to practice these skills while on work placement, and provides them with positive reinforcement when they succeed. Sometimes, however, coaching can be used as a means to give support and ideas of ways to improve the individual’s success with the skills should they try using them at placement and have little improvement, or a negative outcome (i.e., conflict with staff, customers, or management where they might have acted out with aggression or a negative verbal response) (Johnson, 2010).

Although many programs exist in North America to help youth and young adults acquire job and social skills training, along with work experience, there is still a high demand for more programs to be implemented, as the wait times and lack of space poses barriers for unemployed youth or young adults to be successful in the North American labour market (Government of Canada Website-HDRC 2010). This appears to be more predominant in Canada as many YEPs such as the Shine Program and others similar have room for 6-8 participants each session according to Johnson, (2010).

Rationale and Suggestions for Further Research and Implementation of YEPs

Hiring more staff through additional government funding could allow for more participants and programs that could run several programs concurrently, rather than one every ten weeks. More research studies could be conducted that analyze the curriculum taught in the YEPs and the training material’s effectiveness at increasing the participants job skills, social skills, employability once the program is completed and whether the program helped the participants self efficacy to use the skills taught to them when seeking and maintaining employment. Different testing instruments could be utilized also to measure pre and post learning outcomes, along with perhaps researching other interventions (curriculum and training methods that have not be implemented before to observe their effect on youth or young adults enrolled in an employment program). A need for more paid programs would help the youth as well, because they would have income during the course of the program and be more motivated perhaps to enrol in a YEP and complete it. As previously mentioned by studies that did pay the youth to attend a YEP while enrolled, higher completion rates occurred, along with the participants ability to experience paid training, which might in turn motivate them to want to seek further employment as they have already been exposed to receiving a pay cheque for doing the work involved in attending and participating in a YEP.
How the Literature Relates to the Current Study

To conclude, the literature discussed is all relevant to YEPs and demonstrates why it is crucial to evaluate them and continue to offer them to youth and young adults, as their emotional well being and self efficacy, along with finding employment increases through learning and increasing their job, social skills and work experience repertoires. All of these factors could lead to a decrease in the unemployment rate in North America, with an increase in the number of youth and young adults who could not only gain work experience, but prolonged self meaningful employment. Earnings for this population would increase once employed, and the participants could be more successful in their future endeavours in life.
Chapter III: Method

Participants

Inclusion criteria. The participants for this study were youth or young adults who were out of school, out of work, and not receiving employment insurance. This was the mandated criteria from Service Canada to be met before the facilitator could proceed with screening assessments at the Shine Program information session provided by Kingston Employment and Youth Services (KEYS). Once participants filled out forms from Service Canada and met eligibility from the government’s guidelines, then the facilitator provided a screening questionnaire to further eliminate individuals who did not meet the facilitator’s criteria on a basic screening questionnaire (Appendix A). From there, the facilitator would read over the screening questionnaires briefly and then decide who would benefit from the program. An assessment interview time would be booked with the individuals selected to meet with the facilitator the following week. The assessment interview consisted of a forty-five minute interview with a potential participant where the facilitator would ask a series of in depth questions about why the individual felt they would be a good fit, what some of the barriers to employment were for each individual, and/or other questions pertaining to educational history, and other social or behavioural difficulties each might have experienced. This interview was informal in the sense that the facilitator did not always ask all of the questions from the interview form (Appendix B). The interview process was a way to get a better sense of the individual’s previous history, and to determine if they would be a good fit for the program. Once interviews were completed, participants were chosen on how well they would work with each other based on age, background history (behavioural issues or barriers to keeping previous jobs), gender, education level, social skills functioning (deficits needed to be present) and medical history (mental illness). Random selection did not occur in this study. Once the group members were selected, notification via phone took place to inform the participants that they were chosen and the date and time that the program would commence.

Participant Variables. For this study, eight participants were originally selected based on criteria met by the government and facilitator’s guidelines. Normally, only six participants are chosen, but due to a surplus in funding left from the previous session, the facilitator included two extra participants. It is important to note that in the first three weeks, three participants left, and two others replaced them in week four of the program (one left for a higher paying job, one was let go for lack of attendance, and one chose to leave voluntarily). For the purposes of this study, data only on the seven participants² who started or joined later and completed the ten week program will be analyzed and discussed. The age range for all seven participants¹ was 18 to 22 (M=19.6). The group consisted of three females and four males, all of whom spoke English, had some or no work experience, and had barriers to employment that included deficits in social functioning and employment skills.

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²Participants coded 1 to 7 to protect client confidentiality
Participant 1 was a 21-year-old mother; and had two previous jobs, but lost them within the first two months of obtaining them. She presented as very social and outgoing; perhaps too much so. She talked a lot, and tended to interrupt others while they were speaking, which tended to be problematic for the facilitator during instruction times. Her long term goals included finishing her high school, going to college and perhaps pursuing a career in Real Estate.

Participant 2 was a 20-year-old male, who was being supported by Ontario Works (OW). He had one job in the past, lasting almost three years, but self-reported that he was fired for missing three work shifts. For the past year, he had been actively looking for employment but to no avail. He identified as a musician who was friendly and funny, and did attempt college; but failed the second semester of the Digital Arts program at the school he attended.

Participant 3 was an 18-year-old female supported by Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). She self-reported having a learning difficulty, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Fetal Alcoholic Spectrum Disorder (FASD), but no medical record or formal diagnostic record from a professional was obtained. Although she had graduated from high school, she struggled both academically and socially in settings with her peers. She had limited work experience, and lived with her boyfriend who is also supported by ODSP in a supportive roommate situation with two older professionals.

Participant 4 was an 18-year-old male who had experience in a high school focus program both in carpentry and electrical. He had been looking for a job in the trades for the past five months since graduating from High School. His only employment had been with a family member for summer employment. He did self-report as having a learning disability; being a slow reader, struggling with ADHD, as well as having anger management issues with other people in the past.

Participant 5 was an 18-year-old male who had not been attending school for over a year, and had never worked. His parents had given him an ultimatum (either school or employment) and said that they would no longer be supporting him financially. He reported that he lacked motivation for job searching, as his parents supported him financially his whole life. Socially he had some problems with his peers and lacked work experience, along with a deficit in job and social skills to help him gain employment.

Participant 6 was a 20-year-old female who was skilled academically, but had no previous work experience. Her verbal speaking skills to others in a social situation were minimal; as she presented as shy and tended not to talk and self-reported that she did not enjoy speaking with people unless absolutely necessary. She had little job experience and needed assistance interviewing for a job and how to be more talkative and positive when job searching. She had an interest in data entry, or a job that did not involve talking to people. She had attended several employment related workshops offered by KEYS and had participated in previous employment counselling at the agency.

Participant 7 was a 22-year-old male who was a past client at KEYS, and lived with his partner who was expecting a baby in a few months. They were both supported by OW. Although he had some work experience he had not had success with work retention. He had been diagnosed with a learning difficulty, but developed some effective strategies to cope with this. He was interested in a labour type placement. A deficit did exist in regards to reading and writing, along with some weaker job and social skills.

Participants six and seven were the two subjects who entered late into the program (beginning of week three). The information pertaining to all participants was retrieved from
Consent. On the first day of the Shine Program, verbal and written consent was obtained from clients in order for them to participate in the study. It is also important to note that the Research and Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College reviewed and approved the current study. The signed consent form (Appendix C) was then taken by the researcher and kept in a secured location. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and participation was voluntary. They were further informed that should they choose to withdraw from the study, that their personal information would be destroyed and they could still participate in the Shine Program without penalty. Signed consent was also obtained from the agency’s general manager and facilitator to use the agency name and supervisor’s name in the study (Appendix D), along with permission from the publisher to use their questionnaires for the study (Appendix E) for publisher’s permission letter and pictures of the measurement questionnaires used (Appendix F).

