



"Accent on Essential Life Skills"

Resource Book of "How to" skills for mind, body, and spirit

WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS?

abilities and inner powers to communicate, solve problems, & provide solutions or results

****Skills affect your level of performance and the excellence of what is produced****

****Skills enhance your ability to be an expert and/or specialist****

ULTIMATE COLLECTION OF 48 CRITICAL LIFE SKILLS

7 KEY SKILLS AREAS

- Self-Awareness**
- Researching**
- Creativity**
- Spirituality**
- Higher-Level Thinking**
- Communication**
- Leadership**

****Features****

- hands-on, interactive, reality-based, practical learning
- can be learned by people of ALL ages!
- easy to learn, step-by-step instructions
- integrated holistic approach – body, mind, spirit
- skills apply to any discipline, subject, work area
- extensive lists of support resources such as web sites, other books are provided

****Bonus Feature****

**custom designed related skills training workshops
are available for individuals and groups**

**ONCE A SKILL IS LEARNED,
IT CANNOT BE UNLEARNED!
NOBODY CAN UNLEARN HOW TO RIDE A BIKE!**

Benefits:

- improved attitude and energy because of improved competency
- existing skills become stronger and more useful
- increased motivation to learn more
- improved ability to debate, discuss, support arguments and express oneself
- be more relaxed and confident when meeting important or intimidating people
- increased confidence with responsibilities and leadership roles
- make better and more informed decisions
- increased possibilities of success in challenges
- personal and work levels of performance improve
- participants are empowered to be greater creators of new learning instead of consumers

Samples of Skills:

Body Language, Stress Control, Logic, Convergent-Divergent Thinking, Enhancing Perception, How to Analyze, Elements of Creativity, Public Speaking, Time Management, Communicating Effectively, Brainstorming, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking

Testimonials:

"...a refreshing change from typical corporate training which often focuses on job-related strategic selling...skills that allow us to be more successful in any endeavor...improve your corporate workforce? Teach them the essential life skills found in this book and workshop!" - David Ruuskanen, VP Mid Markets, SAP Canada Inc., Toronto, ON

"...introduced our inventor group to Personal Life Skills Training...simple techniques...any individual could enhance their creativity and self-development skills...for those who constantly strive to better their general awareness and problem-solving abilities...practical techniques...48 of the most important skills that can benefit everybody. - Bob Huybrechts, Speaker Recruiting, Inventors' Alliance of Canada, Toronto, Canada

"I admit I was a bit skeptical...at Otto's creativity skills workshop ...allowed me to go deeply inside myself...uncovered blocks to my creativity and then discovered gems of new insights...It's made a huge difference to freely create what I love. I used to believe I was limited..." - Dianne Scott, Portrait Artist, Toronto, Canada

"...brilliant and innovative book offers formal instruction for learning and developing empowering skills. They act as the golden keys...into an ongoing well-lived life...gift to those desiring more fulfillment..." - Jeannie MacKay, Chapter Director, Business Innovation Group, Thornhill, Canada

Purchase This Book at www.AccentonSkills.com

In-depth Skills Training Workshops are available for individuals and groups. Call Today!!

Otto Schmidt, Principal Consultant, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Telephone: 416-226-2332

Email: o.schmidt@accentonskills.com

Website: www.AccentonSkills.com

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Foreword

As we go through life we never really know who we are ultimately going to become... and so one might argue that it takes the daring and resolve of an entire lifetime to find out. It is important that along the way we discover and take advantage of opportunities to nurture that courageous journey of the human spirit. We must strive to develop the strengths, passions, relationships and, fundamentally, essential life skills, so that we can grow in positive directions. However, positive growth can be challenging. And, although meeting the various challenges can be pleasurable, sometimes we find ourselves feeling perplexed, or unhappy, or even concerned. Otto Schmidt has written “*Accent on Essential Life Skills*” because he understands how important it is for people to believe in themselves, to engage in educational and constructive processes, and to experience holistic well-being. He recognizes the power of inquiry and invites us to celebrate greater self-awareness. He helps individuals appreciate the value of researching, the power of creativity, and the joy of spirituality. He explains how to engage in higher-level thinking processes, enhance communication, and cultivate leadership abilities. By asking us to probe the way we consider both inner and outer aspects of ourselves, and by providing us with resource support to do so, he shows us how to use our intelligence and