Design
This study analyzing the Shine Program used a group AB design, consisting of pre- and post-test score comparisons (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006) from three questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of the programming and training taught in the youth employment group (YEP). An assessment of self-reported goals from participants and the evaluation of these goals post-programming by participants and the facilitator was analysed to demonstrate whether the self-reported goals improved over the course of the study. The training and programming offered in the YEP focused on job and social skills found in the 30 Ways to Shine book (Bissonette, 2004) and other books pertaining to team work and icebreaker exercises; participants could learn skills such as effective communication, teamwork, and problem solving. Information pertaining to resume writing or interviewing for a job included in handouts offered in the agency’s resource centre across the street. Certification courses were also included in the training experience and were offered during the four weeks of in-class training from different outside agencies and included training such as Conflict Resolution, Smart Serve, Service Excellence, First Aid and CPR, along with other employment related courses funded by the Shine Program. This extra certification training meant that participants could add these training experiences on their resumes as they were completed. The certification courses were taught based on the needs of the participants, and were decided upon on the first day of the Shine Program by the clients and facilitator, as only a certain amount of funding per client was allocated for training certification courses.

The independent variables in the study included the course curriculum, along with certification training. The dependent variables were the scores obtained pre- and post-testing along with the pre-programming self-reported goals and evaluation of these goals post-programming by participants and the facilitator.

Pre and Post Test Measures. Three questionnaires were provided to participants at the beginning and end of the study in a pre-post method (first and last day of programming). They were delivered and completed in the afternoon of the first and second last day of programming. All of the three pre-testing questionnaires were altered (folded over) so participants could only see test questions and not the entirety of the other sections.
(Those meant for goal setting and areas where individuals could learn where they scored high or low). The alteration of the questionnaires was chosen by the research student as they felt that the subjects might answer with bias if they could view all of the questionnaires’ areas before completion.

The post testing was given in a similar fashion, however, participants were given the option to look at the rest of the questionnaires’ areas and could complete the self report written portions that the questionnaires provided, with the choice to have the researcher photocopy their results and self reported goals. Photocopying was offered as the subjects could not keep the questionnaires. In total, it took all participants approximately 90 minutes to complete all three questionnaires. For the participants who joined in the third week, the questionnaires were given on the first day they arrived and on the second last day of programming in the same fashion as the others were. These measures were utilized to assess the effectiveness of the program’s training of job and social skills and measured job search knowledge, job search attitude, and employability skills of each participant. A total comparison of results from the three questionnaires will be analyzed using a non-parametric Wilcoxon Test. Results will also be displayed using tables and figures pertaining to the group’s mean score to responses on each subscale of each questionnaire, along with the group’s standard scores for each measurement scale.

**Job Search Knowledge Scale 2nd Ed (JSKS).** This self report scale consists of 60 true/false statements in which the test taker answers. The test measures how much an individual knows about how to look for work, and helps them to discover the skills for job searching that they are struggling with or need improvement, as this can help to find employment faster. There are five subscales in which the test assesses which includes identifying job leads, applying directly to employers, writing resumes & cover letters, interviewing, and following up (after applying for employment). The alpha coefficients for the JSKS ranged from .75 to .91. The test-retest reliability for the JSKS a month later ranged from .79 to .90. Thus, from these results, it was determined that the inventory provides consistent measurement. From research conducted on the measure’s concurrent validity by its author who tested 100 subjects, the JSKS was found to have sound interscale correlations, and good construct validity (Liptak, 2009).

**Job Search Attitude Inventory 4th Ed (JSAI).** This self-report measure consists of a 40 statement across five subscales using a four point Likert scale (0 being completely disagree to 4 being completely agree) in which the test taker agrees or disagrees to each statement. The five categories consist of luck vs. planning, help from others vs. self-help, passive vs. active, and optimistic vs. pessimistic. This assessment measures an individual’s self identified attitude about job searching and aids them in discovering their attitudinal and mental barriers that might be hindering them from obtaining work.

Reliability for the JSAI was computed in terms of internal consistency (alpha coefficients), stability (test-retest correlations), and split-half reliability for an adult population. The database consisted of more than 100 unemployed adults participating in outplacement counselling programs or workforce development programs. Alpha coefficients for the JSAI ranged from a low of .85 to a high of .91, all of which were statistically significant at the .01 level. Many of this initial group of subjects were tested approximately three months later with the test-retest reliabilities ranging from .60 to .76, respectively. To examine further evidence of the internal consistency of the JSAI scale, split-half reliability estimates were also obtained, and these
coefficients, which ranged from .53 to .81 resulted from testing. Therefore, both the reliability and validity appear to be sound for the JSAI Scale (Liptak, 2010).

**Employability Skills Inventory (ESI).** Used as a self-report measure, this test assesses an individual’s strengths and weaknesses across eight subscales directly related to employment skills areas. They include: Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, Personal Qualities, Resource Management Information Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Systems Management, and Technology Use. Each assessment contains 80 statements that are related to the employability skills and each item asks test takers to rate how well the statement describes them on a three-point Likert scale ranging from “Very True” to “Not True.” The ESI also enhances awareness of specific employability skills and provides suggestions for enhancing job employability even more. The ESI was developed as a reliable and valid way to measure the level of proficiency for employment competencies and basic skills. The ESI requires approximately 20–25 minutes completing, and showed very strong internal consistency validity with split-half correlations ranging from .80 (Thinking Skills and the Systems Management subscale) to .93 (Information Skills subscale). All split-half correlation scores for the eight scales were significant at the 0.01 significance level. Approximately one month after the original testing, 50 people in the sample population were re-tested. Test-retest correlations for the ESI ranged from .81 (Information Skills) to .92 (Systems Management). All of these correlations were also significant at the 0.01 level. For validity, the ESI was correlated with another scale similar to it. Based on the number of correlations between the other similar scale at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, it was concluded that the ESI has appropriate construct validity (Liptak, 2010).

**Goal Setting Forms.** A self-reported goal setting form designed by the research student and approved by the facilitator was given to each participant on the first day of program. Participants were to list two employment skill-based goals in two separate small paragraphs and explain in writing how they would achieve the goal by the end of the four week in-class portion of the program (Appendix G). The two participants that were replaced in week three were administered the forms on the first day of their arrival (Monday of week three).

   The self report forms completed at pre-testing were related to job and social skills and were behaviorally defined as best as possible, as participants were given instructions by the student researcher on how to complete a behavioural goal (write out how and when the goal will be completed) and were provided with examples of them from both social and job skills areas. For example, if a participant wanted to improve their resume writing skills, the goal would be written as “I would like to improve my resume writing skills by learning in class how to write a proper resume, and then practice making one for which I will use to apply for my six-week employment placement”. The goal would be evaluated by the participant and program supervisor at the end of the four week in-class training. The supervisor would measure the improvement of the skill based on experience with resumes that were written or designed correctly, and looked at whether the resume helped the subject obtain a six week employment placement (Facilitator would get feedback from the employer about the resume’s quality and if it appealed to the hiring employer).

   On the last day of the four weeks (Friday), all participants who completed the program were given an evaluation form (Appendix H) with a four point Likert scale (1 to 4 stating extremely to not at all) to determine their level of satisfaction towards completing their self-report goal from pre- to post- programming. The facilitator also completed the same Likert scale
below on the form to provide their opinion of each participant’s successful goal completion. Both the goal and evaluation sheets took approximately 20 minutes each to complete in the morning of the first and last day of programming.

**Feedback Survey.** In the morning of the on the last day of the ten week program, a short feedback survey (Appendix H) was given to participants to rate the student researcher’s facilitation ability, and to also the performance of the facilitator as well as the overall effectiveness of the Shine Program. This survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. A qualitative summary of the goal setting forms, evaluation forms, and feedback surveys will be presented in the results section of the study.

**Setting & Materials**

The group sessions for the four week in-class training took place across the street from the agency in a rented office space which contained two office spaces and a large boardroom that was turned into a classroom-type setting. Participants were able to choose as a team how they would structure the tables, and this particular group chose a “U” shaped pattern facing a white board. A bookshelf was in the room, and offered extra supplies and materials such as pens, paper, markers, calculators, and scissors (for use when participants were completing individual assignments or group work that required these materials). Extra copies of a book entitled, “The Alchemist” (Coelho, 1988) were located on bookshelf for participants to read from and follow along when the facilitator read from the book at the end of the day. A television with a DVD player and a table with each of the participants’ personal plastic crate bins where their belongings, 30 Ways to Shine Books (Bissonette, 2004), program binders and journal books were stored on top of the table at the left side of the classroom.

**Procedure**

As mentioned previously, three questionnaires and self reported goal setting forms were administered on the first day of the Shine Program. Then for the next four weeks in class, training and curriculum consisted of job and social skills pulled from the 30 Ways to Shine Book (Bissonette, 2004) and other teamwork exercises that the facilitator had found in various books on teambuilding and icebreaker exercises, videos, and internet websites; all of which were referenced and copyright permission given. The majority of employment and social skills were taught from The 30 Ways to Shine book, which the facilitator adapted in presenting the material. For example, if the skill was providing great customer service, the facilitator would pick teamwork games that had learning objectives similar to the skill of giving great service in a positive manner. She would also use videos, handouts that she made and a group discussion to teach the skill. The student researcher had developed a Shine Program Binder with all of the possible resources and games from the facilitator’s computer database, the internet, the 30 ways to Shine book, and two other icebreaker and team building game books so that the facilitator or others could pull material from the binder and utilize it to teach job and social skills, especially if they needed to improvise and find something in a limited timeframe. At the end of the day, the facilitator would hand out journal questions that participants were to answer in journals provide to them on their first day of the program and were expected to answer the questions using as much detail as possible. Then the facilitator would read for the last ten minutes of class before four o’clock from the previously mentioned book entitled The Alchemist (Coelho, 1988). The day would be broken up into several time slots approximately two hours in length for each
activity based on a skill. Lunch was a half hour in length usually from 12:30pm until 1:00pm. Most days would consist of having two or three skills being taught, to ensure that the facilitator covered all 30 skills by the end of the 10 week session. Fridays during the in class sessions tended to have a movie or games that participants would watch or play that would be related to overcoming obstacles in life or taught problem solving strategies. These Fridays, although were more informal, were deemed important and valuable skills for the clients to learn. Mondays during the six week placement portion were called “Shine On” days and would be used for participants to attend the classroom and cover any issues or skills the facilitator felt needed to be addressed, or that the clients needed to talk about. This could include tardiness at work, behaviours that employers were noticing and commenting to the facilitator on, or skills from the 30 Ways to Shine Book that the facilitator wanted to teach. During the six-week job placement portion, participants attended their chosen placements for four days a week, up to 28 hours, and were mandated to attend Mondays at the Shine program building.

Some examples (ten) of the skill based games, activities, and skill sets that were taught are depicted in Table 1 (Appendix J for full examples and descriptions):

Table 1
Important Skill Based Games/Activities/Skill Sets Taught to Participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Game/Activity/Skill Set</th>
<th>Job and Social Skills Taught/Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nailed (Icebreaker/Team Building)</td>
<td>Teamwork, communication, Problem solving, asking for help when needed, organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shining in the Eyes of the Employer.</td>
<td>Social skills to keep your employer happy and maintaining employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivity Exercise</td>
<td>Having a good attitude, being social towards others (clients and co-workers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose your attitude at work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Excellent Customer Service</td>
<td>Doing a good job, helping others, problem solving, being positive towards others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume Writing</td>
<td>How to write effective resume to get a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Links for Job Skills &amp; Motivational Short Films</td>
<td>How to job search, resumes, Interviews, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying your values in the workplace</td>
<td>Using values to succeed in workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Stress in the workplace</td>
<td>Conflict Resolution and decreasing anxiety when it arises at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefiting from Praise and Criticism</td>
<td>Ability to give and receive constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing Life While Working</td>
<td>Enjoying and making the most out of any type of employment to remain happy and employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the second last day of programming, all final post testing was completed by participants in the morning and afternoon, as the research student felt that breaking up the amount of testing would give the participants a break and make it more probable that the questionnaires (completed in pm) and survey, evaluation and goal setting forms (completed in am) would be answered in a truthful and non rushed fashion where the clients would not be fatigued from spending approximately four hours continuously completing testing procedures.

On the final day of programming, the participants went out on a “fun day”, where the facilitator, the student researcher, and the participants enjoyed lunch, played laser tag and miniature golf. This day of celebration occurs at the end of every ten week session, as it provides participants with positive reinforcement for completion of the program.
Chapter IV: Results

The current study investigated the effectiveness of the Shine Program’s job and social skills training by comparing pre- to post-training scores on the JSKS, JSAI, ESI questionnaires and the self-reported goals of participants with the facilitator’s evaluation of these. Although it was hypothesised that there would be a demonstrated increase in scores across all questionnaire subscales; however, no statistically significant improvement in the scores of any subtests were found. The group’s Mean and Standard deviation was obtained on each questionnaire across subscales to determine if any changes occurred pre- to post-training. No significant differences were observed during this period of time.

Table 2
Group Pre and Post Mean SD scores for JSKS Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Job Leads</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Application to</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resumes and Cover Letters</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Interviews</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Up</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Group</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean scores were calculated based on group average question scores per subscales in the JSKS questionnaire which is a 2 point true or false scale

Table 3
Group Pre and Post Mean SD scores for JSAI Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luck Vs. Planning</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninvolved Vs. Involved Help from Others vs. No Help</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive vs. Active</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic vs. Optimistic</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Group</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean scores were calculated based on group average question scores per subscales in the JSKS questionnaire which is a 4 point Likert scale (1= strongly agree, 4=.strongly disagree).
Table 4

Group Pre and Post Mean SD scores for ESI Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Skills</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Qualities</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Skills</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Skills</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Management</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Use</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Group</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean scores were calculated based on group average question scores per subscales in the ESI questionnaire which is a 3 point Likert scale (1= not true, 3= very true).

A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was completed by the student researcher using SPSS 17.0 to determine if any statistically significant changes from pre- to post-testing for the overall group question answers across subscales occurred for each questionnaire.

The analysis revealed non-significant results for all three questionnaires. It is interesting to note that in the second questionnaire (JSAI), the subscale Pessimistic vs. Optimistic approached significance (p<.08) of an increase in social skills related to being positive during a job search. Also in the third questionnaire (ESI), the subscale Personal Qualities approached significance (p<.07) in favour of an increase in social skills related to having positive qualities in the workplace. For visual analysis pertaining to the three questionnaires, see figures 1 to 3.
Figure 1

Group Average Question Scores for JSKS Questionnaires

![Bar Chart](chart1.png)

- Identifying Job Leads
- Direct Application to Employers
- Resumes and Cover Letters
- Employment Interviews
- Following Up

Subscales

![Bar Chart](chart2.png)

- Luck Vs. Planning
- Uninvolved Vs. Involved
- Help from Others vs. No Help
- Passive vs. Active
- Pessimistic vs. Optimistic

Subscales

Figure 2

Group Average Question Scores for JSAI Questionnaire
Self Report Goals and Post Evaluation Results. The self report forms completed by all participants in the pre-testing phase resulted in overall increases at the post-testing evaluation phase by the subjects’ self report evaluations. The self-reported goals completed by participants at pre-training and then evaluated at post-training yielded some changes for four participants, as participant six reported that the second goal of gaining more product knowledge while on employment placement greatly improved. Participant one self-reported a greatly change in both of her reported goals of improving job search techniques and mastering the basic duties of her placement job, and finally, participant two and seven self-reported greatly changed on both of their goals.

This was not the case for evaluations made by the supervisor at post-testing as participants 3, 4, and 7’s evaluations for both goals demonstrated no change by the supervisor, with decreases for participants 4 and 5. Participants 1, 2, and 6 did improve one or two points each from satisfactory to extremely or excellent on their goals. The program supervisor stated to the researcher that the evaluations tended to be marked “tough” so subjects could get an actual sense on their performance of attempting to improve their self reported goals from pre- to post-training.

Feedback Survey. All seven participants completed a feedback survey demonstrating their satisfaction overall for the study and the student researcher’s ability to facilitate workshops on four different occasions during the four week portion of the program. All subjects’ responses on a Likert scale section (1=excellent to 4=poor) of the survey were rated good or excellent (Two participants rated good and four rated excellent), which was important information to the student researcher, facilitator, and agency. The subjects were also able to write any additional feedback
that could improve the program or the study itself. All subjects reported in written form that the program and the facilitation went well, and the student researcher received verbal feedback from the facilitator on areas to improve on when facilitating workshops.
Chapter V: Discussion

In consideration of overall mean group scores obtained from the pre- and post-test questionnaires, the job and social skills amongst the subscales of the questionnaires important or did not reveal significant gains in participants’ increase of knowledge or ability to perform job and social skills necessary for employment. However, it is important to note that some average mean scores for the group did increase from pre-to post-testing (see table 2, 3, and 4), indicating that the group did improve in certain subscales of the questionnaires which are directly related to job and social skills that are required for employment.