our imaginations to be more empowered and resilient. The book is, in effect, incentive for self-directed, lifelong learning. Throughout its pages and in well-organized fashion, the author describes practical methods for skill development, offering readers encouraging words and addressing their hesitations. He accomplishes this while focusing on specific motivational, experiential, foundational, and personal skills, addressing over forty topics. For example, the author discusses positive affirmations; time management; summarizing; free-flow writing; meditation; analyzing; interviewing; and activism. Otto Schmidt has worked with children, teachers, parents, gifted learners, corporate executives, and community leaders—all of which gives him a broad-based perspective and informed understanding of what kinds of skills are necessary and worthy of our time and effort if we are to be all that we can be. “*Accent on Essential Life Skills*” is a preparatory guide for daily living designed to enable us to look back one day and realize that we not only strove to meet the various challenges but worked toward mastering many of them.

Foreword by Joanne Foster, Ed.D.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Teacher Education Program
(Educational Psychology, and Gifted Studies)

Co-author of the award-winning *Being Smart about Gifted Children: A Guidebook for Parents and Educators*. (2005) Great Potential Press, Scottsdale: AZ. www.beingsmart.ca

Preface

This book is being presented as a new and vital addition to the world of teaching and learning. It contains a set of personal, life enhancing “how to” skills that we all need to acquire and/or improve. People already have them to some degree and apply them to varying levels of competency. How many people, however, have ever learned personal life skills such as analyzing, relaxation, and creative thinking directly? How many understand them clearly and can control them consciously when required? This is the intent of “Accent on Essential Life Skills.” From a holistic perspective – mind, body, spirit – the skills have been gathered and made available for all to learn.

What is a skill? A skill is an ability or inner power to communicate, solve problems, and provide solutions or results. It is acquired by training, practice and experience. A skill facilitates performance, the accomplishment of tasks, and general learning, in physical and mental tasks for oneself or others. A skill results in aptitude and competence that leads to becoming an expert or specialist. The operating words that indicate a skill are “how to”.

The idea for this book started in the mid 1970’s. From only a few, the list of competency skills was added to steadily over the years. As a facilitator/teacher of gifted elementary and secondary students, it was obvious that highly intelligent people need far more than what most education provides for them. They need competency skills, not more knowledge and facts.

The skills approach to learning grew quickly to the 48 individual skills presented herein. They were taught with great success to students initially. Imagine teaching in a classroom with no textbooks, tests, exams, timetables, or course outlines. What was done with those students? They were taught personal life skills. (Communication has been maintained with several former students who can attest to the benefits and support the approach used in this book.) It soon became obvious that what worked with gifted people would also work with everybody else too. This book is the product of that realization.

The most important tools of learning – skills – need more attention. This book focuses on many of the thinking, creativity and self-development skills that all people need to learn. There are seven key areas:

1. **Self-Awareness** - how to improve: self-esteem, deportment, identifying and dealing effectively with styles of learning, using thinking styles, being one’s own best friend, powers of observation and noticing, inner calmness and sense of inner balance with life
2. **Researching** – how to: find the best information and what to do with it, how to engage in a long-term project that can lead to a career or a life-long hobby, summarize information
3. **Creativity** - how to: take the ordinary and do something unordinary with it, generate unusual ideas at will, use models and thinking templates, probe the depths of the mind for spectacular spontaneous thoughts and ideas

4. **Spirituality** – how to: identify and appreciate our unique status in the universe, be the best we can be, renew strength and grow in wisdom, appreciate our great gift of life, trust intuition, identify success
5. **Higher-Level Thinking** – how to: think in different ways to maximize learning and understanding, solve problems more effectively, think logically, think critically
6. **Communication** – how to: speak, write, and read more effectively when alone or in a group
7. **Leadership** – how to: organize and use personal strengths to make a difference in the world, making the best decisions for self and others, deal with criticism

The individual skills are valuable in many ways. They empower people to better assess and make decisions that improve the quality of life. Motivation, self-esteem, desire to learn, and the ability to solve problems more effectively will improve. Improved creativity leads to greater confidence. Skills improve the ability to meet daily stress, tension and demands at work and at home. They ultimately help people enrich and enhance their work and play in daily life.