The Wilcoxon test provided no significance towards an increase from pre-to post-testing, however the self-reported goals completed by participants at pre-testing and then evaluated at post-testing yielded some changes for three participants. The results demonstrate that some participants did meet and improve on their self-reported goals. All participants also felt satisfied with the facilitation of the curriculum and the program itself according to the feedback surveys that they completed post programming. Also four of the seven subjects remained employed once the program was completed.

Strengths

The feedback from participants on the survey suggested that a high level of satisfaction was obtained with the program material and the way in which the curriculum was implemented over the ten week of training. There was some slight improvement in the questionnaire scores in job and social skills learned from pre- to post-testing.

The material itself contained a variety of different learning exercises and games which promoted role playing and participation towards the acquisition of social and job skills related to being a success in the workplace and remaining so once employed. The curriculum taught in the program could be used in other youth employment programs in the province of Ontario, as it is currently being used by the agency’s sister sites.

As well, over 50% of the session’s participants were offered to remain on as paid employees at their placements, with one of these participants deciding to go back to high school to further their education, to could obtain a career in the hospitality/tourism as a manager.

Limitations

The study used a very small sample size, and did not extend to more than one group session. Including more participants or more sessions in a study may yield more meaningful results concerning the job and social skills learned pre- to post- training.

Different questionnaires could have also been designed that were more suitable for the curriculum taught in the youth employment program, and more reflective of the job and social skills that the Shine program teaches.

As the participants were paid during the course of the program, it cannot be determined whether this may have affected their level of participation in activities and responses to the feedback survey, as they might have felt they needed to perform well as to not be dropped from the program and to provide answers in class and on the survey in a manner that would please both the researcher and facilitator. To determine if participation in exercises and the program itself is based on monetary reinforcement, a future study could be conducted using a control group (subjects do not get paid for the 10 weeks) versus an experimental group (subjects who do get paid for the 10 weeks). The two groups could then be measured based on the subjects’
participation in activities, completion of homework and other tasks and on completion of the program itself. The self-reported goals may have also been more positively inflated somewhat due to subjects wanting to complete the program, get paid, and receive a good reference from the program supervisor for future employment. The researcher could have done the pre- and post- measuring at the start and end of the ten weeks, rather than at the end of the four weeks, as this did not seem like an adequate amount of time for the subjects to learn (even more so for the two participants who started the program late); as there was additional material taught to them on Mondays during the six week placement period that might have influenced the results on the three questionnaires used during testing. Additionally, the Shine program itself could provide more consistency, as the overall daily sessions seemed to be structured inconsistently from session to session, which could pose a problem when attempting to keep this variable stable if a study where multiple sessions were being studied was conducted. Also important to note, because three participants left in the middle of week three, and two new participants were added to the group in beginning of week four, this could have affected how the two replacement subjects learned job and social skills, as one week of training could may have affected their testing results on the questionnaires and goal setting evaluations. Finally, there was no control group to compare the experimental group results with, as it would be interesting to see what results a controlled study would yield.

Summary
The youth employment program assessed in this study is one that provides 10 weeks of training in finding and maintaining employment to high risk youth and young adults. Studies have shown that these types of YEPs do in fact lead to increased skill sets (job and social skills) that allow youth to find jobs and to remain employed. And although this current study did not yield statistically significant results to demonstrate an increase in skills from pre-to post-training, other positive qualitative results were found. With more research using a number of different Shine YEP groups over a longer period of time and perhaps investigating other training, it is quite possible that results may yield support for the current study’s hypothesis relating to the Shine Program’s effectiveness in increasing job and social skills from pre- to post-training.

Contributions to Behavioural Psychology Field
This study’s contribution will be aiding in the further research of YEPs and their effectiveness in increasing behavioural skills related to the finding and maintenance of employment. YEPs are critical to learning the necessary skills required for an individual who may not have or who needs to improve their job and social skills. Further understanding of the behavioural skills that do help young people succeed in the workplace via research or conducting further studies means that these individuals can have improved behavioural repertoires that can land them employment that is maintained for prolonged periods of time. Prolonged employment could potentially decrease unemployment rates and help to teach skills to individuals on social assistance, who could then find employment which could add more household income than they receive via welfare programs. These skills might also generalise to other areas in a young person’s life, further helping them in future successes such as relating with the people in their environments in a more positive manner or to decide to complete schooling to advance into a
career. There is also the potentially of youths breaking the cycle of living in poverty, and to gain self-efficacy and maintain the responsibilities of having paid employment.

**Multilevel Challenges to Service Implementation**

**Client.** Many clients who participate in the Shine program have never had a job or if they have had one, they have not had much experience with maintaining one. Some of the clients expect someone to do the work for them, and do not understand what it means to take responsibility for themselves and their behaviour. This can include making their resumes and cover letters to wanting the employers to be called or sought out by the facilitator to get the client a job placement. The clients can be late, call in sick more than once (due to reasons that are not always truthful), and some have negative thinking around job searching for a placement. This can be frustrating for the facilitator of the Youth Employment Program. The program Facilitator is employed at the agency to teach, support, and guides the participants so that they can use the new job and life skills being taught to them to make their own documents, decisions, and to use their own job placement searching strategies. Resistance or a negative attitude by the clients to attempt doing the work themselves once they are shown how to can also occur, resulting in the facilitator feeling taxed, tired, and internally discouraged.

**Program.** Currently, there is only funding for one supervisor for the YEP, so when she takes ill, or goes on vacation, the agency must pull one of its staff from another area within. The staff member might be familiar enough with the material that needs to be taught; however, sometimes this is not the case. Also, although the program supervisor has strong multitasking capabilities, she still must work with six to eight individuals for ten weeks straight, which can become exhausting and busy. Lack of staffing due to funding shortage is a problem that the agency faces on a continual basis. Additionally, the Shine program only allows for six participants, so the waitlists for individuals who want to participate is long and there is only one program in the city.

**Organizational.** The Federal government of Canada, who provides the funding for the Shine program requires that facilitators to have a limited budget for each client. The program does not get funded for a long enough period of time, as there is so much information to teach the participants in a four week period. The agency and Ministry need to be collaborating more and trying to assess and fix this discrepancy, so that the agency, government, and clients especially can benefit from the services offered to them.

**Societal.** Employers in the community can be pessimistic and unresponsive to the program’s facilitator and clients’ efforts to find employment placement for six weeks, and especially to keep the youth further employed once the six week placement is completed. Stereotypes still exist in the community and society at large about the capacity for certain members in the youth and young adult populations to obtain and maintain employment. Unfortunately, age discrimination still exists, and although the Canadian Labour Market is mandated to hire equal opportunity employees, the reality of it is that they do not. The communities in which these programs are operating in could be more supportive of the clients’ willingness to want to learn, work, and improve their quality of life.
References


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SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a quick overview of your personal history to assess if you would be an ideal fit for the SHINE Skills Link program; the purpose is to determine what has been holding you back in your job search and/or success. All applicants that have some clear areas that the SHINE program could assist with will be given an appointment time for a more thorough and personal assessment.

NAME: ______________________

CONTACT NUMBER: ________________

Have you ever had paid employment? Where, when, how long?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Have you been fired from a job?

____________________________________________________________________

Quit without giving your employer notice?

____________________________________________________________________
What is your highest level of education?
__________________________________________

What year was that?
__________________________________________

How long have you been looking for work?
__________________________________________

How many places a week do you apply to?
__________________________________________

How to you apply; in person, fax, email?
__________________________________________

What is your ideal short term job goal?
__________________________________________

What is your long term job goal?
__________________________________________

Are you currently working with an Employment Counsellor/Advisor? -
_______________

Or, have you in the past? _______________

If so, who? __________________________
Info and Assessment Interview Form

DATE_________________      SIN ______________________

NAME________________________________

Registration □
Resume □

What do you expect to gain from the SHINE Skills Link Program?

Who do you live with and where?

What is your current source of income?

How you get to Keys and to your placement?
Do you have any other needs (i.e. Childcare, medical concerns) that would interfere with your attendance? How can you address these needs?

Tell me about your jobs or volunteering in the past;

Have you ever had a job?

When/Where?

What were you good at?

What was a bit hard?

What kind of a job do you see yourself doing in the next year?

In five years?
Tell me the best and worst things about having a job.

Best -

Worst -

Have you worked with an employment counsellor? What sort of things did you work on?

High school; was it a good fit for you?

What did you like?

What didn’t work for you?

Do have any educational goals?
Do you have any learning difficulties or any disabilities that would you like to share?

Tell me two of your strength areas?

What are two areas you would like to improve upon?
APPENDIX C: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Job Skills Training, Employment Outcome, and Increased Self Efficacy for Young Adults Enrolled in a Youth Employment Program

Student: Amber Smith

College Supervisor: Deborah Smith

613-544-5400 ext 1442

INVITATION
I am a student in my 4th year in the Behavioural Psychology at St. Lawrence College and I am currently on placement at the . As a part of this placement, I am completing a special project called an applied thesis and am asking for your assistance to complete this project. The information in this form is intended to help you understand my project so that you can decide whether or not you want to participate. Please read the information below carefully and ask all the questions you might have before deciding whether or not to participate.
What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of my study is to evaluate the effectiveness of The Shine Program, which is a youth employment program designed to teach both social and technical skills related to seeking and maintaining employment in the community. I will also be evaluating the program’s effectiveness by testing job search knowledge, job search attitude, and employability skills before and after the completion of the program. The Shine Program is believed to be useful and helpful in teaching important job search skills, life skills, and employment related skills to assist in finding and maintaining future employment. This program will be useful and helpful to individuals such as you to learn the necessary skills and have the hands on experience of being in a four week in class instructed environment, followed by the six week job placement. I will use three self-report questionnaires, along with a goal sheet that will be filled out before and after the Shine Program to determine if any positive changes have occurred in your knowledge and attitude towards job searching, as well as in your employability skills, which are taught to you during the ten week Shine Program. All three self report inventories will be assessed by the placement student, and the data collected will be used in my Thesis, which will help in the evaluation of the Shine program. I have also created a feedback questionnaire for you to evaluate the program and address any areas in the program that you feel could be improved. The last item that I have prepared is a goals sheet to self complete at the beginning of the program to address two skills that you would like to improve on to help you along in your job search and maintenance of successful employment beyond the six week job placement. The facilitator will include learning material designed to improve these goals. The goals sheet will then be evaluated by the facilitator and yourself at the end of the program to see if the goals were achieved. Your opinions and thoughts are crucial to ensuring that this program remains ongoing and improved through your feedback.

What will you need to do if you take part?

If you decide to take part and complete these questionnaires, it will take approximately 60 minutes to complete the questionnaires that will be given at the beginning and end of the program. The feedback evaluation and your goals evaluation forms will take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The classes you attend for the first four weeks will be seven hours in length, from Monday to Friday. The placement job will be for six weeks, from Monday to Friday for approximately seven to eight hours per day, in accordance to the employer’s business hours, and the type of employment position that they designate to you.
What are the potential benefits to me of taking part?

The benefits of participation in this project may include learning more about the skills required to seek and maintain successful employment, to learn about yourself in your confidence and capability to apply these learned job skills, and to feel good knowing that you are helping to measure the program’s success.

What are the potential benefits to others of taking part? (If applicable)

Information from this project may be used to help maintain the program to continue to be offered, and potentially to more youth. Additionally, this project may help to improve the “Shine” Program for future youth.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The risks to participation in this project are minimal, but may include becoming tired or bored from answering so many questions.

What happens if something goes wrong?

If you have any reaction to the material being taught or the questions being asked, please know that you may talk to me, or the “Shine” facilitator, Jana Johnson.

Will my taking part in this project be kept private?

We will make every effort to keep all information pertaining to you strictly confidential unless required by law. All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet located in the facilitator’s office which will be locked when she is not in the office, and only the student researcher and the facilitator will have access to the files. Any information on my computer will be password protected. Your name will not be identified in any reports, publications, or presentations that result from this study.
Do you have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without incurring any penalty.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw without it affecting your participation in the employment group at anytime.

Contact for further information.

This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College. The project will be developed under the supervision of Deborah Smith, my supervisor from St. Lawrence College. I really appreciate your cooperation. If you have any additional questions or concerns, feel free to ask me, Amber Smith, or you can contact my College Supervisor, Deborah Smith at 613-544-5400, ext 1442, or you may also contact the Research Ethics Board at appliedresearch@sl.on.ca.

Consent

If you agree to participate in the project, please complete the following form and return it to me as soon as possible. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records. An additional copy of your consent will be retained at the agency and in a secure location with the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College.
Consent

By signing this form, I agree that:

The study has been explained to me.

All my questions were answered.

Possible harm and discomforts and possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me.

I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.

I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study.

I have been told that my personal information will be kept confidential.

I understand that no information that would identify me will be released or printed without asking me first.

I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

I hereby consent my son/daughter to participate in the research study,

Participant/Parent/Guardian Printed Name: ____________________________

Age of Participant (If Under 18): ________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

SLC Student Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

Printed Name: ____________________________
CONSENT FOR USE OF AGENCY NAME

I __________________________ consent to the use of the name of [Agency Name] in [Student Name]’s applied thesis for the Bachelor of Applied Arts in Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College.

________________________________  ______________________________
Agency Staff Signature  Student Signature

________________________________  ______________________________
Printed Name  Printed Name
Consent for Use of Agency Name

St. Lawrence College
www.slc.on.ca

Date: 22 FEB 2011

CONSENT FOR USE OF AGENCY NAME

I, Gillian Watters, consent to the use of the name of [Agency Name] in [Student Name]'s applied thesis for the Bachelor of Applied Arts in Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College.

[Signature]
Agency Staff Signature

[Signature]
Student Signature

Gillian Watters
Printed Name

Amber Smith
Printed Name
CONSENT FOR USE OF AGENCY NAME

I, [Agency Name], consent to the use of the name of [Agency Name] in [Student Name]’s applied thesis for the Bachelor of Applied Arts in Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College.

[Signature]
Agency Staff Signature

[Signature]
Student Signature

[Printed Name]
Printed Name

[Agency Name] Job Centre
APPENDIX E:

Publisher’s Letter of Permission

September 25, 2010

RE: Permission rights to use Job Search Attitude Inventory, 4th edition, Job Search Knowledge Scale, 2nd edition and Employability Skills Inventory

Dear Amber:

Thank you for your interest in using the Job Search Attitude Inventory, 4th edition, Job Search Knowledge Scale, 2nd edition and the Employability Skills Inventory as part of your dissertation or research study. Please review the following permissions guidelines:

- Use of the assessments is allowed for academic or research purposes only. If you have not already done so, please provide us in writing with a brief description of your research and your name, contact information (including e-mail address, title and school/organization).
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- The assessment may not be revised or reused in any other way without express written consent from the publisher.
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By reproducing the Job Search Attitude, 4th Edition, Job Search Knowledge Scale, 2nd Edition and the Employability Skills Inventory in your dissertation or research study you agree to the above guidelines.

We wish you the best of luck in your research, and thank you for using JIST assessments.

Sincerely,

Dave Anderson
Assessment Manager

A Division of EMC/Parnes Publishing

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APPENDIX F: Measurement Scale Pictures and Descriptions

Job Search Knowledge Scale

The Job Search Knowledge Scale (JSKS) helps determine how much an individual knows about looking for work. Responding to the 60 true/false statements helps test takers discover the job search skills they need to develop further to find work faster.

The JSKS offers guidance on the job search methods that work best and provides journaling space to establish job search goals. The assessment saves time and resources by helping people focus on key areas of the job search as needed and land a job more quickly.

It also allows counsellors and other professionals match individual needs with specific job search training. Self-scoring and self-interpreting, the JSKS works well as an intake assessment and as a pre-test and post-test for educators, workforce development professionals, and counsellors who need to prove their results and effectiveness. It also serves as an ideal compliment to most of JIST’s job search books, workbooks, and videos.

The JSKS assesses an individual’s knowledge in these five areas:

• Identifying job leads

• Applying directly to employers

• Writing resumes and cover letters

• Interviewing

• Following up

Job Search Attitude Inventory (JSAI)

When it comes to finding a job, attitude is everything. Most job coaches and counsellors would agree that a person's mindset and motivation when looking for a job are the keys to finding one quickly. The Job Search Attitude Inventory (JSAI) helps individuals identify their attitudes about looking for a job and then offers suggestions for becoming more active and self-directed in the job search.