At work, life skills increase competency and productivity. Employees become more powerful thinkers. People will know how to stay relaxed in stressful situations. Individuals and teams can unleash their creativity to generate more and better ideas. Studies and work projects will show greater creativity and depth of thought.

There are four kinds of presentations/experiences that are catalysts of personal success and competency. Each has its own positives and negatives. The skills approach, however, can be seen as standing out from the others.

1. **Motivational** – motivation goes up and down, tends to return to original levels
2. **Experiential** – offer only a small sample of a new experience, lack depth and breadth of learning e.g. getting into a race car does not make someone a race car driver
3. **Foundation Skills** – the basic accepted procedures and skills that all people in a particular job or career must learn to do their job properly, included are basic reading, writing and number sense provided to all in a society
4. **Personal Skills** – empowerment with personal creativity, self-development and communication skills, cannot be unlearned, become highly individualized

Personal skills are the most important of the above. Once skills such as the ones in this book are learned, they cannot be unlearned! Skills training makes the greatest impact on people. Anyone who has learned to ride a bike knows that it is a life-long skill that can only improve through practice and effort. Each and every skill furthers people in becoming more independent, self-directed producers of learning instead of the usual consumers. Skills empower people to take control of their thinking and learning and be less dependent on others. They empower people to reach their potential.

Anyone using this book can be confident in the authenticity of results and reliability of the methods used to teach the skills. Content is tried-and-proven and has been written using many sources: course and conference notes, readings, lectures, personal lesson plans, direct experience, trial and error, observation of others using the skills, discussions with experts, and musings since the 1970's. Most importantly, each skill has been taught directly and has been thoroughly evaluated for practicality and usefulness. A list of related support resources follow each main section

Many individuals and groups will find this book of universally important skills to be valuable. Since writing it, the positive reaction to “Accent on Essential Life Skills” has been astounding. The book and skills have been presented to, appraised and praised by: gifted children, parent support groups, classroom and guidance teachers, educators of gifted children, teachers of mentally/ intellectually/physically challenged people, inventors support groups, corporate executives, and leadership trainers. One corporate client believed that the skills would be highly valuable to women and members of visible minorities that were being trained to move into executive positions. A major project under way with “Accent on Essential Life Skills” involves a full training course - all the skills – being provided to a group of international teachers working in vanguard schools established for children affected by an Asian tsunami and civil war. Skills empower people to become experts and specialists in whatever they do, at any age, anywhere in the world.

All of the life skills in “Accent on Essential Life Skills” are designed to be highly user friendly. The essential elements of each have been condensed so that the skill can be learned quickly and easily. They are reliable and all have been tried and proven in personal, educational and corporate/business settings. The language is straightforward and uncomplicated – an “easy read.” Practical acquisition and application are highlighted instead of theory. In other words, the skills are laid bare and taught directly and clearly.

Most books fail to teach the important, personal life skills the way “Accent on Essential Life Skills” does. They have exciting and interesting information, activities and exercises but commonly allude to important skills that are

simply expected to be in the learner. At worst, foundation skills are taught and re-taught. Is it any wonder that people get bored with learning? They are being spoon-fed by people who are having all the fun. Skills training involves taking a step back from those experiences and putting into place the skill(s) that ensure greater competency and empowerment. An easy way to test any learning situation for skills acquisition is to ask if there is a “how to” involved. What is the person learning “how to” do? For example, most people have been asked to pay attention. What does paying attention really mean? “Accent on Essential Life Skills” provides the answer by taking a step back and teaching people what to do to pay attention – a willingness to give time.

Unlike many educational books, the contents of this one will continue to be the same. Skills are ageless and unchanging. This book – as is – will be just as valuable in the future as it would have been hundreds of years ago.

Education is under added pressure to better prepare people to be more competent in the global village. The skills in this book will do that. We all need to be more self-aware, creative and better problem-solvers. Global trade, demands for increased productivity, fierce multinational competition, and ongoing changes in technology challenge workers to adapt and cope. Being highly skilled helps.

Skills are not just the competencies found in trades and services. Improved personal higher-level thinking, creativity, and self-development skills are the basis for being the best in any environment. That is why this book is so valuable at this time.

Within the mission statement of this book, the most important objectives are:

- a) Teach the skills to young people and their teachers. They can learn and perfect them at home and in school in order to enjoy their lives more and be more effective participants in the workplace.
- b) Teach the skills to workers/employees/executives at the corporate/business level to improve the workplace.
- c) Have related courses available to students in colleges and universities around the world.