The JSAI asks job seekers whether they agree or disagree with 40 statements about the job search process. Users then profile their scores in five categories: luck vs. planning, uninvolved vs. involved, help from others vs. self-help, passive vs. active, and optimistic vs. pessimistic. The assessment helps them to identify mental and attitudinal barriers that might be keeping them from finding work and discover strategies for improving their attitude and reenergizing their job search.

This new edition adds a fifth scale (optimistic vs. pessimistic), and includes revised items and instructions and additional tips for improving one’s outlook and increasing one’s job search success.

Product type: Assessments

Pages: Six-panel foldout

Size: 8.5 x 11


(John Liptak, Ed.D. 2010)
Employability Skills Inventory (ESI)

As a self-report measure, the *Employability Skills Inventory (ESI)* allows workers to quickly assess their own strengths and weaknesses so that they may improve their skills through additional training and experience and make themselves more marketable.

It assists administrators by giving them a quick overview of their client’s employability, helping them to determine the training and additional skills needed most. The *ESI* feeds into the following scales:

- Basic Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Personal Qualities
- Resource Management
- Information Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Systems Management
- Technology Use

The 80-item assessment is self-scoring and self-interpreting and can be completed in 20 minutes. It includes strategies and recommendations for improving employability skills and a worksheet for setting goals.

Product type: Assessments
Interest level: High School-Adult

(John Liptak, Ed.D, 2009)
APPENDIX G: Participant Self Report Goals Sheet

Please describe two job related skills that you would like to improve over the next four weeks. Be sure to include how you will achieve your goal and why you feel these goals are beneficial to future employment.

Goal #1: __________________________________________________
________________________________________________
____________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________

Goal #2: _________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

____________________
_____________________________
Goal Evaluation Sheet

Please circle the answer on the scale from 1-4 on how you felt you did in improving your two goals over the four week period.

Goal #1: _____________________________
I felt that I improved this goal/skill during the past four weeks:

Goal #2: ______________________________
I felt that I improved this goal/skill during the past four weeks:

Facilitator’s Rating of Goal Improvement:
Student improved this goal/skill during the past four weeks:

Feedback: ___________________________________________________ 
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
APPENDIX I: Group Feedback Evaluation Form

**Group Feedback Evaluation Form**

Please take a few minutes by answering the following questions using the rating scale, and completing the short answer questions below, 1 is excellent and 4 is poor. Your feedback can help to improve the content and format of future groups. Thank-you.

1. Was the group material presented in a clear and logical manner?
   - 1. Excellent
   - 2. Good
   - 3. Fair
   - 4. Poor

2. Please rate the group facilitator’s ability to facilitate the group
   - 1. Excellent
   - 2. Good
   - 3. Fair
   - 4. Poor

3. Please rate the usefulness of the group activities and homework material
   - 1. Excellent
   - 2. Good
   - 3. Fair
   - 4. Poor

4. Please rate the length of time of the individual group activities in a day session
   - 1. Excellent
   - 2. Good
   - 3. Fair
   - 4. Poor

5. The skills that were taught are applicable to future job searches and employment
   - 1. Excellent
   - 2. Good
   - 3. Fair
   - 4. Poor

Do you have any further comments or suggestions about the group sessions as a whole?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX J: Important Skill Based Games/Activities/Skill Sets Taught to Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Game/Activity/Skill Set</th>
<th>Job and Social Skills Taught/Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nailed (Icebreaker/Team Building)</td>
<td>Teamwork, communication, Problem solving, asking for help when needed, organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shining in the Eyes of the Employer.</td>
<td>Social skills to keep your employer happy and maintaining employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Positivity Exercise Choose your attitude At work</td>
<td>Having a good attitude, being social towards others (clients and co-workers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Providing Excellent Customer Service</td>
<td>Doing a good job, helping others, problem solving, being positive towards others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resume Writing</td>
<td>How to write effective resume to get a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Job Search Strategies</td>
<td>How to job search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Applying your values in the workplace</td>
<td>Using values to succeed in workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dealing with Stress in the workplace</td>
<td>Conflict Resolution and decreasing anxiety when it arises at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Benefiting from Praise and Criticism</td>
<td>Ability to give and receive constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Balancing Life While Working</td>
<td>Enjoying and making the most out of any type of employment and balancing your life to remain happy and employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Icebreaker/Team Building Game

**Nailed**

**WHAT YOU HAVE:**
Small group(s): five or less  
One large nail in block of wood  
10 additional nails

**OBJECTIVE:**
Get the ten additional nails to balance on the one in the wood

**RULES:**
Wood base must stay flat on the table, (as is)  
Nail must stay in wood base, (as is)  
No other nail must touch the wood base  
No other materials or resources may be used

**HINTS:**
Build on table  
Listen to your group  
Use different parts of the nail  
It should resemble a roof

**POINT:**
Learning from mistakes  
Recognize teamwork/creativity  
Recognize feelings:
  - Impossible and challenged when first introduced  
  - Determined when I said you could or you were getting warmer  
  - Frustrated and ready to give up when it was taking so long  
  - Excited when you were getting closer  
  - Renewed when you got a hint or help  
  - Proud when completed  
  - Learning from making attempts/mistakes with your team
2. Shining in the Eyes of the Employer

**HOW CAN YOU SHINE?**

**EXCEEDING EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS**

**MAKE THEIR DAY!**

ASK YOURSELF:

1. How would you describe a ‘Star Employee’ of this workplace?
2. What is this organization’s greatest source of pride?

THEN:

- **Do more than is asked or expected**
- **When performing routine tasks, make it your first time**
- **If you don’t have anything to do, find something**
- **Look for ways to save your employer time or money**
- **Volunteer to do the things that fall between the cracks**
- **Commit as much of yourself as possible to whatever you are doing in that moment**
- **Offer to learn a new task or process**
Look for chronic problems in your area that have been ignored and look for solutions

Ask for FEEDBACK

“Feedback is the breakfast of Champions” - Rick Tate, Business Consultant

- Ask your supervisor at the end of the day: ‘How am I doing? Can you give me a few hints on how I could be doing better?’

- Learn the culture of this workplace. Learn the unwritten rules about: Dress code, Personal use of equipment, Every day employee protocol, Dealing with unusual circumstances

Your Next Challenge

Take advantage of a clean slate. Live the image you want people to have of you! Drop any survival habits that no longer serve you – whether it is a hard shell, the tough guy act, or using your looks rather than your brains.

If you could choose how people describe you six weeks from now, what would you have them say about you? What words would you have them use to describe you?

- Assertive
- Knowledgeable
- Reliable
- Cheerful
- Resourceful
- Intelligent
- Outgoing
- Motivated
- Patient
- Flexible
- Skilful
- Caring
- Committed
- Confident
- Capable
- Eager

Your word: 

Now write down one action you can do to support that;
Activity 3: Positivity Exercise: Choose your attitude at work

Positive Behaviour Exercise

This exercise seeks to enable clearer understanding of positive behaviour and positive thinking, extending to the notion that positive behaviour produces positive effect or reward for the person (or group) acting positively.

Instead of trying to unravel the secrets of the karmic universe or the meaning of religious and spiritual life, we can perhaps understand better the effects of our own positive behaviour (or that of a group or entire corporation) by considering how we personally respond to the positive behaviour of others.

Ask group members to consider how they personally feel and respond towards someone who behaves in the following ways:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. smiles a lot and is generally happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. gives to others and wants nothing in return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. thanks others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. helps others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. listens to others without judging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. takes the blame or responsibility for faults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. gives others credit for successes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. absorbs negative behaviour from others with tolerance and understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Points to review:

Extend some of the examples above to imagine long-term relationships and issues of trust, reputation, recommendation, willingness to do business with such a person, etc.

Extend the examples to the responses of many thousands of customers, to many positive behaviours of a corporation, (and then consider the opposite effects: i.e., responses of thousands of customers, and the knock-on consequences, arising from many negative behaviours of a corporation).

Positive behaviour of one person is sometimes immediately rewarded or acknowledged by others, but often the effects are not immediate.
CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE
Attitude Determines Attitude

I will get up early tomorrow, excited over all I get to do before the clock strikes midnight. I have responsibilities to fulfill this day. I am important. My job is to choose what kind of day I am going to have.

Today I can complain because the weather is rainy or I can be thankful that the grass is getting watered for free.

Today I can feel sad that I don’t have more money or I can be glad that my finances encourage me to plan my purchases wisely and guide me away from waste.

Today I can grumble about my health or I can rejoice that I am alive.

Today I can lament over all that my parents didn't give me when I was growing up or I can feel grateful that they caused me to be born.

Today I can cry because roses have thorns or I can celebrate that thorns have roses.

Today I can mourn my lack of friends or I can excitedly embark upon a quest to discover new relationships.

Today I can whine because I have to go to work or I can shout for joy because I have a job to do.

Today I can complain because I have to go to school or eagerly open my mind and fill it with rich new tidbits of knowledge.

Today I can murmur dejectedly because I have to do housework or I can feel honoured because the Lord has provided shelter for my mind, body and soul.

Today stretches ahead of me, waiting to be shaped. And here I am the sculptor who gets to do the shaping. What today will be like is up to me. I get to choose what kind of day I will have!
Activity 4: Providing Excellent Customer Service

**5 Ways to Provide Excellent Customer Service**

No matter what kind of job you have or what your aspirations are, one of the best skills you can cultivate is excellent customer service. Keeping customers happy may happen to be a mainstay of your job. No matter if you deal with them in person, on the telephone or online, this is not something that is simple to do. You will find that when you have an unreasonable customer, it may be very easy to give in to them. However, if you are a good customer service representative, this is not an option. Below are some pointers for you to consider no matter who you are dealing with.

**1. Smile!**

Even if a customer is on the telephone and cannot see you, they can always detect a smile even in your voice. A smile is a set of muscle movements that your body associates with happiness. You can feel your spirits lift when you smile. A smile will put your customers at ease so that they will be more comfortable and open with you in the future.

**2. Be as friendly as your schedule allows!**

If you have to talk a person through something, you will find that there is some 'down time' between when your computer is processing and when you can resume your business. Take time to be friendly and chat with your customer and ask how their day is going. A customer is usually pleasantly surprised when this is asked by a stranger. You will find that this will make it a great deal easier to deal with this customer in the future.

**3. Do as much as you can for them!**

We all know that the time comes when we have to say 'No' to a customer. This is not ideal, even if the customer is gracious about it. If you cannot go about giving them what they want, you can still give them something no matter if it is another option to try again or just a coupon. Make sure that your customer always leaves with something. This is not only great for your customers but is a good business practice as well.
4. Get personal!

Whether you have an email response set up, or you can simply put a work order through, you'll find that something as simple as calling your customer and reassuring them that things are going smoothly is a good way to make a connection. You'll find that if you are able to give them at least a voice to put to the message, they'll be much easier to work with.

5. Keep your promises!

If you say that you will do it, then you need to do it! While you can always say things like 'I'll check to see if that's possible,' or 'I'm not sure, but I'll ask for you,' if you say, 'Yes, this can happen,' you need to make sure that it does. Even if you are simply calling back to check in, you'll find that keeping promises is an extremely important part of customer service.

Did you know? FACT: 68% of people will quit doing business with companies that have poor customer service.

(Another idea is to go over this skill from pg.50- pg.54 in the 30 Ways to Shine Book, and have the participants do the challenge of the day.)
Activity 5: Resume Writing Worksheet

RESUME WORKSHEET

Skills Heading
With bullets underneath

SALES / CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Enthusiastic service provider, consistently striving to exceed the customer’s expectations.
- Accustomed to interacting with store management and staff and respecting service priorities.
- Effective communicator and sales representative; able to explain and market sales promotions.
- Knowledge and understanding of the role of the vendor representative on the sales floor.
Activity 6: Video Links for Job Skills & Motivational Short Films

Video Links for Job Skills & Inspirational Short Videos

**Job Skills**

1) **How to Ace a Job Interview: 3 Keys to Success:**
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQIKROhaUyQ

2) **Top Six Ways to get an Angry Customer to Back Down:**
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACKbkmo9rLg

3) **Need a job? Resume writing lessons and basic tips:**
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5bWALrP8gY

4) **Job Search Tips:**
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EB1rshuI5fY

5) **Stress management in the workplace:**
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rpq0IhbCITs

**Motivational and Inspirational Videos**

(www.simpletruths.com/movies.asp)

1) **The Race:** http://www.the-race-movie.com/

2) **The Dash:** http://www.thedashmovie.com/

3) **212 The Extra Degree:** http://www.212movie.com/

4) **The Essence of Leadership:** http://www.theleadershipmovie.com/

5) **The Power of Teamwork:** http://www.powerofteamworkmovie.com/

6) **Jimmy the Bagger:** http://www.stservicemovie.com/
   (Showing how one employee went the extra mile for his customers. This is a good video to show with the skill concerning going the extra mile to meet employer expectations)
Activity 7: Applying Your Values in the Workplace

**TAKE THIS JOB AND LOVE IT**
**PUT YOUR VALUES TO WORK**

*Joy, purpose and belonging do not come with the job. They are like tools or a uniform – they are qualities you bring to the job.*

*We must be true to the qualities that support what we value.*

Identify your values. *Rate the following values in order of importance to you.*

- Family
- Spirituality
- Friendship
- Respect
- Health
- Self-esteem
- Integrity
- Making a Difference
- Love
- Helping Others
- Loyalty
- Tolerance
- Fun/Humour
- Honesty
- Security
- Wisdom
LIST YOUR TOP 3 VALUES:

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Now Explain Why and How You Could Use Your Top 3 Values in The Work Place to Improve your Performance or Simply To Make Work More Enjoyable!!

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•
Your First Challenge

- **Put your values to work**

  **Look at your top three work values and then decide on two small steps you can take to bring more of that quality to your present work situation.**

Examples:

**If friendship is important to you, you may want to have lunch with different people throughout the week.**

If *beauty* is important to you, you may want to decorate your work space.

List some Small Steps to bring my top 3 values to my work:

1. 

2. 

3.
Activity 8: Dealing with Stress in the Workplace

Managing Workplace Stress

While it may be easy to blame someone else for stress in the workplace (as many do...), stress management in the workplace is primarily YOUR responsibility. As you know, stress can be positive or negative. And everyone experiences stress and pressure in his life. How you react and what you do about stress--will determine how it affects you!

- **Describe Stress Free Work Environment** - What would it look like--if you worked in a stress free work environment?
- **Positive Attitude at Work** - Our attitudes toward our work and the people we work with--greatly influence our stress level at work!
- **Stress Relief Work Ideas** - What can you do to minimize stress at work?
- **Causes of Workplace Stress** - What makes work stress an issue? Do you know if you need to look at stress management in the workplace?
- **Symptoms of Workplace Stress** - How will you know if work related stress is a problem at your place of work? What are the signs of stress at work?
- **Workplace Bully** Just as many schools have a problem with bullying, bullies also exist at work for many people. Do you know how to minimize the efforts of a workplace bully?
- **Working with Difficult People** Outside of work, you can just avoid difficult people. But, at work, you don't have that option. What can you do to minimize your work stress, if you work with difficult people?

While not everyone is stressed at work, many people do have a need for stress management in the workplace.

If you notice that you have some of the symptoms of stress at work, and that you don't enjoy going to work, then you may need to address some stress management issues to make life easier.

**Fortunately, for most people, simply adjusting YOUR attitude and your beliefs, and changing the way that you react to others--will make life a lot easier for you at work!**
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation (or PMR) is a technique for reducing anxiety by alternately tensing and relaxing the muscles. It was developed by American physician Edmund Jacobson in the early 1920s. Jacobson argued that since muscle tension accompanies anxiety, one can reduce anxiety by learning how to relax the muscular tension. PMR entails a physical and mental component.

The physical component involves the tensing and relaxing of muscle groups over the legs, abdomen, chest, arms and face. With the eyes closed and in a sequential pattern, a tension in a given muscle group is purposefully done for approximately 10 seconds and then released for 20 seconds before continuing with the next muscle group.