In summary, a strong personal skill set includes creativity, higher-level thinking and control of the self. Personal life skills are vital for survival, enjoyment, personal fulfillment and optimum productivity at home or in the workplace.

The following words summarize the intent, essence, importance and impact skills training has on life:

“Give someone a fish and feed them for a day. Teach someone how to fish and feed them for a lifetime.” – ancient wise saying

“Skills are the most important elements used in maximizing learning and utilizing knowledge and facts. They also determine the quantity, quality and overall excellence of the final products or outcomes of learning.” – Otto Schmidt

SAMPLE SKILLS BELOW

SAMPLE Skill Area: Part 1 - Self-Awareness

Skill to Learn: 1-1 How to Read and Use Body Language (3 PAGES)

Introduction

Only about 10% of face-to-face communication is through words. Besides the words and ideas, we also use non-verbal language to communicate. How to use body language to one's advantage is the theme of this section of the skills package. By knowing the signals and sub-conscious messages, one can better control the messages sent out when communicating physically.

Objectives

- Increase ability to communicate more effectively
- Improve ability to control an audience
- Learn techniques that improve success when dealing with others

Personal Benefits

- Greater confidence when presenting to others
- Improved ability to make an impact on others
- Greater ability to reduce chances of failure in interactions with others
- Greater sense of control of an audience or group when communicating

Learn the Skill

How to Make a Good First Impression or Establish an Instant Rapport

- watch how you dress, stand and walk confidently, introduce yourself clearly, shake hands firmly – avoid excessive pressure, get close enough to the person but not inside the person's "personal bubble."

(To discover the "personal bubble", stand back ...

It will be different for each person – usually about 30 - 60 cm. Friends, relatives and family are usually allowed much closer without any discomfort.)

- **any physical movements should be made toward a person, give things to people with a little flair...**
- **keep first words brief and have positive facial expressions such as smiles, breathe normally ...**

...

Basics of Body Language

a) When Speaking

i) **Speech**

People like to be with others who ...

...

ii) **Body Awareness**

- keep gestures, movements and postures ...

iii) **Eye Movements**

- keep eyes focussed on the person rather than ...

b) When Listening

- look at the person and lean in ...
- ...

Showing Positive Body Language

a) When Sitting:

- keep shoulders slightly off the perpendicular but ...
- ...

b) When Standing:

- keep shoulders slightly ...
- ...

Practical Application of the Skill / Practice

- do impromptu speeches and ...
- use the skills when debating...
- offer to speak at local ...
- volunteer to be...
- be in the audience of TV...
- volunteer to be a ...

AND MORE

SAMPLE Skill Area: Part 1 - Self-Awareness

Skill to Learn: 1-9 How to Manage Time (5 PAGES)

Introduction

YOLO. – You Only Live Once. Alas, what we do with that time is up to us. We can choose to fill waking moments with meaning or squander them. With discipline, motivation and determination, we can use precious time very effectively.

Objectives

- Learn alternative ways of thinking about time
- Learn several steps useful in organizing time
- Learn about time wasters and time savers

Personal Benefits

- Become more productive and boost self-esteem
- Appreciate and use present time more effectively
- Become more organized
- Become more willing to fill time with that which is meaningful

Learn the Skill

How to Organize Your Day and Save Precious Time:

1. Action Lists

- These are self-designed and can be as simple as an 8 ½ x 11 sheet ...
- Write down EVERYTHING that you need to do...
- After prioritizing, do some small ones first and then move quickly...

Here is a sample action list:

...	...
...	...

2. Preparing Work Space

Some of the worst time wasters are: fetching ...

- Before you start, imagine in your mind that you are doing the work ...
- Think about how much time you will spend at the workstation. ...

3. Working to Personal Deadlines

- Often when people work alone, they don't have deadlines the way they do when they are working for others. This can result in poor time management. When confronted with a series of tasks, try these:
- ...
- ...
- Examine each subject/task and estimate the amount of time Reward yourself in some small way if you succeed. (no, don't go watch TV!)

Things That Slow Us Down and Waste Time

- Loud music ...
- Daydreaming ...

Diary Writing and Saving Time

Diary writing is like giving oneself a report card ...