The mental component focuses on the difference between the feelings of the tension and relaxation. Because the eyes are closed, one is forced to concentrate on the sensation of tension and relaxation.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique

Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing and relaxing, in succession, sixteen different muscle groups of the body. The idea is to tense each muscle group hard (not so hard that you strain, however) for about 10 seconds, and then to let go of it suddenly. You then give yourself 15-20 seconds to relax, noticing how the muscle group feels when relaxed in contrast to how it felt when tensed, before going on to the next group of muscles. You might also say to yourself "I am relaxing," "Letting go," "Let the tension flow away," or any other relaxing phrase during each relaxation period between successive muscle groups. Throughout the exercise, maintain your focus on your muscles. When your attention wanders, bring it back to the particular muscle group you’re working on: The guidelines below describe progressive muscle relaxation in detail:

- Make sure you are in a setting that is quiet and comfortable. Observe the guidelines for practicing relaxation that were previously described.
- When you tense a particular muscle group, do so vigorously without straining, for 7-10 seconds. You may want to count “one-thousand-one,’ "one-thousand-two,” and so on, as a way of marking off seconds.
- Concentrate on what is happening. Feel the build up of tension in each particular muscle group. It is often helpful to visualize the particular muscle group being tensed.
- When you release the muscles, do so abruptly, and then relax, enjoying the sudden feeling of limpness. Allow the relaxation to develop for at least 15-20 seconds before going on to the next group of muscles.
- Allow all the other muscles in your body to remain relaxed, as far as possible, while working on a particular muscle group.
- Tense and relax each muscle group once. But if a particular area feels especially tight, you can tense and relax it two or three times, waiting about 20 seconds between each cycle.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

Once you are comfortably supported in a quiet place, follow the detailed instructions below:

- To begin, take three deep abdominal breaths, exhaling slowly each time. As you exhale, imagine that tension throughout your body begins to flow away.
- Clench your fists. Hold for 7-10 seconds and then release for 15-20 seconds. *Use these same time intervals for all other muscle groups.*
- Tighten your biceps by drawing your forearms up toward your shoulders and "making a muscle" with both arms. Hold... and then relax.
- Tighten your *triceps*--the muscles on the undersides of your upper arms--by extending your arms out straight and locking your elbows. Hold ... and then relax.
- Tense the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows as far as you can. Hold ... and then relax. Imagine your forehead muscles becoming smooth and limp as they relax.
- Tense the muscles around your eyes by clenching your eyelids tightly shut. Hold... and then relax. Imagine sensations of deep relaxation spreading all around them.
- Tighten your jaws by opening your mouth so widely that you stretch the muscles around the hinges of your jaw. Hold ... and then relax. Let your lips part and allow your jaw to hang loose.
- Tighten the muscles in the back of your neck by pulling your head way back; as if you were going to touch your head to your back (be gentle with this muscle group to avoid injury). Focus only on tensing the muscles in your neck. Hold ... and then relax. Since this area is often especially tight, it's good to do the tense-relax cycle twice.
- Take a few deep breaths and tune in to the weight of your head sinking into whatever surface it is resting on.
- Tighten your shoulders by raising them up as if you were going to touch your ears. Hold ... and then relax.
- Tighten the muscles around your shoulder blades by pushing your shoulder blades back as if you were going to touch them together. Hold the tension in your shoulder blades ... and then relax. Since this area is often especially tense, you might repeat the tense-relax sequence twice.
- Tighten the muscles of your chest by taking in a deep breath. Hold for up to 10 seconds ... and then release slowly. Imagine any excess tension in your chest flowing away with the exhalation.
- Tighten your stomach muscles by sucking your stomach in. Hold ... and then release. Imagine a wave of relaxation spreading through your abdomen.
- Tighten your lower back by arching it up. (You should omit this exercise if you have lower back pain.) Hold ... and then relax.
Activity 9: Benefiting from Praise and Criticism (Team game where the objective is for players to learn how to receive constructive feedback in a positive manner.)

**FEED ME!**

**In a Nutshell**
People try to guess pre-selected alphabet letters based on positive feedback from a partner.

**What It's For**
Use this game if you want to: boost your energy when it's low; help others to stop procrastinating; motivate chronically underperforming employees; spark team performance; use competition as a motivational tool.

**Time**
20 minutes.

**What You’ll Learn**
Positive feedback boosts performance, and it also can be fun!

**What You’ll need**
You’ll need one large bowl and a bag of candies or popcorn for every pair of individuals who will be participating in the game. One person in each pair should also have some writing materials (a pad and pencil will do).

**What to Do**
Divide the group into pairs. If possible, have each pair of individuals sit on the floor, cross-legged, facing each other, not more than three feet away from each other. One person, the Listener, holds the bag of popcorn or candy, and the other person, the Speaker, holds the bowl.

Ask the Listeners to write down an alphabet letter of their choice and then to conceal that letter. The Speaker’s job is to guess that letter. He or she can get clues about the letter by saying any three-word phrase aloud.

The Speaker begins the exchange by saying a three-word phrase. If The Listener throws a candy and the Speaker catches it, the Speaker can then guess a letter. If the Speaker misses, no guess can be made. If no candy is thrown, the Speaker can try another phrase.
When the correct letter is guessed, the exchange ends, and the Listener raises his or her hand to signal the successful conclusion of the exchange. Bonus: The Speakers can keep any candy they can catch! If time permits, have the Speaker and Listener keep switching roles, and play again!

**Discussion Questions**

1. How long did it take you to guess the target letters?
2. What impact did the positive feedback have on your performance?
3. What impact did the positive feedback have on your thinking? How did it affect the Speaker’s phrases? Why is positive feedback important for performance? How can you increase your use of positive feedback in the workplace or at home?

**Alternative**

To make the game tougher, forbid the Listeners from selecting vowels or require the Speakers to use four- or five word phrases. To make the game easier, allow the speakers to use two-word phrases or even single words. For extra fun, have the Speaker and Listener sit farther apart. If you’re using popcorn, have the Listener aim for the Speaker’s mouth!

**If You Have More Time**

Have participants switch partners!
Activity 10: Balancing Life While Working

The Challenge of the Day Bringing Balance to Your Life

1. Place a check (✓) next to each of the areas below in which you would like to do something in order to bring more balance to your life:

   - Spiritual or religious activities
   - Creative interests or hobbies
   - Family life
   - Physical health and well-being
   - Relationships with friends
   - Community involvement
   - Fun and adventure
   - Time spent in nature
   - Other:

2. Follow the directions for Food for the Soul: Ideas from A to Z on the next page to bring on-going balance to your life.
Food for the Soul: Ideas from A to Z!

Listed below are 26 suggestions for feeding your spirit in simple ways outside the job. Place a check (✓) next to each of the suggestions you would consider trying. Choose three of these ideas to put into action immediately.

a. Take up an artistic hobby like water coloring, juggling or using computerized graphics to make greeting cards. Expand your creative horizons!
b. Find a way to make each person in your home feel appreciated.
c. Go for a hike somewhere in nature.
d. Volunteer to read to children in a hospital.
e. Turn off the T.V. an hour earlier than usual and read a book.
f. Donate blood to a blood bank.
g. Call and offer a sister, your mother, a neighbour or your child’s teacher “two hours on Saturday morning” to use as they wish.
h. Tend a garden or simply plant seeds in a small pot. Make a gesture of peace to someone in your life where it is needed.
j. Ask a question of an elderly person that he or she would love to answer.
k. Give a small child your total and undivided attention for a sustained period of time. Write to someone you admire and tell him or her why you feel that way.
m. Celebrate a small event in someone’s life in a big way! (For example, the purchase of a new car, a lost baby tooth, or getting hired at a new job.)
n. When in doubt, give the right of way to the other driver at every stop sign. Practice kinder and gentler driving habits!
o. Host a party for friends and have everyone bring a favourite piece of music, poem or artwork.
p. Cook a gourmet meal for your family.
q. Memorize your favorite poem.
r. Volunteer at a soup kitchen. Serve it up with love!
s. Go somewhere you’ve never been before.
t. Redecorate a room in your house.
u. Make a gift for someone special in your life.
v. Call or write to a person in your life you care a lot about but haven’t had contact with in a long time.
w. Learn to play a musical instrument.
x. Organize a donation for a family that needs help.
Y. Clean out your closets and give the things you are not using to a local charity.
z. Write a speech that begins with the words, "I have a dream ..."