Time is Valuable

Why don't people value their time? Some take it for granted that it will be there. Others lack self-discipline and get off on wasteful tangents. Some wait ...

Other Important Quick Time Savers that Really Work

- NEVER check email when first starting to work!
- before leaving work...

Practical Application of the Skill / Practice

- Take on a difficult task ...
- Challenge yourself and then prepare a reward ...

AND MORE

SAMPLE Skill Area: Part 2 – Researching

Skill to Learn: 2-1 How to Do Open - Ended Independent Studies (7 PAGES)

Introduction

Most people have enjoyed an open-ended, self-directed independent study. It may have been through a life-long hobby or in a career. If you are an expert and/or a specialist, you've done one. An expert knows something about everything on a topic. A specialist knows everything about something on the topic.

Objectives

- Establish a plan that guides a major studies
- Learn to integrate specific skills and knowledge to expand a study
- Learn methods that cause a study to expand endlessly
- study evaluation techniques

Personal Benefits

- Reduce fear of doing a major study
- Be able to add extra interest and excitement to projects and studies
- Increase competency in producing deep and meaningful studies
- Improve interest and motivation when doing a study
- Produce more professional and valuable studies

Learn the Skill

What is an Inappropriate Independent Study?

- one that requires little effort on the part of the learner to get information e.g. history of a well-known famous building
- a common topic that has been over studied e.g. dinosaurs
- narrow topic that does not open up well to broader learning e.g. paperclips

.....

Sources of Information Others Have:

(CONTENT OF THE STUDY AND SETTING UP FOR PROCESS SKILLS, NETWORKING) This might involve friends, relatives, ...

Skills I Want/Need to Learn During this Experience:

(PROCESS SKILLS AND POSSIBLE INDICATOR ...

Evaluation Options for Independent Studies

In most cases, anyone doing a truly self-directed independent study should be more than excited about it and eager to share the learned information and skills with ...

AND MORE

SAMPLE Skill Area: Part 3 – Creativity

Skill to Learn: 3-1 How to Brainstorm (7 PAGES)

Introduction

We often hear the word brainstorm and think we know what it means. It is a far more complicated and demanding skill than most people think.

Objectives

- Learn how to generate many ideas
- Learn how to generate creative and original ideas
- Learn simple techniques that result in producing a steady stream of ideas
- Develop and/or enhance the ability to think in lists
- Show how lists can be used in many situations and practice making them

Personal Benefits

- Able to generate more ideas in any situation
- Improved problem-solving abilities
- Reduced blanking out and/or running into brick walls
- Increased creativity and originality of ideas
- Generate lists at will
- Become a more useful member of a solutions-oriented team
- Enrich your life and learning by having more choices at hand

Learn the Skill

Preparations for Brainstorming

Dealing with Inner Fears and Concerns About Performance

Eliminate the negative thoughts ...

The Work Environment

Have lots of writing materials

Four Components of Brainstorming

1. **Quantity - Generate ...**
2. **Variety - Aim for great differences ...**
3. **Piggyback – use previously ...**
4. **Evaluation - Suspend ...**

AND MORE

Sample Skill Area: Part 4 - Spirituality

Skill to Learn: 4-3 How to Meditate –Adults and Children (5 PAGES)

Introduction

Many people have heard of eastern mystics who meditate for hours and go into deep trances where they are revealed the truths of the universe. What exactly do they do? This skill lesson will attempt to give basic instructions on how to prepare and then meditate on life. There is nothing magical or mystical about this. In fact, it is a very useful tool for people to use to recharge their “batteries”. Scientists at the University of Wisconsin conclude that meditating an hour a day, six days a week can boost spirits and strengthen the immunity system in the body. Enjoy.

Objectives

- Improve thinking in general while in a disciplined, deeply concentrating state
- Develop a greater appreciation of the mind’s restorative and creative powers
- Bring the body into a more holistically united state

Personal Benefits

- Increased self-awareness
- Greater sense of being relaxed and at peace with oneself
- Have greater appreciation of your ability to think deeply and meaningfully

Learn the Skill

Adults: Introduction

- Meditation is a process of self-exploration ...
- The goal of meditation is to ...
- There is no right or wrong way to meditate, ...
- ...

Adults: Preparing for a Meditation

Find a quiet spot, be alone and away from all distractions (Length of time is by choice, but...

AND MORE